



Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO)

# President's Annual Assessment 2010

Dr. Don Betz



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY



# NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE *of the* PRESIDENT

Documentation for assessment of Don Betz, President of Northeastern State University, by the Regents of the Regional University system of Oklahoma, April 16, 2010  
Presidents' Annual Assessment and Three-Five Year Goals and Objectives

Dear RUSO Regents,

Thank you for this opportunity to review and evaluate with you the first twenty-two months of my tenure as president of Northeastern State University. The time has evaporated as we listened to, and interacted with, faculty, staff community and alumni alike, re-creating a working mosaic of NSU today, and not the university I left in 1994 after 23 years of deep connection. I accepted your offer to return as President just as the global economy dove into its severest recession since the Great Depression and which has not been resolved even as we meet. It has been a time of challenge and opportunity.

Over the past two years, I believe that the Northeastern State University community has embarked on a path to define its future. Throughout 2009, we celebrated the Centennial, embraced our storied past, and then immediately turned to Charting Our Second Century. We are examining our strengths and opportunities in the most transparent way that we know. We re-framed the university's focused mission as well as its vision and connected across the institution in identifying and embracing the five core values that will guide us to fulfilling the focused mission and vision. This was a highly collaborative, multi-stage process.

In striding into NSU's next 100 years, we are motivated by the vision and accomplishments of those who proclaimed education to be a regional value as early as 1846. We are the inheritors of their persistence, acumen, and sense of service to the community. Despite the mounting challenges of constrained resources, changing demographics, and the impact of technology on the breadth of our lives, but especially on how we communicate and learn, NSU in 2010 is awakening again to its opportunities and obligations and is committed to live the promise that quality, accessible, and affordable education has meant to this country and this region for generations.

Dr. Don Betz,  
President



# NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY PROFILE

## THE UNIVERSITY

Northeastern State University is a comprehensive regional university that prepares students to succeed as global citizens by providing exceptional undergraduate and graduate programs, along with the only Doctorate of Optometry offered in Oklahoma (one of only 20 nationwide).

## HISTORY

Northeastern was founded in 1846 as the Cherokee National Female Seminary, which opened in 1851. On March 6, 1909, the Oklahoma Legislature purchased the Seminary from the Cherokee Nation, and the following September classes began at the newly formed Northeastern State Normal School. The NSU Centennial celebration officially began on Founders Day, March 6, 2009.

## CAMPUS LOCATIONS

NSU serves a blend of residential, rural and urban communities that form a learning triangle in northeastern Oklahoma: Tahlequah, Muskogee, and Broken Arrow.

## GOVERNANCE

The fourth largest public four-year institution of higher learning in Oklahoma, NSU is one of six regional institutions governed by the Regional University System of Oklahoma.

## SUPPORT

In FY 2010, state appropriations comprise 52% of the University's budget, while student tuition and fees make up 42%. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds provide 4%, and 2% comes from other sources. NSU's base budget this year is \$71.67 million.

## UNIVERSITY ECONOMIC IMPACT

Northeastern State University employs 1,034 people with an annual payroll of \$40.4 million. In 2008, Disposable Personal Income in Oklahoma increased by \$178 million as a result of NSU, and the University's contribution to total consumption across the state is \$250 million. By 2018, NSU is projected to have a DPI impact statewide in excess of \$725 million and contribute an estimated \$794 million to total consumption. NSU created 5,057 jobs across the state for 2008, a number expected to reach 9,677 during the next decade.

## OUR STUDENTS

In the 2009-2010 academic year, NSU serves 9,318 students on three campuses, an enrollment increase of 5.5% over last year. Freshmen enrollment increased 11.5%, and the number of graduate students enrolled climbed 12.6%. Credit hour production this year is 106,788, an increase of 4.6%. Almost 29% of NSU students are self-identified American Indian; annually, the institution graduates the highest number of American Indians among public four-year institutions nationwide. With more adult learners returning to college, the average age of an undergraduate student is 25.9; among graduate students, 33.5. In addition, NSU graduates more teachers annually than any other Oklahoma institution.



# NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY AT A **GLANCE**

## **AVERAGE ACT SCORE FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN**

2008-2009: 20.5

## **FIRST YEAR RETENTION RATE**

2008-2009: 64 percent

## **DEGREES AWARDED 2008-2009**

1,809

## **ACADEMIC EMPHASIS**

These include education, business, technology, social sciences, math, sciences, optometry, language, and the arts.

## **TOP MAJORS**

In 2008-2009, the top five majors included Elementary Education, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Business Administration, and Early Childhood Education.

## **2009-2010 COSTS**

The calculated cost for a freshman Oklahoma student, carrying 15 hours in the fall and spring semesters, living in traditional housing in a semi-private room with the most popular meal plan, is \$9,389.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

Scholarships, federal grants, work study, and loans are available to students. Among 78% of full-time freshmen who applied for financial aid, 85% demonstrated need, and 95% of those received aid. The average financial aid package is \$7,570. In addition, NSU employs 550 students as institution workers.

## **STUDENT DEBT LOAD**

On a national average, 61.7% of students attending four-year public institutions borrow money for college, graduating with average cumulative debt of \$17,277 per student. By comparison, 64% of spring 2008 NSU graduates carried average cumulative debt of \$18,573. At least 71% of NSU students borrow money to attend college.



**NORTHEASTERN**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

**GATHER HERE. GO FAR.**

## Describe your strategic plan for the next three years, which includes your goals and objectives:

In January 2009, Northeastern launched an extensive review of its 2006 strategic plan in an intensive, inclusive review process with the expectation that this exercise would set new courses of direction for the university. While the previous strategic plan provided a comprehensive description of the functions of a university, it did not fully define a future vision for NSU and its campuses' and their diverse service areas.

### **This comprehensive, institution-wide review resulted in:**

- » Clarified, simplified and enhanced the Mission, Vision and Values of the university.
- » Extended the strategic planning process to academic and administrative units, and established colleges and departments as central to strategic planning and implementation.
- » Established annual, integrated Strategic Plan progress-reviews and updates for the university, the colleges and departments within the university.
- » Developed an ongoing collaborative strategic planning process that encourages open, two-way communication with students, faculty and staff.
- » Initiated the Academic Priority Process currently in-progress, which is crucial to the efficient and effective growth of the university.
- » Developed seven Strategic Goals that will drive the future direction of the university and our strategic actions at all levels of the university. These goals are built directly from the enhanced Mission, Vision and Values.
- » Identified university strategic priorities to provide strategic focus in 2010-2012.

