UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE
REPORT FOR INFORMATION

PRESENTED BY: Fran Walley, Chair, Planning and Priorities Committee

DATE OF MEETING: May 22, 2014

SUBJECT: **Report on TransformUS Action Plan**

COUNCIL ACTION: For information only

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:

The TransformUS Action Plan is submitted to Council in recognition of the planning and priorities committee's mandate for university-wide strategic planning. Discussion of the Action Plan will be invited at the Council meeting.

The committee reviewed a draft version of the Action Plan at its meeting on April 23, 2014, and provided suggestions and comments on the draft plan. In response, the plan was modified as deemed appropriate by PCIP and on April 30, 2014, the committee received the final Action Plan.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The report is presented for information with no accompanying detailed analysis from the planning and priorities committee, as the Action Plan was received and discussed but no recommendations were made with respect to substantive changes, and the accompanying project briefs and summary were not reviewed by the committee prior to release. The committee's comments centred upon areas for clarification within the Action Plan, Council's jurisdictional authority, the need for consultation, and enhancing student accessibility and understanding of the plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

1.   TransformUS Action Plan

    The project briefs and summary can be found at:
    http://words.usask.ca/transformus/actionplan/

TransformUS action plan: Our path toward financial sustainability

April 30, 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of President Busch-Vishniac, the [provost's committee on integrated planning](#) (PCIP) was given the task of developing an action plan in response to the recommendations of the academic program and support services transformation task force reports which were released to the campus community in early December 2013. This document is the action plan.

Following a review of the principles and criteria used by PCIP, this action plan describes a set of university-wide projects organized into four themes:

1) **Simplify and amalgamate academic and administrative structures.** This theme is about increasing the impact of programs and key campus services by combining related programming, consolidating fragmented services, reducing administrative layers and amalgamating structures to better support student learning, faculty research and needed administrative functions.
2) **Focus on core mission.** Actions included under this theme are intended to focus institutional energy on degree-credit teaching and peer-reviewed research.
3) **Share services: work together across unit boundaries.** This multi-functional university-wide initiative is intended to improve the university's support services by reducing duplicate, fragmented and competitive administrative services and reorganizing them into new structures that will include local (decentralized), regional, and centralized provision of services.
4) **Incorporate prioritization into ongoing practice.** This theme focuses on the linkages between planning, budgeting and resource allocation, as well as outcomes assessment.

TransformUS is the University of Saskatchewan's adaptation of program prioritization. It was initiated in January 2013 with the objective of finding $20-25 million in permanent savings, with up to $5 million for reinvestment in priority areas. TransformUS is part of the larger operating budget adjustments (OBA) initiative, which was affirmed by the Board of Governors in May 2012 as a direct response to the projected deficit of $44.5 million by 2016 if no actions were taken.

To be financially sustainable, this action plan asserts that the University of Saskatchewan must reduce costs now; must limit cost growth in the future; must increase focus; and must ensure that human and financial resources are sufficiently concentrated behind strong and critical programs that are essential to the core missions of learning and discovery. The actions described in this plan will help the university accomplish these goals. And, while TransformUS actions are driven by financial necessities, they are also about nurturing and reinforcing academic strengths. Together with several other strategies included in the OBA initiative, the actions proposed in this plan will ensure that the University of Saskatchewan is among the most resilient, adaptable and focused universities of the next generation.

INTRODUCTION

This action plan is the provost's committee on integrated planning (PCIP)'s response to the recommendations of the academic program and support services transformation task force reports that were released to the campus community in early December 2013.

This action plan identifies a set of initiatives to be taken to address the $20-25 million target set by President Busch-Vishniac for TransformUS, the university's adaptation of program prioritization, and the items that will be brought forward for consideration/approval by the university's governing bodies and/or referred to unit leaders for action.

The set of co-ordinated measures outlined in this action plan is part of a larger initiative, operating budget adjustments (OBA), which was affirmed by the Board of Governors in May 2012 as a direct response to the projected deficit of $44.5 million by 2016 in the multi-year budget framework, if no actions were taken. Given that this plan addresses the president's directive of finding $20-$25 million in savings and up to $5 million for reinvestment in priority areas, completing the actions outlined in this plan will bring the total annual expense reductions achieved to date in the larger OBA initiative to an estimated $35 million. This plan therefore significantly assists the university in reaching its overall goal of financial sustainability, that is, a future in which expenditures no longer grow faster than revenues, and in which the likelihood of undertaking significant budget reductions is significantly diminished. In doing this we will be focusing the university's resources more tightly on supporting student learning, faculty research, and the resulting positive impacts in communities we serve.

Change is never easy for large organizations and especially for universities. Over the course of the past 18 months, our university has experienced significant change and all of the dynamics that go along with it: fear and uncertainty about jobs and job loss, anxiety and worry about the nature of the work to be performed, concern and stress about the availability of programs of study, alarm about continued existence of areas and disciplines of inquiry, anxiety about future structures and goals, doubt and disbelief about budgetary projections and financial management, and criticism and complaint about the process. As this plan has been developed, PCIP has strived to provide information through timely communications, blog posts, and regularly scheduled and special meetings to minimize rumours and speculations that have been circulating. We know this plan will not eliminate all of these tensions, but by setting a clear direction it will move us forward.

This plan presents an overview of what the university needs to do in the coming months and over the next year or two to address the recommendations in the task force reports, and to meet the challenge of the Board of Governors to leave "no stone unturned" in our efforts to ensure financial sustainability. As we outline the work ahead, PCIP strongly affirms that members of our campus community cannot lose sight of our goal: to be recognized among the most distinguished research-intensive universities in North America and world leading in selected areas of education and research. This goal is important to our key stakeholders,

students and the communities we serve. Achieving this goal will require our collective energy, co-ordinated and focused on a set of actions, and the courage and determination to see actions through to completion. Because this action plan below is about creating anew with greater efficiency and effectiveness, the collective engagement and concerted action of the whole university, including faculty, staff, students, deans, associate vice-presidents, executive directors and governing bodies is required for our goal to be fully realized and implemented.

Finally, and most importantly, this action plan has been developed by PCIP in an iterative and collaborative way through detailed discussions with senior leaders (deans, executive directors, associate-vice presidents and vice-provosts), taking into account feedback from the campus community and conversations with University Council and its committees, student leaders, department heads and the Board of Governors. We would like to thank the academic program and support services transformation task force members, the Senior Leadership Forum, the administrative leadership council, deans' council, the planning and priorities committee of University Council and other council committees, department heads, the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union and graduate student association executives, and all the alumni, donors, faculty, students and staff who make up the University of Saskatchewan campus community, for their comments and contributions to TransformUS over the past year and a half. As the changes outlined in this action plan are shaped and enacted, PCIP will continue to rely on your leadership, commitment, support and feedback.

PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

This action plan is based on criteria and principles that were developed in consultation with the campus community in January 2014 and posted on the TransformUS website in February 2014.

To recap, the principles used by the provost's committee to support process management were: transparency and accountability, evidence informed, collaborative. The evaluation criteria utilized were: institutional benefit/transformational, alignment with strategic directions, financial sustainability, materiality, build organizational capacity, coherence.

