The Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research (OPAIR)

University Strategic Plan Assessment

A Review of
Our Commitment to Impact

2016-2019

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This academic year, 2019-20, marks the halfway point of Penn State's ten-year strategic plan, *Our Commitment to Impact.* Initiated as a five-year process, the extension of the strategic plan offers an opportunity for the entire University to make an intentional, data-driven examination of their progress to date. This assessment opens the door to the next five years of the planning cycle, where the University will be moving forward with a more structured design and tracking process headquartered in the Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research.

In this high-level assessment, data were drawn from Unit level strategic plans, Executive Committee reports, and seed grant applications. These data were coded to determine connections to each of the main components of the institutional strategic plan: **Foundations** (Enabling Access to Education, Engaging Our Students, Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World[1], Enhancing Global Engagement, Driving Economic Development, and Ensuring a Sustainable Future), **Thematic Priorities** (Transforming Education, Enhancing Health, Stewarding Our Planet's Resources, Advancing the Arts and Humanities, and Driving Digital Innovation[2]), and **Supporting Elements** (Organizational Processes, Infrastructure and Support, and Constituent Outreach and Engagement).

Unit Plans

The assessment of Unit Plans was performed as an aggregate of the entire body of institutional planning work, rather than attempting to isolate the contribution of individual units. This aggregation was performed at the Objective rather than Goal level to provide more explicit connections with the various components of the plan. Many Goals linked to multiple components, while each Objective had an identifiable primary association with a segment of the plan.

Unit Objectives connected most often with the Enabling Access to Education and Engaging Our Students Foundations; as well as the Supporting Elements of Constituent Outreach and Infrastructure and Support. Among the Thematic Priorities, Unit Objectives overwhelmingly aligned with Transforming Education – over half of the various Units' Objectives connected to this Thematic Priority.

Seed Grants

The Office of the Provost offered campus entities the opportunity to compete for seed grants funding pilot projects supporting *Our Commitment to Impact*. As part of the application process, seed grant applicants were required to indicate primary and secondary associations between their proposals and either a university strategic plan thematic priority or supporting element. Applicants also selected which of the university plan foundations their application would support. Since applicants could select more than one foundation, a coding process like the one used for unit plans was used to determine a funded application's primary foundation alignment. Data for the non-funded applications were drawn from self-reporting.

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[1] Foundation updated to "Engaging Principles of Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity" for the 2020-2025 extension of *Our Commitment to Impact*.

[2] Thematic Priority updated to "Empowerment through Digital Innovation" for the 2020-2025 extension.

In all, 265 total applications were received for seed grants through four funding cycles. Forty-three (43) initiatives were funded after review by the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee. Across these four funding cycles, more than $9 million in seed grants were awarded.

Among Foundations, Engaging our Students and Ensuring a Sustainable Future were most often associated with the funded grants. Transforming Education, followed by Stewarding our Planet's Resources, led the way with funded projects among the Thematic Priorities. Five seed grants were funded which focused primarily on the Supporting Elements.

Executive Committee Summaries

There are eight executive committees related to *Our Commitment to Impact*, one focused on each Thematic Priority and Supporting Element in the strategic plan. These committees met to establish goals for University-wide action on each of these components, as well as to enumerate larger scale initiatives taking place to support each area of the plan.

Each of the Executive Committees provided semi-annual reports to the Strategic Plan Oversight Committee about University-wide progress in each of these areas, outlining major initiatives in each of the eight areas, as well as potential leverage points for future direction of resources.

Summary Results of Oversight Committee Progress Reviews

The eight Executive Committees of *Our Commitment to Impact* report to a Strategic Planning Oversight Committee, chaired by Nick Jones, Executive Vice President and Provost. Subgroups of the Oversight Committee were tasked by the Provost with summarizing the 4-year progress of each of the foundations, thematic priorities and supporting elements of the University plan. They were provided with information from the original University planning process, seed grant analysis and progress, and Executive Committee reports submitted semi-annually for the last two years – as well as assessment results from unit plan analyses. These subgroups were each asked to compile a summary report on the progress of the segment of the University plan to which they were assigned. Along with the summary of progress, they were asked to suggest revised wording for the University strategic plan if updates were appropriate or required moving forward to 2025.

Recommendations

The Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research offers the following recommendations to the Penn State community for optimizing unit and university evolution via the planning process:

- Units should carefully review the standardized goals/objectives (KPIs)/action items (metrics) structure as well as designating members of unit leadership as point people for this process and draw thoughtful input from all Unit functional areas (i.e. departments, divisions, schools, programs, centers, institutes, et al).
- Adhere to deadlines for completion of data entry into the new assessment management system, *Nuventive*, during the planning process. Keeping to this schedule provides more opportunities for feedback.
- Identify areas both within each unit and university-wide to focus upon given this data. Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World should clearly be given priority.

- Units should consider if there are areas from the 2014-2019 planning cycle which could be considered self-sustaining. If so, effort and focus should be shifted to areas that may be lagging or were set aside due to resource constraints.
- The University should provide incentives to encourage units to create objectives (and thus, goals) related to underutilized components of the last cycle of plan via new rounds of targeted seed grant funding.

Introduction

Penn State's Strategic Plan, *Our Commitment to Impact*, has been extended from 2020 to 2025. This extension marks the first time that a PSU strategic plan has operated on a ten-year cycle. This expanded timeline provides opportunities to take advantage of an intentional, data-driven approach guided by the work to date within the institutional strategic plan. This report attempts to provide an *overall* picture of the plan's progress, as well as iterations and edits to the institutional plan based on analyses from the executive committees and foundation leads. Furthermore, this report will act as a tool and resource as units conduct a reflection and assessment of their own plans and seek to engage in the next iteration of their own planning cycles to 2025.

Core Components of the University Strategic Plan

Our Commitment to Impact is organized around three major areas: Foundations, Thematic Priorities, and Supporting Elements. These areas provide the basis for this summary report.

