

Upper Iowa University
Strategic Planning

Curricular
Report, Public Comments & Response

Committee members:

John Andersen

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Ed Ogle (chair)

Strategic Planning for Curricular Policy and Programmatic Issues Committee Report

An AQIP Team including several members of the Residential University faculty, the Dean of the Extended University and a full time Extended University academic advisor recently completed a thorough review of the University's General Education program, and its recommendations were approved by both the faculty and the administration in April, 2007. The revised system is currently being assimilated into the overall University curriculum. The present committee, having examined the new structure, believes that the General Education's new design is congruent with the University's newly revised mission to develop global citizens; that it, in fact, seems to anticipate the revised mission. Of course there may be additional competencies relevant to the University's efforts to develop global citizenship, and the committee assumes that the new system is fluid enough to accommodate phylogeny.

In June, 2007, another University committee, acting under the direction of the Strategic Planning Group, independently arrived at a list of competencies and capabilities it perceived as essential to full global citizenship. That list is remarkably similar to the one arrived at by the AQIP Team as it fashioned its system of Tasks which students would complete as they worked their way through the General Education. Both attach high value to communication and problem solving skills, cultural sensitivity and aesthetic sophistication, and technological competence.

For the sake of comparison, the present committee has also looked at a global citizenship matrix prepared by a University of Washington task force laboring under a similar mandate. Upper Iowa's AQIP and Strategic groups' conclusions differ more from the Washington group's than from each other's, in particular with regard to communication and problem solving skills. The committee endorses Upper Iowa's approach, and suggests that time and assessment will determine what further modifications may be appropriate at some future time.

It is worth noting that, in anticipation of a general academic swing toward the idea of global citizenship, Upper Iowa began offering General Education coursework in cultural anthropology in 2001, for the first time in a generation; at the same time, the University approved the creation of a tenure track faculty position in that area. The General Education is, in brief, soundly in accordance with the University's Mission Statement.

On the other hand, there is little in Upper Iowa's major degree and graduate programs that speaks to or encourages the development of a global citizenry. A few elective courses in a scattering of programs address the concept (e.g. BA 424 International Marketing, COMM 221 Intercultural Communication), but there seems little consideration given among majors to incorporate into or even to directly acknowledge in the curricula the overarching goal of global citizenship.

The members of the present committee, whose academic degrees represent the fields of anthropology, education and English, do not believe that they are in position either of

expertise or of authority to mandate curriculum reform across the majors, let alone to determine what global citizenship means with respect to a major in chemistry, accounting or, indeed, any of the other 35 majors available across the University. They do, however, believe that the question should be examined in view of the University's mission.

Too, committee members understand that the inclusion of global citizenship has already involved new coursework and a new tenure track faculty line in the General Education. To incorporate the same into the majors may well involve new coursework, different program configuration, more faculty positions and a wider variety of out-of-classroom experiences (including foreign travel) for students. The cost of implementing these potential changes is unknown, and this committee declines to speculate on the matter.

Accordingly, this committee recommends the following:

1. The University should maintain its momentum toward General Education reform by continuing implementation of the system as recommended by the AQIP Team and approved by the faculty and administration in April, 2007;
2. The University should empower a new AQIP Team to study the impact of Upper Iowa's mission upon the academic majors and graduate programs, and to make appropriate recommendations to the faculty and administration. This Team should involve faculty members representing each of the University's academic divisions; it should include both graduate and undergraduate faculty, and faculty teaching in the Extended University as well as those in the Residential University.

CURRICULAR TEAM REPORT COMMENTS

Comment 1: Continued work on establishing our identity/brand

Hi folks! This is a great effort by UIU, and I commend everyone for this Strategic Planning commitment. My main point is: " in light of continued workplace demands, and our ever-changing global community, UIU will need to consider 'new' international travel-based courses to supplement what we already are offering, in addition to innovative, and cutting-edge programs/courses that are based on feasibility, and workplace needs assessments! Employees in the Madison area(capitol of Wisconsin)are always looking for such courses, and/or programs, and if we can provide them with these offerings, we will continue to distinguish ourselves from our competitors, thus enhancing sustainable competitive advantage." Thank you!

