

# Modern Strategy Planning in Higher Education



Brought to you by: Paul N. Friga  
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# Paul Friga's Background



**Paul N. Friga, Ph.D.**

- AGB Practice Area Lead – Transformation of Public Higher Education; AGB Senior Consultant
- Clinical Associate Professor of Strategy – UNC Chapel Hill
- Former Chief Strategy Officer, HelioCampus
- Leading higher education thought leader with over 22 articles in the Chronicle of Higher Ed and InsideHigherEd and numerous webinars and blogs over the past 24 months; significant consulting projects
- Former consultant – McKinsey & PwC
- Former Trustee – Saint Francis University, Loretto, PA
- Former Board Chair – Saints Francis & Clare Church, Greenwood, Indiana
- Founded ABC Insights, a leading higher ed benchmarking consortium
- Created NACUBO Master Class in Financial Transformation for CFOs
- Author of *The McKinsey Mind* and *The McKinsey Engagement*

*Paul N. Friga, Ph.D., Clinical Associate Professor of Strategy – UNC Kenan-Flagler  
AGB Practice Area Leader: Transformation of Public Higher Education*

## About (visit his [website](#) for articles, blogs, and videos on strategy)

Paul is one of the foremost higher education thought leaders and strategists. With 20 years of experience as a professor, researcher and consultant at UNC CH and Indiana University, Paul understands how public education really works and how it should change. His former experience as a consultant with PwC (earned CPA and CMA designations as ) and McKinsey (including projects in public higher education) round out additional relevant experience. He has also served as a Trustee at Saint Francis University and the Board Chair at Saints Francis and Clare Church in Greenwood, Indiana. He has an MBA and Ph.D. from UNC Chapel Hill.

For the past 10 years, Paul has been researching best practices strategic resource allocation in higher education, presenting at international conferences, and co-founded ABC Insights, a premier higher education benchmarking consortium that was acquired by HelioCampus. Over the past 24 months, Paul has authored 22 articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education and InsideHigherEd on strategies for change in higher education for surviving the COVID crisis and positioning universities for the long-term (over 500K views/downloads). He has also conducted many strategic planning projects and board retreats for universities, not-for-profit entities (including the Marines), and corporations (including The Biltmore Estate). He has written two best-selling books on team problem-solving (*The McKinsey Mind* and *The McKinsey Engagement*) and is an award-winning teacher of strategy and consulting for undergrads, MBAs, and Executives. He created a year-long board workshop series for AGB.

