

Ithaca College Bridge Plan

Introduction

The attached plan was devised by the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) during the 2007-8 academic year and approved by President Peggy Williams on June 16, 2008.

The plan was the result of a charge by the provost and vice president for academic affairs to the PPC to create a “Bridge Plan” for 2008-10, which could serve the campus during the presidential transition and/or until a new, long-term plan is devised. According to the provost’s charge, this plan would include only ongoing initiatives from the previous plan and critical new initiatives that emanated from the Middle States self-study process and team visit.

Ithaca College Bridge Plan (June 16, 2008)

Priority Areas

We strongly affirm that teaching and learning together form the primary mission of the College. That mission includes program curricula, general education and common experiences, and fulfilling the learning goals of the College's mission. It also focuses on support for teaching, faculty recruiting and evaluation, and development. Several priority areas fall underneath this overall priority as areas of support: academic assessment and program development, student life and campus experience, facilities, technologies, marketing and enrollment planning, resource development, governance and structure, and human resources. Finally, three important priorities extend across all of these areas: diversity, sustainability, and assessment.

Note: All goals in this plan are coded according to their source as follows:

M = directly from Middle States self-report and/or appendix and/or Middle States evaluation team report

P = coming from previous plan

Italics = newly phrased goals that come from a combination of brainstormed items, themes or processes already under way at the College, refinement of what was stated in the previous plan, and more.

1 Focus on Teaching and Learning

Priority: Focus all campus energies toward promoting teaching and learning as the primary goal of the institution.

1. (M) Continue to emphasize and support excellence in teaching and learning by providing resources for optimal class size, teaching load, pedagogical development, external expertise and guest speakers, and learning resources.
2. *Explore new and better ways to attract and retain exceptional faculty and to clarify and assist them through the process of promotion and/or tenure.*
3. (M) Continue to refine and harmonize our methods of assessing teaching effectiveness across campus and in different teaching environments and explore additional ways to help faculty develop teaching expertise.
4. (M) Explore ways to expand and improve advising, tutoring, and personal and career development resources for students.
5. *Investigate ways to provide, promote, and evaluate the use of the most effective and contemporary learning, teaching, collaboration, and studying or practicing environments, tools, and techniques for our students.*
6. (M) Continue to expand opportunities for faculty development and mentoring, such as training in online or blended learning and assessment of student learning, appropriate release time for scholarship, and start-up support for junior faculty.
7. *Review current faculty review, tenure, and promotion procedures and criteria to make them consistent across the campus and examine the role of activities such as advising, pedagogical innovation, and program administration.*
8. (M) Continue to define workload as distinct from teaching load and examine both for consistency across campus.

1.1 Academic Assessment and Program Development

Priority: Strengthen the College's academic offerings, including interdisciplinary programs and graduate and professional studies programs.

1. (M) Comply with Middle States recommendation to define an educational philosophy for general education that clearly communicates student learning expectations as well as the curricular plan through which those outcomes will be achieved.
2. (M) Enhance efforts and increase participation in ongoing activities to ensure that a common intellectual experience and the College's mission of fostering intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation, and character development are reflected in our programs of study and first-year experience.
3. (M) Work to obtain institution-wide commitment and resources for the Ithaca Seminar.
4. (P, M) Examine existing programs of study and consider possible new combinations or areas of opportunity (including DIIS and graduate and professional studies) to create the most promising, viable, and quality academic offerings.
5. (P) Develop and expand curricular and cocurricular programs that encourage field-based, internship, experiential, and performance-based learning; collaborative research; and partnerships with educational, professional, and service organizations and the community.
6. (M) Develop a comprehensive plan for student learning outcomes assessment for general education, major, and cocurricular programs which designates purposes, responsibilities, cycle, and timelines and which describes the plan's integration with the institution's overall institutional effectiveness plan.
7. (M) Begin to create a culture of student learning assessment that can fulfill the Middle States review team's desire to complete two full assessment cycles of student learning in all academic programs, documented in an institutional-level report in time for the Middle States five-year report.
8. (M) Examine and disseminate existing campus learning assessment strategies for best practices (e.g., in Park and business schools).
9. (M) Review and evaluate academic support services and refine services to reflect comparative institutional best practices.

