Overview

During the year since our report to the board in August, 2014, we have made substantial progress in implementing actions identified during Program Prioritization, ranging from performance improvement within individual units to large-scale reorganization.

The best measure of the value of Program Prioritization is the degree to which we have broadly integrated the processes in assessment and business practices. Two recent occurrences provide specific opportunities in this regard: (i) our mid-cycle accreditation visit and (ii) a FY16 budget shortfall.

- We underwent our mid-cycle accreditation visit in October, 2014. In preparation for the visit, we solidified the conceptual integration of program prioritization with the accreditation process.
- A recent budget shortfall required that we make substantial reductions in expenditures, and we chose to apply the principles and mind-set of program prioritization in doing so. Because the decisions made in that process used program prioritization as a foundation, we present several examples in this report.

Recap of Process and Results to August 2014

During the 2013-14 year, Boise State evaluated instructional programs, academic departments, and administrative and support programs based on four criteria: relevance, quality, productivity, and efficiency.

For administrative and support programs the process required each program to develop measures of relevance, quality, productivity, and quality, so that we could evaluate the direct and indirect contribution of units to the university’s mission. The wide variation in activities among units led to a wide variation in the metrics used to assess each criterion. For a number of administrative and support programs, this was the first time they had developed metrics for evaluating unit performance.

We identified 651 programs at the university: 242 administrative and support programs, 163 degree and graduate certificate programs; 198 minors, emphases, options, and alternate degrees; and 45 academic
departments. A total of 70 programs were excluded from evaluation, primarily instructional programs that were less than three years old. Of the 242 administrative and support programs evaluated, 47 (19.4%) were placed in the fifth quintile, requiring them to make substantive changes. Of the 135 degree and graduate certificate programs evaluated, 29 (21.5%) were placed in the fifth quintile, requiring them to make substantive changes. Another 22 degree and graduate certificate programs were flagged for a low number of graduates, requiring them to increase productivity. Progress of instructional programs will be re-assessed in spring, 2017.

**Progress in Implementation of Actions through May 2015.**

The following table provides a tally, for each division of the university, of the progress on implementation of actions proposed by the administrative and support programs of those divisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>As of August, 2014</th>
<th>As of May, 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Programs</td>
<td>Number of Actions Proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs: Administrative and Support programs</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement and University Foundation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Operations and General Counsel</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers and Institutes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Administration</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Office</td>
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<td>33</td>
</tr>
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<td>Research and Economic Development</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
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*Re-delineation of several programs resulted in a reduction of the total number of administrative and support programs to 240.

The University also implemented the following major changes to organizational structure in the Division of Academic Affairs:

- Dissolution of the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs (SSPA)
- Creation of the School of Public Service (SPS) and movement of 5 departments from SSPA to SPS
- Movement of five departments from SSPA to the College of Arts and Sciences
- Movement of two departments and University Health Services to the College of Health Sciences
• Creation of the College of Innovation and Design

Two groups of programs were not reviewed initially:

• Programs less than 3 years old were excluded because they might not have had enough time to fully mature. Those excluded programs, along with all other academic programs, will be reviewed in an annual report that will include information on annual number of graduates, graduates per budget dollar, student credit hours and sections taught per faculty FTE, and measures of progression of students.

• A group of 8 secondary education programs in the social sciences and humanities suffer, in general, from low enrollments. Discontinuation would have served little purpose given that they share most of curriculum with subject area majors. Instead of considering them individually during Program Prioritization, we opted to address them en masse during 2014-15. We are considering several options as possible avenues of action: (i) Use recently-created IDoTeach program as a model, which would involve substantial incorporation of teaching curriculum into the subject matter curriculum. The IDoTeach program complete revamped our science secondary education programs and created a set of engineering secondary education program. (ii) Centralize the oversight of the secondary education programs in the College of Education, thereby ensuring more comprehensive focus on secondary teaching methods.

Challenges Encountered during Implementation

Sustaining the process: The primary challenge we face going forward is to ensure we sustain the value of program prioritization. Below we discuss the importance of accreditation and a budget shortfall in helping us to sustain the value of program prioritization.

