

Purpose, Functions, and Objectives of the University of Idaho

The highest aspiration of a university is to imbue the human mind with knowledge, tolerance, and vision, and to stimulate a lasting attitude of inquiry. The University of Idaho shares this aspiration with universities everywhere. The particular purpose, functions, and objectives of the university have been defined as follows:

Purpose. In the widest sense, the purpose of the University of Idaho, a publicly supported comprehensive land-grant institution, is to serve the people of the state and nation as a major center for the preservation, advancement, and transmission of knowledge. Deriving from this purpose are the functions to be performed and the objectives to be achieved through the interaction of the various components and publics of the university.

Basic Functions and Objectives. Since its founding, the functions of the university have been viewed as threefold--teaching, research, and service. The broad objectives relating to these functions are, respectively:

1. To offer undergraduate and graduate academic programs of excellent quality in the liberal arts and sciences and in many professional disciplines so that qualified students may develop into responsible, thinking citizens, provided with a sound general education, prepared for a lifetime of learning, and equipped with the professional and technical skills needed by society.
2. To add to knowledge through research, scholarship, and creative activities in both fundamental and applied fields, and to seek ways of applying that knowledge to the betterment and enrichment of humanity.
3. To make readily available to all people of the state the results of research and the rich heritage of human culture embodied in the arts and sciences.

Unique Functions of the University. As a part of the coordinated system of higher education that encompasses the state universities and college and the public community colleges, the University of Idaho has historically had certain unique functions. Specifically, the university serves the state as:

1. Its comprehensive land-grant institution, with primary statewide responsibility for instruction, research, extension, and public service in agriculture, architecture, engineering, forestry and wildlife, law, mining and metallurgy, and in designated areas in the arts and sciences, business, and education.
2. The institution with principal responsibility for research, research-oriented graduate education, and the granting of the Ph.D. degree. As a concomitant of this responsibility, UI's faculty members conduct research as a clearly defined element of their professional duties.
3. The institution responsible for the state's role as a partner in regional cooperative programs in medical and veterinary medical education.
4. A center for professional education, operating accredited professional programs in architecture, chemistry, education, engineering, forestry, family and consumer sciences, law, music, and wildlife, fishery, and range sciences, and also offering comprehensive programs in the preparation of public-school teachers, administrators, and counselors.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2007-2010

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING GOAL: Engage students in a transformational experience of discovery, understanding, and global citizenship.

Context:

Our graduates will live, work, compete, and prosper in a global and multicultural environment. Consequently, graduates must learn the substance of their studies and understand the values, perspectives, skills, and experiences that advance humankind.

Objective A: Build and sustain competitive advantages through innovative curricula of distinction.

Strategies:

1. Develop learning outcomes at the University as well as at program levels for graduate and undergraduates.

2. Use learning outcomes assessment pro-actively as a means to keep teaching and learning vital, contemporary, and grounded.
3. Utilize distinctive Core curricula to engage students in participatory learning and to prepare them for the challenges of higher education.
4. Expand partnerships with industry, government, schools, and foundations that emphasize active learning opportunities such as internships, practica, athletics, and the arts.
5. Invest in field work and outreach as a means of contributing to learning and the land-grant responsibilities of the University.
6. Develop flexible course schedules and year-round programs to meet student needs throughout the University.
7. Establish curricular content that utilizes interdisciplinary student teams to solve complex learning tasks.

Objective B: Develop effective integrative learning activities to engage and expand student minds.

Strategies:

1. Enhance innovation, development, and recognition of high quality teaching and student learning.
2. Expand opportunities for students to experience self discovery through hands-on activities such as graduate-level and undergraduate research, creative activity and service learning, national student exchanges, internships, education abroad, disciplinary competitions, and engagement in professional societies.
3. Provide graduate and professional students with integrated experiences in teaching, research, creative activity, and outreach.
4. Integrate educational experiences with the living and learning environments.
5. Engage alumni and stakeholders as partners in student recruitment, retention, mentoring, learning, and post-graduation transition.
6. Engage students in personal mentoring and academic advising to facilitate their learning.
7. Engage students, staff, and faculty in curricular and co-curricular activities that enhance our understanding of our place in a diverse local and global community.

2. SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY GOAL: Achieve excellence in scholarship and creative activity through an institutional culture that values and promotes strong academic areas and interdisciplinary collaboration among them.

Context:

Most scientific, social, economic, environmental, legal, and political problems are partly embedded in a complex system of interlinking causes and effects. The University is strategically positioned to effectively address these complex societal issues through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Objective A: Promote an environment that increases faculty engagement in interdisciplinary scholarship.

Strategies:

1. Establish administrative structures, policies, procedures, and incentives for faculty, departments, centers/institutes, and colleges to participate in interdisciplinary programs.
2. Ensure that individual levels of effort in interdisciplinary programs and grants are adequately recognized by their department and college.
3. Improve and strengthen faculty appointments, position descriptions, advancement, and recognitions to ensure interdisciplinary collaboration is attractive and effective.
4. Increase hiring to strengthen interdisciplinary scholarship that advances the University's strategic themes and land-grant mission.
5. Strengthen programs that encompass cultural, economic, legal, scientific, policy, environmental, and/or international dimensions.
6. Establish, renew, remodel, and reallocate facilities that encourage collaborative interdisciplinary inquiry and provide access to information resources and innovative technologies.
7. Increase grants that support interdisciplinary activities.

Objective B: Emphasize scholarly and creative activities that support the University's strategic themes, the research-extensive and land-grant missions, and strategically important graduate and professional programs.

