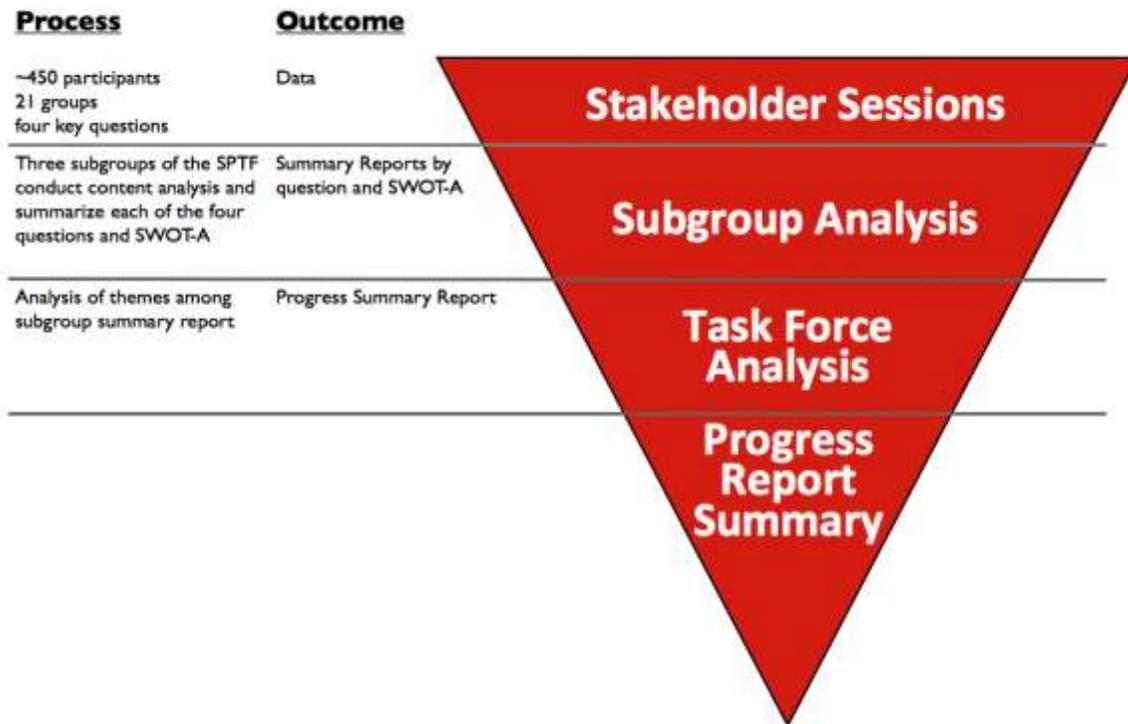


## Current State and Stakeholder Data Summary

The planning process provided extensive input from university stakeholders about the current state of the university and its aspirations.

The data began as input from approximately 450 stakeholders. The stakeholder input was analyzed and summarized by three Strategic Plan Task Force subgroups (see Appendix A for more detail).

The subgroup summaries were then distilled to prevalent and pervasive themes that cut across stakeholder groups. The intention of this summary is to create coherence from a vast amount of information in a manner that is accessible, easily understood, and actionable. It is an articulation of our current view of the university and will serve as a foundation as the process moves into planning the future steps of the university.



## **The numbers in parentheses cross-reference to the subgroup reports in Appendix A.**

### **Our Strengths**

- Campus improvements/beautification/facilities (campus life/physical environment) (1, 22)
- Increasing student quality, enrollment, and retention (2)
- Differentiation: identity, growing reputation (3, 14)
- Immersive learning, BBC (4, 27)
- Emphasis on improved availability, use, and support of technology (5, 26)
- Student opportunities and experiences, learner focused (6, 47)
- Vision: capable of changing; aspire to have a distinctive national and international reputation (13, 44)
- Realignment of online and tuition structuring for hybrid offerings; aspire to be leading online/distance education by rebranding to “multimedia education” (16, 51)
- Value (23)
- Caring faculty (24)
- Open to innovation; small enough to change; design thinking—create culture of change and learning reciprocity (25)
- Aspire to collaborative learning among faculty and students (49)
- Aspire to interdisciplinary collaboration—institution of choice, creative and bright students (46)