Alan Capelle

Comment 2: Welcome message

Dear Colleagues:

Curricular team members include Dr. Linda Haines, Dr. John Andersen, Dr. Doug McReynolds, and me. We welcome comments and/or questions that relate to curricular issues as we continue to develop elements of our strategic plan. We will review and thoughtfully consider all comments. You should expect to receive a response to your message after the 30-day comment period closes.

Regards,

Ed Ogle

Comment 3: 03 October 2007

While I would like to “engage in a campus-wide dialog” as requested by Dr. Walker, I note that these pages are accessible to the general public.

Although we have nothing to hide, this dialogue may prove to be more dynamic and effective if taken off-line. While the general public can be privy to the process itself, would it not better serve the university to keep the content at this point within the university community?

I submit this comment with the utmost respect for our historic values and institutional heritage.

DSerra

Comment 4: Commendations, Reflections, and a Recommendation/Question

First, I want to commend the Board of Trustees and the University Administration for their selection of this particular strategic planning process. I am most appreciative of the emphasis on the “ever-widening circle of participants” and holding “recursiveness” as a planning value. Too often, strategic planning processes are not broadly based enough and there’s a mentality present that says “once we’ve decided something, it stays decided; there’s no going back to reconsider.” In addition to valuing wide participation and having a willingness to “go back,” if necessary, in light of new developments or changed understandings, I want to thank the Board and Administration for the way in which the work has been accomplished up to this point. Re-examining the mission and vision statements was an important step and using key phrases in those statements was a productive way of structuring the SWOT analyses as the various position papers were initially developed. You’ve provided us with a solid foundation for carrying on the work that lies ahead.

Second (almost as an aside), I want to comment that if others are like me, they don’t really have a very deep understanding of Upper Iowa University’s already rather sizable global “footprint.” Perhaps because I’ve lived in Iowa my entire life, mostly in the eastern half of Iowa, my conception of UIU was that it was a small college in a small town, in a corner of the state, off the beaten track. I make this comment to suggest that one of the tasks that we will need to undertake will be to help others appreciate just how well positioned Upper Iowa University is to make the claim that we are developing global citizens. A brief review of current literature of higher education reveals that many institutions are on a “global citizenship” track; they are seeking to re-invent themselves as preparing “global citizens.” We are truly several steps ahead of the pack, so to speak, because of our world-wide institutional presence. I can imagine that even small things, for example, like listing the various centers on our stationery, is one way to begin to communicate about our place in the world. Also, it was not until I served on the AQIP Gen Ed Assessment Committee that UIU’s size became clearer to me when we talked about the number of sections of general education courses that are offered worldwide through UIU (and thus needed to be included in our assessment activities). Communicating this kind of information also may be a necessary step to take to help people comprehend that we are so much more than a small college located in a small town in Iowa, a small state in the midwest.

I am most interested, at this time, in the “curricular” area. I am very much aware that there’s a great amount of challenging work to be undertaken in a very short amount of time, and in a very dynamic environment. Based on the strategic plan recommendations to date, it looks as though the faculty will be generally responsible for engaging in the work that relates to the institution’s curriculum, and that is as it should be. Also, no doubt, faculty members will be expected to provide assistance in other areas as well. That said, my concern has to do with time and capacity. I am a part-time faculty member at this point. I was full-time last year and because of that experience, I am much more aware

of the amount of work that is normally expected of full-time faculty. Prior to serving as an UIU faculty member, I was a high school principal for 26 years. I normally worked 60-80 hours per week. I found that I was working almost an equivalent amount of time last year, and I wasn't even in a position to have much responsibility, in terms of leadership in the various committees on which I served. My sense is that faculty members may find the amount of increased work to be very challenging and possibly very time consuming, if the work is to be at the level of quality that it needs to be, in order to serve well the long-term interests of the University. Most faculty members already had full loads before the strategic planning process began. They were rather fully engaged in the ordinary tasks involved in university teaching and academic governance. Now an incredibly important and necessary burden has been added to their loads that will require even more careful and thoughtful consideration. Extra-ordinary effort will be required to work together and to communicate in ways, perhaps, that have not been used before. Somehow (and I am not sure how), it looks as though faculty members will need to make time to perform these new and necessary responsibilities. Time is the crucial issue. Do we have the capacity to add more to faculty loads? There is more to do by a long shot than there is time in which to do it.

