

# Interim Strategic Plan LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY

draft 8/20/09

## Introduction

For over five years, Lock Haven University was guided by its strategic plan, *A Framework for the Future (2003-08)*. Many goals in this plan have been accomplished. Many things in the university and its environment have changed. This plan has now expired and the university must establish new priorities.

## Planning Process

The university has begun the self-study process for its review by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in the spring of 2010. This process is gathering substantial data on the university and drawing widely on the wisdom its members. In addition, during 2008-09, the university has employed a consultant to assist in revising its facilities master plan and participated in the Policy Center on the First Year of College's Foundations of Excellence® in the First College Year (FOE) program of self-evaluation and planning. We want to utilize the findings from these initiatives in preparing the university's next strategic plan – and align the strategic planning process with the Middle States self-evaluation processes that occur every five years.

A draft of the Self-Study Report will be shared with the campus community in August 2009 for review and refinement; information gathered during this process will be used in revising the final version of the report by the end of the fall semester. The FOE report is also expected to be available by the fall. As these materials are being discussed, a Strategic Planning Committee appointed by the President will use these reports and discussions to begin developing the university's next strategic plan. This plan should focus on a small number of issues critical to the university's future and articulate specific and measurable goals. A draft should be distributed for discussion in the fall of 2010 and the plan finalized by December 2010.

The present document is intended to serve in the meantime as a provisional outline of critical issues with a number of interim goals. It has been developed from many existing reports and discussions, including:

- The university's existing strategic plan, *A Framework for the Future (2003-08)*.
- Discussions about the university's identity beginning with the fall 2007 President's retreat.
- Reports and recommendations from the First-Year Experience Committee, Web Site Task Force, Enrollment Management Steering Committee (and previous plans), and other committees.
- Action plans from the various university offices.
- Concerns frequently expressed by individual faculty and staff.

## Mission (Summary)

Lock Haven University:

- Serves students from central Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth, the Middle Atlantic, and the world.
- Provides *access* to higher education at modest cost to students from varied backgrounds and abilities.
- Prepares students for *personal and professional success*.

The university seeks to fulfill this mission through its:

- *Faculty* of outstanding teachers who work closely with students in and outside the classroom.
- Friendly, diverse, and supportive *community* of faculty and staff who know students by name.
- Strong *international dimension* prepares students for global success.
- Unique *geographical setting* of natural beauty and rural environment, which provide unique learning opportunities, together with easy access to major metropolitan areas.
- Quality *academic and professional programs* that meet the needs of students and the Commonwealth.

## Critical Issues

### Enrollment

Enrollment growth (40% between 1998 and 2008) has enabled the university to support more programs with a stronger revenue base, but has posed challenges in programming and the sense of community.

- The university remains the third smallest in the *State System* and receives a Small School Adjustment for lost economies of scale. The Board of Governors strongly encourages enrollment growth.
- Changing *demographics* pose substantial challenges. Pennsylvania *high school graduates* are expected to decline by 13% (2007-17) overall (more than 20% in much of central Pennsylvania, with increases only in eastern and southeastern counties). Similar declines are expected throughout the Middle Atlantic region. Without changes in marketing and recruitment, the university's enrollment will *decrease* by as much as 15% by 2017, requiring reductions in programs, faculty, and staff.

### Market Position

Undergraduate students consistently identify four reasons for choosing to attend Lock Haven: location, size, choice of academic programs, and cost – typically in this order.

- The *location*, historically a selling point for students from central Pennsylvania, is more problematic in light of demographic changes. The university must provide a compelling reason for prospective students to drive past other PASSHE universities to attend Lock Haven.
- The university's *small size* has been a part of its distinctive appeal. While growth presents challenges, current and prospective students view Lock Haven as a small school (especially compared with others they consider) and there are strategies that can be used to maintain community.
- The university seeks to minimize students' *costs* by keeping charges for room and board below those of nearby peer schools and to insure that students receive the *financial aid* for which they are eligible.

### Academic Programs

The final reason students choose Lock Haven is the choice of *academic programs*.

- Almost three-quarters of students major in five areas: education, health and biological sciences, sport and recreation, criminal justice, or business (including accounting).
- Two-thirds major in areas identified by PASSHE as "*high-need*" (all of the above except business).
- Our most *rapidly growing programs* (2003-2008) include Business, Sport Administration, Biology/Chemistry, Healthcare Professions, and Secondary Education programs in math and social studies.
- The *Honors* program has grown by 50% in four years and has the potential for further growth.

