



SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING 2017-18
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

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Department/unit: Academic Affairs

- Division: Academic Affairs
 Administration and Finance
 Advancement
 Green Music Center
 Student Affairs

In each section, please list the most-supported or frequently mentioned ideas first, followed by a section on "other ideas."

1. ASSESSMENT: What do we do well at SSU? What makes us proud?

Frequently mentioned/supported ideas:

At SSU, the following things make us proud:

- 1. People: We are proud to work on a campus with incredible students, faculty, and staff, and are especially proud that we continue to improve our ability to diversify our faculty and staff and to serve students who come from diverse socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds.
2. Service, inclusion and leadership ethos: We are proud to serve our students and our communities, including the fact that many of our students get leadership opportunities; many of our faculty are leaders in their disciplines; many of our students serve the community through internships and service-learning opportunities. We have a welcoming community on our campus and are proud of our inclusivity.
3. Campus and environment: Our beautiful campus and beautiful location and beautiful preserves. Green Music Center and some of our other new buildings are a point of pride for what they bring to the campus and the region in terms of service and opportunity.
4. Shared values: We have shared values around such important 21st social issues as: diversity, social justice, sustainability (of all sorts: environmental, fiscal, social), resilience/adaptability, responsiveness, empathy, community engagement, and connectivity with our broader community and business partners/stakeholders and alumni. We love the Seawolf Commitment and its expression of our core values (responsibility, integrity, respect, excellence) and also recognize these other core values as part of the campus fabric.



5. **Strong teaching and learning commitment:** We have many unique programs and many programs that uniquely serve our students and the region. We recognize that this commitment to teaching and learning in an environment with strong liberal arts at the core is important to our institutional identity.

Other ideas (either less frequently mentioned or less robustly supported):

Other positive aspects of SSU:

- 1. Some new faculty housing available (townhouses).
- 2. Some programs are well connected to community and business partners.
- 3. Faculty leadership in some key areas of our academic programs.

2. IMPROVEMENT: What can we do better at SSU?

***Please note with an * the ideas to which your group assigned an asterisk (indicating that the unit/department could help to make improvement in this area)**

Frequently mentioned/supported ideas:

We believe the institution can improve:

- 1. **Student success and transformational educational experiences:** We need to focus on improving recruitment, retention, and graduation rates to help all students succeed and have a strongly positive experience at SSU. We believe we can transform students’ lives and the wellbeing of entire families and communities and that we do some of that work already but not in a fully cohesive way. We need to think more in terms of impact and leveraging what we are good at so students know what opportunities there are and so we can pool resources for greater impact (e.g., speaker series could be more coordinated and higher impact, etc.). Having more programming at Green Music Center that is relevant to broader community (all internal/external stakeholders) is important for integrating the arts on campus and developing cultural relevancy in the region. Having clearly defined learning outcomes for GE and for the entire institution will be an important component of this goal.
- 2. **Communication:** SSU's communication with external and internal stakeholders needs improvement (including media relations, opportunities for people to come together outside of office to network/learn from/with each other, marketing, branding, website and web presence, leveraging our HSI designation, internal communications across departments so more people know what others are doing, etc.).
- 3. **Campus (physical plant):** We need minimum standards for cleanliness in all spaces so we can feel confident in our campus physical plant; we need 21st century landscaping that is more water wise and sustainable. We also need a plan for capital improvement and infrastructure so we can raise and save money to overhaul campus buildings over time.
- 4. **Business processes and an ethos of responsibility and service:** Improvement across business

services including digitization of processes; can-do attitude rather than ‘we can’t do that’ or ‘we tried that once and failed’ attitude; service orientation should be part of who we are as a campus, not just in one area or another or one job classification or another: we are all here to serve. We need to commit to adapting to become nimble so we can use our time effectively and be more responsible with our resources. This would also include more streamlined approaches for things like web support and web design.

4. Support for faculty and staff success, including diversification as a priority: We need to find more ways to provide professional and career development opportunities for faculty and staff to help raise our ability to maintain currency, innovate, be disciplinary leaders, and/or change the ways in which we support academic excellence at SSU. Part of this commitment involves diversifying our faculty and staff to ensure we are adapting to align with our values, with 21st century diverse student needs. Ideally such support would also involve support for transitional housing, affordable housing, and/or low-rate mortgages.

5. Support for research, scholarship, and creative activity: We need to more robustly and sustainably support RSCA (including student opportunities for RSCA), including grant activity, grants and sponsored programs, etc. This shift will include doing an asset map of our current RSCA support across the institution so we can ensure maximal opportunity and impact.

We believe Academic Affairs can help improve everything listed above and also the following:

1. Service-minded approach: Focusing on how we do our work and how we can do it better is important to us and to our ability to improve how we educate and operate at SSU. We need to adapt our processes to be more 21st century and our approach to changing such processes to help move the institution forward toward less bureaucracy and more “can-do” modes of doing business. We could do better in probing and promoting this attitude.