### **Our Strategic Goals that guide planning at all operational levels at Northeastern State University are:**

1. Develop a culture of learning and discovery throughout the university.
2. Build a sustainable campus and sustainable communities - encompassing environmental, economic, education, health and green initiatives.
3. Build and reinforce an environment that values full inclusion, collaboration and shared leadership.
4. Encourage and nourish a commitment to civic engagement by our students, our faculty and our staff.
5. Develop an environment which encourages global knowledge and cultural sensitivity.
6. Improve quality of life by serving as a cultural and entertainment destination on our campuses and throughout the region we serve.
7. Develop and manage the resources of the university to support a vibrant and viable community.

*Seven Strategic Goals will guide planning at all operational levels at NSU over the course of the next five years.*

Over the next year, our strategic priorities focus on learning and discovery, on building sustainable communities, and on creating the necessary infrastructure.

**Four strategic priorities are essential to creating a culture of learning and discovery:**

- » Invest in new programs, staff and services to sustain and grow the university; evaluate all Academic Programs and University Support Services for possible reallocation to support growth.
- » Reorganize teaching, learning, and assessment effort on campus.
- » Recruit and retain a diverse, highly qualified faculty and staff, becoming a recognized employer of choice in compensation and resources.
- » Become a recognized (international) center for Native American and indigenous culture and language.

**Two strategic priorities will begin building sustainable communities:**

- » Centralize Campus Outreach Efforts in Making Place Matter. Form and implement the Eastern Oklahoma Futures Institute by the 2010 Regional Summit.
- » Develop a broad-based campus sustainability initiative, integrating student, faculty and staff leadership.

**The final two strategic priorities address infrastructure, critical to driving all strategic goals:**

- » Upgrade technology resources to meet 21st century standards.
- » Develop a comprehensive plan to upgrade student life facilities and surrounding grounds on the Tahlequah campus, and provide services to encourage growth for NSU and its campuses' and their diverse service areas.

Included in the **APPENDICES** to this report are three documents that fully describe the outputs of the strategic planning process:

1. Mission, Vision and Values
2. Full articulation of Strategic Goals (currently in the advanced "draft" form)
3. 2006 Strategic Plan



**Objectives to be accomplished over the NEXT FIVE YEARS are more fully described in other sections of this report. They include:**

- » Emerge from the recession with relevant goals and objectives and in a position to create new opportunities.
- » Increased enrollment at all three campuses for a total of 12,000 unduplicated headcount by 2014. These initiatives include exploring recruitment opportunities in surrounding states, especially Northwest Arkansas.
- » Improve retention and graduation rates over the next five years.
- » Grow international student enrollment and global learning opportunities.
- » Enhance collaboration with regional educational institutions.
- » Be recognized as the regional facilitator for economic development in collaboration with OSRHE's Making Place Matter initiative.
- » Plan and successfully execute our Higher Learning Commission self-study and site team visit in October 2011 leading to re-accreditation for the following decade.
- » Focus development plans for the Muskogee and Broken Arrow campuses to meet local and regional development opportunities.

*Eight Objectives will be addressed through 2015, including campuses growth, and increased retention and graduation rates.*



## Give a brief description of your primary responsibilities:

As the president of the university, I serve in multiple, interwoven capacities. I am responsible for the vitality and well-being of Northeastern and its faculty, staff and students. We have been building the leadership team to guide the institution in fulfilling its responsibilities to all our students and to all constituencies and stakeholders. This is a fresh team, still evolving, composed of familiar faces who have served NSU their entire careers, as well as professionals new to NSU bringing the benefit of their talent and experience at other institutions. This leadership team will continue to evolve and change. The intention is for them to become effective members of a single organism, each with different functions and responsibilities, but all focused on the fulfillment of the mission and vision through the guidance of our institutional values. In this way, we are living the promise of our mission documents and our history.

Some analysts characterize university presidents and chancellors as CEOs, but I believe such an analogy offers incomplete insight into what presidents do. This is not a job; it is a life and a lifestyle which defines no boundaries between public and private life.

As much as the planning described here is fundamental to NSU serving the people, communities and state, I believe that the vision which inspires those plans and focuses our actions is central to any meaningful definition of success. I believe one of my roles is to offer an answer to the perennial question, "What are we doing here?," individually and as an active learning community. The right vision, properly articulated often and at the right time, is a potent instrument for aggregating the efforts of many and lends purpose and meaning to what can become the "daily routine" if it is not regularly re-framed and re-focused. I embrace the responsibility of connecting with a full spectrum of constituencies and stakeholders about what we do, why we do it, and why it matters to all of us, and why and how we can collaborate to realize our goals.

I am ready to offer a comprehensive list of the multiple roles I might assume during a week, from Tahlequah, Muskogee and Broken Arrow, to Tulsa and Oklahoma City, and often in the region, country and beyond. I spend a substantial portion of my days teaching and mentoring by word and example, attempting to model the way to build a collaborative cadre of leaders at all levels of the institution, and in the state in collaboration with my colleagues. There is more to discuss in this arena if there is interest to do so.



*I believe that the vision that inspires our plans and focuses our actions is central to any meaningful definition of success.*



In the most basic sense of the term, I am responsible, and we are building our team to execute those responsibilities as we pursue together our mission and our vision.

I represent the interests and aspirations of many constituencies in multiple forums almost every week. I work to build relationships with other entities, including educational institutions, government, non-profits and the business community. Our modus operandi is highly and visibly collaborative, within the university community as well as outside. For many here this is a change in culture. We understand that efficient and effective use of scarce resources demands that we connect with others to serve students and the citizens of this state.

*Sixteen initiatives are currently underway for the 2010 and 2011 academic years.*

Fundamentally, I strive to create the optimum environment for learning and discovery, engagement and service. It is essential that we can articulate the connection between what we do at NSU and how students learn and communities thrive.



## Main initiatives for the current year:

### **Reorganization of the teaching, learning, and assessment effort on campus.**

Northeastern is joining the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy, adding faculty learning outcomes coordinators in every college who are part of the campuses' assessment committee, reorganizing our approach to faculty and staff professional development through the reframing of our Center for Teaching and Learning, exploring the implementation of an online tutoring service for students, assessing learning outcomes for student affairs, exploring adoption of national accreditation for online courses and programs, and tying those activities together so that they complement and build upon each other in a non-duplicative effort. Investment in faculty growth and development is fundamental to NSU's, and any university's success.

### **Review of the tenure and promotion process.**

We have a faculty committee reviewing the tenure and promotion process and expect them to offer recommendations that will add more peer review, provide early and ongoing mentoring of new tenure-track faculty, add a three-year mid-probationary review, create a process for differentiating faculty roles based upon their strengths, and possibly create a new review area outside of the traditional areas of teaching, scholarship, and service.