Oversimplification by outside entities: There is a natural tendency for outside entities to ask for a simple version of the results of program prioritization: what were the scores? What were the rankings? What programs were cut? Release of such information potentially ignores the complexities of the process: interpretation of rankings must be done with full sensitivity to the robustness of the data that informed those rankings and with full understanding of the context of the programs. If the rankings were publicized, the complexities of the metrics and context would be overshadowed by the rankings themselves. During the 2015 Legislative Session, for example, BSU received a request for the Program Prioritization rankings associated with programs within the Department of Art. We were able to comply with the request, but only with a comprehensive explanation of the complexities of the metrics and context, and without revealing the original (raw) rankings; instead we supplied the rankings after consideration of metrics and context.

Quantifying Impact: Outside entities also ask for information on the fiscal impact of the process, even though a truly accurate accounting of that impact is difficult, if not impossible. For example, the actual impact of discontinuing an academic program can range from freeing up substantial resources (as would result from discontinuation of a program and the faculty lines associates with it) to no impact at all (as would result from a simple reorientation and/or modernization of a degree program). Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between direct fiscal impacts, such as those that occur when one activity is terminated resulting in direct savings, and indirect fiscal impacts such as savings that occur because of an organizational realignment or an improvement of business processes.
Opportunities that have been presented

Two key occurrences (accreditation review and budget shortfall) that can be interpreted as opportunities during this last year are discussed below.

Regional Accreditation Process

The NWCCU accreditation standards focus on determining how well the institution fulfills its mission. We interpret these standards broadly, in order to form a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the contributions to institutional mission of the many units that comprise the university. Thus, our reporting to the NWCCU has three perspectives: (i) University-level mission fulfillment; (ii) contribution to institutional mission fulfillment by academic departments and their instructional programs; and (iii) contribution to institutional mission fulfillment by administrative and support programs.

By broadening the focus of accreditation to include the evaluation of administrative and support units, instructional programs, and academic departments (all of which are “programs” in the context of program prioritization), we have created a strong conceptual integration between accreditation and program prioritization. Thus, by addressing our accreditation standards we also sustain the process of program prioritization.

Our evaluation of mission fulfillment for accreditation includes three components: (i) Is the mission clarified so that that evaluation of its fulfillment is possible? (ii) Is the mission being fulfilled (based on evaluation via metrics)? (iii) What action has been taken based on outcomes of the evaluation? Our emphasis is on evaluation that results in action. These components align with the process of program prioritization, which focuses on evaluation of performance using metrics and resulting actions taken.

Boise State’s mid-cycle NWCCU accreditation review visit occurred in October 2014. Program Prioritization was used as evidence that we assess fulfillment of the institutional mission and make improvements as a result. The following direct quote from the report of the external review team shows the strong connection at Boise State (note the use of “P³” as an abbreviation for “Program Prioritization Process”).

The P³ initiative recently undertaken by BSU was, by all indicators, a comprehensive process that required all the constituent components of the campus go through a thorough assessment. An upper level administrator indicated that “the P³ process has changed the culture in a number of areas on campus” while an Academic Dean characterized the P³ process as being “one of the best things to have happened to this campus in the past 20 years.” And BSU personnel shared with the visitation team examples of how the “feedback” of assessment results has resulted in tangible changes to the campus. There are many examples of the breadth of its impact: faculty lines have been moved within colleges, programs have been consolidated, facilities no longer charge departments for painting and recarpeting, and the bowling alley - initially slated for removal from the Student Union Building - was “saved” after analyzing the results of both quantitative and qualitative assessments. One Dean indicated that the process has resulted in “a massive overhaul of the curriculum within [his] college.”

As part of the accreditation process, Boise State previously defined four Core Themes to characterize its primary responsibilities: Undergraduate Education, Graduate Education, Research and Creative Activity, and Community Engagement. During program prioritization, however, it became evident that we do not have a Core Theme that (i) aligns with two of our program prioritization criteria, productivity and efficiency, and (ii) is aligned with the basic notion of program prioritization that the institution should work to ensure its resources are best aligned with the mission. Institutional productivity and efficiency
are foundational to our ability to carry out our mission, therefore, we will consider development and adoption of a fifth Core Theme that is focused on responsible stewardship of resources.