Foundations are integral to everything Penn State does and are essential to implementing the strategic plan. These foundations — **Enabling Access to Education**, **Engaging Our Students**, **Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World**, **Enhancing Global Engagement**, **Driving Economic Development**, and **Ensuring a Sustainable Future**—are not the responsibility of certain programs, units, or individual faculty and staff. Instead, these are imperatives for all members of our University community. The foundations are woven throughout the thematic priorities and are important considerations in implementing all of them. (*https://strategicplan.psu.edu/foundations/*)

The plan highlights five **thematic priorities**: **Transforming Education**, **Enhancing Health**, **Stewarding Our Planet's Resources**, **Advancing the Arts and Humanities**, and **Driving Digital Innovation**. These strategic areas of focus embody existing and emerging strengths and opportunities that were identified during Penn State's planning process (2016-2020). Each priority represents a breadth and depth of expertise and interest across multiple Penn State units where the University is well positioned to offer profound and measurable contributions with continued commitment and strategic investment of resources. The thematic priorities intersect with unit plans and pull from the human capital, infrastructure, and programs they represent, but by focusing on synergistic energy and resources they will enable a comprehensively strong Penn State impact.

These areas of focus are not intended to exclude or minimize the importance of the University's many other endeavors and enterprises, such as fundamental and applied research across a variety of disciplines, which remain at the core of our enterprise. Rather, for this plan (2016-2025), they are areas of opportunity we believe merit more attention and investment in the near term.

In addition, these thematic priorities are not prescriptive, but visionary. A strategic plan for an academic institution must serve as a consensus-driven beacon for future directions without the rigidity that can stifle innovation and the emergence of new and previously unimagined opportunities. In this plan, the vision is impact and these themes provide paths to achieving it where Penn State has expertise and assets. Interwoven with them are the foundations, which provide a scaffold on which the themes rest on a common framework for implementation. *(https://strategicplan.psu.edu/thematic-priorities/)*

The plan also identifies important components that must be in place for Penn State to pursue its thematic priorities and to support its mission and vision. The **Supporting Elements** are **Organizational**

[Processes](https://strategicplan.psu.edu/supporting-elements/), **[Infrastructure and Support](https://strategicplan.psu.edu/supporting-elements/)**, and **[Constituent Outreach and Engagement](https://strategicplan.psu.edu/supporting-elements/)**, and they are intended to support the thematic priorities and strengthen the overall impact of the strategic plan. *(https://strategicplan.psu.edu/supporting-elements/)*

Key Terms

Foundations

> The underlying basis for all decisions that engage and implement the vision, mission, and institutional values of the University.

Thematic Priorities

> Strategic areas of focus that embody existing and emerging strengths and opportunities while representing a breadth and depth of expertise across the University.

Supporting Elements

> Broad and overarching concepts that support the thematic priorities and support the University's mission and vision.

Goal

> An aspirational target. Goals are a "where to" expressing how a Unit desires to change within the planning cycle.

Objectives

> Outlines of how a unit hopes to achieve a goal. Progress towards an objective is measured by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Action Items

> The specific activities necessary to accomplish an objective. These combine strategies and tactics to demonstrate "how" a unit will achieve the objectives. Action items are assigned to specific groups or individuals and have deadlines attached. Progress on the completion of action items are measured by assigned metrics.

Strategies

> Broad illustrations of how a Unit plans to achieve its Objectives.

Tactics

> Concrete actions oriented toward what a Unit will do in service of their strategies to execute their strategies. They involve best practices, specific plans, resources, etc.

Methods

Data corpus

This assessment examined four major categories of institutional strategic plan progress to date:

- **Unit level strategic plans:** Plans from 49 budget units across Penn State, including all of Penn State' campuses, academic units, and administrative units, were analyzed. Unit data included the original or updated 2014-19 unit plans and alignment reports, in which units were asked to connect their strategic plans to the institutional strategic plan. These alignment reports were completed in 2016. In 2017 and 2018, units provided annual progress reports on their own strategic plans. Units were also provided with feedback in 2017 and 2018.

  All goals and objectives for the budget units listed on the Unit Planning page (https://strategicplan.psu.edu/unit-planning/) were coded in terms of the university foundations, thematic priorities and supporting elements. In total, amongst the 49 units included in this report, there were 263 goals and 951 objectives identified.
- **Executive committees:** There are eight executive committees, one focused on each thematic priority and supporting element in the strategic plan. Each executive committee was asked to provide updates to their respective thematic priority or supporting element every six months starting in January of 2017. Once a year, each executive committee also provided a strategy table related to their thematic priority or supporting element.
- **Seed grant recipients:** Seed grants were offered via the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost for pilot projects relating directly to the components of the Strategic Plan. Each of the 43 awarded groups was asked to provide progress reports every six months to the strategic plan oversight committee (which includes executive committee co-chairs). The timeframe for each seed grant can be from 1 to 3 years, and each group will be asked to submit a final report upon seed grant completion.
- **Signature Initiative groups:** As the strategic plan was implemented, large-scale Signature Initiatives arose from joint efforts across the University. Signature Initiative groups began to develop in fall of 2018 and will be asked to provide progress reports as well as outcomes to the oversight committee. These groups are at different phases of development with their initiatives and some groups are still crystallizing as of the writing of this report

Analysis framework

Unit Level Strategic Plans

One of the challenges in creating this summary was the variability among unit plans. All had at least two levels of hierarchy, which were loosely equivalent to "goals" and "objectives." Though different terms sometimes were used within the unit plans, goals were operationalized in this analysis as "what a unit hoped to accomplish during their strategic plan cycle", while objectives were operationalized as "the process by which a goal would be met by the unit."

As well, the unit plans had consistent linkages to *Our Commitment to Impact's* foundations, thematic priorities, and supporting elements. Once identified, unit goals and objectives were mapped to these core components of the university strategic plan.

Coding was carried through a textual analysis performed by multiple reviewers within the Office of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research. These codings were cross-checked for agreement among reviewers. If there were disagreements between reviewers in coding, discussion followed to gain consensus.

Though this type of coding analysis is somewhat limited, this analysis is the way in which we could most authentically balance the analysis between the strategic work of the unit and the framework of the institutional strategic plan. Unit objectives were used for the analysis rather than unit goals. Each unit goal was comprised of multiple objectives which often aligned with differing components of the institutional plan.

Executive Committee Reports

Executive committee reports were analyzed using this coding schema as well. These reports were analyzed over time and connected to the unit and RFP progress reports when appropriate. Relationships to the foundations were made visible when data was available. These results were then used by the executive committees and foundation leads in the institutional plan analysis to update the institutional strategic plan.

Seed Grant Projects

Applicants for Seed grant projects were required to indicate which thematic priority and foundation their project aligned with most closely. Applicants could select multiple priorities or foundations, if applicable. As well, a secondary analysis like that performed on the unit level plans determined with which Supporting Elements the grants best aligned.