Like the task forces, our experience was principled and criteria based. PCIP looked to be consistent with *Promise and Potential*, the university's third integrated plan, the foundational documents that are key elements of our planning process and with our university's new vision and mission. We also aimed high by setting a goal of financial sustainability—to have a transformative impact on university structures, processes, and culture so we do not

Principles for process management:

- Transparency and accountability
- Evidence informed
- Collaborative

Evaluation criteria:

- Institutional benefit/ transformational
- Alignment with strategic directions
- Financial sustainability
- Materiality
- Build organizational capacity
- Coherence

face similar budget adjustments every five to seven years. And, we looked to embed the idea of prioritization within our planning processes to more directly and more firmly link planning, budgeting and resource allocation, and outcomes assessment.

We rarely diverged from the thinking of the task forces, but our focus was different.

First, while the task forces reviewed programs, our job was to focus on actions, and, generally speaking, the units of action in our university are planning units—colleges, schools and major administrative units. We were therefore particularly interested in how task force recommendations rolled up at the college, school or unit level, and in what deans, executive directors and unit leaders thought about the relative prioritization of different activity areas and the patterns or groupings in the recommendations.

Second, our focus was centered on the estimated magnitude and impact on university revenues and expenditures. To identify university-level projects, particular attention was paid to the materiality criterion to ensure the university can obtain the savings it needs to address the projected deficit, thereby attending to the board's directive to leave "no stone unturned." As we conducted our work, we looked at all possible actions of significant scale to meet the board's financial goals. Smaller possible actions were left for college, school and unit leaders to evaluate later or separately.

Third, and equally important to materiality of savings, was our overall goal to ensure that university programs and services would be sustainable into the future. For example, PCIP kept front of mind the impact of the faculty incentive plan for retirement on possible initiatives that might be proposed. While this initiative cannot be viewed in itself as strategic (since it was based on the unco-ordinated departure of about seven per cent of faculty), we could and did consider how the pattern of recommendations of the academic task force related to participation in the retirement incentive program. Our proposals for structural reorganizations and plans for targeted budget cuts were shaped with the pattern of faculty retirements in mind. This process will be completed when TransformUS investments are made beginning mainly in 2015/16, which, we anticipate, will involve creation of faculty positions guided by TransformUS task force categorizations, [transparent activity-based budget system](#) (TABBS) results for units, support for transformative change and strategic priorities.

> **TransformUS is not only about short-term cost reduction. It is also about avoiding future costs and about ensuring the ongoing, effective use of our resources.**

Fourth, and finally, over the many sessions and meetings as this action plan was developed, PCIP was consistently focused on having a bias toward action; seeking to advance the university decisively rather than through small, incremental steps. We will honour the effort and attention that our whole campus has put into TransformUS by ensuring that changes are significant and lasting. The goal must be to

achieve a sustainable state in which the university does not have to repeat the same process again in a couple of years. After a focused period of changes, we believe prioritization will become a mindset that continuously guides resource allocation from year to year into the future.

As we set out this action plan, it is important to understand that TransformUS is not only about short-term cost reduction. It is also about avoiding future costs and about ensuring the ongoing, effective use of our resources. Some actions that are identified in this plan could be seen to be saving little, but streamlining and simplifying much, with long-term benefits to clarity and effectiveness. And, some actions that are proposed will be very costly to introduce in the short-term, but will significantly reduce future costs. Long-term effectiveness and permanent cost containment are key considerations. The projects proposed in this plan are a balanced, co-ordinated, interconnected and mutually reinforcing set of ideas. All of the proposed actions are needed, we believe, in order to both achieve financial targets and to affect enduring change.

ACTION PLAN

While the task force reports provided the starting point for conversations with unit leaders from which the projects presented in this plan were developed and refined, it quickly became apparent that they could be grouped into four main themes. These themes characterize a university that will have simpler structures, tighter focus on its mission, staff working together in shared services and prioritization as an ongoing way of allocating resources. PCIP is hopeful the campus community sees the opportunity within this action plan, and that the campus will seize this occasion to simplify, to focus, to work together and to prioritize for our collective success.

Theme one: Simplify and amalgamate structures

Estimated cost savings of $11.8 million

This section of the action plan presents ten projects whose purpose is to combine and reduce university offices, unit structures, and programs. The goal of this set of actions is to maintain wide areas of institutional activity, including student learning, faculty research, and services to students and faculty, while simplifying the structures that support those activities. The following paragraphs describe the set of projects in general, followed by each of them presented in turn.

Projects that revolve around the simplification and amalgamation of structures are necessary because, over the years, the university has accepted an accumulation of offices, programs and units, each of which made sense individually, but which have given us a multiplicity of structures that may not be optimal. While many different areas of inquiry and many different

services make up a university and will continue to do so, the idea that all need their own separate organizational units or separate formal frameworks is a hindrance to our university's success. Excess structure divides our efforts and adds cost. The academic task force questioned the range of programs[i] of some academic units, the number of programs with low graduation rates[ii] or long completion times and the degree of competition between similar programs across the university. The academic task force also suggested that many programs, particularly undergraduate programs in related areas, seemed to compete for a similar student constituency and could be linked more closely together. Similarly, the support services task force shone a light on the organic growth[iii] of administrative staff, administrative structures and on administrative practices that transfer operating budget funding between units, thereby encouraging cost recovery[iv] operations to proliferate. As the support service task force report represents the first comprehensive and holistic look at our administrative and support service activities in many decades (if ever), PCIP was especially interested in its observations and conclusions. Both task forces pointed to a number of instances of duplication, fragmentation, overlap or undue complication. A conclusion to be drawn is that

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our university seems to be over-structured and over-subdivided for a university of our size, and we are overly burdened with costs and hindered from working together as effectively as we could be. In an era where resources are constrained and will remain so well into the future, we can no longer afford work-arounds. We need to take advantage of collaborative opportunities and synergies to be truly successful.

The need for simplification and streamlining begins with the top-level organizational structure and senior administrative leadership of the university, and a project in this area is presented first below. The thought process is centered on supporting needed work in the future with fewer separate offices, and reducing the overall size of the university's leadership group. Similar thought processes of amalgamating and combining can also be applied in various academic and administrative units across campus, where, after accommodating the impact of the incentive retirement plan for faculty, some cost reductions can still be identified as a result of new combinations of programs and activities. Further, the reconceptualization of programs into interdisciplinary and cross-college/school collaborations offers an opportunity not just for efficiency, but also for greater impact through new or revitalized programs that are attractive to students from within Saskatchewan and beyond. Through TransformUS, the university and its faculty, staff and students are presented with a real opportunity to re-imagine the structures that support our core missions of learning and discovery.

Projects identified as part of this theme are intended to streamline, combine and reduce the number of structures that are parallel, duplicated or competitive to ensure efficiency and

effectiveness, increase profile and impact, and provide more direct support to our university's academic priorities. These projects follow the principle that the simplest possible structure should sustain academic or support functions. By doing this, resources should be made available, now and in the future, to focus on high-impact and high-profile programs/services. Ongoing costs will be reduced and "work-arounds" will be removed. The principle of subsidiarity (assigning authority to the lowest level competent to exercise it), will empower action at the local level. Changing structures and amalgamating programs and services will be difficult because the university is an interconnected organism. A great deal of input and discussion will be needed to shape the changes and determine the best way of making them. Nevertheless, making these changes will be critical to ensure the university's future financial sustainability.

