STANDARD
ONE

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION
AND GOALS, PLANNING, AND EFFECTIVENESS
Mission, Vision, Planning, and Effectiveness

Boise State’s Story

—A NEW VISION

Boise State President Bob Kustra’s analysis of Boise State’s role in the state educational system and its place in the governmental and commercial heart of the state of Idaho led him to conclude, in fall of 20051:

“What is unique about our place in Idaho higher education and what offers us the opportunity to develop a distinctive mission for Boise State is the convergence of our metropolitan character, our traditional undergraduate teaching mission, and the research of our faculty, focused as it is on the regional and state economy, the Western landscape and the challenges of science...Clearly, Boise State has embarked on a mission to become a metropolitan research university of distinction.”

To many, those words may have seemed a bold and unattainable vision, and a major shift in our trajectory as an institution. However, President Kustra captured in words what had already begun to happen at Boise State. Our emergence as a metropolitan research University is an inevitable and unstoppable result of the interaction of two factors: our role in our state system of education and the environment in which we are located. To do so with distinction will result in large part from a third factor, the highly participatory manner in which we have translated our vision into a strategic plan and in which we are implementing that plan.

—OUR ROLE AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Boise State University is typical of state universities in that it was given a very broad role and mission by its governing board, the Idaho State Board of Education. Although the statement provides some guidance as to areas of emphasis, it gives Boise State remarkably broad latitude in determining the ways in which we will “serve a diverse population through undergraduate and graduate programs, research, and state and regional public service.”
The Boise metropolitan area, with its population of more than 650,000, is a regional center for business and government. It is the capital of Idaho and is hundreds of miles from the next bigger population center. Although there are other institutions of higher education in the area, Boise State University is the only “full-service,” comprehensive state University in the region, and therefore shoulders the responsibility for the bulk of post-secondary education, research support, and service to the community.

As a state-funded institution, Boise State relies on the state legislature for a substantial portion of its funding [see Standard 7]. However, although funding from the legislature continues to grow, that funding represents a smaller and smaller portion of the University’s annual budget. Because resources are limited, Boise State must focus on what is most needed. We must strive to make the best use of resources available to us by being efficient and by aligning our actions with a common vision.

—ACHIEVING DISTINCTION

Although becoming a metropolitan research university may be inevitable given our role and our location, achieving distinction in that new role is not. Our ability to achieve distinction is a result of the way in which we have translated our vision into a strategic plan and the way in which we are implementing our strategic plan.

In leading the development of our strategic plan, Provost Sona Andrews deliberately involved a wide range of campus community members. Rendering the vision into a concrete set of destinations involved hundreds of faculty members, staff members, students, and community members. Development of the strategic plan by which we will attain that vision was the work of a group from the campus community. They were charged with developing simple yet comprehensive and potent goals to guide our actions. The outcome of this effort was a set of goals that guide but do not prescribe the development of plans for action at the unit level. It is primarily through the plans and actions of units that we are implementing the University-wide goals and will thereby achieve our vision.

As a result of these processes, “metropolitan research university of distinction” is a vision founded in democratic process and based on the ideas and commitments of the entire campus community. Consequently, our strategic plan, Charting the Course, has become an important part of nearly every planning discussion held on campus. Finally, implementation of our strategic goals has become a collective effort of the units on campus. There is, perhaps, no better way to secure the intense campus-wide buy-in needed to achieve the distinction to which we aspire.
Mission, Vision, Planning, and Effectiveness

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Development and Adoption of Mission and Vision

1.A.1 The institution’s mission and goals derive from, or are widely understood by, the campus community, are adopted by the governing board, and are periodically reexamined.

1.A.2 The mission, as adopted by the governing board, appears in appropriate institutional publications, including the catalog.

1.B.3 The planning process is participatory involving constituencies appropriate to the institution such as board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and other interested parties.

—ROLE AND MISSION PER THE IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In October 1998, the Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted the present role and mission statements for each of Idaho’s four institutions of higher education: Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, and the University of Idaho.²³

“Boise State University is a comprehensive, urban University serving a diverse population through undergraduate and graduate programs, research, and state and regional public service.