Programs in these areas offer the greatest prospect for enrollment stability and growth; they are attractive targets for increased resources (e.g., science building, business school).

Existing plans have called for growth at Clearfield and in graduate and distance education programs.

- Growth in *Clearfield* will require additional, probably bachelor's, degree programs.
- Growth in *graduate enrollment* will require development and aggressive marketing of new programs.
- Growth in *distance education* will likewise require the development and marketing of new programs.

### President's Vision

President Miller has sought to create a distinctive identity for the university by emphasizing:

- *Technology*. The student laptop initiative, wireless connectivity, and classroom technology have put LHU in a leadership position in using technology to support and strengthen student learning.
- *Diversity*. Our emphasis on international education and recent gains in students of color are strengths, but only 10% of students study abroad and we can strengthen multi-cultural learning in the classroom.
- *Engagement*. Students develop and apply learning through undergraduate research, internships, field education, student teaching, community service, athletics, the arts, and campus organizations.

In this environment, further development and communication of the university's identity is essential.

### **Media Strategy and Image Management**

To prosper in an increasingly competitive environment, the university must pursue active strategies to attract students, including from eastern and southeastern Pennsylvania and the Middle Atlantic.

- The university began a new *media marketing strategy*, airing a new television spot in eastern Pennsylvania markets that produced over 7,000 unique visits to a new web site during 2007-08.
- The *web site* plays an increasingly important role in recruitment. In 2006, a task force recommended redesign of the site with a content management system. Implementation is currently underway.
- Other PASSHE schools have seen enrollment increases after modernizing *student housing*. A recent study has recommended that the university do so as well.

### **Student Success**

The 2003 strategic plan called for improving second-year persistence and graduation rates. (Their close correlation suggests that focused attention on persistence is the best way to improve graduation rates.)

The 2007 Enrollment Management Steering Committee included among its recommendations:

- Support for all *first-year students* through enhanced orientation, proper placement, sufficient sections of first-year courses, and a required first-year experience course focused on success skills.
- Support for all *at-risk students* through coordination of programs for incoming at-risk students, structured support for students on probation or readmitted, and aid for talented low-income students.

### **Resources**

Declining state support and increasing costs have led to increasing pressures. Since 1998:

- State support for E& G expenses declined from 53% to 38% and from \$5,250 to \$4,340 per FTE.
- Personnel costs have risen from 74% to almost 80% of the E&G budget.
- Major projects and new initiatives require increased operating margin (revenue less expenses) that is increasing difficult to achieve.

There are two only ways to address financial challenges. One is to contain costs.

- Recent energy and Voice over IP initiatives have resulted in savings of over \$1 million annually.
- Since 1998-99, spending per student FTE increased 21%, while the Consumer Price Index has risen 29% and the Higher Education Price Index has risen 43%.
- According to PASSHE guidelines, the university has more space than is needed for present and anticipated enrollment. Vacating inefficient buildings will save money.

The other way to address financial challenges is to increase revenue.

- Enroll more students (increasing both tuition revenue and FTE-based state support), through:
  - Increasing enrollment in existing programs (through enhanced programs, improved marketing).
  - Adding additional programs.
- Improve performance on selected PASSHE performance measures.
- Secure additional external funding, through:
  - Grants.
  - Annual and endowment giving.
  - A capital campaign (being planned).

### **Public Expectations**

Colleges and universities are subject to increasing public scrutiny, if also to conflicting expectations.

- We must document student learning outcomes in general education and in majors.
- We must meet PASSHE performance targets, especially in areas that match our own highest priorities (such as student success and diversity).

## Emerging Priorities

A strategic plan must focus attention and resources few critical areas that will have a substantial impact, while assuming that other important programs and activities will continue. The university must continue to support and strengthen programs and activities that promote excellence in teaching and learning, technology, diversity, and student engagement, while focusing on the selected strategic priorities below.

### STRENGTHEN IDENTITY, MISSION, AND PLANNING

#### 1) *Clarify and Strengthen the University's Identity and Mission*

- a) Build on the Middle States 2010 Self-Study process to clarify the university's distinctive identity, developing and adopting by December 2010 a revised *mission statement* and new *strategic plan*.

