In the spring 2015 Emporia State University concluded a successful reaccreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission. Concurrent with the preparation of a self-study report to document attainment of the ESU mission and related expectations for reaccreditation, in August 2013 the University community began the planning process for the next ten-year cycle. That planning culminated with *The Adaptive University: Strategic Plan, 2015-2025*.

The lens for “viewing” ten years in to the future is not absolutely clear. Consequently, the Plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Appropriate performance indicators used to chart progress will document that some goal objectives have been achieved. Some objectives will continue with targeted strategies to sustain progress toward their attainment. And as circumstances dictate, University leadership (administrative and shared governance) will adapt and new objectives and strategies will be identified to address desired goal outcomes.

**TITLE: THE ADAPTIVE UNIVERSITY**

Change is a defining characteristic of a dynamic society. Whether the change is of an economic, political or social nature, or with advancements in our academic disciplines or instructional technology, all affect directly or indirectly institutions of higher education. Individually and collectively, these changes present new challenges and opportunities.

To thrive in a dynamic and changing environment, Emporia State University will adapt to respond to circumstances and opportunities. Through the strategic planning process, the breadth of on- and off-campus constituents have identified *strengths* to be reinforced, e.g., a faculty and staff committed to genuine student engagement as active participants in the teaching-learning process, *challenges* to be minimized, and *opportunities* to be addressed.

Change and the challenges of contemporary society require responses that are not typically of a routine nature. Problems and challenges frequently have no clear-cut solutions for which an algorithm or strategy for addressing them exists, i.e., a *technical* (or “mechanical”) solution pathway. Rather, the solution or response strategies for compelling societal issues and needs are not obvious. In contrast to technical solutions to address problems, these circumstances require what have become known as *adaptive* solution responses, or adaptive work strategies, accompanied by new leadership dynamics, i.e., adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership is polyarchic (“by the many for the many”), in contrast to oligarchic decision-making based on the authority vested in a position. Leadership is characterized by participation and broad involvement; it is conceptually aligned with “collegiality.”

While the teacher education heritage of Emporia State University is affirmed, new program initiatives have been or will be identified to transcend the past singular mission heritage and program perceptions. The past accomplishments of graduates from programs in the range of Emporia State University colleges and schools have provided the foundation for that next step toward distinction. The resources to enable that will be identified and aligned accordingly. The elements of *The Adaptive University: Strategic Plan, 2015-2025*, including the slightly modified values statement, the new vision and mission statements, and the four goals that have been developed, chart a course with optimism for the University as it embarks on its next ten-year planning cycle, and its next 150 years of changing lives.
VALUES STATEMENT

The University has four core values: excellence, respect, responsibility and service.

With excellence, the University values intellectual challenges, problem solving, and creative and critical thinking.

With respect, the University values integrity, collaboration, diversity, freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, and freedom of expression.

With responsibility, the University values accountability and stewardship of the institution, the environment, human resources, and personal well-being.

With service, the University values engagement in leadership and community that positively impacts our global society.

Emporia State University leadership believes that fundamental values should not be transitory, but rather should endure. Consequently, the four core values that characterized the previous strategic plan—excellence, respect, responsibility and service—are affirmed and retained. One phrase—freedom of inquiry—was added as a context for the core value of respect in the new Plan. It is noted that leadership and community, two central features of the new Plan, were included in the previous Values Statement.

These four core values serve as the foundation for all campus operations at Emporia State University. They provide guidance for academic and support units to execute their range of responsibilities to all stakeholders. The role of community is a feature of Goal 1, and leadership is the focus of Goal 2 in the Plan.

VISION STATEMENT:
CHANGING LIVES FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

A vision reflects aspirations for the future. It is considered to be motivational and inspirational. Education, fundamentally, involves developing the human potential in a holistic manner, i.e., it changes lives. ESU as a teaching and learning community seeks to change the lives of its students through meaningful curricular and co-curricular experiences. In addition, the ESU combination of experiences seeks to engender sensitivity and concern in its graduates for the welfare and well-being of others. In that spirit a sense of campus community might pervade throughout the educational process, and lay the groundwork for civic engagement for the greater, common good.

MISSION: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, REWARDING CAREERS, AND ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP.

The mission statement as a statement of purpose indicates why the institution exists, what it seeks to accomplish with those it serves, and what ultimate result should be expected. This mission statement articulates three components: the foundations for a rewarding career, lifelong learning, and concern for the well-being of others as an engaged and participating community member.

ESU provides a supportive campus environment that encourages academic and co-curricular engagement. Students extoll the virtues of the teaching-learning environment characterized by opportunities for
significant interactions with faculty. The resulting positive outcomes are documented by comparative data from the National Survey of Student Engagement. These related outcomes are accomplished through high-engagement, high-impact student learning opportunities that prepare students—graduates—for their next steps.

The mission and vision statements complement each other to reflect both the “private good” and “public good”, the dual roles that higher education can serve. Combined, lifelong learning, often career-related to maintain professional currency and one's skill set and/or enrichment beyond one's career essentials, rewarding careers and adaptive leadership can bridge the private and public good, i.e., ultimately enable individuals to contribute to the common good.

