WT 125 Generational Plan
Strategic Relations

Date
March 26, 2018

Area of Responsibility Name
Strategic Relations

Introduction
We live in a day of increasing complexity, and in times shaped by the technologies that permeate our lives. People are living more interconnected lives, and expectations of the institutions that serve them are rising, requiring universities to accommodate many student circumstances (like geographic location, mode of instruction, work schedules) rather than expecting students to modify their own lives to obtain an education.

Today's forces of change mean institutions must change, too.   Higher education can change quickly and effectively, but only if leadership and their professional workforce (faculty) can be brought together in pursuit of common outcomes.

Strategic Relations will become a valuable tool – working as interpreter, counselor, and broker between various units of the University, as well as between institutions.   Bringing people together to address needs and opportunities, identifying solutions and resources, and then providing the accountability necessary to see that commitments bring results – this approach will be repeated over and over as the University responsively changes to suit the changing social needs.

If Strategic Relations is to build and maintain this role across time it will be necessary to preserve its position as the "inside-outsider"; trusted by the University family while remaining separated from the institution enough to see it as outsiders see it.

Theme Group Name
The Panhandle and Its Heart-The I-27 Corridor

Bring together the identities of the 26 Panhandle counties.
Bringing together disparate communities across the Panhandle is needed. WT is the only regional institution who could lead such an ambitious effort. However, it will be a challenge. Creation of a highly-visible and widely understood social, cultural and economic ecosystem would create opportunities to address challenges (water, healthcare, educational needs). It could do so by leveraging the region's assets (natural resources, business/industry, transportation, and workforce) and bringing outside interested parties (political, business, and others) together.

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Key Idea (1)

Key Idea (1)
Bring together the public higher education institutions to meet Panhandle workforce needs.

Goal 1:
Participate in the Panhandle Community College Consortium (PC3+WT)

Action(s) 1.1:
Formalize participation through a revised memorandum of understanding.

Action(s) 1.2:
Deliver to the PC3 Consortium Dual Admission and Dual Enrollment programs to create a single pathway for direct transfer to WT.

Action(s) 1.3:
Address the challenges that exist for transfer students in the Panhandle that involve administrative processes, including alignment of curriculum.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
- Increase the transfer rate of community college students to WT.
- Increase the percentage of WT undergraduates holding a community college credential.

Goal 2:
Deliver educational opportunities that will sufficiently address the rural ISD need for teachers.

Action(s) 2.1:
Partner with rural ISDs to deliver a baccalaureate degree that would support alternative certification for intermediate and secondary teaching positions.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.2.1:
Devise the appropriate number of annual graduates in consultation with Region XVI.

Goal 3:
Build sustainable undergraduate programs of study delivered through the Amarillo Center

Action(s) 3.1:
Deliver a sustainable, coherent curriculum leading to a Bachelor's of General Studies through the Amarillo Center, in full cooperation with Amarillo College. The purpose would be to extend access to a basic bachelor's degree further North and into the economic and population center of the Panhandle. Serious consideration should be given to a hybrid, weekend-college approach.

Action(s) 3.2:
Work closely with Amarillo College to maximize efficiency in administrative services needed for delivery of higher education in Amarillo. (e.g. testing center, advising, etc.)

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.3.1:
- All leadership, director-level and above, will be surveyed annually regarding the effectiveness and inclusiveness of work performed by the Institutional Initiatives Committee. Survey results should be reviewed by the President's Cabinet and should show perceived value.
- Each initiative within the Transfer Initiatives plan will have targets, goals, and timelines (as appropriate), as well as identification of responsible parties. Progress will be reported quarterly to the committee and annually to the Executive team.
- Transfer students' experience with the University should be assessed at graduation at least once every other year.
- 200 undergraduate students annually will enroll in the Amarillo Center pathway (AC and WT's enrollment combined).

Key Idea (2)

Key Idea (2)
Build and maintain a vibrant, successful Amarillo presence. In the Panhandle, Amarillo is the economic center and the University must join, add value, and hold a seat among the Amarillo thought leaders**.**

Goal 1:
WT and the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation will form a deep alliance. Major aspirations could be possible by deliberately joining forces. Universities have access to legal means of securing and/or leveraging resources not directly available to the private sector. WT should partner with all interested parties, including the other higher education entities with a

panhandle presence but intentionality and "big thoughts" will be necessary.

Action(s) 1.1:
Strategic Relations will assist and support the President in direct participation with the AEDC, as well as other economic development parties regionally.

