**Ottawa University**

**Institutional Planning Update**

**2019 Renewal Application**

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This document presents updates and progress on the goals identified in Sections D & E of the institutional plan. Sections A, B & C of the institutional plan on file remain as the foundation for the goals.

1. **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The following lists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are not exhaustive and do not include the entire SWOT analysis. These are factors that are most often identified and that have a direct impact in shaping the goals for the Wisconsin campus.

**Strengths:**

* Student focused
* Mission-centric
* Collaboration across departments
* Dedicated student services
* Diverse student body
* Facilities
* Dedicated full-time and adjunct faculty
* One university-wide schedule to teach across sites (moved from an opportunity in 2015 to a strength in 2016)

**Weaknesses:**

* Constant change in organizational structure and processes (this has been less of a weakness in 2017-2018 with greater stability as a single academic dean across the adult campuses and lack of change in the top leadership of APGS)
* Work-life balance of employees
* Conflicting priorities (e.g. Quality versus Enrollment; Operations versus Academics)
* Not enough diversity among faculty and staff (don’t reflect diversity of student body)
* Scare resources—human and financial
* Team depth
* Limited visibility in market
* Responsibility without authority
* Changes in student body over past few years
* Little in nature of career services/job placement

**Opportunities:**

* Technical college partnerships (this has become a strength of the University, while it continues as an opportunity)
* Corporate relationships
* Alumni placement/referrals—the WI alumni chapter has strong board leadership, but can further enhance its focus on referrals
* Niche areas / programs
* Closing of competitor campuses

**Threats**

* Shrinking adult student pool
* Tuition rate increases
* Lack of student preparedness—academic, social, financial
* Competition
* Economy
* Marketing by competitors
* Regulatory environment—federal, state, accrediting organizations

**Goals for strengths/weaknesses**

* Enrollment and academic advisors at OU-WI will collaborate more closely with enrollment, finance, and academic advisors at other OU adult sites to strengthen student services. By June 2016, student satisfaction data will show a numerical increase.
  + In 2015-2016, this goal was not met. In July 2015, student services were moved to a combination of local services and centralized services. The student survey results of graduates in 2015-2016 didn’t reflect the impact of these changes on the student experience. We will continue to monitor student survey data and address needed changes to increase student satisfaction.
  + In 2016-2017, statistics on the Program Completion Survey indicated that this goal was being met. On the 2014-2015 Survey, Wisconsin students had a mean score of 4.19 on “Overall Ottawa University provided excellent student services.” On the 2016-2017 survey, the mean score was 4.35. This will be a goal for continuing emphasis.
  + For 2017-2018, the mean score was 4.4 for “Overall Ottawa University provided excellent student services.” This score has been rising each year and continues to be an area of emphasis in working to serve students well.
* By June 2016, adjunct instructors will have had two opportunities to increase their skills in Blackboard course editing. Those who have completed the course editor training will be able to make adjustments within their courses, with review of the lead faculty member.
  + In 2015-2016, two training sessions were held in course editing, with a total of 35 participants of full-time and adjunct faculty. This is an ongoing goal in providing the support for those faculty to edit their own and other designated courses. The expanded goal for 2017 is to implement a process to designate adjunct faculty as “course leads” to provide oversight of specific online courses to ensure course currency, relevance, and quality.
  + This is an ongoing goal with course leads in 2016-2017 designated for the majors of Accounting and Leadership & Management.
  + In 2017-2018, with the majority of students shifting to online course delivery, emphasis on faculty training for ground course delivery has shifted to provide training in quality delivery of courses via zoom technology in networking students across the ground campus in Overland Park and Brookfield.
* By June 2016, three courses will have been developed that give adult students the opportunity to explore questions of faith as a demonstration of the integration of faith in the curriculum.
  + A major university-wide initiative for 2015-2016 was a review of the University mission statement. While the essence of the statement will remain the same, language related to “integration of faith” in the curriculum will be revised. Development of faith perspectives will remain a key part of the university mission, which is projected to be approved by the Board of Trustees in a final version in October 2016. Following adoption of the revised mission statement, action steps will be implemented to carry out the various elements in the statement. One of those strands will be identifying opportunities for faith development or clarification. Two courses for faith exploration are in final stages of development; these will be supplemented with additional opportunities to explore questions of faith.
  + The revised mission statement was submitted to the Board of Trustees at their October 2016 meeting and unanimously approved. Recommendations for implementation of the mission are being reviewed and acted on in 2017-2018.
  + For 2017-2018, steps for implementation of the mission statement focused on providing monthly opportunities to engage in mission-related experiences that are coordinated by the University Chaplain. These are offered both through the Brookfield campus and in collaboration with other OU campuses.

