

***Affirming the Promise:
A Bridge to a Third Decade of Excellence in the Liberal Arts
FY 2008-2010***

**University Strategic Plan, FY 2008-2010
Approved by Truman Board of Governors
June 15, 2007**

Executive Summary

As Truman State University enters the third decade of its mission as a public liberal arts and sciences university, we look back on more than 20 years of extraordinary accomplishment. Truman is recognized regionally and nationally as a very strong, master's level institution – one of the best in the public sector – as well as an outstanding public liberal arts and sciences university on par with the best in the nation.

As we look to the future, our vision is to be the nation's premier public liberal arts and sciences university. In the words of our 2002 University Plan Update, we will continue to develop an academic community that provides its students "... *financial access* to a superior educational experience that is rooted in the liberal arts tradition and that fosters nationally competitive learning outcomes in its graduates." In this new plan Truman not only reaffirms its commitment to this ambitious objective but also resolves to extend its reach to provide our students the knowledge and experiences necessary to become "creative, socially responsible leaders and engaged world citizens" who will be able to deal successfully with global challenges in a future world that we can barely imagine today.

In developing a plan to realize this dream, it is tempting to rely on strategies and techniques that have produced such strong results in the recent past. While it is essential that we retain our core values and our strong focus on students, student-learning, and the liberal arts mission, it is also clear that the external environment has changed significantly over the years and is much more volatile and less supportive than in the past. In order to be successful in the future, Truman must adjust to the changing environment. For this reason *the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee is convinced that Truman must rethink its curricular and co-curricular arrangements and embrace substantive changes that will impact how faculty and staff interact with each other and our students, how faculty and staff accomplish their work and are rewarded, and how students engage the curriculum.* The common thread in these considerations should be the creation of an institution that is much more distinctive and that prepares agile, life-long learners who will live their adult lives in a century of profound change that is likely to severely test our democratic institutions.

Our overarching strategy for attaining our vision to be the nation's premier public liberal arts and sciences university is the following:

Truman will become a more learning-centered institution. It will challenge its students, teacher-scholars, and staff to develop their personal and intellectual talents to the fullest, and it will use the most effective and innovative practices to produce graduates from all segments of society who will be creative, socially responsible leaders and engaged world citizens.

In this context, the planning committee has developed the following statement that defines those characteristics that Truman will develop in its students to help them become “creative, socially responsible leaders and engaged world citizens.” It should be noted that this list has direct implications for all faculty and staff because we are responsible for modeling these characteristics for our students if they are to attain them.

Truman graduates are creative, socially responsible leaders and engaged world citizens. They are responsible, informed, and compassionate. Upon graduation, they will have the tools and characteristics that will enable them to be active, successful participants in their worlds. They will be known to:

- * *Ask questions and passionately seek knowledge;*
- * *Strive for personal integrity and professional excellence;*
- * *Demonstrate courageous, visionary, and service-oriented leadership;*
- * *Act ethically, responsibly, and with reflective judgment;*
- * *Appreciate ambiguity and thrive in unfamiliar, rapidly changing situations;*
- * *Understand and articulate well-reasoned arguments;*
- * *Welcome and value new and diverse perspectives;*
- * *Live emotionally and physically healthy lives; and*
- * *Give generously of their time, talents, and financial resources to causes in which they believe.*

The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee believes that these educational characteristics will produce graduates prepared for the challenges of the 21st Century. But in order to accomplish these objectives Truman must rethink much of what it takes for granted today. The entire curriculum must become more attractive for all students and should accommodate (1) a broader range of common core experiences that extend from the freshman year through the senior year, (2) significant co-curricular experiences that take the student beyond the classroom, and (3) study in depth in a major.

Our objective in highlighting these student characteristics is to enhance overall student learning. In order to accomplish this objective with the resources that can be reasonably expected, innovative changes must be adopted in (1) faculty and student workloads, *e.g.*, the four-course student load and the teacher-scholar faculty model, (2) curricular requirements, and (3) the academic calendar. The Planning Committee believes in particular that

implementation of a formal teacher-scholar model for faculty and new curricular requirements will be key components of this transformation as will changes to the professional expectations, incentives, and rewards for both faculty and staff.

At the same time, Truman must continue to refine and improve ongoing, long-term practices – like its comprehensive assessment program and prudent fiscal management practices to assure affordability – that have distinguished it in the past and have contributed to its current success. Indeed, at a time when the current political climate at both the state and national levels is characterized by calls for more performance accountability and increased financial access, Truman’s historical strengths in these areas are major assets. This University remains committed to upholding its long-standing promise to provide its students “Degrees with Integrity.”

The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee envisions a comprehensive review of the University, its operation, and the services it provides. To accomplish this task, the Committee has identified the following six goals, each of which is associated with selected initiatives that will be implemented over the next three to five years.

- 1. Develop a premier liberal arts and sciences curriculum and exemplary approaches to teaching and learning that ensures graduates who are nationally-competitive.*
- 2. Create a total educational experience for students that seamlessly combines the curriculum and the co-curriculum in a collegiate residential environment.*
- 3. Recruit, retain, and graduate an academically talented, diverse student body that meets the CBHE's expectations for a highly selective university.*
- 4. Recruit, support, and develop an outstanding, diverse faculty of teacher-scholars and a talented, diverse staff.*
- 5. Assure the most efficient and effective use of resources to support Truman's learning-centered mission.*
- 6. Build increased support among all external constituencies for the successful attainment of Truman's vision.*

As a public institution with limited resources, we can accomplish this ambitious agenda only by maintaining a tight focus on our mission, choosing carefully among multiple options, and displaying a willingness to innovate and experiment. Truman has a strong record for initiating and digesting significant intentional change, but one of our collective challenges will be to discern how to build on past successes while moving the institution forward in a volatile, highly competitive environment where once useful solutions may no longer be as distinctive or as effective. Consequently, the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee believes that the actions outlined in this plan should be approached both with a sense of urgency to address pressing institutional needs and with a sense of excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead for us to serve our students and the citizens of Missouri in even better and more creative ways.

