Report of the Task Force: Ensuring Resources
To Fulfill the University's Mission

Humboldt State University should align priorities through implementation and integration of its vision, values, and mission. Full implementation of the Strategic Plan by 2020 requires:

- Alignment of resources to achieve ultimate goals
- Transparent and effective communication
- Evidence based decision making
- Accountability through evaluation of aligned outcomes

This report is based on the premise that the overall goals of the strategic plan are to develop and maintain high quality programs to foster student learning and improve retention and graduation rates. This report identifies nine key recommendations and a series of revenue generating and cost-saving implementation priorities. Appendix A provides a suggested framework for developing a comprehensive budget model. The Task Force recommendations are based on a comprehensive consultative process including a community stakeholder forum, campus forum, three surveys (student, faculty/staff and faculty researcher), extensive discussions with a diverse array of campus units, and best practices at other institutions.

Key Recommendations

1. A comprehensive university budget model should be implemented which (a) considers existing resource commitments before investing in new initiatives (b) is transparent in how resources are utilized and (c) has clear implementation/evaluation guidelines. Budget decisions must be based on reliable, relevant and timely data, and will depend on a robust Institutional Research and Planning office. We recommend a comprehensive review and revision of the University’s budget process and to adopt a budget model that reflects university priorities and capabilities. Suggested pathways for developing a budget model that may be suitable for HSU are provided in Appendix A.

2. The highest priority for university resources should be in classroom instruction and innovation. Student and faculty/staff survey results indicate the need for greater capacity and schedule flexibility in required classes and more tenure track faculty. Solutions will require a strong Provost (Senior VP) who will engage the faculty, management, and staff in the implementation of the Strategic Plan with the full input and contribution of the other VP’s.

3. The campus must engage in curricular reform (e.g., streamlining programs and degree requirements) and implement new academic policies that promote the conservation of resources, access to needed courses and progress towards the degree. These reforms and policies must receive a high priority for implementation in the Integrated Curriculum and Academic Policy Committees.

4. An assessment and planning process for non-academic units should be implemented similar to the PREP process used in academic units which have specific measurable benchmarks (derived from strategic goals) as part of the budget/resource review guidelines.

5. University facilities should be utilized year-round through a variety of revenue enhancing events and activities, and in collaboration with community stakeholders. Not utilizing these resources relinquishes significant revenue generation. Developing year-round use of facilities has the potential to improve student retention and graduation, enhance community connections and increase enrollment of international and non-resident students.

6. HSU should increase the potential for generating revenue from self-support programs (College of eLearning and Extended Education and International Programs). A clear implementation timeline for long term initiatives that incorporate benchmarks for success should accompany campus investments in these programs so that they become self-sustaining and net revenue generating.

7. Continue to develop a campus wide focus on externally funded research and scholarly activities through the Sponsored Programs Foundation. Engage a wide range of stakeholders participating in
campus research and intellectual property development. Campus should also foster supportive collaborations for grant writing, managing and research. Space for research, in particular, is reaching its limit under the current utilization model and a new effective strategy should be envisioned to allow for enhanced research activity.

8. **Continue to develop a rich fund raising environment through the Advancement Foundation.** The campus must build a climate for philanthropy that welcomes donors as partners in the mission of the University and demonstrates the impact of philanthropic contributions. Consideration of enhanced fundraising tactics must include validation and feasibility testing, identification of deficiencies, and implementation of enhancements in preparation for a successful university-wide comprehensive campaign.

9. **Develop a process for implementing resource decisions that is transparent, accountable and highly responsive to the changing needs of the institution.** This process needs to include clear designation of responsible persons, adherence to timelines and measurable objectives for evaluating success that are validated by external benchmarks. A process that ensures transparency and accountability is critical to the overall success of the strategic plan.

**Implementation Items for Revenue Generation**

**Generate revenue through philanthropic funds:** Philanthropic contributions can provide a significant source of support for programs and initiatives that appeal to donors. While HSU has many of the essentials required to successfully pursue philanthropic support, the case for donor involvement has neither been well defined nor consistently articulated and the impact of philanthropic contributions has not been consistently demonstrated. The opportunity for HSU lies in building a climate of philanthropy while developing strong and committed supporters who are encouraged to make the University their top philanthropic priority.

- Identify prospective donors who possess both financial means and interest and engage them to build life-long trusting relationships with the University.
- Provide prospective donors with multiple opportunities for exchanges of interest and commitment.
- Orchestrate calls to action providing opportunities for meaningful engagement with the University including solicitation and negotiation of philanthropic contributions.
- In collaboration with Deans and other academic and programmatic leadership, develop and maintain compelling descriptions of opportunities for philanthropic engagement by prospective donors.
- Ensure that donor intentions are understood and honored and that the impact of philanthropic contributions is demonstrated. Establish clear protocols for the appropriate use of philanthropic funds including ways in which funds are deployed when donors provide flexibility as to use.

