

HSU Priorities  
2012–2016



**HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY**



# HSU Priorities 2012–2016

This document defines the priorities for Humboldt State University for the current year through 2016. We can be pleased that our university has made significant progress over the last five years to make changes that will benefit our students as well as faculty and staff. We have made these changes in the face of significant financial reductions.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) review of our accreditation status in 2010 reaffirmed the urgent need for us to embrace institutional change. We are doing so. An excellent example is the restructuring of the Academic Senate into a University Senate that represents all constituencies within the university.

One of the priorities summarized below, and for many of us the most important, is improving student success. Over the last decade, we have made real progress in increasing the diversity of our student body, but we have much to do to ensure that these students and others are educated in a way that ensures success as a student and in their future careers. One of the approaches we are adopting is the use of technology in face-to-face courses and in our developing online initiatives. Perhaps more important are the efforts of many faculty to reconsider how our students are educated and to make use of significant research findings to transform learning opportunities. The future of Humboldt State University is good despite the questionable level of public support. We have worked together to achieve our current success, but much remains to be done.

# History & Context

Higher education is under tremendous pressure to define its educational outcomes, increase graduation rates, decrease time to degree, manage with less public funding, reduce the cost of education, and critically examine both educational content and delivery. These pressures will be with us for some time and Humboldt State University needs to be responsive. At the same time, HSU needs to build its reputation and remain true to its mission and vision.

A number of robust efforts have taken place in the last few years that have helped to define the path HSU will focus on over the next four years. These efforts include Program Prioritization, the Cabinet for Institutional Change, reaffirmation of WASC accreditation, and the Enrollment Management Plan. These broadly inclusive projects combined with the realities of decreasing State resources have defined the priorities for the university: inclusive student success, initiatives that will generate additional revenue, and continued implementation of HSU's vision. These will be the priorities driving major decisions and effort allocations over the next four years.

The following is a brief history of the past efforts leading us to this point, summaries of each of the priorities and clearly defined goals.

From October 2007 to December 2009 Academic Affairs underwent an intensive internal review of its academic offerings. Using criteria developed largely by the faculty, academic program prioritization identified programs that were candidates for augmentation, maintenance, reduction, restructuring or elimination. The process offered a way to review and rank academic programs for the purpose of guiding the allocation of resources. This purpose did not change, but the context changed considerably. The process began when the campus anticipated increased resources and was concluded when the campus reduced its budget by roughly 10 percent. The Provost's final recommendations in December 2009 reflected both the need to reduce the budget and the reality that program restructuring and elimination must be included in the strategies used to do so. That effort also directed tenure-track hiring for highly ranked programs.

In February 2010, the Cabinet for Institutional Change defined five key areas of change on which to focus: University Vision, Campus Governance, Student Success, Culture of Evidence and creating a Collegial, Respectful and Responsive Community. The Cabinet made a number of recommendations in the final report under each of these five areas. To date most of the recommendations have been completed. Specific priorities under the rubric of the five key areas that continue to need progress are addressed in the Change Steering Committee's 2010-11 report. These will become part of the ongoing priorities for the next four years.

## Priority 1

In June 2010, WASC reaffirmed HSU's accreditation for seven years after a three-stage review, but requested an interim report after three years to ensure that HSU sustains its progress and shows concrete results in four key areas: assessing student learning, making excellence inclusive, embracing institutional change, making critical choices and realigning resources and institutional structures.

An Enrollment Management Plan was produced for years 2009-2016, representing the first coordinated effort at incorporating all of the aspects of enrollment management (student success, recruitment and retention) into a document that informs every part of the university about specific roles and responsibilities in these vital efforts.

The new University Senate is now in place, and it is important that this new structure is used to develop practices that allow us to work more collaboratively across constituencies. Many of our administrative leaders are relatively new to the university. Communication, cooperation and collaboration are critical in achieving university goals. There is a good mixture of people with knowledge of the campus and its culture, as well as people with knowledge of how other campuses and systems get things done. Humboldt needs both in order to develop new processes for effective communication, cooperation and collaboration.

The priorities of Humboldt State University for the period of 2012-2016 are summarized below.

## Student Success

The goals defining student success are increasing graduation rates, decreasing time to degree and closing the achievement gap. Our overall goal is to improve graduation rates by 15 percent for under-represented students and 12 percent for the rest of the student population by 2015.

The Enrollment Management Plan (EMP) is a comprehensive plan that covers recruiting, retaining and graduating our students. It guides university-wide student success efforts and is revised on a yearly basis. The EMP sets long-range goals and yearly strategies to help achieve those goals. In order for that plan to be effective, every unit on campus must make helping our students succeed a part of its mission. By implementing the strategies contained in that plan and by supplementing those strategies at all levels of the campus we can achieve our student success goals.

## Priority 2

## Enhancing Revenue

State and national trends clearly indicate that public revenue is going to continue to decrease while the pressure to reduce the cost of education will increase. Revenue generation has to complement our academic mission and our priorities. There are five initiatives that, when fully developed, can help the university compensate for dwindling general fund support while complementing our mission and goals.

**A. GRANTS & CONTRACTS** Grants and contracts help our faculty and staff grow professionally, help us connect with the community, help involve our students and help support other areas of research and creative activities that are less able to bring in additional revenue. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) has spent the last few years restructuring in order to build the capacity to accomplish these goals. It is now well positioned to help strengthen the campus and its mission.

**B. INTERNATIONALIZING THE CAMPUS** The Center for International Programs is now positioned to substantially grow our international student population. Internationalizing the campus provides diverse perspectives and enriches the student experience as well as providing additional revenue.

**C. PHILANTHROPY** University Advancement is undergoing substantial change and growth. The new Vice President for University Advancement will provide a roadmap for engagement with internal and external constituents.

**D. SELF-SUPPORT AND DISTANCE EDUCATION** Self-support and distance programming allow us to be more flexible and responsive to educational demand, reach populations that we otherwise could not serve and market the institution in ways that benefit the entire university. With the new AVP of Extended and Distance Education on board, we will move aggressively to expand programs in this area.

**E. ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITIES** The new Vice President of Administration and Finance will initiate discussions about what opportunities exist, what restrictions should be in place and what infrastructure is needed in order to move forward. The goal would be to develop a clear plan with a strategy for implementation.

## Priority 3

# Advancing HSU's Vision

In its final report, the Cabinet for Institutional Change noted that “based upon our consultation, we conclude that at present they [the mission and vision statements] remain the clearest and best statement we have to guide campus decision-making.” The Cabinet also noted that HSU has not been effective in adopting clear plans to advance the mission and vision and to tie resource allocation to such plans. It recommended a number of short- and long-term strategies to tie campus planning to the mission and vision.

Over the last two and one-half years, the campus has focused on advancing the vision in the areas of diversity and sustainability. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has developed metrics for tracking diversity goals and publishes an annual report identifying areas of concern. Diversity goals have been integrated into the annual academic program review process and the campus has adopted an aggressive plan to diversify the faculty. This year, the campus will develop a campus plan with a specific goal to increase staff diversity. Diversity goals are also a central part of the Enrollment Management Plan.

A sustainability coordinator has been identified and the campus has made a commitment to implement the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) starting in fall 2012 as a way to benchmark and track the progress of HSU's sustainability efforts. This yearlong, campus-wide self-reporting effort will help HSU focus on specific ways to advance the vision in the area of sustainability.

As the university continues with these efforts, the University Senate will initiate a process to develop a recommendation to the President to “streamline and focus the vision in a manner that leads clearly to operational plans.” The goal is to create a vision and a process that allows for “the ongoing development of operational plans to prioritize and implement that vision.”