UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2016-2021

Leveraging the Power of Partnerships and Collaboration
Task Force Report

TASK FORCE CHARGE

Minnesota State University, Mankato will increase the quantity and quality of internal and external partnerships and collaborations that will ignite big ideas with real world thinking. True to its mission, the University promotes learning in service to the state, the region, and the global community. This mission will be further heightened and sustained by enriching strategic partnerships and collaboration.

The Leveraging the Power of Partnerships and Collaboration Task Force is charged to examine the barriers, understand the factors for success, and identify strategies that will advance the University forward and establish strategic value-added partnerships and collaborations.

The Task Force is charged with recommending strategic goals and objectives that will:
- provide a framework for identifying and evaluating value-added partnerships and collaborations,
- increase the quantity and quality of internal and external partnerships and collaborations, and
- increase coordination and communication – or synergy – among current internal and external partnerships to maximize the potential and power of partnerships.

The strategic goals and objectives recommended by the Task Force must be developed within the context of global, national, state, Minnesota State system, and regional developments and trends; an analysis of institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; and the University’s projected fiscal resources and constraints.

The task force will provide a report prior to March 3, 2017, that identifies the critical strategic goals and objectives the University must pursue to achieve measurable gains in internal and external partnerships and collaborations that advance the University’s vision, mission and values. The Task Force will identify measurable outcomes and indicators, suggested leading entities to carry the plan forward to implementation, and projected resource requirements.
**TASK FORCE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Minnesota State University, Mankato has hundreds of existing partnerships. The challenge is to capitalize on the various opportunities in a positive, non-threatening way where true synergistic outcomes are created. This will require having the ability to execute/implement the 4 strategic goals that follow. Importantly, sustaining University-wide valuable partnership hinges on governance which is critical to the Charge and all recommendations.

Minnesota State Mankato has hundreds of partnerships that are reported annually to the Provost and President. There are publications dedicated to Partnerships by College. They exist at almost every conceivable level. The opportunity to capture, track, measure, report-out, and market (to leverage) is incredible.

Critical to this committee’s charge is defining what Partnerships is and what it isn’t. University Partnerships can be and are very diverse. The depth and breadth of these Partnerships and the impact is felt in many ways. This document, while answering the charge of “Leveraging Partnerships,” will carefully define who our audiences are, what types of partnerships we have, and will detail the various metrics in place that we use to track outcomes. We have attempted to focus on a “Partnerships” definition that is indeed leverageable; can be copied, marketed, or used in some way to create even greater value for the institution than the partnership does by itself. We will show that there is power in leveraging partnerships and that we have significant opportunities to do so. We will show how this can be done without handcuffing any activities past, present or future. We will show that coordinating at an institutional level is required to accomplish the charge. We will also make suggestions on how to accomplish this task.

**What is a Partnership?**

For this Charge, we assume the following “Partnership” definition:

- Partnerships generally lead to some type of defined and often measurable outcome.

For example:

- **Value based Partnership**
  - Arrangement between two entities where there is a mutually beneficial exchange of services/actions delivering a desired value to all parties. May not be equal value.
  - Example: Company sponsors a student research project with expected and actionable outcomes.

- **Altruism/Philanthropy Partnership**
  - ‘Party’ (any of the audience types below) funds, enables, a benefit for desired recipient where there may not be a mutual value creation. Examples:
    - Donations, scholarships, grants.
    - Equipment donations.
Who do we have partnerships with?
- Students
- Faculty
- Alumni
- Businesses
- Government
- Communities
- Chambers of Commerce
- C-Suite Executives

Knowing who the decision makers are is critical.

A decision maker can agree to form a partnership. There are internal and external decision makers. These vary and can change based on the audience (Partner size/type). This is a critical point of the forthcoming recommendation. If we are asking for student participation – class participation, recruiting, this decision maker is often very different from the Philanthropic ask. Corporate partnerships are implemented regardless of whether the decision maker is an alumni. Individual partnerships, especially in the Philanthropic space are often alumni.

Measureable Outcomes – Value of Partnerships:
- Dollars – funding of any and all kinds. Research, projects, contests.
- Student participation
- Hiring of our students / recruiting activity
- Networking – leads to Partnerships
- Minnesota State Mankato selected as training partner – Continuing Professional Education, customer training, funding employees education needs.
- Partnerships with other higher educational institutions

Additional Outcomes
- Powerful partnerships must create prosperity.
- Position the University as a strong civic partner and contribute in relevant and meaningful ways to the economic vitality of the region.
- Build upon Minnesota State Mankato’s long tradition of community engagement.
- Cultivate and build business and civic partnerships that address pressing economic, social and environmental and workforce challenges facing the region.
- International university partnerships developed to enhance the Institution’s position as a globally connected University.