### SUPPORT AND ATTRACT QUALIFIED STUDENTS

#### 2) *Support Student Success*

- a) Develop and implement by August 2010 a *comprehensive plan* to insure that all entering students receive appropriate support (e.g., orientation, placement, advising, needed courses).
- b) Increase *second-year persistence* from 66.8% (FA07 to FA08) to 74% (FA10 to FA11) (with the long-term goal of achieving PASSHE target of 79%).

#### 3) *Strengthen Marketing and Recruitment*

- a) Increase *Honors* (and First-Year Excellence) enrollment (215 in FA08).
- b) Increase matriculated *international students* (72 in FA08).
- c) Develop and implement an integrated *marketing plan* by June 2010.
- d) Construct and occupy the first units of *modernized student housing* by August 2012.

### ENHANCE PROGRAM OFFERINGS IN HIGH-NEED AND HIGH-DEMAND FIELDS

#### 4) *Enhance Existing Programs with Potential for Growth*

- a) Expand *Physician Assistant* program to Harrisburg and Coudersport by May 2010, increasing enrollment from 92 (FA08) to 140 (FA11).
- b) Provide resources needed to increase majors in *business* (Business, Accounting) (530 in FA08) and to submit an accreditation plan to AACSB by December 2011.
- c) Complete the proposed *science center* by fall 2012, with the goal of increasing majors in natural and health sciences (main campus) (744 in FA08).
- d) Increase majors in *sport and recreation* (Health and Physical Education, Recreation Management, and Sport Administration) (828 in FA08).
- e) Increase the number of students *studying abroad* (140 in FA08).

#### 5) *Develop New Academic Programs with Potential for Growth*

- a) Initiate new degree, degree completion, and certificate programs at *Clearfield*, increasing undergraduate enrollment (273 FTE in FA08).
- b) Initiate new *online degree programs* (graduate and undergraduate) and increase enrollment (76 FTE in FA08).

### ATTRACT AND MANAGE RESOURCES

#### 6) *Increase Efficiencies*

- a) Increase *credit hours* per FTE faculty from 542 (2007-08) to 575 (2009-10).
- b) Reduce *personnel ratio* from 76.9% (2007-08) to PASSHE target of 73% (2011-12).
- c) Reduce excess in *E&G facilities* by June 2013 by vacating inefficient buildings.

#### 7) *Secure Additional Resources*

- a) Reduce E&G spending on athletics (5.6% in 2008-09), by either securing additional revenues or reducing costs.
- b) Initiate silent phase of a *capital campaign* by December 31, 2009.

## **Additional Benchmarks**

The university also monitors continued achievement in important areas.

### **PROMOTE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

#### **1) *Student Success***

- a) Degrees awarded: associate's, bachelor's, master's, minority, STEM disciplines
- b) Graduation rates: four-year, six-year, four-year minority, six-year minority
- c) Professional exams: PRAXIS (education), NCLEX (nursing), PANCE (physician assistant)
- d) Placement rate

#### **2) *Faculty***

- a) Faculty with terminal degrees

#### **3) *Accreditation***

- a) Percentage of (eligible) accredited programs

### **DEVELOP THE UNIVERSITY'S DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY**

#### **4) *Enhance Learning through Technology***

- a) Courses employing an online learning component
- b) Enrollments in online courses

#### **5) *Increase Diversity of the Campus and Student Learning Experiences***

- a) Minority freshmen (African-American and Hispanic)
- b) Faculty: female, minority (African-American and Hispanic)
- c) Professional and executive staff: female, minority (African-American and Hispanic)

#### **6) *Increase Documented Student Engagement***

- a) Scholarly and professional activities (academic/professional presentations, performances)
- b) Internships (enrollments)
- c) Community service (hours)

### **ATTRACT AND MANAGE RESOURCES**

#### **7) *Increase Efficiencies***

- a) Low-enrolled programs
- b) Instructional costs: undergraduate, master's

#### **8) *Secure Additional Resources***

- a) Gifts
- b) Grants
- c) Endowment

## **Additional Commitments**

The university also pursues additional commitments (for which no quantifiable measures currently exist).

### **ALIGN PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, AND BUDGET PROCESSES**

#### **1) *Align Planning and Budget Processes to Address Critical Priorities***

#### **2) *Assess Outcomes to Insure and Improve Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness***

### **MAINTAIN A SUPPORTIVE LIVING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

#### **3) *Provide Appropriate Student Activities and Services***

#### **4) *Document Scholarly Growth of Faculty***

### **CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY AND COMMONWEALTH**

#### **5) *Promote community and economic development***

#### **6) *Support the State System of Higher Education***