

Strategic Action Plans 2012-13

Preamble from President Raynard S. Kington

The following document describes the strategic planning process of FY2012 and plans for moving forward during the next five years. I begin by expressing my gratitude to the Grinnell community—gratitude for the time, energy, and good work that contributed to the 2011-12 academic year and to strategic planning. In the midst of providing a superb educational experience, many faculty, staff, and students were actively participating in strategic planning, all following a two-year board conversation about the financial workings of the college. During the past year we conducted studies and reviews on student residences, prospective student perceptions and price sensitivity, alumni perceptions, the website, and IT operations among other issues. Thank you for demonstrating the patience, care, and tenacity to build an analytic culture and to better understand Grinnell's situation within the higher education landscape.

We are now poised to take the next steps. The following is a brief recap of how we got here and a description of the path ahead.

Steering Committee Report

The past year of strategic planning and research studies helped us understand Grinnell in broader context. Our Strategic Planning Steering Committee led the community in addressing the themes posed by the Board of Trustees and produced an excellent report that defined six major directions the College should pursue, as well as examples of some of the many possible tactics we could employ toward each goal. I endorse these directions and see in them precisely the kind of thinking and creativity we need.

The major directions are:

1. Re-envision our commitment to a liberal education and its value in the 21st century.
2. Attract, enrich, and graduate a diverse and talented student community.
3. Instill an orientation to the future and intentionally connect the Grinnell educational experience to post-graduate endeavors.
4. Foster life-long learning and contributions of alumni in the College's intellectual life, service, and mentorship and advising.
5. Celebrate the diverse achievements of our students, faculty, staff and alumni.
6. Transform administrative practices to maintain continuous, collaborative, and adaptive planning for the College.

Board Response

The Board of Trustees reviewed the Steering Committee's report at their June 2012 retreat as part of an in-depth discussion of the College's fiscal sustainability. Our Trustees join me in thanking you and the whole community for your excellent work. In their *Board Reponse*, they

built on the report with additional ideas of their own and proposed a minor rearrangement of elements: as seen in the excerpt below, they called out the topic of learning spaces as its own strategy while folding the previously-freestanding topic of celebrating achievement into other strategies. The result was the following structure:

1. The Grinnell Liberal Arts Experience in a Constantly Changing World: *Create an innovative and evolving student centered, liberal arts curriculum (academic experience) that enables students to be successful in an ever-changing world and informs and enriches the lives of Grinnell graduates.*
2. The Grinnell Student Population: *Create a student body that individually and collectively reaches a remarkable record of achievement and that maximizes the interactive learning opportunities for all Grinnell students.*
3. Grinnell as the Launch Pad for Multiple Life Paths and Careers: *Create a curriculum and learning environment that enables and encourages students to pursue and succeed along multiple life paths and careers.*
4. The Grinnell Learning Place: *Design, operate, and support all spaces on the campus to enhance the academic, social and environmental success of the Grinnell College community.*
5. The Grinnell Alumni Community: *Design the Grinnell alumni community, the alumni-to-alumni relations, and the College-to-alumni relations by purposefully including alumni in all of the strategies.*
6. The Management of Grinnell's Financial and Human Resources: *Create a fiscally sustainable business model that supports the College's continuing enhancements and maintains stability through variations in revenue sources and expenditure patterns.*

I ask you to please read the Steering Committee Report and the Board Response, as we will need to refer to them frequently when we discuss next steps. I am eager to move forward with implementation, allowing time for further discussion whenever needed.

