

Academic Plan Framework Development

December 2016

Plan Development Process:

An update of our 2006 Academic Plan was initiated in the 2015-16 academic year, modeled after the university planning process that identified our strategic priorities in 2012. This process takes a shorter planning horizon and identifies initiatives within four durable themes that can be accomplished in a 2-3 year window. As initiatives are completed, new ones within the themes will be added so that academic strategic planning ends up being ongoing rather than once every 5-7 years. Rather than start from scratch, we started with a set of about 50 initiatives that were identified through a series of faculty focus groups in 2006 when our last Academic Plan was created. Academic Council members looked at each item and marked them as “keep”, “modify” or “eliminate” in order to identify which initiative from that previous process were potentially still relevant for our context today. We then asked the question about what new initiatives might we add to the list based on our current context. Once the list was created and edited, a survey was developed and sent to the fulltime faculty in early April, 2015 with a ten day window to respond and a mid-survey window reminder. The possible initiatives were divided into four thematic groupings and faculty were asked to identify their top two from each category. Eighty-seven responses (64% response rate) to the survey were received and the data were analyzed with faculty, academic council and Provost feedback and then divided into three tiers based on those inputs. Below are the twelve items that were identified as Tier 1 initiatives in both summary and expanded formats. Initiatives were grouped by similar category and presented in no particular rank order.

Tier 1 Summary

Enhance and Broaden Student Learning and Success

1. Recruit and retain a diverse student body to include international students
2. Focus on diversity/cultural learning through both curricular and co-curricular programs

Develop and Promote Quality Curriculum and Programs

3. Understand and appropriately adapt to the ever-changing student populations that attend PLNU
4. Strengthen our commitment to a liberal arts education through inter- and cross-disciplinary learning
5. Offer and support integrative learning opportunities that connect theory to real-world experiences
6. Establish a new General Education platform that ensures that students make the connections we expect from a liberal arts education
7. Cultivate a graduate culture that encourages quality scholarly engagement of faculty and students and relevant, mission-aligned programs

Support for Faculty Scholarship and Teaching

8. Study and make recommendations for better support of faculty scholarship
9. Develop a rolling two-year calendar for opportunities for teaching development
10. Create a system for helping faculty to plan their career and sustain scholarly work

Infrastructure Support for Academic Initiatives and Leader Development

11. Develop a master plan for upgrading, maintaining and equipping academic spaces
12. Offer a regular discussion series about the engagement of our academic disciplines within the context of our Christian convictions and our Wesleyan heritage

Tier 1 Details

Enhance and Broaden Student Learning and Success

1. Consider expansion of the University's efforts to **recruit and retain a diverse student body to include international students** who can contribute to the globalization of campus and through their presence provide greater opportunities for addressing multi-cultural learning outcomes within our learning community.
2. Expand the University's **focus on diversity through both curricular and co-curricular programs** and collaboration between these areas. Cultivate and maintain student engagement for understanding the knowledge, skills and attitudes for cultural learning and appreciation of diversity. This includes investigating which experiences and courses are most helpful in developing our students' multi-cultural competence, supporting the work of University centers that focus on these issues, forging further ties between the Office of Global Studies and the Diversity Committee while creating opportunities for faculty, staff and students to build relationships across ethnic and cultural lines.

Develop and Promote Quality Curriculum and Programs

3. Research and develop strategies to **understand appropriately adapt to the ever-changing student populations that attend PLNU** over time and ensure that we modify our dispositions, support services and pedagogical practices in order to continue to provide relevant, high quality educational experiences that maximize our students' learning.
4. Continue to develop our understanding of and **strengthen our commitment to a liberal arts education**. This includes providing support for reading and writing across the curriculum, creating opportunities for interdisciplinary connections, ensuring students have space in their schedules for electives so they can pursue minors or gain cross-disciplinary experience and the incorporation of high impact learning opportunities within the curriculum.
5. Seek creative ways to **offer and support integrative learning opportunities**. These include study abroad experiences, student internships connected with the interdisciplinary work of our University centers, interdisciplinary courses and programs and learning experiences that connect content and theory with real world issues (case studies, group projects, learning lab partnerships, practicums, etc...).
6. Research and **establish a new General Education platform** that builds upon the strengths of the PLNU community and ensures that students make the connections we expect for an integrated liberal arts education in the context of a multi-cultural world.
7. Continue to **cultivate a graduate culture that encourages quality scholarly engagement of faculty and students** and delivery of appropriate masters and doctoral level programs that are responsive to current contexts and aligned to PLNU's mission. This should include strategic hires and development opportunities for graduate faculty to ensure alignment to graduate level advising, teaching and scholarship expectations.