### **Our Weaknesses**

- Insufficient resources, aspiration: adequate resources to support aspirations (28, 50)
- Student experience (11)
- Technology (12)
- Limited alumni engagement and support; alumni not attached strongly to university (30, 31)
- Geographic location (32)
- Lack of focus; at times lack institutional will to make difficult resource decisions (34, 43)
- Low risk tolerance (41)

### **Disconnects and Confusion About How We Do Things and Relate to One Another**

- Threat: organizational cultures/change management; aspiration: reward both process and end result (40, 48)
- Emphasis on research and creative endeavors; discord around teaching and research (7, 15, 21)
- Campus culture/morale; aspire to be a place where people are happy to work (8, 45)
- Faculty support (9, 17)

- Low faculty salaries (33)
- Administration, treatment of faculty (10, 19)
- Uneven course and research loading among colleges (18)
- Increasingly bureaucratic (20)

## Appendix A

### Data Gathering Sessions

An integral component of the strategic planning process is gathering stakeholders' perspectives on the current and future direction of the university. Initially this took the form of structured data gathering sessions.

The Strategic Planning Task Force identified the following stakeholders:

- Faculty members
- Students
- Staff Council
- Service personnel
- Prospective students
- Parents of prospective students
- Parent Advisory Council
- Alumni
- State elected officials and agencies
- Community members
- High school guidance counselors and superintendents
- Business leaders and Career Center clients

The Task Force was divided into small teams of two or three to facilitate discussions with stakeholder groups. Twenty-one stakeholder data gathering sessions with approximately 450 individuals were conducted. Faculty was the most highly represented group with approximately 180 participants. Sessions were conducted in all seven colleges.

The sessions had two components. First, the groups reviewed and reflected upon a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Aspirations (SWOT-A) analysis that was summarized from the university's administrative retreat.

Second, participants were asked to answer four questions:

1. Over the last five-year period (current strategic plan), what has gone well?
2. Over the last five years, what could have gone better?

3. What have we learned about the university in the last five years that we did not know before?
4. If you could choose one area of focus that will have the greatest positive impact on the university, what would it be?

The Task Force reviewed the data collected during the stakeholder sessions collectively. The group then divided into three subcommittees. One analyzed the data from questions 1 and 2. Another analyzed the data from questions 3 and 4. And the final group reflected on the SWOT-A analysis. Each group reported its observations about the data back to the team. Their reports follow.

## Questions 1 and 2 Summary

1. Over the last five-year period (current strategic plan), what has gone well?
2. Over the last five years, what could have gone better?

The following summarizes two of the questions asked during the stakeholder workshops. Responses were obtained during the stakeholder meetings that were held during the summer and fall of 2011. After the meetings were held, the Strategic Planning Subcommittee identified major theme areas that could be used for the summaries. Following that initial review, the individual responses were placed into the categories shown below.

The first part of each section details a presentation at the Strategic Planning meeting held on October 6, 2011. The text following each list was the discussion led by John Obrycki, who summarized the material for the subcommittee members in charge of these questions.

### What Went Well (by session)

1. Campus improvements/beautification/facilities (14)
2. Student quality/retention/enrollments (14)
3. Identity/uniqueness (10)
4. Immersive learning (10)
5. Tech support, emphasis on improvements (10)
6. Student opportunities/experiences (7)

The numbers within the parentheses indicate the number of sessions in which the comment was mentioned. Campus improvements/beautification efforts were widely mentioned. Similarly, the increased quality of students was highlighted. Student opportunities and experiences, related to their opportunities with immersive learning, getting involved on campus, and so forth, were mentioned as well. The university's branding initiative, as well as developing a strong state and national reputation was mentioned too. Immersive learning was mentioned separately too. Another aspect highlighted for "what went well" was the increased technological support and improvements, for example an increase in wireless accessibility on campus.

### What Went Well (by individual)

- Campus improvements/beautification/facilities (96)
- Student quality/retention/enrollments (60)
- Student opportunities/experiences (55)
- Identity/uniqueness (47)
- Immersive learning (41)

- Tech support, emphasis on improvements (35)

The number in parenthesis show the number of “votes” each comment received. The votes were counted as the number of checks each comment received. The comment itself automatically received one “vote” because someone had to write the comment down on the tablet. The data show a broader discrepancy in how strongly people felt about different aspects of what went well. Campus improvements dominated. The next “what went well” category received about 17-18 votes, so we feel this offers some split between the top vote-getters and the rest of the comments. However, if the “student experience” is interpreted broadly, then the comments for the next two categories, related to student quality and student opportunities, would have 115 votes. Generally speaking, stakeholders felt that the university has done a great job of bringing in high quality students and providing those students with great experiences.