# Agenda



Modern Priorities for  
Higher Education



Best Practices for  
Strategic Planning



Team Exercise

# Modern Priorities for Higher Education

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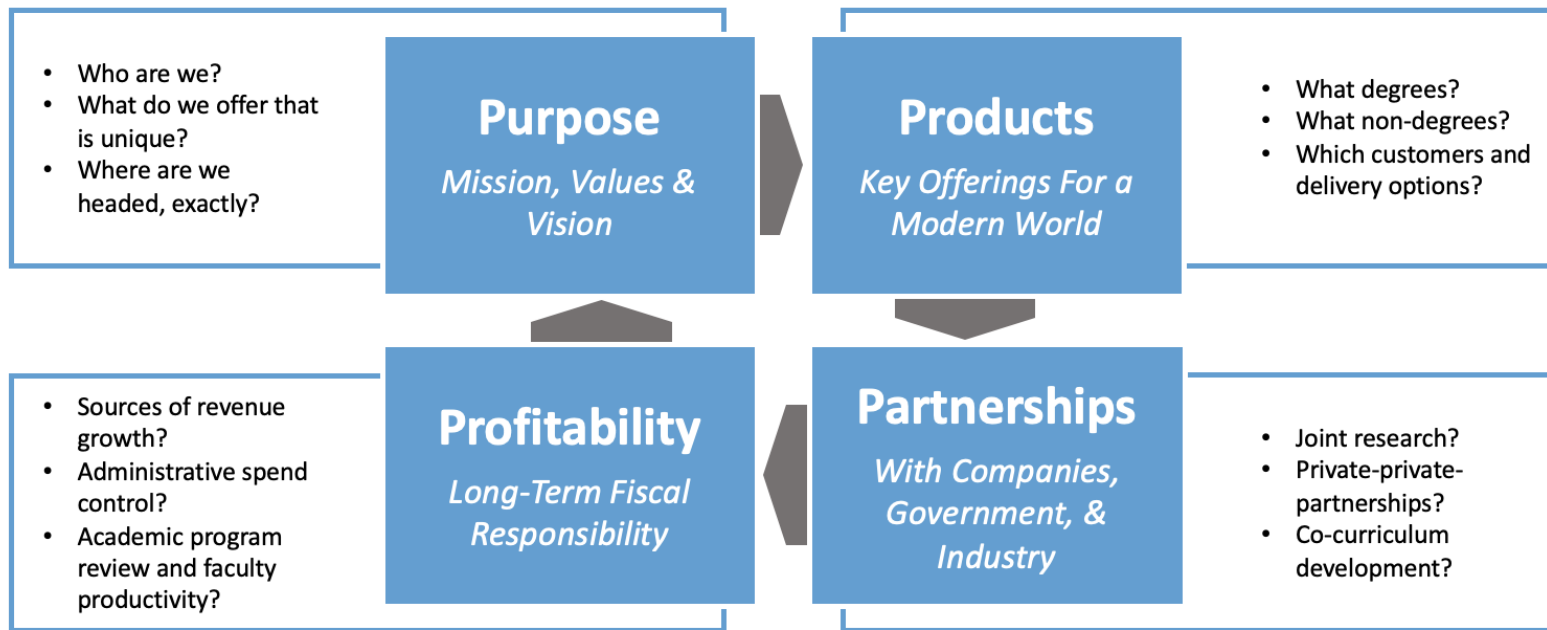
# The “Six Million Dollar Man” Strategy for Modern Higher Ed

- How can modern strategic planning be **BETTER**?
  - Truly seek differentiation in what you do
  - Focus on strategic vs. operational issues
  - Tackle the hard challenges
- How can modern strategic planning be **STRONGER**?
  - Craft strategy “slogans”
  - Involve your campus in the strategy process
  - Manage the change carefully (use Kotter Model – see Appendix)
- How can modern strategic planning be **FASTER**?
  - Shorten the strategic planning period
  - Keep the planning horizon to three years
  - Think of strategy as a living document

# Understanding the Higher Ed Macro Environment

	Applied to Higher Ed
<b>SOCIAL/DEMOGRAPHIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional tuition increases of 3+% unsustainable - \$1.6T of student debt</li> <li>• 12 consecutive years of enrollment decline on a national basis and steeper declines forecasted</li> <li>• Adult students increasingly interested in higher ed</li> </ul>
<b>TECHNOLOGICAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online education methodologies widely available</li> <li>• Increasing analytics capabilities for decision-making</li> <li>• Benchmarking data and platforms growing significantly</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality of earnings – 3 years of negative ratings by Moody's and S&amp;P for higher ed (recently stable)</li> <li>• Recovering from recessionary conditions and potential recession (state support for higher ed at risk)</li> <li>• Over 1,200 colleges either at or approaching "not financially viable" status (DOE Financial Composite Scores)</li> </ul>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL/ GEOGRAPHIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More supply of brick-and-mortar colleges than student demand</li> <li>• Pressure for more sustainable energy use</li> <li>• Growth in international higher ed competitors</li> </ul>
<b>POLITICAL/LEGAL/ GOVERNMENTAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness to more inter-institution collaboration/mergers/alliances</li> <li>• New control of the House may lead to changes in higher education support</li> <li>• Increasing financial support/demand for underserved segment education</li> </ul>

