October 13, 1998

To: All Members of the University at Albany Community

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of the entire University community, I am pleased to accept officially the attached Statement of Values and Statement of Goals for the University at Albany. These two documents were informed by our Mission Statement of 1992, which is also attached. My heartfelt thanks to the 34-member Strategic Planning Committee (see attached), chaired by Provost Judy Genshaft, and the many others who provided input to this planning process through university-wide fora and individual responses to the draft documents. The input received in such fora, as well as from the Senate Executive Committee, the Deans Council, members of the Pew Roundtable, and our University Council was invaluable.

In reviewing the attached documents, I believe it is important to reflect on the succinct set of institutional Values identified by the Committee: Engaged Learning, Discovery, Societal Responsibility, Innovation through Technology, and Distinctiveness. We at the University at Albany consider these values to encompass our paramount strengths, responsibilities, and opportunities. Engaged Learning reminds all of us, faculty, staff, and administration, that we must ensure that our students benefit from an active learning experience that is nurturing, challenging and enhanced by Discovery and creativity. We value Discovery as an integral part of a research university, but also as the spark that engages our students and informs and enhances our communities, locally and worldwide.

Our Societal Responsibility is multifaceted. It challenges us to expand access to a diverse population and ensure that our programs of teaching and research benefit society. We recognize both the challenges and opportunities of Innovation through Technology and accept our responsibility to utilize the power of new technologies to enrich our programs of instruction and assure our students'
preparedness for a society transformed by such technologies.

The Committee also recognized that we must demand much of ourselves. We can not be content to simply be a good university. We, as a faculty, staff, and administration, desire programs which are Distinctive and distinguished. We will increase our value to our students and the larger society to the extent that we set priorities and make the difficult choices which will lead to an enhancement of the entire University.

The Committee’s Statement of Strategic Goals and Initiatives reflects our Mission and Values, and will enable us to set priorities and strategically allocate our resources at a time of great change in higher education. Neither the Goals nor the Initiatives are in priority order — nor are they weighted — they are, rather, inter-related. Taken together, they will allow us to chart a course to achieve our shared institutional aspirations. The Strategic Goals and Initiatives challenge us to be rigorous and objective in our evaluation of our programs of teaching and research, to be creative and aggressive in our recruitment of a diverse student body of the highest caliber, to be sensitive and responsive to societal needs through our teaching and scholarship, to be unapologetic about our commitment to excellence in all that we do, and — above all — to be able to make the hard decisions necessary to achieve the vision we share for our institution.

With my acceptance of this University Strategic Plan, I also now charge the Deans and Vice Presidents to lead their faculties and staffs in developing or refining their own strategic plans. Such unit-specific plans should complement and advance the University Goals, and should include measurable outcomes which will enable us to assess our progress. Indeed, each unit’s annual budget request will be reviewed in the context of such plans and such outcomes.

Again, my deep thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee and to all who participated in this institution-wide process. I look forward to continuing to work with you as, together, we further develop, refine and, as necessary, alter over time, this Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

Karen R. Hitchcock
President

Strategic Plan
University at Albany
State University of New York
Introduction

The Challenge of the New Millenium

American higher education today must take the lead in addressing major societal transformations: emerging social issues, now international in scope, representing a global multiplicity, not just of cultures but also of perspectives, ideas and demands; the constantly rising level of necessary technological sophistication; and, students' need to learn not just a discipline but the ability to grow and change intellectually throughout their lives.

As colleges and universities embark upon the new millenium, they face an environment of increasing public expectations and dwindling traditional resources. It is a time when many institutions - those who do not rise to these unprecedented challenges - will not survive. Yet we believe that the University at Albany can attain a new level of distinction which will enable us to surpass, not just meet, the daunting expectations and challenges facing us.

We, the members of the Strategic Planning Committee, have been charged to recommend a course for this institution in such a complex environment. We will be guided by the University's own Mission Statement, adopted in 1992, which says, in part, that "today's University at Albany community eagerly seeks opportunities to enhance its educational mission - both in the creation and in the dissemination of knowledge." We also acknowledge the words of our President, Karen Hitchcock, in her inaugural address of 1996: "In fundamental ways we are being challenged to reexamine our intellectual and ethical assumptions, our traditional modes of teaching and learning, the structure and content of our curricula, our long-standing commitment to diversity of peoples and ideas, and the nature and extent of our service relative to our community, state, nation and the world."

How then shall the University at Albany respond to this complex set of conditions that characterizes society now and for the new millenium?

Commitment to Change. We must ourselves take charge of change. We must revisit the questions of how we discover and disseminate knowledge. We must creatively seek out new opportunities for our students as they enter and help change a truly global society. We must be prepared to reallocate our resources
and build on our strengths — current and emerging - as we develop a set of goals and strategies that will help us to advance the values of our institution. At the same time, we must design administrative structures to assure that the most innovative faculty initiatives in support of these goals receive maximum support.

Commitment to Society. We must be responsive to society, which has placed its trust in us to address the many issues which confront us. Looking to our partners in the community, state and around the world, we can identify and nurture new coalitions - with business, government, other communities of scholars, and alumni - to leverage our resources as we serve the public. Through such partnerships, we can prepare for the new century with a sense of both confidence and purpose.

Commitment to Excellence. As we plan our future, it is useful to look to our past. Albany was founded in 1844 by a small group of bold visionaries who embraced daring concepts for the era, including the idea that a teacher must master both pedagogy and subject matter. Above all, our founders were committed to excellence. Albany developed into a nationally acclaimed, highly selective four-year College for Teachers, and now has evolved into a mature public research university. While our mission has changed since then, that boldness of vision and commitment to excellence remain.

