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**NIU College of Business**  
**STRATEGIC PLANNING COUNCIL XI MEETING MINUTES**

First Meeting (Academic Year: 2007-08) ~ Friday, September 28, 2007, Noon – 2:00 p.m.

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**STRATEGIC PLANNING COUNCIL XI (SPC)**

**SPC Members:**

Mary Allen (MGMT Secretary & President – Staff Council), Sue Braffet (COB Alumni Director), Charlie Cao (FINA – Undergraduate Student Rep), Ann Carrel (Executive MBA Program Assistant Director), Doug Clinton (ACCY Faculty), Joe Cullinane (MKTG Executive-in-Residence & President – Joe Cullinane Enterprises, Inc.), Anthony D'Andrea (Director of Development, Senior Gift and Estate Planning Officer – COB), Michelle De Jean (COB Marketing Director), Charles Gowen III (MGMT Faculty), Sonja Herington (COB Strategic Planning & Assessment Coordinator – As of SP08), James Johnson (FINA Faculty), Courtney Krug (MS MIS – Graduate Student Rep), Brian Mackie (OMIS Faculty), Jane Mall (COB Experiential Learning – Outreach Director), Kate Mantzke (ACCY Faculty), Sarah Marsh (MGMT Chair), Lori Marcellus (Undergraduate Studies in Business Director), Tim Paige (Director COB Tech Resources), Ronald Parrish (MGMT Instructor), Charles Petersen (OMIS Faculty), Paul Prabhaker (Associate Dean, College of Business), Denise Schoenbachler (Dean, College of Business), Wayne Smith (iTest Quality Partners Inc.), Sally Wakefield (COB Strategic Planning & Assessment Coordinator – FA07), and Phyllis Zerull (Undergraduate BSBA Advisor)

**SPC Members Unable to Attend:**

Tim Aurand (MKTG Faculty), Virginia Cassidy (NIU Associate Vice Provost), Diane Docking (FINA Faculty), Gyu Kim (OMIS Faculty), Mona Salmon (Evening MBA Program Assistant Director), and Tanuja Singh (MKTG Chair)

**Guests:**

Raymond Alden (NIU Provost), Lenita Hepker (Administrative Assistant to the COB Dean), Nancy Russo (OMIS Chair), and Jim Young (ACCY Chair)

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Dean Schoenbachler welcomed members and guests to the first SPC meeting of AY 2007-08. The Dean shared that she likes to launch the year by getting us out of our regular environment. She also thanked Lenita Hepker, who arranges all the SPC social events and luncheons, for organizing today's lunch at the Barsema Alumni and Visitors Center ~ DeBiase Family Board Room.<sup>1</sup>

**1. NIU STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE PANEL DISCUSSION<sup>2</sup>**

The Dean began the discussion by pointing out that last year's successful SPC – Dean's Retreat provided the impetus for sweeping COB Strategic Initiatives; this year, the college will look at its mission, objectives, etc., an undertaking which serendipitously coincides with the university's launching of its Strategic Imperatives. Consequently, the confluence of these activities will allow the COB to optimize its review and revision of the Strategic Plan in advance of the FA08 AACSB Visit.

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<sup>1</sup>We also acknowledge the contributions of Pat Myers and the Dean's Office student workers in getting meeting packets ready for this and every meeting.

<sup>2</sup>For information about the NIU Strategic Planning Task Force, its charge, membership, etc., please refer to:  
<http://www.niu.edu/strategicplan/index.shtml>.

Provost Ray Alden: Introduction NIU Strategic Planning Process and Strategic Imperatives

***NIU STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES***<sup>3</sup>

- **Preserve, Strengthen, and Extend NIU's Teaching and Learning Environment**
- **Develop a Strategy for Investing in Multidisciplinary Scholarship and Artistic Clusters**
- **Strengthen and Extend NIU's Regional and Global Impact**
- **Make NIU an Institution of "First Choice" for Faculty, Students, and Staff**

Provost Alden prefaced his remarks about the university's strategic planning process and resulting imperatives by congratulating the College of Business on the fact that it has engaged in strategic planning for some years and is well positioned to align its goals and objectives with the Strategic Imperatives. The purpose of the Strategic Imperatives is not to replace the college's planning. Rather, it is a fundamental shift in the way in which NIU, as a whole, approaches strategic planning and implementation through consensus-building among university stakeholders. Provost Alden noted the imperatives also tie in with accreditation. Thus, he encouraged the college to consider the Strategic Imperatives in its strategic planning and to incorporate the university's College/Department Planning Template<sup>4</sup> as a framework by which to document its planning process, instead of changing the process itself.

