



SAN FRANCISCO
UNIVERSITY
HIGH SCHOOL

San Francisco University High School Strategic Plan: 2004-2009

This is the fifth Strategic Plan undertaken by the UHS Board of Trustees since the School opened in the fall of 1975. It represents the input of the entire UHS community and the hard work of many people including the trustees, administration, and faculty of UHS. This plan, like those that preceded it, reflects the current needs of the School and addresses the fact that no institution that aspires to excellence can stand still.

INTRODUCTION

In late spring of 2003 the Board of Trustees of San Francisco University High School embarked upon a strategic planning process to identify the school's current strengths and weaknesses as well as elicit perspectives on how UHS could best stay true to its founding principles while responding to environmental changes and needs that have emerged since the last strategic plan was adopted in 1995. The plan, grounded in the School's mission and philosophy, would be an active, living document, guiding the School's direction for the next five years. That mission calls for the school to provide an education of the highest quality to a very able and diverse student body in a manner that is consistent with the highest ethical and moral standards.

To guide this work the Board appointed a steering committee to gather and analyze observations and comments from trustees, teachers, administrators, students, parents and alumni during focus groups held in 2003. The information gathered at these meetings indicated quite clearly that everyone believed that UHS' excellent teaching, demanding courses, and extracurricular programs provided bright, motivated, and talented students with an outstanding secondary education. Nevertheless, questions were raised about a number of issues. For example, did UHS have the space, equipment, and physical plant to continue to meet the requirements of new subjects and areas of knowledge? What was necessary to make certain that UHS continued its long-standing practice of operating in a financially sound and fiscally responsible manner? Were we doing everything we could to educate our students to be enlightened citizens by demonstrating how to create a diverse and inclusive school community? Was our practice of providing many opportunities for students to reach their potential accompanied by the unintended consequence of presenting them with the stress of too many choices and conflicting time commitments? Were our various student life services such as Cluster Advising and College Counseling, operating in a coordinated manner so that students and parents felt well supported throughout their time at UHS?

The Board created seven strategic planning subcommittees to investigate and analyze each of the major issues, seeking answers to these questions, as well as others. In the end, every answer became a major goal of the current strategic plan. For each goal, the subcommittees also recommended the steps needed to implement it. The goals and implementation steps presented in the plan are a high level summary. Behind this plan is a detailed matrix that enumerates all of the tasks, responsible parties, dependencies, and timelines for each goal.

San Francisco University High School Mission Statement

University High School welcomes students of demonstrated motivation and ability to engage in an education that fosters responsibility and the spirited pursuit of knowledge. We are a school where adults believe in the promise of every student, and together we work to build and sustain a community of diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and talents. UHS challenges each individual to live a life of integrity, inquiry, and purpose larger than the self.

Strategic Plan Goals And Implementation Steps

GOAL I: Physical Plant

Improve and expand the physical campus to support the mission and programs of the school and to comply with City accessibility requirements.

Context: Given its urban environment, how can UHS ensure that it has the space, equipment, and physical plant to continue to meet the requirements of evolving programs and areas of knowledge?

Implementation Steps

- Complete a Campus Master Plan which will repair and renovate the current facility and address accessibility issues related to *Americans with Disabilities Act* regulations in the Upper and Lower Campuses
- Expand plant through acquisition to accommodate above implementations
- Continue to investigate options for athletic fields
- Develop ways to ensure consistency and quality of future maintenance and operations

GOAL II: Finance

The school's ability to provide an intellectually stimulating and academically challenging program is dependent upon the long-term financial stability of its resources. Any decision that has financial implications must be evaluated within the context of the school's financial metrics and guiding principles.

Context: While the school has consistently operated with favorable financial results, assuring the resources necessary to fund the program, competitive salaries and benefits and an appropriate physical environment calls for vigilance and care with all financial decisions.

Implementation Steps

- Agree upon a set of financial metrics to use in future financial planning and evaluation of projects and programs
- Review our total compensation package relative to peer schools in the Bay Area with a focus on attraction and retention through a salary and benefits package that reflects the varying needs of the faculty
- Determine appropriate funding sources to finance strategic recommendations
- Review, develop and enhance various fund raising efforts

GOAL III: Communications

Improve communication to all school constituencies and develop a clear message that accurately and consistently articulates the school's mission, vision, program and environment.

