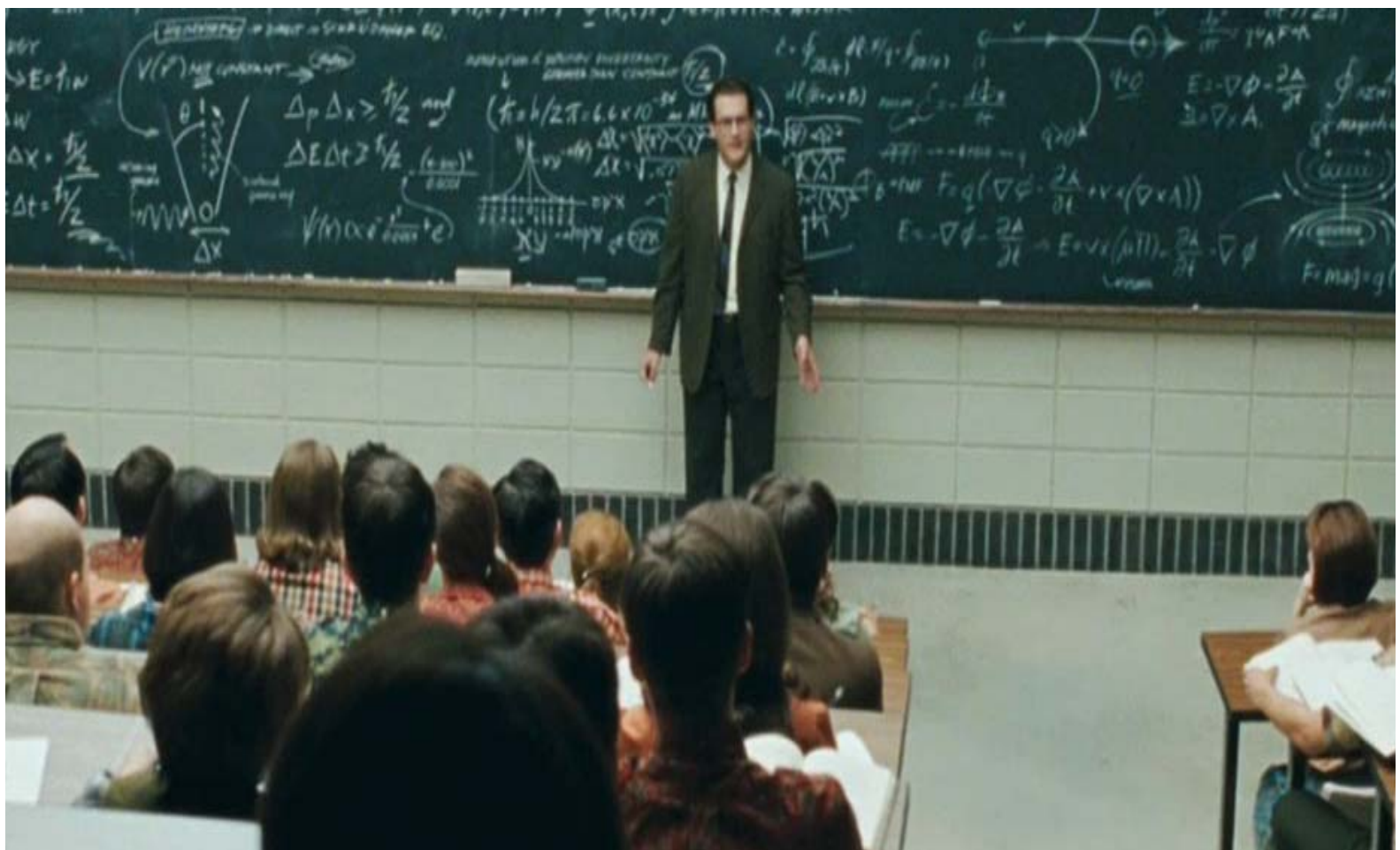


Strategic Directions for the Nevada System of Higher Education

December 2011



Background and Overview

In its recent publication, *Complete to Compete: from Information to Action*, the National Governors Association identified the “triple threat” facing public colleges and universities nationwide:

1. A greater percentage of jobs requiring postsecondary education;
2. A continuing squeeze in state budgets, particularly from the cost of health care; and
3. A growing population of students from groups that have historically not successfully completed postsecondary programs.

Nevada on a grander scale faces these same challenges. Nevada’s public colleges and universities have historically been successful in serving large numbers of Nevadans, but many students fail to graduate and those who do often take too long to do so. As a result, degree productivity across NSHE institutions is extremely low. In a state that needs more educated workers in the future, the NSHE faces the daunting challenge of producing more degrees in a shorter period of time using fewer resources and ensuring quality.

