

Revised May 2, 2003

W 2006

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR

MISSISSIPPI

UNIVERSITY *for* WOMEN

FY2003 - FY2006

The Mississippi University for Women is a public institution of higher learning that offers degrees through the master's level. The university is dedicated to liberal arts and the professional education of all students with an emphasis on academic and leadership development for women. It has been designated by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning to serve the educational needs of the State of Mississippi while attracting students from the region, the nation, and the world.

The institution places a high priority on **teaching, research, and public service**. Valuing teaching and learning as the most important component of its mission, the university offers small classes that encourage active engagement of all students and a student life program that stimulates learning and leadership development outside the classroom. Mississippi University for Women also values scholarship and especially encourages research and creative activities that enhance education, support economic development, and improve the status and well being of women. The university also provides continuing education and cultural enrichment programs as a complement to its academic curriculum and as a service to the community and region.

Mississippi University for Women strives to meet the instruction component of its mission by offering a range of academic programs that attract a diverse student body from across the globe. As a **Carnegie Master's II institution**, the university offers a variety of baccalaureate programs and a number of master's programs. The programs all place a high priority on teaching and learning in a personalized environment. Graduates of these programs are expected to possess the skills in communication, technology, and critical thinking necessary for success; an awareness of gender-related issues, cultural diversity, and responsible citizenship; as well as a broad perspective for continuing intellectual growth.

PREFACE

Mississippi University for Women has made substantial progress in the period since the last strategic plan was adopted in February 1993. A 2002 report by the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) Council details the performance of the University under the W 2001 plan, 1993-2001. In the process of assessing the University's achievement of goals and implementation of strategies under W 2001, it became clear to current members of the PIE Council that a number of the goals and strategies had been written in such a way that without benchmarks, never developed, it was impossible to assess the degree of attainment. It was clear, as well, that the plan had been developed during a period of rising enrollment, increasing revenues, and soaring optimism about what MUW could accomplish. One result was some unrealistic strategies.

In the late 1990's MUW experienced an awakening to the realities of changing educational markets and the realities of a cyclical state economy. Fall headcount enrollment increased by about 25 percent, from 2,652 in 1992 to 3,314 in 1998, but then declined by 36.5%, placing headcount enrollment in fall 2002 substantially lower than at the time W 2001 was adopted. Because much of the headcount increase from 1992 to 1998 was in part-time students, many of whom were enrolled in only a single one-hour course, the swings in FTE enrollment were not as severe: an increase of 10.2 percent, from 2,008 in 1992 to 2,213 in 1997, followed by a decline of 20.6 percent to 1,955 in 2002. In response to enrollment concerns, MUW has engaged in an internal study of student retention, brought about a management change and professionalization of efforts in the Enrollment Management area of the administration, and contracted with an experienced consulting firm to conduct an extensive marketing study.

In spite of declining enrollments, institutional funds devoted to financial aid were increased substantially in recent years. A tuition discount rate persistently over 25 percent has diminished the funds available to the University to fulfill its needs.

Since FY 2000, state and local government appropriations in support of The W's educational programs have declined each year, even before adjusting for inflation, and further reductions appear likely. Mississippi's economy has historically been highly cyclical, and state revenues have been severely hit by the recession of recent years. From its FY 2000 peak of \$15.3 million, state support for MUW was reduced to \$14.0 million in FY 2001 and \$13.2 million in FY 2002, a net decrease of 13.5 percent. With general revenues of \$22.6 million in FY 2002, MUW received 58.4 percent of this total from state appropriations. Because of its dependence on state appropriations for over half of its general revenues, MUW is especially susceptible to financial difficulties caused by declining state financial support. Although less revenue is involved, MUW has also experienced declining support from local government. By agreement with local government, tax revenues that provided over \$428,000 to the University in FY 2000 were reduced to \$314,000 in FY 2002 and will be entirely eliminated in FY 2005.

In spite of these notable challenges, MUW has continued to offer valuable services to its constituencies and to win accolades for its achievements. The University continues to enroll freshmen with the third highest average ACT scores in Mississippi's system of eight public universities, surpassing all other baccalaureate and masters universities and two of the state's research universities. MUW is rated the best value among all Southern master's universities by *U.S. News and World Report*. With an academic reputation score of 3.2 in *U.S. News and World Report's* annual survey of presidents, provosts, and enrollment deans of peer institutions, MUW was tied with five other institutions for 19th place among the South's 130 master's universities in the 2003 edition of *America's Best Colleges*. In September 2002 *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* ranked MUW 69th among the nation's 100 best public colleges and universities.