Values: Framework for Change

Throughout its history, the University has demonstrated flexibility, creativity and responsiveness to the changing needs of society. We have developed innovative approaches to thinking and learning across the disciplines, enriched our undergraduate curricula with unusual opportunities for research and learning, and devised new ways to link theory and practice. We can now build on this rich legacy of leadership and innovation to forge our own daring concepts and a new framework of shared values.

We have defined these values as: Engaged Learning; Discovery; Societal Responsibility; and Innovation through Technology. All of these values will be advanced in the context of a fifth value...that of institutional Distinctiveness. (Each will be discussed in detail later in this report.) These capture in a few words what members of the University at Albany academic community consider to be Albany's paramount strengths, responsibilities and opportunities. These values are not abstractions; rather, they operate at several discernible levels, including the theoretical and the applied. They must serve as a framework on which to build new programs and strengthen current ones.

Strategic Values Defined

Strategic Value 1: Engaged Learning
Engaged Learning is the active and enthusiastic involvement of both students and faculty with the learning process - at every stage and level. Faculty and students will come together in a common quest to appreciate inherited wisdom of the past and to participate in the discovery of new knowledge.

**Strategic Value 2: Discovery**

Discovery is the creation, publication and dissemination of knowledge in an environment where research and teaching are viewed as interrelated parts of an holistic enterprise of scholarship, creative performance, and learning.

**Strategic Value 3: Societal Responsibility**

Societal Responsibility is the obligation of the University to respond to the expectations placed upon it by its external community. These expectations include inclusiveness of access, the quality and types of our programs, and the application of our teaching and research to the needs of society.

**Strategic Value 4: Innovation through Technology**

Innovation through Technology reflects the commitment to creatively harness new technologies in the development of innovative curricular programs and pedagogy, and to prepare students to be contributing citizens in a world that is being transformed by technology.

**Strategic Value 5: Distinctiveness**

The final strategic value reflects the view that the programs we support must not only be *distinctive* through their adherence to the values of *engaged learning, discovery, societal responsibility* and *innovation through technology*, but also distinguished. While remaining committed to our mission as a comprehensive research university, this value of Distinctiveness acknowledges that choices will need to be made as we continue to invest in programs of strength and importance to our overall missions.

*Strategic Values Expanded*

**Strategic Value 1: Engaged Learning**

Engaged learning is the active and enthusiastic involvement of both students and faculty with the learning process - at every stage and level.

**Engagement as a Hallmark**

Striving to make engaged learning a hallmark of a University at Albany education will help us to realize one of the institutional qualities enunciated in our Mission Statement: "...an intellectual climate in which the research and
creative endeavors of the faculty enlarge their sense of inquiry on behalf of their students, so that at all levels students enjoy the stimulation and challenge of engaging in active, rather than passive learning, and the satisfaction not only of assimilating the inherited wisdom of the past, but also of participating in the creation of new knowledge."

As a public research university, the University at Albany emphasizes the integration of teaching, research, creative expression, and public service in its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Faculty bring their research and creative endeavors to bear in their teaching so that students at all levels enjoy stimulating and engaging learning. Our students should experience the satisfaction of both appreciating inherited wisdom and discovering and transmitting new knowledge. With the character of the University at Albany's educational mission so defined, it is only fitting that the foundation of our institutional vision is engaged learning.

Although there may always be a natural tension between research and teaching, we must acknowledge that they are both necessary for engaged learning. We must commit to an educational approach that links the two while still providing clarity of purpose and coherence in our curriculum. We must experiment with more effective and interactive instructional formats. Such innovations in pedagogy can serve to enhance the learning environment.

Finally, faculty members must be able to meet across disciplines with undergraduate and graduate students so that they, together, can confront the intellectual issues at the core of the enterprise.

**The Centrality of Arts and Sciences to a Strong General Education**

Engaged learning calls upon us to demonstrate the centrality of the arts and sciences to the total undergraduate experience. We can accomplish this by demonstrating how qualities that the arts and sciences promote — such as critical thinking, aesthetic sensibility, and an intellectual capacity for synthesis — serve as both the means to and the reward of a liberal education.

We should demonstrate to students how these qualities have served us in our individual pursuit of knowledge as well as the progress of knowledge in our respective fields.

**A Commitment to General Education**

The University at Albany, in its commitment to a liberal education for all its students, must ensure that the best university teaching and research manifest themselves in the general education curriculum. The general education program should reflect the value of discovery, and demonstrate the unity of research, teaching, and public service. The general education program should also be intellectually and programmatically coherent. It should take full advantage of faculty strengths across the University's multiple programs. Such courses, traditional or team-taught, should bring senior faculty, working on the
frontiers of discovery, into the program in a variety of instructional settings.

It is further recommended that consideration be given to including in the general education curriculum opportunities for students to develop proficiency in a second language as well as to receive special training in information technology.

Since learning is not the exclusive property of the "classroom," we should also recognize the positive value of integrating academic life with co-curricular activities. We should use governmental, corporate, public service and other regional and international resources to provide students with internship opportunities and community service volunteer experiences.

A Coherent Educational Experience for All

To be a meaningful and lasting value in the lives of all our students, engaged learning must be a hallmark of every student's education at the University at Albany. Thus, our strategic vision must endorse continual renewal of this University's commitment to the undergraduate experience simultaneously with the preservation and promotion of graduate and professional programs of the highest caliber. This means that the faculty, staff and administration of this University must bring their collective ingenuity, vision, and leadership to bear upon the creation of a coherent educational experience for all.

Prospective students and new faculty must understand that engaged learning is a core value of this university, and that this value will be reflected in the evaluation of their academic and professional performance within a community that emphasizes teaching, research and service as integral, related parts of one's academic responsibility.