Boise State University will formulate its academic plan and generate programs with primary emphasis on business and economics, engineering, the social sciences, public affairs, the performing arts, and teacher preparation. Boise State University will give continuing emphasis in the areas of the health professions, the physical and biological sciences, and education and will maintain basic strengths in the liberal arts and sciences, which provide the core curriculum or general education portion of the curriculum.”

One of the primary reasons for adopting these role and mission statements was to differentiate among the institutions and thereby reduce program duplication. The statements are a key foundation for the determination of the programs that institutions may offer.⁴

—STRATEGIC PLANNING: DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITION OF THE VISION

The development of Boise State University’s strategic plan, Charting the Course (CTC), began in January 2005.⁵ From February through April, more than 600 Boise State University faculty, staff and students participated in 30 focus groups⁶ and provided input via the Web to collectively
define and operationalize the vision of Boise State as a metropolitan research university of distinction. As a result of this process, the vision was defined in terms of four “destinations” and the “milestones” that would demonstrate our progress toward those destinations.

The four destinations and their corresponding milestones are as follows:

- **Academic Excellence**: high-quality, student-focused programs that integrate theory and practice, engage students in community-based learning, and are informed by meaningful assessment.
  **MILESTONE**: Recognized for integrating research with teaching and learning in high-quality programs.

- **Public Engagement**: the University’s academic mission is linked with its community partners to address issues of mutual benefit.
  **MILESTONE**: Recognized for partnerships that contribute to regional growth and development.

- **Vibrant Culture**: embraces and fosters innovation, responsiveness, inclusiveness, accessibility, diversity, and effective stewardship.
  **MILESTONE**: Recognized as a center for cultural and intellectual exchange that enriches the community.

- **Exceptional Research**: progressive scholarship and creative activity, and graduate programs that have groundbreaking applications locally, regionally, and globally.
  **MILESTONE**: Recognized for faculty and students who excel in research.

It is important to recognize that although the “title” of each destination may be typical of what many institutions use to describe themselves, it is the wording that follows those titles that distinguishes and defines what we seek to achieve at Boise State University. Thus, for example, our vision is not simply to attain academic excellence, but to do so in a way that integrates theory and practice, and that involves community-based learning.
Translation & Realization of Mission and Vision: Strategic Planning & Implementation

1.A.4 Goals are determined consistent with the institution’s mission and its resources - human, physical, and financial.

1.A.5 The institution’s mission and goals give direction to all its educational activities, to its admission policies, selection of faculty, allocation of resources, and to planning.

1.B.1 The institution clearly defines its evaluation and planning processes. It develops and implements procedures to evaluate the extent to which it achieves institutional goals.

1.B.2 The institution engages in systematic planning for, and evaluation of, its activities, including teaching, research, and public service consistent with institutional mission and goals.

1.B.3 The planning process is participatory involving constituencies appropriate to the institution such as board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and other interested parties.

1.B.4 The institution uses the results of its systematic evaluation activities and ongoing planning processes to influence resource allocation and to improve its instructional programs, institutional services, and activities.

1.B.5 The institution integrates its evaluation and planning processes to identify institutional priorities for improvement.

1.B.6 The institution provides the necessary resources for effective evaluation and planning processes

—STRATEGIC PLANNING: CHARTING THE COURSE AND THE CREATION OF GOALS AND STRATEGIES

With the vision clearly defined, the process of charting a strategic course continued into the fall of 2005 and spring of 2006 with a planning team of 40-plus persons, representative of University faculty, staff, and administrators. Hundreds of interviews, Web input, focus groups, and other data were used as the basis for a standard analysis to identify our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A key outcome of that analysis was the identification of the five key areas in which we need to focus our efforts if we are to be successful in attaining our vision: resources, infrastructure, people, connections, and culture. Next, 10 goals were derived to guide our progress in those five areas.

