

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

STRATEGIC PLANNING 2002

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:
2002-2003**

September 2002

Introduction

The Strategic Planning Committee of UNH's School of Health and Human Services, in its final report, presented five Strategic Intentions that the Committee concluded should guide the work of the School in the coming three to five years. The Committee made it very clear that their work was only the beginning of a longer process. In presenting its report, the Committee also presented a charge to the School's leadership:

“These [Strategic] Intentions must now guide action. In order to meet our full potential as a School, these Intentions must be translated into the fabric of our budgets, our staffing decisions, and our annual operating plans.”

The next stage in this process, a stage that we anticipated when we wrote our “Proposal to Support the Development of a Long Range Plan”, is to follow the Committee's Report with an Implementation Plan that will be crafted and implemented by the School's Executive Committee. As described in that proposal, we will prepare an Implementation Plan in each of the next five years. Annual Implementation Plans crafted and implemented by the School's Executive Committee are appropriate for several reasons, which we outlined in our proposal. First, planning action steps on an annual basis allows the School to recognize and react to rapid changes in the external environments that influence health and human services. The idea of a specific, five-year implementation plan in health and human services really makes no sense. Producing annual action plans that are closely linked to a set of more enduring strategic directions does make sense. Second, annual implementation plans have the potential for making the entire process more open and more easily evaluated. Annual plans are, in effect, performance targets, and we can more easily be held accountable for our efforts if we specify what we hope to achieve at the start of each year. Third, it is completely appropriate to charge a broad committee (the Planning Committee) with the task of identifying strategic directions and to charge the Executive Committee with the responsibility for implementing those directions. The Executive Committee has the ongoing responsibility of overseeing all the School's activities, and the responsibility for ensuring that the School is both academically excellent and fiscally sound.

Following receipt, in April 2002, of the Report of the SHHS Strategic Planning Committee, the Executive Committee deliberated on the action steps that would constitute the first year's Implementation Plan. A preliminary version of that Plan was presented to an all-School meeting just before the end of the Spring Semester and the final version was subsequently endorsed by the Executive Committee. Work on implementing the plan started immediately, even in advance of the start of the 2002-2003 Academic Year.

In this Report, we repeat each of the five Strategic Intentions identified by the Strategic Planning Committee, and we list each of the action steps we will take this year to address each Intention. We conclude with the discussion of two additional themes we will address during the coming year, and in all subsequent years. These themes, to a very

considerable extent, underlie everything we do. But they are of such critical importance that we should not simply be implicitly assumed. By explicitly acknowledging the extent to which these themes permeate all our efforts, we hold ourselves explicitly accountable for progress in these areas as well.

Putting Strategic Intentions into Action

Intention 1: Reflectively engage with internal and external communities to identify emerging trends and needs in health and human services and to address those needs that are consistent with the vision and priorities of the School.

- Each Department will be asked to examine formal mechanisms in place to insure that the Department seeks and acts on advice from representatives from agencies and organizations relevant to the Department's teaching and research. Specifically, we expect each Department to have a functioning external advisory committee in place by the end of the current Academic Year. In addition, to insure continuity of information, at least one person from each Departmental Advisory Committee will also serve on the School-wide Dean's Leadership Council.
- A particular challenge that emerged from interviews conducted with key external constituencies of the School of Health and Human Services was lack of knowledge and understanding of the School as a whole. People consistently knew and valued individual programs of the School, but had no sense of the School as a whole. To provide a more public and comprehensive understanding of the entire School of Health and Human Services (and to achieve other Strategic Intentions as well), we will select two topics in the coming year, and focus much of our activity around those two topics. With regard to this Strategic Intention, this focus will provide the School with a strong identity as a place where critical health and human service issues are addressed. During the 2002-2003 Academic Year, the School of Health and Human Services will focus on two such critical issues:
 - Adolescence
 - Long-term Care and Aging

Intention 2: Promote and support an infrastructure that fosters an interdisciplinary culture that becomes the motivating factor in the evolution of the School.

