



October 2015 message from President Harris to the campus regarding the strategic planning process

MEMO

Subject: University of San Diego Strategic Planning Process

Dear Campus Community,

Since my arrival earlier this semester, I have been impressed with our campus community's deep commitment to the mission and core values of the University of San Diego. Those core values are clearly grounded in the University's rich Catholic intellectual tradition and imbued with a dedication to academic excellence that one would only find at a university which aspires to rank among the finest in the nation.

Over the past few months I have visited with students, faculty, trustees, benefactors, alumni, parents, community leaders and elected officials. During those meetings nearly everyone has spoken about their pride in the university's progress and development over the years. It is also apparent that people are keenly aware of the challenges that still lie ahead and wish for us to address them with confidence, clarity of purpose, and strategic audacity. In other words, there is a sense of both excitement and anxiety about the future, but mostly there is a desire for USD to articulate a bold new vision and plan which will provide direction for the University over the next decade.

This is a propitious time for USD and the ideal moment to focus strategically on our future. The university's ambitions remain lofty, inspired by a decade of remarkable financial success despite one of the nation's most challenging economic periods. The strategic planning process will capitalize on the progress of the university in recent years and align the new strategic goals with the current strengths of the University, including the progress of the current comprehensive campaign. In short, we will build upon the achievements of the past decade's strategic directions, and will integrate our most effective current programs and initiatives with our elevated ambitions for USD's future.

To support this process, we have engaged Huron Consulting Group, a firm with deep higher education experience. Huron brings a team that is experienced in both university strategic planning and working with Catholic institutions, including Boston College, Georgetown and Marquette. This team will help guide the university in the strategic plan's development.

As our strategic planning partner, Huron will help us think through how best to advance our strategic ambitions, enhance our value proposition, and forge a more distinctive identity. They will support a University-wide Strategic Planning Steering Committee in an effort to affirm our values and mission, articulate a distinctive vision and strategic goals, and develop an actionable plan for the university's path forward. The strategic planning process will be highly-inclusive



and transparent as the Strategic Planning Steering Committee works to engage the campus community and all of its constituencies for input and feedback throughout. Additionally, the process will be iterative and incorporate periods for review, reflection, and dialogue across the institution.

When I considered who might serve on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, I sought the advice of many people. When asked whom they would recommend to serve on a strategic planning committee that they believed could rise above their own unit and think strategically about USD, they consistently mentioned several of the same names. What I discovered is that USD is blessed with an abundance of talented people whose background and experience would be helpful on the steering committee. However, since Huron recommended that the committee not exceed 15 people in order for it to function effectively, it is not possible to have the committee itself represent every USD unit or every constituency.

After reflecting on the issue I asked 15 people to serve on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and I am honored that each person accepted the opportunity to serve in such a significant role. It is important to note that there will also be several working committees that will be formed after the first of the year that will expand the number of people providing leadership to this work. I am pleased to announce that the following people have accepted the responsibility and challenge of serving on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee:

Co-Chairs

Andrew Allen, PhD, Vice President and Provost, Professor of Economics
Esteban Del Rio '95, PhD, Associate Provost for Inclusion and Diversity, Director, Center for Inclusion and Diversity, Associate Professor of Communications Studies

Members

Michel A. Boudrias, PhD, Associate Professor of Environmental and Ocean Sciences
Katie Coutermarsh '16, President, Associated Students
Heather Dooley '02 (BA), '05 (MEd), Resource Specialist for the San Diego Unified School District, President of the USD Alumni Board of Directors
Reverend Monsignor Richard Duncanson '68, Pastor of the Church of the Nativity, Diocese of San Diego, Member of the USD Board of Trustees
Hugh Ellis, PhD, Professor of Biology, Chair of the USD University Senate
Minh-Ha Hoang '96 (BA), '01 (MA), Director, Admissions and Enrollment
Terry Kalfayan, CPA, '88 (BA), '05 (MA), Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer
Patricia Marquez, PhD, Dean, Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, Associate Professor of Management
Noelle Norton, PhD, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Political Science and International Relations
Karen Oropeza, Executive Assistant, Human Resources



Chell A. Roberts, PhD, Dean, Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering, Professor of Industrial Engineering

Carmen Vazquez, MA, Vice President for Student Affairs

Mary Jo Wiggins, JD, Vice Dean, Professor of Law

The process will launch in November and begin with an assessment of USD's current state, as well as review the external higher education landscape. During this current state assessment, we have asked Huron to conduct a number of interviews, meetings, and focus groups with a broad cross-section of constituencies to discuss strengths, opportunities, and future priorities for the university.

Early next year, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee will form several sub-committees that will focus on emerging strategic themes and will be tasked with further evaluating the themes and crafting supporting priority initiatives. The work of the sub-committees will culminate in a vision conference in which participants will work to synthesize findings into a draft strategic plan comprised of a mission-aligned vision statement, strategic goals and supporting priorities, and key considerations.

The vision conference will take place in the spring, and its findings will be shared with the Board of Trustees at its April 2016 meeting. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee will then facilitate additional review and feedback with the university community before confirming a strategic plan and presenting its findings to me. The goal is to have a new vision statement, strategic goals and an implementation plan approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting next September.

According to those who knew him, Bishop Buddy stated that it would take 100 years to build a great Catholic university. One can imagine how proud he would be at the growth and progress of the university he founded. His dream of building a great Catholic university still inspires us today. There is no doubt in my mind that if we create a bold vision, are strategic in our decision making and disciplined in our implementation, we can emerge as one of the nation's finest Catholic universities and fulfill the promise that USD represents to the world.

I am eager to commence the strategic planning process and look forward to our collective work to envision the next decade in the life of the University of San Diego.

Sincerely,

James T. Harris III, DEd
President