In response to these pressures, the Nevada Board of Regents initiated a strategic planning process to sharpen the focus of its current master plan, *Building Nevada’s Future: A Master Plan for Higher Education in Nevada*. The Board set student success as its primary goal, that is graduating more students with meaningful degrees and certificates, thus positioning the graduates for fulfilling and productive careers and positioning the State with an educated citizenry required for supporting and maintaining economic development and diversification. The following initiatives are designed to support that goal and provide a reasonable plan for achievable implementation.



Increase Student Achievement, Retention, & Success

- **Improve remediation** efforts and **develop new instructional** strategies and **strengthen K-12 partnerships** to ensure students are adequately prepared for the rigors of college level coursework.
- **Focus research activities** in areas with high probability of success and recognition; review and **streamline research activities** in areas of lower demand or success.
- **Increase student mentoring** and advising efforts to ensure that students are aware of and understand the steps necessary for success.
- Remain responsive to faculty concerns in order to **attract and retain qualified faculty** to carry out strategic direction and achieve institutional goals.
- Re-examine all courses in order to **utilize transformative teaching methods** that benefit students.
- Require institutions to examine and establish procedures and goals to ensure that all students admitted **receive the essential access to classes and support services** that will allow them timely progress to degree.
- Require the development of academic degree plans for all degree-seeking students through **mandatory advising**.



Increase Transparency, Accountability and Performance

- **Adopt the Complete College America (CCA) goals**, including goals for enrolling and graduating students from diverse backgrounds.
- **Reward institutions for progress** in achieving adopted performance standards, including goals agreed upon through the National Governor's Association Policy Academy and the CCA completion metrics.
- **Establish institutional protocols for reviewing student performance** and determining the extent to which they are pursuing and completing educational programs and **acquiring the skills demanded of Nevada employers**.
- **Develop and implement institutional assessment plans** and effective measures of student learning outcomes for all academic programs—these plans should define student learning outcomes, assess student performance and be used to improve teaching and learning.
- Utilize data to **identify obstacles to student success** and take appropriate steps to correct those obstacles.
- Develop incentives for **recruiting and retaining high performing and innovative faculty**.
- **Establish performance metrics** to set budget parameters, determine system priorities and allocate performance funding dollars.
- **Establish institutional incentives** that reinforce behaviors that lead to student success.



Continuous Review and Revision of Programs to Support Innovation and Responsiveness

- Develop **new degree and certificate programs** to provide students with career and technical options **consistent with current and forecasted economic development** and workforce goals of the state.
- Examine whether, for students who do not meet university admission requirements, to require a transferable associate's degree (AA, AS or AB) to transfer to a university.
- **Develop appropriate public/private partnerships with community, businesses, and K-12** to support innovation connectivity, including enhanced collaborative R&D efforts between industry and higher education research institutions.
- Establish goals for **increasing the number of and revenue from grants for research and workforce development** in areas of high demand/success, including R&D that will support intellectual property and commercialization.
- Seek **funding for innovative and cutting-edge research**, including funds to support the Nevada Knowledge Fund and that leads to invention disclosure, licenses and related income, including spin-off companies.
- **Align overarching research** and workforce development priorities **with the state plan for economic development**.
- **Strengthen degrees** and certificates **that link to identified future jobs** sought by Nevada in its economic development plan.
- Participate on the State Board of Economic Development.



IV. Ensure that Higher Education is Accessible and Affordable for All Nevadans

- **Increase the college participation rate** for students from low **income and first generation families** through transparent and predictable financial aid programs.
- Focus financial aid programs on students seeking degrees who engage in patterns of success, including full-time enrollment.
- Establish **financial aid programs** that address the unique challenges faced by **underrepresented students**.



Plan for Implementation

- **I. Increase Student Achievement, Retention and Success**
 - National Governors Association Policy Academy - Metrics Project
 - Complete College America
 - Efficiency & Effectiveness Committee
 - Remedial Education Project
 - PEBP Task Force
 - Salary and Benefits Schedule Review
 - P-20 Initiatives \ Alignment
 - Diversity/EDIC Council Recommendations adopted September 2011

- **II. Increase Transparency, Accountability and Performance**
 - National Governors Association Policy Academy - Metrics Project
 - Complete College America
 - Formula Funding Study
 - iNtegrate – Wrap SIS and Launch iNtegrate2
 - NSHE data warehouse
 - Code Review Task Force
 - Statewide Longitudinal Data System
 - Government Relations/Communications Plan

- **III. Continuous Review and Revision of Programs to Support Innovation and Responsiveness**
 - Nevada Health Care Sector Council
 - Community College Task Force Implementation
 - Health Sciences Council
 - Low Yield Policy Proposal
 - Academic Health Center – partnership with University Medical Center
 - Efficiency & Effectiveness Committee – savings reinvestment

- **IV. Ensure that Higher Education is Accessible and Affordable for All Nevadans**
 - Access & Affordability Committee