

Strategic Planning Steering Committee Meeting

12/16/2020 1-3 pm, Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Present: **UCR:** Tom Smith, Johnny Cruz, Christiane Weirauch, Nichi Yes, Crystal Petrini, John Haberstroh, Yat Sun Poon, Xiaoping Hu, Timothy Lyons, Christian Shelton, Gabriela Canalizo, Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera, Bruce Link, Rebekah Richert, Kathryn Uhrich, Chris Lynch, Rodolfo Torres, Peter Hayashida, Brian Haynes, Ken Baerenklau, Julia McLean **AKA Strategy:** Tony Knerr

Absent: Eddie Comeaux, Xuan Liu, Luis Huerta, Jason Stajich, Juliet McMullin

Agenda in Brief

1:00 Welcome & Meeting Goals (*Tom Smith*)

1:05 Workgroup Feedback & Discussions

1:05 RSD

1:20 USE

1:35 TCC

1:50 CPG

2:05 SIOF

2:20 General Discussion

2:55 Next Steps

Meeting Minutes

Welcome (*Tom Smith*)

Thank you everyone for joining us just before the holiday break. This will hopefully be our second to last Steering Committee meeting. Thank you to each of you and everyone in your working group for taking the time to read and give detailed comments on the Strategic Plan Draft.

Approval of September Minutes

The September 18th minutes are unanimously approved with no suggested edits.

Meeting Goals

The goal of today's meeting is to hear summaries of your working group discussions and get overall reactions. We will provide space to hear and discuss your concerns and suggestions on how we can make this more readable, more exciting, and more motivating.

Meeting Structure: One working group chair will talk through a summary of their working group's comments and then we will discuss those comments as a whole group before moving on to the next chair. It will be most helpful to come away from each discussion with some specific ways to address the challenges and comments brought forth.

My goal today is to listen, absorb, and ask follow up questions on things that need some discussion among the group. Ken will manage the chat and discussion, Julia will take copious notes, and Tony will moderate the conversation for any statements that need further development.

We will take your suggestions back to our virtual offices and update the draft, providing you with the penultimate draft of the Strategic Plan in the new year. We want you to come out of this meeting feeling like if we address your concerns and comments from today, our next draft will be ready to share with campus.

Workgroup Feedback & Discussions

Research and Scholarly Distinction Feedback

- RSD Chair and Vice Chair are on the same page and happy that the latest version reflects most of what they had in their working group report. From their committee they also heard that working group members were mostly happy with it.
- Early versions of plan did not reflect the working group report the way they had hoped, but this current draft came much closer to capturing what they have worked on over the past year.
- **Core Principles:** The core principles which open the document lack an important thing that UCR does as a university which is motivate a sense of curiosity across all disciplines. It does not mention that one of our principles is to ask big questions and find big answers.
 - **Too Restrictive:** As written, this draft may be too restrictive and overly emphasize applied research instead of fundamental research.
- **Needs More Arts & Humanities:** When the RSD working group adjusted their committee, they saw clearly that their report draft did not represent arts and humanities. They worked hard to prioritize and emphasize filling those gaps in our document and would like to see that in the larger document, too.
- **Relationship between Working Group Report & Strategic Plan:**
 - How will the two documents be related? The RSD Working Group Report has specific recommendations developed in great detail. This document does not call that out and there is concern that the WG reports will be lost to a link that most people will not click.
- **Sense of Wonder:** The university document should have the opportunity to conjure more of a sense of wonder and leave the nuts and bolts to the RSD report.

Research and Scholarly Distinction Discussion

- **Response to Relationship between WG Reports and Strategic Plan:** The idea is that when individual units are working on their own plans, they will want to see the specific recommendations from the working groups. The plan will link to those reports but the point is taken that the document can do a better job of emphasizing the WG reports.
 - **Discussion Point:** WG reports should be called out in the larger document because they provide the roadmap.
 - **Discussion Point:** For most external audiences the focus will be on the main strategic plan document. For internal audiences, departments and administration often referenced the working group reports from the previous plan (UCR 2020). The entire collection would be publicly available, but it is expected that the WG reports to be mainly used internally.
- **Investing Resources:** The Strategic Plan is expected to help identify how UCR invests resources so the research part of this document is of particular importance. Does this document help guide where investment needs to be made? Does this document get to that specificity or does it feed down to other documents that still need to be made at department and college levels?
 - **Response:** RSD talked a lot about finding that right balance. RSD took a different approach from UCR 2020 (which used h-indices to try to quantify excellence to target money). Instead, RSD provided examples of excellence and the WG report says that the UCR Strategic Plan should not only make suggestions, but describe a mechanism in place to help administrative make those touch choices.