> **Reduce and restructure senior leadership.** This set of projects involves changes to direct reports to vice-presidents, changes within vice-presidential portfolio offices and changes within central administrative offices, including reductions in numbers of directors, increases in spans of control and changes to titles. A first phase will reduce top levels of leadership by approximately 23 per cent. Given that the University of Saskatchewan is one

…the university will have one of the smallest senior administrations among our U15 peers…

of the smallest members of the U15, it should follow that we have one of the smallest senior administrations. A significant reorganization within the senior leadership, through TransformUS, will produce this result. The number of leadership positions reporting to the four vice-presidents will be reduced, including at the associate vice-president, dean, executive director and director levels. Included in these changes, proposals will be made to reduce the number of deans by three through reporting changes and structural changes. A second phase will remove levels of management within portfolios to provide improved front-line services. Included in this will be a number of separate projects involving significant reorganizations for each of the vice-presidential portfolios, to teaching and learning, and to college/school reporting arrangements.

As PCIP reviewed the recommendations of the support service transformation task force (SSTF), we understood that the task force chose to consider various executive offices and their functions as separate programs, and recommended that various ones be considered as candidates for phase out, subject to further review (quintile 5 (Q5)).

As this plan was developed, each TransformUS task force recommendation was examined carefully to consider not only the letter of the recommendation, but also its spirit as indicated by the themes identified by the task forces in their executive summaries, and the qualitative comments about each unit's programs. With this in mind, each senior leadership office in Q5, as well as others, was considered as a candidate for phase out. The overall organizational structure of our university was reviewed, the vice-presidential

portfolios in particular, as well as the organizational structures of other universities, in order to see which leadership positions could be eliminated or where streamlining through restructuring could bring about more efficient integration of activities. The provost's committee did so from the perspective that, in a university shrinking its resources by five per cent, leadership positions should also decrease in number by at least this amount. It seemed to us that, within this new context, all positions and organizational structures required examination.

There were a number of instances in which leadership offices were placed in Q5 while the functions they led were placed in higher quintiles. PCIP took this to mean that the leadership office in question should be carefully scrutinized, and, in particular, that we should consider whether it could be merged with another leadership role and/or changed to report at a different level in the organization and/or reconfigured.

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- In the case of the associate vice-president development, it was determined that, as part of a wider reorganization, the leadership office could be eliminated for a net reduction in leadership positions and a significant permanent saving. Former responsibilities of this position will be discontinued or redistributed among various remaining offices.
- In the case of the associate vice-president student affairs, it was determined that, as part of a general reorganization, this leadership office could be combined with another for a net reduction in leadership positions and a significant permanent saving. The combined new leadership area will be reorganized to ensure sustainability under a single leader.
- In the case of the dean of dentistry and the executive director of the School of Public Health, and a number of directors that previously reported to a vice-president directly, it was determined that these positions could report elsewhere in the organization, although, at the time of writing, the exact reporting structure for some of these positions is still not determined. Some savings can be anticipated, and a main benefit of this change lies in the streamlining of senior leadership.

The second phase of this project, to be completed by December 31, 2014, will reduce the number of managers, supervisors and levels between senior administration and the faculty and students that make up this university. The reduction in size of senior leadership and in layers of administrative functions will make it more important than ever that staff and managers at all levels be empowered to act within university policies and frameworks, and to resist the tendency to think of leadership or influence as something that can come only with a certain job title. More leadership will be delegated, and all supervisory positions will

have more responsibility to align with university directions and to take initiative to provide excellent service to students, faculty and staff.

As this work is carried out, it will be important to be vigilant to ensure that the gains made in span of control, titles and position levels are not eroded by the normal flow of routine processes. As a partial assurance against this, a new process that reviews all administrative and support job postings has been put in place in recent months. It is our intention to make institutional oversight for co-ordination and a broader perspective a normal practice of university operations throughout this planning cycle, culminating in guidelines for hiring of staff positions to be developed by Human Resources for institution-wide guidance and direction. Consideration must be given to additional staff positions and the value these create, based on institutional priorities and within the context of our core missions of learning and discovery. New staff positions being created in the university can be viewed on a website updated weekly at jobs.usask.ca.

Project briefs are under development for a number of sub-projects under this area; sub-project titles are provided below.

- Restructure provost and vice-president academic portfolio
- Restructure vice-president research portfolio
- Restructure vice-president advancement and community engagement portfolio
- Restructure vice-president finance and resources portfolio

Reorganize central services for teaching, learning and the student experience. This set of interlinked projects involves changes to models for oversight of graduate education, redesign of support services for undergraduate and graduate students, and changes to academic and administrative structures that are intended to streamline and simplify in support of the new vision for the portfolio of the vice-provost teaching and learning (VPTL). A series of complex changes are envisioned, including proposals to disestablish the College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) and to transfer leadership authority for the student related functions within the University Learning Centre to the University Library, while retaining the functions and reporting structure for the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness within the VPTL portfolio. Changes to learning technologies through consolidation of roles in Information and Communications Technology and Education and Media Access and Production (eMAP), and focus on core missions will result in the dissolution of eMAP as a support unit by December 31, 2014. A project to conceptualize an enterprise-wide timetabling and scheduling system aimed at addressing the needs of 21st century learners is also envisioned to provide the best possible schedule for students with a view to improving retention and optimizing university resources used to serve students.

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In setting out these projects, PCIP is signaling that the student experience is a very high priority for action as signaled by the SSTF and the functions that support students need to be organized in ways that optimize supports for student success. PCIP is also signaling that significant involvement by faculty, staff and students will be required for these projects to be successfully implemented.

Given the placement of functions for graduate education by both task forces, in addition to the outcomes of the graduate education review committee, it is clear that fundamental change is required in how our university structures and supports graduate education. A proposal for the disestablishment of CGSR will be prepared over the next few months and brought forward for consideration by University Council by fall 2014. At this time, the establishment of an office of graduate education within the VPTL portfolio is envisioned that will retain oversight of graduate policies, act as the home for graduate program review and provide support for post-doctoral fellows, among other duties to be described in the concept paper to be developed with participation of faculty, graduate students and staff. For this project and for others that require approval by one or more governing bodies, faculty, staff and students will be involved throughout the process, including drafting the concept paper, envisioning the future support structure and championing the outcomes.

The new portfolio of the VPTL will integrate teaching, learning and the student experience, including services delivered to both undergraduate and graduate students. The provost's committee envisions changes and streamlining within the Student Enrolment and Services Division (SESD) as part of an amalgamation with graduate student administrative support functions. Of primary importance is the co-ordination of services that span the student life cycle alongside the integration of faculty development and support for teaching both on campus and through distributed modalities. Changes to the organization of learning technologies will more effectively support classroom and student lab technology including computer, network and audio-visual systems, thereby optimizing use of learning technologies to enhance the student learning experience. Given the significant impact of the changes in this area on undergraduate and graduate students, PCIP commits to working with our students, either through their student organizations or in other meaningful and timely ways, so that these changes can directly benefit from student input and advice.