**Generate revenue through self-support programs:** Promote high demand professional programs for which HSU Faculty expertise exists, such as Environmental Management, Geospatial Information System, Sustainable Business Practices, Health Information Management and Digital Media and Arts, etc.

- Establish clear goals for generating additional revenue resulting from investments in self-support programs.
- Create a university-wide commitment to foster HSU eLearning.
- Explore the possibility of year-round self-support academic programs.
- Self-support programs should develop strategic plans for success, goals (including revenue generation) and criteria for evaluating success.
- Establish clear protocols on the use and direction of the revenues generated by self-support activities (i.e. reinvestment into the activity, revenue sharing with the University, etc.).

**Generate revenue through grants and contracts:** HSU should support, incentivize and facilitate a streamlined process for the development and management of research opportunities. Funding for these
activities may be provided through indirect cost return or other sources. A survey of research-active faculty identified the following concerns:

- Build a rich culture of support and collaboration between faculty researchers and Sponsored Programs Foundation through sustained outreach to faculty; the value of positive relationships between SPF and faculty researchers cannot be underestimated.
- Provide more release time and seed grants for faculty to identify, apply for, and generate preliminary data for external funding.
- Expand or renovate labs, studio spaces, equipment and other infrastructure to alleviate constraints on faculty research.
- Enhance both pre-award (e.g. grant writer, budget developer) and post-award support services, improve resources for identifying external funding opportunities, and develop a more collaborative relationship with faculty PIs.
- Reexamine the university indirect cost rate to determine the most appropriate rate for HSU and identify ways these funds can improve research infrastructure.
- Foster greater involvement of students in research.
- Establish clear protocols on the use and direction of the net revenues generated using guiding principles established by the Federal Office of Management and Budget.

**Generate revenue through increased enrollment of international and out-of-state students:**
Nonresident and international students diversify and culturally enrich the campus.

- Implement multiyear ambitious targets for non-resident and matriculating international students.
- Emphasize strategic approaches to increase student enrollment.
- Recruit international students from statewide community colleges.
- Amend language proficiency requirements to be more similar to the majority of other CSU’s.
- Improve year-round housing and dining infrastructure and ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate international and out-of-state students.

**Generate revenue through use of university facilities:** Campus facilities should be utilized throughout the year for community collaborations, summer events and other uses that leverage the University’s unique geographical setting, academic expertise, and infrastructure. This year-round effort can improve student retention by providing summer work to students as well as generate revenue.

- Host events on campus that leverage our unique geographical setting and involve local community stakeholders.
- Enable an efficient streamlined campus events process by creating a single point of contact, coordination, and marketing.
- Establish a university-wide committee (with community participation) to coordinate campus infrastructure and services to implement these initiatives on a continuous basis.

**Generate revenue through partnerships with local communities and organizations:** We encourage the President to engage local business and community leaders in an ongoing consortium to strengthen new and existing partnerships with the University based on a unified approach.

- Once established, identify and exploit potential sources of revenue, which could include: Research collaborations, patent development, and technical/professional services.
- Capitalizing on the HSU brand through licensing, co-branding, and marketing opportunities.
- Leveraging the HSU brand and geographic location to develop educational ecotourism/adventure sports joint ventures.
- Collaboration in the establishment of a business/research incubator.

### Implementation Items for Revenue Savings Through Improved Policy and Process
Establish Academic policy, Programs and Curricula that focus on student success while acknowledging resource implications. The Academic Policy Committee and ICC should proactively work to modify policies and streamline curricula that focus on student success and conservation of resources.

- Coordinate course rotations, curriculum sequencing, and graduation plans.
- Limit the number of courses taken outside the major.
- Reduce the number of times that courses can be repeated and restrict pre-registration for them.
- Clarify and reduce prerequisite chains.
- Block schedule efficient freshman major pathways for core courses.
- Evaluate course/program options to reduce bottlenecks for timely graduation.
- Redefine student registration windows based on progress toward degree rather than total units earned.
- Have students file for graduation when they first enroll as freshmen, and find additional ways to foster their identity as “proud member of the class of 20xx”.
- Fully consider academic resource and administrative workload issues before creating “micro-departments”.
- Establish an online platform for curricular review and approval.
- Develop a college-level curriculum process to recommend changes that don’t have university-wide implications, allowing the Integrated Curriculum Committee time to deal with university-wide issues.
- Integrate these and other related proposals into an Academic Master Plan under the leadership of the Provost and with faculty participation for the next round of WASC review.

Campus Organization, Communication, Process and Procedures. Organizational opportunities will be better realized if a number of concrete steps are taken to enhance organizational leadership (by supporting a stable and strong Provost position), decision-making (by rewarding evidence based decision making), and good practices (by looking for opportunities for efficiencies, and effective models to adopt).

- Consolidate general university and student services where possible to establish One Stop Service Centers to prevent confusion regarding where students, faculty and staff can receive timely and unambiguous assistance.
- Establish greater use of PeopleSoft through programming and modules so campus policy and procedures can be implemented without resorting to other 3rd party vendors.
- Continuously evaluate campus processes by a neutral party to enhance communication and efficiency.