**What Could Be Improved (by session)**

- 7. Research/creative endeavor (15)
- 8. Campus culture/morale (15)
- 9. Faculty support (14)
- 10. Administration (13)
- 11. Student experience (10)
- 12. Technology (8)

The top six categories for “what did not go so well” are presented by how many sessions in which the comment was mentioned (in parentheses). Interestingly, several of the comments are repeats from what did go well over the last five years, including technology and student experience. These categories were more difficult to categorize compared to the “what went well” categories. Additional explanation follows regarding what fit into each category.

**What Could Be Improved (by individual)**

- Campus culture/morale (196)
- Faculty support (163)
- Student experience (141)
- Administration (98)
- Research/creative endeavor (95)
- Technology (61)

The number in parentheses shows the number of “votes” each comment received. The votes were counted as the number of checks each comment received. The comment itself automatically received one “vote” because someone had to write the comment down on the tablet. Campus culture and morale, a broad category, received 196 comments. Some

comments may have been double counted. For example, a comment about having all faculty use Blackboard for grading could fit within student experience and technology. An additional note about these numbers is that this includes nearly all comments, even those with one vote. With more concrete groupings for the “what went well” categories, some comments were not placed within those six groups. But for responses to question 2, nearly all comments were placed into a group.

### **Breakout: What Could Be Improved**

#### 9. Faculty Support (163)

- Salary
- Recognition
- Autonomy

While subcommittee members read through the comments within each category, a few themes emerged. The category faculty support included comments about salary levels, and related to this, salary levels and expectations of teaching/research loads. Also, faculty voiced some concerns about levels of recognition, for scholarly work or teaching abilities. This recognition seemed related to, but separate from, the salary issue. The issue of recognition also related to concerns about being asked to do too much. Another issue mentioned was autonomy, and this seemed to appear at a few levels. Individual faculty wanted some autonomy to teach, do research, and travel to conferences to make presentations. Others wanted autonomy from other departments around campus. There was also the issue of the relationship between faculty and university administration.

### **Breakout: What Could Be Improved**

#### 12. Technology (61)

- Consistency
- Continual Improvement
- Communication

Related to technology, the three themes of consistency, continual improvement, and communication stood out. With regard to consistency, the themes of consistent websites, consistent use by faculty of Blackboard for submitting grades, and stronger wireless connections across campus were mentioned. Related to this, continual improvement seemed to build upon the comments under the “what went well” responses. The technology improvements to campus have been great, and other improvements to consider include greater use of technology in the classrooms. Finally, under communication, several students voiced concerns about wanting less automated service help from the university. Parents wanted a stronger communication with the university too. The “technology” section did not have nearly as many individual comments or votes as the other categories that were responses to question 2.

### **Breakout: What Could Be Improved**

#### 7. Research/Creative Endeavor (95)

Research/Travel Funding

Recognition

Empowerment

The comments under research/creative endeavor related to some of the comments under faculty support. Faculty spoke of stronger support for research and travel funding to present research results to their peers. Others spoke about the different kinds of recognition afforded to immersive learning projects compared to other research. The empowerment issue related to students, faculty, and staff. Some wanted students to take a greater responsibility in their own learning. Others wanted greater encouragement for employees to become students at Ball State. An interesting comment in this category that is difficult to interpret is from the students about the “Scholarship and Financial Aid Department.” If this means more scholarship money, refers to interactions with staff in the office, or alludes to any other issues, it is unclear, but it did receive a high number of votes relative to the other comments in the category.

### **Breakout: What Could Be Improved**

#### 8. Campus Culture/Morale (196)

Connections

Communication

This was a broad category that fit several kinds of comments. However, the two themes of connection and communication jumped out. With regard to connections, these touched all levels of the university and Muncie community. Students wanted to feel more connected with others students, with advisors, with faculty, with administrators, and with Muncie. Faculty wanted a stronger connection with Muncie and the administration. Departments wanted stronger connections with other departments. Related to more connections was a desire for an increase in the amount of communication. This included very specific comments, such as an update of the Roll Out the Red initiative, and more general comments, such as more support for tougher grading and a perception of low faculty morale. These two general categories of connections and communication seem to go together. People wanted increased networking, resource sharing, collaboration, and communication.