Signature Initiatives

Signature initiatives are emerging from the strategic plan work that Penn State is conducting. These projects are new to the Penn State landscape. The University community is currently working on the advancement of the work of these initiatives as well as measurement of outcomes and impact. We expect more results related to these initiatives to emerge over time and will publish updates on these initiatives moving forward to 2025. There are currently five funded Signature Initiatives, one for each Thematic Priority:

- **One Penn State 2025** (Transforming Education)
- **Consortium to Combat Substance Abuse** (Enhancing Health)
- **Humanities Institute** (Advancing the Arts & Humanities)
- **Center for Immersive Experiences** (Driving Digital Innovation)
- **Consortium for Integrated Energy Systems** (Stewarding Our Planet's Resources)

Unit Plan assessment results

Following are breakdowns of the Objectives from the Unit Strategic Plans. The results of this assessment are intended to be high-level overviews of institutional plan progress to date. These results are provided to illustrate the *aggregation of all institutional work* across the unit plans, rather than the isolated contribution of any individual unit.

Justification for the use of objectives versus goals in analysis. Unit objectives were used for the analysis in order to acquire accurate and detailed results. At the unit goal level, it was difficult to classify each goal with a single accurate association to the university plan, as each unit goal's multiple objectives each had connections to different university plan components. However, unit objectives could be mapped more directly to the university plan. This was done by analyzing unit objectives and their supporting action items to determine the primary connection with university plan components. Secondary connections were noted separately. Visualizations are based on primary connections, except for supporting elements, which show all connections.

Unit Plans Mapping to Foundations

- Enabling Access to Education — 27%
- Engaging Our Students — 19%
- Driving Economic Development — 16%
- Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World — 15%
- No Associated Foundation — 13%
- Ensuring a Sustainable Future — 6%
- Enhancing Global Engagement — 4%

Unit Plans Mapping to Thematic Priorities

- Transforming Education — 51%
- No Associated Thematic Priority — 25%
- Driving Digital Innovation — 7%
- Stewarding our Planet's Resources — 7%
- Enhancing Health — 7%
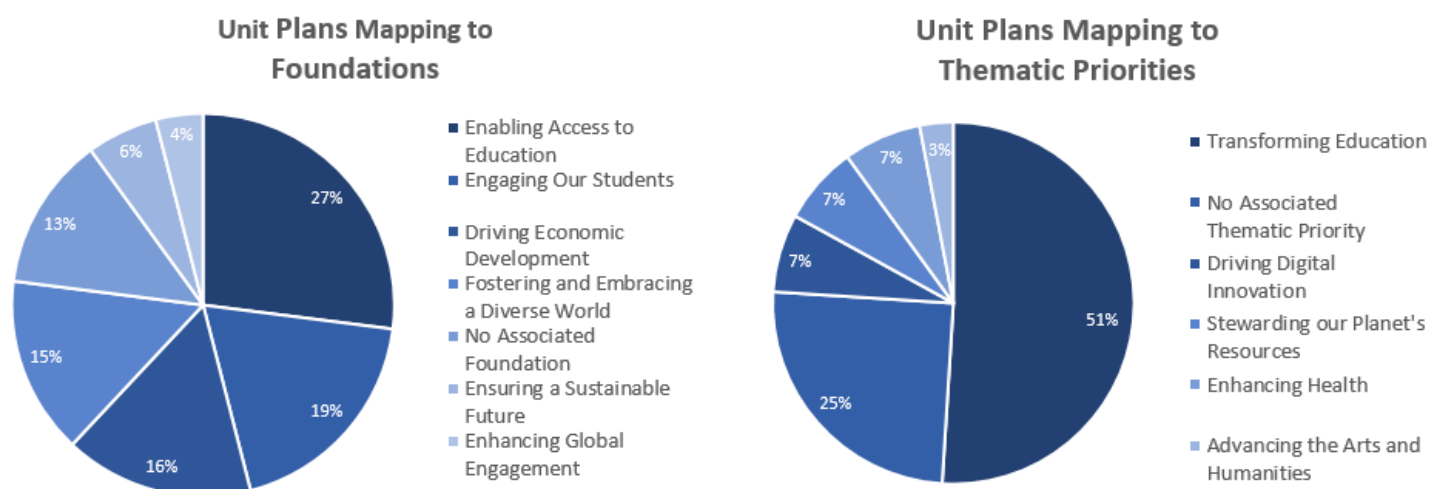- Advancing the Arts and Humanities — 3%

Figure 1 – Unit level Institutional Relationships to Foundations and Thematic Priorities