Develop a sustainable budget model that is consistent with the university Mission: A major issue with our current “incremental” budget model is the failure to consistently evaluate/consolidate existing commitments to resources when new investments are made. The University must engage in budgeting practices fostering accountability using a budget model that holds departments and programs accountable for contributing towards the university mission and incentivizes efficient and effective practices. The University should evaluate a variety of budgeting philosophies for strengths and weaknesses and adopt a progressive university budget model.

- Evaluate university-level budget priorities between divisions with a focus on student success.
- Evaluate initiatives and ideas according to their fit to these priorities and identify sustainable funding sources prior to approval. Define set funding periods with midpoint and endpoint assessments.
- Hold mid and executive level managers accountable to make evidence-based decisions.
- Develop periodic assessment of programs in all units and divisions based on criteria and benchmarks for continuous improvement.

Utilize existing spaces effectively and efficiently. Space should be considered a university-wide resource that should be evaluated and allocated strategically.
• Make the following criteria priority in class scheduling: Classroom and lab space utilization, FTES generation by space type, and student demand for specific classes to support graduation progress.
• Create a system for projecting research space needs during the grant application and routing process.
• Continue to develop an equitable and realistic administrative and office policy that takes changing technological capabilities and space scarcity into account.
• Empower departmental staff to operate space allocation and scheduling policies without feeling undue pressure from their constituents.
• Utilize dormant times in departmental spaces for IELI classes.

Information Technology: HSU should develop a coordinated effort to purchase and support computational resources. In addition, IT staff should be consulted early in project development and implementation in order to leverage technological assets. Priority should be to modify/enhance existing software (e.g., PeopleSoft) to achieve integrated operational outcomes rather than resorting to third party solutions that leads to less integration and software fatigue.
• Develop a central computer refresh strategy with a dedicated budget so that equipment does not become obsolete (which results in higher maintenance costs).
• Continue to implement new PeopleSoft functionality over third party software
• Investigate cloud-based technology for cost saving and ease of use.
• Provide consistent access to services/data from anywhere with any device.
• Investigate the use of mobile laptop carts for partial computer needs in classrooms (in order to free up dedicated computer lab scheduling).
• Bandwidth and file storage capability needs to be augmented.

Co-Chairs:
Hari Singh
Rick Zechman

Members:
Carlos Diaz
Steve Hackett
Alex Hwu
Evan Johnson
Volga Koval
Jasmine Servin
Amy Sprowles
Sarah West
Craig Wruck

Admin Support:
Julie Tucker
Appendix A

**Recommended Budget Model Pathways**

Humboldt State University should perform a discovery process to adopt a budgeting and financial management model that fosters accountability, rewards effective practices, aims to develop additional revenues, and encourages efficiency.

Two well-known models in higher education that should be considered are Responsibility Centered Management, and Performance Based Budgeting. The strength and the weaknesses of each model should be evaluated against the local campus needs and realities. Organizational changes that need to take place must be developed and implemented through a thoughtful communication process that allows the changes to be adopted by the HSU community with full input and feedback.

The following section highlights some of the areas that will require attention during the preparatory process in the evaluation of any higher education management model.

**Factors for Consideration in Planning for Financial and Budgetary Changes**

**Adequately Funding Existing Operations**
- Existing operations need to be funded based on cost ratios that are realistic for each College/Division.
- This implies that we have different categories for different types of students depending upon typical costs for lab courses, performance based courses, field trip courses, etc. IR would identify and define these ratios (cost buckets) based on available data.
- We should be mindful about adequately funding academic units based on these cost ratios.
- These cost ratios and expected outcomes should be evaluated based on external benchmarks. If they are significantly different from external benchmarks, reasons for differences need to be justified and evaluated.

**Evaluating existing Operations**
- Each organizational unit will develop specific measurable thresholds that they will achieve within a 3 to 5 year timeframe. These performance thresholds will be derived from Specific Strategic Goals of the University such as retention, graduation, inclusion etc.
- Performance measures will be developed in such a way that they have external validity (i.e. some form of comparisons with external benchmarks such as cost-ratios or achievement standards based on comparable students from other institutions).
- The main rationale of this kind of objective self-evaluation is to assess what is working and what needs to be changed to meet the University’s ultimate goals. Resources can be more effectively utilized or redeployed in a different area to be more effective.

**Evaluating New Initiatives**
- New initiatives need to be evaluated within specific guidelines that are derived from the University’s strategic goals.
- Such initiatives need to have a specific timeline for implementation and evaluation that is agreed upon from the outset.
- When new initiatives are considered, there should be significant analysis of potential duplication (and what can be given up) to finance new initiatives.
- Requests for Proposals (RFPs) should be clear, transparent, and open to all (for meeting specific goals). RFPs should not be negotiated privately but rather be part of a transparent and open process that fosters trust and accountability.

**Note:** Implementing this budget model and phasing it in may take 3 to 5 years. IR will need to provide timely and relevant data for effective decision-making and resource allocation.