At the undergraduate level, we must develop an appropriate balance between general education and the major. We must ensure the coherence of the general education program, and strike a balance between breadth in overall lower-division studies and depth in upper-division studies, both within and outside of the major. We must ensure that all undergraduate offerings support students in their pursuit of a coherent program of study, beginning in the freshman year.

At the graduate level and in our professional programs, we must provide resources and develop programs that combine specialized skills with broad experiences including, where appropriate, internship placements, interdisciplinary research activities, and fieldwork in countries that can benefit from the University's expertise in specialized areas.

The active involvement of faculty in advising and mentoring students at the graduate and professional level should serve as a model at the undergraduate level. We should create a campus culture for learning in which faculty and students interact outside the course structure as an extension of their academic activities.
In keeping the commitment to the quality of every undergraduate's educational experience, we must take an active role in better preparing teaching assistants, both as a component of their professional training as graduate students, and in the context of their own role in engaged learning at the undergraduate level.

**Strategic Value 2: Discovery**

Discovery is the creation, publication and dissemination of knowledge in an environment where research and teaching are viewed as interrelated parts of an enterprise of scholarship, creative performance, and learning.

**Discovery — the Heart of a Research University**

Free and motivated inquiry is the leading edge of our enterprise and the heart of discovery. We urge consistent, active attention to concrete measures that enhance the status of the University as a research institution. Research — "the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, [both] for its own sake and for its practical benefits to society" (University at Albany Mission Statement) - nurtures the spirit of inquiry among both faculty and students.

The University must place greater value on consistent productivity in research and publication, recognizing the time and resources that are necessary. High quality research and scholarship, as well as creative performance, should be adequately reflected in the criteria for achieving tenure and promotion. Supporting such scholarly activities will depend on access to sufficient resources, and we must make the necessary fiscal choices based on how well the programs support our commitment to discovery and the promotion of distinctive and distinguished programs across the University.

Further, we are committed to creating an environment for discovery where research and teaching are viewed as deeply interrelated. By so doing, the University at Albany will realize a goal enunciated in its Mission Statement: "Its educational mission sustains an intellectual climate in which the research and creative endeavors of the faculty enlarge their sense of inquiry on behalf of their students, so that at all levels students enjoy the stimulation and challenge of engaging in active, rather than passive, learning, and the satisfaction not only of assimilating the inherited wisdom of the past, but also of participating in the creation of new knowledge."

As a research university, the University at Albany is able to provide connections between its strong research and graduate programs and the undergraduate experience by teaching problem solving and critical thinking, and providing students with experience in a wide range of research and scholarly activities. We must make every effort to maintain these synergies.

Discovery in both the research setting and the teaching environment defines the very idea of a research university. Members of the academic community of the University at Albany must therefore be prepared to be judged by our success in creating such an integrated learning environment.
While acknowledging the inevitable tensions that sometimes arise, we reject the suggestion that research and teaching represent inherently alternative or competing endeavors. Instead, we view research and teaching as interrelated dimensions of a broad enterprise of scholarship, creative performance, and learning. Similarly, just as research and teaching exert a significant impact on the quality of learning, so too they animate our mission of service.

We must confront the difficult decisions required for the preservation and continued improvement of distinguished graduate programs that play a major role in defining the distinctiveness of our University. This does not diminish the need for a coherent and distinctive undergraduate experience. How these programs are integrated in the future will play a major role in defining the distinctiveness of our University. Clearly, if research and teaching are to be truly integrated, we must place greater emphasis on programmatic and resource allocation decisions that enhance this distinctive strength of the University.

**Strategic Value 3: Societal Responsibility**

Societal responsibility is the obligation of the university to respond to the expectations placed upon it by its external community, including inclusiveness of access, the quality and types of programs, and the application of our teaching and research to the needs of society.

**Societal Responsibility and the Life of the Mind**

Our societal responsibilities will be fulfilled within the context of five discrete, yet interdependent, qualities described in our Mission Statement: "A commitment to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, and to that reinforcement of character, through co-curricular experiences, which enables [our students] to develop emotionally, physically and socially even as they mature intellectually; a commitment to the ideas of social justice; a commitment to freedom of thought, inquiry and expression, and to the rights and obligations of the faculty and students to pursue knowledge wherever it may lead; and, a commitment to profit intellectually and imaginatively from differences of opinion and of culture."

Within the context of these five qualities, it is asserted that the life of the mind should be a universal opportunity. Our societal responsibility includes the prevention of artificial barriers of access to that opportunity because of handicapping condition, economic, social or cultural factors such as gender, race, religion and sexual orientation. The university must always be inclusive, existing as a community of diverse individuals committed to benefiting from that diversity. At the same time, there must exist a set of core values to which all are expected to adhere.

**Responding to Both Our Internal and External Constituencies**

A university committed to societal responsibility is one that is internally
coherent and externally linked to its societal partners, including government, not-for-profit organizations, and the private sector. Inclusiveness of participation is encouraged as part of our mission as a public research university.

A University’s societal responsibility is defined by both its internal and external stakeholders. Internally, we must vigorously strive to fulfill our commitment to providing an educational environment characterized by inclusiveness and quality. The University at Albany is committed to establishing and maintaining an internal community — students, faculty, administrators and staff — responsive to the needs, talents and interests of all members of a diverse society.

We must also continue to accept the responsibility of structuring our activities to respond to the requirements of our external community — including citizens, government, business and alumni. We must respond to their need of and expectation for relevant and convenient educational programs that provide opportunities for lifelong learning. And, we should support and promote programs of research and scholarship which can address a variety of societal needs.

The Inevitability of Change

Change in our internal and external communities is inevitable. The economic status and demographics of our students, the need for a quality learning environment which addresses the needs of both traditional and non-traditional (e.g., adult) learners, and the curricular and pedagogic innovations needed to prepare students for an inter-connected, global society, are all indicative of changes required in our internal community.

