

Francis Marion University Strategic Plan

Background

The University's Strategic Plan is one of five planning processes that address the eleven Planning Assumptions developed in 2000 and subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees. Taken together these processes comprise the major planning activities of the University. In addition to this Strategic Plan, the other major plans include the Facilities Master Plan, the Accreditation Plan, the Development Plan (Capital Campaign) and the Technology Enhancement Plan.

This University Strategic Plan has been developed collaboratively over several years with significant input from the community, (during the community input phase), the faculties of the School of Business, the School of Education, and the College of Liberal Arts, (by means of their respective strategic plans), and overseen by the Strategic Planning Workgroup. The procedures followed in this strategic planning process were patterned after those advocated in *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases* (David, 2001). While the overall process included a review of the University's mission, analysis of external threats and opportunities, as well as a review of internal strengths and weaknesses; what appears here are the University objectives and strategies derived from those reviews arranged so as to be aligned with the planning assumptions.

11 Planning Assumptions

1. Academic Focus

Francis Marion University is a public, co-educational institution offering students a strong liberal arts foundation and advanced education in academic disciplines and professions.

2. Student Body

While maintaining its commitment to educating students from the Pee Dee region, Francis Marion University must incrementally increase its enrollment from the remainder of South Carolina, nationally and internationally.

3. Resources

Appreciable resource growth for Francis Marion University will be dependent on (1) increasing student enrollment and retention, and (2) increasing financial support from the private sector.

4. Technology

The University must develop an institution-wide technology planning process that addresses future technology needs of students, faculty, staff and administrative functions.

5. Image

Francis Marion University must communicate the image of an institution that provides quality educational opportunities and is committed to academic rigor through excellence in teaching.

6. Athletics

Francis Marion University's athletic programs must engender greater community and campus interest while developing greater reliance upon community support.

7. Diversity

Francis Marion must maintain the diversity of its students with regard to race and gender and achieve greater diversity in the hiring and promotion of faculty and staff.

8. Faculty, Staff and Administrative development

Recognizing that Francis Marion University's faculty and staff are its most important and enduring assets, the University must cultivate plans for individual career growth and development of its employees.

9. Physical Campus

Francis Marion University must commit the resources for maintenance of its physical facilities to preserve the beauty and to enhance the viability of the campus.

10. Community Relations

Francis Marion University must strive to identify, understand and accommodate the needs of its various constituencies.

11. Campus Culture

Francis Marion University's future success depends upon the cooperation and cohesion of the faculty, staff, administration and students in collectively addressing needs and supporting its mission.

University Objectives (*in Bold*) with Strategies (*non Bold*) aligned with Planning Assumptions (*numbered in italics*):

I. Maintain and expand quality academic programs and maintain academic accreditations as indicators of program quality. *1., 5.*

- a. Continue the University Accreditation Committee's supervision of accreditation efforts.
- b. Regularly evaluate the University's general education program.
- c. Study the feasibility of additional programs.
- d. Familiarize faculty with accreditation standards and procedures.

II. Improve student academic success rates. *2., 1., 5.*

- a. Collaborate with state technical colleges and engage in articulation agreements to ensure that transfer courses, which meet FMU general education requirements, are comparable to FMU courses.
- b. Coordinate the existing efforts of academic areas to work with local schools.
 - i. Coordinate Sandhills Regional Science Fair, Math Tournament, Modern Language competition, etc.
 - ii. Involve academic disciplines in enhancement of school instruction
 - iii. Encourage qualified liberal arts students to pursue secondary education careers.

- c. Establish formal systems designed to improve graduation rates
 - i. Raise admission standards while continuing to ensure educational access for students in the Pee Dee.
 - ii. Expand tutoring services.
- d. Engage in practices which support high acceptance rates into professional schools in medicine, dentistry, law, and graduate programs.
- e. Provide for the needs of international students.

