The Nature of the Plan

President Graham’s Xavier Way initiative provides our campus with an opportunity for an integrated approach to advancing the goals of the University, focusing on student learning and development, and improving the financial health of the institution. The academic plan is designed to support this initiative and will be supported in kind by the financial plan, producing a single clarifying vision for the future of Xavier University.

The plan is formed around seven goals. The work we will do to achieve the goals is a set of interdependent, mutually reinforcing activities that emerges from our traditions and past success. As such, this plan does not create a sharp departure from our past. Rather, it builds off of our strengths, provides us the opportunity to shape our collective future, and creates new areas of curricular and co-curricular success demanded by students and the market.

As with any plan, this plan helps us frame our future. It provides a set of shared goals that all of us can work toward. As we do so, the plan makes apparent how to prioritize our daily work and our strategic choices. Including measures of success into the plan allows us to know how well we are doing in moving toward the goals. By automating the collection and reporting of data and the evidence of our success whenever possible, it frees us up to focus on supporting students and each other. By using our available structure of existing committees and the system of shared governance, we can build evidence-based feedback systems that will tell us when we are doing well and when our work needs to be modified to align more closely with our stated goals. This practice of setting goals, measuring progress toward them, and sharing information broadly so we all know how we are doing will keep us steady and focused during a time of significant change in the higher education industry.

An unstated assumption of this plan is the value of optimizing rather than maximizing. Imposing a maximization strategy for this plan would cause us to continually try to do more, regardless of available resources such as time, people, and money. Such a strategy places a heavy burden on everyone as it presents a never ending demand to do more and more, often at the expense of being able to take the time to determine what should be done and how it might be done better. An optimization strategy is equally determined but is a gentler approach to achieving our shared goals. With this approach, we will focus on achieving our goals with available resources, always seeking to do things better and more efficiently. As we do this, and free resources that are not needed for the work we do to achieve our goals, we can redeploy those resources in areas needing more, we can use them in support of new activities and initiatives, and we can bank them for future use, whether they be money or time or any other resource.

This plan gives us a framework through which to analyze our success as well as the means to gauge the effects of external factors while choosing our course of action. The goals that drive this plan are rooted in the success of our past, our current capabilities, and the passion and abilities of our faculty and staff. Student success, faculty and staff success, and gaining the financial resources needed for us to do our work are all derived from working toward and achieving the plan’s goals. Staying focused on those goals will allow us to view external factors and determine their relevancy and importance to us, the degree of urgency with which we need to act, how to communicate about them internally and externally, and what we will choose to do.
Finally, working toward the goals allows us the freedom to cease doing things that we need not do to achieve our goals, stay true to our mission, and help students learn and develop.

Goals

These goals are designed with the understanding that helping students learn is our primary focus. Further, the goals recognize that faculty and staff need freedom of action to do the work in and out of the classroom that serves students and time and financial resources to further develop their knowledge and skills. Embedded in each goal is the assumption that we will seek the greatest quality in everything we do to nurture engaged students. As we do that, the first six goals provide the foundation out of which goal seven, and the new net revenue it represents, will be achieved. We will strive for quality and care of the students first. All else comes from that.

1. **Design and implement the revised Core Curriculum.**

The Core Curriculum is a crucial part of each undergraduate student’s learning and development. The faculty are making significant progress in redesigning the Core and are on target to complete the revision and begin implementing the new Core during the Fall of 2015. As redesigned, the Core will be a living Core, reviewed annually for efficacy and modified as warranted.

The redesign of the Core is an exemplar for the academic plan. It focuses on student learning. There will be a built-in process for continuous quality improvement. It seeks to integrate co-curricular student engagement when appropriate in promoting its student learning and development goals. There is an emerging understanding that the work of the faculty will change in some ways, that the faculty in conjunction with the administration will work to define what those ways will be, and that support for faculty, and staff, development is key to supporting whatever changes are chosen. Space for creativity and innovation is being designed into the Core with a fundamental belief in the faculty and staff and their ability to live and extend the University’s mission. As this Core comes to fruition, it makes possible significant revenue growth, especially from undergraduate transfer students and Veterans.