### **Creation of a campus-wide team responsible for recruiting, retaining, and graduating students.**

This Enrollment Management Team is comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The team meets twice each month to review all disaggregated student enrollment data with point-in-time comparison to the previous year, review current campus policies and procedures, and make recommendations directly to the President's Cabinet on ways to improve our recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts. For the 2010-11 academic year, we have set an informal target of unduplicated enrollment of 10,000 students, which would be an increase of nearly 700 students from this fall's enrollment, or growth of 7.4 percent.

### **Moving baccalaureate degree completion programs to our Smart Choice community college partners.**

Criminal Justice, Health Care Administration, and Family and Consumer Science will be the first bachelor degree completion programs delivered on site at five Smart Choice partner colleges so that working adults in those communities can complete a bachelor's degree without coming to the NSU campus. Courses in those programs will be delivered in a blended, accelerated format.



*Faculty tenure and promotion procedures are under review.*

**Full implementation of NSU's branding campaign that describes both our unique personality and promise that will be shared with all external audiences: prospective traditional students and their parents; non-traditional students; graduate students; alumni; and decision-makers.**

Branded under the marketing slogan, "Gather Here. Go Far.", the campaign is the product of many conversations and assessments of the contemporary milieu, of surveys and interviews with nearly 3,000 NSU stakeholders. Implementation of the creative expressions continues throughout the university in the continued development of our website, advertising, recruitment collateral materials, publications, fundraising, and campuses' banners and way finding. The branding campaign is credited with building top-of-mind awareness that assisted the campus in realizing a 5.5 percent increase in fall student enrollment and a 6.3 percent spring student enrollment growth. More information is available in the **APPENDICES.**

**During the coming year we will begin to brand the Broken Arrow and Muskogee campuses as adult-friendly sites for pursuit of bachelor's and master's degrees.**

This reflects the extraordinary presence of non-traditional students over the age of 25: some 52 percent at Broken Arrow and 80 percent at Muskogee. Programs delivered at those sites will be blended using both classroom and distance learning pedagogy, and will be accelerated. We are in the process of co-locating our Muskogee campus with Connors State College and will expand our seamless articulation of programs. At Broken Arrow we are expanding our relationship with Tulsa Community College to include more TCC courses on the Broken Arrow campus and entry level courses from NSU taught at the TCC campuses to engage TCC students with NSU early in their academic career. We also plan to increase the number of day classes at the Broken Arrow campus due to the increase in traditional age students from TCC.

This follows on our unprecedented agreement last June with TCC in which 48 of TCC's associate degree programs will seamlessly transfer to our majors. We plan to implement major health care initiative programs at the Muskogee and Broken Arrow campuses and have allocated new faculty lines to staff those programs. Additionally, we are actively pursuing with our Congressional delegation directed funding allocations to speed up the expansion of these programs to meet the critical shortage of health care professionals, engineers and scientists in Oklahoma. We already have Health Care Administration planned for delivery as a degree completion program in the fall of 2010 at both the Broken Arrow campus and the Muskogee campus. We anticipate that Family and Consumer Science also will be delivered beginning in the fall of 2010. Both programs complement the existing degree completion programs already delivered to Broken Arrow and Muskogee.



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**Upgrade software systems supporting student management, finance, and human resource functions.**

Currently the administrative functions of the University are operating on various software systems. Payroll and human resources functionality has been converted to the new Oracle E-Business suite, while student enrollment and other student functions, as well as finance and budget systems, are still maintained on an older system from Sungard Bi-Tech. Oracle has purchased the PeopleSoft ERP system and is planning to end support for the student system portions of E-Business. The current situation is causing numerous problems for the university. The new system (purchased over six years ago) has been extremely difficult to configure properly to work for a higher education institution from its business construct. Staff at the university at all levels are not able to be as effective at their jobs due to the time and effort needed to maintain outdated, diverse and non-integrated systems. With the subsequent purchase of PeopleSoft, the current system (Oracle E-Business) is no longer an adequate long-term solution for the university.

*NSU will develop a long-range capital improvements plan this year for the renovation and construction of facilities.*

**Develop a long-range capital plan for the university.**

NSU must develop a capital plan for renovation and construction of facilities at all three campuses. The capital plan is needed to ensure facilities are available to meet the long-range academic goals of the university. Funds for capital expansion usually come from State bond issues, revenue bonds, or fundraising efforts. The long-range capital plan also will assist our efforts in securing these funds by showing how the capital expansion affects academic instructional offerings.

**Pursue international articulation agreements in the coming year with various international institutions and institutional consortia in strategic locations worldwide.**

This expansion is in the formative stage with connections being made that could result in the creation of 2+2 and/or 3+1 agreements that would bring international students to NSU. Reciprocal student exchange agreements would afford NSU students the opportunity to attend these institutions as well.

**Implement a Healthy Campus Initiative.**

The purpose of the NSU Healthy Campus Initiative is to contribute to the learning environment by empowering individuals to reach their full potential and take responsibility for themselves and others. The steering committee has developed five goals for the year. Goal 1: Engage the campus community in connecting to the Healthy Campus Initiative. Goal 2: Develop a 5-year strategic plan. Goal 3: Implement a campus-wide assessment plan. Goal 4: Become a tobacco free campus. Goal 5: Enhance the physical environment to promote healthy living activity. The Healthy Campus Initiative is a collaborative effort by the following departments: Health and Kinesiology, Criminal Justice, Student Affairs, Fitness Center, Athletics, Center for Tribal Studies, Student Health Center, Student Counseling Services, Human Resources, University Police Department, University Housing, Physical Plant, Administration and Finance, and the Northeastern Student Government Association.



### **Increase Civic Engagement and Leadership Development.**

This addresses two of our strategic goals of “creating a culture of civic engagement” and “leadership.” We will focus on streamlining our efforts to foster a civically-minded institution. We recently were awarded President Obama’s Service Excellence Award for the work of our students, faculty and staff. We were one of the first institutions to respond to the devastating earthquakes in Haiti. Fundraising relief efforts by the student body are still underway and students are working toward service trips to Haiti in the next year. We are developing an infrastructure to support academic service learning experiences and co-curricular programs. We also have committed to focusing our campus efforts in the American Democracy Project and Campus Compact to ensure students are engaged in a culture of public service. Leadership development opportunities will be offered to students, faculty, and staff through a variety of methods. We also piloted “Strengths Quest,” a nationally recognized leadership program, into our freshmen orientation course this spring and plan on full implementation in fall 2010.