Support for Faculty Scholarship and Teaching

8. Study and make recommendations for the **support of faculty scholarship**. Ideas include giving consideration to the needed number of sabbaticals to support the current faculty size, right sizing the release time for research and the number of targeted university grants, the possibility of research contracts, unifying the university grant proposal process, providing support for grant writing. Consider ways that additional funding can be obtained for scholarly work including endowed chairs.
9. **Develop a rolling two year calendar for opportunities for teaching development**. This includes emphases in multiple relevant pedagogical approaches and technology mediated instruction techniques, training for adjuncts, providing support for integrating faith into the classroom and providing access to mentoring and coaching for new and current faculty who would like to improve their teaching.
10. Create a **system for helping faculty to plan their career and sustain scholarly work**. Help faculty to lay the ground work for sabbaticals and to find their personal balance between research and teaching.

Infrastructure Support for Academic Initiatives and Leader Development

11. Develop **master plan for upgrading, maintaining and equipping academic spaces** with timelines and cyclical review where appropriate. This would include both new and/or refurbished spaces for academic units support services as well as ongoing upkeep of classroom and laboratory appearance, technology, furnishings and equipment taking into account pedagogical considerations.
12. Ensure a regular **discussion among faculty about the nature of our academic disciplines within the context of our Christian convictions and our Wesleyan heritage**, including ways that we might separately and corporately embody our devotion to Christ as we offer our academic lives in service to God as acceptable acts of worship.

Subsequently the Provost, Co-Chair of the Planning Council and the Provost's Council took these results and aligned them with the new branding platform and university strategic plan to identify consistent language to describe four durable themes in which the various initiatives would fit. We then narrowed the number of initiatives down to a smaller number that would represent the first initiatives to be pursued in the Academic Plan. This refined set of themes and initiatives is given below.

Academic Plan Themes and Initiatives:

1) Develop Intercultural Capacity and Proficiency

- A. Create ways for students and faculty to develop intercultural competence in light of both the ever changing demographic and generational nature of our student population.

2) Develop and Promote Quality Curriculum and Programs

- B. Research and establish a new General Education platform that builds upon the strengths of the PLNU community and ensures that students make the connections we expect for an integrated liberal arts education in the context of a multicultural world.

- C. Continue to cultivate a graduate culture that encourages quality scholarly engagement of faculty and students and delivery of appropriate masters and doctoral level programs that are responsive to current contexts and aligned to PLNU's mission. This should include strategic hires and development opportunities for graduate faculty to ensure alignment to graduate level advising, teaching and scholarship expectations.

3) Support for Faculty Scholarship and Teaching

- D. Streamline and centralize the system for awarding internal grants (Wesleyan, RASP, Alumni etc.)
- E. Create a system for helping faculty to plan their career, sustain their scholarly work and find their personal balance between faith, work and life for students.

4) Develop and Enhance Avenues to Embody Mission and Explore Vocational Call

- F. Develop ways to weave the exploration of calling into classes and programs. We should be modeling the connections between faith, work and life for students. This includes the formation of a system that connects a faculty member's professional development goals, activities and funds.

Next Steps:

The next step is to flesh out the details of each key initiatives and to create a 4-year timeline so that the Academic Plan initiatives can be implemented as part of the institutional Strategic Plan. The assumption is that new initiatives will be added to the plan as the initial ones are completed. The Academic Plan under this model will have a longer term infrastructure, captured in the durable themes, with a dynamic strategic planning process generating the variety of initiatives than cycle through the long term infrastructure. The current level of planning for each of these themes is reflected in the attached PLNU Academic Plan Draft Implementation Timeline.