

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Item Name: 2014-2015 Academic Strategic Plan for Northern Arizona University

Action Item Discussion Item Information Item

Issue: The Committee is asked to review and approve the 2014-2015 Academic Strategic Plan for Northern Arizona University.

Background

ABOR Policy 2-223.A requires each university to submit an annual Academic Strategic Plan to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee for approval. The Plan is intended to provide information on the key academic initiatives planned by the institution and describe how they support both the University's strategic plan and the system-wide strategic plan of the Arizona Board of Regents.

Statutory/Policy Requirements

ABOR Policy 2-223.A – The Academic Strategic Plan

Strategic Implications

The Academic Strategic Plan serves as a primary mechanism by which the Committee provides oversight and direction for the academic initiatives and academic mission of each university.

Discussion

As outlined in Board policy, an Academic Strategic Plan shall include any of these types of changes proposed for a university:

- Plans to establish new academic programs and to eliminate specific types of academic programs, described below.
- Plans to establish and eliminate academic organizational units, described below.
- Proposals to require more than 120 credits in an undergraduate program.
- Plans to apply more than 64 Community College credits toward the undergraduate degree requirements for a specific major.
- Plans to offer lower division credit courses outside of an established campus in a county served by a Community College

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Outline of Academic Strategic Plan

The Academic Strategic Plan for NAU includes the following requests and information:

Part I. Narrative Overview

- Overview of Initiatives to Improve Learning and Educational Attainment
- Academic Programs and Organizational Unit Overview
- Academic Programs that will require program fees

Part II. Academic Programs

- New Academic Programs
- Changes in Academic Programs

Part III. Academic Units – none submitted at this time

- Academic Units may be modified on an addendum to the Academic Strategic Plan at a subsequent Academic Affairs Committee meeting.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee review and approval the 2014-2015 Academic Strategic Plan for Northern Arizona University, as presented in this executive summary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
2014-2015 ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN**

Part I: Narrative Overview

A. Overview of Initiatives to Improve Learning and Educational Attainment

- i. During 2013-14, Northern Arizona University has concentrated on assessing and improving the major programs that have been launched in the past few years to improve student success and learning. University College is in its second year of existence, and continues to support a growing number of faculty focused on excellent instructional design and work with lower division students. A structured College Success Program will integrate curricular, co-curricular and academic support programs for new students at highest risk. The First Year Learning Initiative is now reaching the majority (97%) of first-year students through deliberate design of large-enrollment 100-level courses to ensure active engagement, rapid and frequent feedback, and other best-practice course elements; FYLI is now expanding to incorporate similar (appropriately advanced) approaches in key 200-level courses.
- ii. The President's Technology Initiative continues to expand and to increase its beneficial impact on student learning through innovative course designs that involve students in team or individual problem solving and application in classes serving larger numbers of students. The original grantee departments have now completed implementation and two rounds of assessment, qualifying for department incentives after demonstrating equal or greater student learning and an increase in course cost efficiency. Other programs are partway through the process or are participating in the early developmental and redesign phase. High-impact courses from virtually every college, from lectures to laboratory formats, are participating in this effort to transform student learning by adopting blended designs or similar approaches. A "learning studio" in Cline Library that can facilitate more technology-intensive learning is nearing completion for use in Fall 2014.
- iii. The Lumberjack Mathematics Center continues to add key mathematics courses to its portfolio and to refine the design and implementation of adaptive, assessment based models for lower-division mathematics courses identified as important elements of student success. Peak Performance, a summer opportunity for entering students to improve their level of math placement prior to starting their university career, is being expanded and improved to address this key component of first-year student success.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

iv. We continue to pursue analytical approaches to understanding our students and the factors influencing their progress and success. In particular, as the composition of our incoming students continues to evolve (more out-of-state students, more students with unmet financial need, more first-generation students), we monitor the degree to which different students make use of (or are touched by) various interventions or student success programs. We are also assessing the relative impact of various programs on particular components of our student population. Over time these analyses should improve our ability to target particular interventions to those students who will benefit most greatly in terms of improved retention or progress to degree.

