



Seattle University – Academic Strategic Action Plan

Six Initiatives

With the goals of advancing academic excellence and assuring that all graduate and undergraduate students experience an integrated Jesuit education for leadership, the following six interdependent initiatives are presented for the 2009-2014 Academic Strategic Action Plan (ASAP):

1. Curricular Renewal – Graduate Degrees, Undergraduate Majors and University Core
2. Comprehensive Faculty Development
3. Student Success and Enrollment Management
4. Instructional Spaces and Campus Facilities
5. Centers, Institutes and Signature Programs
6. Strategic Fundraising and Celebrating Success

Mission – Vision – Values

Mission: Seattle University is dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world.

Vision: We will be the premier independent university of the Northwest in academic quality, Jesuit Catholic inspiration, and service to society.

Core Values: Care for the Success of Every Student,
Academic Excellence in All Its Dimensions,
Faith, Justice, Catholic Character,
Global Education, Community Engagement
Formation for Leadership,
Technology, Diversity, and Sustainability

Four Educational Goals For Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

An **undergraduate education** at Seattle University which culminates in the award of a baccalaureate degree shall be characterized as addressing and achieving the following broad educational goals:

1. Proficiency in basic life and learning skills that include, but are not limited to adeptness in verbal and written communication, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, self-understanding, the use of basic technologies, community engagement, and leadership;

2. Depth in an academic discipline or field of study, including but not limited to its methods of inquiry, standards of evidence, knowledge base, current questions and theoretical organization;
3. Breadth and integration of deep learning characteristic of a liberal arts and sciences education, including but not limited to an understanding of the modes of learning characteristic of the humanities and arts, the social and behavioral sciences, the physical and natural sciences and mathematics, as well as the significance of global education, diversity in all its human dimensions, and a commitment to environmental sustainability;
4. Strength in one's learning dispositions and core personal values, including but not limited to intellectual honesty and truth-seeking, tolerance toward others, academic integrity, maturity of judgment, and a deepening of students' awareness and appreciation of a faith that promotes justice, engages culture, and embraces interreligious and ecumenical dialogue.

A **graduate/professional education** at Seattle University that culminates in the award of a degree shall be characterized as addressing and achieving the following broad educational goals;

1. Excellence in life and learning skills, including, but not limited to adeptness in verbal and written communication, critical thinking, ethical decision making, self-understanding, the use of basic technologies, community engagement, and leadership;
2. Post-graduate levels of depth in an academic discipline of study or professional field including but not limited to its methods of inquiry, standards of evidence, knowledge base, current questions, and theoretical organization.
3. A functional understanding of the integration of that professional field or academic discipline and its significance for global understanding, diversity in all its human dimensions, the promotion of social justice and the human stewardship of the environment;
4. Strength in one's learning dispositions and core personal values, including but not limited to intellectual honesty and truth-seeking, tolerance toward others, academic integrity, a maturity of judgment, and a deepening of students' awareness and appreciation of a faith that promotes justice, engages culture, and embraces interreligious and ecumenical dialogue as this relates to their professional field and area of academic study.

Adopted by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees Feb 19, 2009

Six Initiatives – Selected Highlighted Objectives

The set of six initiatives presented for Seattle University's (SU) ASAP have been framed solidly within the context of SU's vision, mission and core values. Together, they position the academic enterprise at Seattle University for the attainment by students of the broad educational goals of the University at both the graduate/professional and the undergraduate levels. These six initiatives are organized and integrated so that the academic community of SU moves forward systematically and systemically toward ever greater excellence and success. This plan presents the University with a series of specific concrete objectives, sequenced and integrated over a period of several years. As fully expressed in the accompanying multi-year chart action steps, the strategic academic action plan includes more than can be presented in this précis. Each of the six initiatives for the 2009-2010 through 2013-2014 ASAP includes action steps, benchmarks, metrics and timelines. The pages which follow briefly describe each of the six initiatives and highlight only a few of the objectives each is envisioned to contain.

1. Curricular Renewal – Graduate Degrees, Undergraduate Majors & University Core

This initiative assures that each and every student's degree program and learning experiences at SU address the four broad educational goals and the core values of the University. This objective connects and grounds the delivery of an integrated Jesuit education for leadership and the discernment of one's potential contributions in life with the student's learning experiences at the degree program level, thus potentially touching every SU student. This initiative also links curricular renewal to the vital academic processes of Program Review and Learning Outcomes Assessment, thus addressing important objectives including accreditation, continuous quality improvement, and school-level academic strategic planning.