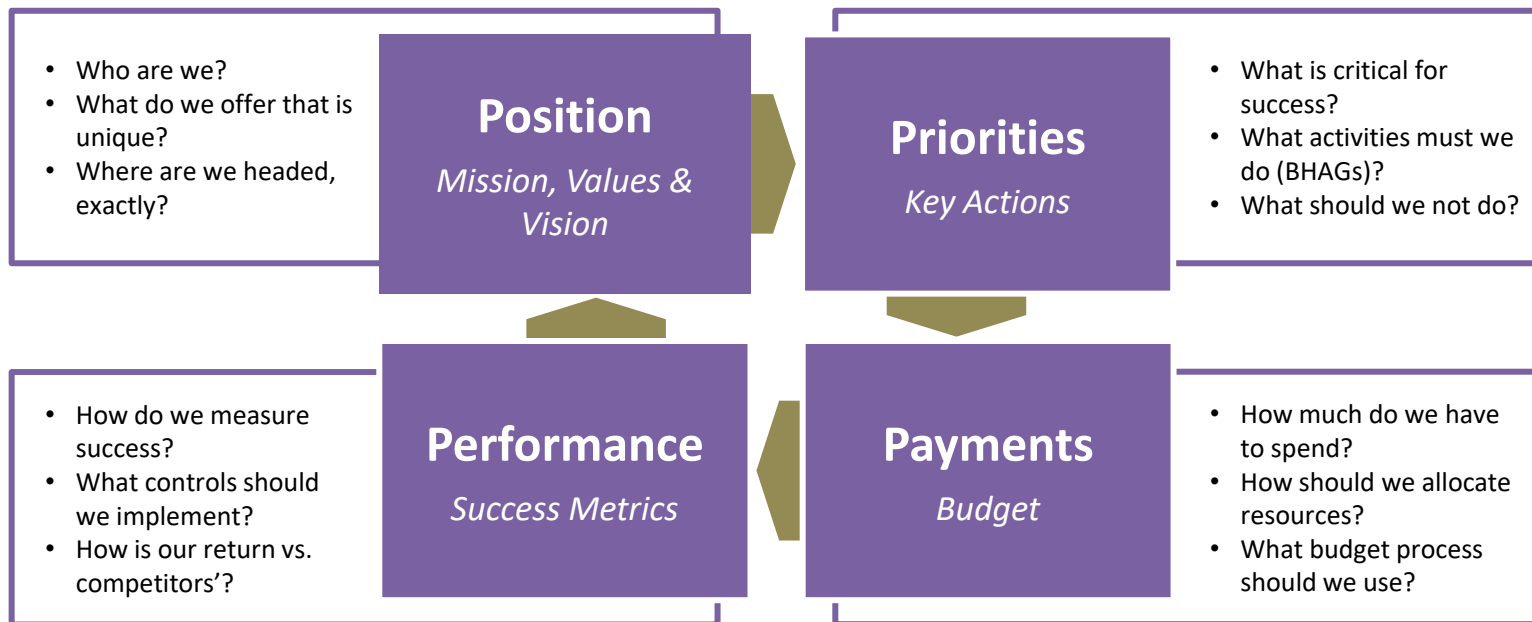
# A Framework for Strategic Priorities Over the Next Decade



# Best Practices for Strategic Planning



# The starting point is the content of strategy



# It is helpful to create core strategy statements

## Mission Statement

Statement which specifies a firm's purpose or "reason for being" and the primary objective toward which the firm's programs & plans should be aimed. Statement specifying the firm's key constituents and how the firm will serve them. It must be clear and understood.

*It "makes you proud."*

## Vision Statement

Statement describing what the firm strives to be at some future time. It should be specific and motivating.

*It "makes you excited."*

## Values

It is what we believe in, our guiding principles, and how we interact.

