

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

“Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.” – John Dewey

Planning

Description

The [President’s Strategic Action Plan](#) carries forward UVM’s mission and vision, balancing key areas of innovation and expansion with fiscal responsibility and an emphasis on optimizing university resources. The action plan, and its academic expression, the [Provost’s Academic Excellence Goals](#), motivate and organize decision-making and planning processes throughout the university. The plan itself emerged through collaborative engagement that emphasized key strategic areas in the University’s planning process, including the academic program, diversity, research, revenue enhancement, and institutional efficiency. In this way, the current Strategic Action Plan, like the plan that immediately preceded it, [Strategic Plan 2009–2013: Sustaining the Advance](#), resulted from systematic and inclusive deliberation and planning.

Sustaining the Advance, the strategic plan that guided the university from 2009 to 2013, was generated through a process managed by the University Planning Council, which convened groups including faculty, staff, students, and administrators to review action ideas that emerged from earlier senior leadership meetings. These groups were tasked with modifying, updating, or rejecting these action ideas. The resultant plan emphasized increasing global and domestic diversity on campus, increasing academic standards and expanding graduate programs, and preparing students to be ethical leaders in a globalizing world, reflecting and reaffirming the university mission and vision. As the 2009–2013 plan was nearing completion, the university president launched a new strategic planning process.

During the 2012 academic year, the UVM Strategic Initiatives Project (SIP), inclusive in its design and outcomes and explicitly grounded in the university’s mission, engaged the UVM community. The SIP process involved vice-presidents, deans, faculty, staff, and student leaders in committee deliberation processes that focused on five strategic areas: diversity and internationalization; student success and satisfaction/general education; research; net revenue enhancement; and cost structure/productivity enhancement. A full description of the process as well an example progress report provided to the Board of Trustees on SIP can be found on pages 102–196 of the [book of materials prepared for the May 2012 Board of Trustees meeting](#).

Upon his arrival at UVM in July of 2012, President Tom Sullivan met with diverse constituents within and outside the UVM community to better understand the outcomes of the Strategic Initiatives Project and the foundational insights offered from this collective work. These insights included a reaffirmation of the university’s commitment to increasing diversity and attracting more international students, the need to move general education planning forward more decisively, a focus on steps to achieve the university vision of UVM as a “premier small research university,” and impetus to create a more flexible and efficient financial framework. President Sullivan’s Strategic Action Plan, the discussion of which began formally at the October 2012 Board of Trustees meeting, drew on core elements of the SIP process and also provided a broader framework for the strategic priorities of the university. The new UVM Strategic Action Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees on October 26, 2013, framed four priorities:

1. Promoting affordability, financial access, and academic support;
2. Promoting academic excellence and cultivating talent;
3. Identifying necessary investments to ensure a bright future; and

4. Instilling an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness

The full version of the [Strategic Action Plan](#) is available on the Office of the President website.

From this starting point, the Strategic Action Plan was given more definition through a series of initiatives that have been undertaken at the university level. These include implementation of:

1. The [Academic Excellence Goals](#), which outline distinct areas of academic improvement and extension of university programs, and which also served as implementation goals for the design of the initial incentive-based budget (IBB 1.0);
2. An [incentive-based budget](#), which provides the university community and units with the [budgetary framework](#) within which they need to operate in order to achieve those goals;
3. Implementation of a Strategic Financial Plan in 2018.

Each of these initiatives has been further developed through extensive consultation with the appropriate level of constituents at the university.

Appraisal

[The Academic Excellence Goals](#) were developed by the provost and deans as a means of bringing more structure to the priority of *Promoting a culture of advancing academic excellence and cultivating talent* in the President's Strategic Action Plan. These goals have been implicitly incorporated into the university's incentive-based budget, and, where appropriate, administrative and academic units have created plans to meet explicit goals. Throughout these planning and implementation processes, the Office of Institutional Research serves as the hub for data generation, analysis, and sharing. For example, the goal of increasing UVM's four-year retention and graduation rate has required considerable data-gathering and analysis, resulting in a separate [retention plan](#) with broad engagement across units. Similarly, increasing domestic and international diversity are central not only to the Strategic Action Plan and the Academic Excellence Goals, but also to UVM core values. In response, the university has recently developed a [Framework for Inclusive Excellence 2016–2021](#) built on four pillars: academics, community, environment, and operations. Each major unit within the university generated an Inclusive Excellence plan with [specific goals and action steps](#); links to these plans are listed in Data First form 2.1. These plans are currently in initial stages of implementation, with units preparing to evaluate their progress and share insights at the institutional level.