This initiative has four parts:

- A. Graduate/Professional Degree & Undergraduate Major Program Renewal
- B. Undergraduate Core Curriculum Renewal
- C. Linkage to a revised Academic Program Review process
- D. Linkage to Learning Outcomes Assessment

Highlighted Action Agenda Items 2009-2014:

- Create an ongoing process to assure alignment of the academic requirements and learning outcomes of each graduate degree program and each undergraduate major with the educational degree program goals and the core values of SU. Systematically review each graduate degree program and each undergraduate major program to affirm this alignment. Revise and strengthen the Academic Program Review Process. Build into that process attention to the University's core values and educational goals, to strategic planning at the school and departmental levels, to realistic expense and revenue projections, to peer benchmarking, and to the thoughtful analysis of data derived from student learning outcomes assessment. Link this process to professional accreditations such that over a 5-6 year cycle every program undergoes a full, fair, objective and useful program review.
- In view of the educational goals of the University and its core values, articulate the requirements of a University Core Curriculum, expressed in terms of learning outcomes and those educational experiences which contribute to their realization. Map the old requirements onto new requirements. Put in place transition plans and procedures to move to the new University Core. Identify the necessary learning facilities and staffing levels required for delivery. Implement for all undergraduates the new University Core requirements articulated in terms of the core values of the institution and aimed directly at aiding students to attain the proficiencies, deep integrated learning, and essential values and habits of mind of a SU undergraduate degree.
- For purposes of learning outcomes assessment, systematically gather and analyze high-quality program entry and program exit data. Track how well students at the undergraduate and graduate levels are progressing in their attainment of these proficiencies, deep and focused learning, and essential values and habits of mind associated with each of their degree levels' educational goals. Incorporate the results of these analyses into the ongoing program review and renewal process at all educational levels. Use this work to enhance the students' educational experiences, to inform academic advising, and to assist with accreditation. And for all concerned with educational excellence – including the faculty, students, parents, alumni and benefactors – use the student achievements manifested in the assessment of outcomes of their learning experiences to evaluate the educational effectiveness of the University's degree programs.
- Use the students' learning experience and the academic enterprise, renewed and reinvigorated, to provide a more than ample and robust basis to guide institutional planning and priorities for campus facilities, strategic fundraising and institutional marketing and communications efforts.

2. Comprehensive Faculty Development

This initiative results in a coordinated, comprehensive and integrated set of programs and infrastructure at the university and school levels focused on faculty success and the core values and goals of the University. Through attention to enhancing faculty research this initiative supports the career development of the individual faculty member, extends the academic excellence of the institution, builds its reputation, and improves the quality of the teaching delivered to graduate and undergraduate students. In teaching, this initiative provides opportunities to expand the faculty's use of active learning pedagogies, contemporary teaching technologies, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching, and hybrid or blended applications of distance learning. In service, this initiative supports the development of collaborative, informed and effective faculty leaders in key roles, such as committee or department chairs, program directors, and associate deans.

Some of the programs envisioned already exist in one manifestation or another at SU. These are among the institution's current assets and their presence will make it easier for the university to develop, fund and launch those additional programs which are still needed in order to achieve the requisite, comprehensive and interconnected faculty development support system.