1.2 Culture and Experience

Priority: Support programs and practices that build a quality student experience and a distinctive and unifying culture for students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

1. (P) Position the College as a national model for living and learning environments by continuing to develop comprehensive and rich residential, cocurricular, and campus life programs and support systems.
2. *Strengthen traditions and enhance common experiences to unite the schools and provide a greater sense of College pride.*
3. (P) Enhance our environment of openness, communication, trust, and respect in which all individuals across the campus are empowered to inquire and act and are challenged by themselves and others.
4. *Enhance the physical and mental health and spiritual needs of the campus community and ensure a safe environment in which to live and work.*
5. (P) Continue to build the College's involvement in community service with involvement from administration, faculty, students, and staff.
6. *Continue to build opportunities for continued alumni involvement and interaction with students.*

1.3 Marketing, Enrollment Planning, and Retention

Priority: Optimize enrollment in all programs while continuing to build a strong brand, identity, and academic profile.

1. (P) Optimize enrollment at 5,900 in cost-effective programs while strengthening the academic profile of the student body.
2. (P) Increase student retention (e.g., by developing effective advising and early-warning programs for at-risk students).
3. *Continue to refine our marketing, recruiting, and publicity programs by examining the relationship between the College's mission, academic profile, and character and its market position and target students and by encouraging greater faculty involvement and campus understanding.*
4. *Examine admissions, transfer, and articulation standards as well as yield statistics to ensure that we are using the most appropriate measures and financial aid strategies.*
5. (M) Continue to examine ways to utilize faculty in student recruitment and retention.

1.4 Facilities

Priority: Maintain and enhance the College's academic, residential, recreational, athletic, and administrative facilities and grounds.

1. (P) Create policies and procedures to maintain, enhance, and make optimal use of the College's academic, residential, recreational, athletic, and administrative facilities and grounds.
2. (P) Continue the facilities review process to enhance the quality and technical support for teaching, learning, and meeting spaces.
3. (P) Provide quality indoor and outdoor facilities that enrich students' overall education.
4. (P) Continue to implement and update a facilities master plan and funding plan consistent with the mission statement and to ensure appropriate maintenance and renovation as well as accessibility and safety in all facilities.
5. *Examine new strategies for housing and dining in light of enrollment projections, new student populations and expectations, integration with living and learning initiatives, and overall quality of campus life.*

1.5 Governance, Structure, and Policies

Priority: Create organizational systems that promote efficiency, collaboration, flexibility, accountability, and transparency.

1. (M) Create a more defined, cohesive, and transparent method to tie together and clarify institutional planning components, including budget, academic assessment, planning and priorities, and development.
2. (M) Clarify and encourage shared governance responsibilities and opportunities for faculty and staff to inform and be informed of campus and board decisions and the decision-making process.
3. (M) Refine financial plans and policies to maximize flexibility, accountability, and fiscal responsibility and to ensure support of strategic initiatives.
4. *Reexamine the College's overall existing organizational and governance structure to promote efficiency and the best synergy among and between departments and divisions.*
5. (M) Examine academic and administrative practices across campus to maximize appropriate standardization and efficiency; share best practices across the campus and ensure that governance documents are up to date.

1.6 Resource Development

Priority: Enable the College to become less tuition-dependent and reliant on debt by increasing financial resources from public, private, and entrepreneurial sources.

1. *Identify campus priorities for support through new sources of funding and revenue and/or special fund-raising initiatives.*
2. (P) Strengthen our internal and external constituencies' understanding of the College's mission and future direction to increase support.
3. (P) Provide broader and more meaningful ways for students, parents, and alumni to be engaged in and see the benefits of philanthropy.

