REALIZING UB 2020
The Opportunity to Make UB Distinctive

Next Steps
(Revised)

President Tripathi’s State of the University address has challenged the university to find ways to become a better and more truly distinctive university. This effort will touch every aspect of the institution and better define who we are.

We have the resources to invest and we have a window of opportunity to use these resources wisely to achieve our aspirations. This is a special moment that we must all think about together as a campus community. To this end, we have committed to:

1. **Articulate a well-considered Statement of Institutional Direction that will guide our strategic efforts, subject to continuous review, for the next 5-10 years.**

2. **Identify the planning structures that will develop this Statement and consult with relevant constituents within the university to ensure full engagement and broad understanding of this direction.**

This Statement will be completed by April 2013. It will be shaped by core principles that express the values guiding our plans and actions. The sections below outline these principles, suggest the contents of the direction statement, the planning structure that would develop these ideas, the plan for engaging our many internal and external constituents and the timeline of action from now through May 2013.

**PRINCIPLES**

Webster defines a principle as a standard or rule of personal conduct, a fundamental or general truth; an underlying or guiding theory. From this perspective, the principles we adopt should be few in number, applicable to our full range of activities and reflective of what kind of university we hope to become. In creating this Statement of Institutional Direction, we will:

1. **Seek Excellence** – This has to be our overriding focus, but there are multiple pathways to excellence and local contexts across the university can contribute excellence in particular ways from great undergraduate experiences to great service programs to outstanding discoveries in research.

2. **Think as ONE institution** – We can imagine together, across units, what an institutional brand/image/identity might be and make unit plans within that more encompassing identity.

3. **Enable Innovation** – Internal and external challenges require creative response beyond incremental thinking to ideas that challenge who we are, what is possible and
what best expresses the special talents we have at UB. These innovations should be ahead of their time and reflect a forward-thinking, risk tolerant shift in internal culture. These innovations will be the building blocks of a new and distinctive UB identity.

4. **Be inclusive** – The opportunity to hear every willing voice should be afforded and every interested member of the university community should shape new UB directions and understand their role in these efforts.

5. **Reach beyond building strength to problem-solving** – New UB directions should build and direct institutional strength to solve important societal and economic problems.

6. **Develop implementable plans** – Plans must be achievable in timeframes that create impact ahead of expectations.

THE STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTION – A Narrative for UB’s Future

This process will deliver a statement that is a fulcrum for plans and actions across the institution. This is not our strategic plan. Nor is it a collection of unit plans. It is a narrative that imagines where this university can be in 5-10 years and describes the big steps that will need to be taken in that period. It will be brief, provocative, thoughtful, encompassing, inspiring, and above all, will answer the question: *what makes UB distinctive?*

The Statement will be drafted by a team led by the Provost and shared with key constituent groups in multiple iterations. The Statement will feature UB’s new academic strategy and shape the other components of university activity around it. Improvements in student experiences will be aligned with the creation of a more distinctive educational environment. Enrollment plans will be a product of academic direction. The campus infrastructures of the university will make us a place of aesthetic distinction while enhancing our efforts in scholarship, teaching, service, economic development and health care delivery. The Statement will indicate how we meet the obligations we assumed with the NY SUNY2020 program and how we become more competitive for great students and attract additional research support in challenging market contexts.

The Statement will begin with an articulation of institutional goals and values and the specific outcomes we hope to achieve. This opening should set a large, visionary framework for actionable strategies that realize our ambition to become a great public research university. These strategies provide the substantive direction for the university’s future and include:

1. **The Academic Strategy**
   a. What key themes best enable an alignment of innovation in curriculum development, research development, and the improvement of the student experience with the university’s overall plan?
b. How will current institutional initiatives (e.g.; Strategic Strengths, Undergraduate Academies, general education, international experiences) align to our academic strategy?
c. What innovations in pedagogical strategy and investments are required to achieve our academic strategy?
d. What are the core values to be reflected in distribution of resources that enable UB to meets its diverse missions?

