



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
Accreditation and
Institutional Effectiveness
Office of the Provost

Administration Building, 104
220 S. Jackson St.
Athens, Georgia 30602
TEL 706-542-9902

July 7, 2017

President Jere W. Morehead
Administration Building
220 South Jackson Street
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

Dear President Morehead,

We are writing to you as members of the University's Strategic Planning Committee -- a subcommittee of University Council tasked with monitoring progress toward the goals outlined in the strategic plan. We hope this finds you enjoying summer in Athens.

After completing a midterm assessment of the University of Georgia 2020 Strategic Plan last year (please see the attached summary of our findings), the committee spent 2016-17 studying strategic plans at peer institutions and discussing best practices with planning experts. Our goal was to be able to inform the University's next strategic planning phase.

As we have detailed below, we recommend the University consider some significant changes, including but not limited to: a shorter term for the next strategic plan; performance indicators that are more easy to access; and the development of an operational plan concurrent with the strategic plan.

We believe these changes would foster a strategic plan that is more relevant, responsive and distinctive. Rather than being bound by the rigid, nonspecific underpinning inherent to a long-term plan, the University could frame its strategic direction around bold, institution-specific, aspirational goals such as the three priorities you outlined in your 2017 State of the University address.

A significant portion of this committee's responsibility, as specified in the University Council Bylaws, is "to advise and consult with the President and the faculty in the establishment, monitoring and revision of the Strategic Plan of the University." Based on our observations and discussions this academic year, we would like to submit to you the following recommendations as the University begins working on the next strategic plan.

Recommendation: Consider a plan with a shorter term, such as five or six years.

- We reviewed the strategic plans of 20 peer institutions and found that the majority carried five-year terms. We observed that plans with a shorter term can be more

reflective of a current administration's goals. They also can link specific actions to larger philosophies, resulting in identifiable "wins" throughout the term of the plan.

Recommendation: Ensure performance indicators are limited in number and also measurable, with data that is qualitatively or quantitatively accessible.

- Our midterm analysis of the 2020 Strategic Plan showed us how difficult it can be to assess progress toward strategic goals when the performance indicators are vague and/or the data associated with those indicators is either difficult to gather or unavailable. A shorter plan with fewer goals naturally would produce fewer indicators. We suggest a thorough vetting of all indicators to be certain relevant data, whether qualitative or quantitative, can be accessed.

Recommendation: Develop an operational plan at the same time as the next strategic plan.

- Even a five-year plan will be somewhat static. We believe an accompanying operational plan, with input and buy-in from stakeholders across campus, could serve as a living document, able to pivot to contemporary realities. The strategic plan would be a map of where the University wants to be. The operational plan, in concert with unit-specific plans developed by the academic and business units, would outline how to get there.

Recommendation: Launch the next strategic plan in Fall 2020.

- With the current capital campaign finishing in 2020, and the University undergoing reaffirmation in 2022, we see Fall 2020 as the ideal time to launch the next strategic plan. We recommend setting a schedule for the planning/writing phase that would accommodate this timing (see the following two recommendations).

Recommendation: Limit the planning/writing phase to one year.

- Especially for a shorter plan, the planning/writing phase cannot be a laborious one. We suggest a task force be appointed and begin working by Fall 2018. In our conversation about planning with Associate Vice President Steve Dempsey, he suggested that best practices for organizing such a task force would include someone who can represent your vision, a representative of those who will be assessing the plan, as well as representatives from groups across campus and from key external stakeholders (board of regents, state agencies, industry). We agree with that suggestion.

Recommendation: Allow up to one year for all units on campus to develop unit-specific operational plans to align with and complement the University's strategic and operational plans.

- The University's operational plan would address implementation at the institutional and operational levels in a broad sense. The University's academic and business units would

develop unit-specific operational plans that would outline unit-specific strategies and programs instrumental to the University's strategic directions.

Thank you for your attention to these recommendations. Please reach out if you have questions or would like a more detailed explanation of anything contained within this letter.

Respectfully,

Malcolm Adams, Franklin College of Arts & Sciences

Andrew Darley, College of Pharmacy

Carla Dennis, Division of Student Affairs

Anjali Dougherty, Staff Council Representative

C. Robert Dove, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences

Morgan Easley, Undergraduate Student Representative

Vicki Michaelis (Chair), Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication

Russell Mumper (Ex-Officio), Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Tom Reichert, Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication

James Zhang, College of Education