- **Response:** In the WG report there are a few bullet points that address the targeted areas and that UCR should seek new research and funding across disciplinary boundaries (Section C.1 of RSD Report). Strategic investment will not just be in one area or another, but in a different way of doing science. These statements have received some attention in the larger document, too.
- **What is UCR not investing in?** If this document does not name what the university is going after and what it is not, it won't happen. This document should at least state that strategic investment needs to be done, that we will name those areas, and this is how.
 - **Response:** The RSD report and the Strategic Plan both state that UCR needs to have strategic investment.
 - **Response:** It is also important to name which areas we will not invest in. Deans will decide where to hire and put resources and if they go after something the campus decides to scale back, we eventually lose those faculty. The interplay here makes a big difference in the ability to be strategic.
 - **Response:** The plan should not say what UCR won't invest in. If it is not stated here or fitting into the interdisciplinary categories, UCR won't target for investment.
- **Milestones & Checkpoints:** The document should say by when, by whom, and by what mechanism these goals will happen, otherwise they won't happen. This conversation happened 10 years ago, too. Even though this plan should stay at 30,000 feet, UCR would be better-served to say (example) will happen by December 31st, 2021 and that it will happen by (example) group.
 - General agreement with including checkpoints and milestones and targets.
 - And early takeaway from RSD's forum efforts was that campus was hesitant and would not list strategic investment areas. The RSD group went boldly and has "named names" which was a real step forward. Now, we need to take it a bit farther.
 - **Response:** This Strategic Plan will be followed by an implementation process which should take care of some of these questions. It will begin around Spring Quarter with the expectation that it is an engaged and shared process. After 6 months or so there should be a document that answers what is going to happen, by when, and by whom.
 - **Response:** Yes. The implementation process will be a multi-level process and there will be a campus-wide implementation plan but there will also need to be implementation plans at the dept and college levels. As UCR has moved toward a model with less funding in the central resources, the real work needs to happen in the colleges and schools. Hard decisions will be made there.
- **Health Disparity:** The example on health should include health disparity as a targeted area.
 - **Follow-up Question:** We do mention addressing racial and social disparities in the preceding bullet ("Fostering an equitable society"). Should it should also be present in the "Living healthier and longer" bullet?
 - **Response:** Yes.
- **Global Economy:** On the master document, the "Managing the globally connected economy" bullet has similar problems. What is listed omits economics (for instance) and isn't really about global economy, but about technology.
- **Working Group Reports:** Can we post all of the working group reports with the Strategic Plan and ask for public comment?
 - **Response:** Yes.

Unparalleled Student Experience Feedback

- **Posting the WG Reports:** USE went into this process knowing that their report was advisory. Still, a lot of important ideas in their document did not make it into the final report. How will the WG's investments be acknowledged? Can they be posted to campus and considered more fully vetted and approved by campus? They'd like campus to be committed to the ideas in the WG reports.
- **Define Readership:** Who is the intended audience of the Strategic plan? Working Group reports?
- **Reduce the focus on AAU profile**
 - Aiming for AAU profile limits potential. Instead, let's set goals based on how UCR can become an "unparalleled" institution of higher education providing unique and distinctive leadership to the nation and/or how we can advocate for change of the AAU parameters.
 - If AAU is the goal, UCR should try to be innovators. Our goals go beyond their profile and there are things we could do to be leaders. But, reduce focus of this in the document.
 - General agreement that the emphasis on the AAU profile should be reduced.
 - **Comment:** Reducing the focus on AAU was mentioned by provost candidates. It seems as if the entire campus feels this is the most important thing because the document starts this way. Change the order?
 - **Comment:** The emphasis on AAU seemed contradictory to the title "Defining the Future of Public Higher Education". If UCR is defining the future we shouldn't hold ourselves to someone else' (possibly antiquated) standard.
 - **Comment:** The document was aiming for the idea of "AAU+" but we haven't hit the mark yet.
- **Reconsider how diversity is addressed**
 - This seems like a resource we are exploiting instead of a value UCR embraces
 - More discussion on diversity's value, impact, and our commitment to celebrating all that diversity brings to the UCR community.
- **Commitment to full-circle assessment**
 - This document must make an explicit commitment to assessment. Commit to infrastructure and set up mechanisms to make sure we accomplish our strategic goals.
- **Explicitly address and include staff**
 - The role of staff feels absent from this document at least in terms of explicit acknowledgement of staff as members of the UCR community and ways in which strategic initiatives will also target and benefit staff. This document doesn't quite do it yet.
- **USE Specific Suggestions:**
 - **Lessen the focus on honors & existing programs.**
 - Using the vignettes to highlight existing programs, instead of creating and imagining opportunities, has the effect of limiting the ambition of this strategic plan.
 - Currently highlighted programs, like Honors, are models for promoting the success of UCR's top-achieving students. Embracing these models for all students without critical consideration will likely increase (rather than decrease) inequities in students' opportunities and potential for success at UCR.
 - There may be other programs and ideas to highlight which meet the needs of all students at both UG and GRAD level.
 - **Expand on Item II.3 (Expanding educational access in ways that are resilient to disruption)**
 - If this is meant to be about online education, say that. If this is meant to be more open about all ways to expand access, then say those more specifically because we don't know what this part of the document was intending to accomplish.