Nevertheless, reductions in revenues from state and local governments, declining enrollment, and extensive tuition discounting have limited the University's capacity to provide competitive pay and benefits for faculty and staff or invest in new programs and services for current and potential students. In developing this plan for the 2002-2006 period, the PIE Council has been conscious of the likelihood that public funds for support of The W will likely remain highly limited for several years. It is based on a recognition of the need for the University to generate a larger proportion of its operating funds to achieve its true service potential. The heart of this W 2006 plan is to focus University efforts on building capacity, especially financial and human resources, to enable the institution to solidify and increase its performance level, even in difficult times. The plan further provides for some enhancement of programs and services as capacity is built and a strengthening of the institutional effectiveness program to assure continuous improvement through systematic assessment of performance and appropriate action to address findings.

The W is both blessed and burdened with historic and other aging buildings. The beautiful and distinctive campus is a draw for students and an asset to the Columbus community. But because all buildings are aging - including the newest ones, which are almost 30 years old - operation and maintenance costs are high. As opportunities are available for upgrades, renovation of older buildings is preferred to construction of new ones, often resulting in higher costs per square foot than new construction would require and compromises in design. The University has been fortunate that the Mississippi Legislature has provided The W with substantial funds from state bonds in recent years to improve campus facilities, especially to renovate buildings. Looking toward the future, it appears likely that there will be funds available to continue the process of steadily improving the campus's physical facilities. A new master plan encompassing all campus physical facilities is an important element of the W 2006 plan. In the past little private money raised by the University has gone into improvement of physical facilities. The PIE Council now projects that governmental funds will be supplemented with private donations for physical facilities in the future.

On November 10, 2002, a tornado ravaged The W campus, destroying the Pohl Physical Education -Assembly Building and the Fine Arts Building, seriously damaging several others, and strewn the campus with debris. The Federal Emergency Management

Agency and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency quickly sent representatives to the campus, and the Mississippi Legislature authorized \$10 million in bonds to pay the state's 25 percent match of federal funds for immediate needs and restoration of damaged facilities. Planning and implementation of storm damage recovery will place an additional burden on The W's human and financial resources.

As an integral part of Mississippi's eight-university system of higher education, The W is governed under the constitutional authority of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL Board). The IHL Board has adopted a strategic plan for the system and has indicated that performance evaluations of universities will be related to progress in achieving the goals of the "Plan of Excellence."

Formal development of W 2006 began with a campus meeting in March 2002 to elicit ideas from faculty, staff, and students about desired characteristics of MUW four years hence. The PIE Council discussed and categorized the characteristics that emerged from the visioning exercise and developed draft goals and strategies to send to the campus for comment. Email exchanges and meetings of such groups as the Academic Council provided opportunities for comment and discussion. PIE Council members recognized that the characteristics envisioned for the University were highly consistent with the IHL Board's goals for the system. Through this process the PIE Council decided to propose that MUW's university goals be identical to those of the IHL system and that strategies unique to the institution be developed to achieve those goals. W 2006 is a result of this process.

W 2006 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

- December 2002 University adopts W 2006 plan and implementation program.

University assigns responsibility for implementation of each strategy.
- January 2003 PIE Council – using Fall 2002 data or FY 2002 data, as appropriate – determines benchmarks from which to measure progress on *maintain, increase, reduce, and enhance* strategies.

PIE Council chair and the Director of Institutional Research meet with unit administrators to plan for a system of unit planning and reporting to assure consistency in implementation of W 2006 plan. Format for annual reports, tying them to W 2006, is developed and disseminated.
- Jan./Feb. 2003 PIE Council establishes timetable for implementation of each strategy, with FY 2006 quantitative or qualitative target for each, and intermediate targets, as appropriate.

University completes adoption of PIE Council policy statement.

All units review and/or adopt written statements of purpose.
- April 2003 PIE Council reviews goals, strategies, timetables, and targets in light of 2003 session of state legislature and recommends adjustments, if necessitated by fiscal considerations.

=====
- Annually By July 31 of each year (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) the administrator in charge of each academic and nonacademic unit prepares an annual report detailing progress made toward implementation of strategies and achievement of goals, challenges encountered, significant achievements/milestones, use of assessment results to make unit more effective, and future plans/concerns and submits the report to the Office of Institutional Research.

By August 31 of each year (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) the person(s)

responsible for implementation of each strategy - using unit annual reports and other data, as appropriate - prepare(s) an annual report on W 2006 detailing progress made during the previous fiscal year, challenges confronted, and suggestions for improvement and submits the report to the PIE Council.

During each fall semester the PIE Council evaluates the progress made and issues a broader annual report, organized by goal, detailing progress made toward achievement of W 2006 goals, challenges confronted, and recommendations for actions leading to University improvement. PIE Council recommendations become components in implementation of University plans for continuing improvement.

W 2006 PLAN

Adopted by PIE Council December 3, 2002

MUW Goal 1. Provide high quality instructional programs that are affordable, accessible, and student centered.