Highlighted Action Agenda Items 2009-2014

- More fully articulate the “Scholar-Educator” model and clarify the responsibilities of faculty holding various kinds of academic appointments. Affirm the vital link between the professional advancement of the individual and the achievement of the academic strategic goals of the University. Achieve workable balances between the research, teaching and service responsibilities for faculty holding different kinds of appointments. Evaluate faculty accomplishments in terms of the standards of the disciplines seen in the light of the kind of institution SU is and aspires to be, given its mission, vision, values, and educational goals. Benchmark expectations by reference to the accomplishments of faculty at SU's statistical peer institutions.
- Reinforce and reaffirm the importance of hiring persons for faculty and academic staff positions who best fit the mission, vision, values and educational goals of SU through training and policy development so that those engaged in faculty hiring are well-positioned to recruit the best possible candidates. Continue the development of a comprehensive and sustained orientation program for all new full and part-time faculty and academic staff which integrates those individuals into the academic community, reinforces SU's core values and professional expectations, and assists these new colleagues to successfully begin their work at SU. Establish a faculty mentoring program to assist all faculty members in their development as Scholar-Educators at every stage in their careers.
- Partner with Mission & Ministry to provide opportunities at the local, national and international levels for faculty to engage in faculty development for Leadership for Mission in the Jesuit educational tradition.
- Provide support for tenure-track faculty to launch their scholarship/research and teaching on high trajectories at SU. Endeavor to provide rigorous mid-probationary reviews for tenure-track hires (if we adopt this proposed change to the probationary review process), and provide support for successful candidates to address any perceived weaknesses and to reinforce their progress toward excellence as they prepare to apply for tenure. Increase the number of competitive summer awards in support of scholarship/research and teaching improvement. Enhance research services infrastructure and provide grant-writing assistance aimed at increasing the competitive success for external funding.
- To assure consistency of practices, understanding of policies, and effectiveness in their vital roles, provide systematic training workshops (a) for new and continuing deans, department chairs, directors and associate deans; (b) for all faculty engaged in the evaluation, retention, promotion and tenure review processes to make operationally consistent the expectations, procedures and policies of these complex and essential quality control processes. To promote excellence, provide workshops and training programs for newly tenured and senior faculty to enable them to use more advanced teaching strategies, to support their programs of research/scholarship, and to assist their transitions to new leadership roles at the University. Provide programs aimed at deepening the faculty's understanding and appreciation for the core values of the institution including providing students with an integrated Jesuit education for leadership. In collaboration with the Executive Vice President, provide training programs, workshops and career development opportunities for academic staff.

3. Student Success and Enrollment Management

This initiative envisions the seamless integration of student support services and programs in order to (a) maximize student success, learning and leadership, and (b) assure high student retention rates and timely graduation rates. It includes strengthening the SU culture of high expectations for student achievement, providing enhanced and proactive student academic support services appropriate to the differing needs of graduate, undergraduate, transfer and new first-year students, and doing so in ways that are organized and managed using student-centered and cost-effective delivery systems. This initiative calls for the development of long-term enrollment plans for each college/school, predict enrollment-related revenues and expenses, and effectively manage resources during the academic year and the summer session. This strategic initiative builds closer links between Academic Affairs, Student Development, the Division of Finance and Mission & Ministry. It also links closely to University Marketing and Communication.

For educational purposes, improving the overall quality and diversity of the graduate and undergraduate student body are key elements in this enrollment planning initiative. Striving to attain the appropriate student enrollment level for the university will enable it to offer the variety, quality and size of programs which attract strong students to the University. It also permits diversifying program offerings as an additional budgetary buffer against the inevitable enrollment fluctuations associated with various professional fields at differing points in the nation's economic cycles. The character of the educational experience at SU must remain focused on student success. Thus, this initiative presumes no fundamental change in such basic operating assumptions as the overall Student-to-Faculty Ratio. The benchmark should be to remain within one standard deviation of the median of SU statistical peer institutions. Similarly, the overall institutional mission, vision, core values and educational goals are assumed to continue vigorously into the future as SU competes ever more successfully for students, faculty and institutional recognition against essentially the same set of statistical peer institutions.

Highlighted Action Agenda Items 2009-2014

- Generate 3-year prediction models to target enrollments by head count and student credit hours generated, by school, department, program and level (including new student enrollments, retention rates and graduation rates). Use enrollment targets and results to evaluate budget requests by schools and departments. Establish peer institution enrollment metrics to guide expectations and allocations. Create a system of incentives for deans to achieve assigned enrollments within budget limits.
- Giving priority to student support and enrollment management functions, review and update facilities plans for which programs and offices will occupy the Pavilion and University Services Building post-opening of the Library and Learning Commons. Identify alternative locations on campus for programs or offices currently in those buildings which are not vital to these strategic academic priorities.
- Centralize and restructure SU summer program pricing, compensation policies, class scheduling and marketing to improve competitive position of SU in new student recruitment, assist more students to graduate on time, and generate substantially more revenue. To more fully realize its mission as an urban Jesuit university, explore the development of a college providing educational services to adult learners, degree completion students, and which is nimble enough to respond with specialized programs and educational collaborations in partnerships with businesses and not-for-profit organizations; explore ways to use the latest teaching technology to provide effective off-site educational programs in selected professional fields; examine academic structures which enable SU to take full advantage of the various entrepreneurial educational opportunities which present themselves in the future.
- To maximize retention, timely graduation and student success, reinforce for students and for all faculty and staff the importance of a consistent message of high expectations for student success at SU. Taking a student-centered approach to service delivery, co-locate into “one-stop shops” all functions related to the needs of various student populations (e.g. continuing undergraduates, freshmen, transfers, graduate students, evening adult learners). Cross-train staff and organize service delivery with student success the top priority.