### **Breakout: What Could Be Improved**

#### 10. Administration (98)

Communication

Information

Relationships

Comments reflected issues with university administration at department and upper administration levels. With regard to communication, people mentioned wanting to know more about university decisions and having a stronger dialogue between university administrators and the university at large. This was related to the next issue of information, as some would have liked more information about implementing immersive learning or implementing the University Core Curriculum. Students wanted more information about administrative decisions. With regard to relationships, some felt that the relationships with university administration tended to be one-sided.

### **Breakout: What Could Be Improved**

#### **11. Student Experience (141)**

- Involvement

- Consistency

- Recruitment

## Questions 3 and 4 Summary

3. What have we learned about the university in the last five years that we did not know before?
4. If you could choose one area of focus that will have the greatest positive impact on the university, what would it be?

The subcommittee developed 10 overarching themes that are common to both questions. The group did not set out to develop a set of themes that converged for both questions; this happened naturally. It suggests, therefore, that a core set of issues, both positive and negative, exist among stakeholders.

- VISION: focused on recent and continued changes for Ball State
- RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT: focused on continued development of Ball State as a research-oriented institution
- EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: focused on continued educational development of Ball State (includes immersive learning, online learning, etc.)
- SUSTAINABLE/GREEN: focused on Ball State's efforts to be proactive in areas related to sustainability
- ISSUES WITH ADMINISTRATION: focused on dissatisfaction with administration's priorities and/or bureaucratic policies. This includes dissatisfaction with how faculty/staff are treated by administration (feelings of being underappreciated, top-down approaches, etc.)
- ISSUES WITH FACULTY/STAFF SUPPORT: focused on dissatisfaction with pay and support (travel, etc.) for faculty/staff; this includes dissatisfaction with actual remuneration and course loads for faculty/staff
- BALL STATE'S STATE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS: focused on connection between Ball State and Muncie or state of Indiana
- REPUTATION: focused on Ball State's reputation
- INFRASTRUCTURE: focused on physical and technological advancement and/or needs of Ball State
- STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONCERNS: focused on opportunities and/or areas for potential growth for Ball State students

These 10 themes can be grouped together based on the degree to which they express positive or negative sentiments about Ball State. Said another way, the themes converge around feelings of *concordance*, loosely used here to mean areas in which Ball State is

succeeding, and **discordance**, loosely defined here as areas where Ball State has room for improvement.

### Concordance

The following themes express concordance: Vision, Research Development, Educational Development, Sustainable/Green, Reputation, Infrastructure, Ball State's State and Community Relationships, and Student Opportunities and Concerns. These themes were generally positive in tone and expressed both recognition of Ball State's many recent achievements and pride for the institution.

13. For instance, regarding the university's vision, people noted that we have worked toward change and we have done so with much success:

- "The University is capable of change [and] moving in a positive direction."
- We have the "ability to achieve progressive goals."
- "Gora is working hard to move Ball State forward."

14. Stakeholders are proud of Ball State's growing reputation:

- We are now "known as a university of excellence,"
- "recognized as a research institution,"
- "respected as a university statewide."

15. Both teaching and research were recognized as contributing to the strength and vitality of Ball State. With respect to research, stakeholders suggested that Ball State should:

- focus future efforts on developing "research partnerships" and "research infrastructure,"
- "continue grant activity" and "external funding successes,"
- "support and reward faculty scholarship" through such things as money for travel, software for research, and the creation of research institutes or improved workspaces for faculty members.

16. Regarding teaching, stakeholders recognized both Ball State's

- "important" and "unique" place as an institution focused on "immersive [and] experiential learning"—something that "sets us apart nationally" and allows us to "preserve [the] proven value of on-campus education."
- and Ball State's "strong presence" with "quality online and distance outreach for teaching."

## Discordance

Two themes suggest discordance in the data: Issues with Administration and Issues with Faculty/Staff Support. At some level these two themes are quite similar: they express a high level of dissatisfaction with the general working environment at Ball State. Nonetheless, we felt it was important to develop two distinct themes in order to illustrate the degree to which this dissatisfaction permeates the faculty/staff experience at Ball State.

17. On the one hand, stakeholders were concerned with very concrete, material kinds of support such as disparities in raises for faculty and administration:

- “Faculty and staff make sacrifices in income and perks, although high administration doesn’t make the same sacrifice.”
- “The financial decision making of the University Elite is hidden and seemingly unfairly distributed among stakeholders.”
- There is a “discrepancy in salaries (salary raises) between administration and faculty.”

