Strategic Plan, UA South Rebranding Among Topics Discussed at Faculty Senate

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The UA's strategic plan, a proposed reorganization of distance learning sites and updates on senior-level searches were discussed at Monday's Faculty Senate meeting, the first held this semester.

A draft of the strategic plan was shared with campus last week, along with an invitation to comment. So far, about 150 people have offered feedback, said Lisa Ordoñez, vice dean of the Eller College of Management and co-chair of the strategic planning process.

Next steps in the process include a consideration of the costs and impacts associated with the plan's initiatives and the development of metrics and key performance indicators so that progress can be assessed once implementations begins, she said.

The plan's progress also will be measured against baseline "organizational health index" data, which will be collected via a survey going out next week to faculty and staff, Ordoñez said. The survey will cover areas including accountability, leadership, direction and work environment.

"It's very important to the progress of the strategic plan," she said, adding that the survey "helps us guide where we're going."

The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete and will be repeated every two years, Ordoñez said.

UA President Robert C. Robbins said he hopes to have dashboards created that show the progress of the initiatives under each of the plan's five pillars so that there is transparency about how the efforts are moving along.

"The most important pillar to me is around student success," Robbins said. In early feedback, it appears that campus is most interested in the fifth pillar, Institutional Excellence, which is described in the plan's draft as "ensuring the UA lives its values and innovative culture to enable a high-performing academic and administrative enterprise."

The current draft of the plan includes revisions made as a result of "listening tours" that took place at the colleges over the summer, Robbins said, adding that there has been some "pushback" from campus community members returning to the UA after being away for the summer.

"People are beginning to realize that things may change, (and) so we better get involved," Robbins said.
Implementation of the strategic plan is slated to begin after it is presented to the Arizona Board of Regents in November.

In other remarks, Robbins welcomed new members of the Faculty Senate and shared that the latest U.S. News & World Report rankings place the UA at No. 46 among public institutions[^2] ? a 14-spot improvement over last year.

"It's a good thing for the University because there are plenty of prospective students and their families that are looking at these rankings," he said.

**UA South Rebranding**

Tuesday's meeting also included a presentation on rebranding and reorganizing UA South[^3] ? the UA's campus in Sierra Vista ? and other UA distance education locations across Arizona.

UA South, which operates as both a separate college and as a distance education location for programs based on the UA's main campus, is a two-plus-two program, meaning that its students have completed two years of courses at community colleges.

Among the ideas that resulted from research conducted by a consulting agency were: to rename regional campuses and distance education sites whose names don't clearly convey their locations; to combine the UA's regional campuses, University of Arizona Online and the UA's international microcampuses under a single brand; and to strengthen the connections of UA South faculty with their disciplines on the UA's main campus.

The presentation was given by Melody Buckner, UA South's interim dean. She invited feedback on the ideas.

**Leadership Searches**

Several searches are underway, including the vice president for research and the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Robbins told the Faculty Senate.

Four candidates for Title IX coordinator will visit campus soon and a search is planned for a senior vice president for business development and partnerships, he said. A search firm has been engaged to help fill the position of chief financial officer and senior vice president for business affairs, he added.

The search for a new provost will be launched before the search for a vice president for research so that the incoming provost has an opportunity to participate in the VPR's selection, said Brian Ten Eyck, chief of staff in the provost's office.

Ten Eyck said a search has begun for a vice provost for global affairs and that a committee has been selected for the upcoming search for the vice provost for faculty affairs.

In other business:

- Chair of the Faculty Jessica Summers welcomed two new deans, Terry Hunt, Honors College, and Andrew Schulz, College of Fine Arts. Summers, associate professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Sociocultural Studies, also gave an overview[^4] of senate-related work that happened over the summer and goals for the coming year.
- Faculty Senate member Leila Hudson, associate professor in the School of Middle
Eastern and North African Studies, said she would like to propose a resolution calling on
the UA administration to explore and act on ways to allow DACA students to pay in-state
tuition rates.

- **Sabrina Vazquez**, assistant vice president for state relations, gave a summary of the
  most recent legislative session, including the passage of policies related to free
  expression on the state's public university and community college campuses.

- **Peter Dourlein**, assistant vice president for planning, design and construction,
discussed efforts to develop a renewable energy strategy for the UA. A survey related to
  those efforts will be sent to campus soon, he said.

- **Marlys Witte**, a professor of surgery and senator-at-large, called for a "moment of
  restlessness" in honor of William S. Bickel, University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Physics, who died in June. Witte called Bickel "the happiest of teachers," and said he inspired students and stimulated them by example to think original ideas, to be bold, to challenge authority and to design "beautiful experiments." In his honor, Witte said she is establishing an annual $500 prize for "most original undergraduate research project."

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**Links**

[1] https://strategicplan.arizona.edu/
[3] https://uasouth.arizona.edu/