- Establish, in the best New England tradition, monthly "Town Meetings" to bring departments together. The explicit focus of these meetings will be on interdisciplinary research and teaching. In the coming year, following on the

action steps associated with Intention 1, Fall Town Meetings will focus on the theme of Adolescence and Spring Meetings on Long-Term Care / Aging.

- Focus the School's limited discretionary funds on supporting proposals for interdisciplinary courses or interdisciplinary research.

Intention 3: Promote and support an ethos and infrastructure that cultivates scholarship and research amongst School faculty and students.

- Involve HHS faculty in the development of the Carsey Institute for Effective Families and Communities and make use of the human and financial resources to assist faculty in the development of new research projects, especially projects that bring together social, behavioral and health sciences.
- Continue to enhance the efforts of the New Hampshire Institute for Health Policy and Practice to engage HHS faculty in applied, policy-relevant research, particularly research focused on New Hampshire.
- Insure that research themes are regularly included in Town Meetings.
- Continue to work with junior faculty, through P and T workshops and one-on-one mentoring, to enhance their research productivity. Expand faculty development workshops to address the specific needs of senior faculty, especially Associate Professors.

Intention 4: Create an environment that continues to support the School's teaching mission while integrating research and service with teaching.

- Provide resources for the development of new courses, with a particular focus on interdisciplinary courses including:
- A new, interdisciplinary, School-wide introductory course aimed at both the general student body and undeclared first and second year students;
- Assuming the approval of the new Discovery Program, both a series of Inquiry Courses and additional General Education courses, especially Science courses organized around health-related themes.
- Continued development of issue-based, interdisciplinary courses of general interest (e.g. women's health, adolescence, death and dying).

- Use Town Meetings to highlight faculty who have successfully and effectively integrated teaching, research and service.

Intention 5: Create an active and engaged process of communication with the larger community regarding the need for and impact of School of Health and Human Services contributions.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy, one that begins with the selection of key compelling messages from each department and program, and with the identification of key audiences. Selection of key compelling messages for the School as a whole, and the identification of School-wide audiences will follow. With these in place, our communication strategy will provide direction for all communication efforts, both print based and web based and those needed for recruitment and for development purposes.

Overriding Themes

In addition to these five strategic directions, there are three overriding themes that the School of Health and Human Services must continue to address in the coming year, and in all subsequent years. Aspects of these themes were addressed in the deliberations and report of the Strategic Planning Committee, sometimes explicitly but sometimes implicitly. Yet each is of such fundamental importance that they must be included in this Annual Implementation Plan. The three are:

- Enrollment Growth,
- Diversity, and
- Efficiency.

Enrollment Growth: In the last 5 to 7 years, the School of Health and Human Services has experienced substantial declines in undergraduate enrollment, measured by numbers of majors enrolled or numbers of undergraduate credit hours generated. This enrollment decline is the driving force behind the School's current financial difficulty and reversing it will be the driving force behind our recovery. We simply must get enrollment levels back to where they were in the recent past. The School's Executive Committee has focused strongly on this in the past year, and will continue to do so. Actions steps presented above, particularly those related to the development of new introductory courses, will contribute to our efforts to attract more students.

Diversity: The School, like the rest of the University, must make concerted efforts to attract and retain both a more diverse student body and a more diverse faculty. Because of retirements, resignations, and negative tenure decisions (and in spite of a very tight financial situation), we will propose a substantial number of faculty searches during the

coming year, perhaps as many as ten. We must use this opportunity to make substantial progress in diversifying the HHS faculty. We have already discussed this imperative as an Executive Committee and we will be working aggressively, both within the School and with colleagues throughout the University, to assist with this critical goal.

Efficiency: As we seek to attract additional students and new faculty, we cannot lose sight of the major financial challenges we face as a School. We are, after all part of the health and human service “industry” and are subject to the same pressures that providers and insurers face. As a School, we conducted complete curricular audits during the last year, to assess the efficiency with which we deliver our educational programs. We must continue to be vigilant about efficiency as we make those changes and those investments called for by the Strategic Plan and this Implementation Plan.