ASCENDING TO GREATNESS

2013-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN
Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Bethune-Cookman University (B-CU) family has been engaged in a strategic planning process to help us reaffirm who we are as an institution, and determine what we want the university to look like in the near future. The process established a roadmap for how we can get to where we want to be in 2018 and helped define the fundamental principles that will guide us along the way.

Through community meetings, working groups, and countless hours of collaboration, a broad cross section of the community has developed a new mission and vision statement, identified a new set of core values, and set six strategic goals with underlying objectives that will carry B-CU forward through 2018.

B-CU’s resulting five-year strategic plan charts the future direction for the university in terms of making critical decisions, implementing change, reducing risk, and reaching consensus on issues that affect the university. The strategic plan also helps us to align our priorities with those of the state of Florida and nationally. I am confident that the strategic plan will serve the institution well as we move forward.

Our challenge as an institution is to make this plan a living, breathing document to assure that we become the university we want to be in 2018. To that end, the Strategic Plan is a starting point in an ongoing process of change, adaptation, and continuous improvement. With the Strategic Plan as a roadmap, we must work together to implement key strategies and measure our progress toward fulfilling our sacred mission and vision for academic excellence.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who devoted your time, energy, input, and enthusiasm to this process. Your participation has made B-CU a stronger university as we ascend to greatness.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edison O. Jackson
President


**Developing the Strategic Plan**

Upon assuming the presidency of Bethune-Cookman University, the first act of radical transformation presented by Dr. Jackson was to articulate a strategic vision that is the lens through which all plans, initiatives and programs are derived, measured and assessed. In the second act, Dr. Jackson led a review of the university’s mission designed to reaffirm the development of students as the central focus of the university. The third act of radical transformation was the establishment of a task force that identified Bethune-Cookman University’s five core values. The fourth and final act of radical transformation was to establish six strategic goals used to measure the university’s progress toward implementing the vision.

Along with the new mission and core values, President Jackson spent considerable time communicating his vision and presented a strategic plan that, when taken together: 1) strengthens the university’s reputation for producing world-class graduates; 2) ensures the longevity of the university; and 3) transforms the university into the best private liberal arts university rooted in the legacy of social justice and committed to the values of our beloved founder, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune. The President titled the vision and strategic plan “Ascending to Greatness” as a reflection of our ability to exemplify excellence, enhance quality assurance, streamline administrative processes, and efficiently and effectively steward resources.

Most importantly, the vision provides the operational infrastructure, philosophical ideas, and strategic direction needed to meet the expectations of all Bethune-Cookman University stakeholders. The vision, as it is instituted, ensures that funding agents get enhanced quality and improved productivity; business and corporations get better prepared graduates; students are prepared to accept the challenges of a new and rapidly changing world by exposure to rigorous and relevant curricula; alumni feel understandably proud of their newer counterparts; our friends and benefactors become more supportive of B-CU; and finally, our faculty, staff, administrators and trustees are more excited about B-CU, its students and graduates.

The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan charts the future direction for the campus in terms of decision-making, implementing change and helps us align priorities with those of the state and nation. The plan establishes the framework and, in a sense becomes a roadmap for how we will measure success and assess our progress by targeting key performance indicators for each of our strategic goals as we Ascend to Greatness.
Mission, Vision, Values

Our Vision

Bethune-Cookman University seeks to define a new standard for academic excellence as a way to become the best small college in the southern region. To educate and empower people to seek their own solutions; to advocate for opportunities for all citizens to improve their quality of life; and to inculcate an international perspective that would facilitate a keen appreciation of the new global realities.

Our Mission

The mission of Bethune-Cookman University is to develop global leaders committed to service, lifelong learning and diversity by providing a faith-based environment of academic excellence and transformative experiences.

Our Core Values

B-F.I.R.S.T. represents the core values of Bethune-Cookman University. Our goal is to reinforce them in the minds of students, faculty and staff. The definitions of the core values are:

FAITH We recognize and uphold the Christian tradition while welcoming the diversity of faiths.

INTEGRITY We live in a way that reflects our deepest convictions.

RESPECT We recognize the inherent dignity and worth of each person.

SERVICE We seek social justice through civic engagement.

THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE We are engaged in the continuous pursuit of learning that transforms us and the world.
**Strategic Goals**

As the university moves toward 2018, the following strategic goals are critical to educating students and assuring that the institution thrives:

1. Enhance Academic Enterprise
2. Promote Student Success
3. Increase Access, Opportunity and Affordability
4. Enhance Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency
5. Increase Institutional Visibility and Image
6. Upgrade Physical Infrastructure

**Facing Today’s Challenges**

**Demographic Diversity**

With the articulation of a new vision for the university, certain assumptions have been considered. The faces of the state and the nation are changing. The United States of America is undergoing dramatic shifts in their demographic composition, and the state of Florida is in the forefront of that change. Our demographic provides a canvas upon which we can draw a fairly reliable portrait of society for decades to come. Historic images that emerge from the state, the nation, and the university are significantly different than those we saw just ten years ago.

- Today, women, people of color and immigrants, many of whom are non-English speaking, represent more than half of the present workforce. By the year 2018, 85 percent of the 25 million people entering the workforce will be female, African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, or new immigrants.
- By the middle of this century, the majority of the population will be non-white. Hispanic-Americans will constitute the largest minority in the United States.
- The majority of immigrants to the United States are no longer from Europe and Canada. In the last thirty years, the overwhelming majority of immigrants have come from Mexico, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia. Most of these new immigrants have settled in six states – California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey and New York.

In addition to meeting the needs of an increasing number of immigrants and international students, the university’s new vision addresses the intentional focus on developing an “international university.”
Student Competencies in the Global Community

This new vision requires that the university continues to play a significant role in the diverse communities we serve. It requires that we educate and empower people to seek their own solutions. It demands that we support public policies that create economic and social opportunities for the citizenry to improve their quality of life. To this end, the university is pursuing strategies “that create a vibrant teaching and learning community” through curricular globalization.

Bethune-Cookman University’s students must prepare for an ever-changing global community where collaboration and competition necessitate a different preparedness than in the twentieth century. Specifically, in addition to needing knowledge of human cultures, civic engagement, and social responsibility, students will be required to compete using intellectual and real-world skillsets that must be practiced comprehensively throughout the curriculum in order to be competitive in a rapidly changing, globalized marketplace.

Companies desire graduates who have the aptitude to be strong decision makers, can solve problems, possess excellent communication, planning, and prioritization skills, as well as data collection and analysis acumen (Adams, 2014). Similarly, the majority of employers want higher education institutions to help students to master skills that include critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal communication, and the ability to apply knowledge to real-world situations in order to have employees who are prepared to innovate (Hart Research Associates, 2013).

Financial Challenges

Institutions of higher education are also experiencing diminishing resources. The costs of higher education grow more rapidly than the cost of living. Along with other issues, such as, changes in standards, decreasing fiscal support by the various funding agents, and the need to “do more with less,” the new vision articulates the university’s determination to deal with higher expectations from the state’s and nation’s stakeholders in the face of these shrinking resources. In his book, Planning and Assessment in Higher Education: Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness, Michael Middaugh (2010) points out that institutions operate in a “culture of evidence” where evidence of institutional effectiveness and productivity is a must in order to receive funding.

This vision provides the operational infrastructure, philosophical underpinning, and strategic direction to meet the expectations of all the university’s stakeholders: ensuring that funding agents get enhanced quality and improved productivity. Businesses and corporations will receive better prepared graduates capable of assuming productive positions in their organizations and students will be prepared to accept the challenges of a new and rapidly changing world by exposure to rigorous and relevant curricula.
The President’s 7 Big Ideas

The big ideas are the internal drivers for guiding our work and are directly reflected in our six strategic goals and objectives. The big ideas codify the vision of a new standard of academic excellence. The seven big ideas are defined as follow:

1. **Holistic Integrated University** – represents a philosophy of educational transformation that promotes students’ power to self-actualize by intentionally engaging connections with disciplines, the surrounding community, University Core Values, fostering compassionate living and a thirst for knowledge in the world. As B-CU focuses on academic integration we will be in an enviable position of offering a cadre of integrative learning opportunities available to students throughout their matriculation at the university.

   “Student engagement is vital to student success...If we want to be the best, we can no longer function in silos, we have to work together.”

2. **Niche Creation** – is the development of B-CU specific academic initiatives that brand the university as an innovative and research-driven academic institution by establishing research driven programs that will rival any university, public or private as well as the development of Centers of Excellence focused on attracting the best possible caliber students and faculty.