**Sustainment in our Budget Processes.**

Boise State recently had the opportunity to apply the principles of program prioritization to tough decisions regarding expenditure reductions. FY2014 financial ratios indicated that a large increase in personnel and other expenditures had a negative impact on the University’s net income and net assets financial ratios.

In response, we immediately began implementation of strategies to reduce expenditures for FY15 and to plan for permanent reductions for FY16 and beyond. Each division was given a target for permanent reduction of appropriated budgets: Academic Affairs was asked for an overall budget reduction of 1 percent or slightly more than $1 million. Other divisions were asked to cut by 3%. Each division was then given the flexibility to determine how best to achieve expense reductions. The divisions were asked to make strategic decisions to reduce expenses while maintaining the relevance, quality, productivity, and efficiency of their programs.

The following sections provide some high points of the decisions made by the divisions, and illustrate how the principles of Program Prioritization have informed those decisions.

**Division of Campus Operations and General Counsel**

This past year, the division focused on reorganization and renegotiating contracts to implement service improvements and create cost savings. In line with best practices in the industry, the facilities, operations, and maintenance (FOAM) department is being restructured to implement a zoned services approach for delivery of general custodial, maintenance and landscaping services. Zones will also provide a framework that can be used campus-wide to fully integrate and coordinate operations including emergency preparedness. This fully-integrated approach will improve responsiveness, efficiency, and quality of service. Based on this approach, the Division was able to eliminate 7 current vacant positions and reduce operating expenses, saving nearly $350,000.

The Division is also charged with the creation of a University Public Safety Office and is reorganizing to lay the groundwork. While this will require an investment in professional staff and safety officers, the cost will be partially offset by reducing reliance on a contract with the Boise City Police.

**Division of Finance and Administration**

Finance and Administration initiated two major reorganizations based on Program Prioritization results. Human Resources (HR), which scored in the lowest quintile, now has new leadership and is focusing its reorganization on improving service delivery to the campus by implementing the use of HR business partners, who serve as HR generalists assigned to areas of campus who will work directly with staff and faculty to meet their HR needs. The business partners and functional experts work together to help solve customer issues and reduce errors and work-arounds. In addition, major system improvements were initiated to help streamline the multiple processes that the campus utilizes on a daily basis to recruit, hire, compensate and evaluate and promote faculty and staff.

Finally, in addition to reorganization, new position descriptions and responsibilities are being developed for many job positions in HR. Importantly, this reorganization has occurred without increasing the budget, and the realignment of responsibilities has created greater opportunities for interaction both within HR and across the campus.
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) was reorganized so as to reduce one-time and long term operational costs. Program Prioritization determined that cost efficiencies could occur if we further centralized IT, thereby reducing redundancy across campus. We did an organizational assessment using best practice business cases from our professional organizations (EDUCAUSE and the Education Advisory Board). One outcome was a reduction in software licensing and maintenance costs based on a review of terms and conditions of, and the need for, each contract. As a result, 14 agreements were renegotiated or non-renewed, resulting in permanent annual savings of nearly $300k. Additional savings will be realized in future years as a result of our transition to cloud-based subscription services.

OIT’s organizational realignment took advantage of staff turnover to merge organizational units. In addition, to help counteract the high rate of turnover in OIT technology staff that results from high local demand, OIT worked with HR to create a career progression series for each area. Current staff members were placed in positions based on work experience and expertise and a path for promotional opportunities is outlined. OIT has also created significant opportunities for student employees to work on key IT projects. Student employees were key contributors to our student success dashboards project, and in a number of cases, these students become full time employees upon graduation, and continue to develop their skills and project work. The OIT contract savings and reorganization resulted in a permanent budget reduction of over $440,000.

Division of University Advancement and the University Foundation

The Program Prioritization report created by University Advancement and the Boise State University Foundation’s highlighted the opportunity raise $7.2 million as a result of an investment of approximately $500,000. To accomplish this return, the division proposed 7 changes to organizational structure, 21 improvements within programs, and five actions involving resource reallocation. To date, 22 action steps have been accomplished, and as of March 31, 2015, the investment and/or reallocation of approximately $156,000 has resulted in new gift income of more than $2.4M for FY15.

