University begins fifth year of plan to reach preeminence

Purdue's Strategic Plan to achieve preeminence in discovery, learning and engagement is ending its fourth year at new heights while the University is ready to "take the next giant step," according to President Martin Jischke.

"Purdue already is a great university," Jischke told the Board of Trustees on Friday. "We believe we can be even more."

Learning

The right central strategies set in 2001 to attain and preserve excellence in learning include increasing faculty numbers and faculty participation in undergraduate instruction, integrating new instructional technologies; continually assessing programmatic successes in student learning; expanding student leadership and personal growth opportunities.

In his report to the trustees, Jischke cited the goal to add 300 faculty positions at the West Lafayette campus.

"As of this fall, we have added 200 Strategic Plan faculty positions," he said. "We have filled 184 of these positions. This includes nearly 134 new assistant professors, 23 associates and 24 full professors."

The goal is to hire 50 more faculty in each of the next two years to reach the 300 mark.

Named and distinguished professors continue to multiply as well, and more faculty than ever have distinguished themselves as members of national academies and institutions.

As applications for admission have been increasing steadily, so has the preparedness of the students applying. During the past seven years, the average SAT score of Purdue students has increased by 40 points and the number of valedictorians and students earning prestigious awards continues to grow.

The opportunity for qualified students to attend Purdue also has grown, with approximately 474,000 students in the student aid distributed system-wide in 2004-05, an increase of 128 million over the previous year.

New academic programs are adding new dimension to the Purdue student learning experience system-wide. Programs approved during the past year include:

- At West Lafayette, a master of fine arts in art and design, and a master of science degree, a master of science in engineering education degree and a doctoral degree in engineering education.
- At Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, three bachelor of science degrees in biotechnology, interdisciplinary studies, forensic and investigative science, and a master degree in applied biotechnologies.
- At Purdue North Central, a master of business administration.
- At Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, a master of science in organizational leadership and supervision.

When assessing student success, the data shows more Purdue students are graduating in fewer semesters than were five years ago. The four-year graduation rate is 39.3 percent, up from 33.4 percent in 2000. In the past year alone, the six-year graduation rate has increased from 65.6 percent to 66 percent.

Of those graduating, nearly 91 percent are being placed in jobs or in graduate school.

Rankings reveal that Purdue programs are gaining in respect and stature nationally and internationally.

Jischke reported: "In the most recent national program rankings by U.S. News and World Report, Purdue had 25 programs among the top 10 rankings, and 75 programs among the top 20 rankings; we have more work to do."

Part of that work is in increasing diversity, an area of steady progress since it was named as an overarching initiative in the Strategic Plan.

Jischke reported domestic student diversity — minority students native to the United States — stands at 12.9 percent, up from 12.7 percent the year before. Diversity among new undergraduates, he said, is 14.3 percent.

"While we continue to be below our peers and below where we need to be, we are making steady progress," Jischke said.

Discovery

At its inception in 2001, the plan's strategies toward sustaining excellence were discovered including undertaking "cutting-edge and visionary" research work and making internal collaboration in major research initiatives and developing interdisciplinary research centers to attract outside funding.

The creation of Discovery Park is the most dramatic physical result of these strategies. Completion this year of the Basildon Bioscience Center and the Black Nazarene Chemistry Center adds two completed facilities to the park, which is now slated for five facilities. However, the number of Discovery Park buildings will not limit the number of centers, which now stands at 10.

Discovery Park has now reached an estimated $200,000 in research grants. Overall, at the end of the 2004-05 fiscal year, Purdue had received $2,702 million in sponsored program support, far surpassing the $250 million goal for the year. Of that amount, $54 million came from the National Science Foundation — 24 percent more than in 2003-04.

While federal agencies provide the largest portion of research grants, Purdue has succeeded in competing for awards from Indiana's 21st Century Research and Technology Fund. Of 10 total awards made, 14 involved Purdue, with $5.8 million going to Purdue researchers.

Engagement

Hand-in-hand with discovery are the goals of engagement that have been achieved each time new knowledge is discovered at Purdue is used in an entrepreneurial endeavor in Indiana. Now recognized as one of the top technology-business incubators in the nation, Purdue Research Park continues to expand with 139 companies that employ 1,500 people.

"Our research park has been named the country's outstanding research park by its peers," Jischke said, referring to the park's award as the country's outstanding university research park from the Association of University Research Parks. "Of the nearly 70 high-tech companies at the Purdue Research Park, one-third are based on Purdue-licensed technologies."

The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) is a major component in Purdue's engagement engine. It helped more than 400 companies in the past year, and is now teamed with the Regenstrief Institute for Healthcare Engineering and the Indianapolis Health and Education in a concerted effort to reduce healthcare costs.

Purdue also is partnering with 15 Indiana Certified Technology Parks in the state.

Engagement with K-12 students, Purdue has sponsored state academic competitions that touched more than 30,000 students in the past year.

The Science Bound program, supported by more than $1.4 million in grant funds, encourages Indianapolis public school students to pursue a scientifically oriented college education at Purdue. Nearly 80 Science Bound students win full tuition scholarships to Purdue. The program is now in its fourth year.

President extends plan through June 2007

With the Strategic Plan now starting its fifth year, President Martin Jischke has recommended and trustees unanimously agreed that Purdue continue working with the same three-pronged blueprint for one year beyond the original five-year plan.

"There are three aspects of our plan that merit special attention," he told trustees on Friday. "The first is our Strategic Plan initiative to add 300 new faculty. We have plans to add 50 more by next fall, the final year of our five-year plans. We will still need to add the last 50 positions to reach our Strategic Plan goal of 300."

Jischke also said that some facilities called for in the plan will not be completed at the end of the fifth year, and that fund-raising efforts are slated to continue.

"Our Campaign for Purdue runs into 2007," he said. "We have raised more than $3.24 billion in our campaign to date. This campaign has always been scheduled for completion on June 30, 2007, and I am confident we will reach our goal by that date."

"To allow us sufficient time to add the final 50 faculty, to complete new facilities and to coincide with the planned completion of our campaign for Purdue, I believe our five-year plans should be extended one additional year, to June 30, 2007."