Our strategic goals are purposefully broad and general. They are:

- Obtain fiscal resources necessary to support the vision
- Build and maintain facilities to support programs and create an attractive and accessible environment
- Recruit and retain faculty and staff to support the vision
- Create an organization that is responsive to change
• Recruit and retain an academically-prepared and diverse student body
• Provide student-centered services
• Promote diverse communities that foster faculty, staff, and student interaction.
• Develop network and outreach opportunities with the community
• Respond to the educational needs of the region
• Provide development opportunities for faculty to integrate research and teaching

Finally, 21 strategies were developed. They are designed to be suggestions and examples, not restrict possible strategies that might be developed.

—DISSEMINATION OF OUR MISSION, VISION, AND STRATEGIC PLAN.

Charting the Course (CTC) was released to the campus community in August 2006.7 8 Key to the successful attainment of a vision and implementation of a strategic plan is that they become widely known and discussed. The vision and the entire strategic plan are printed in a format (a “z-card”) that fits into a wallet or a pocket, and is convenient to distribute individually and to larger audiences. The self-contained nature of the z-card makes it a useful tool. The graphic nature of the plan allows anyone to easily grasp the elements of the plan. Upon the initial release of CTC, every employee at the University received a z-card. New employees receive the plan at orientation. Banners depicting the four “destinations” of CTC have been displayed on campus light posts.

Similarly, the mission and vision statements are widely available and are communicated to faculty, administrators, students, and the public through a variety of internal and external publications, such as the Boise State homepage9, and the Boise State University Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs.10 11

The mission, vision, and strategic plan guide the selection of editorial focus and content for Presidential Reports, the staff and faculty e-newsletter UPDATE, and FOCUS, the University's quarterly alumni magazine.12 The mission, vision, and strategic plan are the foundation of the University's first comprehensive fundraising campaign13 and helped determine priorities in the University-wide and college case statements. Simply stated, the “metropolitan research
university of distinction” phrase has become part of the campus community vernacular and is commonly used in all types of correspondence, quotes, and publications.

Have we been successful at getting the message out? A group of students in an Instructional & Performance Technology course conducted a study to determine the degree to which personnel in one college (College of Health Sciences) had identified with the vision of becoming a metropolitan research university of distinction. Findings revealed high levels of engagement, with a majority of the respondents reporting high levels of satisfaction with the strategic plan and the ability to identify how their roles and duties align with the strategic vision of the University.

In October 2006, Boise State University submitted its strategic plan, Charting the Course, to the SBOE. By approving the plan, the SBOE approved both the vision of the University and the strategic plan for achieving that vision. The University and the SBOE revisit the plan annually and reconfirm their commitment to its direction and goals.

—IMPLEMENTATION VIA UNIT LEVEL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Because of the general and broad nature of the 10 strategic goals, CTC does not function as a prescriptive, detailed strategic plan. Instead, the goals provide a broad framework to which individual units can contribute, in which they can have ownership, and with which they are expected to align. The goals afford opportunities for units to develop their own initiatives to help with implementation of CTC.

Soon after release of CTC, units were asked to develop their own plans aligned with CTC. All academic colleges have completed their plans and many academic departments have completed plans that complement and extend the plans of their respective colleges. Most non-academic units have also created strategic plans.

—PLANNING AND BUDGET PROCESS, AND IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITIES

The successful implementation of a strategic plan requires the teeth of budget relevancy. Over the last four years, Boise State has adopted an Annual Planning and Budget Process that ties budget decisions to strategic planning:

- Units explicitly describe the relevance of budget requests to unit-level and University-level strategic goals. Decisions as to which initiatives are funded are based to a substantial degree on the strength of the tie to strategic goals and the success of that unit in implementing previously proposed strategic initiatives.
• Units describe the outcomes of previous successful budget requests.

• Units describe their progress in strategic planning and in developing performance indicators to evaluate progress in attaining their strategic goals.

• Units describe the strategic accomplishments they have made.

Budget initiatives are then prioritized at the division level, so that for example, the budget requests of academic departments are prioritized within colleges, and then the budget requests of colleges are prioritized by the Provost.

Once budget initiatives are prioritized within each division, budget allocations are made based on strategic alignment and need. The President and the Vice President for Finance and Administration together decide on allocations among the divisions.