Of the remaining action steps left to implement, five involve Foundation reporting, metrics and organization; two involve identification and solicitation of new corporate/foundation prospects; one restores the ability of the planned giving gift officer to focus on highly productive planned giving; and three involve the addition of gift officers to increase income in FY16-20. The remaining action steps are projected to account for more than $4 million of anticipated income growth.

Division of Academic Affairs

The division of Academic Affairs was required to reduce annual expenditures by $1.03M. A substantial portion of this reduction was achieved by phasing out programs in the Department of Community and Regional Planning. Importantly, those programs scored low in metrics associated with productivity and efficiency. This action will reduce expenditures by more than $500,000.

In addition to reducing appropriated budgets by $1.03M, each college in Academic Affairs was asked to develop strategies to increase revenue. Attrition of students reduces tuition revenue to the university, therefore, increasing retention has a substantial impact on revenues generated, as well as increasing student success. Recruitment also emerged as an important strategy, and is especially effective when it involves programs that have capacity and can therefore accommodate increased numbers of students with no additional instructional cost.

The College of Arts and Sciences proposed actions that include the following:

- Biological Sciences and Anthropology proposed an omnibus set of actions that have at their foundation the creation of a new PhD in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior. The actions proposed would (i) remove the need for restrictions on enrollments of biology majors, (ii) increase the ability to provide service courses to meet the needs of majors in the health fields, (iii) streamline
and improve the quality of the undergraduate curricula of both departments, and (iv) substantially increase the research output of both departments, while providing research and doctoral graduates in the area of human-environmental interaction.

- Chemistry proposed actions that will increase the success of non-chemistry majors in its General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry courses; success would translate into increased retention of students.
- Communication will develop a non-thesis track within its MA program, making it more appealing to working professionals and increasing enrollment in classes within existing capacity.
- English proposed the creation of two new minors (Professional Writing and Linguistics) and Music will increase recruitment into its minor; these actions will enhance the educational experience of students in other majors, increasing both quality and retention.
- All departments proposed plans to increase the connection between first and second year students and the faculty, thereby increasing retention.

The College of Business and Economics proposed actions that include the following:
- Strengthen advising by investing in additional professional advisors. This action will result in the ability to shift faculty workload from advising to teaching and research, substantially increasing both quality and student retention.
- Create a “Bridge to Career” program and a new minor in Business that will provide non-business majors with skills that will increase their success after graduation. Potential students who know of the program are more likely to be recruited, while students with more confidence in their post-graduate success are more likely to be retained. An additional benefit of the program is the elective coursework made available to non-business majors at relatively low cost.
- Examine the undergraduate curricula with a focus on streamlining to facilitate student progression. Students better able to make progress are more likely to be retained and graduate.

The College of Education proposed actions that include the following:
- Enhance recruitment and retention in those programs with unused capacity.
- Focus substantial effort on securing research grants.

The College of Engineering proposed actions that include the following:
- Enhance recruitment into its professional graduate engineering programs, thereby increasing enrollments in courses with unused capacity. The effort will include the creation of new graduate certificates using existing resources.
- Create a BS in General Engineering, which will provide the option of a generic engineering degree for students who are interested in pre-professional programs (e.g., medical school), entrepreneurship, and secondary-level teaching.

The College of Health Sciences proposed actions that include the following:
- Create a new BS in Public Health that will focus on individual and population-based factors that positively affect the adoption and maintenance of optimal health, which coincides with the goal of the Affordable Care Act. The new degree will provide a more focused and professionally valuable degree option for students who major in Health Sciences Studies and will, therefore, increase both recruitment and retention.
- Increase the capacity of the BS in Kinesiology program and enhance advising throughout the department. The result will be increased recruitment and retention.

The newly-created School of Public Service proposed actions that include the following:
- The Departments of Political Science and Criminal Justice will undertake activities to better engage students with their major departments, thereby increasing retention.
• The Department of Policy and Public Administration will create an Executive Master of Public Administration degree to serve working professionals in a wide variety of organizations.