Further, the changing and increasing needs of our external constituencies make ever more urgent the application of our teaching and research capabilities to the needs of society. Opportunities abound: the need for economic revitalization of our region; the fiscal constraints of state and federal governments; the need to improve health, education and other social services in the State; the increasing need for expertise in national and international issues.

The challenge to the University is to respond to these internal and external changes and needs in a strategic manner which will permit choices to be made among potentially competing opportunities. The inevitability of change — and yet the uncertainty of its nature - makes effective planning essential for the University at Albany. Our societal responsibilities require adoption of a strategic plan which provides broad latitude for entrepreneurship and rapid adaptation to emerging challenges and new opportunities.

Responding to the Challenges: Structures and Incentives

The structures and incentives of the University need to support and recognize the critical role of the faculty in meeting, through their teaching and
scholarship, the needs of society. To fail to do so is to abandon our traditions, sacrifice our distinctiveness, and place ourselves at risk in terms of economic and societal support.

There are many potential constraints to our progress in this area. We must meet the need for sufficient resources to encourage experimentation and change. We must overcome a tendency to focus solely on individual interests at the expense of broader university concerns. And we must deal with the fact that our population of students, faculty and employees must become more diverse.

Further, we must expand our relationships with our many external communities and strengthen our ability to communicate effectively our strengths, accomplishments and areas of possible collaboration. We must, as a faculty, work harder to look beyond our campus borders. We must recognize that our external constituencies do not necessarily understand the possible relevance (and importance) of our research activities in contrast to our teaching mission. And, we must identify ways to overcome the structural insularity of our campus facilities.

The foregoing list of constraints is only a portion of those that exist. While each represents an opportunity for institutional growth, we must also recognize and acknowledge the inevitability of conflict as we seek to enhance the role of our institution in fulfilling our responsibility to society. Indeed, what some colleagues may see as a constraint to increasing our institution’s responsiveness to societal needs (and, by so doing, increase the financial support of their research and teaching through new partnerships), others may see as protection from too deep an engagement with our society. A workable consensus for change, rather than unanimity, will have to guide our strategic planning in this area.

**Strategic Value 4: Innovation Through Technology**

Innovation through technology reflects the commitment to creatively harness new technologies in the development of innovative curricular programs and pedagogy, and to prepare students to be contributing citizens in a world that is being transformed by technology.

**The Technology Challenge**

To seize the opportunities and master the challenges of the Information Age, the University at Albany must embrace innovation and harness new technological tools which are inexorably transforming the nature of higher education and the way we learn. If we are to remain nationally competitive as a research university, we must assure the institutional flexibility which will be required for the campus to keep pace with rapid change. Indeed, our Mission Statement states our commitment to encouraging the development of "...curricula characterized by innovation."

**The Importance of Innovation**
Increased access to communication and information technologies must be regarded as a major institutional priority. We will need to be innovative if we are to identify the advantages and opportunities these technologies present to us at every step — for recruiting and retaining students, for enriching interactions between faculty and students, for reaching out beyond physical campus boundaries; for creating and disseminating new and inherited knowledge; and for fostering the regional, national, and global exchange of ideas.

We must also look to technology to improve our administrative systems, reduce bureaucratic processes, put more information directly into the hands of users, and generate information in a form that is more timely and more accurate, as well as more easily understood and analyzed.

Advances in information technology are shrinking the world and making the learning environment less bound by place and time. Satellite hookups, the Internet, interactive web sites and fax machines are transforming the distribution of information and images. By harnessing these new technologies, innovative and more effective curricular programs and pedagogy will be possible. We need to recognize that these technologies are capable of transforming the learning environment, and we must be creative in utilizing them to extend our reach as an institution of learning.

Each year brings to campus a new group of freshmen who are technologically better prepared than the last. During their time at the University, we must assure that they master these information tools so that they can be fully-contributing members of an inter-connected global society. To fulfill this responsibility to our students, University faculty and staff must themselves be technologically proficient so they are more able to enhance the campus learning environment.

The Value of Technology to a Research University

Such new (and constantly evolving) information technologies are vitally important to knowledge creation and, hence, the University's status as a major research university. The research accomplishments of Albany's faculty have propelled the University to high rankings among the nation's public research universities. As an institution, we must make the financial choices necessary to assure the continued competitiveness of our faculty.

We must provide the technological infrastructure necessary for the research programs of our faculty. Further, highly trained support staff are critical resources in providing appropriate institutional support.

Challenges

Clearly, an up-to-date technology program in a research university environment is costly and resource-intensive. Communications hardware, state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, and the institutionalization of programs to
ensure continuing faculty, student and staff development all require significant up-front investment and constant infusions of capital, even in a funding environment that remains, at best, steady-state.

While external funding for research will absorb some costs, the campus will have to make up the difference by encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship which provides a setting where governmental agencies and business partners will be encouraged to share the investment with us. Reallocation of resources will also be required if we are to provide the technology infrastructure essential to realizing the University's values of engaged learning and discovery.

To make the investment worthwhile, there must be a corresponding "attitude of support" within the University community. The potential for technology to bring about real improvement in the learning process has already been admirably demonstrated in many quarters of the campus. For many of our faculty, students and staff, the use of communication technology has already become second nature.

The challenge before the University is to provide the remaining members of the academic community with access to technology and, along with that access, the support required to develop their own capabilities and demonstrate the tremendous potential of new technologies to an enhanced learning environment.

**Strategic Value 5: Distinctiveness**

**Investing strategically in distinctive and distinguished programs**

**Investing in Strength**

At a time of declining State resources, responsibly planning for the future requires us to refine and promote a plan of strategic investment. As we make key decisions about investing our resources strategically, we must focus our efforts not only on programs that are distinctive - uniquely reflecting our values - but also distinguished, marked by eminence, excellence and extraordinary achievement. At the same time, we must identify and support academic programs of evolving excellence.