The same process was utilized in the most recent budget cycle to determine the budget reductions to each unit. Reductions were prioritized at the department level, the college level, the division level, and the University level. Budget reductions were not across the board, but instead were strategic. The net outcome was that academic units (including the library) and the Division of Research made reductions on average of 3.2% of their budgets, with cuts varying from 2.0% to 3.38%. The other divisions (Finance and Administration, Student Affairs, and Advancement) as well as the President’s Office, the Provost’s Office, and the Department of Athletics made reductions of between 3.2% and 6.15% of their budgets.19 20

As part of the planning and budget process, units are provided information to support their planning and budget prioritizations.

• Institutional Analysis, Assessment, and Reporting (IAAR) provides academic colleges with a wide range of basic measurements about their academic departments such as the numbers of majors and credits produced, budget allocations, and research funding.21 A set of ratios also is calculated such as credits per faculty member and number of majors per budget dollar.

• Other information is also supplied to departments by IAAR, including information on time to graduation and retention.22

• Academic departments now have access to the data warehouse, which provides a wide range of information on enrollments, etc.23

• IAAR and the Registrar’s Office provide information that departments request via ad hoc inquiries.24

• The Budget Office provides information on present budget allocations, balances, and carryforward amounts.25
1.A.7 The institution reviews with the Commission, contemplated changes that would alter its mission, autonomy, ownership or locus of control, or its intention to offer a degree at a higher level than is included in its present accreditation, or other changes in accordance with Policy A-2 Substantive Change.

A key aspect of our academic planning efforts is that we keep fully informed, and seek approval of, those groups charged with external oversight of our operations. The first level of oversight is provided by the SBOE. The SBOE’s Council on Academic Affairs and Programs (CAAP), which consists primarily of the chief academic officers of the state’s public institutions of higher education, first reviews proposed changes. If changes are recommended for approval, they are then considered by the SBOE. For graduate programs, we submit a Full Proposal, which requires a much more extensive description of the program curriculum, the need for the program, and resources available for the program. Doctoral programs require an external peer review. See additional detail in Standard 2.

The second level of oversight is provided by the NWCCU. All new programs and all discontinuations of programs are listed in our annual report to the NWCCU. Any changes that are substantive, as defined by NWCCU Policy A-2, are discussed with NWCCU personnel and appropriate action is taken. Until August 2008, Boise State enjoyed “Level II Oversight,” which meant that a number of changes considered for some institutions to be “major” substantive changes were considered for us to be “minor” substantive changes.

In August, 2008 the NWCCU revised its Policy A-2, and now classifies changes either as “minor” or “substantive.” At the same time, the NWCCU clarified regulations regarding geographically separate locations. Over the last year, Boise State has submitted Substantive Change notifications for two actions: (i) the transfer of an entire college (the Larry Selland College of Applied Technology) and all of its programs to the newly created community college, the College of Western Idaho, and (ii) the offering of several programs at geographically separate sites.
Translation & Realization of Mission & Vision: Assessment, Effectiveness, Revision

1.A.3 Progress in accomplishing the institution’s mission and goals is documented and made public.
1.A.4 Goals are determined consistent with the institution’s mission and its resources - human, physical, and financial.
1.A.5 The institution’s mission and goals give direction to all its educational activities, to its admission policies, selection of faculty, allocation of resources, and to planning.
1.B.1 The institution clearly defines its evaluation and planning processes. It develops and implements procedures to evaluate the extent to which it achieves institutional goals.
1.B.2 The institution engages in systematic planning for, and evaluation of, its activities, including teaching, research, and public service consistent with institutional mission and goals.
1.B.4 The institution uses the results of its systematic evaluation activities and ongoing planning processes to influence resource allocation and to improve its instructional programs, institutional services, and activities.
1.B.5 The institution integrates its evaluation and planning processes to identify institutional priorities for improvement.
1.B.6 The institution provides the necessary resources for effective evaluation and planning processes.
1.B.9 The institution uses information from its planning and evaluation processes to communicate evidence of institutional effectiveness to its public.

—EVALUATING PROGRESS ON CHARTING THE COURSE

One important way that our strategic progress is assessed is by requiring each unit to list, during the Annual Planning and Budgeting Process, its strategic accomplishments for the last two years. By tying evidence of progress on strategic goals to budget allocations, we have given substantial importance to strategic accomplishment.

