A Pragmatic Approach to Strategic Planning

A Strategic Dialogue with Georgia College & The Georgia College Foundation
The 2019 AGB Foundation Leadership Forum
January 28, 2019

BUILD A BETTER BOARD | AGB.ORG/CONSULTING
Context:
Strategic thinking is more important than ever

• Changing landscape of public higher education
• Challenges to move beyond the Margin of Excellence model
• Increased volatility and risk in investment markets
• Sustainability of funding models
• Growing engagement in real property development
• Heightened standards of accountability
Traditional Strategic Planning

Traditional strategic planning models pose special challenges for foundations:

• Foundation mission and priorities driven by institutional contexts and priorities
• Institution may lack a current plan
• Financial and structural constraints:
  • Financial capacity
  • Staffing
  • Development structure
Why Have a Strategic Plan?
Why Have a (Strategic) Plan?

• Do you need a strategic plan or do you need a strategy?
• Provide board with a direction, a map, and mile posts
• Develop consensus about organizational priorities and guiding principles
• Orientation and education tool
• Provide a structure for the identification of annual agendas and objectives
Checkpoint #1

What are the catalysts and contexts of planning?
Why Now?

• New institutional strategic plan
• Campaign cycle
• Plan maintenance/refreshing
• Board leadership transitions
• Changed institutional needs or opportunities
• Disruptive events
Preparing for Alignment

• Tailoring the planning process to institutional contexts
• Defining strategic intent
• Alignment with other regular planning processes (financial, development, human resources, volunteer leadership, governance practices)
• Setting goals and benchmarking progress
• Transparent Process
• Building Trust; Forming a Partnership
• Culture Matters!
Are You Ready?

• Trust
• Transparency
• Timing
Checkpoint #2

Is your Foundation strategically aligned to the Institution?
Two Critical Questions

Why Do We Exist?

• Our Essence, This is What We Do

• Mission

What Do We Aspire to Become?

• Our Dream, Our Aim

• Vision
Georgia College & State University Foundation

Mission Statement:
The Foundation promotes and supports the mission of Georgia College & State University by acquiring and administering funds and by utilizing the creative leadership and expertise of Board members.

Vision Statement:
The Foundation strives to become the strategic force that drives Georgia College & State University’s preeminence in educational excellence by being a leader among small to mid-sized universities in fund-raising and being a valued partner of the university. The Board’s responsibility through its collaborative efforts and participation is to challenge the university administration with progressive and innovative educational roles for its students and faculty that will enhance the growth of both the university and the communities and other key constituencies it serves.
Our vision:
A future transformed by philanthropy, one dream and one legacy at a time.

Our mission:
To connect passion with possibility, inspire generosity, and support greatness at the University of Minnesota.
University of Iowa Foundation

The University of Iowa Foundation’s mission statement is:
Advancing the University of Iowa and fulfilling the aspirations of those it serves.

Its vision statement is:
Inspire generosity. Exceed expectations.
Clemson University Foundation

Mission:
The mission of the Clemson University Foundation is to support Clemson University by promoting growth and stewardship of resources entrusted to us which fulfill our covenants with donors.

Vision:
The vision of the Clemson University Foundation will be long-term, stable and significant provider of resources in supporting Clemson University's goals.
Georgia College & State University Foundation
2018 - 2021

Mission
The Foundation promotes and supports the mission and vision of Georgia College & State University by acquiring and administering resources, and by advocating for the university

Vision The Foundation provides strategic leadership to drive Georgia College in its quest for preeminence
Checkpoint #3
Confirm Your Strategic Intent

Mission
Vision
Principles (Values)
Overarching Goals and Objectives
Georgia College and State University

Principles/Values

• Integrity
• Accountability
• Sustainable Partnerships
Takeaways

• Create opportunities for campus leadership to interact with the board (early and often).
• Involve the board in conversations that are critical to institutional mission.
• Take advantage of existing campus activities to immerse the board in campus life.
• Deepen relationships within the board by offering opportunities to interact beyond meetings.
• The Foundation Strategy and Goals must align to Institutional Strategy and Goals
Pitfalls to Avoid

• Confusion about the appropriate role of the foundation board
• Political tensions with institution boards and administrators
• Distracting the board from fundamental fiduciary and fundraising responsibilities
• Encouraging board members to cross the line dividing governance from management
• Bored boards
Keep it in Perspective

“A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week.”

— General George S. Patton
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