To close on the Summary, we are trying to frame up how we looked at the Charge, defined a workable scope, and defined the various audiences and outcomes.
TASK FORCE WORK

The task force determined four key strategies that anchor our ability to leverage the power of partnerships and collaborations:

- Strategic Goal #1 – Governance & Reporting Structure/CRM
- Strategic Goal #2 – Partnership Cultivation & Solicitation
- Strategic Goal #3 – Partner of Choice
- Strategic Goal #4 – Leverage our Partnerships

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION: STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy Goal #1. – Governance & Reporting Structure/CRM

Rationale: This section is about how we effectively manage these relationships where all parties win and we maximize the potential of these Partnerships focusing on the deliverables as shown via the metrics section of this initiative. Our objective is to scope the initiative realistically, yet, recommend a robust policy that is both manageable and is good for both internal and external audiences.

The Committee recognizes there will need to be some process introductions designed to facilitate the desired outcomes. This means we are introducing steps that will require changes. Committee also recognizes that there will need to be some compromises as well. Our desire and following recommendations are designed to keep compromises to the internal (Minnesota State Mankato) audiences and that everything we do (actions) are seen as synergistic and customer friendly from the external audience.

• Strategic Objective 1.1. That the Division of Strategic Partnerships coordinates, monitors, and reports out on this initiative.

• Strategic Objective 1.2. That an internal advisory council be formed with specific directives to manage the process. This would have broad campus representation.

• Strategic Objective 1.3. That a very specific external Strategic Partnerships executive board be created that represents at an executive level, the Partnership mix of both existing and potential relationships.

• Strategic Objective 1.4. That the Division of Strategic Partnerships report-out on a scheduled and predicable basis (quarterly?) to cabinet and other internal executive committees (like Council of Deans) in terms of status updates and realized outcomes.

• Strategic Objective 1.5. That the internal advisory board be tasked to further define scope of what constitutes a University Partnership. What is and is not part of this recommendation and eventual policy. We recognize this will never be precise or perfect. Some discretion/judgment must be allowed/possible.
• **Strategic Objective 1.6.** That the University make available a Customer Relations Management (CRM) software program that is accessible and easily utilized by any and all internal audiences where they interact with in-scope Partners. Implementing and following this recommendation will limit down-side risk. We also propose that process eliminate data-entry redundancy. We strongly recommend that University develop and adopt policy for compliance for use of CRM.

• **Strategic Objective 1.7.** Inventory all strategic partnerships – housed in Strategic Partnerships Division.

• **Strategic Objective 1.8.** Look at a sample academic planning tool.

• **Strategic Objective 1.9.** Create a template for faculty and staff to submit Partnership results to Dean’s for their annual report.

Resource Requirements: Successful implementation of recommendations will require an investment in either licenses for CRM use or the purchase or internal development of a dedicated program. The balance of resource requirements is mostly time commitments of Internal Board, Cabinet, and the University members that actually do the “Retain,” “Grow,” and “Gain” part of the Strategic Initiative.

**Strategic Goal #2. – Partnership Cultivation & Solicitation**

**Rationale:** “Retain” existing Partnerships – “Grow” existing partnerships (additional benefits) and “Gain” new partnerships needs a process to objectively maximize the potential upside and minimize the potential downsides. For example, multiple people from MSU contacting the same person or same company can create confusion and eventually a situation where the Partner does not want to work with us. On the other hand, an effective and coordinated process can make working with MSU a delightful and productive process.

Committee recognizes that there are many types of partnerships and many ways the University can pursue these. The committee also recognizes the reality that there could be internal competition on who leads, manages, communicates, and benefits from these many and diverse relationships. For example, Development could (not always) have a different ‘leading’ agenda then say a college or program or even an individual faculty member. These scenarios often vary based on the Audience type. **Strategy II** reinforces the importance of the Governance recommendations and is critical to the Charge of Leveraging these Partnerships.

• **Strategic Objective 2.1.** Celebration event held regularly.

• **Strategic Objective 2.2.** Partnership meetings held regularly to update and share examples.

• **Strategic Objective 2.3.** Implementation of the Governance recommendations.
• **Strategic Objective 2.4.** Educating campus about the importance of partnerships/collaborations.

• **Strategic Objective 2.5.** Help people understand how partnerships benefit the University at a higher level.

• **Strategic Objective 2.6.** Marketing – internal and external.

**Strategy Goal #3. – Partner of Choice**

**Rationale:**

**Qualifications of a Partner or Project**

- Partnerships and outreach programs must be of mutual benefit to both institutions and organizations.
- Must follow proper procedures to insure quality of academic program activities.
- Must protect the integrity of the university and its academic reputation.