Strategies:

1. Increase the number of competitive graduate assistantships.
2. Improve and expand start-up packages and compensation that attract and retain a diverse, competitive faculty in the scholarly modes of discovery, application, integration, and teaching.

3. Increase the number of endowed faculty positions and fellowships.
4. Allocate physical and financial resources for operation, maintenance, safety, and security of technical infrastructure facilities.
5. Strengthen library capacity, collections and technological innovation to improve access to information sources.
6. Partner with faculty and staff from all disciplines and professions to provide grant processing and management support, and proposal preparation assistance on proposals submitted to government agencies, private organizations and foundations, and industries.
7. Enhance scholarly modes of discovery, application and integration that address issues of importance to the citizens, government, economy, and environment in the state of Idaho.
8. Build strategic educational, research and/or technology transfer activities regionally, nationally, and abroad.

3. OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT GOAL: Engage with the public, private and non-profit sectors through mutually beneficial partnerships that enhance teaching, learning, discovery, and creativity.

Context: The University has a long and strong history of extending agriculturally related teaching and research findings throughout the state. We seek to broaden that outreach and engagement to better link all academic areas of the University with the needs of constituents and stakeholders throughout Idaho.

Objective A: Build upon, strengthen, and connect the University of Idaho Extension with other parts of the University to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders.

Strategies:

1. Develop a coordinated university-wide funding strategy for University engagement that complements resources received from county, state, and federal sources.
2. Build an organizational system that empowers, encourages, and recognizes scholarly engagement relevant to the issues and needs of Idaho and our region.
3. Grow the capacity of the University to engage with communities by involving all faculty who have programs relevant to local, regional, national and international issues.
4. Engage with communities and organizations through flexible partnerships that share resources and respond to needs and expectations.
5. Partner with other educational institutions, industry, not-for-profits, and public agencies to enhance outreach delivery and quality.
6. Foster key industry/business relationships that benefit entrepreneurship and social and economic development through innovation and technology transfer.
7. Conduct periodic assessments of the needs of the state and work to address those needs.
8. Integrate sustainability into all facets of community engagement and outreach.
9. Broadly and intensively communicate the activity and impact of the University's engagement with society.

Objective B: Deliver undergraduate, graduate, continuing professional education, and Extension programs and opportunities for life long learning.

Strategies:

1. Design and implement an institutional system that promotes access to program/course delivery statewide and facilitates faculty in course/program design and development.
2. Develop an array of academic and outreach programs based on community needs and University expertise.
3. Determine effective program delivery modes as a function of site, available technology, partnerships, and learner characteristics.
4. Implement a fee structure that provides adequate budgetary support based on a realistic costs matrix.
5. Have programs and stakeholders reflect the faces and places of Idaho, including those who have been underserved or underrepresented.
6. Grow and support community internships and service learning activity as opportunities for students and communities to engage for mutual benefit.

4. ORGANIZATION, CULTURE, AND CLIMATE GOAL: Create and sustain an energized community that is adaptable, dynamic, and vital to enable the University to advance strategically and function efficiently.

Context: To implement the first three goals of the strategic plan requires an organization adaptive to change and opportunity, and a community characterized by openness and trust. The University needs to create formal and

informal organizational structures, policies, and processes that enable us to be effective while also fostering a climate of participatory decision making and mutual respect. The success of the change processes will be enhanced if they are conducted in an open, welcoming climate that enhances our ability to work through difficult issues in a respectful manner.

Objective A: Sustain and enhance a positive work climate to enhance the quality of University life.

Strategies

1. Develop a socially healthy and welcoming environment characterized by trust and respect that allows for open communications about difficult issues and differences.
2. Ensure that the University is a safe work and educational environment for its employees and students through proper training and monitoring.
3. Recruit and retain a diverse body of students, staff, and faculty to enrich the quality of the University's activities.
4. Align employees' position descriptions and reward structures with institutional priorities.
5. Create formal and informal opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to learn from each other and build meaningful collaborations.
6. Provide all new students and employees the opportunity for diversity and cultural competence training as a component of their initial orientation and offer ongoing training for all students, staff, and faculty.
7. Provide ongoing opportunities for self discovery and personal and professional growth through cultural, social, recreational, diversity, wellness, and continuing professional development programming.

Objective B: Sustain and enhance an organizational structure, policies, and procedures that enable the University to attain its other goals.

Strategies

1. Advance an attitude of making choices, taking actions, and developing mechanisms for making investments in people, programs, places, and processes.
2. Reduce academic, structural, and administrative barriers and enhance rewards for collaboration across the University in all of its locations.
3. Employ best practices and distribute authority-responsibility-accountability to efficiently and effectively manage the people, programs, and places of the University.
4. Enhance accountability measures and employ them to assess our progress on strategic issues.
5. Build strong support from the public sector and private donors to accelerate the attainment of our University goals.
6. Utilize the athletic and art programs to enhance the visibility and image of the University through competitive and integrity-based programs that unite students, faculty, staff, alumni, and their communities.
7. Develop a fund raising effort across the University and its constituents to generate and sustain the resources necessary to implement the strategic plan.
8. Enhance the efforts of our valued alumni, friends, advisory board members, and volunteer organizations in attracting and retaining students and generating gifts to support the advancement of the University goals.
9. Strengthen financial and administrative operations so that they meet the needs of faculty, staff, and students, and those of our constituents and stakeholders.
10. Establish facilities that encourage collaborative interdisciplinary inquiry using information resources and innovative technologies.
11. Foster a university that is academically, culturally, fiscally, and environmentally sustainable.