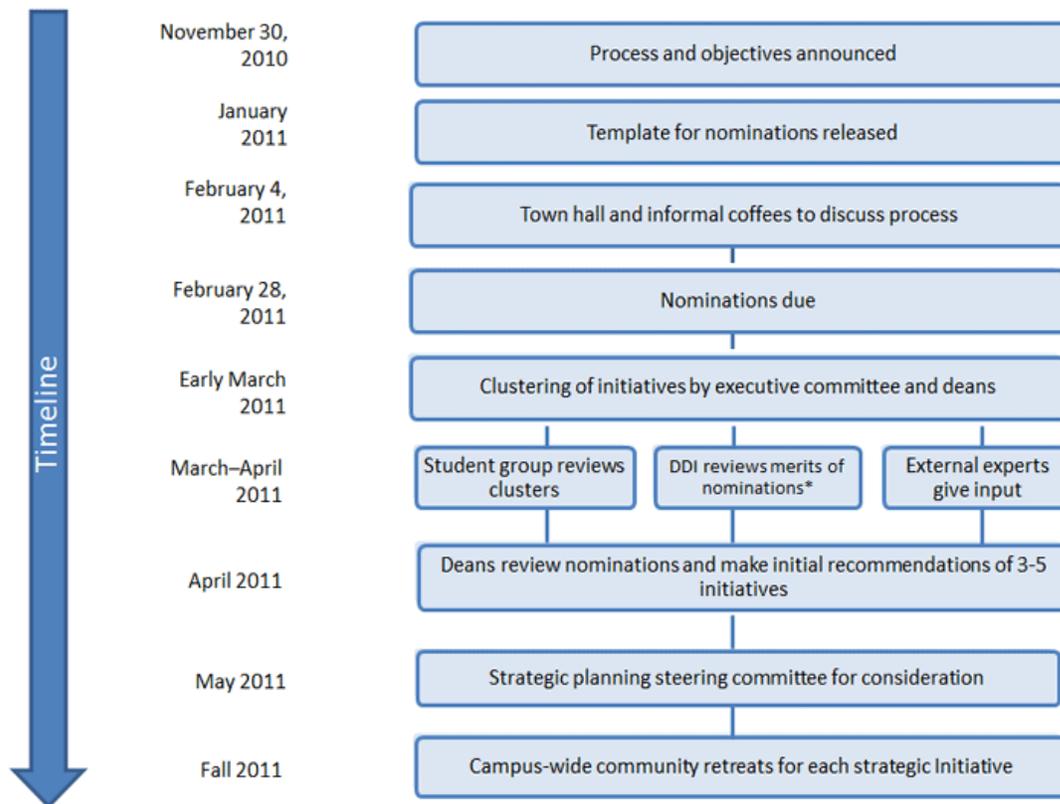


Town Hall Meeting February 4, 2010 Strategic Initiatives

Informal Coffee Conversations (RSVP to provost@ku.edu)

- Monday, February 7, Noon–1:00 PM, Malott Room, Kansas Union
(feel free to bring a brown bag lunch, beverages provided)
- Thursday, February 10, 4:00–5:00 PM, Malott Room, Kansas Union

A critical piece to the strategic plan will be the identification of strategic initiatives or themes under which we will cluster KU's academic and research strengths. Below you will find an overview of the process and answers to some frequently asked questions.



**After DDI reviews proposals individually, feedback will be given to nominators.*

Ongoing Strategic Planning assessment group reviews and revises on a regular basis.

What is a Strategic Initiative?

A strategic initiative is a broad theme or emphasis where KU can make important and impactful contributions. It addresses a grand challenge whose complexity necessarily requires insights from multiple disciplines to solve.

The great minds of the preceding centuries such as Newton, Galileo, and Descartes did not view themselves as purely mathematicians, physicists, or philosophers. Rather, they were members of a wider community of academics whose discoveries and interactions inspired one another. In the same way, strategic initiatives will draw together modern-day researchers who are experts in their individual disciplines to engage, challenge, and inspire one another to meet society's grand challenges.

Why is identifying strategic initiatives important to KU?