A second important way in which our strategic progress is being accomplished is via the annual CTC scorecard, “Achieving Distinction.” Our first scorecard was issued in January, 2009. Two to four key performance indicators (KPIs) were derived for each of the four “destinations” and for each of the 10 goals of Charting the Course. The KPIs were chosen very carefully, with an attempt to best capture the meaning of the destination or goal in terms of Boise State. For example, one measure of “Academic Excellence” is the number of students participating in Service-Learning courses. Although such a measure may seem an atypical way to measure academic excellence, it is a highly appropriate way to measure academic excellence as defined by us to include the engagement of students in the community.
Third, colleges, departments, and other units of the University are now in the midst of developing their own unit-level KPIs and their own report cards that will describe their accomplishments in meeting the goals of their own strategic plans and their contributions to the University-wide plan, CTC.29

Finally, we also assess our progress via notable accomplishments and recognitions, especially those accomplishments that are based on a broad characterization of the University. Perhaps the best example is our successful application to receive the Carnegie Foundation’s classification in Community Engagement, described in the following section. Such a classification speaks to the broad involvement of our campus in community engagement, a key aspect of our strategic plan.

—EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1.6 Public service is consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution.

Engagement with the community is especially important because of our location in the regional population, economic, and political center of the state. Evidence of intent to engage with the community is clear in the descriptions of the four destinations that define our vision of a metropolitan research university of distinction: the theme of community engagement appears explicitly in each description. In addition, community engagement is a key aspect of two of the strategic goals of CTC: (i) develop network and outreach opportunities with the community and (ii) respond to the educational needs of the region. Community engagement is also a theme in many of the suggested strategies of CTC and is an important aspect of many of the unit-level strategic plans that have been developed.

Assessment of our progress in engaging with the community provides excellent examples of three of the types of evaluation described in the previous section: metrics, accomplishments, and recognitions.

First, our Service-Learning program provides an example of how success can be expressed by metrics:30 (i) the number of students participating in Service-Learning courses has more than tripled over the last seven years to more than 2,000 in 2008-09, (ii) Service-Learning coursework is offered in 32 academic departments and in every college at Boise State, (iii) since Fall 2000, nearly 290,000 hours of service have been provided to Idaho’s Treasure Valley through our Service-Learning program.

Second, two exemplary partnerships illustrate the many accomplishments of units in the University.
• The “Court Mediation Program” is a partnership venture of Boise State University’s Dispute Resolution Program and Idaho’s 4th District Court. Boise State students, supervised by a court employee and mentored by community mediators, help those who come to small claims court to resolve their differences before a judge determines their case. The court receives over 1,500 hours of service work annually from the students who conduct the mediations. Litigants receive another chance to control their own fate and negotiate a mutually agreeable solution. They also see competent conflict managers at work. Students receive invaluable experience in mediating real-life conflicts.

• The “Partnership for Health” is a long-standing partnership created by Boise State’s Department of Nursing and the Central District Health Department to promote the health of the community through projects that focus on immunizations, Meals on Wheels, childhood obesity, smoking cessation, and the public health nursing workforce.

• Third, external recognition was provided in 2006 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Boise State was one of only 76 universities initially included in the “Community Engagement Elective Classification” for their outstanding efforts to engage the community through partnerships, outreach activities, and curricula. An additional 120 institutions were recognized in 2008.

—STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROGRESS

Annually, each state agency is required to report its progress in meeting strategic goals. The Idaho State Board of Education coordinates the reporting for the institutions of higher education in the state. Reporting is twofold. First, we describe our strategic plan in a specified format that includes goals, objectives, performance measures, and benchmarks. Second, we complete a Performance Report, which contains both required and optional performance measures.

—COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC

We recognize the importance of our “story.” To effectively partner with community members, they must perceive their potential interaction with us as being valuable. They also must understand that they are able to rely on us. It is immensely important that we effectively communicate to the public our plans and our accomplishments. Indeed, a number of the suggested strategies of CTC refer specifically to promoting our story.
Our athletic program has been highly successful at promotion, aided in large part by our remarkable success on the football field including our 2007 Fiesta Bowl win. Our unique blue football field has become an icon of that success.