Action(s) 1.2:
Strategic Relations will work to align and coordinate the strategic initiatives of the University along the direction of regional economic development efforts. Communication between research faculty and various appropriate regional parties will be facilitated, in expectation that faculty research interests will gravitate toward the needs of the region.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
Strategic Relations will track the interconnected efforts of the University with the region and identify these individuals that serve as "connectors" between parties.

Key Idea (3)

Key Idea (3)
WT will build solid political allies across the region by advocating/ supporting the interests of others, even when not directly related to university interests. The President will foster that by hosting gatherings of key interest groups and working with the politicians to articulate and support positions that represent broad interests of the region (water, transportation, or ag policy for example). Strategic Relations will support such efforts through extending availability and access to the University.

Goal 1:
The region will see such tangible and consequential benefit from WT's involvement that organizations will seek WT participation when seeking to address needs or opportunities.

Action(s) 1.1:
Strategic Relations will nurture the development of partners and allies.   Under direction of the President, Strategic Relations will participate in various regional efforts.   It is important such efforts augment the work of the President and function as an extension of his plans, rather than a separate set of plans. One such example is the work of the PC3 Consortium.   Established by the regional community colleges, the group added West Texas A&M University in the Spring of 2018. Strategic Relations works to formalize those

relationships, support the gatherings of the Presidents, and encourage the University to implement the commitments made by the President through this consortium.

Other such efforts which could be supported by Strategic Relations include:
- Economic development corporations across the region (see Key Idea 2, Goal 2)
- Panhandle County Judges and Commissioners Association
- Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
- Region XVI

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
No information submitted

Theme Group Name

Our Relationship to Community Colleges
WT must extend our reach more deeply into the region through close, coordinated work with community colleges. These "colleges for the common man" are more localized and less expensive, thus providing important opportunities. WT will learn to <u>share</u> faculty, facilities, subject matter expertise, manpower, and political influence with community colleges. Most important, they will learn to do so in a genuinely collaborative manner, where the interests of students come first, followed closely by the interests of both the community college and the university.

Key Idea (1)

Key Idea (1)
Build a seamless path for students through community college to WT.

Goal 1:
Dual Admission through Amarillo College, Clarendon College, Frank Phillips College and (possibly) South Plains College

Action(s) 1.1:
All AA and AS seeking students enrolled in any of the Panhandle community colleges would be offered advising and other support services by WT, including access to the career planning services provided to WT students.

Action(s) 1.2:
Degree-seeking community college students from these colleges will be able to

participate in a wide spectrum of enhancement activities coordinated with their destination college at WT.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
- WT's dual admission program will have 5,000 or more students in dual admission status annually.
- 80% of the dual admitted students who transfer to an institution of higher education will select WT as their transfer university.

Goal 2:
Dual Enrollment through any Texas community college to WT.

Action(s) 2.1:
Students would be able to enroll at WT to take courses at any point during their community college path, to best deliver a coherent and efficient undergraduate degree.

Action(s) 2.2:
Students' financial aid would be provided by WT, with full consideration of their community college enrollments, thus providing a single point of service while dually-enrolled.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.2.1:
- 10% of dual admitted students will enroll in one or more WT courses annually, prior to completion of their community college coursework.
- Percentage of dual enrolled transfer students will grow to 15%.

Theme Group Name

Undergraduate Academics
Traditional concepts of curricular coherence and a liberal core education are losing their relevance – not because the ideals are wrong, but because a variety of forces have collectively changed the mindset of students, parents, and policy makers. A college education is now viewed as simply a body of knowledge, divided into "credits," which a student must compile and complete until they have satisfied the state-mandated number and a degree is conferred. Even members of the University community cannot agree about what "core" body of learning best represents a general education.

A successful Regional Research University needs to consciously articulate and defend its best thinking around

general education. It will not be enough to outline core requirements. Those standards must be explained and defended by the faculty and administration together. Confidence in an undergraduate education needs to be rebuilt over the next decade.

Key Idea (1)

Key Idea (1)
Concentrate instructional resources by reducing variability in curricular requirements while improving quality.

Goal 1:
Simplify of the Core - rethink our approach to general education and simplify our general education core requirements. Core needs to be defendable by all faculty, regardless of their discipline. Reducing the core to its basic elements will help clarify and reinvigorate the belief in the core and its purposes. It will also aid students as they increasingly "swirl" between institutions and among various career goals.

Strategic Relations should be one voice among many within the University to encourage the faculty to undertake this difficult, but critical, work.

Action(s) 1.1:
The Institutional Initiatives Committee will stimulate this simplification by keeping WT aware of this need, documenting the degree to which current degree requirements complicate the path for students.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
No information submitted

Goal 2:
Develop robust, well-supported online undergraduate programs of study. Standards of instructional delivery, institutional support and administration are needed to deliver competitive 100% online and hybrid programs.