B. Academic Programs and Organization Unit Overview

i. No new departments or academic programs are being proposed for the Flagstaff campus or for the Phoenix Biomedical Campus. Faculty members are being hired and the initial cohort of students is being recruited for the new Occupational Therapy program, launching in Phoenix in August 2014.

ii. Extended Campuses (specifically, NAU – Yuma) is proposing three new degree programs. The Bachelor of Science in Biological and Ecological Sciences is a further development of the existing B.S. in Biology, drawing upon the four-year experience students can have both in Yuma and in community colleges throughout the Lower Colorado River region. The degree plan is responsive to current student demand and interests. Specifically, this program correlates with the community college science degrees so that students can make a seamless transition to the NAU-Yuma degree. The degree addresses water and conservation issues particular to the unique situation of Yuma and its surrounds but is easily adaptable to being generalized to other parts of the states when the program expands to online delivery.

NAU Yuma is also proposing a new Bachelor of Arts in Social Work. This is a formalization of the separate administration and delivery of the Social Work degree from that offered by the Department of Sociology and Social Work on the Flagstaff campus. Student demographics in Yuma differ dramatically from those of students enrolled in Flagstaff; nearly all Yuma social work students are first generation college students, and all are community college transfer or 2 + 2 students. The majority speaks English as a second language. The degree is a BA so that students can focus on the Spanish language. It is designed to be both bilingual and bicultural so that graduates will be equipped to excel as social workers in the very special context of the Lower Colorado Region. The BA in Social Work will differ from the Flagstaff BSW degree in that it is designed to prepare professionals to serve a regional population with a high prevalence of Spanish speaking households.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Bachelor in Interdisciplinary Studies is proposed to replace the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. This streamlined program will serve students on multiple campuses in the Extended Campuses division, including NAU Yuma, NAU-Yavapai and the Online Campus. The BA and BS no longer serves students in this population; the communication Extended Campuses has with its online students necessitates that staff are able to be clear and quick in describing EC offerings. In order to maximize transfer credits, students will still have the option of a language or science block of courses, but the system will be more efficient with one, instead of two, kind of degrees. Students in the legacy BS and BA Interdisciplinary Studies degree programs will be able to complete those degrees or elect the new curricular path.

- C. Northern Arizona University is not proposing any new academic programs that will require program fees.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
 2014-2015 ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN**

Table 1 - Proposed New Programs

Name of Proposed Degree (degree type and major)	College/School (location)	Program Fee Required? (Yes or No)	Additional State Funds Required? (Yes or No)	Brief Description/Justification (max 100 words)	Projected 3 rd Year Enrollment & Implementation Date
Bachelor of Science in Biological and Ecological Sciences	Northern Arizona University, Yuma	No	No	This degree is part of the four-year experience students have due to NAU Yuma's partnership with community colleges in the Lower Colorado River region. It extends and enhances NAU's statewide presence. The proposed major has been developed in a logical progression from emphasis to specialization to major. This plan meets student needs based on current demand. Additionally, as the Yuma Branch Campus prepares to meet the growing professional needs of its demographic region it is essential that it continue to develop its own rigorous programs of delivery.	Year 1 25 Year 2 35 Year 3 50 Implementation Date: Fall 2014
Bachelor of Art in Social Work	Northern Arizona University, Yuma	No	No	The need for the BASW program at NAU Yuma is grounded in the different missions of the Mountain Campus and the Yuma Branch Campus social work programs. Student demographics in Yuma are dramatically different than those students enrolled in the Flagstaff Social Work	Year 1 30 Year 2 45 Year 3 60 Implementation Date: Fall 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

				Program. More specifically, nearly all students at the Yuma Branch Campus are first generation college students and all are transfer or 2 plus 2 students in contrast to the more traditional student located in Flagstaff. The majority of NAU Yuma students speak English as a second language.	
Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies	Northern Arizona University, Yuma	No	No	Extended Campuses plans to offer a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, instead of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences currently in place. Over the last several years Northern Arizona University has been streamlining the number of degrees it offers. Replacing the BA and BS with one single degree will cut the number of options to students in half without sacrificing quality or choice to students.	Year 1 873 Year 2 1700 Year 3 1900 Implementation Date: Fall 2014

Table 2 - High Demand Programs Proposed for Elimination

Program	College/School (location)	Justification/Brief Description (max 100 words)	Impact on Current Students (max 100 words)
Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies	NAU-Yuma	A Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies is proposed to replace the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. This streamlined program will serve students on multiple campuses in the Extended Campuses division, including NAU-Yuma, NAU-Yavapai and the Online campus.	Current students will be able to complete those degrees or elect the new curricular path.