However, to achieve a reputation of excellence in the many other aspects of our University requires that we go beyond football. To promote our non-athletic attributes, in 2006 the Office of Communications and Marketing launched a public marketing effort that was developed on the theme of “Beyond the Blue,” specifically building on public knowledge of our blue football field. The campaign was a major effort to raise the profile of the University for its academics, research, faculty, and student life. An institutional 30-second spot aired nationally on ESPN and other outlets, featuring the Beyond the Blue concept. Similarly, print advertisements, radio spots, billboards, and signage were used over a four-year period. More recently, another new campaign, “The New U Rising” was launched to focus on the accomplishments that are defining our transition into a metropolitan research University.

Public outreach has also been achieved through a quarterly magazine called FOCUS, which has a primarily alumni-based circulation of 63,000. In addition, the University’s website continues to be a consistent tool to tell Boise State’s story, with about 30,000 visits each day to the homepage.

In addition to the active promotion efforts describe above, the Office of Communication and Marketing emphasizes the generation of “earned” media coverage locally, regionally, and nationally. Each communications specialist is assigned a “beat,” that is, he/she has primary responsibility for highlighting the accomplishments of a particular set of academic units. Such a structure ensures that each communications specialist will develop a relationship with the members of those units and be especially sensitive to the activities of those units.

We also put forth our message for very focused purposes. In October 2005, the Campus Master Plan was presented to the Idaho State Board of Education as a blueprint for the future that summarized facility improvements through 2015 and beyond. Local media provided extensive coverage on Boise State’s building plans as they relate to its vision. Importantly, the destinations of our strategic plan define the framework of the Master Plan.

36 http://www.boisestate.edu/news/beyondtheblue.shtml
38 http://www.boisestate.edu/news/focus/index.shtml
40 http://www.boisestate.edu/masterplan/
In August 2007, the public phase of “Destination Distinction: The Campaign for Boise State University” was launched with the goal of raising $175 million in private support. As with the Master Plan, our fundraising efforts are defined by the destinations in our strategic plan. A website, newsletter, and other communication tools have been used to inform donors and friends of the campaign’s progress. Success of the campaign relies on the perception by potential donors that the University has an exciting vision and is successfully pursuing that vision.42

In addition, each August, the President delivers the State of the University Address to the campus community and general public. Each year the President emphasizes our progress toward becoming a metropolitan research university of distinction and identifies work yet to be completed. Media coverage and interest in these annual messages has been strong.

Prior to 2004, the Office of Institutional Research reported to the Vice President for Finance and Administration and the Office of Institutional Assessment reported to the Provost’s Office. In 2004, the Office of Institutional Research was moved to the Provost’s Office. In 2005 the Office of Institutional Assessment and the Office of Institutional Research were consolidated into the Office of Institutional Assessment, Analysis, and Reporting (IAAR) to create a synergistic interaction between the data gathering/reporting arm of the University and the assessment/analysis arm.43 The new office was tasked with taking a leadership role in creating a University-wide data warehouse44 so that all units could benefit from having the information they need for informed decision-making. The IAAR reports to the Associate Vice President for Academic Planning (AVPAP), enabling the AVPAP to work strategically with IAAR personnel and the campus community to develop additional data instruments, analyses, and presentation methods to enhance our assessment efforts.

The efforts of IAAR occur at three levels. The first is the providing of information to all entities on campus. The second is the analysis of data to look for interesting trends that should be brought to the attention of the campus. The third is to perform in-depth investigations of particular aspects of our operations, thereby providing data needed to understand causes and aiding the development of action plans. Reports based on gathered data and on additional
Two examples will illustrate this three-level approach. The first concerns campus climate. The IAAR implements the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) on a biennial basis. IAAR provides results and analyses to administrators. A lower than desired NSSE score in the benchmark area of “supportive campus environment” was one of the impetuses in the creation of the Campus Climate Task Force (CCTF). The CCTF worked closely with the IAAR to create and carry out a comprehensive Campus Climate Survey to assess campus perceptions about equity and environment. Based on the results of that survey, the CCTF created a comprehensive action plan designed to create a more inclusive campus environment. Several actions have resulted, including (i) the development of a “Statement of Shared Values,” (ii) the creation of a Faculty Campus Ombuds position, and (iii) a number of changes to the Student Code of Conduct.