Operationally, the 45-member NIU Task Force worked with *The Learning Alliance for Higher Education* (University of Pennsylvania),<sup>5</sup> a consulting firm, which facilitated the planning process and carried out 65 hour-long interviews as part of assessing the university's culture, tradition, and direction. Following that phase of the planning process, themes were consolidated into 8 to 9 round table groups, which eventually were whittled down to four working groups – subsequently represented by the four Strategic Imperatives.

Over the course of the Task Force and campus-wide discussions about the proposed imperatives, two push-back items arose:

1. Concern that the Strategic Imperatives would replace the *shared governance* process.

Provost Alden noted that, in actuality, it is a facilitating process complementing shared governance.

2. The perception that the imperatives are mandates.

The Provost reiterated that the imperatives are not intended to take the place of what the units are doing but, rather, to recognize "what is out in the real world, what are the big picture issues" and how to respond proactively to them within the existing organizational structure.

Ultimately, these discussions made more people aware of what transpires at NIU than heretofore was the case. Provost Alden added that, as part of creating a campus climate that recognizes excellence, President Peters is recommending – with expected approval by the Board of Trustees – a "Faculty and Staff Reward and Regard" program to attract and retain "the best and the brightest."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>See <http://www.niu.edu/strategicplan/Strategic%20Planning%20Imperatives8-31-07Version.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup>See <http://www.niu.edu/strategicplan/planning/NIU%20Strategic%20Planning%20Template.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>See <http://www.irhe.upenn.edu/>.

<sup>6</sup>See President Peters' *State of the University* Address at <http://www.niu.edu/president/sofu2007.shtml>.

With respect to the COB's activities, the next step will be to align the college and departmental strategic planning initiatives with the NIU Strategic Imperatives. The Provost noted that, throughout the university's deliberations, the word "goal" was intentionally avoided and the term "Strategic Imperatives" was purposely chosen since these are big picture projects/ideas. However, it is anticipated that, under the umbrella of each imperative, a series of goals will be developed and champions will emerge to assume responsibility for setting timelines, carrying out strategies, etc. Importantly, performance indicators and milestones are to be included, which later will facilitate establishing benchmarks for comparisons with peer institutions, etc.

In support of the Strategic Imperatives, the university is inviting individuals or groups of individuals to submit *Strategic Planning Concept Papers*.<sup>7</sup> These proposals should:

- Identify a need for change, which will be addressed by the idea put forward;
- Include requests for funding; and
- Articulate the potential benefit(s) to NIU and how a particular idea will advance the university.

Proposals will be reviewed and prioritized based on *Return on Investment* (ROI) to the university and, if sponsored, typically would be funded by grants in the range of \$5,000 – \$30,000. Provost Alden pointed out that, in some cases, concept papers may be the genesis for college/unit/departmental strategic plans.

To assure that things do not fall through the cracks, Task Forces will be constituted regarding a host of activities related to the Strategic Imperatives, covering the following issues:

- Student Success: Retention and Graduation
  - May address Spellings Commission issues
  - Build a "College Portrait"
- Student Learning
  - Curriculum – Gen Eds
  - Largely under the UCC: Determine the size of membership
- Multi-Disciplinary
  - Market – Student demands, etc.
  - Niche (in Provost Alden's lexicon, niche is used to mean "expansive")
  - Dean's Council is a good starting point for this imperative
- Sustainable Development
  - Emergency Response: Arising out of the VTU Commission findings, this includes the development and dissemination of the new *NIU Emergency Guide*, as well as future undertakings related to safety and security

Provost Alden wrapped up by citing President Peters, who announced during his *State of the University* address that the "NIU Strategic Planning process will bear the name of the NIU *Great Journeys* program."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>See [http://www.niu.edu/strategicplan/planning/concept\\_paper.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/strategicplan/planning/concept_paper.shtml).

<sup>8</sup>Specifically, President Peters said the following in his closing comments:

"... So that our entire campus community can more readily track our progress, all programs and initiatives created and funded through the NIU Strategic Planning process will bear the name of the NIU "Great Journeys" program. For students seeking a start in life ... for faculty seeking answers to enduring mysteries ... for all who seek an intellectual home, NIU is where great journeys begin...." [<http://www.niu.edu/president/sofu2007.shtml>]

Following up on the Provost's comments, Denise pointed to the SPC – Dean's Retreat, coupled with her 30-minute meetings with all COB faculty and staff when she assumed the Deanship, as activities which in some ways parallel the university's efforts for inclusion in the strategic planning process. For the university, concept papers and the resulting grants will be the means by which [a] priorities will be identified and [b] ideas will be implemented. For those ideas emanating from the COB, the greater the consensus is among college stakeholders about its priorities (and subsequent concept paper submissions), the better the chances for their enactment.