The most transformational component of the President's Strategic Action Plan was the implementation of the incentive-based budget (IBB), a direct implementation of the fourth principle of the plan, to “instill an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness,” and the result of a year's worth of discussion and planning work. The IBB conceptualization and development process was a university-wide endeavor between 2014 and 2015. While strategic planning often breaks down in the operational (implementation) stage, the implementation of IBB enabled local strategic planning discussions to occur against the backdrop of financial realities. The widespread participation and inclusion has earned general acceptance for the IBB model and successful implementation in a relatively short period of time. Built into the IBB implementation timeline was a scheduled summary evaluation, comment period, and recalibration process dubbed “IBB 2.0,” discussed below in Evaluation.

Colleges and schools, provided with clear guidance from the president—through the Strategic Action Plan—from the provost—through the Academic Excellence Goals—and now through the financial framework in which they can sustainably operate, have been able to develop and align their own unit-level strategic plans, listed in Data First form 2.1. Each dean provides the provost with an annual update of how her or his college or school is working toward the Academic Excellence Goals within the financial

framework of the budget. However, senior leaders can also make use of IBB components to guide the direction of the university in line with the Strategic Action Plan and the Academic Excellence Goals. At the central level, the provost maintains both [subvention](#) and a Strategic Investment Fund to respond to emergent opportunities and promote the objectives in the campus Strategic Academic Plan. Subvention is crucial to ensuring alignment to the Provost's Academic Excellence Goals, as subvention adjustments are made based upon a unit's ability to make progress towards these goals. A recent strategic investment in the revitalization of the College of Arts and Sciences from the Provost's Strategic Investment Fund is an example of how these centrally held funds provide flexibility within the budget model to address emergent needs that may otherwise impede achievement of the university's academic priorities and goals.

The 2018 Strategic Financial Plan (more fully described in Standard 7: Financial Resources; see also Document Room: 170511_UVM_Final Report.pptx) clearly articulates steps to ensure that the university has the necessary financial resources to carry forward the Strategic Action Plan and related initiatives. In particular, the plan supports necessary facilities development and operational investments, the third component of the Strategic Action Plan. This financial plan is informed by the individual budget plans of the colleges/schools and administrative units, and is revisited and then articulated to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

Since its approval in 2013, the President's Strategic Action Plan has served as the framework and reference point for planning at all levels of the institution, in both academic and administrative units. The Strategic Action Plan's emphasis on balancing achievement of the academic vision with building and maintaining a strong but nimble financial foundation is evident throughout university, college/school, and administrative unit planning and evaluation processes.

Evaluation

Description

The Strategic Action Plan has incorporated evaluation of both plans and processes since its inception. The incentive-based budget, Academic Excellence Goals, Inclusive Excellence Goals, and administrative and academic unit strategic plans, as concrete articulations of the action plan, are comprised of components that are each regularly evaluated using established metrics. This evaluation process in turn informs next steps in revising and executing elements of the Strategic Action Plan. This is most visible in the implementation of Administrative Unit Review, the revision of the Academic Program Review process, the evaluation of progress on the Provost's Academic Excellence Goals, and the ongoing IBB 2.0 evaluation process.

Implementation of the [Administrative Unit Review](#), which is directly linked to the fourth goal of the Strategic Action Plan, ensures that individual administrative units adhere to "an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness." Each year, a group of five administrative units are evaluated by a team of four or five internal constituents. The evaluation process is all-inclusive, bringing in external consultants, third-party benchmarks, and surveys/interviews with campus constituents. The AUR process was modeled on UVM's Academic Program Review procedures, which were substantially updated in 2009. Both of these processes emphasize benchmarking and external review, not only as a component of assuring quality, but also to open up opportunities to identify areas of exemplary achievement or potential for further growth and innovation to serve as the basis of unit strategic planning. A more detailed discussion of Academic Program Review for both accredited and non-accredited programs, as well as the Assessment Initiative as a means for evaluation of educational effectiveness, are covered in Standard 8.

Appraisal

This reaccreditation review cycle catches UVM at a midpoint in the planning, implementation, and evaluation cycle: IBB 2.0. In the summer of 2017, the IBB Steering Committee evaluated the model as initially implemented (IBB 1.0). The insights from this evaluation, along with broad input from campus constituencies, formed the foundation for a targeted revision process, conducted throughout 2018. By June 2018, the University had received feedback from the deans, implemented two university-wide surveys, received feedback from the provost, CFO, and university budget director, received reports from the Educational Stewardship Committee, and conducted multiple focus groups. Through this work, the IBB Steering Committee identified three areas of focus on specific algorithms within the model, as well as on selected administrative details that are not addressed within the algorithms, such as the role of the Educational Stewardship Committee in IBB (see Standard 4).