The second example concerns freshman success. The IAAR routinely reports first-time full-time freshman retention rates. As a result of the reported low retention rate, the Freshman Success Task Force (FSTF) was created under the leadership of the Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs. The FSTF worked closely with IAAR to further assess how well our new students are able to complete their first year of college and to identify barriers to the success of those students. Based on that information, the FSTF created an action plan. A number of the recommended actions have already been put into place: (i) we created a new position of Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, (ii) we provide data on retention within majors to departments, thereby potentially illuminating problems, (iii) we restructured orientation and advising for incoming students and now require that all incoming traditional-aged freshmen participate in orientation, and (iv) we revamped the way in which the developmental mathematics sequence (MATH 25 and MATH 108) is being taught. Further information on the FSTF may be found in Standards 2 and 3.

Several efforts are under way to ensure that the functions of IAAR are as effective as they can be. First, we are in the midst of adopting iStrategy data warehouse software. The idea will be that iStrategy provides an easy-to-use front end for PeopleSoft, which contains our data but not in an easy-to-access format. Campus-wide access of the data warehouse will allow IAAR to focus its efforts on creating standardized data reports that serve multiple purposes. Second, we have contracted with a consultant that specializes in helping universities to implement enhanced analytical abilities.
an in-depth analysis of the operations and personnel of IAAR in order to recommend the best structure to support the University. He is also providing recommendations as to the best ways to implement iStrategy.

—EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1.B.4 The institution uses the results of its systematic evaluation activities and ongoing planning processes to influence the resource allocation and to improve its instructional programs, institutional services, and activities.

A wide range of evaluation activities are carried out at Boise State with the purpose of providing the information needed to make decisions. Those evaluation activities, some of which are university-wide and most of which are unit-specific, are detailed throughout the remainder of this self study, and pertain to essentially every aspect of our operation.

Commendations, Recommendations, and Action Plan

—COMMENDATIONS

• The University has a vision and a strategic plan that are widely understood and appreciated, and that have become part of the fabric of the institution. Both have substantial buy-in from the SBOE, the campus, and the community.

• The University is implementing its strategic plan in a deliberate manner, has coordinated that implementation with budgeting decision making, and has made that implementation largely a responsibility of and opportunity for individual units. A scorecard has been developed to record progress in University-level performance measures.

• The University does an excellent job of communicating to its constituents through a wide range of media.

—RECOMMENDATIONS

• The vision and strategic plan of the University are ambitious and, given the present economic situation, progress might be modest. The University must not let this cause people to lose sight of the vision.

• Because the successful implementation of Charting the Course largely relies on the actions of individual units, the University
should direct substantial attention to ensuring that units are supported in their planning efforts and that units take actions that contribute to unit and University strategic goals.

- The University must continue to ensure that it communicates to its constituencies the progress it is making on strategic initiatives at the University and the unit levels. When possible, this should be done in a way that enables easy reporting by individual units and facilitates the rolling up of unit accomplishments to the University level. In addition, the University should make use of information from peer institutions to provide benchmarks for evaluating progress and for the development of performance goals.

- The University's strategic planning, assessment, and reporting processes will need to be examined in the context of the new NWCCU standards and accreditation process to ensure compliance.

—ACTION PLAN

- We will focus substantial effort on providing units appropriate information to ensure that they are able to contribute fully to the University's strategic plan and to make progress on their own strategic initiatives.

- We will ensure that we widely report our strategic progress at the University level, and that units are provided with the opportunity to report their progress as well.

- We will develop our report to the NWCCU on Standard 1 of the revised accreditation standards, to be completed by 2011. In that process we will define our core themes and will identify the goals, intended outcomes, and assessable indicators associated with those core themes.