3. **“International University”** – is a focus on recruiting and training faculty, staff and students to be aware and engaged thought leaders of critical issues on cultural and diverse global topics impacting the world.

4. **More Efficient Use of Resources** – is our commitment to creatively manage and leverage human and fiscal capital to produce academic excellence and a more sustainable B-CU by allocating resources consistent with the vision, mission, goals, objectives, and activities at the university.

5. **Increased Productivity** – reflects the university’s strategic approach to improving customer service to all stakeholders through the use of technology and other workforce enhancements to accomplish key performance indicators (KPIs) related to faculty and staff productivity, increased retention and graduation rates and increasingly appropriate alignment of resources to meet the needs of programs.

6. **Enhanced Quality of Graduates** – is our effort to ensure that each student graduating from the university possesses the discipline and field specific knowledge, skills and competencies to be change agents and leaders in their chosen field of study.

7. **More Competitive Positioning of The University** – defines how we seek to establish a brand that reflects a higher education institution committed to academic excellence, embodying the cultural heritage, traditions and values that comprise our competitive edge through the establishment of satellite campuses globally, nationally, and regionally as well as implement a comprehensive communication and branding strategy.
Goal 1: Enhance Academic Enterprise

Objectives

- Develop a curriculum that promotes vigor for the General Education Core
- Develop curriculum that promotes rigor and pedagogy for new and existing degree programs
- Develop co-curricular service learning activities that promote rigor and pedagogy for degree programs
- Develop policies to recruit and retain excellent faculty
- Increase the number of faculty in critical areas of STEM, Business, and Nursing
- Develop Flagship programs in STEM and Business
- Recognize and reward excellence for faculty and staff
- Increase the number of programs seeking accreditation
- Plan and develop the Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED)
- Establish the Center for Undergraduate Research Excellence (CURE)
- Improve and expand the library collection
- Upgrade and create new smart classrooms
- Upgrade teaching laboratories
- Create a Center of Excellence for Teaching and Learning
- Establish a faculty performance management system
- Strengthen research capabilities by establishing research institutes/centers

Key Performance Indicators

- Dollar amount spent on technology impacting teaching and learning
- Dollar amount received through research grants
- Number of qualified faculty with terminal degrees
- Number of new program initiatives
- Number of accredited programs
Goal 2: Promote Student Success

Objectives

- Expand the services of the College of Undergraduate Studies
- Implement a comprehensive student retention strategy
- Recognize and reward excellence for student achievement
- Strengthen academic advising and counseling through the Student Success Center
- Increase civic engagement activities for students
- Increase faith-based activities for students
- Increase study abroad program opportunities
- Establish collaborative learning spaces
- Expand peer tutoring and counseling services

Key Performance Indicators

- Retention rate
- Six-year graduation rate
- Number of undergraduate students who enroll in graduate school
- Post-graduate employment within discipline of major
Goal 3: Increase Access, Opportunity and Affordability

Objectives

- Strengthen the profile of incoming freshman class to increase retention and graduation rates
- Expand the Honors College to include school-based programs and services
- Expand online learning programs and services
- Expand educational opportunities within the Volusia and Flagler counties
- Increase student access to quality technology
- Improve housing and student accommodations
- Expand the program offerings in the School of Professional Studies

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of out-of-state applicants, including transfer and international students
- Number of students enrolled in online degree programs
- Enrollment
- Percentage of college ready students
- Percentage of male students enrolled
- Percentage of students who express satisfaction with on-campus housing
- Default rate
- Average Institutional need-based aid
Goal 4: Enhance Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency

Objectives

- Strengthen managerial and financial reporting
- Strengthen the procurement function
- Revise and update the technology plan
- Devise an updated compensation plan
- Implement a customer care program
- Establish an inventory management system
- Revise and implement an Executive Performance Management program
- Develop a recycling and green energy plan to reduce energy cost
- Develop an accountability and assessment plan
- Review the university’s investment policy

Key Performance Indicators

- Return on assets
- Cash reserves
- Cost of FTE
- Return on investment
- Budget to actual
- Maintenance cost per square footage
Goal 5: Increase Institutional Visibility and Image