*We will know we have achieved this goal when the redesigned Core Curriculum has been implemented, requisite faculty and staff development programs and funding are in place, and all supporting systems are in place and functioning as needed.*

2. **Increase the quality of all academic and student development programs.**

No matter how high the level of quality of our programs, each program can be made better. This will require a precise understanding of the goals of each program, assessment and evaluation systems, and faculty and staff development whenever needed. This goal has a focus on investing in our faculty and staff so they can serve each other, our students, and our communities. Determining that our programs are increasing in quality can be done through a formal process of program review and through periodic program evaluation and assessment of student learning. The Faculty Committee, in conjunction with the Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, has committed to developing academic program review for consideration by the faculty and the academic administration. Staff, student life administration, and the Office of the Provost
and Chief Academic Officer are simultaneously forwarding evaluation processes to improve their systems to support and catalyze student learning. Further development of program review is important but revising and implementing the Core is more important and will take precedence.

*We will know we have achieved this goal when we can show on a periodic basis that each and every program has increased its quality in terms of student learning, student development, scholarship and creative work, and other quality indicators specific to the programs.*

3. **Create and provide significant opportunities for experiential learning for all students.**

As a residential university, we must provide the most robust learning environments for our students, combining experiences on campus through study, research, collaborations, competitions, and performances, and off campus through opportunities for service, work experience, international cultural immersions, leadership, and solidarity. This will both differentiate us from other schools as we prepare students to discern a vocation and do so through values-driven experiences that fit perfectly with the developmental expectations of the Xavier Way. These opportunities will need to be developed in partnership among faculty, staff, and administration, be fully supportive of the Core, and integrated across academic programs.

*We will know we have achieved this goal when all undergraduate and graduate students participate in one or more experiential learning programs annually.*

4. **Create and implement the XU NextGen teacher-scholar model.**

Without doubt, there are significant social, educational, and financial pressures on higher education in general and Xavier University specifically. Much of what we do will persist, yet there will need to be changes in how we work so that we adapt to and overcome those pressures and additional pressures yet to be felt. Over the course of the 2014-15 academic year and beyond, there will need to be a deliberate study of what can be the best teacher-scholar model for our faculty at Xavier and then the implementation of that model. This model will provide the basis for the continued improvement of our academic programs and the scholarly reputation of our University. Thus, we must take great care with this, neither unduly rushing its formation nor underfunding the faculty development and support that will be needed for the model to work. This model will be developed by faculty, led by the Faculty Committee, and the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, and supported by academic administration as warranted.

*We will know we have achieved this goal when we have a clear understanding of the parameters of faculty work, agreement on those parameters, support systems in place for that work, and the teacher-scholar model is being enacted by the faculty.*

5. **Create and implement improved systems for student success.**

One of the foci of President Graham’s 2013 cross-functional teams and the Xavier Way teams has been to identify ways in which we can use our structures, systems, and programs to increase student learning and success. Analyses and recommendations have been crafted and are now
being considered individually and collectively. The task before us is to conclude that process and begin implementing a model that supports student learning and development, increases graduation outcomes and rates, enhances advising and career preparation, provides the highest level of support for international teaching and learning, supports and inculcates diversity into the fiber of the University’s being and binds that work to our mission and identity, and addresses the other Xavier Way recommendations that become accepted. Further, we must ensure that staff have development opportunities in the same way that faculty do in order to grow in their skills and abilities to serve students.

We will know we have achieved this goal when every student development program and office is showing increases in efficacy and when staff development and support systems are in place and funded.

6. Create space for new initiatives that advance our mission, serve our students, and make the University stronger.

Xavier faculty and staff, and the friends of the University who support us, are an exceptionally talented and creative group of people. The systems and structures we have put in place over the past several years are working to nurture program expansion, innovation, and new forms of partnering across the University. It is not possible to predict what new initiatives our faculty and staff will develop but we must continue to proactively respond to the evolving needs of students and the changing needs of the world around us, within the context of our competitive environment.