Truman State University Strategic Plan
Approved by Truman Board of Governors
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Vision: *Truman will be America's premier public liberal arts and sciences university.*

Overarching Strategy for Attaining Vision: *Truman will become a more learning-centered institution. It will challenge its students, teacher-scholars, and staff to develop their personal and intellectual talents to the fullest, and it will use the most effective and innovative practices to produce graduates from all segments of society who will be creative, socially responsible leaders and engaged world citizens.*

GOAL ONE: Develop a premier liberal arts and sciences curriculum and exemplary approaches to teaching and learning that ensure graduates who are nationally competitive.

- a) Revise learning outcomes for majors and the general education curriculum to align them with the desired characteristics of Truman graduates, Truman's core values, and a growing national consensus regarding learning expectations for the 21st Century.
- b) Design an exemplary liberal arts and sciences curriculum that is learning-centered, includes nationally-competitive major programs, accommodates significantly increased student participation in transformative learning opportunities such as study abroad, internships, service learning, and undergraduate research or creative activity, and encourages creative approaches to teaching and learning.
- c) Create more opportunities for students to engage in undergraduate research or creative activity where projects may extend beyond the traditional semester and students make a meaningful contribution to the research or creative endeavor.
- d) Develop an alternative transcript organized by learning outcomes that illustrates how students have achieved these outcomes.
- e) Upon completion of Truman's new curriculum, review and refine as appropriate Truman's comprehensive assessment plan to ensure its alignment with the new curriculum and best practices nationally.

GOAL TWO: Create a total educational experience for students that seamlessly combines the curriculum and the co-curriculum in a collegiate residential environment.

- a) Create a model first-year program and an exemplary living-learning environment for all students.

- b) Further student growth and development by increasing learning-focused student interaction with faculty and staff beyond the classroom.
- c) Develop policies, rewards, and support services for community-based research, service learning, volunteerism, and internships.
- d) Reexamine the scholarship work/service experience, including assessing the potential educational benefits and feasibility of providing a service requirement for all students.
- e) Enhance the liberal arts culture of the University by expanding the availability of significant scholarly and cultural events, *e.g.*, restoration of the Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program.
- f) Implement a plan to develop the attitudes and skills necessary for Truman students to become effective, engaged world citizens and socially responsible leaders.

GOAL THREE: Recruit, retain, and graduate an academically talented, diverse student body that meets the CBHE's expectations for a highly selective university.

- a) Develop an enrollment management plan that determines the optimal size of the university, including appropriate targets for new freshmen, transfers, graduate, and international students, and incorporates a process to regularly review the enrollment targets and realistic sizes of all academic programs.
- b) Assess and revise financial aid policies to improve student yield and increase net tuition revenues.
- c) Recruit, support, and graduate more historically underrepresented students at Truman, increasing the total to at least 10 percent of the student body.
- d) Increase transfer student enrollment and improve transfer success through enhanced transition efforts.
- e) Design and establish a student support program to enhance student success, including an early warning system to identify students who are struggling academically.

GOAL FOUR: Recruit, support, and develop an outstanding, diverse faculty of teacher-scholars and a talented, diverse staff.

- a) Align faculty roles, responsibilities, and reward structures to support teacher-scholars.
- b) Revise faculty recruitment, promotion, and tenure policies and expectations to ensure equity across and within the disciplines and to align faculty incentive structures to support teacher-scholars.
- c) Develop and implement a plan to ensure that faculty salaries and benefits are competitive in order to recruit and retain highly qualified teacher-scholars.

- d) Establish and maintain a classification system for staff that clarifies job responsibilities, provides opportunities for advancement, and aligns total compensation to ensure competitiveness within appropriate markets.
- e) Develop a plan to recruit faculty and staff that ensures the most diverse and highly qualified University community possible.

GOAL FIVE: Assure the most efficient and effective use of resources to support Truman's learning-centered mission.

- a) Ensure all administrative offices develop continuous improvement plans that include appropriate performance measures to document progress and foster administrative efficiency.
- b) Review, and adjust where appropriate, Truman's administrative structures and processes to respond to a changing environment while assuring alignment with its learning-centered vision and collaborative culture.
- c) Utilize information technology to provide increased support for University operations, with emphasis on support and technology that enhance teaching and learning (*e.g.*, increased training opportunities and improved classroom technology design and support).
- d) Establish a standing strategic planning committee charged with the responsibility to review the implementation of the University Strategic Plan and recommend additions and/or changes each year.
- e) Optimize use of facilities through improved logistical management and an entrepreneurial program of summer camps and conferences.

GOAL SIX: Build increased support among all external constituencies for the successful attainment of Truman's vision.

- a) Conduct a comprehensive fund-raising campaign to increase private support from alumni and friends to provide the margin of excellence Truman needs to serve its students well.
- b) Significantly increase grant applications and total funding from external grant sources to supplement state resources.
- c) Assess and address state and national educational needs to guide development of new mission-appropriate programs and services.
- d) Forge closer links and increased collaboration with Kirksville and the surrounding region to address unmet needs as appropriate and to increase participation in University activities.
- e) Develop and implement a strengthened communication system with the state and federal governments as well as alumni and friends.