Undergraduate Studies proposed an initiative that would double the capacity of a highly-successful Learning Assistant program, which provides peer tutors in key lower division courses. The expansion would enable the program to provide assistance to an estimated 9,000 students per year, many of them freshmen in early-career courses. Research has shown that success in early-career courses has substantial impact on retention.

The Graduate College proposed an initiative to increase its capacity for recruiting students to the university’s graduate programs. Existing recruiting efforts have been highly successful in actively recruiting students to programs that have in the past relied wholly on passive recruiting. Increased recruiting efforts will increase utilization of graduate program capacities.

The Division of Extended Studies is continuing implementation of its eCampus initiative, which aims to create ten new fully-online undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs over the next three years, thereby increasing access while generating revenue.

Sustainment in our Program Review processes

During program prioritization, we measured the performance of instructional programs and the departments in which they are housed using a much broader array of metrics than ever before. In addition, many metrics that had previously received little attention gained substantial import because they were used in scoring programs and for subsequent assignment into quintiles. The following are modifications to our Periodic Review process that emerged from program prioritization:

1. A more extensive but focused set of metrics will be used, which combines those historically used in our annual planning and budget process with those identified in program prioritization. The metrics will continue to be organized using four criteria: relevance, quality, productivity, efficiency. Further work will be done to ensure we have effective metrics for relevance and quality. The data will also (i) provide trends over time, (ii) include student survey data, and (iii) include peer comparisons from the Delaware Study. Finally, we will attempt to create composite measures that show the balance in the department among its various functions using relatively few dimensions (e.g., research & creative activity, student credit hour production, graduate production, and student satisfaction).

2. The metrics will be reviewed by departments, the dean, and the provost on an annual basis, as well as presented in the self-study for Periodic Review of academic departments and their programs, which occurs every five years. Annual review of data will ensure that there are no surprises at the time of Periodic Review and will increase opportunities for departments to continually improve their operations.

• We will strengthen the focus on assessment of Program Learning Outcomes and the subsequent improvement of curricula. The strength of a department’s assessment process is a reasonable proxy for the quality of its programs.

Sustainment in our Analytic Capacity

An important aspect of Program Prioritization has been the expansion of our capability to analyze and make use of data on unit and organizational performance. Our accomplishments in this realm include the following:
In developing our report to the NWCCU, we made progress in simplifying and creating consistency among the key performance indicators for various purposes: strategic planning, performance reporting to the SBOE, strategic enrollment planning, and accreditation. We have identified a set of “important key performance indicators” that have been used as the basis for major initiatives at the university. Those metrics include the following:

- Annual number of baccalaureate graduates, which is an important focus of the SBOE and Complete College Idaho and a driving force for many of our actions and budget requests.
- Graduation and first year retention rates are the focus of a wide range of initiatives that address one of the goals of our strategic plan.
- Research expenditures and annual number of doctoral graduates are emblematic of our emergence as a research institution.
- Performance of students in mastering the University Learning Outcomes is indicative of the quality and success of our Foundational Studies Program, which we regard as a signature experience for undergraduates.

We are making substantial progress in enhancing data integrity and quality. First, data held within core systems is presently being scrutinized, and in some cases converted to new structures, in order to provide a better foundational base for reporting. Second, the University recently created a Data Quality Council that has the charge “to improve data quality and promote consistency in the definition and use of data at Boise State University.” Finally, we have begun implementation of the software package “Data Cookbook,” which will enhance our consistency in data definitions and help ensure that those developing and using data warehouse reports make use of appropriate data elements.

Additional Steps

1. We will solidify an ongoing evaluation process for administrative and support programs. Doing so is necessary for accreditation and an important step toward sustaining the value of program prioritization. Two key components of this step are:
   a. All programs need to revisit the metrics they developed during program prioritization, with the goal of ensuring that they truly measure unit effectiveness.
   b. The university will develop a protocol for review of units to ensure that the metrics developed are systematically evaluated on a regular basis and that improvements are subsequently made.

2. We will systematically examine the centralization of services in several areas, including: (i) custodial services, (ii) employee training, (ii) facilities maintenance, (iv) information technology, and (v) travel arrangements. A separate but related issue is whether to outsource centralized service functions, generally.