In the following document, Hanover Research proposes a potential framework and road map for strategic planning at SUBR. Hanover provides a template with which SUBR can create a strategic plan suited to the needs and aspirations of the institution and its stakeholders.
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INTRODUCTION

This document presents a general framework and road map for the strategic planning process at Southern University and A&M College (SUBR). The proposed template provides guidance in the production of a strategic plan that will serve the needs and aspirations of SUBR and its stakeholders.

The first section lays out the methodology for creating this document along with a potential road map for SUBR. Section II builds on best practices and the practices of peer and aspirant institutions, as defined previously for SUBR, to create a strategic plan template for SUBR. In addition to providing a generalized concept of the structure and content of strategic plans, this document draws on relevant information from stakeholders, the institution’s mission and vision, and peer and aspirant plans.
SECTION I: METHODOLOGY AND POTENTIAL ROAD MAP

This section lays out the methodology used by Hanover to develop the strategic plan template, as well as a potential road map for developing a strategic planning framework for SUBR.

METHODOLOGY

This report builds on a previous report for SUBR regarding best practices in strategic planning and a Strategic Planning Stakeholders survey analysis conducted for the university. The road map for strategic planning relies heavily on the best practices identified in the previous report. In order to develop the strategic plan template presented in Section II of this report, Hanover Research synthesized best practices, peer and aspirant practices, and SUBR stakeholders’ input. The sources used for this purpose are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practices</th>
<th>Peer and Aspirant Practice</th>
<th>Stakeholder Input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Society for College and University Planning and the Planning for Higher Education Journal(^1)</td>
<td>Strategic plan and strategic planning documents from peer and aspirant institutions, as listed in Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Strategic planning surveys of SUBR students; parents; alumni and friends; employers and community stakeholders; and administrators, faculty and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional content identified in Hanover Research’s previous report for SUBR on best practices and benchmarking in strategic planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>The mission statement, strategic planning documents, and existing commitments of the university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the best practices input includes strategies employed by other institutions, the goal of this report is to develop a strategic plan template specifically suited to SUBR. Accordingly, the template seeks to incorporate practices at peer and aspirant institutions, as defined in Figure 1.1.

POTENTIAL ROAD MAP

The strategic planning process is a continuous cycle, involving plan design, implementation, and evaluation, as well as stakeholder engagement, the maintenance of strategic planning mechanisms, and alignment with the budgeting process. Some of the most critical steps are listed below, aside from the creation of the strategic plan documentation.

- **Forming or strengthening a strategic planning committee that includes a variety stakeholders**
  While the strategic planning process follows a cycle, the formation of a strategic planning committee initiates the cycle. The university should either create a committee specific to this round of planning or strengthen an existing planning committee. This committee should include stakeholders from a variety of areas within the university, as well as relevant external stakeholders.²

- **Creating implementation and monitoring mechanisms**
  In order to understand the institution’s progress toward implementing the strategic plan, an individual or an entity within the institution must monitor the implementation of the plan’s components. This can be a duty of the planning committee or another entity within the administration, but it is vital to have an actor responsible for monitoring. Accordingly, the institution must also set up the mechanism by which relevant information is reported to this individual or entity.³

- **Developing an implementation plan and specific action plans**
  While the strategic plan is not an operational plan, the university must necessarily operationalize the objectives and targets in order to progress toward them. A comprehensive implementation plan, specific action plans for objectives, or both can serve to operationalize the institution’s strategic plan.⁴

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³ Ibid.
Alignment with the budget process
Since resources are a critical driver of implementation, the strategic planning process must correspond with the budget process. If the university seeks to align its budget with institutional priorities, the strategic plan should be a guiding influence. Moreover, the implementation plan must take into account the limitations imposed by the university’s budget.\(^5\)

\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 15-16.
SECTION II: STRATEGIC PLAN TEMPLATE

This section begins with general considerations when creating a strategic plan and the major components of a strategic plan template. The focus then shifts to more detailed review of the individual potential components of SUBR’s strategic plan, combining SUBR stakeholder survey input, best practices, and content drawn from peer and aspirant institutions.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In developing a strategic plan, it is important to consider a wide variety of related issues. This report discusses four important general considerations, including terminology, timeframes, measurement, and flexibility.