I wonder, therefore, whether the University needs to think a little differently about how to get some of the initial central tasks accomplished. Based on the recommendations that have been made with respect to curriculum, likely there will be a need to discover (or invent) ways to incorporate the idea of "global citizen" and "global citizenship" in academic coursework in all of the divisions. It seems to me that the University may wish to consider the possibility of outsourcing some of the initial curricular organizational tasks. Since there is so much activity currently occurring regarding the development of "global citizens" in a wide variety of institutions, I wonder whether some consulting groups have been established to help institutions identify organizational structures for approaching and executing the task of transforming curricula. Ideally, UIU could authorize the employment of such a consulting group to assist the faculty in structuring the overall project. No doubt, there is a need for some involvement of faculty in the oversight of the consulting group. However, one would hope that much "wheel spinning" and much "re-invention of the wheel" would be avoided, if a knowledgeable outsource worked with the UIU faculty to identify an approach (or approaches) to curricular transformation that could fit our organizational structure and needs. Further, it seems to me, there will be lots of work for faculty members to undertake once an overall approach is approved. Even then, perhaps, additional outsource assistance could be acquired. My concern is that if UIU does not allow at least some of the work to be outsourced, resistance to change will be unnecessarily present. It may be present merely because there isn't enough time available among current faculty members to do the work at a level of quality that would be normally expected and thus there would be opposition to engage in the work until we would have the capacity to perform the work as it should be performed. Should we consider looking to groups such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) and the American Council on Education (ACE) for some initial assistance in the work that lies ahead of us?

John Andersen

Comment 5: The Library

Others have noted the general lack of support to aid our academic programs as well as curricular support programs. As far as I know, no one has yet asked where the Library fits into all of this. Our recent efforts to unify the university and to proceed towards a flat global campus so far seem to have not included the Library. Under the new model where the Library provides curricular support for the entire university, funding, staffing and technology issues are all going to have to be examined.

Jeff Butikofer, Chair, Library Committee

Comment 6: Curricular Policy and Programs

This area should be at the heart of the strategic planning process. This is our CORE BUSINESS. It is what we do. It is what we are.

If we are serious, there is substantive work to be done in this area. That work needs to be underway before the other areas can advance too far -- because they must support the academic achievement of students. I think it will take more than an AQIP team to study and revise the majors and graduate programs to inculcate the mission across the university's academic offerings. It will take EVERYONE. Plus some people that don't even work here yet. (And maybe a few consultants -- but use them carefully, as they get to go home and do not have to live the future at UIU.)

Other portions of the strategic planning team provided at least wish lists that demonstrate they anticipate costs associated with changes to fulfill the mission. UIU must invest in its academic infrastructure (faculty, support staff, the library (collections, journals, informatics), and instrumentation and specialized equipment, among other things). I fear that if we wait too long to speculate on the costs of development, change and enhancements in curriculum, it may be assumed that there are no additional costs anticipated. This would be a grave mistake.

K. McCarville

END OF CURRICULAR COMMENTS

Curricular Team

Response to Public Comments

The Curriculum Subcommittee found that the commentators' comments reflect as much as anything the university community's willingness to participate in curriculum reform. That so many commentators addressed curricular issues either directly or in more general response to the larger combination of committee reports suggests an engaged and forward looking community and, further, promises an expectation of real strategic planning followed by real implementation.

The comments seem to develop three distinct themes. First there is concern that the current plan is really not a plan at all; that it appears to be without clearly defined goals, outcomes, strategies, and so on. Second, while there is agreement that the faculty is and should be responsible for establishing these goals, outcomes, strategies, and so on, the current situation at Upper Iowa University is that most individual faculty members are already assigned more teaching and governance responsibilities than their counterparts at peer institutions; to expect faculty to embrace the responsibility of strategic planning without consideration of their current assignments and responsibilities is to invite potential gridlock and resistance even while such faculty may value the potential benefits of an effective strategic plan. Finally, there were comments suggesting some of the potential parameters of a final plan.

