STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT

Steering Committee Recommendations

From Strategic Plan to Implementation Plan

A strategic plan identifies an organization's vision of its future and the goals, objectives, and actions that will realize that vision. Bringing the plan's goals to fruition, however, requires a more detailed specification of how the plan will be implemented, including identification of metrics of success, timetables for action, and similar matters. This means we need a structure to execute the plan, as well as an oversight mechanism to evaluate progress toward the plan's goals and objectives and to establish and, when necessary, recommend modifications to the plan's actions, timetables and metrics.

Principles for Implementing the Strategic Plan

LMU's overall approach to implementation and oversight should mirror the key elements of our three strategic commitments: diversity and inclusion; adaptability and collaboration; and extending our reach and impact. Our implementation practices and oversight structures should exemplify these commitments and balance effectively between them. Specifically:

- Our oversight structures should draw on an array of perspectives across differences in identity, role, etc. They should harmonize an inclusive and diversity-embracing approach with functional efficacy in decision-making.

- We should be open to evolving our structures even when it runs contrary to past practice or expectation, encouraging cooperative effort and information sharing across unit and disciplinary boundaries, and ensuring that the plan's implementation is appropriately transparent and adaptable to developing circumstances.

- Our approach to oversight and implementation should be continually conscious of and responsive to changes in the external environment and emerging best practices and innovations across higher education.

In addition, the mechanisms we adopt for implementing and overseeing the strategic plan need to interact effectively with existing management structures, shared governance practices, and budgeting processes to ensure appropriate modes of responsibility, accountability, consultation and information-sharing. **It is understood that the plan's spotlight initiatives will have presumptive priority in allocating strategic funds through the annual budgeting process through the duration of the plan.**

President's Planning Advisory Council

We recommend assigning responsibility for oversight of the plan to a President's Planning Advisory Council which would meet at least twice per year. Its membership should include senior administrators, faculty, staff, and student members familiar with the plan's initiatives as well as those primarily responsible for implementing the plan, including the spotlight initiative implementation team leaders (see below). This group would review reports on progress toward each spotlight initiative and the plan as a whole; make recommendations to the president on potential adjustments to goals, objectives, actions and timetables as needed; and share periodic updates on the plan's progress with the LMU community.

Spotlight Initiative Implementation Teams

We recommend establishing separate implementation teams in support of each of the plan's five spotlight initiatives in order to coordinate action across the university. To ensure effectiveness, these teams should be small and agile and should consist of faculty, staff, and administrative members as appropriate for the subject matter and the organizational roles and responsibilities involved. During the summer and fall of 2021, these teams will be charged with drafting an implementation plan for each spotlight initiative, including recommended actions, timetables, resource requirements and metrics for success, consulting with partners and impacted constituencies as appropriate. As implementation proceeds, these teams will meet regularly to coordinate efforts and report to the Planning Advisory Council on progress, resource requirements, and recommended adjustments to the overall implementation plan. Each implementation team will have a designated team leader who will serve ex officio on the Planning Advisory Council. A subcommittee of the Planning Advisory Council composed of the implementation team leaders would meet between Council sessions to coordinate efforts between the teams, identify potential interrelations and efficiencies between the spotlight initiatives, and prepare items for the Council's consideration.

Unit-Level Planning

In addition to the university strategic plan, many academic and operational units of the university will want to develop their own unit-level plans outlining their strategic agenda. In order to maximize creativity and flexibility while ensuring an appropriate degree of university-wide alignment, we propose a "loosely-coupled" approach to unit-level planning. This approach would invite all units to identify their own most significant goals, objectives and actions for the coming years, while also asking them to report regularly on how their unit's plan aligns with and contributes to achieving the goals and objectives of the five spotlight initiatives. Not every unit would be directly involved in every spotlight initiative, but all units would be expected to support and contribute to achieving the goals of the five spotlight initiatives collectively. These planning processes would be led at the unit-level and should include substantial consultation with stakeholders and respect appropriate shared governance roles and responsibilities.

Outcomes and Metrics

Effective implementation of a strategic plan requires establishing specific outcomes and metrics that will be used to assess the plan's success. The outcomes and metrics selected should be meaningful to the goal of each spotlight initiative and should be capable of being measured and reported with appropriate ease and frequency. Metrics should be valid, specific, realistic, time-bound, and aligned to the initiative's goal. Metrics may include a combination of both inputs (activities and projects that contribute to the work of the plan) and outputs (targets and outcomes achieved by the plan). We should be selective about the metrics chosen to distinguish those measures that are most significant for the overarching goal of each spotlight initiative. A good question to ask ourselves when selecting and aligning key metrics for each goal is: "If the targets and/or outcomes for this spotlight initiative are achieved, will it improve our institution's progress in this area?" Data collected for the metrics should be integrated with the university's overall data-sharing structures and pertinent to evidence-based decision making. In developing proposed outcomes and metrics, the Spotlight Initiative Implementation Teams should consult widely with appropriate stakeholders.