The three algorithms addressed by the IBB 2.0 Steering Committee were: undergraduate net tuition; facilities; and support center funding pools. Undergraduate net tuition work focused on different college-by-college weightings of student credit hours, as well as the revenue split between the student's academic home and the college/school where the course is taught. The committee recommended removing the weightings, which are poorly understood and widely seen as affecting some colleges disproportionately, and replacing them with targeted subventions to help manage high instructional costs in select units. Facilities work investigated whether the current methodology can or should be revised to account for space weighting by functional use, remediation obligations, and utility costs; the committee concluded that the current system should be left in place. And finally, the steering committee reviewed the headcount "tax" used to calculate responsibility center support and implemented some changes to this model, reducing perceived disincentives to hiring some categories of faculty. For each of these focus areas, the IBB Steering Committee utilized both qualitative feedback and institutional data on budgets, revenues, and enrollments to inform evaluation and revision of the model. Details of the IBB 2.0 Steering Committee's work can be found in the [Provost's communications to campus on IBB 2.0](#).

The budget mechanism ensures that the allocation of resourcing is both consistent and realistic with planning priorities for the individual college/school. Enrollment Management provides multiyear projections for majors and enrollment based upon external and internal factors, which in turn allows units to provide multiyear financial plans. Embedded within the budget model (see budget workbooks in the Document Room) are unit-level contingency reserve funds to be used in the event of unanticipated events that impact budgets. In addition, the Educational Stewardship Committee developed parameters to track potential effects of IBB on certain instructional indicators. With the analysis now comprising several semesters in a row, no negative trends attributable to IBB-related practices have emerged in the data. Details of this report can be found [here](#).

In Fall of 2018, Provost David Rosowsky [reviewed progress on specific Academic Excellence Goals](#), which both support and realize the academic priorities in the President's Strategic Action Plan. The goals of the review were to assess and report progress on the goals, to evaluate and modify strategies in areas where there has been insufficient progress towards achieving the goals, and to identify new growth areas that might be added to the Academic Excellence Goals. The report noted excellent progress in the areas of fostering interdisciplinarity in teaching, research and scholarship (as evidenced by an increase in new interdisciplinary programs, proposals, and university-wide research endeavors), and in expanding hybrid and online learning (the number of students enrolled in online and hybrid courses increased by 300 percent), and good progress on research/funding metrics (evidenced by increase in the number of large grants and development of new internal programs to support innovative research) (see Standard 6 for details). For several goals, indicators pointed towards some progress, including increasing graduate enrollments and improving four-year graduation rates and retention (see Standard 8 for details). In the areas of increasing domestic diversity (as indicated by enrollments) and improving advising (as indicated

by NSSE survey results), progress was limited. This evaluation process confirmed the importance and continued relevance of the eight Academic Excellence Goals, with specific recommendations related to the EAB Student Success Collaborative software implementation, the *Navigate* app and targeting improvement in university and unit-level career-readiness programs.

In 2016 a new director for the Office of Institutional Research prioritized the organization, use, and dissemination of data within the university. The development of the Catamount Data Center, which debuted in 2017, dramatically expanded the university's capacity to make key data on student enrollment, retention, and progression rates available both for internal use in evaluating key initiatives, as well as to the public. Through the Catamount Data Center interface, UVM publicly displays the student success rates including [retention, transfer, and graduation rates](#); [average undergraduate indebtedness at graduation](#), and [employment rates](#) on its Office of Institutional Research [website](#). [Rate of progression](#) data can be found on the Office of Institutional Research's Catamount Data Center. Enrollment Management monitors retention and progression to graduation rates for several specifically recruited populations, including [Catamount Commitment](#) (first-time first-year, Pell-eligible Vermonters), Urban Partnership, and international students. Post-graduation outcomes are also shared with all respondents of the [UVM Career Outcomes](#) survey, conducted six months past a student's graduation date, as are licensure passage rates for specific individual departments (see e.g., [Nursing](#), [Physical Therapy](#), [Counseling](#), and [Education](#)). The institution makes student default and repayment rates publicly available in [College Navigator](#).

The results of the President's Strategic Action Plan, the Provost's Academic Excellence Goals, and the Strategic Financial Plan are regularly presented to the Board of Trustees and meetings at the university as evidenced above. In addition, the university maintains a collection of resources and reports, available to the campus community, from which it draws the data necessary to evaluate progress in these initiatives. Some examples include:

- [Catamount Data Center for student/faculty data](#)
- [IBB resources](#)
- [Educational Stewardship Committee reports](#)

Data for these presentations and the assessments of progress within the Strategic Action Plan are provided by the Office of Institutional Research and the Financial Analysis and Budgeting office:

- <http://www.uvm.edu/~ofabweb/?Page=Publications/Publications.html>
- https://www.uvm.edu/~ofabweb/Budget_Building_Materials/IBB/
- <http://www.uvm.edu/~oir/>

Current planning and evaluation processes at the university encourage alignment of initiatives at all levels with the overarching university Strategic Action Plan. With roots in long-term university goals, the Strategic Action Plan encourages expansion of research strengths, promotes access to a UVM education for a diverse student population, and fosters efficiency and fiscal responsibility to create a strong foundation for the fulfillment of the university's academic mission and vision.

