

Conclusion

St. Cloud State University has engaged in a serious self-study process over the past two years. Hundreds of individuals were involved in various committees to examine our current practice related to the Higher Learning Commission's criteria for "best practice". We are grateful for the opportunity to come together to celebrate our strengths, identify areas where we need to improve, and begin the process of implementing serious changes when needed. St. Cloud State University is committed to taking the results of the self-study and turning our challenges into action. We have identified 28 challenges organized into three broad categories to guide us in our efforts over the next several years as we begin our work. Responsible units will be designated and a timeline will be developed to address each challenge.

Challenge	Core Component
SCHOLARSHIP, TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING	
Develop a better understanding of the unique learning and support needs of our underrepresented and diverse student populations.	1B, 4C, 5C
Changing demographics will require increased focus on recruitment, establishing enrollment targets, and improvements in retention and graduation rates.	2A, 2B, 4C
An increasing number of faculty retirements along with a national shortage of faculty in several disciplines will make hiring new faculty difficult, thus challenging the university to be more deliberate in developing recruitment strategies.	2A
Increase graduate education opportunities (to meet student demand and address demographic changes).	2B, 4A
Increase online learning opportunities (to meet student demand and address demographic changes) and evaluate the effectiveness of alternative learning options.	2B, 3D
Expand outreach efforts to include more programs (to meet student demand and address demographic changes).	2B
Develop strategies to enhance the recognition of faculty service related to assessment work.	3A, 3B
Develop and support innovative teaching practices to reach diverse groups of students and solicit their input regarding their academic needs.	3B
Provide for campus discussions over the priority and support of teaching, scholarship, and research in the tenure and promotion process as well as increased public recognition of faculty and staff achievements.	3B, 4A
Improve student advising at the undergraduate and graduate levels.	3C
As enrollments in Continuing Studies expand, establish a formal process to ensure that decisions about outreach and faculty teaching loads are systematic and data-driven.	3C, 3D
As instructional delivery options expand, examine the capacity in terms of number of faculty and staff to determine our ability to adequately serve students.	3D
Revise the General Education curriculum.	4B
Provide for further campus-wide data collection and analysis of engagement and service activities to allow us to systematically increase our efforts to better serve our constituents.	5A, 5B, 5D
Increase the support for service learning activities (i.e., scholarships, grants).	5C
Develop strategies (i.e., website development) to be more effective in communicating our service and engagement activities.	5A, 5B, 5D
Improve the animal care vivarium and animal welfare assurance process.	4D

Challenge	Core Component
ASSESSMENT AND DATA MANAGEMENT	
Improve and refine access and quality of data used in making decisions.	1C, 2A
Allocate additional resources to the development of data systems on campus.	3A, 4C
Develop and implement the University Assessment System inclusive of General Education, colleges, and programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.	2C, 3A, 3D, 4B, 4D
Develop a data management system to allow better access and information on student participation in programs, organizations, and centers.	3C, 4C, 5A
UNIVERSITY PROCESSES	
Develop a process to ensure that all university initiatives align with the mission.	1A
Clearly link the university's resource allocation to the strategic priorities.	1C, 3D
Develop ways to maintain the integrity of our consultative process while increasing the speed at which we makes critical decisions.	1D
Declining state support for higher education will challenge the university to find alternative sources of revenue.	2A
Strengthen the presence and role of the Office of Affirmative Action by establishing appropriate procedures and communicating effectively to the campus community.	1E
Develop and implement a revised budgeting process.	2D
Examine budget policies and practices to improve faculty use of professional development funds to ensure best practice.	4A