Figure 1 demonstrates the relationships of the units toward the various foundations and thematic priorities of the institutional strategic plan. The percentages are based on the count of objectives across all unit plans (n = 951) aligning primarily with a foundation or thematic priority. "No associated foundation" means the objective did not fit into any defined foundation category but may have been related to thematic priorities or supporting elements. The same is true for "no associated thematic priority." The Transforming Education thematic priority is linked to more than half of the objectives, while a more uniform distribution exists across the foundations.
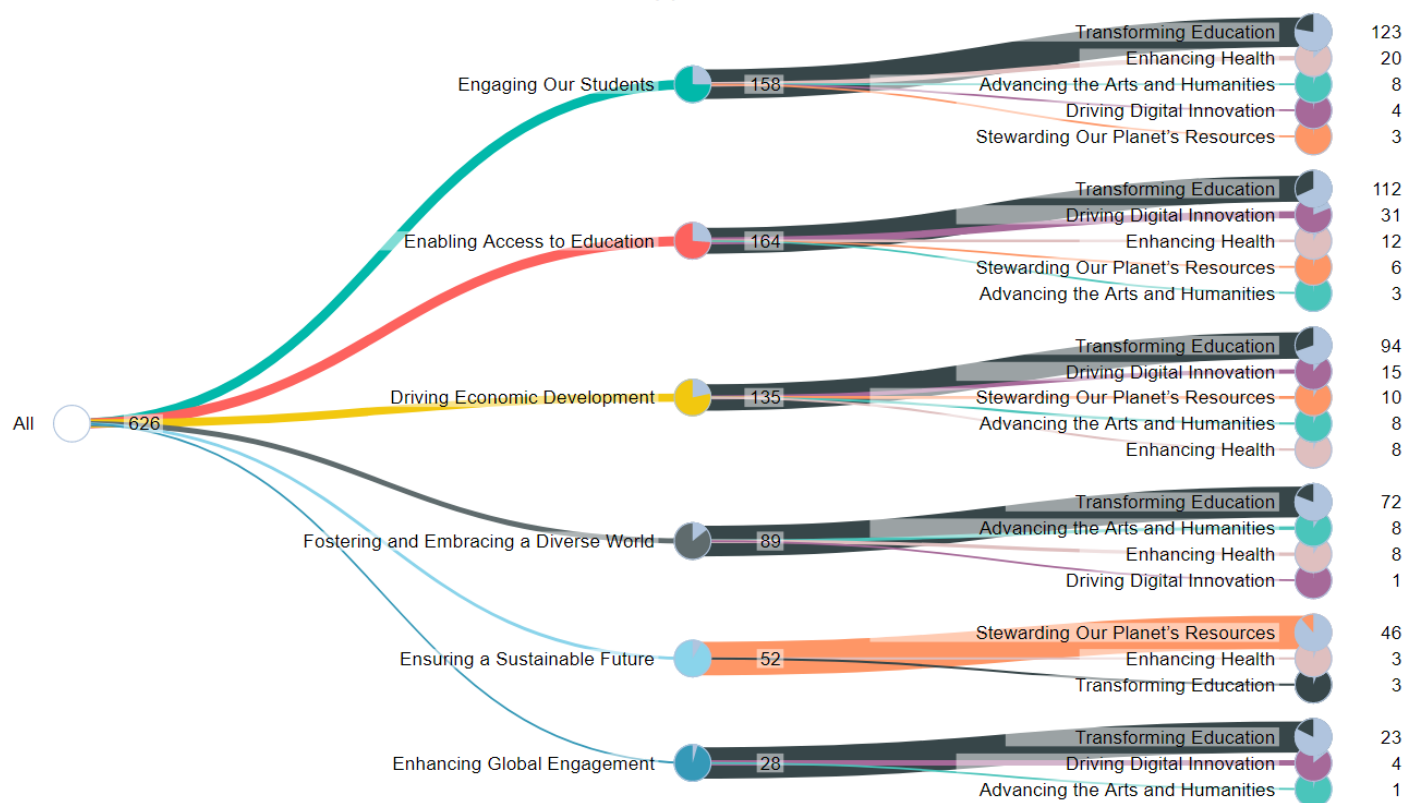
Figure 2 – Thematic Priority Associations Mapped to Foundations

Figure 2 illustrates how the unit thematic priority associations connect to the university foundations. The count (n=626) is based on the number of objectives in the unit plans associated with a thematic priority, with only one thematic priority linked to each objective. The objectives with no associated foundation and/or no associated thematic priority are not included in this figure. The Transforming Education thematic priority is the leading contributor to all foundations of the strategic plan except Ensuring a Sustainable Future.

Unit Plans Mapping to Supporting Elements

- ■ Constituent Outreach and Engagement
- ■ Infrastructure and Support
- ■ Organizational Processes
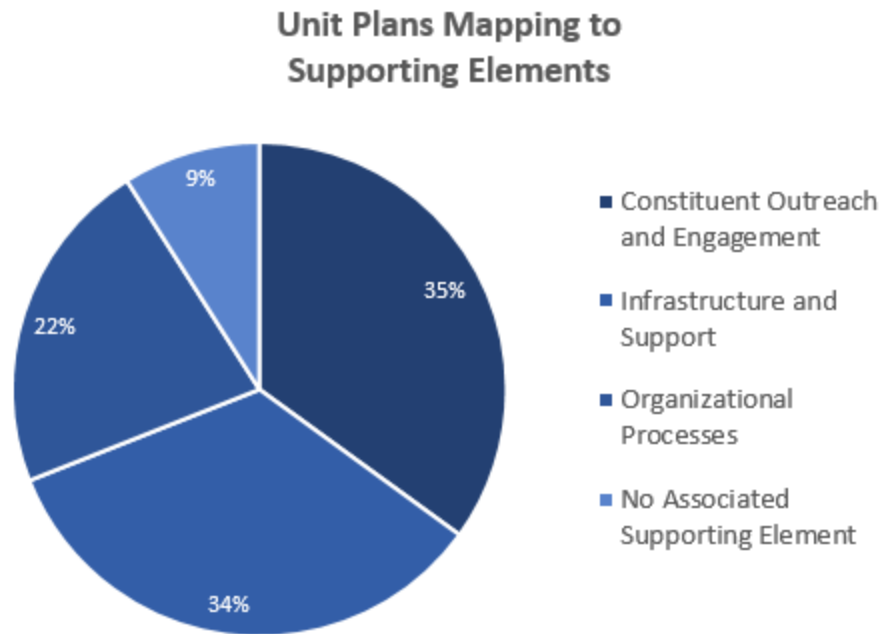- ■ No Associated Supporting Element

Figure 3: Institutional Effort around Supporting Elements

Figure 3 reflects the distribution of unit objectives mapped to supporting elements. Unit objectives could be mapped to multiple supporting elements. The distribution is approximately one third each for Infrastructure and Support and Constituent Outreach and Engagement, with Organizational Processes linked slightly less often.

