

Strategic Plan 2007–2012



[Home](#) » [About](#) » [Strategic Plan](#) » [Archive](#) » [Agendas and Minutes](#) » Minutes from March 25, 2005

Minutes from March 25, 2005

Members absent: Lawrence Cunningham, Tom Kinghorn, and Roger Wessel.

Provost Pitts convened the meeting at 7:35 a.m. The minutes of March 18, 2005, were approved.

Completion of report from the Plan Review Subcommittee–Michael Prater:

Dr. Prater completed the PowerPoint presentation from the Plan Review Subcommittee. He began by reviewing examples of model values (from Purdue and Oregon State) that use a few key words as descriptors. He commented that the best plans show a clear relationship among the goals, mission, and values.

Examples of model "themes" (from Bowling Green and Oregon State) express ideas that infuse their plans.

Examples of words that might be unifying in a plan are "growth" and "increasing diversity." Model goals (example from the University of Nebraska at Omaha) then speak to a desired outcome and include who and what. They are brief and clear, relate to the unit's stated niche(s), and translate into objectives. An example of a model objective from the Plan Review Subcommittee answered these questions: *Who? When? What? How much?* A subcommittee might then be formed to work on the objective.

Dr. Prater turned to an example of clearly integrated goals, objectives, and strategies (UMKC). The plan clearly states university actions to implement the objectives. An example of model unit-level strategies (UMKC) demonstrates that units were asked to provide actions and measures in relation to the planning goals. Another plan (Oregon State) contained clear statements as to who was accountable, but there was no indication of target dates for elements of the plan. Dr. Prater showed a revision of this plan to which he had added the needed dates.

The Plan Review Subcommittee believes that the best plans include an assessment component. An example from Purdue showed that growth and progress could be tracked and updated yearly.

Dr. Prater then presented the subcommittee's recommendations:

- o The Ball State plan should recognize the university's context. While Ball State's plan can borrow effective elements from other plans, no other single institution's strategic plan can be used as a "template."
- o Ball State's plan should be comprised of the following sections/components: vision statement, mission statement, values, goals, objectives, implementation, and assessment.
- o If it is determined that BSU needs a more "complete" plan, then the plan should clearly identify and describe its niche in the vision, mission, and values sections. It should also clearly articulate goals and objectives in relation to that niche.
- o If BSU needs a more "complete" plan, then it should clearly describe strategies and actions for implementation in terms of target outcomes and accountabilities in relation to all relevant levels of the university.
- o If BSU needs a more "complete" plan, it should clearly describe a procedure for assessment in terms of baselines, targets, and time lines.

Dr. Prater then referred to an addendum of "Findings and Suggestions" that he had distributed. The question addressed was: How "complete" (action-oriented) is Ball State's Strategic Plan?

- o The subcommittee members found that Ball State's plan does have the components of Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals. However, while the Vision, Mission, and Values are brief and mostly positive in voice and the Goals well organized, no target audience is cited in the Vision; a niche is not specifically indicated in the Mission; the Values terminology is hard to find within the Goals; and only the technology goal (Goal V) seems to reflect directly a selected niche. Further, Goal #2 seems to be more of a Values statement.
- o The subcommittee raised questions about the "completeness" of the Objectives, Implementation Plan, and Assessment Plan. The sub-goals are not aligned to individual units; operating principles serve as "implementation parameters" but do not indicate steps, time lines, and/or procedures for achieving goals or sub-goals; and some "measures" are difficult to evaluate in concrete, quantifiable terms.
- o The subcommittee found that a Strategies component is incomplete: there is no clear indication of specific actions to be taken in pursuit of goals.

Dr. Hater considered the presentation with the comment that the best plans reviewed were worked on over time.

They are "working documents" that can be continually updated as needs within the institution change.

The task force commended the subcommittee for its hard work and excellent presentation. In the discussion that followed, individuals made the following comments:

- o Perhaps the subcommittee should become a "quality control group" to make sure that ideas proposed are on target for clearer objectives in the new Strategic Plan.
- o When individual units were asked to report during the last planning cycle, some of their plans were not connected to the university's plan and they were not strategic. The temptation was to "tinker" with their own plan, and sometimes their reports became an annual summary of activities within the unit.
- o The best approach to planning seems to be "top-down" first and then "bottom-up."
- o Perhaps individual units should see the subcommittee's presentation as an aid to their own planning and assessment.
- o There is a need to re-assess the terminology for the values named under the Mission statement in the current plan.

Provost Pitts requested that the subcommittee distribute a list of web sites reviewed. Task force members can then go to these sites for additional information.

SWOT Analysis–Frank Sabatine:

Dr. Sabatine asked the task force to analyze the information in his report on Distance Education and the two presentations by Vice President Kinghorn. In the ensuing discussion, the following observations were made by individual task force members:

- o The fact that we are centrally budgeted is an opportunity. We are therefore able to undertake cross-discipline initiatives such as Freshman Connections.
- o We have a strength but more opportunity in distance education. It is agreed that the market is there, but Ball State's distance education could become a weakness if we cannot provide student services.
- o A weakness is that we are under capacity for asynchronous education, especially in graduate education.
- o The Internet is competing with our MBA program. Presently the College wishes to maintain live video with site-based education.
- o Strengths are our initiatives in education and economic development.
- o The quality of correspondence courses may be a weakness.
- o Opportunities may exist for increased Summer School enrollment if we are willing to make it more

accessible for students through technology. Tuition rates are a threat in that students often choose to go somewhere else where summer fees are lower.

- o A threat is that our status could change from "a growing campus" to "a mature campus" with financial loss as a result.
- o An opportunity could be to use graduate assistants to help with undergraduate teaching in on-line and prison programs.

Provost Pitts asked that each task force member choose five items from each category (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) in the updated SWOT analysis for discussion at the April 1st meeting. It will be held in the Forum Room, 7:30-9:00 a.m. The entire time will be spent on the SWOT discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

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