*Civic engagement, service-learning, and student support services are targeted for expansion to ensure that students are immersed in a culture of public service.*

### **Increase student support services to meet student needs.**

Student counseling services, academic advising, and career services are at a bare minimum staffing for an institution of our size. We recognize that students need guidance and support to meet the challenges they face during their academic pursuit. We are examining and realigning our services to better serve students. We are also seeking external federal grant funding to address the budget shortfalls which cause barriers to our ability to provide appropriate student support services.

### **Continue to enhance campus safety and security.**

Student and campus safety and security are a top priority at our institution. We have enhanced significantly our campus safety efforts within the last three years. Based on the work of our Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT), we achieved National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance certification beginning in 2008, a full two years prior to our requirement. Further, significant monies and energy have been invested in University Police, CERT and NSU emergency equipment, notification and training systems. Finally, as of April 1, 2010, NSU has a new director of public safety who is in charge of NSUPD, CERT, Safety and Risk Management. This position solidifies and strengthens our already competent and certified emergency response network for all-hazards disasters and incidents. We will continue to focus on increasing staff training, increasing emergency notification methods, and bringing awareness to students about participating in addressing their own safety.



## How have you directly contributed to the success of others, including the faculty?

At NSU, we measure success now by the progress we make as an institution, as well as that achieved by individuals and groups. We actively and publicly laud the success of our students, faculty and staff as well as our alumni. As one example, this past year we inaugurated the “Model the Way” awards to recognize those who make a demonstrative difference in the lives of others through leadership by example. This is a peer-nominated process and already has encouraged lively interest. We actively encourage faculty and staff to avidly pursue their personal and professional growth and development. In the last two years, we initiated a staff leadership training program and will move to a university-wide leadership forum in the coming months. Despite the resource challenges, NSU assists faculty in pursuing their goals via travel support, unique training opportunities, including mid-career cross-discipline education. In this way, we facilitate faculty in connecting effectively with peers in other disciplines to create relevant learning experiences in this era of unprecedented access to knowledge and of accelerated rate of change. We have committed to intentionally build the next generations of educational and civic leaders for the institution and the region. Leadership is a key to development and success for Oklahoma and the eastern counties that we immediately serve. By the fall of 2010, NSU will inaugurate a center for emerging leadership with a special emphasis on women.

We are also striving to purposely flatten the hierarchy. We invite all to actively participate and develop a sense of ownership in the mission, plans and their execution. We want to broaden and deepen the sense of being part of the NSU team. This inclusion extends to faculty, staff, students, alumni and the communities we serve.



*At NSU, we measure success now by the progress we make as an institution, as well as that achieved by individuals and groups.*

## Implementing the strategic plan:

We will complete the initial identification of university priorities as part of the university planning process, which will be ongoing under the guidance of the University Planning Group. Those priorities will be resourced through reallocation and through a budgeting process tied to enrollment growth and external funds garnered through our development, research, and proposal writing efforts.

Central to our approach to strategic planning is to establish clear direction of our strategic goals, and encourage colleges and departments to build detailed and specific plans that support and drive the goals. A comprehensive review process ensures that all colleges and departments develop and implement plans directed toward achieving university goals. This process is complemented by university priorities, which provide focus on a limited number of initiatives that have far reaching implications for the institution and must occur so as to move forward in achieving our Strategic Goals. Dedicated human and fiscal resources from multiple areas will be invested in addressing and achieving university priorities.

I have also empanelled an Enrollment Management Team from across our campuses to address the student recruitment procedures and enrollment cycle, and also to address institutional practices so as to improve our retention and graduation rates.

Starting in 2009, colleges and departments now report annually on progress to their plans. This is a new expectation.

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## Describe examples of your modeling collaboration in leadership:

We have expanded the Smart Choice partnership with two-year colleges throughout eastern Oklahoma and implemented a co-location effort with Connors State College and our Muskogee campus. We are in the process of enhancing our existing relationship with Tulsa Community College through a comprehensive MOU that includes a dual admissions strategy. We are exploring joint programming with OSU-Tulsa and UCO to share resources in the delivery of graduate programs. NSU is beginning the process of collaboratively organizing a regional economic development effort for our 24-county region.



Personally, I consult with Cabinet and other senior leaders regularly, both formally and informally. We are creating a fluid environment of consultation and connection not rooted in a hierarchical model. We know our formal roles and responsibilities, but we have found that we are enhanced in our individual work by the open sharing and connection among us. It is an approach that has proven effective for me at four different institutions over the past four decades.

*We have expanded the Smart Choice partnership with two-year colleges throughout eastern Oklahoma.*

Our campus-wide activities in developing our strategic plan, “Charting our Second Century,” is a comprehensive example of internal collaboration. Engaged in the discussion is a cross-campus University Planning Group that represents all sectors of the administration, colleges, faculty staff and students. These 40 individuals have identified 7 strategic goals (described above in No. 1) to carry NSU through the next five years. During the past year the leaders of the UPG have provided regular updates in all-campus meetings, established a web site, and held three listening sessions on our campuses to fully discuss the goals.

All faculty and staff, academic department chairs, divisions leaders, deans, and senior executives are currently describing objectives and tactics for each of the goals simultaneous to a UPG-led exercise in which all academic departments are assessing their contributions to the campuses’, region and state’s identified needs. Processes and procedures have been fully reviewed and endorsed by the Faculty Council. All faculty and staff have had multiple opportunities to provide input into establishing the objectives and tactics of the goals, and in prioritizing those.

Through this filtering process, and based upon full inclusion of faculty and staff in the prioritization process, the executive leadership in the Cabinet will establish each year’s priorities.

Transparency in institutional decision-making and information sharing is a hallmark of successful collaboration. We have actively taken steps in two distinct communication areas to foster collaboration through knowledge. We share information broadly through our newly redesigned website. Additionally, NSU provides updates to all faculty, staff and students through “RiverHawks Daily,” a daily electronic official newsletter. Further, each week our executive leadership decision-making activities are shared through e-mail delivery to all faculty and staff through our Cabinet Notes.



## How do you think others would describe your leadership style?

Open, collaborative, communicative, data-informed, and high-energy with high expectations of all of us. We are here, in part, to take care of each other. This orientation is beginning to be embraced in ways that are healthy for all who learn and serve here. We are focused on the major issues of the mission and vision even as we tackle the daily demands which over time define the institution's culture. For us, we are, and plan to be, intentional about learning and discovery, about service and engagement, and about building vibrant communities and our state via educated, committed citizens. By word and action, I strive daily to communicate these values and perspective.