Our fiscal strength derives from a number of sources: State funding, student tuition, federal and corporate sponsors, and private donors. We must do all we can to maximize these revenues by sharply defining and communicating our areas of distinctive competitiveness. But we must accomplish this while staying true to our commitment to be a comprehensive university, with vibrant programs that embody our own values across the disciplines.

Successfully positioning ourselves among public research universities will increase our access to funding and allow us to strengthen external support. To stabilize, indeed to improve, our fiscal position, we must increase our support of the University at Albany programs that set us apart from other public (and
private) research universities, areas that provide a competitive advantage for our institution. We also need to identify emerging academic strengths, research areas and opportunities for outreach to our various communities that also reflect our academic values and represent additional opportunities for Distinctiveness. Indeed, our planning must be characterized by such investment in programs of both current and emerging strength.

Investment in strength will clearly require the reallocation of resources on campus. This reallocation, guided by strategic planning, must be undertaken in the context of our values of engaged learning, discovery, societal responsibility, and innovation through technology. We must judge programs according to these values and invest accordingly.

This University is already distinctive for many of its research and graduate programs, as well as many at the undergraduate level, which provide students with a flexible combination of rigorous and innovative academic programs. In addition, a number of our undergraduate programs and graduate programs can be described as distinguished when evaluated by nationally recognized measures.

We must ourselves apply similar objective criteria and recognized professional measures in assessing the strengths of individual programs and in reaching decisions regarding resource allocation. In each and every case, such decisions must reflect exceptional academic strength recognized at the regional, national and international levels. At the same time, we must invest in programs which have the potential for such national stature.

We must continue to address a concern within the University community about Albany's collective will and ability to cooperatively engage in strategic planning that invests in strength — and accept the outcome of decisions that follow.

We must also recognize and support the positive contributions that individual units, and school-wide and university-wide programs such as general education and research centers make to our goal of being known as a comprehensively distinctive and distinguished University.

**Achieving Strength and Meeting Societal Needs through Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

Academic programs that are central to this University's distinctiveness are not necessarily discipline-specific. Distinguished and distinctive programs occur at all levels of the University: at the level of schools and colleges; in departments; and in disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary institutes and centers. Indeed, resolving many of the most pressing issues facing society today often requires an interdisciplinary approach ... requires the collaboration of scholars with expertise in a wide range of disciplinary areas (e.g., issues in the environment, AIDS prevention, youth violence, health care delivery, K-12 education, etc.). In many instances of societal need, progress can only be made if research approaches are interdisciplinary in nature. The campus must support such
collaborative interdisciplinary initiatives. We must identify and overcome physical and administrative obstacles to such interdisciplinary activities.

We believe that a focus on distinctive and distinguished programs will promote the activities of interdisciplinary centers and institutes and foster a cooperative spirit of entrepreneurship. Equally important, this focus will provide an institutional framework that facilitates the academic initiatives of faculty whose teaching and public service interests, pedagogical practices, and research cross or transcend boundaries of more traditional disciplinary departments.

Submitted by the University’s Strategic Planning Committee, Provost Judy Genshaft, Chair, September 25, 1998.
Accepted by President Karen R. Hitchcock at the General Faculty Meeting, October 13, 1998.

Strategic Plan
University at Albany
State University of New York
Introduction

In the context of the University's Mission Statement and the Strategic Values enunciated by the University's Strategic Planning Committee, a set of Strategic Goals has been proposed by the Committee.

The University at Albany, throughout its long and vigorous history, has prided itself on providing not only a quality education but also meaningful research and service to its various communities, based on strong academic and intellectual foundations. We have prided ourselves on our ability to anticipate and respond to the need for change.

This is one of those times. The University at Albany must once again create a bold and, yet, realistic vision to enable it to meet the needs of a profoundly changing society. Dramatic advances in available information and technological delivery of that information; new opportunities created by an ever more diverse and global society; and increasing financial constraints at this and all our nation's universities, are just some of the major challenges to which the University must respond in creative ways.

In developing the Strategic Goals which follow, the Strategic Planning Committee engaged in many hours of discussion about the current state of the University, its areas of greatest strength and opportunity, its challenges and its values. The Committee recognized the need for the University to uniquely identify and distinguish itself among the top public research institutions of the State and the nation. The Committee also reaffirmed its firm belief that choices will need to be made...that the allocation of resources must support the achievement of academic excellence. The concept of allocation (or re-allocation) "across-the-board" is not sufficient to our purpose of ensuring the stature of the University at Albany as one of this nation's premiere research universities.

During the Committee's deliberations, two recurring themes emerged which were felt to be so basic to our future as a major research university that they needed to be reflected in each of the Strategic Goals. First, the Committee felt that we must commit ourselves to fostering the international dimensions of our University. This applies to every facet of campus life including curricula, (e.g., study abroad opportunities, foreign language competency, etc.), research and scholarly collaborations, as well as faculty exchanges, student recruitment, and
alumni relations.

Second, we must assure that our campus acquires and fully supports the utilization of state-of-the-art technological resources, including the technical and administrative staff, equipment and facilities that support research and scholarship, facilitate innovation in the learning environment, and enhance administrative processes.

These two themes, or principles — the fostering of a truly international university, and the strategic utilization of new technologies — explicitly inform the strategic initiatives developed for each of the University’s goals. These two principles, coupled with our commitment to achieve distinctive academic programs of excellence through the strategic investment of resources, are the assumptions which underlie the Goals for the University at Albany.