*It "makes you belong."*

## The T-Shirt Theory (Strategy on one page)



Mission  
Vision  
Values

Priorities  
Objectives  
Initiatives/Strategies

# Example: University XYZ (Hypothetical Small Public Institution) - Strategy

## Proposed Strategy Statements

### Mission

**Creating leaders to  
impact society**

### Vision

**Become the university  
that students call home**

### Values

**Student Focused  
Equity & Diversity  
Accountability**

## Proposed Priorities

### Priority 1

**Create a compelling  
vision around student  
success, personalized  
education, and  
athletics**

### Priority 2

**Grow research in  
high-impact  
disciplines**

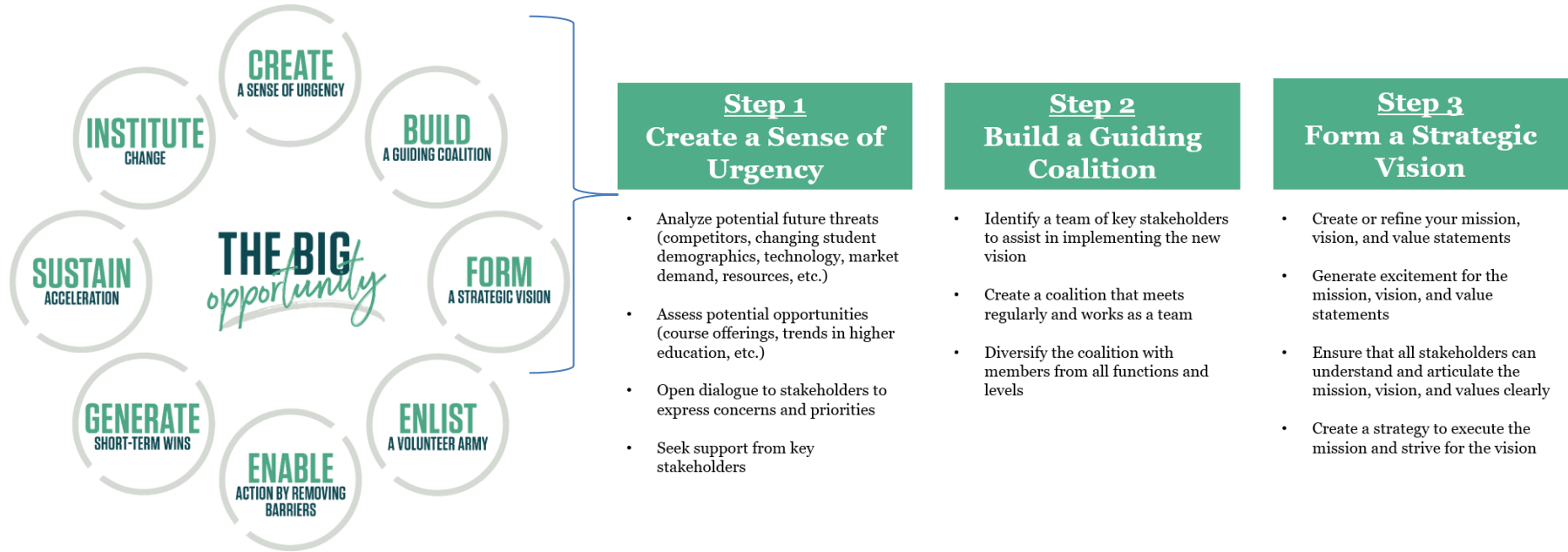
### Priority 3

**Expand external  
partnerships**

# Example: University XYZ (Hypothetical Small Public Institution) – Multi-Year Implementation Plan

	Priority 1: Create a compelling vision around student success, personalized education, and athletics			Priority 2: Grow research in high-impact disciplines			Priority 3: Expand external partnerships		
	Objective 1.1: Launch New Strategic Vision	Objective 1.2: Conduct Program Review to Reallocate Resources	Objective 1.3: Expand Athletic Programs	Objective 2.1: Develop Academic Plan	Objective 2.2: Research & Innovation	Objective 2.3: Create Nursing School	Objective 3.1: Develop Modern Pedagogies and Offerings	Objective 3.2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers, Alumni, and Partners	Objective 3.3: Launch New Online Program with Community Colleges Nationwide
<b>Strategy 1 (Y1)</b>	Assist all divisions and colleges in university-wide strategic refresh effort	Examine student enrollments, demand, and fit with faculty	Benchmark athletic programs and student success against peers	Prioritize research areas and redesign faculty incentives accordingly	Launch research institutes and grant writing office	Solicit input from stakeholders and finalize acquisition target strategic scoring matrix	Conduct market analysis of target student populations, demand, and competitive offerings	Expand partnerships with employers interested in diverse student graduates	Build business plan for expansion of degree completion programs and target markets
<b>Strategy 2 (Y2)</b>	Develop multi-year strategic performance dashboard	Eliminate lowest performing programs and invest in high market demand areas	Invest in athletics department, coaches, and new sports	Hire additional research faculty	Create equity fund and incubation facilities	Identify acquisition targets and conduct due diligence on top-scoring candidates	Invest in current and new digital offerings; promote inclusive pedagogical techniques	Grow key alumni engagement; invest in analytics and staff to prepare for comprehensive campaign	Create seamless transfer routes with community colleges in our state and beyond