III. **Continue to build an excellent faculty.** 8., 7.

- a. Continue to recruit faculty with excellent teaching skills.
- b. Continue to explore opportunities for recruiting minority faculty.
- c. Continue the support/mentor system for new faculty.
- d. Create a program to fund graduate degrees by minority students who return to the University for a specified term.
 - i. Seek funding from governmental programs and charitable organizations.
 - ii. Establish a donor program with local minority organizations
- e. Raise faculty salaries.
- f. Continue to address salary compression and discrepancies in compensation.

IV. **Increase opportunities for all students and faculty to become aware of multicultural and global issues and to have international study/employment opportunities.** 2., 1.

- a. Enhance International Studies curriculum
- b. Develop internship opportunities in other countries.
- c. Promote and expand international exchange programs.
- d. Increase interaction between U.S. and international students.

V. **Develop the technology on campus to address future needs of students, faculty, staff and administrators.** 4.

- a. Provide students with more opportunities to develop technological skills for a global economy.
- b. Develop the technology resources of the campus through continuous revisions of the Technology Enhancement Plan.

VI. **Maintain investments in information resources and educational support services.**

- a. Continue adequate funding for and updating of library resources.
- b. Continue adequate funding for and updating of the Media Center, Writing Center, and Tutoring Center and other support units.

VII. **Increase student enrollment and retention** 2., 1., 11.

- a. Work with Pee Dee area high schools to ensure that graduates are prepared for higher education.
- b. Expand curricular offerings attractive to non-traditional students and retirees.

- c. Consider alternative delivery systems for instruction.
 - d. Ensure affordability of tuition and fees in order to maintain the University's focus on access and equity.
 - e. Provide a vibrant campus life through a variety of cultural and recreational events.
- VIII. **Increase external funding.** *3., 1.*
- a. Expand scholarship opportunities for top academic students.
 - b. Expand external funding for faculty research and development
 - i. Develop a proactive Grants Office
 - ii. Develop a system to coordinate new funding efforts and initiatives across disciplines.
 - c. Increase funding for the Francis Marion University Foundation.
 - d. Solicit more support and assistance from alumni.
- IX. **Increase opportunities for student involvement within the business, governmental, and public organizations within the local community.** *10.,*
- a. Coordinate efforts by faculty who plan, arrange, and supervise internships.
 - b. Coordinate efforts to establish cooperative work-study programs within the community.
- X. **Emphasize career planning and job placement services for all students of the University.** *2., 11.*
- a. Evaluate effectiveness of current program.
 - b. Develop formal job placement relationships with local business, governmental and public organizations.
 - c. Work with the Alumni Office to develop a systematic alumni tracking system.
- XI. **Raise the quality, diversity and visibility of athletic programs supported by the community.** *6., 5., 10.*
- a. Increase the attendance at home sports events.
 - b. Continue to explore opportunities for recruiting minority coaches.
 - c. Maintain high academic performance by student athletes.
 - d. Review appropriateness of divisional classifications.
- XII. **Develop the physical facilities, natural resources and infrastructure of the campus.** *9., 11.*
- a. Continue to plan and develop on-campus housing.
 - b. Continue to develop and enhance the campus in a manner that will increase student involvement in campus life.
 - c. Engage in renovation, construction and modification of campus facilities including Founders Hall and Cauthen Educational Media Center.
- XIII. **Enhance the University's image through an aggressive, focused marketing campaign.** *5.*

- a. Maintain and improve national status in terms of accreditation, success of graduates and faculty achievement.
- b. Publicize the advantages of post-secondary liberal arts, business and education degrees.
- c. Increase publicity of the successes of the University's students, alumni and faculty.
- d. Cooperate with industrial, business, healthcare and community non-profit organizations to understand and respond to their needs and concerns.
- e. Continue to plan and market campus activities so as to attract the public to the University's campus.

REFERENCE

David, Fred R., (2001) *Strategic management: Concepts and cases*. (Eighth Edition). Prentice Hall. ISBN 0-13-026995-6.

Approved by General Faculty, April 11, 2006