

## CSHE Strategic Planning

*1) In view of your unit's history and the evolving nature of your work, what different directions (mixes of themes) are you considering for your future? For each possible direction you identify, please indicate the reasons and your sense of opportunities and challenges.*

For CSHE to thrive, the center must be known for particular lines of research that (i) are making important academic contributions, (ii) are of interest to external funders, (iii) align with the interests/passions of the faculty, (iv) are distinctive from focus areas at other universities, and (v) can be sustained over time in terms of a series of research projects. Clearly stated areas of focus can help guide the internal allocation of resources and time and the external communication of our strengths and capabilities. Because the CSHE faculty experienced major turnover in recent years, a process (involving individual director-faculty meetings and later group deliberation) was employed to identify the following four areas of focus.

A. Using institutional data to examine student outcomes, institutional effectiveness, financial sustainability and student access/equity.

- Evaluations of programmatic interventions or specific units within colleges/universities.
- Innovative approaches to institutional research
- Examination of research questions prominent to academics
- Connections with M.S. capstone projects.

B. Access, equity, and diversity

- Use of education-related social science research in legal decision-making
- The impact of legal decisions and governmental laws and policies on historically underrepresented students access to postsecondary education
- Institutional policies and practices that promote racial/ethnic and socioeconomic equity
- The nature and effects of student and financial stratification across colleges and universities

C. The changing landscape in higher education

- History of higher education
- Use of technology in instruction
- Financial sustainability of colleges/universities.
- Changing structure of faculty employment
- Racial/ethnic demographic changes
- Growing importance of research and knowledge in society

D. Cross-country evaluations of higher education systems.

- The production of research.
- The production of student learning.

The efforts to advance our work in the above research areas are important because a major objective of CSHE is to produce prominent research, with an important portion funded by external entities. In recent years, CSHE has sought to also accomplish the following objectives:

- Produce high-quality training institutes that leverage CSHE faculty expertise to advance society and produce net revenue for the university.
  - Sustain, and optimally grow, the Academic Leadership Academy.
  - Scan the environment for additional opportunities.
- Provide institutional service to Penn State via research. Such service can advance the university while providing researchers opportunities for pilot studies that can lead to larger multi-university research initiatives, which would be of interest to external funders.
  - Further advance connections and projects being established with multiple units across the university.
  - Connect with research associated with M.S. research capstone projects.
- Supporting innovation and growth in online education.
  - The current director was tasked with helping drive the creation of an online M.Ed. program, which is proceeding on target to launch in the Fall of 2014.
  - CSHE has been connecting with key members of Outreach and Teaching and Learning with Technology to contemplate/institute innovative approaches to course development and faculty capacity.

*2) What is your preferred direction for the future and why?*

The plan outlined in response to question #1 is our preferred direction and is driven by a belief that higher education is changing rapidly and that units that proactively position themselves for that change will most thrive in the future. The planned research agenda for CSHE is organized around topics that will grow in importance in the years ahead. CSHE efforts to advance blended institutes and online education in innovative ways reflect the growing demand of blended and online options by working professionals. Finally, our planned initiatives are designed to generate net revenue for the university while also advancing its mission, which is an important consideration given the erosion of the traditional business model underlying universities.

Our plan also reflects the past through its inclusion of institutional service, which was an important component of the original mission of CSHE. We are strategically targeting service opportunities that advance the university as well as CSHE's ability to achieve our stated goals in research and education.

*3) To what degree does consensus exist around the pursuit of this preferred direction within your unit? If there are "minority" positions within your department or unit, what are they and how are you addressing the differences of opinion?*

This plan was discussed in a recent CSHE meeting and a draft of this document was shared via e-mail, and faculty members were asked if consensus existed and if any "minority" positions were present. Only one faculty member expressed any concern regarding the plan and those concerns were focused on the portion of the plan pertaining to World Campus. Outsourcing and the extent to which World Campus instructors in the future will have a voice in the curriculum and governance were the sources of the concern. These issues are important ones that multiple CSHE faculty members directly examine them in their research. We hope to connect these

CSHE research endeavors to World Campus activity within the HI ED program so that both activities are advanced.

*4) What are the concrete next steps you wish to take? Short term (next two years); Longer term (>2 years).*

#### Next Steps: Research

- Further establish the practice of regular CSHE meetings that allow the faculty to jointly contemplate research project development associated with the selected four research areas.
  - Via those meetings, develop specific projects in these areas, and when funding opportunities exist, seek to procure external support.
- Further build connections with academic researchers in academic programs other than the higher education program. In addition, strengthen connections with other research units on campus.
- Further build research collaborations with offices within Penn State and with other colleges and universities.

#### Next Steps: Training Institutes

- Continue to move forward the “transition plan” for the Academic Leadership Academy that will allow the Academy to continue to grow and provide quality education after Bob Hendrickson moves into full retirement.
- Contemplate additional institutes as opportunities arise.

#### Next Steps Institutional Service

- Partner with the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment, and the Division of Undergraduate Education to help support the higher education program to help institute and advance the capstone research projects associated with the M.S. degree that will be conducted during the 2014-15 academic year.
  - Identify and realize opportunities to create CSHE-related research projects the build upon the capstone projects.
- Continue to advance partnerships and projects that seek to simultaneously provide institutional service, develop innovative approaches to institutional research, and advance research projects of academic importance.

#### Next Steps: Supporting Online Innovations within the HI ED Program

- As we approach the fall 2014 launch of our World Campus M.Ed. program
  - Ensure successful launch.
  - Build connections between resident education, online education, and blended training institutes.
  - Connect our online education activities with administrative units at Penn State and with national/ international professional organizations.
  - Develop innovative marketing approaches.
  - Develop innovative ways to build faculty capacity.
- Develop innovative ways for certificate programs to exist alongside a Master’s degree.
  - Sustain the institutional research certificate program.

- Create additional certificates programs.

*5) What are the budget implications?*

If successful, our future steps will generate new revenue for the university, with substantial portions remaining in the college given university budgeting formulas associated with research, World Campus, and Outreach.

*6) What does your unit wish to be known for in the future?*

CSHE wishes to be known for research excellence in the four research areas described earlier. In addition, CSHE wishes to be known as a unit that provides high-quality training institutes, advances Penn State through service in multiple domains, and supports innovations pertaining to World Campus programs.