Project briefs are under development for a number of sub-projects. Titles are:

- Develop a new model for oversight of graduate education at the University of Saskatchewan
- Redesign services to support the undergraduate and graduate student experience
- Reorganize the University Learning Centre
- Reorganize learning technologies
- Redesign timetabling

Reorganize health science administrative structures. A new configuration for health-sciences programming, involving**,** streamlining of structures and programs, reductions to the number of dean and equivalent positions reporting to the provost and reconceptualization of the current council of health science deans, is intended to provide more effective leadership for academic programming and research initiatives and achieve increased profile and impact. Changes envisioned include a new mandate and governance for the health sciences council, greater development of interprofessional education and interdisciplinary research across the health sciences, changes in reporting arrangements for the College of Dentistry and the School of Public Health, and increased linkages to programming in preventive and public health to achieve greater synergies, such as through amalgamation of public health and related programs. An investigation into alternative forms of organization for kinesiology academic programming and services is being considered given the reorganization of the health science programs and the size and scale of the college.

For the project associated with optimizing public health programming and infrastructure, PCIP is looking to combine the relevant strengths of the School of Public Health and the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology in the College of Medicine, in order to create a strong nucleus for public-health research and educational programming. Apart from generally increased effectiveness and simplified university structures, a specific goal in this work is to create a larger and more robust unit that can support the original goals outlined when the School of Public Health was created in 2007, namely to augment university-wide research and graduate programming in the interdisciplinary field of public health. Ideally the merged entity will be clustered together with other centres, schools and units in which there is active interest in public health. Like all health sciences units, it will need to collaborate interprofessionally across the health sciences and be integrated in the health sciences council. Faculty across the university, including those associated with the One Health initiative, the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture, and the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, will be invited to imagine and articulate ideas for cross-university programming.

Project briefs are under development for a number of sub-projects under this area; sub-project titles are:

- Establish and implement a new mandate for the Council of Health Science Deans
- Optimize public health programming and infrastructure
- Reconfigure dentistry
- Investigate governance structures for kinesiology programs and services

Reconfigure campus libraries. This project will continue the work initiated as the University Library Transformation Project by consolidating the library's collection and service footprint, and by implementing a new configuration for library resources and

services to optimize service delivery. It will involve the introduction of remote storage and retrieval systems, and changes to program service delivery. The purpose is to generate savings, deliver library service more efficiently and effectively, and free up valuable space within the core of campus for use by other university high-priority programs and services.

Reduce and restructure facilities management. A direct response to the recommendations of the support services task force, this project is intended to continue the transformation undertaken beginning in summer 2013 by assessing and adjusting Facilities Management Division's functions and organizational structure. The purpose is to further streamline activities to ensure delivery of effective customer service and to achieve significant savings.

Reorganize and simplify related cross-college programming. For a number of programs, the combination of recommendations by the task forces and the pattern of faculty retirements opened the possibility of reconceptualizing programs to increase impact and profile. The set of projects envisioned here address areas of related programming that straddle two or more colleges/schools, and where there are opportunities to combine resources to create much stronger programs. While some savings can be achieved, the most important purpose is to create sustainable programs and units that will have greater profile and impact, serving to distinguish the University of Saskatchewan and to attract wider student, faculty and public interest. Program areas include:

> **While some savings can be achieved, the most important purpose is to create sustainable programs and units that will have greater profile and impact…**

- business policy and applied economics
- environmental studies
- food and nutrition

Faculty within related units from across the campus will be asked to come together to champion academic change in these areas beginning with re-imagining undergraduate and graduate programming in new ways or combinations so that desired profile and impact are achieved.

Reorganize programs and department structures within selected colleges. In a number of departmentalized colleges, the patterns of task force recommendations, faculty retirements and strategic college and university priorities point to the desirability of reorganizing selected departments to have fewer, stronger and more sustainable units and programs. The key concern in these cases is sustainability: to maintain areas of teaching and research, some of them at reduced levels, in the context of no real growth in overall university resources, and the need to achieve economies for administrative costs and faculty time. Experience has shown the difficulties and costs of maintaining small units. Our funding environment indicates that the university cannot rely on resource increases to

grow our way out of small economies of scale in these units. To define sustainable academic units will require disestablishing some existing departments, programs or majors in favour of fewer new ones based on creative re-imagining of departments and programming using the best available ideas. In the process, the colleges concerned will need to consider the relationship of departments to disciplines or interdisciplinarity; the significance for students of the titles of courses, majors or degrees; and the significance or not of co-location of groups of faculty and staff; among other factors.

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- For arts and science, the dean has been asked to achieve program changes in specific departments, primarily in the humanities and fine arts, aimed at directing more students to a degree outcome; to address the issues of small departments, interdisciplinary programs and three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) programs across the college.
- For engineering, the dean will be looked to for leading changes to departmental names and new program options, including new graduate programming and a co-operative education initiative for undergraduate students.
- For medicine, the dean has been asked to reconceptualize the biomedical science programs within medicine and with other units such as pharmacy and nutrition to reduce duplication, bring coherence to program offerings, increase effectiveness/efficiency in resource use and support institutional mission.
- For veterinary medicine, the dean has been asked to pursue changes to departmental structures and graduate programming in clinical and basic science departments, and to lead college engagement with Prairie Diagnostic Services, to ensure they are integrated for impact, profile and efficiency.
- For the University Library, the dean has been asked to refocus the information literacy/library instruction program to be delivered through self-help online access and/or through integration into for-credit courses.

The many changes that are contemplated in reorganize and simplify related programming across colleges for increased impact and profile and reorganize programs and departmental structures within selected colleges are important for programs and structures to be sustainable given the impact of incentivized faculty retirements; to keep future cost growth down and to keep programs strong in an environment of constrained resources; and also to achieve some shorter-term cost reductions that together contribute significantly toward our budget targets. While the overall impact will mean significant change to undergraduate and graduate programs and to departmental structures, as well as some savings that will contribute to university financial targets, the main purpose of these changes is to shift activity to provide greater impact and profile. Opportunities for faculty involvement in articulating new programming, in shaping the outcomes and in

driving the academic changes necessary will be vital in order to ensure that the new structures and programs to be created are informed by the best available thinking.

- **Reorganize international functions and services.** This project directly addresses the support services transformation task force's observation about the fragmentation[v] of services for undergraduate and graduate students. It is about ending the current dispersal of international resources and activities in multiple offices, to bring them together under coherent leadership to ensure maximum impact and to minimize the risks of unco-ordinated growth and cost increases. This project is a response to a clear message in the task force reports about the profile of international activities and about how they are provided to students and faculty. It involves the development of a new administrative model to organize and streamline units responsible for student and faculty mobility in order to place greater emphasis on international activities overall.

