Introduction
In 2003, the SDSM&T campus began a conversation regarding our past, present, and most importantly, our future. The dialogue was informed by several existing planning documents, and involved all students, faculty, and staff who elected to participate. Initially, alumnae, community leaders, and interested citizens were invited, and some elected to join in the dialogue. Two all-campus meetings were held (October 29, 2003 and January 22, 2004) along with numerous small group discussions, and the resulting work products included a revised mission, vision and goal statement with four comprehensive strategic initiatives to guide future planning.

A web site address was opened to post all background documents, group discussions, and work products. A summary designed to capture the essence of the plan and to highlight major concerns was discussed with the Board of Regents in March 04, 2004.

A work agenda for the 04-05 year was established at an all-campus planning session held on May 11, 2004. The work products of the May 11, 2004 all-campus meeting ushered in a new planning paradigm for the campus.

At the annual May all-campus planning session, the campus community is invited to give a critique of the progress outlined in that agenda. Based on that input, revisions and updates are made to the strategic agenda for the next academic year.

A View of Strategic Planning
In our context, strategic planning is viewed as an ongoing, cyclic process—not the creation of a static document. The goals and strategic incentives are viewed as constant organizers for institutional development. Annually, action items for each initiative are identified. The findings from a review of the previous year’s efforts, combined with a scan of current and emerging environmental challenges and opportunities provide the background against which the next year’s action plan is constructed. Finally, strategic planning is viewed as an all campus, open, cyclic process—all are intended to be both planners and deliverers.

Assumptions that Guide our Planning
A number of planning documents, studies, and institutional analyses informed our conversation about the future of the School of Mines. Five assumptions emerged as critical. Response to these assumptions undergirds our plans and actions. The assumptions are summarized as follows:

1) Mission Affirmation. The School of Mines is, and plans to continue to be, a small technological university with a curriculum grounded in engineering, the physical sciences, and technology. No mission expansion is contemplated.

2) West River Consortium (BHSU/SDSM&T). We are committed to make the Consortium a viable mechanism for the collaborative delivery of post-secondary education. Our plan is built on the demographic changes facing South Dakota. Of sharp concern is the declining 18-24 year old population.

3) Regional/National Demographic. Our plan also recognizes projected dramatic population changes in border and other midwestern states, including Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, and Utah.

4) Need for Scientists and Engineers. Current South Dakota data suggests a “steady state” between graduates in science/engineering and announced employers’ needs state-wide. Any environmental change resulting in a reduction in graduates or increase in workplace expansions could result in a shortage of this critical element of the workforce. Regionally and nationally, the projected additional need for scientists and engineers now, and in the future, is significant.

5) Financial Analysis. Economic and social pressures will continue to challenge the financing of higher education nationally and across South Dakota. Future institutional financial planning will need to take a “total resource management” approach. Fiscal planning will necessarily include the use of tuition and fees, state support, auxiliary enterprises, grants and contracts, and philanthropy.

Critical Implications
Critical implications (even changes in direction for the institution) that need to be understood, both on campus and by those beyond, include the following:

1. Positioning SDSM&T as a regional/national small technological university. (i.e. meet South Dakota’s needs first; but move beyond)
2. Remaining at current size (+/- 200)
3. Redirecting Enrollment/Strategy (e.g., target underserved, out-of-state, and international students)
4. Expanding R&D focus
5. Adding PhD. Programs
6. Building partnerships everywhere!
Mission, Vision, and Goal

Mission:
The South Dakota School of Mines and Technology serves the people of South Dakota as their technological university. Its mission is to provide a well-rounded education that prepares students for leadership roles in engineering and science; to advance the state of knowledge and application of this knowledge through research and scholarship; and to benefit the state, region, and nation through collaborative efforts in education and economic development. Our mission as a technological university was reaffirmed by the South Dakota Board of Regents in December 2003.

Vision:
The School of Mines is dedicated to being a leader in twenty-first century education that reflects a belief in the role of engineers and scientists as crucial to the advancement of society. Our vision is to be recognized as a premiere technological university in the United States.

Goal:
Most immediately, our goal is to be recognized as the university-of-choice for engineering and science within South Dakota and among our peer group of specialized engineering and science universities.

Strategic Initiatives

During 2003-2004, four strategic initiatives were identified by the School of Mines campus community which provide a framework for the actions that must be undertaken in successive years to achieve our goal and vision.

Strategic Initiative 1: Reshape the Learning and Teaching Experience
A distinctive curriculum and co-curriculum will make the School of Mines a national university of choice for high quality, relevant education in engineering and science. Our curriculum needs to be distinctive enough to attract the best and brightest while ensuring that all students develop both technical expertise and “soft skills.”

Strategic Initiative 2: Promote the Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
A continuing and growing focus on research and scholarship in all its manifestations will enable us to better serve our constituencies and fulfill our mission. Excellence in focused areas of scholarship will gain us national recognition for leading-edge research and development that contributes to the quality of life and economic well-being of the state and the nation.

Strategic Initiative 3: Engage and Serve the Broader Community
Our ability to fulfill our mission will be enhanced as we develop networks and partnerships with external entities. We will expand collaborations with the Native American community, with other universities, and with business and industry.

Strategic Initiative 4: Prepare for Our Future as a National Player in Science and Engineering Education and Research
The necessary facilities, infrastructure, marketing, support services, and management will be developed to enable us to provide excellence in engineering and science education and to conduct nationally recognized research. Preparing for our future includes a review of the organizational structure of the university.

Annual Action Items

Based on input from across the campus community at the May all-campus meeting, a set of action items to advance the strategic initiatives will be developed. This list will be reviewed by appropriate campus leaders and administrators and will serve as input to the preparation of both the current and requested budgets. The following fall, a revised list of anticipated actions for the year will be presented.

Achievement against each item will be gathered the following May and will serve as input for the campus-wide review of the year, and building of action items for the forthcoming year.

Indicators

Several quantitative indicators have been identified and accompany the annual strategic agenda against which progress toward elements of the strategic agenda may be measured. Additional indicators are tracked by each Vice President as they monitor progress in their specific area.