Programs with one or more of the following attributes will be privileged, because over the next six years they a) provide the best mission / market synergies and b) best advance the University’s strategic, academic, and financial plans:
   a. Critical thinking / analytics
   b. Student creative work / production (e.g., arts, innovation, entrepreneurship)
   c. STEM
   d. Health professions
   e. Transdisciplinary programs
   f. Internationalization
   g. Differentiated programs that fit our mission

The decision to develop a program will be based on the combination of:
   a. Mission fit
   b. Market fit or market creation
   c. Organizational expertise and capacity
   d. Faculty and staff passion for the work involved

We will know we have achieved this goal when new initiatives and programs are organically and systematically created in response to the needs of students and society, and when faculty and staff liaisons collaboratively ensure program quality and synergies.
7. **Increase net revenue from the Provost’s area by $26,000,000 across FY 16 – FY 20.**

Achieving the first six goals of this plan is the basis for achieving this seventh goal. Across the 2016-2020 fiscal years, we are projecting an increase in gross revenues from the Provost’s area of approximately $45,000,000 based on expenses of approximately $19,000,000, resulting in an increase in net revenue of approximately $26,000,000. These revenue projections are based on the following assumptions and plans:

a. Increase the number of undergraduate students by 800, with targeted growth in transfer students, Veterans, students from outside our normal domestic catchment area, and international students. This increase in students is not dependent on new undergraduate academic programs, nor is the revenue or expenses from such programs included in this plan.

b. Increase the number of graduate credit hours by approximately 19,000 through the creation and implementation of twelve new graduate programs averaging 30 students each.

c. Expand enrollment in existing certificate and credentialing programs and create new programs over the life of the plan. When possible, reconfigure existing graduate degree programs so that students can enroll in the degree program or stack courses for continuing education, certificates, credentials, and then degrees.

d. Expand our innovation-related training and development programming, particularly in the area of healthcare systems innovation.

e. Create educational products specifically designed to meet the needs of other organizations and delivered at the Xavier level of quality. Such organizations could be for profit organization, not for profit organizations, community-based organizations, and the like.

f. Additional financial assumptions are embedded in the revenue projection spreadsheet attached to this plan.

Any revenue producing program or activity not mentioned above is not included in this plan’s revenue estimate. Thus, the revenue estimates in this plan are intentionally conservative. For example, we expect that the implementation of a model of student success will markedly increase our undergraduate retention rates but those rates and the corresponding increase in revenue are not included in our estimates. Similarly, we know that new undergraduate programs will be successfully created but it is unclear when and how successful they will be, so they are not included in the revenue estimates. It is highly likely that our efforts to increase our innovation-related programming and new proprietary programming will pay off in the near future. However, because both of those are new initiatives, we have afforded several years for those programs to come to fruition, effectively understating the anticipated revenue from those initiatives.

*We will know we have achieved this goal when the net revenue targets for each fiscal year are achieved.*
Emerging Systems and Structures

As mentioned above, we need to create the systems that support the model for student success. We need to create what is needed to support the XU NextGen teacher-scholar model. And we need to ensure that our systems of faculty and staff development are robust.

Two new units need to be created to help this plan come to fruition. Both units are related to innovation. Achieving the goals stated above will require that we are creative in our thinking and innovative in our applications. These behaviors not only do not happen by accident but they can be systematically taught, supported, and implemented. Each college needs a unit that can support innovation and the Provost’s area in general, and in fact the University in general, needs a unit that can support innovation. The Williams College of Business enjoys the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship and the Xavier Leadership Center as its targeted supporters of innovation. The College of Social Science, Health, and Education enjoys Xavier Health as its targeted support of innovation. The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) enjoys no such targeted support. To remedy that, we will create the School of Arts and Innovation within the CAS. This School will be comprised of the arts programs. The faculty in these programs has been working for some time on plans to integrate their efforts and be the targeted support for innovation in the CAS. Expenses associated with the creation of this school are included in the expense projections for the academic plan.

To serve the development and dissemination of innovation within the University and to expand our innovation programming and services outside of the University, we will create a Center for Innovation reporting to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer. In addition to serving as a bridge that creates synergies across the colleges, it will catalyze forward-looking and innovative approaches to systems that promote student development, and will serve as a source of revenue generation for the University. A budget for this center has been included in the FY 15 budget.

Conclusion

This plan reflects several years of ideas, documents, and conversations, and, most of all, the heart of this institution. An integrated plan, at once mission-drive through the Xavier Way, grounded in Xavier’s past and moving toward our promising future, and supported by careful and transparent financial planning is a crucial step in Xavier’s successful future. I look forward to working with you to support this work.

Scott A. Chadwick, Ph.D.
Provost and Chief Academic Officer
March 24, 2014
Appendix A
Financial Assumptions