- **Improve co-ordination of programs and services for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.** The third integrated plan identified co-ordination of Aboriginal activities as foundational to our future success and both the academic[vi] and support services[vii] task forces recommended ways to address these programs and services for increased impact and profile. Similar to the previous project, this one is about bringing together existing resources for maximum efficiency and impact. It is also about ensuring co-ordination with and among college services. Building on this approach, the co-ordination of Aboriginal student programming will be addressed through the creation of a framework for engaging with Aboriginal communities, as well as through support programming specifically geared to ensuring student success in our academic programs. Some components of the university's future success and co-ordination are clear. The Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Student Centre will be an important hub. The university will want to consider our over forty-year record of successful transition programs. The College of Arts and Science Aboriginal Student Achievement Program will play a lead role in ensuring that students enter and succeed in first-year programs, which also sets them up for success in professional programs. The project will consider how these successful programs work together and how other existing and new initiatives across the campus will be co-ordinated with them. As this work is carried out, the opinions of students will be particularly important so as to effectively shape these programs with their needs in mind.

- **Revitalize interdisciplinary structures.** This project builds on the commentary in the academic programs task force report about interdisciplinary programming[viii] and is about developing new models for interdisciplinarity that are effective and that are less expensive than the multiplication of stand-alone academic units. This project is mainly about improving the effectiveness of existing resources and providing mechanisms for (re-)allocation of those resources to emergent program areas, while ensuring appropriate academic governance and planning. It is also about ending individual interdisciplinary

programs sponsored under the College of Graduate Studies and Research and ensuring that other structures[ix] exist to accommodate interdisciplinary graduate programming.

The effect of the changes described above will be that the university will have fewer and stronger units that are sustainable into the future and staff, faculty and leaders at all levels who are empowered and have authority to act.

Theme two: Focus on the core mission

Estimated cost savings of $2.0 million

Seven projects under this heading will tighten the university's focus in support of university-level learning and discovery. These projects will involve winding down some selected areas of university activity, and more generally distinguishing activities that closely support the core academic mission from others that do not, with appropriate organizational and funding structures in each case. Clarity and effectiveness are key considerations in these projects, including ensuring that resources are concentrated in the long term behind the university's priorities and that growth in non-core costs and activities is limited in the future.

> **Vision: To be recognized among the most distinguished research-intensive universities in North America and world-leading in targeted areas of education and research, knowing that we serve Saskatchewan best by helping to solve global challenges that have particular relevance to our region, and by striving to lead the nation in Aboriginal post-secondary education initiatives that meet community needs.**

Our university's vision is "to be recognized among the most distinguished research-intensive universities in North America and world-leading in targeted areas of education and research, knowing that we serve Saskatchewan best by helping to solve global challenges that have particular relevance to our region, and by striving to lead the nation in Aboriginal post-secondary education initiatives that meet community needs." Our primary missions are learning and discovery, each best accomplished in the presence of the other.

For over a century, the University of Saskatchewan has served the people of Saskatchewan and of Canada in a variety of ways. During that time, our environment has changed considerably. The University of Saskatchewan is no longer the only post-secondary institution in the province and now functions as part of a diverse post-secondary sector that includes numerous agencies and that has an international reach. In an era of constrained resources, it is responsible for us to focus on the things a research-intensive medical-doctoral university can uniquely do within a wider post-secondary sector. The task force reports made clear that it is now time to focus on degree credit teaching and peer-reviewed research, and to review or

reconsider other aspects of service and administration that are secondary to our mission. This includes reconsideration of outreach activities[×] and non-degree-credit education. The university is and will continue to be committed to providing programs and services to the people of Saskatchewan, particularly to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who are under-served and under-represented in our programs, and to northern, rural or remote communities even while we change how we do this in a substantial way. As our foundational document on Outreach and Engagement (2006) and the university's new vision statement have made clear, community and Aboriginal engagement are integral to our teaching and research.

> **…the university will move away from its historical mission of centrally organizing non-degree credit programming to a new model where non-degree programs, outreach and service are prioritized and provided by academic units only where they are essential to the unit's core academic mission.**

Given these considerations, the university will concentrate resources on the activities that are central to our academic mission, will reduce activities that are less central, and will eliminate activities that are seen to be peripheral by our colleges and schools. In so doing, the university will move away from its historical mission of centrally organizing non-degree credit programming to a new model where non-degree programs, outreach and service are prioritized and provided by academic units (colleges, schools and centres), only where they are essential to the unit's core academic mission and where the resources allocated to them do not detract from the academic mission.

Administrative units will be redesigned around supporting colleges and academic units rather than undertaking outreach or service on their own. Actions taken under this theme also include providing greater role clarity for several central administrative units and functions, as well as how alumni and the general public are engaged in the academic mission of the university.

Through all of this, the provost's committee wants to signal the continued importance of partnerships with our community-based organizations and within the educational sector. Indeed, through this plan, we are signaling that we will be increasingly reliant on our partners, including St. Thomas More College, to offer or support some programs that the university can no longer offer or support on its own.

This increased focus on core mission is particularly evident in the restructuring that is currently underway in the College of Medicine, and indeed defines the character of that transformation. From our review of both task force reports, it is very clear that both strongly supported the vision articulated in *The Way Forward*, which set out the blueprint for the necessary changes to that college and which represents over two years of work to date to address the accreditation issues within the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program. In focusing the college on the success of degree programs and peer-reviewed research, and moving away from diverting academic resources to clinical service, the university is returning to the roots of

what it is for: to offer high-quality degree programs and research that support and serve the interests of the people of the province, the nation and the world.

A second way in which PCIP has interpreted this theme is to address fee-for-service and internal cost-recovery activities[xi], a theme that was prominent in the support service transformation task force report. A variety of units in our university support the costs of service (including paying for staff positions) by charging service fees to other parts of the university. The scale of these internal charges is excessive for a university our size; it adds costs in processing transactions and it also makes missions, roles and planning less transparent. While work to review such fees was already underway, the support services task force used its report to make it clear that these fees and practices hinder our work both within the university and within the broader community. The efforts here will be focused on service standards covered by budget allocations with fees eliminated altogether or substantially minimized except for less mission-central activities (such as for continuing professional education programs). The maximize value of the university spend (MVUS) project within OBA, currently under the leadership of the associate vice-president financial services, will be tasked with this work with targets of providing a policy framework by the end of December 2014 and with significant progress over the next two fiscal years. The situation is not sustainable and, given the transition to our new budget model, this is now the time to address the fee-for-service issue.

Changes that form part of this theme have profound implications for two of our university's units, CCDE and eMAP, both of which will be dissolved as entities of the university by December 31, 2014.

CCDE was created with the disestablishment of the Extension Division in 2006 and as a response to the outreach and engagement foundational document. It is the centre that has provided the greatest contact with our provincial educational system, serving as the university's representative to the regional colleges and as part of our distributed learning enterprise. It is best known locally for the many programs of community interest that are offered annually, including language courses, music, business and leadership programs, and personal and professional interest programs. It has operated these programs on the principle of cost recovery, never quite fully realizing that mandate and with few resources from central sources to address the distributed learning activities of the university. These activities will be drawn to a close and those functions that directly support for-credit instruction, including English programming from the languages centre, relationships with the regional colleges and support for distributed degree-credit learning, will be transferred to a different structure within the VPTL portfolio. Programs, courses and certificates such as programs for seniors, the Prairie Horticulture Certificate, and business and leadership programs that make sense to various colleges and schools will be transferred directly to academic units; announcements about outcomes of these various programs are anticipated in June 2014. A proposal will be

brought forward for University Council's approval to disestablish the CCDE as a type B centre in fall 2014.