Thematic Priority — **Supporting Element**

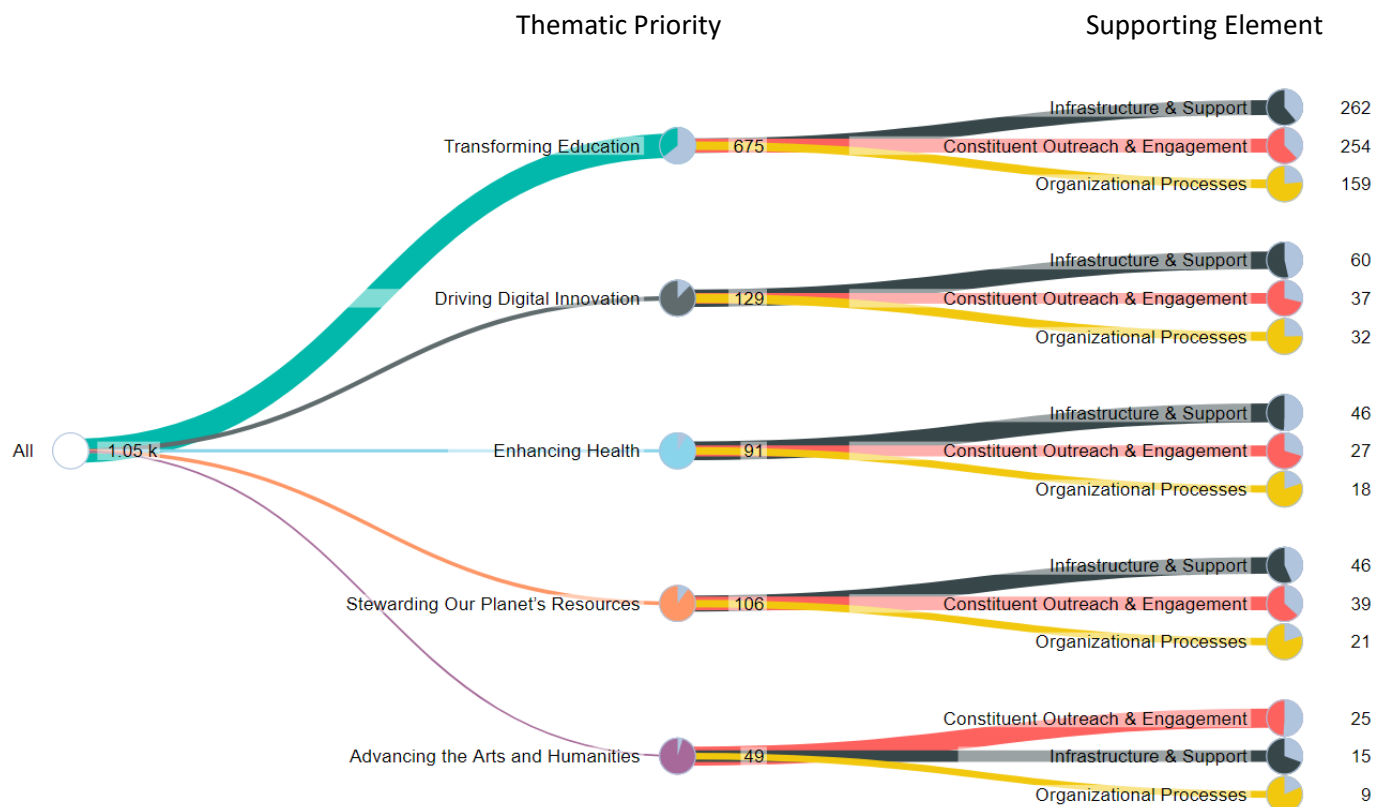| Transforming Education | 675 | Infrastructure & Support | 262 |
Constituent Outreach & Engagement	254
Organizational Processes	159
Driving Digital Innovation	129	Infrastructure & Support	60
Constituent Outreach & Engagement	37
Organizational Processes	32
Enhancing Health	91	Infrastructure & Support	46
Constituent Outreach & Engagement	27
Organizational Processes	18
Stewarding Our Planet's Resources	106	Infrastructure & Support	46
Constituent Outreach & Engagement	39
Organizational Processes	21
Advancing the Arts and Humanities	49	Constituent Outreach & Engagement	25
Infrastructure & Support	15
Organizational Processes	9

All — 1.05 k

Figure 4 – Supporting Elements Mapped to Thematic Priorities

Figure 4 shows the associated supporting elements in the plan mapped to the thematic priorities. Again, objectives could be mapped to more than one supporting element. The objectives that had no associated thematic priority and/or no associated supporting element were not included. This figure shows that objectives that related to Infrastructure and Support intersect the most with the thematic priorities.

Unit Objectives per Thematic Priority

Following is additional information about the Unit Objectives that were associated with each of the University Plan Thematic Priorities, per priority:

Advancing the Arts and Humanities

Thirty-three (33) Unit plan objectives mapped to Advancing the Arts and Humanities as a primary theme, as well as 49 additional objectives as a secondary theme. Objectives primarily mapped to the Advancing the Arts and Humanities theme were most often related to the foundations of Driving Economic Development (24%), Engaging our Students (24%), and Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World (24%).

Among supporting elements, Unit plan objectives that mapped to Advancing the Arts and Humanities related to Constituent Outreach and Engagement 45% of the time, Infrastructure and Support 27% of the time, and Organizational Processes 16% of the time.

Driving Digital Innovation

Sixty-nine (69) Unit plan objectives mapped to Driving Digital Innovation as a primary theme while 80 additional objectives noted it as a secondary theme. Objectives that were primarily mapped to the Driving Digital Innovation theme were most often related to the foundations of Enabling Access to Education (45%) and Driving Economic Development (22%).

Among supporting elements, Unit objectives that mapped to Driving Digital Innovation related to Constituent Outreach and Engagement 28% of the time, Infrastructure and Support 46% of the time, and Organizational Processes 24% of the time.

Enhancing Health

Sixty-two (62) Unit plan objectives mapped to Enhancing Health as a primary theme, as well as 30 additional objectives as a secondary theme. Objectives that were primarily mapped to the Enhancing Health theme were most often related to foundations of Engaging our Students (32%) followed by Enabling Access to Education (19%), Driving Economic Development (13%), and Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World (13%).

Among supporting elements, unit objectives that were primarily mapped to the Enhancing Health theme related to Constituent Outreach and Engagement 27% of the time, Infrastructure and Support 46% of the time, and Organizational Processes 18% of the time.

Stewarding Our Planet's Resources

Sixty-seven (67) Unit plan objectives mapped to Stewarding Our Planet's Resources as a primary theme, while 46 additional objectives noted it as a secondary theme. Objectives that primarily mapped to the Stewarding Our Planet's Resources theme were most often related to foundations of Ensuring a Sustainable Future (68%) followed by Driving Economic Development (15%).

Among supporting elements, Unit objectives that mapped to Stewarding Our Planet's Resources related to Constituent Outreach and Engagement 33% of the time, Infrastructure and Support 39% of the time, and Organizational Processes 18% of the time.

Transforming Education

Unit plan objectives mapped to Transforming Education as a primary theme in 486 cases and it was noted as a secondary theme in 136 additional objectives. Objectives that were primarily mapped to the Transforming Education theme were most often related to foundations of Engaging our Students (25%) followed by Enabling Access to Education (23%), Driving Economic Development (19%), and Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World (15%).

Among supporting elements, Unit objectives that mapped to Transforming Education related to Constituent Outreach and Engagement 34% of the time, Infrastructure and Support 35% of the time, and Organizational Processes 21% of the time.