Implementation

Many strategic planning processes have failed at the implementation stage. In my observation, this often happened because the initial conversations were allowed to trail off or because no one felt that she/he was responsible for the implementation. In a truly effective planning process there are multiple steps: we need to determine where we want to go; figure out how to get there; do the work; and measure our progress. To avoid the traditional pitfalls Grinnell needs to employ a process of distributed leadership and shared governance. Toward this end, each strategy will be co-led by an existing senior staff member and a faculty leader, often someone who was deeply involved in the working group focused on that strategy during last year's planning process. The following are the 2012-13 implementation leads:

Implementation co-chairs

Kathy Kamp, Earl D. Strong Professor in Social Studies, Chair of Faculty

Angela Voos, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Special Assistant to the President

Strategy 1: The Grinnell Liberal Arts Experience in a Constantly Changing World

David Harrison, Professor of French, Director of the Center for International Studies

David Lopatto, Professor of Psychology

Paula Smith, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Professor of English

Strategy 2: The Grinnell Student Population

Pablo Silva, Associate Professor of History

Joe Bagnoli, Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admission and Financial Aid

Strategy 3: Grinnell as the Launch Pad for Multiple Life Paths and Careers

Janet Davis, Associate Professor of Computer Science

Mark Peltz, Associate Dean and Director of Career Development

Strategy 4: The Grinnell Learning Place

Keith Brouhle, Associate Professor of Economics

Jim Swartz, Professor of Chemistry, Interim Director of Analytic Support and Institutional Research

John Kalkbrenner, Vice President for College Services

Strategy 5: The Grinnell Alumni Community

Sarah Purcell, Associate Professor of History, Director of the Rosenfield Program

Beth Halloran, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations

Strategy 6: The Management of Grinnell's Financial and Human Resources

Angela Voos, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Special Assistant to the President

Karen Voss, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer

Carlie VanWilligen, Associate Director of Analytic Support and Institutional Research, Chair of Staff Council

Action Plans for 2012-13

The following draft set of action plans assimilates the Steering Committee's work, the Board's response, and my own thoughts into a list of initial steps with these characteristics:

1. A move away from episodic strategic planning to a continuously-evolving strategic work model. This means that the steps listed below are not the last word, but a starting-place. We will pilot new ideas and ways of working. We will routinely review our efforts and allow for changes of direction.
2. Open, civil discussion of opportunities and challenges, for the purpose of helping us define our best options and make informed decisions.

3. A commitment to choosing our steps and assessing our progress in a broader context, with reference to changes in higher education and the world at large.

Integrating Short-term and Long-term Planning

Any planning process takes place in a dynamic environment: actions that seemed logical at the outset may no longer seem appropriate one or two years into the work. Conditions may change, resources may shift, new opportunities or challenges may emerge. How can we as an institution keep on track? How can we integrate short-term and long-term planning?

Our solution is to set the goals but allow flexibility in our tactics. Just as a sailor navigating by the stars takes periodic readings and adjusts course, or a doctor measures the patient's progress and adjusts the treatment as needed, Grinnell's best chance of reaching our goals is by a process of continuous review and reassessment.

Each action plan below includes a set of defined objectives. The actions that follow are meant to answer the question, "How will we get there?"

Innovation Fund

Before reviewing the action plan, I would like to say a brief word about the Innovation Fund. This is a new fund to support faculty, student, and staff pilot projects that promise the most transformative benefits for Grinnell's teaching and learning. Over the next five years, a committee will choose among competitive proposals ranging from \$5,000 one-year projects to \$150,000 three-year projects. The fund's purpose is to remove financial barriers to a culture of innovation, experimentation, and informed risk-taking. I fully expect that some pilots will succeed and eventually be incorporated into our operating budget, while others will not pan out. No matter the outcome, we will learn from them and in the process build our capacity to innovate.

The details of the award process and membership of the selection committee are being developed. If all goes as planned, we will invite the first round of proposals in Spring 2013.

DRAFT Strategic Action Plans 2013

Co-chair of Strategic Implementation: Kathy Kamp, Earl D. Strong Professor in Social Studies, Chair of Faculty

Co-chair of Strategic Implementation: Angela Voos, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Special Assistant to the President

STRATEGY 1: Teaching and Learning

Staff Lead: Paula Smith, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Professor of English

Faculty Leads: David Harrison, Professor of French, Director of the Center for International Studies; David Lopatto, Professor of Psychology

Goal: Re-envision Grinnell's commitment to a liberal education and its value in the twenty-first century. Create an innovative and evolving student centered, liberal arts curriculum (academic experience) that enables students to be successful in an ever-changing world and informs and enriches the lives of Grinnell graduates.