**Qualities of Partner of Choice**

- Our strategic partners must show clear commitment to working with us in their actions and deployment of their own resources.
- Involve relationships with key business and civic partners.
- Relate to University-wide economic development-focused programs such as the Hubbard Innovation Center and industry-cluster initiatives.
- Successfully leveraging these Partners of Choice will require effective Governance.

**Operations**

There are specific operational items that may be used campus-wide to help manage all partnerships more consistently. First and foremost is the ability to communicate about partnerships and strive to serve external partners as effectively as possible. Other items that will support effective partnerships include:

- A memorandum of understanding governs each strategic partnership.
- Further develop existing relationships and create new ones as appropriate, particularly those that have a bearing on: (workforce talent issues, OTHER??)
- Strategic partnerships typically involve multiple colleges, departments and service units across campus.
- Partnerships typically require a high degree of coordination and oversight due to the complexity and strategic significance of each relationship.
- Strategic Partnerships focuses on core sets of activity:
  - Internships help groom potential employees who have a deeper understanding of your organization’s needs and expectations.
  - Grants can be leveraged to respond to ongoing research and development needs as well as solving short-term problems and creating new opportunities.
• Access to students and faculty allows you to tap into a network of critical thinkers and creative problem solvers who can bring a new perspective to whatever issue you present.

• The Small Business Development Center provides valuable consultation services and classes to business owners at all stages in the life of a business.

• Contract Research allows you to test products, ideas and innovations in a controlled setting—and to receive real-world results in a timely manner.

• Technology Services help you stay nimble as innovations and changes take place.

• Continuing and Professional Education provides opportunities to train employees, offer professional development and meet specific workforce needs.

• The College of University Extended Education coordinates partnership programs between Minnesota State University, Mankato and other higher education institutions where the University has established bachelor completion program options on-site.

• Serve a central industry liaison role for the university

• Manage a Strategic Partnership oversight board: A university-wide leadership group created to facilitate clear communication, information sharing, measurement and assessment of MSU’s partnership agenda and goals.

• **Strategic Objective 3.1.** Define what “Partner of Choice” means in a broad sense.

• **Strategic Objective 3.2.** Ensure that Partnerships connect to structure(s) already in place, such as in Advancement, Athletics, etc.

• **Strategic Objective 3.3.** Determine Categories, Levels, Classifications for Partnerships such as:
  - Academic
  - Financial (Advancement)
  - Business
  - Enrollment drivers
  - International
  - Service Learning
  - Community / Nonprofit

• **Strategic Objective 3.4.** Seek external perspective to define “Partner of Choice.”

• **Strategic Objective 3.5.** Look to identify and learn from ‘best practice’ institutions for policy or guidelines.
Strategic Goal #4. – Leverage our Partnerships

Rationale: One of the most important ways we can ensure a return on our investment is to share the story of our accomplishments. A centralized avenue to market the amazing outcomes of our collaborations and partnerships will help our institution gain new partners, solicit funds from agencies/private donors and recognize faculty and staff for their work. Leveraging our partnerships will lead to an increase in our return on investment and establish Minnesota State University, Mankato as a signature institution for dynamic learning and innovation.

• **Strategic Objective 4.1.** Establish and maintain a webpage linked to the home page of Strategic Business, Education and Regional Partnerships.
  o Oversight by Strategic Business, Education and Regional Partnerships.
  o Initial Funding of $10,000 to establish website/IT support
  o Base Funding of $9000 to fund a Graduate Assistant

• **Strategic Objective 4.2.** Produce an annual print publication marketing collaborations and partnerships to be distributed to potential partners, prospective donors, grant funders, legislators and other constituents.
  o Oversight by Strategic Business, Education and Regional Partnerships in collaboration with Integrated Marketing.
  o Base Funding of $2000

• **Strategic Objective 4.3.** Feature one significant partnership (annually) in a television commercial.
  o Oversight by Strategic Business, Education and Regional Partnerships and University Marketing
  o Existing marketing money used for advertising through Integrated Marketing

• **Strategic Objective 4.4.** Host an annual University-wide celebration event recognizing significant partners (internal and external).
  o Oversight by Strategic Business, Education and Regional Partnerships in collaboration with University Advancement
  o Base Funding of $2000

• **Strategic Objective 4.5.** Host a select Presidential reception at the Hubbard Building or President’s home for select, high-level partners.
  o Oversight by Strategic Business, Education and Regional Partnerships in collaboration with University Advancement and the President’s Office
  o Base Funding of $1500

• **Strategic Objective 4.6.** Feature a new partnership each month on the front of the University home page.
  o Oversight by Strategic Business, Education and Regional Partnerships in collaboration with Integrated Marketing and IT.
  o Existing Resources
**Task Force Membership**

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