**Goals for opportunities/threats**

* OU-WI will grow enrollments in 2015-2016 by 3% over the previous year by focusing on technical college relationships and alumni referrals.
  + In 2015-2016, total new starts increased from 107 to 123, a 15% increase. Undergraduate new starts saw a 17% increase and graduate new starts a 8% increase. Returning students again saw a decrease over the previous year. The increase in new starts was a first after several years decline. That increase will grow total enrollments.
  + In 2016-2017, total new starts increased from 123 to 128, a 4% increase. Returning students saw an increase term over term. The campus stabilized its enrollment compared to the previous year by beating total student enrollment numbers for the year, with a total of 1158 students in the 2015-2016 academic year compared to 1181 in the 2016-2017 academic year.
  + In 2017-18, total new starts decreased from 128 to 106, a 17% decrease; this decrease is partly due to restructuring of our enrollment staffing model which was completed in January 2018. Returning students saw a small decrease in the majority of terms compared to prior year, with a total of 1144 students in the 2017-18 academic year compared to 1181 in the 2016-17 academic year. The majority of these students enrolled in online classes.
  + OU-WI will grow enrollment in 2018-19 by 6.6% for new students, 7.5% for returning students, and 7% for total students through continued focus on technical college partner relationships, alumni referrals, and corporate agreements.
  + OU-WI will begin offering its MBA program to International students starting in October 2018 with a goal of 65 additional students through this initiative by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year.
* This goal is no longer relevant as students have shifted learning to online delivery: OU-WI will expand the services of the local campus Professional Writing Center to be available for students throughout the university. Metrics at end of June 2016 will demonstrate usage by students from Indiana and Kansas City campuses.
  + This goal was not fully implemented. The OU-WI Professional Writing Center has been made available to beginning online students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, but not to all OU students. The metrics of usage have been difficult to gather. Students electronically contact the writing instructor so there is no identification of geographic campus. The process of information gathering is being updated and plans are underway to fully implement the availability of both the Professional Writing Center and Math Center by the Fall2 2016 term.
  + While these support services were not fully implemented across sites, teaching across sites was implemented this past year. A university-wide schedule was implemented in Spring 2016. Classes offered on ground in Wisconsin were available via Zoom technology to students in Indiana and Kansas City, and vice versa. With larger class sizes and geographic diversity in the classroom, students receive a deeper educational experience.
  + In 2016-2017, with the decrease in ground-based students, use of the Writing Center also decreased and is no longer actively serving students. Discussions are underway to expand support for students in quantitative courses with enhanced tutoring and possible additional ground courses.
  + Network learning opportunities through Zoom technology continue to support classroom learning across the Indiana-Kansas City-Wisconsin campuses.
* During 2015-2016, OU-WI will regularly schedule enrollment advisors and/or community development advisors to be present on the WCTC and Gateway campuses. By June 2016, faculty, advisors, and students at WCTC and Gateway will readily recognize Ottawa University as a degree completion school, particularly in the areas of accounting, business, administration, RN-BSN, and human services.
  + In 2015-2016, enrollment personnel were on the Gateway and WCTC campuses 27 times over 11 months. That department has a goal to get a permanent office at both sites with a set time and day each month to be present on campus.
  + In 2016-2017, the goal of establishing a permanent office at the Gateway and WCTC campuses has not been met, but the Community Development Executive continues to meet regularly with students and to participate in education fairs at those campuses.
  + In 2017-2018, regular office hours were established at WCTC, our largest technical college partner school.
  + During 2018-2019, OU-WI will set up regular office hours with Gateway and MPTC, our second and third largest partner schools.
  + OU has established Transfer Advantage agreements, which allow for a 35% discount to undergraduate students with an associate’s degree from a partner school, with nine of the sixteen Wisconsin technical college system schools.

1. **FUTURE THINK**

It is an interesting and valuable idea to describe our school five years from now: what it will look like and how we will be positioned in the marketplace. In a time of rapid change and uncertainty in higher education, Ottawa University stands on a history of 150+ years. That long history and the flexibility through the years will serve Ottawa University well in the coming five years.