4. Instructional Spaces and Campus Facilities

This initiative addresses the significance of assuring that all instructional labs, studios, classrooms, technology, and scientific equipment are up to date and directly supportive of the institution's learning goals and enrollment projections. At the same time it focuses on the importance of the many other facilities and campus improvements necessary for attracting excellent students, faculty, and staff, achieving academic excellence and becoming known as the premier independent university in the Pacific Northwest. This strategic initiative builds closer links between Academic Affairs and Facilities Management and campus master planning.

This initiative is vital to the success of the curricular renewal initiative, for that will require significant upgrades in the quality of the science and technology teaching labs. Currently, these facilities at SU often place the institution and its students at a distinct competitive disadvantage as compared to its peers. There are deficits in the classrooms and other instructional spaces available to students enrolled in other SU schools and colleges as well. As the institution grows over the years, there are predictable infrastructure and facilities renovation, expansion, and carefully planned repurposing needs to address.

This initiative is vital to the student success and enrollment management initiatives. It will be important to explore creative approaches to construction financing to address the major competitive disadvantages which currently encumber SU, such as the lack of sufficient SU controlled and operated student housing and the lack of adequate student recreational fields and facilities. Addressing these deficits, although not directly within the scope of Academic Affairs, is deemed essential for achieving the institution's overall mission and educational goals. Two key indicators of success in this area would be that by 2014-2015, 65% of SU undergraduates and at least 20% of full-time graduate students will reside in on-campus or off-campus SU housing and that by the same year the SU undergraduate retention rate will surpass 90%.

Highlighted Action Agenda Items 2009-2014

- In coordination with the introduction of the new undergraduate core curriculum, build and equip a Science & Technology Lab Building which provides students and faculty with the learning and teaching spaces necessary for a high quality 21st-Century college education.
- Begin immediately to inventory all instructional spaces, graduate and undergraduate; evaluate each of them for purposes of being able to utilize the most effective contemporary pedagogical approaches and teaching technologies in the various disciplines; establish a priority list for instructional space renovation, replacement or repurposing; and commit the resources needed to systematically and expeditiously bring every instructional space up to current industry standards and benchmark against statistical peer institutions.
- For academic enrollment management purposes, endeavor to bring a Student Recreation and Fitness Center on-line to accommodate the needs of faculty, students, and staff.
- Use anticipated residence hall room revenue, over an extended number of years, as the financial basis to fund the development of new or to remodel current campus facilities in order to create sufficient residence units for undergraduate and graduate students to support the Enrollment Management Plan and foster the kind of caring campus community which best achieves the core values and educational goals of the university.
- Based on academic and institutional priorities and on the long-term enrollment projections, with the objective of establishing "campus neighborhoods" which cluster student support services with their academic programs, and with a view toward using perimeter campus facilities to enhance community engagement and further strengthen town-gown relations, develop a comprehensive capital projects plan which integrates new construction, facilities repurposing, deferred maintenance, and which is annually updated and appropriately funded.

5. Centers, Institutes and Signature Programs

To highlight the core values and mission of the institution and its colleges/schools, and to draw together educational and scholarly energy, expertise and interest from multiple academic units, this initiative calls for identifying a limited number of strategically significant university-level and school-level programs, centers and institutes. As the saying goes, “People do not care what you know until they know that you care.” The identification and promotion of strategic centers and signature programs demonstrates that the university and its schools and colleges embrace a set of core values which are of importance not only internally but to the external community as well.