<b>Strategy 3 (Y3)</b>	Share division and college level results on an annual basis	Communicate reputation for retention, graduation, and post-employment success	Leverage athletic programs to target prospective students nationwide	Create endowment to support research and launch academic journal	Expand commercialization and tech transfer capabilities	Develop robust integration plan, complete acquisition, and hire key leaders	Launch new micro-credential, certificates, and non-degree executive education offerings	Invest in incubator and SBD offices	Launch national advertising campaign to expand program
<b>Underlying Values</b>	Student Focused			Equity & Diversity			Accountability		

# Change Management: Balancing Long-Term & Short-Term



# Example – UNC College of Arts & Science Strategy

Mission	Proposed Priorities
Think. Communicate. Collaborate. Create. ...For meaningful lives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop a modern, innovative, inclusive, and global <b>curriculum</b></li><li>2. Expand high-impact and interdisciplinary <b>research</b></li><li>3. Tell the <b>story</b> of the College of Arts &amp; Sciences</li></ol>
Vision	
Reimagining the arts & sciences for the public good	
Values	
Student Focus Scholarly Excellence Strategically Bold	

# Implementation Planning: Objectives, Metrics and Initiatives/Strategies

- Priority – thing we do to live our mission and achieve our vision; first of mind; more important than other things; could be noun or verb statement
  - Objective – thing aimed for or sought after; achieving the objective will indicate progress toward our priority (*Note that each objective has **metrics/outcomes** that measure the progress and **targets** which are the target within that metric.*)
    - Initiative/Strategy – project or action that is carefully defined and designed to achieve your objective (will ultimately have owners who lead and report out on progress)

# Priority 1: Develop a modern, innovative, inclusive, and global curriculum

## Objectives and Initiatives/Strategies

### A Reinvent General Education

1. Develop a planning process and timeline for curriculum development and campus-wide review/approval
2. Identify key guiding principles based on current literature, national models of excellence, and key stakeholder input
3. Evaluate and prioritize knowledge areas and student outcomes for potential inclusion in the curriculum
4. Consult with a wide range of user groups on inclusiveness, implementation, and feasibility (e.g., students, faculty, advisors, registrar)
5. Develop an annual general education assessment plan for each included component
6. Provide the curriculum blueprint for review and critique by major campus review groups and implement new curriculum by fall 2019
7. Assess the functioning of the curriculum after one complete academic cycle

### B Reimagine the Humanities Ph.D.

1. Create new, innovative graduate courses that integrate an introduction to the discipline and its methods with professional development activities and an exploration of public engagement;
2. Explore alternative formats to the monograph-based humanities dissertation (e.g. digital, interdisciplinary collaboration/team-based, etc.)