Objectives:

- Create an adaptive curriculum and pedagogy that will evolve fluidly, creatively, and intentionally in response to new and sometimes unanticipated challenges.
- Cultivate students who can integrate knowledge across disciplines, who are sophisticated in their writing, analysis, and research, and who understand the social basis and responsibilities of knowledge.
- Create a flexible environment that allows for creativity and collaboration across disciplines.
- Increase the accessibility and sharing of knowledge, scholarship, and primary source materials created at or owned by the College.

2013 Actions (Estimated Initial Financial Impact, Estimated Continuing Financial Impact, Timeframe):

- Analyze faculty responsibilities (teaching, advising, research, service/governance) in order to ensure that time spent is fulfilling to the individual and the institution.
- Increase the number of academic support staff, provide them with deeper professional education and training, and empower them to share administrative responsibilities with faculty more effectively.
- Introduce new educational opportunities in both teaching and research that increase cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- Give students more direct experience with the creation and interpretation of knowledge.
- Create more opportunities for course-embedded travel, courses with experiential components, clinics for real-world problem solving, alternative uses of the academic

calendar, and curricular structure that are coordinated with and complement co-curricular activities. (See Innovation Fund)

- Launch a Forum for Teaching and Learning to support curricular innovation and experimentation and the scholarship of teaching.
- Examine constraints posed by administrative structures (departmental, divisional) that may impede course innovation within a discipline, course innovation in liberal education, and faculty collaboration.
- Pilot student retention programs to address identified needs.

Metrics (Measures used to assess progress and success. Targets for each measure.)

Examples:

Assessment of learning outcomes

Graduation rates

Retention rates

Class sizes

Faculty compensation

Student/faculty ratio

Faculty with terminal degrees

Breadth of courses taken by students

Distribution of core liberal arts elements in courses

Instruction budget/total budget

Expenditures/student

STRATEGY 2: Enrollment

Staff Lead: Joe Bagnoli, Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admission and Financial Aid

Faculty Lead: Pablo Silva, Associate Professor of History

Goal: Attract, enrich, and graduate a diverse and talented student community. Create a student body that individually and collectively reaches a remarkable record of achievement and that maximizes the interactive learning opportunities for all Grinnell students.

Objectives:

- Develop financially sustainable admission and financial-aid policies consistent with a mission of academic excellence and educational access.
- Develop *Guiding Principles for the Composition of the Student Body*.
- Reduce the reliance on the endowment for operating support.
- Maintain the academic profile of the incoming classes of students.
- Focus financial aid to provide access to a Grinnell education for academically qualified students with significant financial need or backgrounds that would create an obstacle to earning a college degree.

- Increase the diversity of the student body to provide a robust learning environment.
- Understand and positively influence market perceptions of prospective students and their families.
- Enroll entering classes of students who are strongly matched to Grinnell and therefore are likely to succeed and graduate.
- Retain and graduate students who choose to pursue an education at Grinnell.

2013 Actions (Estimated Initial Financial Impact, Estimated Continuing Financial Impact, Timeframe):

- Develop admission policies that support the identification, admission, and matriculation of qualified classes of students. Examine and modify Grinnell’s financial aid policies to insure the enrollment of a diverse population of students and the long-term fiscal sustainability of the College.
- Reorganize and/or combine campus committees to better support the enrollment function and maximize the use of faculty time.
- Create a mini-course on financial aid and institutional revenue.
- Examine and modify Grinnell’s Admission Rating Scale in order to create a tool to assist with the selection of entering classes of students.
- Create recruitment materials (online, print, video) consistent with Grinnell’s mission and values and informed by Art and Science research findings on prospective student perceptions.
- Determine a comprehensive fee strategy based on research conducted by Art and Science.

Metrics (Measures used to assess progress and success. Targets for each measure.)