Objectives

- 1.1 Maintain low student-faculty ratio within range consistent with ratios of *Mississippi's public master's level universities.*
- 1.2 Maintain accreditation of *accredited* programs.
- 1.3 *Assure achievement of core curriculum learning objectives.*
- 1.4 *Maintain pass rates above 90% national standardized and licensing exams.*
- 1.5 *Need pay increase strategy, e.g., provide salaries competitive with other Mississippi Master's level public universities.*
- 1.6 Increase pay for adjuncts, overloads, and summer teaching
- 1.7 Increase funding for library acquisitions.
- 1.8 *Maintain tuition below Mississippi IHL system mean.*
- 1.9 *Provide array of financial aid adequate to assure access by students with limited financial means.*

MUW Goal 2. Provide support programs and services that enhance student recruiting, retention, timely completion of degrees, and attainment of student goals.

Objectives

- 2.1 Increase *year-to-year* retention and 4, 5, and 6-year degree completion rates.
- 2.2 Increase university funding to enhance recreational and cultural opportunities for students.
- 2.3 Increase number of students living in residence halls.
- 2.4 *Conduct periodic surveys and focus groups of students and adjust programs and services in accordance with student needs.*
- 2.5 *Assure continuation of safe campus environment by increasing staffing and equipment of MUW police.*
- 2.6 Conduct customer service workshops for faculty, staff, and student workers to enhance student-centered environment.
- 2.7 *Increase enrollment of first time, full-time freshmen and transfer students by 5% annually.*
- 2.8 *Increase number of non-traditional students by 5% annually enrolled at MUW by meeting their identified needs.*
- 2.9 *Identify freshmen with academic difficulties and provide assistance to assure academic success. (Reduce number with GPA below 2.0 at end of first and second semesters.)*
- 2.10 *Increase number of alumni referrals of prospective students to Admissions Office.*
- 2.11 *Increase number of alumni legacies enrolled in the University.*

MUW Goal 3. Encourage research and creative activities to enhance instruction, generate new knowledge, and contribute to economic development.

Objectives

- 3.1 Employ a grants writer-developer and increase dollar amount of grant funding.
- 3.2 Maintain sabbatical system and provide released time for faculty members to develop proposals for external funding and conduct research and creative activities.
- 3.3 Increase university funding for research and creative activities, including travel for research and creative activities and presentation of results at conferences, shows, and performances.
- 3.4 *Initiate programs of university grants for research on instructional effectiveness.*

MUW Goal 4. Provide informal education, technical assistance, and other public services that respond to societal needs.

Objectives

- 4.1 Increase participation in Continuing Education programs for CEUs and enrichment.
- 4.2 Increase number of children served through Child and Parent Development Center.
- 4.3 *Initiate program of Elderhostels.*

MUW Goal 5. Promote accountability, efficiency, and productivity of fiscal, physical, and human resources, as well as effective utilization of technology.

Objectives

- 5.1 Reduce tuition discount rate.
- 5.2 Increase number of baccalaureate degrees earned by students in critical shortage teacher education fields.
- 5.3 Increase number of degrees earned by students in natural sciences, mathematics, nursing, and health sciences.
- 5.4 Increase student credit hours produced per faculty member.
- 5.5 Increase percentage of annual operating budget generated by sources other than state appropriations.
- 5.6 Increase amount of giving to the Foundation and/or University.
- 5.7 Provide up-to-date equipment in renovated Parkinson and Martin Halls at the time they are opened for use.
- 5.9 Provide one or more high tech classrooms in each academic building.
- 5.10 Provide course management system and train faculty in its use.
- 5.11 *Increase availability of training in instructional software. Respond to needs expressed by faculty for instructional software.*
- 5.12 Increase number of courses offered by distance education and number of students enrolled.
- 5.13 Increase revenue from providing campus facilities and services for appropriate programs sponsored by MUW and other sponsors during summers.

MUW Goal 6. Promote diversity of students, faculty, and staff *while maintaining historic commitment to emphasis on women.*

Objectives

- 6.1 Increase number of courses suitable for inclusion in Women's Studies minor.
- 6.2 Increase library holdings supporting women's studies.
- 6.3 Improve accessibility of campus facilities to persons with disabilities.
- 6.4 Maintain position in top half of Mississippi's public universities for student diversity.
- 6.5 Increase number of international students.
- 6.6 Increase number of W students studying abroad.
- 6.7 Develop and implement program of instruction in English as a second language.
- 6.8 Increase number of minority faculty members.
- 6.10 Conduct workshops *to assure faculty awareness of concerns relating to students with disabilities.*
- 6.11 Conduct workshops *to assure staff awareness of concerns relating to students with disabilities.*
- 6.12 Assure that experience of male students at The W is rewarding.

MUW Goal 7. Enhance programs and utilization of resources by development of cooperative efforts and partnerships.

Objectives

- 7.1 Increase enrollment in internships.
- 7.2 *Increase number of K-12 partnerships.*

MUW Goal 8. Enhance public awareness and support for MUW.**Objectives**

- 8.1 Increase number of press releases for MUW.
- 8.2 Bring media people to campus for events and interviews.
- 8.3 Host legislators and other public officials on a regular basis.