Finally, as with all Strategic Plans, the strategic goals and initiatives developed have been informed by prior and ongoing planning processes and special planning initiatives (e.g., Mission Statement, campus-wide discussions which preceded Senate legislation for the current General Education program, ongoing discussions of the Task Force on the Quality of Undergraduate Academic Life and Student Retention, the Pew Roundtable, the goals and objectives of the recently-completed facilities Master Planning process, etc.). And, the Goals will be fully realized only when each of the University’s schools, colleges, and divisions has developed its own strategic plan which reflects and helps to advance these University-wide Strategic Goals, and when the University’s budget planning reflects the academic priorities enunciated by the campus Strategic Plan. These goals will serve as a guide for the University as it reaffirms its core values, charts new directions and strives to fulfill its mission with creativity and a commitment to academic excellence and institutional distinctiveness.

*Strategic Goals Stated*

**Strategic Goal 1**

The University will provide a distinctive, student-centered undergraduate learning experience which will be highly competitive as the result of its intellectual coherence, rigor and engagement of students with faculty in the process of inquiry and discovery.

**Strategic Goal 2**

The University will provide distinguished graduate and professional programs which reflect the distinctive strengths of its faculty, and which are competitive regionally, nationally and internationally for students of exceptional academic ability.
Strategic Goal 3

The University will further advance its national and international reputation as a major public research university, a university which competes successfully for the most qualified faculty and students, as well as external research support, and a university which is committed "... to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, for its own sake and for its practical benefits to society." (University at Albany Mission Statement.)

Strategic Goal 4

The University will continue its historic commitment to the core value of societal responsibility by assuring inclusiveness and ease of access to its educational programs, and by actively supporting the application of its teaching and research to the needs of society.

Strategic Goal 5

The University will establish and stabilize enrollment at a level comparable to this nation's mid-sized public research universities, with a student body reflective of the rich diversity required for a quality education, and with an academic profile comparable to the most selective of this nation's public research universities.

Strategic Goal 6

The University will expand and diversify its sources of revenue to assure its continued growth in the context of its mission and strategic goals.

Strategic Goals with Sample Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Goal 1

The University will provide a distinctive, student-centered undergraduate learning experience which will be highly competitive as the result of its intellectual coherence, rigor and engagement of students with faculty in the process of inquiry and discovery.

The University at Albany will be known as a research university which uses to the fullest all of its considerable assets to provide a personalized, student-centered educational experience for all its undergraduates. Undergraduate students will have the opportunity to participate in a learning environment characterized by interactions with faculty scholars who place a high value on teaching. Creating such a distinctive learning environment will also require a thorough examination of the content of our undergraduate curriculum and the quality of our pedagogy in the context of the new demands which will be placed upon our students when they leave our campus.
We must focus on strategies to revitalize the intellectual interactions between faculty and students — both within and outside the classroom — interactions that lie at the heart of the learning experience. We must create a curriculum and a learning environment which are more flexible, more individualized, and more focused on fostering discernment, as well as interpretive and analytical skills, more interdisciplinary and more collaborative — an environment where students and faculty share in a powerful learning experience.

Sample Strategic Initiatives

The Committee offers the following examples of strategies that can be implemented to help the University, working in concert with its colleges, schools, and divisions, achieve Goal #1:

Teaching/Learning
Subject the general education curriculum, as well as disciplinary and interdisciplinary majors, to regular faculty review.

Ensure the participation of a number of our best teachers, especially our full-time senior faculty who are actively engaged in research, in teaching general education courses. Meet the challenges of providing the class-size most appropriate to engaged and active learning at all levels of the curriculum.

Advising and Orientation
a Improve and expand academic advising and orientation programs for all entering students, both traditional and non-traditional, either during the freshman year, or at the time of transfer into the University, as well as for students throughout their undergraduate experience. Make available prompt and appropriate academic assistance to students experiencing academic difficulty.

Promote and enhance the study of foreign languages, and teaching through the medium of foreign languages, wherever appropriate in the curriculum.

Faculty Development
Encourage and reward faculty who practice engaged and active learning. Increase opportunities for faculty development; support and reward faculty who devise improved and innovative teaching methods and courses, develop additional incentives for quality undergraduate teaching, and evaluate the quality of teaching as a significant factor in personnel decisions. Encourage the use of new technologies to improve teaching and learning.

Research
Expand undergraduate research opportunities. Ensure that opportunities for student involvement outside the classroom, including internships, research and service activities, support and enrich the academic experience.

International
Promote and enhance international and study abroad programs that expose students to other cultures and traditions.

Strategic Goal 2

The University will provide distinguished graduate and professional programs which reflect the distinctive strengths of its faculty, and which are competitive regionally, nationally and internationally for students of
exceptional academic ability.

The University at Albany must make the strategic investments necessary to assure that all of the graduate and professional programs it offers are academically distinguished and are attractive to a diverse pool of the most qualified applicants...regionally, nationally and internationally. Accomplished teacher-scholars must be present in sufficient numbers to assure a learning experience which will position our students for distinguished and productive professional careers.

Academic programs, both within and across disciplines, must be distinctive as well as consistently ranked among the best in the nation when compared to peer institutions. Faculty quality and access to resources (e.g., library, new technologies, laboratories, etc.) must be exceptional when evaluated by nationally recognized measures.

The University at Albany, while remaining committed to its role as a comprehensive research university, must focus its allocation of resources for graduate and professional programs in areas of distinctive academic strength and, hence, competitive advantage for our institution. Likewise, we must identify and invest in programs which have developed specific strategies to attain such academic excellence. Such investment in programs of current and emerging strength will assure the intellectual rigor and national competitiveness which must characterize all of the University’s graduate and professional programs and will, therefore, position the University at Albany for election to membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU).