18. In a related vein, stakeholders felt that the institution fails to support research by having heavy and/or uneven teaching loads across campus:

- Ball State needs to “set reasonable expectations for workloads. Teaching 3 classes and research and service is unrealistic for [the] tenure track. Reduce something.”
- There is a “disconnect [between] loads and research expectations.”
- There needs to be “equity among colleges” in course loads.

19. These material concerns can be contrasted to stakeholder dissatisfaction with the way the administration treats faculty and staff, especially in regard to extensions of appreciation, respect, and autonomy:

- “Faculty voice is often ignored or not sought.”
- “The strength/expertise of the faculty is not fully recognized/appreciated.”
- “Faculty don’t get credit for student successes.”
- The “university values administration over faculty/sports over academics/reporting over progress.”

20. Stakeholders also expressed concern with the increasingly bureaucratic structures of Ball State:

- There is too much “top-down direction.”
- “The ‘faculty-driven’ academy is dead; an autocratic system seems to be replacing this organizational form.”

- “There’s an increasing central planning mentality that crowds out department autonomy.”

21. One additional area of discord centered on a slight antagonism between teaching and research. Stakeholders noted that:

- “little value [is] placed on activities other than scholarly productivity,”
- “teaching [is] devalued,”
- the administration needs to “give good teaching the same respect as research.”

### **An Observation**

The areas of concordance were associated with multiple stakeholder voices (faculty, students, alumni, employers, etc.), while the areas of discordance were largely associated with one voice, that of the faculty.

- One might be inclined to dismiss these complaints as artifacts of a particular group of people, rather than see them as meaningful indicators of areas of needed improvement for Ball State.
- However, of the 21 stakeholder groups that were part of the data gathering sessions, 6 of them were nonfaculty/nonstaff groups (i.e. employers, alumni, students, parents, etc.). Fifteen groups represented faculty and/or staff from across campus.
- This means that the vast majority of the data, both positive and negative, comes from faculty and staff stakeholders.
- Thus, the faculty see much in Ball State that is positive and worthy of praise, but they seem to feel excluded from these processes and devalued for their efforts. Addressing faculty morale, then, may be the greatest challenge for our strategic planning efforts.

## SWOT-A Analysis

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Aspirations

The group reviewed the SWOT-A data. The analysis was challenging, given that discussion of the SWOT-A was uneven across stakeholder groups. While most of the strengths are specific to Ball State, most of the weaknesses appear common to higher education institutions. The data beg the reader to determine which results create a sense of urgency or demand action and which are simply observations about the context in which the university is situated.

A long held aspiration at Ball State has been becoming a “public ivy” university such as Miami University or the College of William and Mary. This led to a discussion about what operationally defines progress to goals. What does success really look like and to what end? For Ball State to approach the ranking of these aspirational peers, our peer assessment, student selectivity, retention and graduation rates, percentage of faculty members with terminal degrees (including contract faculty members), percentage of undergraduate classes with fewer than 20 students, and expenditure per student would have to increase substantially. Changes toward an even greater emphasis on performance funding from the state might help us move in this direction, although this funding would represent “a somewhat larger slice of an increasingly small pie.”

If Ball State is to embrace its aspirations, then a detailed and transparent analysis of the resource and organizational investments required to achieve them would be very useful. The group also observed that the criteria for academic program excellence in terms of accreditations and rankings may not necessarily equate to university excellence overall.

The discussion also focused on one specific result of the SWOT-A analysis: the hope that Ball State will become a place where people are happy to work. The group concluded that perhaps having higher turnover of faculty members and professional staff members in the future would have both some positive and some negative outcomes for the university.

#### Strengths

22. Campus (campus life/physical environment)
23. Value
24. Caring faculty
25. Open to innovation
26. Technology
27. Virginia B. Ball Center/BBC/immersive learning

#### Weaknesses

28. Insufficient resources
29. External stakeholders definition of success is dynamic and not well defined
30. Alumni engagement and support
31. Alumni not attached strongly to university
32. Geographical location

- 33. Low faculty salaries
- 34. Lack of focus—faculty being asked to go in too many directions

### **Opportunities**

- 35. Small enough to change
- 36. Design thinking—create culture of change/learning reciprocity
- 37. Establish an environment for learning
- 38. Strategic replacement of retiring faculty and other personnel