*For us, we are, and plan to be, intentional about learning and discovery, about service and engagement, and about building vibrant communities and our state via educated, committed citizens.*

## Discuss plans and progress in the following areas:

### ENROLLMENT

Our efforts have been substantial and substantive. They include: expansion of off-campus delivery of existing majors; approval from HLC for creation and delivery of online programs; efforts undertaken to increase retention, build our brand, and focus our efforts on the adult population. As noted above, NSU enjoyed strong growth during each semester of the current academic year, reversing a three-year downturn in enrollments. We have set a long-term growth target of 12,000 unduplicated headcount by the 2014-15 academic year. This will require substantial attention to our recruitment, enrollment, administrative support, and retention activities to accomplish this aggressive target. Our branding activities have enabled us to come to agreement on a “personality” for NSU that offers unique experiences to prospective students, and we are addressing inefficiencies in our administrative and academic support areas to ensure that we are fulfilling the “promise” that students receive a timely, quality education.

*We have set a long-term growth target of 12,000 unduplicated headcount by the 2014-15 academic year. This will require substantial attention to our recruitment, enrollment, administrative support, and retention activities to accomplish this aggressive target.*

With regard to recent enrollment trends, both headcount and student credit hours have increased each comparative semester for the past two years. In general, these data have increased at each campus as well as for most of the colleges. Please see the following tables for unduplicated headcounts by each campus and college as well as the student credit hours by campus. All counts were as of the official census date for each semester.

#### Unduplicated Head Count By Campus

CAMPUS	SUMMER 2008	FALL 2008	SPRING 2009	SUMMER 2009	FALL 2009	SPRING 2010
TAHLEQUAH	2,274	6,462	6,100	2,469	6,914	6,342
MUSKOGEE	177	324	290	140	350	353
BROKEN ARROW	880	2,047	1,875	968	2,053	2,090
OTHERS	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,331</b>	<b>8,833</b>	<b>8,265</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>9,318</b>	<b>8,785</b>

#### Student Credit Hours By Campus

CAMPUS	SUMMER 2008	FALL 2008	SPRING 2009	SUMMER 2009	FALL 2009	SPRING 2010
TAHLEQUAH	12,116	76,264	71,120	13,294	80,284	73,555
MUSKOGEE	873	2,334	2,405	764	2,835	2,790
BROKEN ARROW	5,522	23,494	21,385	6,405	23,657	24,017
OTHERS	0	3	0	0	12	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,511</b>	<b>102,095</b>	<b>94,910</b>	<b>20,462</b>	<b>106,788</b>	<b>100,362</b>

## Unduplicated Head Count By College

COLLEGE	SUMMER 2008	FALL 2008	SPRING 2009	SUMMER 2009	FALL 2009	SPRING 2010
BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY	678	1,528	1,482	728	1,545	1,603
EDUCATION	999	2,113	2,118	1,063	2,255	2,278
LIBERAL ARTS	709	1,440	1,389	655	1,406	1,375
OPTOMETRY	53	107	106	52	108	109
SCIENCE & HEALTH PROFESSIONS	392	914	986	436	1,048	1,100
UNDECLARED*	500	2,713	2,184	643	2,956	2,320
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,331</b>	<b>8,833</b>	<b>8,265</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>9,318</b>	<b>8,785</b>

\* The Underclared category includes students in the General Studies program

## RETENTION/GRADUATION GOALS

We plan to increase freshmen to sophomore retention by 5 percent next year and improve our graduation rate by 5 percent the following year through addressing our Drop-Withdraw-Failure rate. This situation is the product of several variables, including high school preparation, socio-economic conditions, and first-generation students among others. This will be accomplished by increasing our "touch points" with students from recruitment through enrollment, and through implementation of recommendations that will come from our Enrollment Management Team, including creation of an enrollment management plan for the university. Changes are being driven by fact-based information, including a review conducted by Noel-Levitz associates, as well as comparative student data gathered in our NSSE survey.

Since my arrival, the cohort information for six-year graduation rates are not yet available. The most recent six-year graduation rate came from the 2003 first-time, full-time freshman cohort of 1,199 students; the rate was 29.4 percent. Obviously with the Enrollment Management Team, as well as other processes we have instituted, we expect these numbers to be significantly higher with the entering cohorts from our most recent years. Degrees awarded for academic year 2008-2009 included 1,536 bachelor's degrees, 265 master's, and 26 first professional degrees in Optometry. This represents a steady increase over prior years. With regard to retention rates, the Fall 2008 first-time, full-time freshman cohort one-year retention rate was 63.9 percent for 959 students. This, too, will be addressed and enhanced through our various aforementioned efforts as well as pursuit of a federal Title III Student Success Center grant proposal we are currently preparing.

*We plan to increase freshmen to sophomore retention by 5 percent next year and improve our graduation rate by 5 percent the following year.*

## NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES

During the coming year we will implement a Masters of Science in Nursing to address Oklahoma's critical shortage of nursing educators and nurses. We will add additional programs in the health sciences; and we will expand our off-campus outreach into Northeastern Oklahoma for both credit and non-credit programming.

## FUNDRAISING

Despite prevailing global, national and local economic realities, Northeastern enjoyed a banner year in 2009 with record donations to the NSU Foundation (\$1.975 million); a record number of donors (2,219) and record faculty and staff giving (\$104,768). All of these indicators will improve. Additionally, the Foundation and university realized their first-ever \$1 million gift, which will be dedicated toward reading laboratory capital improvements and toward endowed chairs. During 2011, as part of our "Charting Our Second Century" comprehensive campaign, we will continue to cultivate additional large gifts. Additionally, we are actively pursuing eight-figure private foundation gifts to assist in our top capital construction project, our Health & Wellness Center. While we are encouraged by the past two years of giving, it is clear that this is a realm of learning, endeavor and concentration for us for years to come. We have been re-organizing the people and plans since July 2008 and will continue to do so. We may face challenges here, as well as other key university areas, due to resignations and the resulting challenges of filling responsible positions with limited resources. We are not regionally nor nationally competitive in our faculty or staff hiring packages. We have lost qualified applicants, who exhibited the right talent and interest, due to the non-competitive nature of our offers.



*Despite prevailing global, national and local economic realities, Northeastern enjoyed a banner year in 2009 with record donations to the NSU Foundation.*

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Within a few months of returning to NSU, I initiated a search for an international programs director to revitalize this dimension of the university's programming. Recently, we have identified a Fulbright faculty coordinator on campus who is assisting faculty and students to secure international opportunities through that program. We are working to cultivate relationships with universities internationally to develop program articulations. We also are working with international recruiters to identify students who would be interested in coming to NSU to enroll those students, which provides international cultural exposure for students and develops an enhanced tuition revenue stream. This academic year we have students attending NSU for the first time from Nepal, India, Egypt, Nigeria, Bulgaria, Morocco, Uzbekistan, Ecuador and Vietnam. Currently enrolled are 256 international students representing 54 nations.