Sample Strategic Initiatives

The Committee offers the following examples of strategies that can be implemented to help the University, working in concert with its colleges, schools, and divisions, achieve Goal #2:

**Recruitment**
Establish the recruitment processes necessary to attract a diverse student body of excellence from the region, the nation and the world.

**Resource Development**
Increase student support from external, non-state sources (e.g., federal grants and training programs, foundations, corporations, industry, etc.).

Increase the University's endowment devoted to financial aid.

Provide stipends at nationally competitive levels.

Invest in the facilities and equipment necessary for the kind of quality academic experience which will position our students for competitive professional careers.

**Teaching/Learning**
Subject graduate and professional programs to rigorous, periodic peer review, and discontinue programs which cannot meet the institution's standards of excellence.

Achieve and maintain the number of highly qualified faculty in each graduate and professional degree program required for the delivery of the highest quality academic programs, and at a level in keeping with national norms for peer institutions.

Develop new professional and certificate programs in areas of institutional strength which will help meet the needs of a changing society.
Equipment, Facilities, & Technology
Develop and maintain access
to the advanced technologies
and information resources
necessary for a quality learning
experience.

Strategic Goal 3

The University will further advance its national and international reputation as a major public research university, a university which competes successfully for the most qualified faculty and students, as well as external research support, and a university which is committed "...to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, for its own sake and for its practical benefits to society." (University at Albany Mission Statement.)

The University at Albany must continue to invest strategically in the programs of research, scholarship and creative expression which are at the heart of our academic enterprise. Quality research, both within and across disciplinary boundaries, informs the undergraduate experience, defines the learning environment for our graduate and professional students, advances the disciplines, and enables the University to be responsive to societal needs.

The University has the potential to advance significantly its national reputation as a research university. Indeed, the campus has evolved over the past three decades into one of the country's major public research universities, a status confirmed recently in a study that ranked the University at Albany among the nation's top 20 public research universities based on faculty quality (The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Post-War Era, Graham and Diamond, 1997, Johns Hopkins Press). In order to continue to advance the quality of our programs of research and scholarship, the University must focus its allocation of resources on distinctive research programs of current and emerging strength. Faculty must be supported in their attempts to secure external support for their research and graduate students. Access to information resources and electronic communications must be provided, and the physical infrastructure of the campus must support the scholarly endeavors of the entire university community.

Such initiatives are critical if the University is to attract and retain the excellent faculty required to solidify and advance its reputation for the highest quality programs of research and scholarship. Such continued investment is essential if we are to achieve the faculty size required for our programs to be nationally competitive, let alone achieve designation as a Research I University (Carnegie Classification). Indeed, such strategic investment of resources in faculty recruitment and infrastructure development will position the University at Albany to attract the additional non-state revenues (i.e., federal, corporate/foundation, business and private-giving) so essential to our long-term growth as a research university.

Sample Strategic Initiatives
The Committee offers the following examples of strategies that can be implemented to help the University, working in concert with its colleges, schools, and divisions, achieve Goal #3:

**Research**
Ensure that as a core value, quality research and scholarship is a criterion in all institutional decisions regarding distribution of resources, personnel, capital planning, and investment in technology.

Recognize and reward those faculty who engage in high-quality, nationally competitive research, scholarship and creative expression.

Support interdisciplinary initiatives, including those that address issues of societal need.

Support the development of research centers and institutes (within and across disciplinary boundaries and within and across schools and colleges) which will foster research collaboration and the establishment of innovative partnerships with other universities and the private sector; ensure the periodic review of such organized research units.

Recruit a diverse faculty who are nationally regarded for the quality of their research and are also excellent teachers.

Develop faculty recruitment plans that will maintain areas of strength.

**Services**
Review and, as appropriate, improve administrative support of the research mission (e.g., regulatory functions, processing of external awards, purchasing, personnel, etc.).

**Resource Development**
Provide incentives and support faculty in their identification of both federal and non-federal sources of funding for their research and scholarly activities.

**Equipment, Facilities, & Technology**
Make significant capital investments to provide for improved research facilities and assure the currency of the campus' technological infrastructure and information resources.

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**Strategic Goal 4**

The University will continue its historic commitment to the core value of societal responsibility by assuring inclusiveness and ease of access to its educational programs, and by actively supporting the application of its teaching and research to the needs of society.

As a major public research university, the University at Albany has the obligation to address the changing needs of the region, state, nation — indeed, the whole of our now global society. Such societal responsibility has been a core value of the University at Albany from its beginnings, and has been manifest in its commitment to inclusiveness of access, as well as the application of our programs of research and education to the needs of society.

Indeed, the University must ensure that artificial barriers to access do not exist and that our institution will be inclusive, existing as a community of diverse individuals...
committed to benefiting from that diversity. In addition, the structures and incentives of the University at Albany must recognize and support the critical role of faculty in meeting, through their teaching and scholarship, the needs of society. To fail to do so is to abandon our traditions, sacrifice our distinctiveness, and place ourselves at risk in terms of societal support. Administrative support must be provided to facilitate research and training partnerships with government, not-for-profit and private organizations and agencies which address important societal issues.

Opportunities for such partnerships abound, partnerships which can enhance the quality of life of our region through enriched programs in the arts, culture and sports, can contribute to the economic revitalization of our region and state through the application of our programs of fundamental research, and can enhance the professional opportunities of the citizens of New York through the provision of relevant and conveniently-scheduled educational programs.

In keeping with our Mission Statement, the vast resources of our university can, in partnership with our external constituencies, be brought to bear on such critical issues as public policy, the environment, health, K-12 education, and social services. Such involvement with our external communities can, in turn, enrich our programs of research and scholarship and provide a valuable dimension to our students’ educational experience. Further, the University’s ongoing commitment to inclusiveness of access and its responsiveness to the needs, talents and interests of all members of our society assure that our programs of research and instruction are informed by the contributions of a diverse academic community united in its belief that all can, in the words of our Mission Statement, “... profit intellectually and imaginatively from differences of opinion and of culture.”