Seed Grant Assessment Results

As noted earlier, the Office of the Provost offered campus entities the opportunity to compete for seed grants funding pilot projects which support *Our Commitment to Impact*. As part of the application process, seed grant applicants were required to indicate primary and secondary associations between their proposals and either a university strategic plan thematic priority or supporting element. Applicants also selected which of the university plan foundations their application would support. Since applicants could select more than one foundation, a coding process like the one used for unit plans was used to determine a funded application's primary foundation alignment. Data for the non-funded applications were drawn from self-reporting.

There were 265 total applications for seed grants. Forty-three (43) seed grants were funded over the first four cycles of competition. A few applications were funded through alternate sources.

The following information examines the breakdown of these grants across foundations, thematic priorities, and supporting elements.

Table 1 – Seed Grants Mapped to Strategic Plan Foundations

	Awarded		Not Awarded
	Primary	**Secondary**	**All mentions**
Enabling Access to Education	7	9	106
Engaging our Students	12	23	185
Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World	6	15	116
Enhancing Global Engagement	2	13	83
Driving Economic Development	5	9	98
Ensuring a Sustainable Future	11	4	83

Table 2 – Seed Grants Mapped to Thematic Priorities & Supporting Elements

	Awarded		Not Awarded	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Advancing the Arts and Humanities	7	3	27	34
Driving Digital Innovation	4	12	28	80
Enhancing Health	7	6	41	38
Stewarding our Planet's Resources	9	4	30	32
Transforming Education	11	16	70	99
Constituent Outreach and Engagement	2	25	15	93
Infrastructure and Support	1	16	7	51
Organizational Processes	2	7	4	39

Advancing the Arts and Humanities had 34 seed grant applications, 14 were forwarded for review by the Oversight Committee, and 7 were funded ($1,211,069). Of the funded applications, 5 additional grants had secondary associations to Advancing the Arts and Humanities. Of the non-funded applications, 27 had Advancing the Arts and Humanities as a primary thematic priority while 34 had it as a secondary.

Driving Digital Innovation had 32 seed grant applications, 12 were forwarded for review by the Oversight Committee, and 4 were funded ($852,438). Of the funded applications, 10 additional grants had secondary associations with Driving Digital Innovation. Of the non-funded applications, 28 had Driving Digital Innovation as a primary association while 80 had it as a secondary.

Enhancing Health had 48 seed grant applications, 14 were forwarded for review by the Oversight Committee, and 7 were funded ($1,623,529). Of the funded applications, 9 additional grants had secondary links to Enhancing Health. Of the non-funded applications, 41 had Enhancing Health as a primary association while 38 had it as a secondary.

Stewarding Our Planet's Resources had 39 seed grant applications, 15 were forwarded for review by the Oversight Committee, and 9 were funded ($2,237,554). Of the funded applications, 6 additional grants had links to Stewarding Our Planet's Resources. Of the non-funded applications, 30 had Stewarding Our Planet's Resources as a primary linkage and 32 had it as a secondary mention.

Transforming Education had 80 seed grant applications, 19 were forwarded for review by the Oversight Committee and 11 were funded ($2,234,958). Of the funded applications, 19 additional grants had links to Transforming Education. Of the non-funded applications, 70 listed had Transforming Education as a primary mention while 99 listed it as secondary.

Constituent Outreach and Engagement had 17 applications, 6 were forwarded to the Oversight Committee, and 2 were funded ($249,333). Of the funded applications, 25 additional grants had secondary links to Constituent Outreach. Of the non-funded applications, 15 had Constituent Outreach as a primary linkage, while 93 listed it as secondary.

Infrastructure and Support had 10 applications, 5 were forwarded to the Oversight Committee and 1 was funded ($111,866). Of all funded grants, 16 also listed Infrastructure and Support as a secondary element. Among non-funded proposals: 7 listed Infrastructure and Support as a primary element and 51 mentioned it as secondary.

Organizational Processes had 6 applications, 5 were forwarded to the Oversight Committee and 2 were funded ($343,512). Among all funded grants, 7 had a secondary mention of Organizational Processes. Among non-funded grants: 4 listed Organizational Processes as primary, and 39 listed it as secondary.

Executive Committee Summaries

There are eight executive committees related to *Our Commitment to Impact*, one focused on each thematic priority and supporting element in the strategic plan. These committees met to establish goals for University-wide action on each of these components, as well as to enumerate larger scale initiatives taking place to support each area of the plan. Following are brief synopses of the Executive Committee's findings in each area:

Advancing the Arts and Humanities

More than 50 Inter-domain Gen Ed courses have been created, partially with Gen Ed incentive funding. The committee is supporting efforts to integrate more arts and humanities into study abroad programs with marketing, technology, and more cohesive experiences. The move of the Palmer Museum to the Arboretum in fall of 2022 will increase visibility of the collections. A university-wide calendar of events has been developed. Research entities such as the Arts and Design Research Incubator and the Humanities Institute, have been created. The Humanities in the World project has the goal of promoting Penn State as a national leader and innovator in the Humanities, in research, and as a resource for public discussion of important public issues.

Driving Digital Innovation

Several new degree programs have been initiated and two new centers were created: The Center for Security Research and Education and The Center for Immersive Experiences. Additionally, LaunchBoxes and Penn State Startup Week have been able to highlight entrepreneurship and innovation within the Penn State community.

Enhancing Health

The College of Nursing launched the Employee Health & Wellness Center at UP. Penn State launched a University-wide smoke-free policy. Penn State Cancer Institute is working to attain NCI designation. The Penn State Addiction Center for Translation, and the Consortium to Combat Substance Abuse were created to combat the opioid epidemic by creating collaborations across units. Two additional seed grant proposals were funded by entities outside the seed grant process (Food Inequality and Gene Editing).

Stewarding our Planet's Resources

Energy University, The Institutes of Energy and the Environment [IEE], Coalition for Fossil Energy Research, Council on Competitiveness for the Energy and Manufacturing Competitiveness Partnership, and Energy Days continue to focus on energy-related research. A solar array was installed near the Nittany Medical Center and there are additional solar installations planned. Global Programs and The Sustainability Institute are working to integrate their efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Created a Waste Task Force to take a university-wide systemic assessment of our waste challenge. The "EnvironMentors" program was created to partner faculty mentors with minority high school students. Two additional seed grant proposals were funded by entities outside the seed grant process (Office of the VP for Research funded a project to build a "mesonet" of data sensors for water and soil moisture across the Commonwealth and the IEE funded a project on the food-energy-water nexus).