### C Expand and develop instructional methods based on evidence-based inquiry

1. Maintain student focus
2. Increase instructor professional development about student learning
3. Leverage and integrate new technologies
4. Secure appropriate spaces
5. Introduce new ways of measuring student learning
6. Utilize predictive analytics

### D Generate interdisciplinary, experiential, and global learning opportunities

1. Increase public and private partnerships for student learning
2. Expand credit and non-credit bearing global learning opportunities for all students
3. Provide interdisciplinary courses in hybrid (in-person-online) and other formats

# Priority 2: Expand high-impact and interdisciplinary research

## Objectives and Initiatives/Strategies

### A Strengthen basic and applied research portfolio

1. Identify top priority research expansion areas based upon department and center input
2. Leverage new strategic resource pools for key high-impact research

### B Harness interdisciplinary talent for addressing global issues

1. Encourage opportunities/new structures that go beyond single departments for research
2. Measure and reward interdisciplinary grants, projects and major partnerships

### C Build adaptive research facilities

1. Build new APS/Tech development building for translational research
2. Renovate Wilson Hall to improve animal model research and support flexible laboratories for biology.
3. Renovate Phillips Hall as a home for CoSMS Institute
4. Encourage and expand makerspaces, including app development space for students

### D Increase commercialization of research

1. Notice and celebrate our successes
2. Build incubator space
3. Create college-level incentive for translating research
4. Build better database of "expertise", "facilities", and "capabilities" to connect with entrepreneurial networks

# Priority 3: Tell the story of the College of Arts & Sciences

## Objectives and Initiatives/Strategies

### A Raise the national profile of the College of Arts & Sciences

1. Promote innovative College research and teaching
2. Identify key graduate programs to raise the profile of to improve U.S. News ranking

### B Create awareness at the local and State level of the role of the College as research entity, economic driver, and source of innovation

1. Promote awareness of companies, start-ups, patents, products, nonprofits created by College faculty, alumni, students
2. Raise profiles of College institutes and centers working on “big problems”—environment, energy, water, racial/religious intolerance, social justice, and others

### C Instill a culture of strategic planning and thinking that creates and shares the story of the College

1. Complete College and Department level strategic planning
2. Raise awareness among faculty—and the greater UNC-Chapel Hill campus community as a whole —of strategies and research and teaching innovations and outcomes
3. Create more effective external communications channels to collect and promote College successes

### D Raise \$600M + for the college as part of the University’s capital campaign

1. Refine College campaign priorities
2. Engage volunteers and advisory boards
3. Prepare and launch mini-campaigns to highlight and secure support for key priorities

# Metrics need to be tracked and reported out regularly – Example: UNC College of Arts & Sciences

Element	Description	Metrics
Mission	Think. Communicate. Collaborate. Create. For meaningful lives	Student satisfaction (net promotor) Faculty satisfaction (net promotor) Alumni satisfaction (net promotor)
Vision	Reimagining the arts & sciences for the public good	External review assessment of performance/alignment Annual faculty and staff survey
Priority 1	Develop a modern, innovative, inclusive, and global <b>curriculum</b>	Learning outcomes % adoption of modern teaching % initiatives completed % students with global credit bearing experience % students with internship/work experience % students with directed research % securing full time jobs/graduate school # cross listed/interdisciplinary courses % of students in cross listed/interdisciplinary courses
Priority 2	Expand high-impact and interdisciplinary <b>research</b>	\$ total research grants awarded % faculty applying for grants # of new buildings % faculty in joint grants # publications # patents # licenses # start-ups # IPOs # STTRs/SBIRs
Priority 3	Tell the <b>story</b> of the College of Arts & Sciences	Rankings – national and international (e.g. US News, Kiplinger, etc.) \$ raised from donors \$ raised from corporate partners (for research and operations) % of strategic objectives and initiatives completed

# One of the best examples of unique positioning

## ASU Charter

ASU is a comprehensive **public research university**, measured not by whom it excludes, but by **whom it includes** and how they **succeed**; advancing **research and discovery** of public value; and assuming **fundamental responsibility** for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the **communities** it serves.