NSU has long enjoyed exchange relationships for faculty or students. Our agreement with Southwest University of Science and Technology (SWUST) in

China has sent three faculty, including one currently, to teach, and we hosted a SWUST faculty member. Twenty students from SWUST are anticipated for studies in August. This fall, NSU will send its third student scholarship winner to Swansea University in Wales via an initiative funded by the Governor Brad Henry Scholar Program. In the last year we have initiated reciprocal exchange agreements with the Bangkok School of Management in Thailand, the International Human Resources and Training Center in Vietnam, the ETOS Corporation in South Korea, the Edwise Foundation of Nepal, WSharar Consulting of China and Taiwan, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages in Taiwan, StudyWiz in Thailand, NCN in Japan - renewal agreement), and more recently, a summer research and joint MBA programs with several universities in India.



### **IMPACT OF FURTHER BUDGET CUTS AND RE-ALLOCATIONS**

At NSU, we pride ourselves on being creative, enterprising and realistic. We fully appreciate the budget difficulties confronting Oklahoma. Attributed in significant part to the volatility of the state's oil and gas industry cluster, we are aggressively partnering with state and regional economic development organizations, including the Greater Tulsa Metropolitan Chamber, as well as the Broken Arrow, Tahlequah and Muskogee chambers, to identify those industry clusters that are ripe for expansion and which offer high paying, high tech employment. State funding constraints are problematic. With reductions in state funding, we will be forced to retrench some campus activities to support our strategic planning initiatives that focus on inputs, outputs and outcomes: recruitment, graduation, and regional economic growth.

Depending on the depth of the reductions, we will be limited in our expansion of degree programs and delivery of those programs to the Broken Arrow campus because of the need to hire more faculty and support staff lines, which we can't do to the extent needed with current recurring resources. Additionally, budget cuts impede the university's ability to raise faculty and staff compensation, thus further reducing those salaries to applicable market rates. This will make it difficult to attract faculty or staff to fill vacant positions or add positions necessary based upon student growth. Although we are pursuing extramural funding through Congress, through federal grants, and through fundraising and gifts, these are "soft money" resources and for the most part cannot be relied upon to sustain our ongoing operations or assist us in long-term expansion. It will be necessary to make extensive use of university reserves in order to preserve core services until budgets are restored by the State. If the budget reductions continue longer than expected, or are deeper than projected, our institutional reserves may be further depleted. Our situation is not the most dire and distressed in the state, but protracted shortfalls will erode important progress that has been hard won.

*At NSU we pride ourselves on being creative, enterprising and realistic.....but state budget cuts are problematic.*

We believe with strategic use of our resources over the next four to five years we will be able to budget through the recession without significant budget cuts.

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We are pursuing the consolidation of all university outreach areas through the creation of the “Eastern Oklahoma Futures Institute.” The Institute is a direct outcome of last fall’s Regional Summit, which brought 350 regional leaders together to find a common voice and appreciation for the Tahlequah-Muskogee’s 7-county region. This was the first time that these eastern Oklahoma counties had gathered together in such numbers to discuss and begin to plan for their future as a region. Coordinated with the Cherokee Nation, the SACC-EZ empowerment zone and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the Summit demonstrated the need for a “front porch” that would ease access to our institutional outreach resources by external business, industry, government, non-profits and K-12. The Futures Institute will act as an umbrella coordinating agency to assist in faculty consulting, student internships, service-learning projects, credit and non-credit outreach courses, and public policy analysis and implementation to local government jurisdictions and school districts.

*We are pursuing the consolidation of all university outreach areas through the creation of the “Eastern Oklahoma Futures Institute,” which will be a milestone in the history of NSU.*

We anticipate that the Futures Institute will be a milestone in the history of NSU, and through its anticipated extensive outreach mission it could serve as a national model for other regional universities. These regional efforts correlate well with the OSRHE’s initiative “Making Place Matter” (MPM) initiative which actively encourages higher education institutions to be economic and cultural engines for change in their areas of concentration. With our three campuses serving varied constituencies, NSU is uniquely positioned to assist the Regents in realizing the promise of the MPM initiative.

Our second Annual Regional Summit will continue to explore common ground for regional growth in economic, sociologic and environmental sustainability during a two-day conference on October 26-27, 2010. We are particularly gratified that Northeastern and its partners were recognized with an “Innovator of the Year Award” by the Oklahoma Journal-Record for the 2009 Regional Summit.

In tandem to the Futures Institute, NSU anticipates establishing a University Business Center, and is seeking federal assistance and designation through the Economic Development Administration. This regional economic development service will provide a broad array of services: economic development viability data-based research through our Oklahoma Center for Rural Development, which carries a state-wide mission of rural assistance; a full suite of individual business consulting services leading to launch; market survey assistance to businesses and local governments; and, in collaboration with local agencies charged with economic development and with ODOC, the active recruitment of new businesses and industries to our 24-county service area.



## MAJOR CHALLENGES/NEEDS/WANTS FOR THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR

We must update our technology/data system on campus immediately to ensure ease of access to student databases, and on-line enrollment and class registration. In tandem with this is the need for an administrative package that includes human resources as well as institutional budgeting and accounts management. This is a major funding issue for us. Full roll out of these programs will take 18-24 months.

*We must update our technology/data system on campus immediately to ensure ease of access to student databases, and on-line enrollment and class registration.*

Because of an ever-increasing deferred maintenance backlog approaching \$90 million, we have pressing facilities issues and needs that are ongoing and that can hamper our ability to meet student needs and expectations. Additionally, inadequate facilities are a potential obstacle to successful national accreditation standards in some programs. Most recently, our music department accreditation site review team filed a negative report on our Fine Arts facilities citing that even at completion of the current renovations to the facility it still will be inadequate to meet required national standards.

Northeastern is addressing some of its most pressing facility needs by enterprising approaches to funding mixes. A brief overview of our top three construction priorities are:

### » **HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER**

The current design concept is a 100,000-square foot two-story brick and glass facility with programming components designated by “wet and dry” sectors of the building. The core of the building will be an extensive locker room/dressing room area dividing the complex into two distinct areas, one for aquatic programs and the other for cardiovascular and strength and conditioning training. The inclusion of the Student Health Center, juice bar and gathering space reflect the intended diversity of the facility. The second floor will house a track, offices and classrooms. This facility will be developed programmatically to address health and wellness issues germane to our region for all age groups, skill levels and needs. The estimated cost of this facility is \$20 million. The identified funding sources are student fees, foundation support, private donations and cooperate partnerships. Desired occupancy is 2012.