Projections

- Beginning in AY 2018–2019, the president and provost will conduct a process to assess progress on the Strategic Action Plan and Academic Excellence Goals, evaluate event horizons, and adjust goals accordingly.

- At the conclusion of the first round of Administrative Unit Reviews in FY 2019, the Vice President for Executive Operations will coordinate an evaluation of AUR effectiveness across types of units and complete a subsequent revision of the process to increase the effectiveness of AUR.
- Each college/school and business unit will complete implementation of their strategic action plan within the Framework for Inclusive Excellence. The outcomes of these plans will be assessed annually to identify the organizational and systemic actions needed to maintain or enhance effective practices and address emerging or identified concerns.

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

PLANNING

Strategic Plans

Year approved by governing board	Effective Dates	Website location
		Historic Board Resolutions: http://www.uvm.edu/trustees/?Page=resolutions/resolutions.html
10/26/2013		http://www.uvm.edu/president/?Page=strategicplan.html

Immediately prior Strategic Plan
Current Strategic Plan
Next Strategic Plan

Other institution-wide plans*

Year completed	Effective Dates	Website location
		See addendum documents folder-PowerPoint presentation from Financial Analysis & Budgeting Office 'FAB UVM_Final Report from Alberto.pptx'
N/A	N/A	N/A
2016	2016-2020	http://www.uvm.edu/dem/strategic_goals_and_current_initiatives
2015	2015-2020	http://www.uvmfoundation.org/s/1690/images/gid2/editor_documents/foundation/document_library/the_strategic_plan_of_the_university_of_vermont_foundation.p

Master plan
Academic plan

Financial plan
Technology plan
Enrollment plan

Development plan

Plans for major units (e.g., departments, library)*

Agriculture and Life Sciences		
Arts and Sciences		http://www.uvm.edu/cas/enews/documents/CAS%20STRATEGIC%20PLAN-%202012-15%20%28NEWS%29.pdf
Grossman Business		https://www.uvm.edu/business/strategic_plan
Education and Social Services		https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/CESS_Strategic_Plan.pdf
Engineering and Mathematical Sciences		https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/strategic_plan_text_2017_v3_layout.pdf
Rubenstein Environment and Natural Resources		https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/RSENR-StrActPlan-6Jan14-1_0.pdf
Nursing and Health Sciences		https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/CNHS_Strategic_Plan_2016-2020_-_updated_8-15-2017.pdf
Honors College		https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/HonCollegeStrategicPriorities.pdf
Libraries		https://library.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Libraries_2016-2020_Strategic_Plan_6_21_16.pdf
Strategic Communications		Hard copy provided
Division of Student Affairs		In process

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

Inclusive Excellence Plans (by Units)

Agriculture and Life Sciences			https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/CALS_Action_Plan.pdf
Arts and Sciences			https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/act_plan_draft_92817.pdf
Education and Social Services			https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/College-of-Education-and-Social-Services/CESS_Action_Plan_Framework_for_Inclusive_Excellence_Dec_2017.pdf
Engineering and Mathematical Sciences			https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/CEMS_Action_Plans_to_PROVO_ST.pdf
Rubenstein Environment and Natural Resources			https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Rubenstein-School-of-Environment-and-Natural-Resources/RSENRInclusiveActionPlan2017.pdf
Nursing and Health Sciences			https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/inclusiveframework.pdf

EVALUATION

Academic program review

Program review system (colleges and departments). System last updated:

Program review schedule (e.g., every 5 years)

Sample program review reports (name of unit or program)*

Website location

Updated Spring 2017. https://www.uvm.edu/provost/A%20Guide%20to%20Academic%20Program%20Review%20for%20Accredited%20Programs%202017.pdf
Every 8 Years. https://www.uvm.edu/provost/?Page=academicprogramreview.html

See document room.

System to review other functions and units

Program review schedule (every X years or website location of schedule)

Sample program review reports (name of unit or program)*

General Info about Administrative Unit Reviews

<http://uvm.edu/president/AUR/?Page=schedule.html>

<http://www.uvm.edu/president/AUR/>

Other significant institutional studies (Name and web location)*

Delaware Study Benchmarks
NSSE
Catamount Data Center

*Insert additional rows, as appropriate.

Website location

https://www.uvm.edu/~oir/?Page=delaware.html&SM=submenu_spec_studies.html
See additional addendum documents for overview presentation https://www.uvm.edu/~oir/?Page=data_center.html

Date

Updated every year
UVM participates every 3 years, last study was in 2017.
Updated every term

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

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