In the same way, eMAP will be dissolved and functions that directly support for-credit instruction and peer-reviewed research activities considered essential to the university's core mission will be transferred to new reporting areas effective December 31, 2014. Because this unit operates many activities on a fee-for-service/cost-recovery basis, sometimes in direct competition with external agencies, and has a variety of contracts and arrangements with various customers, winding down the business operations will take some time. All current fee-for-service agreements will be carefully reviewed and appropriate actions taken. In doing all of this work, the provost's committee will ensure that University Council, through its teaching, learning and academic resources committee, is fully apprised of the changes that are proposed, and that consultations are held with colleges and schools through the associate deans forums and other regular meetings to ensure that the university achieves the end result of a streamlined operation that more fully and adequately addresses the needs of our campus. To support this transition, funding will be provided from the annual sustaining capital grant and from the operating budget to fully equip and complete classroom enhancements and technology upgrades by 2017.

Finally, in this theme area, three additional projects are proposed. The first is intended to clarify mandate and roles for selected administrative offices. The second is intended to focus activities and operations of some museums and galleries into a unit that is equipped to catalogue and display these holdings more effectively than is currently the case. The third is to organize conference and event management to reduce duplication of expertise across campus, increase service quality and identify necessary registration systems to effectively support conferences and events on campus.

Project briefs are under development for a number of sub-projects under this theme; project titles are provided below.

- Complete the College of Medicine restructure
- Align continuing and distance education activities with core mission
- Align eMAP activities with core mission
- Restructure the collections and operations of the University Art Collection and the Museum of Antiquities within the University Library
- Establish a governance framework to eliminate fee-for-service arrangements
- Amalgamate and consolidate conference and event planning
- Ensure role clarity for selected units for core mission

Theme three: Share services: Work together across unit boundaries

Estimated cost savings of $7.5 million

One of the most important areas of work resulting from this plan involves creating a new organizational design for administrative and support services throughout the university. This reconceptualization of how services are provided in support of the academic mission will involve staff in colleges/schools, staff in clusters or regions of colleges/schools, and staff in central units. The concept is for services provided at different levels and in different units to be co-ordinated in such a way that jobs are clear, opportunities are available for staff to develop specialized expertise and advance in their careers, and standards of service for students, faculty and clients are well-defined and consistent. Where needed, staff will be embedded in local units to provide service close at hand; where feasible, they will be concentrated in service clusters for specialized functions; and the organizational structure for each service will be vertically integrated throughout the university. PCIP is confident that changes in this area will enhance services, reduce costs, provide services more equitably across campus, and also limit future cost increases for administrative and support services.

Our university's thinking on shared services goes back several years. During the global economic downturn of 2008/09, and as part of our Board of Governor's directive to look at cost savings as a matter of good stewardship, the service process enhancement project (SPEP) was established and it identified many opportunities for service improvements and cost savings across the university. One of the recommendations, based on input from the campus community, was the advancement of a new organizational design that focused on a shared services approach for the provision of administrative and support services. At that time the university addressed a major change in the communications organizational design, but did not aggressively pursue wider shared services because of the high complexity of change. In 2012, when the university embarked on operating budget adjustments, organizational design was identified as a potential strategy to improve service and reduce costs. In that same year, because of large increases in the university staff complement in a 10-year period, as reported at University Council in September 2012, colleges, schools and administrative units were informed, through the fall 2012 planning parameters documents, of PCIP's desire to look at administrative and support staff organizational design. Over the past year and in the lead-up to the release of the task force reports, further background research was conducted based on the work that was completed in the second planning cycle for the commitment on "working together across unit boundaries." We learned from our association with the Education Advisory Board (EAB) that shared services are being instituted in many higher education institutions; leading academic institutions such as Oregon State University, University of California Berkeley, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Yale University are early adopters.

Based on the EAB research and our own experience, the traditional generalist model at universities for provision of administrative and support services is not working well in terms of efficiency and quality of services. This traditional service model involves looking to a few staff to be skilled and continuously improve their skills in many different functions such as finance, IT and human relations. The increased professional requirements for training and specialization in services due to more complex and sophisticated systems, regulations and reporting has rendered the generalist service model incapable of meeting today's and future standards and expectations for service. Further, the traditional generalist model does not enable universities to achieve economies of scale as managers tend to have a limited number of direct reports.

This multi-functional university-wide project is intended to improve the university's support services by reducing duplicate, fragmented and competitive administrative services by reorganizing them into a new structure which will include local (decentralized), regional (hybrid) and centralized provision of services.

Given the detail in which the support services task force reviewed support service functions, the recommendations verified that there is a lack of organizational coordination and role clarity, along with duplication, overlap, competition and redundancy within and among functional service areas. TransformUS has amplified the magnitude and urgency and provided us with validation to proceed with implementing a shared services model. Our intention now is to think bigger and bolder to realize the service enhancements and savings possible within a two-year window for full implementation. The initial work involves designing a functional service structure, assessing what we currently do on campus and developing a proposal for the deans to review in early fall 2014, along with the establishment of a prototype within the year.

A shared services model represents re-conceiving the structure and connection of our administrative and support services, primarily to determine what should be done in colleges, schools and units, in regions or clusters, and centrally. This multi-functional university-wide project is intended to improve the university's support services by reducing duplicate, fragmented and competitive administrative services by reorganizing them into a new structure which will include local (decentralized), regional (hybrid) and centralized provision of services. The intention is to horizontally co-ordinate seven functional service areas as well as vertically integrate the services provided within each of these administrative functions and services. The seven functional service areas being considered are:

- Human resources
- Information technology
- Financial services
- Student services
- Communications, development, alumni relations

- ▪ Research services
- ▪ Facilities management

Over the next two years, actions under this theme will affect almost every level of the university and virtually every employee at the university, either directly or indirectly. The goal is to create a new functional service design, enhance service quality for students and faculty throughout the university, and reduce costs and growth of costs over time through a smaller workforce. For our current staff this will require extensive change, both in process re-design, reporting relationships and re-training. For current and future administrative and support staff, this initiative will provide more opportunities for personal and professional development, greater clarity of roles and responsibilities, improved career pathways, enhanced training, more specialized roles and increased job satisfaction.

Due to the magnitude of the changes being contemplated, PCIP anticipates that our journey will be arduous. The campus community will need to be patient and supportive as our university enters into one of the most beneficial and difficult to achieve organizational design projects for our support services. However, the overall goal is to better support the learning and discovery missions of the university and in so doing provide students and faculty with the type of supports that they need to be successful. If we can achieve the highest international service standards and levels, we will be among the most efficient universities in the U15.

Theme four: Incorporate prioritization into ongoing practice

Estimated cost savings of $4.0 million

Actions under this theme focus on the linkages between planning, budgeting and resource allocation, and outcomes assessment. Given the introduction of our new budgeting process, which is a responsibility centre management model built on the principles of openness and transparency (among other principles), deans, executive directors, associate vice-presidents and administrative unit leaders will be called upon to articulate priorities, to understand the alignment of unit-specific priorities with institution-wide priorities outlined in integrated plans and planning documents, and to allocate their unit's resources accordingly.