Unparalleled Student Experience Discussion

- **AUU Comments:**
 - General agreement to reduce focus and pull it from 1st position.
 - AAU should be mentioned but it should not be the first thing.
 - AAU should be a milestone along the way, not the end goal of a document which is supposed to guide UCR to many years into the future.
 - Putting AAU first gives the wrong perception of its priority in relation to the other goals.
 - AAU is important and must be mentioned. We can't control membership or change the charter but what would move us closer to membership meshes well with much of the rest of or document.
 - Suggestion: Pull from the RSD report where this goal is listed 4th and worded carefully.
 - It makes a difference to be part of the AAU. UCR is implicitly excluded from various considerations without it. It lowers us in the system's eyes. While it may depend more on politics than our efforts, it is still a seal of quality that does impact us.
- **Diversity Comments:**
 - Overuse of the term diversity. We could reduce it by about 50%. Not because it is not an important value but because using it in a more sparing and targeted way will pack more of a punch. No one will walk away from this document thinking that UCR doesn't take this diversity seriously as an endeavor for the greater good.
- **Honors Programs:**
 - The Honor's program is all about high-achieving students but UCR is about respect, social mobility, and supporting many forms successful education and learning takes. This document is the place to address changing the honors program or adopting new, more inclusive programs. Let's offer something that works better for all of our students.
- **Readership:** There are many different people who will read this document, from school counselors and principals to students. When we compose the student experience portion and when we talk about diversity, let's keep those audiences in mind. The current document seems meant only for UCR's inner circle.
- **Staff Inclusion:** The document lists staff as a constituency in several places, which is an improvement but there are still not programs or initiatives that include or impact staff.

Thriving Campus Community Feedback & Discussion

- *(Pre-Submitted Written Feedback)* The report is clearly-articulated, succinct and "punchy." However, some members have minor comments on its stylistic and think "world-class" seem overused. While their occasional use in the text of a document maybe OK, having them appear prominently in the title of our first goal – "Distinctive, World-Class Research and Scholarship" seemed a bit bombastic and perhaps even a shade defensive. Generally, universities and researchers who are already doing "world-class" research do not need to brag about their research being "world-class." They would have preferred different adjectives to describe the research and scholarship at UCR – "frontier," "socially-relevant," "problem-driven," or "solutions-based." Even labeling it as just "distinctive research" would be fine.
- **Diversity Response:** There are not too many mentions of diversity but it is not portrayed in the best or most positive way. Better develop the term and explain its value.

- **Implementation:** This document is not the place to flesh out the implementation details but there is already a little bit toward the end. In the *Accountability* section, it states that each implementation plan must engage the entire unit (end of first paragraph, in bullet 1). Provide more context here. What is the vision for the consultative process? What went well for the committees was having students, staff, and faculty and if the document only includes this one sentence of direction it will not be performed as well as it should be.
 - **Response:** Let's be careful not to over prescribe as it may not be appropriate for all implementation groups to include all people on all things. It could even be problematic.
- **Public WG Reports:** If WG reports are going to be public, TCC wants to adjust some language.
 - **Response:** The reports will be public. TCC (or any WG) can submit a revised document.
 - General agreement that the WG reports should be made public and mentioned early in the strategic plan document.