Objectives

- Diversify revenue streams
- Implement a comprehensive communications and branding strategy
- Increase fundraising activities and revenues

Key Performance Indicators

- Endowment
- Alumni giving
- Direct support to the university mission
Goal 6: Upgrade Physical Infrastructure

Objectives

- Develop a Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan
- Begin construction on a new residence hall
- Plan and design a new student union
- Begin a capital campaign to build a new integrated science complex

Key Performance Indicators

- Student satisfaction with quality of campus facilities (Noel-Levitz)
- Classroom square footage
- Residential square footage
- Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) Index
- Average age of square footage
Plan Implementation & Assessment

This Strategic Plan is guided by the following general approach:

1. Measuring the achievement of the university’s mission is the central focus to measure how well we are doing as we move forward in meeting B-CU’s strategic goals and objectives.

2. Selected institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are used for measuring our success in meeting the institutional strategic goals and objectives.
   a. Our progress will be presented in the Annual Report.
   b. Our metrics that are benchmarked against peer institutions will be reported annually in B-CU’s Report Card.

3. Divisional Vice Presidents will report on progress toward their divisional KPIs by aggregating assessment results from the unit-level Annual Planning and Assessment Reports.

4. Unit-level outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative, are used to measure our success at the unit-level. Our unit level includes both academic and non-academic units.
   a. A degree-granting program is considered an academic unit. Academic programs focus primarily on meeting program student learning outcomes.
   b. Non-academic units are those areas that manage a budget whether administrative support services or academic and student support services. These non-academic units typically focus on satisfaction, count, efficiency, and quality outcomes.

5. Using multiple KPIs and outcomes to assess each strategic goal, we choose to use as few as necessary as we seek Key Performance Indicators that rise to the institutional level.

6. No one particular measure will be sufficient, but some metric sets or combinations of them will be meaningfully better for tracking progress than others or than having none. We focus on identified activities, rather than measuring every action.

7. Continual adjustments are expected. As we progress, we acknowledge that our KPIs and outcomes used to measure our success at meeting the strategic goals and objectives will require further consultation, analysis, development, and refinement.
Institutional Level: Strategic Plan

President, Cabinet, and Administration

B-CU’s Strategic KPIs

Divisional Level

Deans and Divisional VPs

Divisional KPIs

Unit Level

Academic Programs, Administrative Support Services, Academic & Student Support Services

Academic
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Other Programmatic Outcomes

Non-academic
- Outcomes focused on Satisfaction, Count, Efficiency, Quality
Conclusion

Bethune-Cookman University has a rich legacy built on faith as the central and guiding principle by which we conduct ourselves and engage with our community. The legacy includes a strong sense of service and the commitment to relationships we build with students, colleagues and others. Bethune-Cookman University has never been afraid of taking risks, propelled by visionary women and men who at the helm of this great institution dared to dream and see what others could not see – what we could and can become. Our founder, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, whose daring dream, unwavering faith and commitment to the common good defied odds with a courage and tenacity short of remarkable. She took risks in the face of adversity and understood that great institutions think big and act outside of conventional wisdom.

The visionary leadership continued with Dr. James E. Colston, who oversaw accreditation by the Florida Department of Education. His vision included a commitment to structuring activities around the lives of students and the communities in which they live.

Dr. Richard V. Moore’s vision was one of both expansion and accountability. Thus, under his leadership the College became accredited by SACSCOC, added the Division of Business and expanded curricula and infrastructure.

Dr. Oswald P. Bronson’s vision of academic excellence resulted in additional degree programs and accredited nursing and education programs. An alumnus, Dr. Bronson, who retired after 29 years, was named president emeritus.

Dr. Trudie Kibbe Reed, the first woman to serve in this capacity since Dr. Bethune, recommitted to our motto “Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve,” with the establishment of the Institute for Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility in 2005, and under her leadership the college started its first master’s degree program in Transformative Leadership and acquired university status in 2007.

Dr. Edison O. Jackson, the 6th president of Bethune-Cookman University has followed in the great tradition of visionary leaders charting a bold, new vision not constrained by, but rather propelled by the possibilities we see for ourselves. Under Dr. Jackson’s leadership, we see ourselves becoming the best small research university in the nation that educates and empowers people, advocates for all to improve their quality of life and inculcates an international perspective for the appreciation of new global realities.
References