Context: Defining the essence of UHS is important because it gives us language to tell our story and ensure the school is viewed appropriately by current and potential students, families and faculty. It also ensures that the school is viewed appropriately by the community at large.

Implementation Steps

- Conduct positioning study to determine the "ethos" of UHS and identify key message points
- Optimize UHS communications to support strategic directions, especially concerning community goals and outreach and to support fundraising and marketing efforts.

GOAL IV: Diversity

Continue to support and improve the school's multi-cultural efforts and values.

Context: The school has focused on creating and nurturing an inclusive environment where multiculturalism and respect for our differences are guiding principles. The idea that all students should have the opportunity to thrive leads us to continually examine the adequacy of our support systems as well as the openness of our community.

Implementation Steps

- Continue to develop and improve outreach efforts as well as support for current programs
- Examine ways our various programs could or should intersect so that students feel supported in all aspects of their UHS experience
- Consider strategic partnerships in addition to Summerbridge for greater outreach

GOAL V: Summerbridge

Evaluate Summerbridge's ability to meet its enhanced objective of being more closely aligned with the mission and goals of UHS by preparing its students for admission to selective independent high schools.

Context: Summerbridge recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. One measure of its success is that it has been emulated nationwide. Nevertheless, it has set a new goal for itself of "closing the preparation gap" of public and parochial school students so they are eligible for admission to rigorous independent schools.

Implementation Steps

- Prepare students for high school by adding experienced teachers for core skills, providing a more substantial year-round program, and better supporting Summerbridge parents
- Develop quantifiable assessment tools to measure Summerbridge students' achievement
- Determine total UHS financial and in-kind contributions to Summerbridge and evaluate these contributions based on the mission and objectives of UHS itself

Goal VI: Alumni

Recognize alumni as an important constituency for UHS and develop ways to expand and strengthen relationships between alumni and the school.

Context: With more than 2,400 members, the alumni body is one of the largest constituencies of the school. UHS needs to look at its alumni program to determine how best to serve this group and harness its energy for the good of the school.

Implementation Steps

- Cultivate greater communication and contact between alumni and school
- Improve alumni contact information
- Support UHS' diversity efforts by establishing contact between informal alumni affinity groups and current groups on campus
- Coordinate work of development office and alumni to broaden base of alumni financial and volunteer participation



GOAL VII: Governance

Ensure that the UHS Board of Trustees continues to operate in accordance with the highest standards and best practices of independent school governance.

Context: Recent state and national legislation, as well as IRS guidelines regarding for profit and non-profit governance, serve as a reminder that the Board of Trustees must continually review and update all policies, procedures, and financial practices regarding the operation of the school.

Implementation Steps

- Review school policies and practices in light of Sarbanes-Oxley Act
- Communicate enhanced governance regulations to administration and faculty, as appropriate
- Work with Parents Association and Alumni Council to establish appropriate procedures and oversight
- Re-evaluate Board processes on an annual basis

GOAL VIII: Technology

Enhance the educational, administrative and communications efforts of the UHS community by improving accessibility to appropriate hardware and software and technology skills for faculty and students.

Context: Computer systems at UHS facilitate the educational and administrative work of all members of the UHS community.

Implementation Steps

- Consider various ways UHS can support the home computing environment
- Continue to monitor faculty and student use of emerging technologies
- Evaluate pros and cons of new forms of electronic communication for each program and department
- Share leading examples of effective technology integration with faculty

GOAL IX: Curriculum and Student Affairs

Have all constituents of the UHS community understand and work toward the same educational goals, thereby creating an environment in which our students thrive.

Context: Students, parents, faculty and other community members helped identify issues within the educational program that may be producing unnecessary conflict for students. We should examine the numerous opportunities we provide for students to more effectively control the amount of productive versus unproductive stress they experience.

Implementation Steps

- Create balance among various goals of the program, including intellectual growth, community service, individual growth and college preparation by reviewing and adjusting policies and processes related to the timing of various events of the academic and non-academic programs
- Build a common understanding of our goals for the program and student progress
- Avoid unproductive stress by reviewing policies about the workload and the daily schedule and modifying these where required
- Explore staffing and space requirements for a Learning Center to provide additional support for students with learning differences