Contributions to the Public Good Feedback & Discussion

- General positivity about how this document came together. A great job summarizing everything that was said in each of the WG reports (and more). A few notes from the CPG group and chairs.
- CPG liked seeing their report represented throughout the document. Specifically, about how public good is communicated and linked to the university, awarding faculty for public good work, and strongly representing how UCR can advance itself by setting up public good structures. CPG liked the emphasis on the pipeline because that came up in the local community interviews over and over again.
- **Portal Group:** The report needs to include this. UCR needs to have someone responsible for making the connections between the university and the community.
 - **Question:** This draft tried to emphasized the *what* and not the *how*. Is CPG saying that in this case the Portal group is the *what*?
 - **Answer:** Yes, in this case the what and how blur a bit, but the portal group is important it needs to be in the strategic plan, not just WG report.
 - **Comment:** The portal group is the agent. The person who would coordinate and oversee the process of making the community to campus public good connection happen. They are not the how, they are the agent that helps determine the how. That is why we wanted that detail from our report in the larger document.
 - **Comment:** CPG has some wording suggestions that they will forward to Ken and team.
- **Implementation:** More on implementation and follow through. Who will be responsible for these goals?
- **Distinctive UCR Narrative and Voice:** The current document does not reflect who UCR is or why someone would want to come here as a professor or student. This will be a touchstone document that the chancellor (etc.) refers back to when speaking about our campus. The document should even include a key phrase about UCR. This usability is not developed.

Sustainable Infrastructure, Operations and Finance Discussion

- **Entrepreneurial Activity:** A segue into SIOF conversation. The CPG section, in passing, mentioned entrepreneurship. This is an important activity in terms of public good and in terms of diversifying revenue. There should be more of this throughout the document.

Sustainable Infrastructure, Operations and Finance Feedback & Discussion

- SIOF was generally happy and thought their report materials were well-reflected throughout the document. A few notes:

- **Tone:** The tone of the document needs work. It starts off with hyperbole but then proceeds into a standard tone with repetitive sentence constructions which makes it difficult to read.
- **Vignettes:** The SIOF group is of mixed mind about vignettes. They liked the fact that they sparked imagination and creativity but when they were prescriptive SIOF though they were problematic. They need to all be at the same level and at that higher-up, inspirational level.
- **International profile:** A robust international profile helps recruit students and students and helps with funding problems. Make more prominent that UCR is an international player.
- **Experiential Learning:** SIOF learned a lot about the importance of experiential learning (when students participate outside of the classroom in something that is not research). Can this be bolstered?
- **Mental Health:** Taking care of and improving the mental health of students is vital. It is mentioned under *Access* but seems buried and lost and should be brought to the forefront.
- **Simultaneous Consideration when Planning:** The implementation planning needs to consider everything all at once. We cannot grow one branch and then another. We cannot grow undergraduate programs without growing graduate programs. We cannot grow faculty without building more buildings, and so on. We don't need to dwell on it, but we can acknowledge this has been a problem in UCR's past. Moving forward, UCR must be proactive in considering how the university will grow altogether, instead of sending something off into the stratosphere without giving it the necessary support.

General Discussion

Vignettes

Discussion Prompt: We'd like to hear more thoughts on the varying opinions on vignettes. If they do not work for you, help us fix them or get them closer to accomplishing what they are meant to.

- **Note:** The current draft deliberately has more vignettes than are intended for the final draft. We can (and will) cut the ones that don't work.
- Many people did not love the vignettes at first but have grown to appreciate their function.
- **Engaging Alumni as Mentors:** The 'engaging alumni as mentors' vignette is impactful because inherent in that example is the idea that we should be tracking alumni giving in time instead of just dollars which is a valid and progressive metric.
 - **Comment:** UCR already tracks alumni volunteers' time, albeit not as comprehensively as we could. However, it is true that very often a faculty or staff member will engage an alumnus they know and we never find out.
- **Business School Faculty Creating a Curriculum:** This vignette is a bit more problematic because it can be taken out of context. Ex. Is there is an expectation for computer science faculty to build information systems or economics professors to build the budget? Vignettes should be imaginative but not too real, in case they are taken out of context.
- **Consistency - Aspirational vs. Tactical:** General positivity about the chosen examples in the draft but some are aspirational and others are too tactical. Keep them more academic, and maybe even raise them a level so that they are not read as directives.
 - **Comment:** There is a lot of fluff here with the varying degrees of specificity. Vignettes wield a lot of power and choosing them is similar to choosing areas of strategic investments because everyone wants to be seen in the document. Language is particularly important here.

