

# **An Enhancement of the University of Arizona Transformation Process: Proposed Criteria for Prioritizing Resource Distribution and Phasing-out of Units**

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The first transformation exercise offered some great ideas but it lacked a comprehensive perspective on the university. It did not address the changing context of the University in society or the immediate budgetary constraints, particularly those that may occur in the forthcoming legislative special sessions.

## **Transformation**

A University-wide transformation should be infrequent due to the high expenditure of organizational energy. A full transformation leads to a rethinking of programs, a redefinition of the role of the institution within its environment, and a reallocation of resources. It should build on institutional knowledge gained through previous University of Arizona change-related studies (EEC, PAIP, CORE, and Focused Excellence), an assessment of our strengths and weaknesses, and our objective of being a world-class university.

The substantive social and economic changes we have witnessed in the last two years, particularly this fall, are driving the need for some immediate changes, but these should be addressed within a longer term context. Whatever changes are instituted must go beyond simply changing the organizational chart. The transformation must position the university not only to rapidly respond to external conditions but to create knowledge and to educate students who will thrive in the new world we are finding ourselves in.

## **Revision Phases**

We suggest a revision in the transformation process (with a compressed timeline due to need for action).

### **Phase I – Initial Campus Involvement and Assessment. (In Progress).**

The campus-wide involvement in proposal generation has provided some useful ideas. Initial meetings have been held with the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Appointed Professionals Advisory Council, GPSC, ASUA, the media, and within university units.

### **Phase II - External and Internal Scans. (November 2008- February 2009).**

Prepare Three simultaneous environmental scans:

- *External scan.* Form a small Presidential University Context Panel charged with quickly building a proximate change model identifying the most likely financial, institutional, social and scientific changes that will impact the University of Arizona. Complete a brief assessment on the changing world in which we live and organize the university to excel in this world, assuming it will be different than we are accustomed to and we need to know how it is changing as it relates to the university. This allows us to structure for flexibility and define emerging area. The charge to this panel should be to focus on the external environment without reference to the university's present units or activities.
- *Internal scan.* Analyze the national academic rankings of UA departments and disciplines to help determine our strengths and weaknesses, their linkages to state needs, changes in educational pedagogy, and determine possible cooperative arrangements with our system-wide universities

and non-system organizations (broadly defined, e.g. private sector, federal, state and local agencies). [see suggested 6 tiers ranking system in Annex below].

- *Arizona University System scan.* This process includes an assessment of the UA's cooperation with the other State universities to compliment both or let another university assume leadership in a particular area and we work out distance educational arrangements with them to provide for our students.

**Phase III. Scenario Analysis. (February - March 2009).**

Using the findings of the internal and external scans, prepare several different scenarios which represent potential transformation responses and present them to the university community for discussion. These would include a range of realistic options, not just the optimistic vs pessimistic extremes, and would include possible Memoranda of Understanding with other institutions. This should lead to a rethinking by the community of the nature of transformation rather than focusing on themselves.

**Phase IV. Final Transformation Matrix. (March - April 2009).**

Analysis of operational feasibility and budget impacts (percentage reductions or increases) based on different combinations of the five tiers and phase out of the sixth tier (see Annex). Operational feasibility refers to the tradeoff between the effectiveness of the change vs. the difficulty in implementation. This phase is iterative with Phase III as the University considers different options and is widely discussed by the campus community.

**Phase V. Transformation Decisions with Rationale and a New Strategic Plan. (May - June 2009).**

Make final choices and begin implementation of the transformation process whit FY 2010. Incorporate relevant changes into the university strategic plan for its fall 2009 submission to the Arizona Board of Regents and the State Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting.

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**Annex. Six-Tier Criteria for Prioritizing Resource Distribution and Phasing out of Units**

The comparative analysis will rank programs/departments/schools based on national rankings producing 6 tiers.

1. *Top tier units.* Representing what we want to be best at – the core of our world class approach.
2. *Region focused units.* Need to fortify these units to protect for our overall State funding and purpose. Departments covering subject areas related to our regional context (e.g., water, southwest and critical as a functioning of an Arizona University).
3. *Emerging area units.* Identify developing areas (e.g. energy) - based on the external and internal scans. Care must be taken not to have every unit believe they will be an emerging area; the choice should be dictated by where trends are heading or how the world is changing.
4. *Academic foundation units.* Those units that are necessary for any good university to have. They do not have to be previous top 3 tiers, but should be good and evaluated on distinct criteria.
5. *Support units.* Units that make the above four tier units function efficiently and effectively.
6. *Remaining units.* Consider these units for a phase out process.

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