1.7 Technology

Priority: Ensure that Ithaca College strives to be an innovator in blending contemporary technology with educational techniques and administrative support practices.

1. (P) Create and maintain updated standards for computing and communications equipment, bandwidth, and systems' up-time and reliability in classrooms, labs, and work areas.
2. (P) Maintain processes to periodically reevaluate and update hardware and software, consultation and training about new technologies, and adoption and implementation strategies.
3. (P, M) Continue to enhance web technologies and portal environments for administrative support, marketing, and effective communication and collaboration with all relevant constituencies.
4. (P, M) Continue to examine and increase use of emerging technologies for teaching, learning, research, administration, and communication.

1.8 Employment and Quality of Work Life

Priority: Ensure that Ithaca College is seen as a first-choice employer to attract and retain faculty and staff of the highest quality.

1. *Develop a definition of our desired workplace culture with measures of success in key areas such as work-life balance, employee rewards, performance, supervisory practice, and leader behaviors.*
2. (P) Provide a quality environment and balanced workloads that are appropriate to each employee's function.
3. (P) Increase family and "life-friendly" programs, such as opportunities for flexible working conditions, incentives for healthy lifestyles, child and elder care, and pre-retirement planning.
4. *Create recruitment, retention, and succession plans for staff and administration.*
5. (M) Continue to work toward competitive salaries and benefits for all levels of full-time and part-time faculty and staff.
6. (P) Explore increased opportunities for professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators.
7. (M) Develop a consistent and comprehensive means of performance evaluation for all staff and supervisors and ensure that supervisors have appropriate training in leadership and performance improvement.
8. (P) Consider additional methods to appropriately reward outstanding staff performance, such as employee recognition programs and "pay for performance" systems.

The following three priorities are themes that cut across operating units and are central to our culture. In each area the College should establish specific goals and then mandate that each operating unit develop its own goals in support of the overall priority.

2.0 Diversity and Global Perspective

Priority: Create an environment and programs that enhance campus diversity and global perspectives.

1. *Better define and articulate how diversity and internationalism are tied to our mission and curriculum.*
2. (P) Create an environment that increases and celebrates diversity of the entire College population with regard to age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, and religious belief.
3. (P) Enhance retention of faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented groups.
4. (P) Identify, acknowledge, address, and support the needs of diverse student populations (e.g., international students, students of color, LGBT students, transfer students, graduate students, and students with disabilities).
5. (P) Expand on- and off-campus learning opportunities and collaboration with outside communities for faculty and students to enhance diversity and their ability to participate effectively in a global economy.
6. *Continue the work of the President's Advisory Committee on Diversity related to the monitoring and implementation of campus-wide diversity initiatives and priorities.*

3.0 Sustainability

Priority: Ensure that Ithaca College takes a leadership role in implementing policies and practices that support sustainability.

1. (P) Discover and explore indicators of sustainability on our campus and develop an action plan to address and coordinate sustainability initiatives.
2. (M) Continue to promote learning about sustainability through our courses, operating practices, and outreach.
3. *Explore ways to promote links between sustainability, good citizenship, and community service.*

4.0 Assessment and Planning

Priority: Create a culture of assessment that promotes continuous improvement in each area of the College's operations.

1. (M) Ensure that the College complies with the Middle States recommendations and timelines with regard to assessment and planning.
2. (M) Begin to create a new College strategic plan based on internal and external factors, including an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges through the use of benchmarks, timelines, and specific implementation strategies.
3. (M) Create a comprehensive institutional assessment and quality improvement plan for all areas to determine how the College is achieving its mission and goals and tie the assessment plan to College, divisional, and program-level goals.
4. (M) Create centralized resources, time, and training for assessment and quality improvement methods.
5. (M) Encourage the use of accurate and timely data in planning and reporting for each unit, including “closing the loop” to guide improvement plans.