Transforming Education

The Executive Committee developed the vision of *One Penn State 2025* to bring the university together as a whole. Starfish Analytics, Complete Penn State, and the Student Success Center are helping to enhance degree completion. Creation of the Student Engagement Network and Engagement Space. Researching how to streamline transfer credit application/approval process. Several projects are promoting lower cost textbook and course materials for students (OER) with related training for instructors. Development of new Gen Ed integrative studies courses and planning tools for students to choose Gen Ed courses. Several projects are being created to assist faculty development and instructional design.

Organizational Processes

This Executive Committee formulated three goals in service of this supporting element: Establishing a University-wide approach to Change Management and Leadership; promoting implementation of change management and leadership strategies; and performing a pilot study of recent organizational change. The committee found an abundant number of areas throughout the University where attention to this sort of change would be beneficial, but there were very few responses to the seed grant RFPs to tackle these efforts. The University did engage with a consultant to build expertise in organizational process excellence, as well as performing a pair of pilot projects on transfer credit and a mobile app.

Infrastructure and Support

This Executive Committee found itself in a position they described as "everywhere and nowhere" – since many areas of the institution are interested in improving infrastructure, but there are few projects on the scale of seed grants that are applicable to that sort of change. Most infrastructure projects (such as buildings and new technologies) are very expensive and do not lend themselves to proposal-based expansion. Areas for future focus included content management systems, shared research infrastructure, training needs, faculty and professional development, mentoring, space utilization and office space, recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, recruiting and retaining a diverse student body.

Constituent Outreach and Engagement

The committee's main focus was examining the various thematic priorities and asking, "What are the most highly leveraged opportunities for developing a Constituent Outreach and Engagement strategy and tactical plan related to learning, engagement, and promotion?" The initiatives considered as the highest potential opportunities included working to brand student access/affordability and engagement initiatives similar to Invent Penn State with name, look, messaging, and media, legislative visits and other visible communications and outreach strategies; creating a university-wide "Year of the Arts" thematic campaign as an umbrella for anticipated initiatives to raise the campus profiles as a destination point; developing targeted outreach strategies for areas such as personalized medicine, big data and microbiome initiatives; and creating a compendium of resources for faculty development.

Summary Results of Oversight Committee progress reviews

The eight Executive Committees of *Our Commitment to Impact* report to a Strategic Planning Oversight Committee, chaired by Nick Jones, Provost and Executive Vice President.

Subgroups of the Oversight Committee were tasked by the Provost with summarizing the 4-year progress of the foundations, thematic priorities and supporting elements of the University plan. They were provided with information from the original University planning process, seed grant analysis and progress, and Executive Committee reports submitted semi-annually for the last two years – as well as assessment results from unit plan analyses. These subgroups were asked to compile a summary report on the progress of the segment of the University plan to which they were assigned. Along with the summary of progress, they were asked to suggest revised wording for the University strategic plan if updates were appropriate or required moving forward to 2025. Synopses of these reports follow:

Foundations

Enabling Access to Education: This foundation shows extensive evidence of progress. It is the most linked foundation in Unit plan objectives and was mentioned in half of awarded seed grants. Numerous programs have been launched that are related to this foundation: Enhanced Education Pathways Committee, Huron Task Force on Affordability, the Strategic Budget Task Force Report, and One Penn State 2025. These programs are dedicated to improving access to education by assisting students with scholarships, mentoring, and interventions, as well as creating budget management processes and efficiencies. Several recommendations were made from this review:

- Fully leverage One Penn State 2025.
- Moving beyond "Enabling Access to Education" to include foci on persistence, degree completion, and social mobility.
- Clearly define what it means to offer an affordable Penn State education.
- Expand student aid availability and optimize resource deployment.

Engaging Our Students: This foundation is the second most linked foundation in both unit plans and seed grants. The Student Engagement Network (SEN) was created in 2016 after Student Engagement was announced as a presidential imperative. The focus of Engaging our Students has changed from engagement activities to engagement outcomes through academic research, community service, club participation, and SEN grants. Five themes were identified as areas for growth for students at Penn State:

- Multicultural Awareness
- Civic Responsibility
- Ethical Reasoning
- Systems Thinking
- Professional Development

Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World: Many units had objectives linked with this foundation, but little progress was noted within the data. Two thirds of awarded seed grants linked with this foundation. The committee recommended renaming the foundation "Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." Diversity-related goals recommended to be augmented to:

- Foster a culture of respect and inclusion that values the experiences and perspectives of faculty, staff, and students.
- Develop and implement curricula and scholarship that interrogate social issues and inspire social responsibility.
- Evaluate and rectify organizational structures, policies, and practices that cause differential impact and limit access and opportunities for faculty, staff, and students at Penn State.
- Recruit, support, and advance a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.

Enhancing Global Engagement: This foundation was not linked highly to objectives developed in the unit's strategic plans, although some seed grants did have links to global engagement. The Global Engagement Network (GEN) has been successful engaging a wide range of colleges, campuses, and the research institutes in ways that were not necessarily included in the unit plans. Several areas were identified as opportunities for growth:

- More focused research partnerships.
- Integration of "global" holistically into all levels of Penn State curriculum.
- Integrating international student and scholar perspectives.
- Integration of research and international education activities.
- More systematic use of technology to broaden engagement opportunities.

Driving Economic Development: This is the third most cited foundation in Unit objectives but had the fewest associations in awarded seed grants. Many initiatives are happening around the University related to this foundation: Invent Penn State, Innovation Hubs, Research Parks, and entrepreneurial support. Several topics were noted for future improvement:

- Further integrate student learning with economic development and entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Develop and support initiatives to increase industry-based R&D funding across Penn State.
- Address disparity of R&D funding per capita between suburban and urban areas.
- Determine strategy for continued growth and development of our research park and innovation hub infrastructure.
- Improve connection of the endowed matching funds pool available through *A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence* campaign to economic development strategy and initiatives.
- Partnering with private sector and state to increase venture and economic development funding.

Ensuring a Sustainable Future: Three quarters of units have at least one sustainability objective. Half of the awarded seed grants referenced this sustainability foundation. STARS, a reporting framework for sustainability performance, indicates that Penn State's general areas of strength in Sustainability are in Research, and Campus and Public Engagement. Opportunities for this foundation are:

- Use UN Sustainable Development Goals as a unifying framework- Aligns PSU with global goals.
- Institutionalizing sustainability within units -Champions, Councils, and Charters.
- Status – 9 Colleges + 5 Campuses have initiated this process; more specific KPIs and related goals are needed to track and incentivize progress.