Each strategic initiative will advance KU in the following important ways:

- Address an emerging or escalating global grand challenge where KU has exceptional capabilities;
- Build a scholarly community of excellence that challenges, engages, and inspires individuals from many disciplines around a common theme;
- Enhance KU's national and international visibility and impact;
- Engage and motivate funding agencies, foundations, state and local government, corporations, alumni, and/or friends to provide much-needed resources; and
- Provide our students with unique experiences that will position them as highly recruited and valued drivers and innovators of social and technological change.

Strategic initiatives that build links across KU's schools and campuses will be based upon and will further enhance our tremendous disciplinary strengths. These initiatives will help remove institutional silos that can make crosscutting activities difficult. The synergies as exemplified by The Commons and other centers on campus give glimpses of what can be achieved.

How can I see what others are interested in?

As a resource to help people learn about what others are doing, the strategic planning steering committee has collected areas of emphasis of the College and schools at KU, along with several centers. This list of emphases is not meant to be inclusive of all that is happening in the schools, but rather to inform the campus about interests of the schools.

Individuals are also encouraged to post preliminary ideas for strategic initiatives to the discussion board on that topic. It provides a place to vet and comment on ideas as well as make connections with other interesting members of the community.

How will they be identified and how can I make a nomination?

We have worked to create a transparent process to allow bottom-up input. The process was described in the *Provost eNews* of November 30, 2010. The form to be used to nominate a strategic initiative is available online. The deadline is February 28th. Forms can also be found at the strategic planning website.

Departments and centers have been encouraged to discuss strategic initiatives in the context of group-wide faculty/staff meetings and to submit nominations or encourage nominations.

In March, we will post all nominations on the web for general feedback. Simultaneously, we will receive input from national experts to give feedback on the nominations with respect to funding and emerging opportunities. This input will also be shared and vetted with the KU community. Informed by all input, the deans will propose a handful of strategic initiative themes to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for inclusion in the strategic action plan.

What happens after May?

The process does not end in May. The strategic initiatives that are chosen will be along broad themes. They will build communities interested in different aspects of a particular societal grand challenge. For each strategic initiative, we will spend Fall 2011 holding a *retreat*, bringing the community together, learning the wealth of experience and intellect we have to offer, and collectively deciding what investments are most warranted to enable success within the initiative.

For each strategic initiative, the collective effort in the fall will involve faculty participants, deans, and the Provost's Office. It will involve discussing replacement faculty slots, new faculty slots, needed infrastructure, and personnel. Our goal is to establish an intellectual hub that contributes to exciting and successful scholarly efforts among the participants. We want to help individuals realize external funding to grow and sustain their research efforts.

The strategic initiatives are meant to be dynamic and tracked on a regular basis. Investments will be evaluated in order to gauge the value of further investments.

What if I work I do doesn't fit neatly into one of these strategic themes? Will this mean I'm not valued or that my area of study will not be supported?

As the provost said in the November 30th *Provost eNews*, "please be assured that KU will continue to be a comprehensive university that has a broad foundation in the liberal arts and supports an array of professional disciplines. Our strategic action plan will continue to support and value all forms of scholarly excellence. The identification of a number of strategic initiatives that cut across the many disciplines at KU will add another dimension and leverage our expertise for greater effect.

These initial strategic initiatives will be specific to KU, magnify the impact of the investments we make, and help spread the story of KU excellence to our many stakeholders. They will spotlight our ability to be forward-looking and relevant in challenging times."

At the end of today's meeting we hope you will be able to answer the following questions in the affirmative and also tell us what we can do to help you understand the process better.

1. Do you know more about strategic initiatives and how they fit into the overall strategic planning process?
2. Do you have more new ideas about how to participate in the initiatives process than you did an hour ago?
3. Do you have a better understanding about how the planning process and strategic initiatives involves faculty, staff, students and administration?
4. Do you have a better sense of where potential topics for excellence in research and scholarship exist at KU?
5. Do you have a better understanding of how the process can help inform the allocation of financial resources?
6. Do you have a better sense of how you can participate in the strategic planning process?
7. What do you still need to know? What can we do better?