Examples:

- Demonstrated Academic Potential
- Student Engagement
- Diversity
- Access and equity
- Contribution to Fiscal Sustainability

STRATEGY 3: Post Graduation Success

Staff Lead: Mark Peltz, Associate Dean and Director of Career Development

Faculty Leads: Janet Davis, Associate Professor of Computer Science

Goal: Instill an orientation to the future and intentionally connect the Grinnell educational experience to post-graduate endeavors. Create a curriculum and learning environment that enables and encourages students to pursue and succeed along multiple life paths and careers.

Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for students to make connections between course experiences and other learning experiences (internships, externships, apprenticeships, fellowships, employment, service opportunities, travel, performances, etc.).
- Increase learning experiences outside the classroom.
- Guide students to apply, reflect on, and articulate how their skills are applicable to their futures.
- Develop programs that facilitate networking and mentoring relationships between students and alumni.
- Expand career development support to young alumni.

2013 Actions (Estimated Initial Financial Impact, Estimated Continuing Financial Impact, Timeframe):

- Coordinate the array of experiential learning opportunities, including externships, internships, campus employment, and community service.
- Develop a proposal to proactively extend post-graduate support for young alumni, targeting the five years following graduation.
- Create a Student Employment Task Force charged with evaluating and developing recommendations to improve the College's student employment practices across campus.
- Strengthen the GRINNELLINK Internship Program and expand internship resources.
- Retool and expand the data collection and reporting of the College's Senior Survey.
- Create new print collateral and web content for both internal audiences (student, faculty, and staff) and external audiences (employers, graduate schools, fellowship programs, community partners, and parents).
- Develop a robust web-based framework to facilitate networking and mentoring relationships among students and alumni.
- Create collaborative partnerships with academic departments to support faculty advising and the career development of students within their fields of study.

Metrics (Measures used to assess progress and success. Targets for each measure.)

Examples:

Senior Survey response rate

Proportion of students completing an internship

PioneerLink serves as primary warehouse of campus employment opportunities

Add six sites to GRINNELLINK Internships

STRATEGY 4: The Grinnell Learning Place

Staff Lead: John Kalkbrenner, Vice President for College Services

Faculty Leads: Jim Swartz, Professor of Chemistry, Interim Associate Vice President of Analytic Support; Keith Brouhle, Associate Professor of Economics

Goal: Build learning spaces that encourage collaboration, creativity, and inquiry. Design, operate, and support all spaces on the campus to enhance the academic, social, and environmental success of the Grinnell College community.

Objectives:

- Create learning spaces that promote collaboration, creativity, and inquiry.
- Configure facilities with the right technology and access to necessary data and primary source material to support emerging forms of inquiry-based learning.
- Design spaces to enable faculty to show films, do in-class work on statistics packages, or use databases of images and sounds, and allow students to create different forms of work-products.
- Design mission-driven architecture that supports the full creative range of original materials and scholarship products generated at Grinnell.
- Make better use of College facilities during the summer.

2013 Actions (Estimated Initial Financial Impact, Estimated Continuing Financial Impact, Timeframe):

- Develop the program-planning phase for optimal learning spaces for the humanities and social studies.
- Develop recommendations for best uses of Carnegie, ARH, Library, and Forum Buildings.
- Implement an operation and maintenance process and budget that ensure the continual attention to high-quality spaces and plans for future space-related needs.
- Create a unified, highly responsive technology support structure for teaching and learning.
- Complete an update to the Campus Plan for academic spaces.
- Increase summer programs by hosting outside groups and developing our own programs, institutes and camps.

Metrics (Measures used to assess progress and success. Targets for each measure.)

Examples:

Facilities Condition Index

Maintenance Measure

Accessibility Measure

Safety Measure

Energy Efficiency

Infrastructure Condition

STRATEGY 5: Alumni Engagement

Staff Lead: Beth Halloran, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations

Faculty Lead: Sarah Purcell, Associate Professor of History, Director of Rosenfield Program

Goal: Foster life-long learning and contributions of alumni in the College's intellectual life, service, and mentorship and advising. Design the Grinnell alumni community, the alumni-to-alumni relations, and the College-to-alumni relations by purposefully including alumni in all of the strategies.