Through the greater visibility these strategic and signature centers, programs, and institutes can achieve for the university and for the colleges/schools, this academic initiative can assist leadership at the dean, vice-president, president and board levels with institutional advancement. They build reputation, enhance academic excellence, and assist the university and the schools in attracting faculty, students and outside funding, and promote scholarly productivity and community engagement. Thus, this initiative connects directly to institutional fundraising and to effectively position the university, through marketing and communications efforts, around those issues, topics and community-based activities about which cares most.

In order not to preempt the important collaborative process which must occur at the University level to identify potential University Centers or Institutes and at the school and college level to identify signature programs of each college or school, this initiative focuses on how to unfold that process, rather than on suggesting which programs or centers or institutes might be selected at the end of the process.

Highlighted Action Agenda Items 2009-2014

- Survey faculty of the university to determine areas of expertise, interest and experience as they pertain to the core values, goals and priorities of the university, such as: global education, community engagement, leadership development, ethics and justice, environmental sustainability, diversity, Catholic and Jesuit character, societal and personal development.
- To clarify expectations and to better understand the different ways this initiative is achieved, survey statistical peer institutions to determine the number of university-level strategic centers or institutes which are supported, their key functions on behalf of the institution, the principles upon which they are expected to operate, and the array of programs and services offered.
- Develop a university-wide policy framework for reviewing proposals to form a strategic university center or institute. This framework should address the essential functions of advancing scholarship, learning, community engagement, and positive public visibility for the university around its core values, goals and priorities. Identify the 3-5 most promising options for further development and business planning.
- In those cases where an endowed chair or professorship is required to inaugurate a strategic center or signature program, engage in active and carefully planned fundraising to secure needed resources.
- By 2012-13 launch the first university strategic center or institute and begin offering programs and services. By 2013-14 launch the second. Some time after 2015 launch the third (possibly final) university strategic center or institute.
- With the same purposes in mind and using essentially the same or similar consultative processes, each dean will lead the effort with his or her school or college to identify, fund and promote college/school-level signature programs.

6. Strategic Fundraising and Celebrating Success

This initiative engages prospective benefactors as partners in building the premier independent university in the Pacific Northwest using the University's core values as these are manifested in:

- the educational goals articulated by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board
- the graduate/professional degree programs and undergraduate major programs
- the renewed University Core Curriculum
- the Enrollment Management and Student Success programs of the University
- the priority given to state of the art instructional spaces and student facilities
- the work being done in the University's strategic centers and institutes
- the signature programs of each of the schools and colleges
- the successes experienced by students, alumni and faculty

With academic excellence as the central focus, this initiative assists institutional marketing and communications efforts to celebrate SU and its people both internally and externally. The aim is to tell the university's story, and to project the positive reasons and generate the *de facto* case statement for the next Capital Campaign which will propel SU forward in its continuing quest to achieve ever greater levels of academic excellence.

Highlighted Action Agenda Items 2009-2014:

- Initiate planning for the next SU capital campaign using student scholarships, the vision for the new core curriculum, the strategic university centers and institutes and signature curricular programs which respond to the universities core values and priorities (and their related needs for endowed chairs and professorships), and projected instructional facilities needs to drive and energize the campaign's central priorities.
- Revisit the institution's marketing and communications plan with special attention to how it can use the energy around the revision of the core curriculum and the identification of signature curricular programs.
- Identify students, faculty and staff whose learning, teaching, scholarship, research or work contributions best represent the central values, goals, priorities and ideals of SU and tell those persons' stories to internal and external audiences.
- Articulate a comprehensive institutional marketing and communications plan, based on academic priorities, core institutional values and the enrollment management objectives of the university and each of its schools and colleges. Implement the plan.
- Survey Board of Trustee members and other important friends and benefactors of the university and its schools and colleges with regard to potential campaign priorities and their own giving-capacity and willingness to fundraise in support these priorities.
- Conduct a donor-base capacity analysis to assist the university in the establishment of its fundraising target for the next capital campaign. Determine the staffing needs for the next capital campaign.
- Integrate fundraising priorities and plans with the facilities plans so that fundraising efforts will focus on those major capital projects for which other methods of financing (such as through user fees, room and board fees, or retail leases) are either insufficient or do not apply.
- Raise funds for a new science building as the top and most immediate academic strategic priority project for University Advancement. At an appropriate point in the next five years, begin the silent phase of the next SU capital campaign.