Action(s) 2.1:
The Institutional Initiatives Committee will bring various interests of the University together to conceive of a limited, standardized online approach to undergraduate instruction. This effort should:

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- Improve online student learning
- Lower technology costs
- Improve marketing through clarity around what is available
- Improve recruitment through clarity around scheduling
- Lower 'per enrollment' costs to the University

Technology only lowers costs and improves results if implemented carefully, comprehensively and with clarity of purpose. The tech revolution is forcing higher education to reconsider just what is meant by "academic freedom" and reevaluate the radical individualism that has been assumed to be a necessary requirement.

At present, most decisions around online and hybrid course delivery are left to the individual colleges. It appears some of those colleges leave these decisions to individual departments and faculty members. While that approach made sense when online instruction was in its infancy, higher education has moved beyond this stage and has learned much about best practices. While there is evidence WT has embraced some of these strategies within individual courses, this has not been a university-level approach. This gap leaves the University unable to responsively serve students. And there appears to be no intentional consideration of how the technology could extend the productivity of faculty, freeing them to either teach more students or free up time for research and other scholarly pursuits.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.2.1:
Decisions about course offerings will be made with direct input from all parties involved in the delivery of degrees designated as 100% online. This is needed so the institution can confidently commit to online students that access to the needed courses, in the term when they need it, will be available.

Theme Group Name
Graduate Academics

Key Idea (1)

Key Idea (1)
Embracing the "Regional Research" calling could bring considerable resources, energy, and innovation to the rural Texas Panhandle, as well as to the rest of rural America.

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Goal 1:
Establish and support Innovation Centers - Development of interdisciplinary teams within the University, and connecting them to communities with documented needs, could foster 'incubation centers of innovation' for our region.

Strategic Relations can assist through its external relations work in identifying needs and bringing together University assets to provide part of the answer to those needs. To do this effectively and "at scale" the mission must be embraced across the University. It should not rest with Strategic Relations, but certainly this unit can support, promote and assist.

Action(s) 1.1:
Strategic Relations will connect regional interests with particular WT faculty to encourage research and innovative interventions. The "partners and allies" developed through "The I-27 Corridor, Action 3.1" will be introduced to WT resources with overlapping interests and projects will develop appropriate to those regional needs.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
Each project will possess outcomes selected to demonstrate success of that effort. For example, efforts like rural drug addiction prevention would be measured differently than rural economic development projects.

Theme Group Name
Residential Education Experience

Key Idea (1)

Key Idea (1)
Residential Living on campus will take on new flexibility to address a broad variety of student and university needs.

Goal 1:
Themed Campus Housing - Specialized living arrangements will be needed to support certain educational innovations. For example, a campus high school might need residential living for minors (unique security needs) while international students might need year-round living and in-room cooking capabilities. Residential housing for traditional transfers (21-25 years old) will be needed.

Action(s) 1.1:
Institutional Initiatives Committee will oversee the development of a themed housing plan and its implementation.

Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
- By Fall 2019, there will be themed residential housing policies, programming and capacity for transfer students.
- By Fall 2019, there will be themed residential housing policies, programming and capacity for international students which addresses their unique dining and holiday living needs.
- By Fall 2020, the university will have evaluated and decided whether to expand the number of living learning communities on the Canyon campus.

Theme Group Name

Financial Resources

At the end of the day Higher Education must adapt in a manner consistent with the fundamental impact of the new technologies. Relevant principles for effective technology adoption include: 1) Scale for cost savings, 2) build online programs to meet the needs/wants of prospective students, 3) automate non-essentials (especially administrative functions) and 4) focus on core competencies.

Strategic Relations will encourage application of these principles as an interested third-party to major initiatives across the University.

Key Idea (1)

Key Idea (1)
Rapid and sustained change is difficult, if not impossible, without a concerted effort within the University to deeply embed the changes across the university.

Goal 1:
Create an environment where innovation and risk are encouraged, highlighted before the rest of the University, and lessons are shared with others.

Action(s) 1.1:
Strategic Relations, using primarily the work of the Institutional Initiatives Committee, will encourage, highlight, and evaluate the success of campus innovations in hopes of spreading such practices university-wide.

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Measurable Outcome(s) 1.1.1:
Annually Strategic Relations will report to the Executive Team its progress with innovative practices and projects. Paying attention to the question of the depth of adoption of changes, this report will serve to document the University's progress.

Planning, relationship-building, reporting and accountability are the primary tools Strategic Relations will bring to WT125. The aspiration of creating the first regional research university in the nation is truly a generational goal and one fully supported by Strategic Relations.

Appendices and Additional Facts and Analysis

No information submitted

References

No information submitted