

Xavier Strategic Planning Phase One Report (June 2008)

Focus 1: To recruit and retain students who are prepared to lead and serve on behalf of a more just and humane society.

The first strategy is **focused on students**. The entire plan is **student-centered** recognizing that Xavier is student-centered: the university is tuition-dependent and focused on learning; and, finally, it is defined by its students—those who apply define its competitive niche, as those who graduate define its academic reputation.

Recruiting and retaining these students requires attention to academics but, just as important, to the quality of life on campus. The majority of Xavier students go to class 15 hours a week and study another 10 hours. That leaves another 100 hours each week when students are awake and active. The commitment of the academic community of the university should be that education is going on all the time and everywhere, not only in the classroom or the library, so there should be a relationship between the lessons taught through the curriculum and the experience of the students in their daily lives on campus.

Both research and observation confirm that learning occurs most effectively when it is

- Directed toward outcomes
- Enhanced by experience
- Encouraged by collaboration, and
- Inspired by excellence

The strategy, therefore, is for the university to enhance its facilities and environment to support student learning and improve retention. A secondary issue has to do with the apparent lack of interest on the part of many students in programs and services which are already available. It needs to be discovered whether this is a problem that can be solved by better communication or if it requires a different kind of programming that is in closer alignment with the changing needs and wants of the current generation of students.

Recruitment: To **increase the size of the applicant pool** and **improve selectivity** in order to increase yield among the most promising applicants

- **Tailor financial-aid** to achieve the strategic Focus
- **Improve facilities for students**—a “place to hang out and work out”
- **Improve services and activities focused on students**: food service, social activities
- Provide **greater access to technology** in the process of teaching and learning: on-line and distance education
- Highlight Xavier’s **leadership Focus** among HBCU’s as critical to the “brand”
- **Improve effectiveness of the admissions process** by greater use of EMT technology

Retention: To improve freshman-to-sophomore retention and 5-year graduation rate

- **Strengthen first-year programming**
- **Strengthen first-year advising**
- Increase **opportunities** for faculty and their students to become more **involved in research**

Metrics:

- Quantity and demographics of applications
- Selectivity
- Yield
- Academic Quality
- Financial Aid Discount
- Retention Rate
- 5-year Graduation Rate
- Measures of Student Satisfaction, e.g. NSSE

Focus 2: To recruit and retain faculty and staff committed to living and advancing the mission of the university.

This strategy is **focused on the people of Xavier**, the ones who keep the promises you make in the mission statement. Faculty and staff together are dedicated to the development of the students in body, mind and spirit. The faculty advance the mission through teaching and research, the staff through their support of the work of teaching and learning which is at the center of the university. Faculty and staff together endeavor to model lives of leadership of service that reflects the vision of Xavier's foundress and its enduring mission.

- **Reduce teaching load** for faculty with an active research agenda
- Promote faculty and staff **involvement in the governance** of the university
- Identify and support **flagship programs to complement** Xavier's reputation in Pre-Med and Pre-Pharmacy as well as Pharmacy and expand into other areas. Programs that are:
 - Consonant with mission
 - Responsive to student demand and societal need
 - Current strength in faculty leadership and commitment to program
 - Inter-disciplinary and multi-cultural or global focus

Metrics:

- Number of faculty publications, research grants, patents
- Pass rate for licensure examinations
- Percentage of students admitted to graduate or professional schools

Focus 3: To offer leadership and service for Xavier's city and region and for the world.

Xavier's future is inextricably tied to the future of New Orleans. So, in **contributing to improve the life of the city**, its citizens and institutions, the university is also serving its own cause. Xavier is also a citizen of the world, preparing students to live and work in a society that is increasingly **multi-cultural and global** in its reach. Many of Xavier's students, faculty and staff contribute to the community through their service. But the university itself can also make a contribution by **lending its intellectual capital** and specific expertise to address problems affecting society locally and globally. Some of the areas where Xavier could make a difference include:

- Education
- Healthcare
- Racial and ethnic diversity

Focus 4: To improve institutional effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness is, finally, **mission effectiveness**; the success of the plan will depend on the **alignment** between the goals and objectives and the mission of the university. To achieve success, it is critical that the **allocation of resources** and the **process for planning and evaluation** are directed to the **improvement of the quality** of education and the quality of the total experience for the students.

- Put in place a coordinated strategic planning and budgeting process
- Define an effective staff performance evaluation and development process
- Organize strategic data in a way that supports the goals and objectives of the strategic plan