2. Institutional Effectiveness support: We can do more to support our HSI and other grant and branding initiatives by: making data publicly available, meeting the assessment needs of the institution, and helping create a culture of data- and evidence-based decision-making.

Communication is a key component of this, as are: an effective marketing team and effective IT deployment and support. This could also include creating an updated faculty expertise profile database and/or sharing faculty expertise and awards/accomplishments more frequently so we know where the expertise lies on campus. Overall, SSU needs clearer branding so people know who we are and have up-to-date views on the institutional strengths.

3. Stronger student services: To support an institution that is regionally focused and focused on being an HSI with integrity, we need: an effective admissions/records operation; an effective potential student outreach and admissions plan; strong outreach activities for diverse students and their families; and strong student services (advising, support services, etc.). This includes training faculty more effectively on how to use available advising tools and how and when to refer students for staff advising.

Other ideas (either less frequently mentioned or less robustly supported):

1. Campus life and infrastructure support: Improving access to parking; more diverse food options.
2. Implement a campus-wide honors program.
3. Increase program/course rigor across departments/Schools.
4. Online course offerings (breadth of and support for).

3. INNOVATION: What do we want to do at SSU that we don't do now to make the university better?

Frequently mentioned/supported ideas:

- 1. Cohesive approach to student success and high impact programs:** We need to think more like an institution around student success such that we should consider more mentoring and other similar programs to help engage all of SSU (students, faculty, staff) in helping students succeed. This includes raising the bar on faculty and staff professional development and for pre-professional opportunities for students. HIPs include mentoring, cohort programs, first and second year experiences, student research opportunities, and we need to do a better job at understanding what we do, what the impacts are (assessment), and how to leverage those impacts for the greater SSU community to the extent possible.
- 2. Respond to regional cultural, social, economic, development needs:** Our academic programs and programming overall can be more responsive to our broader regional needs. This would help us connect SSU to broader region, recruit students into programs where there is high demand in the Bay Area (e.g., Wine Business Institute), recruit directly into our programs (e.g., from high schools, community colleges, etc.), and deploy both stateside and extended education programs that help meet regional needs (via degree programs, certificates, and non-degree programs). Our strengths in the liberal arts, business, education, sciences, the arts, and other core areas of campus position us well to make the institution distinctly known for this kind of responsiveness and regional leadership. Some emerging ideas: programs to support agtech, agri-business, biotech; hospitality, design, digital media arts, etc.; a leadership certificate for undergraduates and graduates and potentially another offering through extended education; assessing highly impacted majors at Bay Area institutions and creating programs or capacity in our programs to recruit students to SSU.
- 3. Advancement:** We need to create a robust marketing and advancement operation to support better alumni and donor relations and branding. This is critically important to our ability to strengthen community relations, recruit students, and have a cohesive identity for the institution that includes the Green Music Center, 4200 acres of preserve lands, our distinctive campus environment, our strong programs, and other hallmarks of SSU's campus and campus experience.



Other ideas (either less frequently mentioned or less robustly supported):

- 1. Create a campus-wide calendar for events that is searchable.
- 2. Create cross-divisional opportunities for faculty and staff to come together (social, cultural, lecture series, etc.).

4. ADAPTING AND CHANGING: What might we stop doing or do differently to change, innovate and improve at SSU?

***Please note with an * the ideas to which your group assigned an asterisk (indicating that the unit/department could help to make improvement in this area)**

Frequently mentioned/supported ideas:

Academic Affairs believes we can help with all of the following adapting and changing ideas to help us innovate at SSU:

- 1. **Process and technology improvement and innovation:** digitization, technology support, academic technology regularization (minimum classroom standards for example).
- 2. **Support for interdisciplinarity and adaptability/adaptability** regarding curricula, programming, and teaching and learning opportunities: as we get more and more input about the need to find new ways to invite people to participate in interdisciplinary / innovative initiatives, we need structures in place to allow for such experimentation to happen; we also need to adapt our academic programs to the changing workforce/economic/social needs of our region and our state.
- 3. **Impactful regional outreach:** community outreach and K-12 outreach are strengths but we believe we can do better in helping SSU connect to the region and build a region committed to college preparedness. We need to build capacity to connect the dots, including such ideas as an internship coordinator, a tri-county college compact for success, and a clear marketing plan that tells the region who we are and that we want to serve the local area. We need cohesion in this area. Increasing our regional presence likely will involve thinking differently about how and where we deploy our educational experiences, and we can be thinking more about online/hybrid programs, offsite programs, integration of our preserves, etc. This also could involve more pre-professional opportunities for students throughout the region.

Other ideas (either less frequently mentioned or less robustly supported):

1. Professionalize hospitality operations on campus.
2. Expand children's school to serve more students, staff and faculty families; expand the children's school to be a dual language school.
3. Streamline / cut out some of current committees so faculty have more time to do critically important work.