There are three components under this theme. First, actions outlined in this theme area will represent selective disinvestments in various units based on the patterns of TransformUS task force recommendations and PCIP's reflections in consultation with unit leaders. Generally, these targeted budget cuts reflect the idea that programs and services are to be "maintained with reduced resourcing," and the dean, executive director or unit leader will be responsible to develop and report on a plan for how to redesign or reorganize programs or services to be sustainable on resourced or new revenue generation. A second component will be selective investments (anticipated beginning in 2015/16 fiscal year) in programs and/or units where

they align with institutional priorities, support the learning and discovery missions of the university and advance the university's overall goals. The third component will be the full introduction of the new envelope budgeting system in 2015/16, which will support ongoing prioritization in resource allocation within the colleges and planning units of the university. In short, the university will selectively disinvest and invest in 2014/15 and 2015/16, and through the new budget model will also look to colleges and other planning units to prioritize internally in the future. This theme represents the core of integrated planning—putting resources behind priorities and making progress toward agreed-upon outcomes.

> **This theme represents the core of integrated planning—putting resources behind priorities and making progress toward outcomes.**

Beginning from the observation of the academic programs task force that, in an era of resource constraint, a quintile 3 (Q3) placement (maintain with reduced resourcing) is "normal treatment," the provost's committee has signaled to some unit leaders that there is an expectation to reorganize services, programs and staff complements sustainably to accommodate differentiated levels of budgetary reductions. In assessing the budgetary implications of TransformUS, PCIP began by looking at the proportion of each unit's activity that was ranked by the task forces in Q3. In addition, PCIP considered strategic priorities of the third integrated plan, as well as the first years of outcomes of the TABBS budget model. The resulting budget treatment of different units can be summed up as follows:

- In some cases, the sense of "maintain with reduced resourcing" has already been fully implemented for certain units through the impact of the incentive plan for retirement for faculty.
- In other cases, the combination of incentivized retirements together with reorganization projects mandated under the first theme in this plan will fully accomplish "maintain with reduced resources."
- Where incentivized retirements and reorganization projects are not sufficient to produce the budget reductions needed by the university, selected units are being assigned additional, targeted budget reductions.
- In a few cases, impacts of incentivized retirements and other changes may exceed the contribution the university currently expects and needs from a given unit. PCIP will consider such cases as part of the pattern of reinvestment in subsequent stages of the action plan according to the criteria outlined below.

Among colleges and units the combined impacts of faculty retirements and targeted budget reductions range from zero to 13 per cent of operating-budget allocations. An indication of college and unit overall contributions to the themes in this action plan is available as a [resource](#).

Where targeted budget reductions are required, unit leaders will be asked to prepare plans to deal with the additional reduction and have these plans to be approved by PCIP. As a result, selected activities, programs and services will be discontinued through normal processes. Leaders will need to advance creative solutions, do some things differently and stop doing others. Further, PCIP is requiring all units to address outcomes for programs and services identified for reduced resources (Q3) or phase out (subject to review) (Q5) where these have not been otherwise addressed in this plan.

Prioritization also represents investment in priorities as an essential part of this plan. These selective investments will consider several criteria:

- quintile 1 (Q1), candidate for enhanced resourcing, recommendations of the task forces;
- strategic priorities of the university and of units as grounded in our signature areas and the priorities outlined in *Promise and Potential*, the third integrated plan;
- opportunities to support lasting, transformative changes in programs and services; and
- information provided by TABBS.

High priorities for investments following these criteria include funding for new faculty positions; expanded student support, including increased graduate scholarship funding; and small investments such as upgrades to the graduate information system and classroom technology enhancements that facilitate completion of the actions outlined in this plan. Further priorities will be identified through conversation with senior leaders, planning and priorities committee of council and the Board of Governors in particular. Units have been asked to be mindful of the suggestions they put forward in their submitted templates outlining requests for increased or new investments, and to look at how they may use existing resources to fund these initiatives. The provost's committee has reviewed these and thinks there are many useful suggestions for deans, executive directors and associate vice-presidents to consider when directing or redirecting resources within their budget envelope when opportunities permit. We have concluded that it will be important to have achieved some of the savings in this plan before large-scale investments can begin to occur, and, based on progress in implementing the actions in this plan, will target 2015/16 as the year in which these investments may begin.

As this set of projects are confirmed, we are reminded that in the future the university's new budget model, TABBS, presents an opportunity for colleges and schools to review the budgets of the support centres through the soon-to-be-established support centre budget review committee, and to have input into the budget allocations to the support centres in the future based on satisfaction with service levels and alignment with college/school priorities. We anticipate that the establishment of the budget review committee will increase transparency of budgets and service standards for administrative units.

Finally, PCIP sees an important opportunity to partner with University Council and its committees in the actions that follow from the TransformUS task force reports, including those related to this theme. PCIP has identified a review of University Council's existing policy framework associated with viable enrolments as a point of connection to this action plan and is signaling its interest in working with council to adjust this policy based on the program prioritization experience. Other potential areas for council's consideration include an examination by council's committees, such as the academic programs committee, of the prioritization framework used by the academic programs task force and its potential for incorporation into templates used by the committee when proposals for new or revised programs are brought forward for approval or for program termination. PCIP also looks forward to partnering with University Council in identifying a structure with dedicated resources for interdisciplinary programs; in assessing related programs in different units; in ensuring that Aboriginal academic programs flourish; and in assessing the balance between new programs and existing programs over the coming years.

NEXT STEPS, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The preceding sections have outlined, under four themes, 19 major projects to be launched shortly, with the intention of making our university more sustainable through their combined impact. The facilitation of these actions through our governance process and final implementation will be overseen by the university's senior leadership, through PCIP, with project teams established to support all significant initiatives and to engage with faculty, staff and students within the time available to garner the best available ideas. To do this, a project management approach will be used that will require progress reports from project leaders at regular intervals and regular reporting on outcomes to the campus community and governing bodies of the university.

Actions contained in this plan will be implemented following the normal governance processes for decision-making. In the case of academic programs or academic units, this means discussion and debate in collegial bodies and committees, as well as discussion, debate and approval in our decision-making, governing bodies: University Council, University Senate and the Board of Governors. For administrative services, this generally means a more straightforward decision process, particularly for those actions that are under the purview of an administrative unit leader or vice-presidential portfolio. For administrative actions, there will be a requirement to keep faculty and students informed and involved (where appropriate) and to ensure that the role of the Board of Governors in approving budgets is upheld, as well as that employment agreements and legislation are followed. For academic programming changes, PCIP envisions that these will be led and championed by deans with significant involvement and leadership by faculty and with opportunities for student involvement; there is also a requirement to ensure that the role of the Board of Governors in approving budgets is upheld, as well as that employment agreements and legislation are followed.