- **Introducing the Vignettes:** Back and forth about whether or not the vignettes need to be introduced and explained or if they can be understood from context.
 - **English as a Second/Third Language:** The purpose of the vignettes has been confusing for members on the committee who speak English as their 2+ language. Consider that this may be the case for other readers whose first language is not English. The intention of these vignettes is not entirely clear.
 - Describe the vignettes' purpose in the document so that readers have a clear understanding of what they are and how they are intended to be used.
- **Graduate Student Vignette:** The current illustration has little to nothing to do with graduate students so we should cut that one completely and replace it. Ideally, let's focus on the fact that more than anything graduate students want funding. A tangible and useful illustration could be: *By 2030, all graduate students at UCR have five years of funding.*
- **Diversity:** Diversify the vignettes by taking a DEI approach. Look through for examples about each stakeholder group (staff, faculty, and students), about each college and department, and for various levels of administration and implementation, etc.
 - AND/OR Consider making the departments in the examples vaguer so that certain colleges and departments don't feel left out or overly directed.
 - **Too STEM Focused:** More vignettes with an interdisciplinary approach or fuse in some of the CHASS fields.
- **Distracting, use formatting:** It does read as distracting in the body of the text. Pull the vignettes out of the text into separate and highlighted boxes.
- **Videos:** We might make short videos of the vignettes to show the imagination and creativity of this is where UCR might go. It would be a lot of work but could turn out great.
- **Open Vignettes to Campus Input:** Create some sort of process (maybe with the help of Johnny's team) to get user-generated ideas. Have campus members submit imaginative examples so that everyone can see themselves through the vignettes.
 - **Can we open it up to social media?**
 - Some of the submitted vignette would have to be cut by someone/group.
 - Maybe there could be a competition, with a voting period?
- **Fair Representation:** When this draft goes public, won't every department on campus suggest a vignette to include their interests?
 - **Stimulate Creativity:** That is one thing that these do well, is stimulate creativity in people who read them. They ask, what is an example for my department? And isn't that the point? Let's encourage the creativity that they will hopefully inspire.
 - People should give their own examples of how to see themselves in the document through vignettes. More ownership.

Discussion Prompt: Is this draft bold enough aspirational enough? Does it make UCR distinctive enough?

- **Collective Ownership & Hard Work Ahead:** This needs to be collectively owned by the campus or it is not going to happen so making some part of the process generative is a great goal. This draft is close to the boldness that we need. Some of the hardest work that needs to be done is yet to be done.
- **Strategic Plan as General Path:** This process has demonstrated that the strategic plan is more about charting a general path, rather than giving turn by turn directions. In that sense, this draft does not seem bold (could be bolder with more specifics and details). Consider the perspective

of students on campus right now. They are not going to reap the reward of any of this. They should be able to at least read this plan and know that future students will have a better (and better funded) experience.

- **Bold, not Distinctive:** This document is bold in every sense. What is missing is distinctiveness. This plan, with a change of title and logo, could fit a lot of other universities.
 - That is a difficult ask because the fact is, UCR is like other universities because it is the same industry. Many of our goals align with the goals of others.
 - To be distinctive, this plan would need to be more specific than it is right now. This document has backed off of a lot of those specific in this document but there is still some left. For example, we have ¼ of our document on DEI and that says something.
 - Let's not confuse unique with distinctive.
 - We need to speak more prominently about what UCR is already doing and doing well.
- **Long-term Relevance:** This document should be relevant for more than 5 years.

Discussion Prompt: Does this current draft have enough of a narrative and storyline? Does it create a vision of an institution that you would be excited about? Does it make your hair stand on end?

- **New Metrics:** UCR emphasizes being number one in social mobility and talks a lot about measuring ourselves against different metrics. That is not reflected as well in this document. It is not bold enough and it is not charting a different way of doing things.
- **Title:** *Defining the Future of Higher Education:* Is that the right title?
 - Shouldn't the title be more about UCR? Maybe something like "Defining UCR as the future of higher education". Either way, no, the title is not there yet.
- Needs a strong narrative. There are pieces of a story there but they don't work together, yet.
- **Target Audience:** Are we tailoring this document for different audiences? We might need a much shorter and tighter version for people like high school counselors and potential students who are not likely to read (or care about the details in) this entire document.
 - That is reasonable. There will be other derivative documents for those audiences.
- While this document does have different purposes (and while there may be different versions) anyone who picks it up should be inspired and know UCR after reading it.

Next Steps

Next, we will digest and summarize what we heard today and work with Johnny Cruz's group to develop a penultimate draft. We will summarize how we handle each of the questions you raised and circulate that to you so that you can understand how we tried to address your issues.

We will send you what we hope is the Penultimate draft in advance of our January 26th meeting. At that meeting, we hope for the steering committee to endorse the draft so that we can take it to campus.

We will provide campus a few different opportunities to come together and provide feedback, we hope that everyone will take the time to read it and encourage others to do so as well.

Again, thank you all. You have put in a lot of effort to get us to where we are. Your research and hard work have really paid off. Enjoy your winter break!