### » **MULTI-PURPOSE ARENA**

The current design concept is a 3,500 seat arena inside a pre-engineered structure with locker rooms, offices, concession areas, restrooms, and the Athletic Hall of Fame. The second floor will house meeting space and luxury boxes. The primary use for this facility will be for intercollegiate athletics and special events. The estimated cost of the facility is \$4.7 million. The identified funding sources are student fees, private donations and corporate partnerships. Desired occupancy is fall 2011.

## » FINE ARTS AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The renovation includes a complete update and repair of the envelope of the building including roof system, exterior masonry repair and replacement of selected exterior windows and doors. The heating and cooling system is being updated from a two-pipe system to a four-pipe system to accomplish significant improvement in system efficiency, energy savings and performance. The auditorium will receive a new ceiling, wall coverings and paint. This facility houses the Music Department faculty and staff. The primary features of the building are the auditorium, practice rooms classrooms and offices. The source of funding for this project is state revenue bonds. The cost of this renovation is \$4.3 million. Expected occupancy is January 2011.

## ADVOCACY FOR STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING

Northeastern remains committed to aggressively “telling our story” to state and federal legislators and agencies. At the state level we have been active participants in soliciting legislators and friends of NSU to participate in OSHRE legislative briefings in Claremore and Tulsa, and we visited with more than 60 legislators during Higher Education Day, including legislative leadership. NSU has consistently supported RUSO campuses developing a system-wide legislative agenda to address critical economic growth areas in Oklahoma, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics, health care, and K-12 education. With the current state of Oklahoma’s budget, these resource needs have been sidelined; but we fully believe that RUSO must pursue a system-wide economic development agenda as the economy begins to improve if we are to assist the state in stabilizing its revenue situation.

NSU is committed to a highly active pursuit of federal funding. This year we submitted two federal directed funding requests for \$2.5 million in partnership with our Congressional offices. These are targeted to the implementation of an American Indian School of Health Professionals, affecting more than 20 disciplines, and based at our Muskogee campus. The proposal includes “jump start” funding to initiate a Master’s in Nursing Education and a Master’s in Occupational Therapy. A directed funding request for Broken Arrow would add nine new majors in the sciences, technology, aerospace engineering, petroleum engineering, and health care. These will address shortages of skilled workers in industry clusters identified to us in numerous meetings with corporate leaders and economic development agencies, in the greater Tulsa metropolitan area. It’s well-known that Oklahoma is nearing crises both in the health care professions as well as the sciences and engineering due to Baby Boom generation retirements and professional shortages due to the anticipated growth of these clusters in the state. Our federal initiatives directly offer pragmatic solutions to mitigate these threats to our economy and well-being.



*NSU is committed to a highly active pursuit of federal funding, including directed funding requests and expanded grant proposals.*



NSU also is actively pursuing state and federal grants and contract funding. I instituted a significant supervisory revamping and position addition in Research and Sponsored Programs where we were seriously understaffed beginning in 2008. As a result, over the last three years, the number of proposals, successful “hit” rates and annual extramural funding have increased significantly. Specifically, the number of proposals and percent of awarded proposals has increased from an average of 33 and 38.55 percent in 2006-07 and 2007-08, to 29 and 48.3 percent in 2008-09, to an approximated 45 submissions and 50 percent hit rate in 2009-10 to date. Further, the dollar amount awarded from state and federal grants, continuations and contracts have increased from less than \$1 million in 2007-08, to over \$5 million in 2008-09, to an estimated \$6 million in 2009-10. These increases and the incentives that accompany proposals and successful grants and contracts activities are expected to continue.

*Over the last three years, the number of proposals, successful “hit” rates and annual extramural funding have increased significantly, from less than \$1 million in 2007-08, to over \$5 million in 2008-09, to an estimated \$6 million in 2009-10.*



## Greatest challenges and opportunities:

As described above our greatest challenges are identifying the resources to address significant deficiencies in our infrastructure, of staff support in several areas on all three campuses, as well as facilities maintenance and remodeling. Simultaneously, we benefit from several noteworthy opportunities. These include the development of the Broken Arrow campus. Specifically, that campus is uniquely positioned to address Oklahoma's economy. The majority of our students there are working adults, and we know from the Tulsa Metro Chamber that over 120,000 adults in the 7-county metro area have some college. Our program array, particularly in business, education and health care, directly address continuing needs both of the region as well as prospective students. Through enterprising combinations of blended courses, articulation agreements with TCC, and a region that places a premium on access to education, we are poised to do great things at Broken Arrow.

Through our unique heritage, we also are advantaged by powerful affinities with the Cherokee Nation. We continue to explore numerous opportunities for collaboration with CN to the benefit of the region. Further, by embracing our role as a regional facilitator, technocratic expert and change agent, we are seeing the development of a myriad of regional partnerships that will improve the economy and the quality of life throughout our 24-county service area.

Other substantive challenges include shrinking state funding that has declined over 20 percent in 10 years, visibility in Oklahoma City, the development of the eastern counties of Oklahoma, a lack of leadership talent depth, and a low expectations syndrome.

Our opportunity is to stimulate imagination, discovery, creativity and innovation at all levels to enhance lives and improve communities.

*Our greatest challenges are identifying the resources to address significant deficiencies in our infrastructure, of staff support in several areas on all three campuses, as well as facilities maintenance and remodeling.*



## Addressing Making Place Matter:

For NSU, “Making Place Matter” (MPM) means partnerships and collaborations across a wide range of groups and organizations from small, rural communities to the Tulsa metro area to deliver educational and related services to residents of those places. A product of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), “Making Place Matter” has been adopted as an educational imperative for the 25 institutions of OSHRE. NSU is emerging as a leader in Oklahoma and nationwide in embracing this re-framed conceptualization of our historic mission. No longer is it sufficient to simply focus on the output of the number of graduates we produce each year. Rather, we must also actively reach out to create sustainable communities that address economic, environmental and social well-being. Data for our region are rife with the protracted and daunting challenges faced by our residents. We wish to improve the quality of life of those residents, raise the intellectual capital of the region and attract investment in our region, grow personal wealth, and stimulate regional economic development.

As an early adopter of MPM, we have already implemented the Regional Summit, as described above. NSU was recently acknowledged by a senior OSRHE staff member as a lead MPM institution in Oklahoma. Our Eastern Oklahoma Futures Institute and Business Resource Center are “think and do tanks” that will bring our intellectual talents and resources to bear to make Eastern Oklahoma a better place to live and work. More information is available in the **APPENDICES**.