It is important to keep in mind at this point that the "public commentary" stage has been scheduled fairly early in the Strategic Planning Process in order to get a sense of the perceptions of others about the tentative direction in which UIU is headed. As we all know, and are coming to understand at even deeper levels, UIU is a complex global educational institution that has chosen to undertake two monumental tasks simultaneously—to reconfigure its overall organizational structure to result in what has been called "one flat seamless global campus" and to reconfigure, if necessary, its curriculum so that it can more effectively prepare global citizens who can function productively in the 21st century.

Upper Iowa is only at the beginning of the strategic planning process. The subcommittee sees the following as a useful outline for proceeding:

Vision Statement:

Upper Iowa University will be recognized and respected as an exceptional and ascending institution of higher learning, developing global citizens who become lifelong learners prepared for leadership within society.

Step One--integration of existing expectations into the strategic plan to develop global citizens

Mandate-- Increase student populations at all locations

1. Define the expected growth in students for individual locations RU/EU/IU

2. Identify the student to faculty ratio goal for all locations
 - A. Define the ideal faculty workload for full-time and part-time instructors
 1. Define the number of full-time and part-time instructors needed—RU
 2. Define the number of full-time instructors needed-- EU
 3. Define the number of full-time instructors needed-- IU
 - B. Identify where current student populations indicate a need for more faculty
 - C. Identify the means to fund additional faculty
3. Identify the infrastructure changes needed to support growth
 - A. Define the goal ratio of students to staff for Registrar’s Office
 - B. Define the goal ratio of students to staff for the Business Office
 - C. Define the goal ratio of students to staff for the Financial Aid Office
 - D. Define the goal ratio of students to staff for the IT Office
4. Identify the facilities changes needed to support growth
 - A. RU classrooms, labs, living and recreation facilities, library, offices
 - B. EU classrooms, labs, offices
 - C. IU classrooms, labs, offices

Step Two—make changes to implement the UIU vision to develop global citizens

Mandate—Revise existing curriculum to incorporate the development of global citizens

1. Use existing faculty and staff to form an AQIP team to align the majors across the University based on recognized standards in each academic area and encompassing the goal of developing global citizens
 - A. Identify new faculty and staff positions necessary to support mandate
 - B. Develop a schedule to search and hire for positions identified
2. Implement strategy for every student to have a global citizenship experience

Mandate—Identify new areas of curricular offerings to maximize the development of global citizens

1. Hire consultants to help focus efforts to identify new programs and opportunities
2. Develop a program development fund to support research and development of new program offerings
3. Design a project planning tool to be used to implement new programs
4. Develop an office of institutional research and grant writing to identify sources of funding for new and existing programs

Step Three—plan for the future

Mandate—Track changes in the educational landscape

1. Identify an AQIP team whose task is to study predictions relevant to the University
2. Define a mechanism to bring identified opportunities to University stakeholders.

Challenges

Accomplishing the goals identified in this outline does not appear to be reasonably likely under the university’s current academic structure. Some individual should be entrusted

with overall responsibility for Upper Iowa's academic program, and that person should not be burdened with management of non-curricular aspects of the residential, extended or international campus. At the same time, faculty should be compensated for ongoing participation in the planning process.

Too, the subcommittee itself needs to be largely expanded to include representative faculty from each academic division as well as from the extended and international components of the university.

Finally, Upper Iowa University has a history of defining and implementing new majors based on short term marketing and athletics recruiting goals, and then eliminating those majors during the next enrollment contraction period, or letting them atrophy during periods of economic stress. This history suggests a nimble curriculum, but a remarkably unstable one. For example, the 1977 university catalogue identifies 27 majors serviced by a full time faculty of 49, for a ratio of 1.81 faculty members per major. Ten years later, 30 faculty were responsible for just 16 majors (1.88). By 1997, there were again 27 majors listed in the catalogue, but 18 of them—two thirds—were new since 1977, and all 27 were serviced by a full time faculty which still numbered 30, for a ratio of 1.11 faculty members per major. The 2007 Residential University catalogue lists a whopping 35 majors, 14 of which were not available as recently as 1997 (and only eight of which had persisted from 1977), and 35 full time faculty members; the faculty-to-major ratio had dropped to 1.00. Strategic planning should continue to foster the university's ability to react quickly to market demands, but there is little that is "strategic" about reinventing oneself every time the wind changes. The planning process must support and enhance those major programs which are the university's foundation and upon which its stability depends; it is, after all, stability which determines credibility.