Objectives:

- Actively serve alumni in ways that they deem meaningful.
- Increase the quality and frequency of engagement activities involved with faculty, staff, students, and each other.
- Create engagement opportunities that reflect Grinnell's commitment to academic rigor, independent thinking, service, and mentorship.
- Instill in each student a strong sense of attachment to the College, its mission, and its community.
- Foster a culture of philanthropy that recognizes the crucial role of alumni giving and provides meaningful opportunities to give back to the College community through their time, energy, expertise, and money.

2013 Actions (Estimated Initial Financial Impact, Estimated Continuing Financial Impact, Timeframe):

Opportunities for On Campus

- Create an Alumni Week inviting alumni back to speak about pertinent topics in their profession and the way their Grinnell education prepared them/put them on that path.
- Expand the Alumni College program to cities across the world.
- Encourage faculty to collaborate with alumni in creating experiential components in their courses and increase the number of Practitioners-in-Residence who are invited back to campus.
- Expand campus programming to educate students about the traditions, history, and mission of the College and to inspire life-long loyalty to Grinnell, while promoting campus-wide engagement. Design programs that intentionally celebrate the role of philanthropy/social entrepreneurship in funding the education of students, cultivate life-long capacity for learning, and bring the benefits of learning and discovery to the world.
- Formalize Alumni Mentors to include assigning local Grinnell Alumna or Alumnus to each tutorial.

Opportunities Off Campus

- Develop a program for faculty to give lectures and meet alumni in cities across the globe.
- Encourage and organize regional volunteering in service to Grinnell (admissions, career development) and community service and social entrepreneurship.
- Reinvigorate the alumni travel program.
- Develop a Grinnell College Community Book Club.

Opportunities in The Cloud

- Create a virtual space where faculty, students, alumni, parents, and staff can exchange information, find community, and develop career and social connections.

- Develop a searchable database for alumni, faculty, students, and staff to share information, interests, and make connections.
- Create the Grinnell College YouTube Channel – perhaps with sub-stations for alumni posts related to lifelong learning, student posts for academic and co-curricular projects, and faculty/staff-related posts (coursework, admissions, social commitment, etc.).

Metrics (Measures used to assess progress and success. Targets for each measure)

Examples:

Alumni participation in events

Alumni participation in giving

Alumni feedback on searchable database

Alumni website usage-views-postings

STRATEGY 6: The Management of Grinnell’s Human and Financial Resources

Staff Leads: Angela Voos, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Special Assistant to the President; Karen Voss, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer of the College; Carlie VanWilligen, Associate Director of Analytic Support and Institutional Research

Goal: Transform administrative practices to maintain continuous, collaborative, and adaptive planning for the College. Create a fiscally sustainable business model that supports the College’s continuing enhancements and maintains stability through variations in revenue sources and expenditure patterns.

Objectives:

- Invest strategically in the College’s program and facilities to ensure a high quality educational experience.
- Maintain prospective student demand for a Grinnell education.
- Develop a mechanism to support innovation of faculty, staff, and students that allows for experimenting and developing new programs, courses, and practices.
- Develop a research and development environment in operations, where appropriate.
- Develop a culture of continuous planning and evidence-based decision making.

2013 Actions (Estimated Initial Financial Impact, Estimated Continuing Financial Impact, Timeframe):

- Create an Innovation Fund to encourage and facilitate innovation that contribute to teaching and learning through pilot projects across the College.
- Fully implement Enterprise Risk Management.
- Create a Virtual Center for Institutional Strategy, Analysis, and Learning.

- Organize “Journal Club” to share institutional data findings.
- Redesign Website.
- Develop shared understanding of cost structure and expenditure patterns, visible to the Grinnell community.
- Develop and communicate a suite of financial models including scenario planning to inform resource allocation.
- Systematically search for efficiencies and better ways of working to steward the resources and maximize their impact on the educational experience and opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.