Perspectives: Kate Mantzke – NIU Task Force Member

Through her experience on the Task Force, Kate found that:

The entire university community is as passionate about NIU as we are in the COB. In examining the different Strategic Imperatives, the task force members shared a singular view that we should preserve, strengthen, and extend NIU's highly-respected teaching and learning environment.

The strategic planning process was not intended nor did it become a revolution – where NIU would be torn down and rebuilt in a different fashion. Instead, the focus was on harnessing the power of the University to work in concert – to execute the Strategic Imperatives and to cease being an accidental university.

In watching the plan come together and seeing how much overlap there is between the University and COB strategic plans, the college is well positioned to lead the way as the University moves forward to execute these imperatives.

The challenges of serving on the Task Force were the time commitment and the number of meetings. Notwithstanding these challenges, Kate found the experience to be worthwhile because of what she learned and what the Task Force accomplished.

Perspectives: Sarah Marsh – NIU Task Force Member

As a member of the *Multi-Disciplinary Research Cluster* working group, Sarah's team focused on process. Either for NIU as a whole or the COB in particular, Sarah cited the following challenges to the strategic planning process:

1. This is a real transition point for the university; the external environment will force us to change faster than we have in the past despite a history of pragmatic/creative approaches. There is an increasing understanding and acceptance of student inclusiveness, a cultural change which will move us toward a more integrated university.
2. As a professional school, the COB has a different language, different values than other academic units in the university. For example, how we do experiential learning is different, and we need to communicate better how an investment in what we do will benefit the entire NIU community.
3. As more COB stakeholders work with colleagues across the university in actualizing NIU's strategic plan, it will become easier to collaborate. The COB has a distinct set of external constituencies to whom we routinely reach out, but we need to do a better job internally across the university...and the NIU plan helps us to do that. Additionally, we will need to be mindful that our activities may need to be reemphasized so that synergies across academic units can be realized.

During the Multi-Disciplinary working group's deliberations, a number of ideas floated around that involved business as a component (for example, the planned *Sloan Project: The MS Professional Degree* has a strong business element). But again, Sarah asked, how do we use the university's four imperatives in the COB's priority setting? How will the pieces of the university's Strategic Imperatives guide us? There are dual processes which should be incorporated into our strategic thinking:

- Language, i.e., a common set of definitions used within the university, and
- Champions, i.e., those who take ownership of particular ideas and espouse their value.

Within the university, two impediments to promoting multi-disciplinary partnerships currently exist and will need to be looked at:

- The university's structure can discourage at worst – or doesn't reward at best – multi-disciplinary efforts across the university. As pointed out by an SPC member, simply removing barriers from conducting multi-disciplinary research, which now is perceived negatively, would be helpful.
- The college's merit/promotion systems lack incentives to participate in such university-wide endeavors. Thus, College Council may have to explore ways in which to take these systems and make them more amenable.

## 2. COB STRATEGIC INITIATIVES – STRATEGIC PLANNING COUNCIL (SPC) ACTION TEAMS

### Affirmation of AY 2006-07 Strategic Priorities/Funding

#### **COB AY 2006-07 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES<sup>9</sup>**

- ***Branding***
- ***Curriculum Innovation***
- ***Endowment***
- ***Entrepreneurship***
- ***Global***
- ***One College ... One Team ... One Focus***

Although the COB's *Strategic Initiatives* were discussed and funding priorities were identified at the April meeting, the initiatives were not formally approved. Therefore, the Dean affirmed – and SPC endorsed – the Strategic Initiatives developed during AY 2006-07.

### AY 2007-08 SPC Action Teams

The Strategic Initiative Action Teams (SIATs) from 2006-07, that worked on the initiatives cited above, will be ongoing. Joe Cullinane expressed the view that these initiatives seem to dovetail well with the NIU Strategic Imperatives and are worth pursuing.

Based on what we did last year and *being able to make a case ... to tell our story*, the Dean shared with the Council some activities already happening, which are moving us forward:

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<sup>9</sup>See <http://www.cob.niu.edu/strplan/goals.pdf>.