2. The Strategies That Ensure Student Success
   a. Is UB’s overall size and enrollment mix (e.g. across programs, by residency and diversity, level of instruction) aligned to our academic strategies and to our objectives for student success, degree attainment and to our developing sense of institutional distinctiveness?
   b. What are the characteristics of the student we would consider to be the “bread and butter” UB student. How would we describe the essence of the value proposition we offer to that student?
   c. What are UB’s retention, student quality, student experience, experiential learning and degree attainment goals? Can more intrusive engagements in the right contexts strengthen the bond between the institution and the student? How will these approaches be recognized in degree program requirements, instructional delivery strategies and the services we offer our students?
   d. What, in particular, are the roles of an intercollegiate athletics program and international experiences in catalyzing a better and more distinctive UB experience and in overall institutional student recruitment strategy?

3. The Research and Scholarship Development Strategy
   a. What mechanisms are needed to enhance scholarship across campus and align efforts with institutional priorities while ensuring that our efforts are truly distinctive?
   b. What are the mechanisms to be used to support creativity and ensure scholarship has impact in the discipline and within society?
   c. How do scholarship aspirations articulate into unit goals for external funding?
   d. What research infrastructure is required to enable scholarship and how will these needs be prioritized?
   e. How will we change our approach to the private sector in our overall research development strategy?

4. The Community Engagement Strategy
   a. What role would UB play in engaging its regional community and how will this role contribute to the overall institutional effort to become more distinctive?
   b. What are the highest priority targets for community engagement? What resources, policies, processes need to be implemented to enable UB to become an increasingly more engaged university?
5. **The Regional Economic Development Strategy**
   a. What role will UB play in regional economic development and how will this role contribute to the overall institutional effort to become more distinctive?
   b. What are the highest priority targets and tactics to be used in accomplishing economic development goals? What resources, policies and processes need to be put in to facilitate effective partner interactions?
   c. How will UB be a meaningful partner in the Buffalo and Western New York Regional Economic Development Counsel effort?

6. **The Institutional Faculty Hiring Strategy**
   a. How will faculty hiring be undertaken to build comprehensive strength while at the same time enabling the development of programs that make us distinctive?
   b. How will unit hiring plans and promotion and tenure policies be altered to connect with institutional academic and research strategies?
   c. What processes will we undertake to accelerate the pace and quality of hires we will make? What space allocation and renovation policies must be altered to enable growth in faculty number?
   d. What mechanisms will we use to develop resources to attract and retain faculty members?

7. **The Marketing/Branding/Communications/Image Development Strategy**
   a. What is the prioritized list of marketing targets?
   b. What resources are needed and how are they best deployed to maximize impact on prospective student recruitment, student experience, fundraising, governmental affairs, intercollegiate athletics and institutional reputation?
   c. What techniques will be used to heighten internal and external awareness of the emerging UB strategies for each target group?

8. **The Campus Support Infrastructure Strategy**
   a. What investments, processes and policies are needed to ensure that the campus support infrastructures (buildings, systems, human infrastructures) adapt, evolve and build capacity to enable our academic mission?

   a. How will university resource allocation policy align with university goals and our efforts to become a distinctive university? What principles will be used in prioritizing all university needs in the resource allocation process? How do we structure our resource allocation models in a way that provides economic and strategic incentives that enable the academic strategy to be successful?
   b. How will our capital campaign and other new revenue sources be integrated with our strategic direction?
   c. How do we encourage development of new revenue opportunities and new ways of strategic financial thinking?
   d. What incentives will be put in place to encourage movement towards plans for institutional change?
e. What process will be used in capital budget advocacy, priority setting and project business planning that anticipates a more mixed-source/mixed-use approach in our future?

f. How do we adequately understand cost structures and the financial interrelationships between university operations in a way that ensures transparency and informed decision-making?

g. How do we integrate risk management approaches to anticipate challenges, energize opportunities and monitor our success in implementing our plans?

10. Implementation Strategy
   a. What will be the ongoing planning cycle?
   b. What policies and practices will be used to gather information and make decisions?
   c. What are timelines for implementing strategies?
   d. What mechanisms of evaluation will we implement to ensure that these strategies are implemented and are having the desired effects over time?

