

FOCUS 50-100 STRATEGIC PLAN (11/7/2008) EXCERPTS

IDENTITY AND VALUES

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, is a research institution committed to rigorous educational programs and the highest standards of a liberal education. We produce accomplished graduates who are well prepared to enter the work force or to continue their education in graduate and professional programs. Our faculty, students, and staff enthusiastically confront the challenges of economic and cultural diversification, urban growth, social justice, and sustainability. Our commitment to our dynamic region and State centrally influences our research and education programs, which improves our local communities. Our commitment to the national and international communities insures that our research and educational programs engage both traditional and innovative areas of study and global concerns. UNLV's distinctive identity and values permeate a unique institution that brings the best of the world to our region and, in turn, produces knowledge to improve the region and world around us.

UNLV is committed to and driven by these shared values that will guide our decision making:

- High expectations for student learning and success;
- Discovery through research, scholarship, and creative activity;
- Nurturing equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment;
- Social, environmental, and economic sustainability;
- Strong, reciprocal, and interdependent relationships between UNLV and the region around us;
- An entrepreneurial, innovative, and unconventional spirit.

EDUCATION

The UNLV community is dedicated to our students' success, designing learning experiences characterized by opportunities for achievement in and out of the classroom. Students will acquire the skills, knowledge, and values needed to be successful, informed and engaged citizens in the global community. Acquisition of such skills is measured by a comprehensive assessment process that tracks achievement and guides curriculum development. Our education educational programs promote:

- Understanding of local, regional and global connections and systems as well as the development of multi-cultural and plura-cultural competencies.
- Broad elucidation of sustainability as it impacts economic, environmental, and social concerns.
- Integrative thinking across a spectrum of disciplines.
- Substantial research, scholarly, and creative opportunities for all students.
- Diversity, leadership, social justice, ethical responsibility, and civic engagement.
- The ability to understand and embrace constructive change.

Foundational Skills

As a result of their educational experience at UNLV, students will master the foundational skills and abilities required for a liberal education, allowing them to be successful in their lives and careers. Our graduating students will be:

- Intellectually competent, with the foundational skills needed for success.
- Able, as critical thinkers, to embrace complexity and abstraction.
- Appreciative of aesthetics and creative expression.
- Able to access information effectively.
- Well versed in the principles of research.
- Self-motivated, independent, life-long learners.
- Able to think independently, while still being effective in collaborative activities.

- Adaptive problem-solvers who are willing to challenge conventional wisdom.
- Accountable for their own well-being as responsible individuals who also contribute to the well-being of others and of society.
- Open to the exchange of ideas, including those from diverse and global communities.
- Capable of achieving success in their chosen fields and disciplines.

EDUCATION PRIORITIES

The campus called for improving the success of our students, as measured through retention and graduate rates, by establishing a first year and academic success center and initiating first year learning communities that could be used to get our students off to a strong start. An academic success center would be a first point of contact for students with career and major questions, or who had difficulties adjusting to classes and college life. Revising the general education program to embed the skills and values identified above into the undergraduate curriculum was a major priority. We committed to developing a comprehensive assessment program to insure that students were achieving our stated learning outcomes. The faculty also asked for mentoring programs and workshops to help them improve student learning, develop multidisciplinary curricula, and provide our students with better research and professional development experiences. Finally, we committed to working with sister institutions and K-12 to strengthen education on a state wide basis.

Student Success and Learning Communities

- Expand advising support and tie advising to registration for lower division and transfer students.
- Establish a set of ideal educational experiences and create organizational structures that improve student learning and their sense of community on campus.
- Develop unified first-year experiences that enable students to achieve common skills and knowledge sets before entering a major (e.g., interdisciplinary or cross-college teaching, combined courses for freshman students, perhaps themed learning communities).

Curriculum Improvement

- Establish an integrated curriculum, based on appropriate revision of the general education requirements, and assess the agreed upon student learning outcomes. Create additional capstone courses, including cross-disciplinary ones.
- Assess overall curricular effectiveness.
- Incorporate significant elements of international, multi-cultural, and plura-cultural education in the undergraduate program.
- Create and support relevant internships, service learning, and practitioner experiences to enable students to better understand professions in their discipline and further develop their professional aspirations.
- Integrate research components and competencies into all programs of study and require appropriate research experiences for all students.

Educational Collaboration and Partnerships

- Build linkages within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and other higher education entities to expand statewide access to critical programs not only for our students but also for students at partner institutions.
- Work with regional and state PK-12 institutions to help improve the success of entering students and to focus teacher training programs and priorities to reflect the needs of our community, the State, and the region.

- Collaborate with NSHE institutions and other higher education entities to insure academic integrity, consistent learning outcomes, fair credit allocation for transfer students, and to create clear articulation pathways for students from other institutions.

Research Experiences

- Integrate **research into all educational program**, recognizing that research is an indelible element of our educational mission and that education is a central element of our research mission.
- Require all undergraduate and graduate students to engage in appropriate research experiences in their programs of study.

Educational Innovation and Multidisciplinary Focus

- Develop trans-/multi-/inter-disciplinary programs and activities that incorporate multiple colleges, departments, and groups.
- Assess how the university is organized into programs, departments, and colleges to improve student learning environments and experiences, liberating us from constraining systems and structures.