- *Global Initiative*
  - Talks are in motion with a donor who may fund this initiative for \$40,000 – \$50,000 per year for 10 years.
  - The COB has been named as a *Preferred Partner* with the Chinese Consulate, with an upcoming opportunity to provide an executive education program for 12-15 Chinese executives/officials.
- *Entrepreneurship Initiative*
  - Funding is in place to provide \$25,000 seed money for this initiative, with another \$15,000 promised.
  - UBUS 310 looks a whole lot different and has gone from 0 to 4-5 hours with respect to infusing the concept of a business plan into the curriculum.
  - Another faculty line for strategy/entrepreneurship has been approved.
- *Curriculum Innovation Initiative*
  - The COB is exploring curricular delivery alternatives such as NIU's online interactive learning program *Second Life*.<sup>10</sup>
  - The COB is engaging in the *Health Care Certificate* program – a multi-disciplinary project involving the Colleges of Business, Engineering & Engineering Technology, Health & Human Sciences, and Law.
- *One College ... One Team ... One Focus Initiative*
  - This Action Team has already implemented some of the social aspects of this initiative and efforts are underway to address the multi-disciplinary research issues described above.
  - Denise cited Jim Johnson's view that the college needs to produce a faculty and staff expertise booklet.
- *Branding Initiative*
  - Denise acknowledged that this has always been a hard one. Simply put, how do we do it? The college will need to invest some money in a branding campaign.
  - The Council of Deans is working on a system to communicate with current students and prospective students using multiple, targeted messages.
  - The college is looking at database marketing.
  - Mark Smith, an alumnus and expert in the branding and media placement field, will be bringing us a proposal in this regard.

Wayne Smith posed, *How real is all this?* He then elaborated by saying, to know if the COB is succeeding, it will require quantitative metrics. The college must be able to directly correlate priorities with quantitative measures to determine evidence of progress and the impact of efforts. Thus, it is important to create metrics that demonstrate we have reached our goals.

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<sup>10</sup>See [http://www.niuonline.niu.edu/story\\_seclife.html](http://www.niuonline.niu.edu/story_seclife.html).

The Dean stated that the COB leadership is making a conscious effort to have resources follow activities, which have clearly articulated goals and objectives. As is typical with any strategic plan, however, some of the Strategic Initiatives metrics need to be tightened up and fleshed out before they can be funded. Anthony D'Andrea clarified that the *Endowment* and *Branding* Strategic Initiatives won't *make it happen* ... but they will reflect what we're doing and, where activities are occurring, they represent blueprints for accomplishments. (As an aside, the Dean acknowledged there is a growing realization the COB has to have a presence in Chicago, which will necessitate adding activities there, to aid in raising awareness of what we have to offer the business community.)

The discussion briefly returned to consideration of concept paper proposals and whether the COB should participate in this process. While what these proposals *precisely* should include remains a little vague, there was a strong sense – as expressed by Jim Young and supported by the SPC – that the COB should pursue this opportunity. It was noted that, in endeavors such as these (irrespective of whether at NIU or elsewhere), there is a tendency to award projects with a research focus. In all likelihood, proposals that are multi-disciplinary in nature and involve constituencies across several departments within a single college, or colleges across the university, may be positively viewed, as well. For any concept paper the COB submits, the proposal will need to document to which NIU Strategic Imperative(s) it is aligned. A parallel, synergistic activity to the proposal process is the possibility of identifying external foundations/grants, which may offer additional funding streams.

#### New SPC Action Team: COB Strategic Plan Review

Denise asked for volunteers to join her, Paul Prabhaker, Sonja Herington, and Sally Wakefield on this action team, which will be looking at the COB Strategic Plan. In response, Nancy Russo and Chuck Gowen stepped forward to serve on this team. This team's charge and objectives will be brought back to SPC in November. Ultimately, the SPC in its entirety will look at the Strategic Plan relative to aligning it with the AACSB Standards and the University's imperatives.

#### Strategic Initiative Action Teams – Membership Changes

SPC members were asked to email Denise Schoenbachler and Sally Wakefield by the week of October 15 if they elect to switch teams.<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, it will be assumed members wish to remain on the same team as last year. The only team currently at max is the Global SIAT.

### **3. SPC X APRIL 27, 2007, MINUTES**

A motion to approve the April 27, 2007, minutes was made by Charles Petersen, seconded by Jane Mall, and passed unanimously.

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The Dean thanked everyone for participating in an engaging dialogue about the University's and COB's strategic direction. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 9, 2 – 4 P.M. Depending upon the attendance count, the meeting will be in the Dean's Conference Room or BH 300. The main topics of discussion will be the NIU Strategic Imperatives, COB Strategic Plan alignment, and COB concept paper proposals. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally A. Wakefield  
COB Strategic Planning Coordinator

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<sup>11</sup>See Attachment A: *SPC XI Strategic Initiatives Actions Teams* list as of 10-19-07.