THE PLANNING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE

The April timeline creates the need to develop the Statement and have that thinking shaped by all constituents in a process that is aggressive and efficient. The Provost and other institutional leaders will work together to create concepts in draft form for each section of the Statement of Institutional Direction in a sequence that is defined in more detail below. These sections will be reviewed with the Deans Committee and with the President’s Cabinet immediately upon completion in regularly scheduled meetings.

As campus leadership begins to create the narrative, the President and the Provost will appoint a Campus Advisory Committee, chaired by SUNY Distinguished Professor, Bruce McCombe, that will seek perspectives about the content and style of the message from a full range of internal representative campus groups throughout this period. The roles and membership of the Committee is described below.

The Campus Advisory Committee

1. Roles
   a. Survey constituent perceptions about the opportunities, challenges and current state of the university as well as gather suggestions from a broad range of constituents about ideas that can make UB distinctive across the range of our activities.
   b. Determine process and events for engaging key constituent groups through five constituent committees in shaping the emerging sections of the Statement of Institutional Direction:
      ▪ A Faculty Liaison Committee representing each decanal unit
      ▪ The Faculty Senate Executive Committee
      ▪ The Faculty Senate Academic Planning Committee
      ▪ The Faculty Senate Budget Priorities Committee
2. Membership:
   a. Bruce McCombe, Chair
   b. John Thomas, Chair of the Faculty Liaison Committee
   c. Ezra Zubrow, Chair of the Faculty Senate
   d. Diane Christian, Chair of the Faculty Senate Academic Planning Committee
   e. Frank Gasparini, Chair of the Faculty Senate Budget Priorities Committee
   f. Ann Marie Landel, Chair of the Professional Staff Senate
   g. Barbara Ricotta, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Coordinator of the Student Consultation Process
   h. Staff Support (Ex officio)
      ▪ Laura Barnum, Senior Associate Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Budget
      ▪ Joseph Brennan, Associate Vice President for University Communications
      ▪ Kathleen Heckman, Assistant Vice President and Chief of Staff for Development and Alumni Relations

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

The April timeline requires a quick ratification of this approach or some agreed upon modification. This approval should follow meetings with the Deans, the President’s Cabinet, the Professional Staff Senate, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Academic Planning and Budget Priorities Committees by early November. The effort of drafting and disseminating the Statement will be accomplished in four phases detailed below. The schedule below is proposed from November 9 through May 15:

1. **By November 9 – Orientation meeting with the Campus Advisory Committee Complete**

2. **By December 15 – Phase 1 Meetings Complete with President’s Cabinet, Deans Committee and Campus Advisory Committee**
   a. Academic Strategy Draft 1
   b. Student Success Strategy Draft 1
   c. Research Development Strategy Draft 1

3. **By March 5 – Phase II Meetings Complete with President’s Cabinet, Deans and Campus Advisory Committee**
   a. Vetting and final recommendations complete for 2a-c above
   b. Regional Economic Development Strategy Draft 1
c. Community Engagement and Strategy Draft 1
d. Faculty Hiring Strategy Draft 1

4. **By March 26 – Phase III Meetings Complete with President’s Cabinet, the Deans Committee and the Campus Advisory Committee**
   a. Marketing/Branding Strategy Draft 1
   a. Campus Support Infrastructure Improvement Plan Draft 1
   b. Resource Allocation Policies and Methods Draft 1
   c. Implementation Strategy Draft 1
   d. Vetting and final recommendations complete for 3b-d above

5. **By April 8 – Phase IV Meetings Complete with President’s Cabinet, the Deans Committee and the Campus Advisory Committee**
   a. Vetting and final recommendations complete for 4a-d above
   b. Review and approve detailed outline of the Statement of Institutional Direction
   c. Discuss post-February timeline draft

6. **By April 19 – Second Retreat**

7. **By May 15 – Publish Statement of Institutional Direction and calendar of implementation**

**CONCLUSION**

The approach described above is aggressive and will require your full engagement. The statement we create by May 15 will not answer all our questions but should give us clear pathways of action that will shape a new future for UB.

I am looking forward to both the process and to the spirited interchange that I hope will take place over the next 5 months.