Ottawa University will navigate the waves in the current adult education market and be positioned for sustainable growth five years hence. Adapting as it has always done, while staying focused on what really matters in providing a quality education, the University has expanded its offering to serve international students at the master’s level of the MBA program in an executive weekend-intensive format. The Ottawa University Phoenix and Overland Park campuses have been successfully offering the EMBA program for the last two and one years respectively. The WI campus has received approval from SEVIS to offer the Executive MBA and will begin doing so in the Fall 2 term (October-December) of 2018.

Coupled with our vision of offering “an exceptional value in American higher education . . . characterized as growth minded and highly adaptive within an increasingly global context . . . [and] distinguished by its ability to prepare diverse student populations for lives of enlightened faith, exemplary service, inspired leadership, and personal significance” the mission documents keep faculty and staff focused on what truly matters. Students are increasingly looking for institutions with a strong mission and vision, particularly those that are faith based. The revised mission statement affirms Ottawa University’s concern for the connection between Christian faith and open inquiry, each valued on its own merits, yet each enriched by being informed by the other. As the nation’s growing cultural and theological rifts make plain, this relationship deserves continuing attention.

Ottawa University will continue to seek ways to expand our footprint to better serve diverse populations in a distinctive way. From expanding and strengthening our relationships with technical and community colleges, to re-energizing our online programs with deeper synchronous learning and a dynamic curriculum, to developing the MBA program to serve international students, we will grow in ways that are sustainable and that afford the opportunity to make a difference in students’ lives. While the adult population shrinks in higher education,

* The goal of strengthening online programs is a continuing goal with lead faculty regularly reviewing and refreshing programs, and with a skilled instructional design team implementing a robust schedule of course refreshment with new resources and new technologies.
* In expanding and strengthening our relationship with technical colleges, Ottawa University is providing a clear and solid path for students with associate’s degrees to obtain a bachelor’s degree.

Ottawa University will continue to innovate and develop effective educational models. From curriculum to technology we are always curious to find a better way to create the highest quality educational experience. Change is currently a way of life in higher education, and Ottawa University expects to develop new academic programs, more effective and efficient processes and policies, and new ways of empowering students by helping them create individualized meaning and experience. One example of this direction is OU’s project to teach across geographic sites, using various technologies to strengthen the learning experience and allow students to interact with instructors and classmates with a wider variety of backgrounds and experiences.

* Progress on this direction was made in developing a single schedule across the adult sites and linking the three geographic sites of Wisconsin, Indiana, and Kansas through zoom technology. Implementation of technology means a class offered in one location can now be taught through network learning to students at the other sites. Students benefit through the interaction with students in different parts of the country and having the opportunity to learn from a wider variety of instructors.

Another long-range goal is to continue to provide a high-quality learning experience, but to generate even greater value for the student. Providing a superior learning experience coupled with the concept of exceptional value involves all constituencies in the University from marketing to academics. Identifying key drivers of quality and value are being explored, and we believe we will bring this perceived dichotomy closer together in five years to our students’ benefit.

* A high-quality learning experience is a continuing goal for Ottawa University but serves as the foundational philosophy of OU’s academic advising. Within the first term of a student’s enrollment, the student meets with his/her academic advisor to develop a personalized degree plan that outlines the courses and sequence for degree completion. Where a student needs additional credits, the student and advisor discuss other majors, minors, concentrations, or appropriate elective courses.
* Student surveys require greater attention to identify areas to address in order to enhance student satisfaction and strengthen the student experience.

Preparing students for lifetimes of personal significance, vocational fulfillment, and service to God and humanity is a lofty mission, but it is one that each person serving at the Wisconsin campus strives to achieve. As a private, not-for-profit University we face many challenges, including an uncertain economy, tighter federal and state regulations, increased competition, and a shrinking pool of potential students. What drives us to succeed in this environment is our Mission. We take our responsibility as stewards of our students’ education seriously as we understand the power and promise of education in transforming students’ lives. In the next five years, we will continue to be flexible in adjusting to the environment of higher education and the needs of a changing population of students. With the move of students from primarily on ground learning to primarily online learning, the next five years will include offering an executive MBA on ground in order to maintain a ground presence for students in Wisconsin. The long history of the University, our mission-centric purpose and vision, our flexibility to adapt to wider changes, and our commitment to providing quality education to adult students will ensure that Ottawa University will thrive, not just five years hence, but for another 150 years.