To support this action plan, PCIP has tentatively identified timelines in which we anticipate that the projects we have identified will proceed. We have done this because our university cannot do everything at once, although we recognize that swift and decisive action in many instances will be most beneficial to the campus community. In the support services and functions this is more readily accomplished given that management can proceed to restructure its operations quickly and decisively. In the area of academic programs, actions are dependent on discussions with faculty, collegial decision-making and proposals to governing bodies, so they may proceed at a different rate and sequence. Further, this action plan is formulated in a general way to support the university's senior leaders to carry out the work identified in this plan and project briefs, particularly the deans, executive directors and associate vice-presidents who are expected to lead many of the projects described here. Given these considerations, PCIP expects that the actions identified in this plan will be given priority in discussions within colleges/schools, departments and units, and required proposals will be brought forward for decision by governing bodies by 2016 at the very latest. Wherever possible, decisions and actions must be completed sooner than this in order to achieve financial targets and minimize uncertainty. Within the necessary time constraints, it is expected that faculty and students will be involved in shaping outcomes for several of the projects and that project leaders will include them in meaningful ways. To support incorporation of the student voice at the institutional level, a student forum will be created to ensure consideration of student opinion and feedback in relation to several areas of university finances.

In sequencing the projects in this way, PCIP believes that it should be evident that we are serious about obtaining the outcomes—both increased efficiency and increased effectiveness—for both academic and support service programs. Our university activities must be strong and sustainable; our programs must be distinctive; our university must be focused.

We will update the campus community regularly on progress and will work with our campus community to remove obstacles that are within our power to do so.

CONCLUSION This is the first time that our university has looked at both program and service offerings together in a comprehensive manner. The action plan described above presents a set of interconnected projects that represent a substantial body of work for our university over the coming months and years. It also represents a critical milestone in the evolution of our planning process, whereby the university will move forward from a period of growth and expansion toward an ongoing and systematic process of prioritization, thereby ensuring the ongoing financial sustainability of the university.

Our program prioritization process, TransformUS, has equipped us to address a significant challenge and we are at a critical juncture in our university's history. Action is now required to

address the duplicate, fragmented and competitive programs and services that we have sponsored over the years, and focus our resources more pointedly to achieve the results that we have collectively agreed upon through the plans and planning documents discussed and approved by our governing bodies over the past decade.

The needed changes in our university cannot be accomplished without some service disruption and significant impact on current work. A key consideration must be to reduce uncertainty and bring clarity as soon as feasible regarding the shape of future programs and services. As the university embarks on these projects, PCIP will be particularly mindful of the impact on faculty and student services, which are the two areas our task forces have requested we place at the forefront of our thinking.

Our Board of Governors has challenged management to leave "no stone unturned." University Council has challenged us to ensure that the academic core of the university is protected. We have heard these messages. We have taken them to heart. We have committed to openness and transparency, and the way we are presenting this plan and the associated projects is a key fulfillment of that commitment.

In the preceding pages the provost's committee has outlined a coherent and comprehensive plan that will support the goal of being a financially sustainable university. This plan requires co-ordinated and sequenced action. It now requires the leadership and courage of the university's leadership, faculty, students and staff to achieve it. The result will be a more resilient university, one that is less likely to have structural deficits in the future and will more effectively dedicate resources to priorities. The ultimate purpose is to enable our whole community to focus on the most important, central mission—learning and discovery, and the unique contributions our university can make to Saskatchewan and to the world.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available online:

- Academic program transformation task force report
- Support service transformation task force report
- Principles and criteria for development of the TransformUS implementation plan
- TransformUS data analysis
    - Summary of feedback from consultation and feedback phase
    - Feedback from committees of University Council:
        - Forward from the planning and priorities committee
        - Academic programs committee
        - Governance committee
        - International activities committee
        - Planning and priorities committee
        - Research, scholarly and artistic work committee
        - Scholarship and awards committee
        - Teaching, learning and academic resources committee
    - Aboriginal programs analysis
    - Interdisciplinary programs analysis
    - Research programs analysis
    - Results by discipline
    - Relationship between task force composition and quintile results
    - TransformUS and systematic program review (SPR) results comparison
- TransformUS changes to senior administration
- Summary of college, school and unit contributions to the action plan themes
- University of Saskatchewan vision document (2014)
- *Promise and Potential*, the third integrated plan (includes the multi-year operating budget framework)
- Transparent activity-based budget system website

This plan is accompanied by a set of project briefs outlining cross-institutional and large-scale unit-based projects of university-wide interest, and a document indicating how PCIP addressed all of the recommendations of the two task forces. These documents will be available online (NSID protected) on May 1, 2014.

SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM TASK FORCE REPORTS (ENDNOTES)

[i] "We would encourage other academic units to look at the range of programs they offer with a view to deciding whether all of them can be sustained as vibrant and distinct programs. It may be, for example, that a unit could strengthen its undergraduate programs by creating more specialize streams, options or clusters within programs rather [than] trying to maintain a host of independent programs." (APT task force report, page 21)

[ii] "...the task force concluded that the number of programs with low graduation rates (or in the case of graduate programs, long completion times) was a cause for concern for many obvious reasons, including the additional burden placed on students with extra time in program and the extra resources required to support them." (APT task force report, page 19)

[iii] "Over time, the university has developed a deep administrative layer. This complicated organizational structure is not only expensive but has resulted in an inequity of roles, reports and responsibilities in administrative positions at the same level, reporting structures that lack transparency and are inefficient, and diffuse accountabilities." (SST task force report, page 6)

[iv] "…encourages the university to undertake a comprehensive review of support services funded substantially by transfer of the operating budget and determine, in each case, the proper balance of direct operating budget support and cost recovery." (SST task force report, page 6)

[v] "Support services directed to international undergraduate and graduate students appear to be minimal and, once again, fragmented." (SST task force report, page 7)

[vi] "…their alignment with the stated strategic aspirations of the university, albeit significant, was only one in the list of criteria on which our evaluation was based…some of the programs with an Aboriginal focus have languished because the unit of the university has not devoted sufficient resources or attention to them, and some have apparently failed to tap into sufficient student demand to make them sustainable." (APT task force report, page 19)

[vii] "The university is encouraged to review the host of support services it now provides to Aboriginal students in multiple academic and administrative units with a view to building on current successes without proliferation of administration." (SST task force report, page 6)

[viii] "Our general observation was that the interdisciplinary programs that did less well in our assessment were those that were most heavily reliant on volunteer efforts of faculty to sustain them. Many interdisciplinary programs could demonstrate that they had a strong alignment with the strategic directions of the institution, but this was only one component of our assessment. Some programs received lower scores because no significant investment of dedicated resources had been made in them, and this was often linked to poor or uncertain

outcomes, low levels of demand from students or other constituencies, and an inability to realize fully the collaborative potential of the program." (APT task force report, page 16)

[ix] "The interdisciplinary climate has changed since these programs were first established. Virtually all academic units are engaged in interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary activity with other parts of the university. In this context, it seems that it would be possible to accommodate the interdisciplinary interests of graduate students within other graduate programs or under the auspices of academic units." (APT task force report, page 18)

[x] "The task force suggests the university work to articulate specific objectives for outreach programs, and take steps to better measure success and cost effectiveness of these support services….many outreach activities have a long history and it is unclear whetehr they continue to be relevant to the current mission of the university." (SST task force report, page 21)

[xi] "…it is important to identify those situations where providing services to external clients reduces availability of the service to internal users, where revenues generated may be used by units to support activities which are not well aligned with university priorities, or where the university is competing unfairly with private sector vendors who have to cover the overhead costs of their operations." (SST task force report, page 6)