*We must actively reach out to create sustainable communities that address economic, environmental and social well-being.*



## Special resources needed:

We are especially in need of the political support for the creation and delivery of an applied doctoral degree coming from a regional comprehensive university. We would like to pursue approval for delivery of a doctoral degree in Community Based Leadership with tracks in Community and Tribal Leadership. Extensive focus groups conducted throughout the region show a high demand for this doctorate, which will assist the intellectual development of working professionals who are place-bound without the freedom to leave their jobs, homes and families for several years to pursue this educational opportunity in residency at distant locations.

*We are especially in need of the political support for the creation and delivery of an applied doctoral degree coming from a regional comprehensive university.*



## How can the Board assist you in achieving your goals?

In addition to No. 12, I would like to continue an active dialogue among us. I and we appreciate your willingness to attend a selected number of our activities and to engage the NSU university community on many occasions. Your individual and collective presence is truly appreciated. Like the other RUSO schools, NSU is a complex and multi-faceted organization with innumerable ways to express its personality and to pursue its mission. As president, I openly invite your counsel informed by an enhanced understanding of the circumstances within which we strive to fulfill our mission.

I also appreciate your continuing encouragement of my state, national and international work which broadens and deepens my knowledge, skills and abilities to assist NSU and Oklahoma and bring NSU into connection and conversation with a wide spectrum of organizations, entities and individuals.

Some of my recent opportunities have included participating as one of 100 university presidents invited to the Presidents' Summit on International Education hosted by the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings in 2005 and 2006; one of five keynote speakers at the International Conference on Higher Education in the 21st Century, hosted by the government of Bahrain and Ahlia University in June 2007; and one of 1,000 global invitees to the World Innovation Summit on Education convened by the Government of Qatar in November 2009.



I am currently the chair of the International Education Committee for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), our national organization which includes 430 state colleges and universities; I served as the co-chair for the AASCU Commission on Presidential Leadership and Global Competitiveness for AASCU as we produced the report, "Leadership for Challenging Times," published in September 2009. I serve as a member of the Advisory Council for the New York Times Knowledge Network. I also serve our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission, as a presidential consultant-evaluator on re-accreditation site teams for other institutions.

*Like the other RUSO schools, NSU is a complex and multi-faceted organization with innumerable ways to express its personality and to pursue its mission.*

In Oklahoma, I am active in the Tahlequah Chamber of Commerce where I will serve as president next year, chair of the Northeastern Oklahoma Public Facilities Authority; member of OSRHE's Council of Presidents, member of Leadership Oklahoma, Oklahoma Academy, Educators' Leadership Academy, board member of Creative Oklahoma, Inc., contributor on occasion of op-ed articles to state publications, guest on OETA public service programs on contemporary global affairs, and an annual presenter of the "Great Decisions" series of the Foreign Policy Association for the Eastern Oklahoma Library district every year since 1976.

I am a frequent speaker and panelist at other universities and colleges both inside and outside of Oklahoma, as well as for schools, civic clubs, businesses, non-profits leadership and education conferences and commencements.

## What professional development or what growth or development opportunities do you need?

Your support and encouragement of my state, national and global opportunities and involvement directly benefits NSU. I am grateful for your support and confidence. I am willing to offer you specifics about organizations and activities upon your request.

Your continued connections with possible donors and interested parties in assisting us with facilities and other infrastructure needs will be most beneficial.

*During the past year we adopted best practices through extended training through the Society for College and University Planners. This brings our strategic plan, academic priorities, budgeting cycle and facilities needs into harmony.*



## How we are comparing to peer institutions and aspirational institutions?

NSU faces a unique set of existing circumstances, particularly at the main campus in Tahlequah. The challenges in the far eastern counties of Oklahoma make our economic and leadership development efforts among the people and communities there even more relevant. It is a matter of daily life at NSU that we benchmark ourselves against our peers, not only among RUSO campuses but among AASCU institutions as well. During the past year we adopted best practices through extended training through the Society for College and University Planners. This brings our strategic plan, academic priorities, budgeting cycle and facilities needs into harmony. This best practice underscores all of our activities through our University Planning Group: a transparent, distributed decision-making process in which all campus members contribute to the discussion of strategic goals, objectives and tactics to realize a strategic plan that they helped to design.

*It is a matter of daily life at NSU that we benchmark ourselves against our peers, not only among RUSO campuses but among AASCU institutions as well.*

On an operational basis we track student data comparisons against other RUSO comprehensives when analyzing our performance in such areas as: Drop-Withdraw-Failure rates, retention and graduation rates, recruitment yield rates, NSSE data, and many other indicators that tell us how our students are doing compared to our peers. We are going to be benchmarking our enrollment management planning against Ohio University's plan, which was featured recently in the Chronicle of Higher Education as an enrollment plan that tied capacity and budgeting to enrollment management planning. As our planning process continues we will further identify other aspirational institutions to benchmark in targeted area and we may establish "dashboards," or multiple gauges, to assess our performance, as I have been able to do at other institutions.



## Reinventing NSU to meet the changing environment of public higher education:

We are moving in multiple directions simultaneously, despite ever-restrictive budget constraints. These include:

- >> Creating and delivering online degree programs.
- >> Pursuing approval of an applied doctoral degree program in Community, Education and Tribal Leadership.
- >> Expanding graduate program offerings. Hybridizing existing degree programs and accelerating their delivery for working adults.
- >> Decentralizing decision-making and holding people accountable for their actions. We are engaging and involving students in all levels of decision-making. In essence, we are adopting a shared governance philosophical approach in order to move us forward on a student-centered learning environment in which every action we take should be prefaced by asking the question: "How does this affect students?"
- >> Promoting democratic processes on campus and in everything we do in the region.
- >> Involving students more in planning curriculum and modifying existing curriculum.
- >> Engaging faculty much more in all aspects of campus life, inviting them to actively participate in creating and sustaining the vitality of the university in this time of unprecedented change and opportunity. This ensures that our campus environment is learning-centered with students as the primary focus, which maximizes recruitment, retention and graduation. We have strategically increased our assessment efforts to better understand our current campus environment so that we can capture the best methods to engage our students and maximize learning.

We plan to live the democratic principles we would like to see community members everywhere engage in as part of our decision-making processes.

*We are moving in multiple directions simultaneously to reinvent NSU, despite ever-restrictive budget constraints.*



## **Additional remarks:**

Thank you for this opportunity to engage in this dialogue with you.

I look forward to our conversation based on this presentation, to your analysis of this instrument for presidential review and to its continuing refinement. There are numerous ways to enhance the effectiveness of the Board-president relationship. I look to this assessment of m and NSU as an opportunity to actively consider how, working together, we best serve the current and future needs of our students, institution and communities.