Thematic Priorities

Transforming Education: Unit objectives linked most often with this thematic priority. Seed grants overwhelmingly linked with this priority, however often they were too narrowly focused on special interests, the proposals that were funded did link well with the transforming education working group topics. The working groups created the One Penn State 2025 signature initiative which brings attention to many of the theme priorities. Noted areas of opportunity are:

- Forming a "community of practice" in instructional design.
- Assisting faculty in developing the ability to effectively mentor graduate students engaged in research degree programs.
- Collaboration with Organizational Processes supporting element group to advance the development of a one-stop mobile app to guide students to support services and help streamline the transfer process to better serve adult learners and veterans seeking to enroll in the University's resident and online programs.
- The need to better operationalize the theme to solicit projects that meet the expectations of impact, scalability, and generalizability.

Enhancing Health: Integration of Enhancing Health Executive Committee and University Health Sciences Council (UHSC) has increased focus and broadened coordination around Enhancing Health objectives. The UHSC's development of more-focused goals, consistent with the broad Enhancing Health objectives, has helped spur progress. Opportunities for improvement include:

- Interconnection/communication/collaboration between the health-related enterprises of colleges and campuses with a specific focus on the connection between UP and the College of Medicine at Hershey.
- Leveraging the University's and Penn State Health's statewide reaches for high impact population health initiatives.
- Consolidating resources toward implementation of the Institute for Biomedical Health Sciences Research.

Stewarding Our Planet's Resources: (Note: the report focused primarily on IEE and SP seed grants) IEE grants focused on several of the SoPR priorities, while the SP grants leaned towards engaging research infrastructure and forging partnerships. A new emphasis on water policies is needed to face future climate issues. The primary recommendation is to create a new water-related institute.

Advancing the Arts and Humanities: Many smaller initiatives have made progress and increased visibility including the relocation of the Palmer Museum, the Humanities in the World project, bioethics initiative, touring theatre, and Penn State Laureate. However, many of the focus items of this priority were not thoughtfully developed to implementation. The group wants to return to a focus on one or two big ideas and invest in them at an appropriate level for clear, well defined impact, while continuing the seed grant program at a lower level. Other opportunities for improvement include:

- Promotion of cultural events, increasing the impact of existing resources.
- Identifying better metrics to measure success in this area.
- Building collaborations across the University: integrating Arts/Humanities and Sciences in curriculum/inter-domain courses.

- Connections with international programs/experiences.
- Designation of a "year of Arts & Humanities."

Driving (Empowering) Digital Innovation: Previous proposals were largely infrastructure oriented, leveraging state-of-the-art technologies, including ideas that could have come in via other channels. The primary opportunity going forward was summarized by pushing the idea of "state-of-the-art" forward combined with seeking to understand how digital innovation changes work and communities with the goal of maximizing positive outcomes while mitigating predictable downsides. Opportunities for growth include:

- Combining technologies in new and powerful ways.
- Increase learning outcomes with shared digital assets.
- Collaborating with arts and humanities.
- Finding innovative and effective interdisciplinary digital solutions to confront emerging regional and global issues and identifying and mitigating unintended consequences.

Supporting Elements

Organizational Processes: This essential element of the plan linked with many institutional and unit needs. However, few seed grant applications were submitted related to this element. Recommendations for improving processes include:

- Developing prioritization procedure for process improvement.
- Building a community of practitioners with expertise.
- Establishing infrastructure and coordination of activities across campus.
- Targeting of donors for under-funded parts of the plan should be a priority.
- Better responsiveness would streamline processes - need to stop silos, be transparent and make connections.

Infrastructure and Support: This plan element covers about 1/3 of all Unit objectives and seed grant proposals as a secondary theme, however very few are solely focused on infrastructure. Many of the identified focus issues are making progress University-wide with the HR transformation (WorkLion), Capital plan, SIMBA, LaunchBoxes, Invent Penn State, Re-imagining IT, and aligning the capital campaign around the strategic plan. The primary suggested recommendation is to re-focus this plan element towards identifying needs of unit executives to "go bigger" to find out where the University should be moving forward, and to act in an advisory role to other plan parts. This group suggested possibly combining with Organization Processes.

Constituent Outreach and Engagement: This plan element has many connections, although few that have the related topics as the primary focus. Recommendations include:

- Using groups related to this element in an advisory capacity embedded with other plan parts
- Improving outreach and communications in relation to strategic initiatives.
- Targeting the lower-represented thematic areas to be higher priority in fundraising efforts.

Recommendations

As we move collectively into this new five-year planning cycle, The Office of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research offers the following recommendations to the Penn State community for optimizing unit and university evolution via the strategic planning process:

- Units should carefully review the standardized goals/objectives (KPIs)/action items (metrics) structure as well as designating members of unit leadership as point people for this process and draw thoughtful input from all Unit functional areas (i.e. departments, divisions, schools, programs, centers, institutes, et al).
- Adhere to deadlines for completion of data entry into the new assessment management system, *Nuventive*, during the planning process. Keeping to this schedule provides more opportunities for feedback.
- Identify areas both within each unit and university-wide to focus upon given this data. For example, foundations, such as <u>Fostering and Embracing a Diverse World</u> (<u>Engaging Principles of Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity</u> in the revised plan) should be given priority and could be leveraged with campus efforts such as Penn State's upcoming community survey.
- The supporting elements, meant to undergird and supporting the institutional plan's thematic priorities, should be connected in their support moving forward. As the institutional plan develops, work will be conducted in thinking about the creation of a group that brings the supporting elements together in ways that support the work of the units across all of Penn State. This group will help provide support and connection for major university-wide initiatives using the supporting elements as tools to help identify and sustain university efforts in a sound manner.
- Units should consider if there are areas from the 2014-2019 planning cycle which could be considered self-sustaining. If so, effort and focus should be shifted to areas that may be lagging or were set aside due to resource constraints.
- The University should provide incentives to encourage units to create objectives (and thus, goals) related to underutilized components of the last cycle of plan via new rounds of targeted seed grant funding.

This document is provided by the Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research as a resource in support of the 2020-2025 extension of *Our Commitment to Impact.*

Comments and suggestions are welcome. Contact OPAIR at strategicplan@psu.edu or (814) 863-8721.

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