Sample Strategic Initiatives

The Committee offers the following examples of strategies that can be implemented to help the University, working in concert with its colleges, schools, and divisions, achieve Goal #4:

**Access**
Adopt changes in programs and the physical plant which make the campus more open, accessible and welcoming to members of our external communities.

Provide more on- and off-site learning opportunities to enhance the careers and quality of life regionally, nationally and internationally.

Assure that the institution’s commitment to inclusiveness of access and involvement is reflected in its programs and in the

**Societal Responsibility**
Expand our relationships and dialogue with our external communities.

Strengthen our ability and develop new ways to effectively communicate our strengths and commitment to collaborate with the community.

Provide administrative support to the schools and colleges in developing research and instructional partnerships with government, not-for-profit and private organizations and agencies which address important societal needs.

Support the development of
demographics of its faculty, staff and students.

**Resource Development**
Provide incentives for the development of non-traditional funding for research and instruction which address societal issues.

**Strategic Goal 5**

The University will establish and stabilize enrollment at a level comparable to this nation's mid-sized public research universities, with a student body reflective of the rich diversity required for a quality education, and with an academic profile comparable to the most selective of this nation's public research universities.

The breadth and depth of opportunities afforded to all students at the University at Albany will be enhanced by increasing the overall size of a diverse student population, balanced by a continuing focus on sustaining and improving selectivity in admissions. A balance of (a) undergraduate and graduate and professional students, (b) full-time, part-time and continuing education students, and (c) in-state, out-of-state and international students will be achieved reflective of institutional and societal needs. A larger and more academically competitive student body, drawn from a much broader geographical base (i.e., out-of-state and international), will help create opportunities for our students to contribute in meaningful ways to a technologically interconnected global society.

**Sample Strategic Initiatives**

The Committee offers the following examples of strategies that can be implemented to help the University, working in concert with its colleges, schools, and divisions, achieve Goal #5:

**Teaching/Learning**
Develop distinctive and distinguished academic programs that will attract the most academically competitive applicants.

**Access**
Ensure that admissions, curricular, academic calendar, credit structures and delivery modes provide access to academic programs for traditional as well as non-traditional learners.

Develop on and off campus education programs (e.g., non-degree, master's) which

Continue to promote diversity within the student body.

**Recruitment**
Establish new admissions and recruiting programs that target a broader market of academically competitive applicants in order to increase the size of the student body.

Recognize and expand the critical role of faculty-student interactions in recruitment and retention.
reflect University strengths and address societal needs for life-long learning.

Ensure that admissions criteria reflect the institution’s goal of selectivity and access.

**Diversity**
Diversify the mix of students recruited to the University to include more international and out-of-state students.

**Resource Development**
Review financial aid policies to enhance recruitment and retention.

**Service**
Review advisory and career advisement activities to better serve and retain our students.

### Strategic Goal 6

**The University will expand and diversify its sources of revenue to assure its continued growth in the context of its mission and strategic goals.**

The University at Albany, like public universities across the nation, is faced with the need to be more aggressive in identifying and obtaining the funds necessary to support its academic programs. Fiscal constraints of state and federal governments demand that we diversify our source of revenues by developing new partnerships and increasing in a major way the private fund-raising so critical to the continued excellence of our institution. Indeed, it is the quality of the institution’s programs of research and instruction which will allow the University to obtain funds from a variety of public and private sector sponsors.

Such solidification and diversification of the institution’s financial base, coupled with strategies to maximize the campus’ allocation of state resources and tuition revenues, are essential to assuring the recruitment and retention of quality faculty and staff, and continuing to attract the most able undergraduate, graduate and professional students. The University must develop the funding necessary to provide our faculty with competitive salaries and the equipment and facilities essential to quality programs of research and teaching. The recruitment of excellent students will require just such quality academic programs, as well as competitive financial aid packages.

Indeed, the overall resources of the University at Albany must be increased in a substantial way if we are to support the strategic initiatives required to attain our institutional goals. New resources for scholarships, endowed chairs and professorships, new buildings and programs can be obtained through a carefully conceived and robust development effort by the University across all its schools and colleges.

### Sample Strategic Initiatives:

The Committee offers the following examples of strategies that can be implemented to help the University, working in concert with its colleges, schools, and divisions, achieve Goal #6:
Academic Program Development
Develop on-and off-campus continuing education programs (e.g., non-degree, master’s, etc.) which reflect university strengths, address societal needs for lifelong learning, and generate revenues in support of our academic programs.

Support strategic enrollment initiatives (recruitment and retention) to maximize both the quality of our student body, as well as the institution’s level of support derived from tuition and state tax dollar appropriations.

Partnership
Support the development of partnerships with government, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector which will expand the opportunities for high quality programs of research and instruction and will, at the same time, create new sources of revenue for the institution.

Increase participation of national and international alumni in the life of the University.

Increase the awareness of our various stakeholders of the contributions made by the University to the quality of life and economic vitality of our region, state and the nation.

Private Giving
Make the investment in personnel necessary to position the institution for its next Capital Campaign.
Increase the University’s endowment to ensure a stable funding source for scholarships, faculty and the institution’s academic programs.

Infrastructure
Provide the administrative infrastructure necessary to assist the faculty in gaining increased funding from corporations, foundations and private donors to support their research and scholarship.

Develop the administrative systems necessary for more flexible fiscal management.

Submitted by the University’s Strategic Planning Committee, Provost Judy Genshaft, Chair, September 25, 1998.
Accepted by President Karen R. Hitchcock at the General Faculty Meeting, October 13, 1998.