### **Threats**

- 39. Dynamics of state and fiscal environment (changing funding sources)
- 40. Organizational cultures/change management
- 41. Risk tolerance (Low)
- 42. Miss the “Blue Ocean”
- 43. At times, lack of willingness to make difficult resource decisions

### **Aspirations**

- 44. Distinctive national and international reputation
- 45. A place where people are happy to work
- 46. Interdisciplinary collaboration—institution of choice, creative and bright students
- 47. Learner focused
- 48. Reward both process and end result
- 49. Collaborative learning among faculty and students
- 50. Adequate resources to support aspirations
- 51. Leading online/distance education by rebranding to “multimedia education”

## Appendix B

### Identity Statement: Mission, Vision, Values

After the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) diverged and converged on important values to Ball State University, a subgroup met to develop potential vision and mission statements. The statements were based on input from the SPTF encouraging statements that value a student-centered educational experience, preparing students to go out into an uncertain world, relevance, and connecting students with community and economic development and civic engagement.

The subgroup agreed that the criteria against which such statements should ideally be evaluated are:

- Do these statements focus the university's resources and activity appropriately?
- What kinds of institutional decisions would be consistent and inconsistent with these statements? Is that what we want?
- Are the statements straightforward and easily understood?
- Are they lasting, reaching beyond the current moment or year?

The SPTF and the subgroup wrestled with the fact that most statements of mission, vision, and values do not pass muster against these questions. That's because they are not differentiating in the least and often simply articulate the values of the academy in general, having little to do with the institution itself.

As a result, the subgroup, and subsequently the SPTF, adopted an identity statement in lieu of traditional mission, vision, and values.

#### Draft Identity Statement

As a university, we are committed to the traditional values of the academy: freedom of inquiry, imparting knowledge, and advancing the frontiers of knowledge, all for the purpose of bettering society and individuals. As a creatively pragmatic institution, we seek to articulate our distinctive place in the world while holding these values dear.

At Ball State, we focus on students and high quality, relevant educational outcomes. Disciplinary knowledge is integrated with application. We do this in a manner that fundamentally changes students, researchers, and those who look to the university for guidance. Students learn how to turn information into knowledge, knowledge into judgment, and judgment into action that addresses complex problems.

External forces will continue to shape the role of higher education. We seek to lead rather than follow, with the following aspirations as our guide:

#### Challenge

- the current educational paradigm
- students' assumptions and comfort zones

- disciplinary boundaries
- resource constraints

#### Advance

- critical thinking and creative problem-solving
- interdisciplinary knowledge
- scholarship and creative activity
- coherent, integrated student experiences
- innovative built spaces and campus infrastructure

#### Embrace

- accountability
- adaptability and agility
- engagement with the broader community
- diversity and inclusion
- meaningful student-faculty exchanges

## Appendix C

### PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS: 2012-2017

1. While some targeted and strategic growth at the graduate level is warranted, the university's focus will remain at the undergraduate level.
2. Building nationally ranked academic programs and increasing selectivity in admissions will strengthen the educational experience and enhance our reputation.
3. Guaranteeing an experiential learning experience, such as immersive learning, will enhance the distinctiveness of a Ball State education and prepare students for a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.
4. Performance indicators, such as research awards and four-year graduation rates, will continue to be important to future funding from the state.
5. State financial support for higher education will be limited in the future. Developing additional revenue sources is necessary.
6. Strengthening and communicating our impact on economic development throughout Indiana will be essential for achieving broad legislative support.
7. Developing and implementing the most effective use of technology in scholarship and learning is essential to our mission and our distinctiveness.
8. Recruiting a diverse faculty, staff, and student population enhances the educational environment and reflects the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Revised 3/15/11

## Appendix D

### Strategic Plan Task Force Charge From President Gora

The Task Force will:

1. Review the progress toward the goals of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, summarizing the outcome measures that are on track to meet their respective targets and those that are not.
2. Analyze the impact of the specific outcome measures on achieving the stated goals of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan.
3. Review and possibly revise the Vision and Mission and develop Core Values statements of the university.
4. Recommend which goals (and accompanying outcome measures) should be retained from the 2007-1012 Strategic Plan.
5. Recommend three to five themes (or goals, depending on nomenclature,) for the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan.
6. Recommend goals (with quantifiable performance indicators) and initiatives to achieve goals.
7. Involve the university community during the entire strategic planning process through appropriate communications and multiple ways to provide input.