Arizona State University (ASU) has become the foundational model for the **New American University**, a new paradigm for the public research university that transforms higher education. ASU is committed to **excellence, access and impact** in everything that it does.

No.1 university for innovation (ahead of Stanford and MIT)  
— *US News & World Report* (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Top 1 percent of the world's most prestigious universities  
— *Times Higher Education*

A top producer of Fulbright U.S. students  
— *The Institute for International Education*

A top "Best College Value" in public higher education  
— *Kiplinger Personal Finance*

Top public university of choice for international students  
— *The Institute for International Education*

## Mission & Goals

### Demonstrate leadership in academic excellence and accessibility

- Maintain the fundamental principle of accessibility to all students qualified to study at a research university.
- Maintain university accessibility to match Arizona's socioeconomic diversity, with undifferentiated outcomes for success.
- Improve freshman persistence to **greater than 90 percent**.
- Enhance university graduation rate to **greater than 85 percent** and more than 32,000 graduates.
- Enhance quality while reducing the cost of a degree.
- Enroll **100,000** online and distance-education degree-seeking students.
- Enhance measured student development and individual student learning to national leadership levels.
- Engage all learners on all levels.

### Establish national standing in academic quality and impact of colleges and schools in every field

- Attain national standing in academic quality for each college and school (top 5 percent).
- Attain national standing in the learning value added to our graduates in each college and school.
- Become the leading university academically (faculty, discovery, research, creativity) in at least one department or school within each college and school.

### Establish ASU as a leading global center for interdisciplinary research, discovery and development by 2025

- Become the leading American center for discovery and scholarship in the integrated social sciences and comprehensive arts and sciences.
- Enhance research competitiveness to more than **\$815 million** in annual research expenditures.
- Transform regional economic competitiveness through research and discovery and value-added programs.
- Become a leading American center for innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels.

### Enhance our local impact and social embeddedness

- Strengthen Arizona's interactive network of teaching, learning and discovery resources to reflect the scope of ASU's comprehensive knowledge enterprise.
- Co-develop solutions to the critical social, technical, cultural and environmental issues facing 21st-century Arizona.
- Meet the needs of 21st-century learners through the universal learner initiative by increasing individual success through personalized learning pathways and promoting adaptability to all accelerated social-technical changes.

Eight **design aspirations** guide ASU's ongoing evolution as a **New American University**. ASU integrates these institutional objectives in innovative ways to demonstrate excellence, access and impact.

**Leverage Our Place**  
ASU embraces its cultural, socioeconomic and physical setting.

**Transform Society**  
ASU catalyzes social change by being connected to social needs.

**Value Entrepreneurship**  
ASU uses its knowledge and encourages innovation.

**Conduct Use-Inspired Research**  
ASU research has purpose and impact.

**Enable Student Success**  
ASU is committed to the success of each unique student.

**Free Intellectual Disciplines**  
ASU creates knowledge by transcending academic disciplines.

**Be Socially Embedded**  
ASU connects with communities through mutually beneficial partnerships.

**Engage Globally**  
ASU engages with people and issues locally, nationally and internationally.

Learn more: [president.asu.edu](https://president.asu.edu)  
Twitter: @asupresoffice

Revised 2019

# Team Exercise

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# Exercise – Can you articulate the strategy of your institution?

Mission	Top 3 Priorities
Vision	
Values	

# Resources – Contact Paul Friga if you don't have access to any of these and we can send you a copy

- Paul's related AGB Blogs...
  - [Why Multiyear Financial Forecasting Is So Important in Higher Education](#)
  - [Don't Forget Long-Term Strategy](#)
  - [Why Every University Should Continue to Optimize Post-Pandemic Administrative Spending](#)
  - [It's Time to Increase the ROI of Your Academic Spend](#)
  - [How to Invest Your Federal Rescue Plan Funds](#)
  - [It's Time to Transform Your University](#)
  - [It is Time to Get Strategic About Enrollments](#)
- Plus – Paul Friga's [website](#) with more articles, podcasts and videos