**GOALS**

The four goals of the Plan are as follows:

**GOAL 1:** Pursue distinctive initiatives in curricula and programs that will foster vibrant communities.

**GOAL 2:** Enrich the student experience with opportunities for leadership development and practice.

**Goal 3:** Enhance the competitive role of Kansas by achieving the State's goals for public higher education.

**GOAL 4:** Create a culture of adaptive change as the foundation for innovation and growth.

Each goal is further refined by a number of goal objectives, the associated strategies of the responsible units and/or individuals to achieve the objectives and thereby the goals, and the performance indicators to chart progress toward goal attainment. Annual reviews will discern progress, lead to adaptive courses of action if necessary, and generate results to be communicated internally and externally.

See a complementing matrix, The Adaptive University, Strategic Plan 2015-2025 “Operationalizing the Goals.” It shows progress toward goal attainment with continuous updates by the responsible campus units.

**EPILOGUE**

Some aspects of the new strategic plan were utilized and implemented following the presentation of the Plan elements to the Kansas Board of Regents in June 2014, e.g., use of the new Vision in media spots, and implementation of the new Honors College and Campus Master Plan. Full implementation of *The Adaptive University: Strategic Plan, 2015-2025* officially commenced following the Higher Learning Commission accreditation review and site visit in the spring 2015. The fully developed Plan contains the key initiatives whereby Emporia State University will achieve the desired future.
THE PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process began in August, 2013. An executive director of strategic planning was identified, and a Strategic Planning Cabinet and Council were appointed and announced (see subsequent section, Strategic Planning Cabinet and Council Memberships). The Cabinet and Council met monthly during the process. Early in the process the executive director of strategic planning visited three Kansas Board of Regents campuses where their strategic planning efforts had recently been completed. On these visits processes, pitfalls, and best practices were discussed. Resulting feedback was shared with the ESU Strategic Planning Council and subsequently the campus community. Four Administrative Retreats occurred throughout the planning (August 2013, January 2014, August 2014 and January 2015) during which efforts were devoted to strategic planning. The ESU president, executive director and graduate assistant met weekly or biweekly to review activity and progress, discuss concerns and needs, and plan subsequent activity. These and all other meetings were documented with entries posted in the SkyBox of University Sky Services, which is accessible to all across campus.

Preliminary to campus-wide participation with the SWOT Analysis and environmental scans, 22 individual meetings were held by the executive director with vice presidents, deans, directors and shared governance leadership concerning participation of constituencies with the Analysis.

More than 1000 individuals, on- and off-campus, contributed to the SWOT exercise. The SWOT Analysis with summaries of key findings was completed and shared with the campus community via both electronic postings in Sky Services (SkyBox), and face-to-face dissemination through Council members at the end of the fall 2013 semester.

Campus and community forums were conducted early in the 2014 spring semester to provide feedback concerning the process and progress, particularly the SWOT results, and to solicit input concerning the vision, mission and goals (strategic themes).

Monthly meetings of the Cabinet and Council continued throughout the spring, 2014, and convergence toward the Plan elements (title, values statement, vision, mission and goals) occurred in late April, 2014. The Kansas Board of Regents was briefed on this progress, and endorsed the Plan elements at their June meeting.

The next step in the process was identification of specific objectives to make operational the goals, development of the strategies (the action plans of responsible academic or support units), and specification of the performance indicators to chart progress toward attainment of the objectives and thereby the goals. This activity (often thought of as the development of the “implementation plan” or “operationalizing the goals”) began in the summer of 2014, and substantive work by academic and support units to finalize this step occurred in the fall of 2014 and early spring of 2015. Participating unit faculty and staff reported through their deans, directors and ultimately vice presidents. Cabinet and Council meetings and SkyBox postings were utilized to share progress during this step in the process. The president, provost and vice presidents made the final decisions concerning the goal objectives, strategies and performance indicators.

Completed drafts of the The Adaptive University: Strategic Plan, 2015-2025 were available for review by site visitors of the Higher Learning Commission during their reaccreditation visit in March, 2015. The new Plan was available to be fully implemented as the spring 2015 semester and fiscal year drew to a close.
STRATEGIC PLANNING CABINET AND COUNCIL MEMBERSHIPS

President’s Strategic Planning Cabinet: Zeni Colorado (Joella Mehrhof), David Cordle, Kevin Coulson, Ray Hauke (Werner Golling), Kevin Kienholz, DenaSue Potestio, Andrew Smith, and Jim Williams. Ex-officio: DeWayne Backhus and Amanda Humphrey. [Italics indicate faculty representatives]

President’s Strategic Planning Council: Umair Abbasi, Gwen Alexander, Judy Anderson, Joan Brewer, Sharon Brown, Gonzalo Bruce, David Cordle, Racheal Countryman (Tyler Huddleston), Tyler Curtis, Brian Denton, Jennifer Denton, Laura Eddy, Michael Erickson (Cory Falldine), Kathy Ermler, Shelly Gehrke, Marissa Germann (Victoria Harmon), Rob Gibson, Ray Hauke (Werner Golling), Elaine Henrie, Lynn Hobson, Chris Hoover, Kevin Johnson, Jolanna Kord, Diana Kuhlmann, Gwen Larson, Carmen Leeds, Sheryl Lidzy, Jackie Lutz, Sarah McKernan, Marie Miller (Brent Thomas), Mary Mingenback, Kristie Ogilvie, Bobbi Pearson, Laurie Pitman, DenaSue Potestio, Wade Redeker, Marian Riedy, Mark Runge, John Sheridan, Manjula Shinge, Andrew Smith, Ken Weaver, Kent Weiser, Jim Williams, and Gary Wyatt

DeWayne Backhus, Executive Director, Strategic Planning; and Amanda Humphrey (Jeff Miller), Graduate Assistant, Strategic Planning