Terminology

Various strategic plans use the terms ‘objective’ and ‘goal’ to mean a variety of things. While it is not important for any particular institution to use a specific set of terms, it is critically important for everyone at the university to understand the meanings assigned to these terms within the strategic plan. In plans studied for this document, ‘goal’ typically refers to a higher, broader level than ‘objective,’ and this document emulates that hierarchy.

Timeframes

In creating a strategic plan and associated objectives, it is critical to consider the implementation of the plan. The implementation stage is tied directly to the timeframes required for key action steps. As a result, it is important to establish realistic timeframes that are neither too short nor too lengthy. Short timeframes may lead implementing actors to over-simplify an issue, and they typically imply an assumption that an issue complex enough to be part of the strategic plan is also simple enough to be completed in a year or two. On the other hand, setting a target too far into the future without an intermediate target may lead to lower prioritization and indicate a lack of commitment.

Measurement

There are three major components related to measurement, including choosing quantifiable indicators for the strategic plan’s objectives, confirming that each indicator is appropriate, and establishing a baseline measure. The first issue primarily entails confirmation that the desired indicators can be quantified and captured. Relatedly, it is of paramount importance to identify indicators that are appropriate for a given objective. While this should be straightforward, it is important to reflect thoroughly on the extent to which a given indicator actually measures the intent of a given objective. Finally, it is helpful to establish a baseline measure for each indicator to ensure an understanding of the current situation and the ability to measure progress toward a given objective.

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6 Ibid., p. 11.
7 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
Flexibility

A strategic plan should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing conditions at the university. Whether these changes are demographic, academic, institutional, budgetary, or of another nature, it is important for the strategic plan to articulate the institution’s priorities in a way that withstands and adapts to change.8

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF STRATEGIC PLAN TEMPLATE

The subsections below cover the major components of an institution’s strategic plan, as follows:

- **Vision Statement** - This is optional, and SUBR does not currently provide one. However, it can help the institution articulate its vision for its future.

- **Mission Statement** - The mission of Southern University and A&M College, an Historically Black, 1890 land-grant institution, is to provide opportunities for a diverse student population to achieve a high-quality, global educational experience, to engage in scholarly, research, and creative activities, and to give meaningful public service to the community, the state, the nation, and the world so that Southern University graduates are competent, informed, and productive citizens.9

- **Contextualization** - This is optional, and SUBR does not currently provide one. However, it can help the institution identify its current challenges and the context that shapes its strategic planning process.

- **Strategic Goals** - Sometimes organized within broader themes, these are typically broad goals, such as increasing student retention or diversity.

- **Operational Goals or Objectives** - While optional, many plans break strategic goals into more specific operational goals or objectives. These might include the various aspects of retention and graduating students that would be included within a single broader goal.

- **Metrics, Targets, Strategies, and Actions** - Each objective or goal should have at least one specific, measurable target and at least one specific action, strategy, or initiative to be taken or implemented in order to achieve the target or targets. Targets should be based on measurable indicators, such as four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation rates.

- **Implementation Action Plan and Assessment Template** - When implementing the plan, it is crucial to have a comprehensive plan that addresses the actions, responsible actors, timeframes, resources, and method of evaluation for each objective.

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8 Ibid., p. 20.
MISSION, VISION, AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

Nearly every strategic plan among peer and aspirant institutions incorporates front matter highlighting the institution’s mission and vision. In most cases, this front matter also includes some other type of contextualization, such as the values or principles of the institution or a brief overview of the institution’s situation, history, and current challenges. **More than an introduction, however, these components are the foundation for the strategic plan.** They provide direction for the plan and the rationale for the prioritization and selection of goals.

VISION

SUBR does not identify an institutional vision on its website. A vision statement is typically one or two sentences and describes the institution’s expectations for its future self, embodying where the institution wants to be. Examples from peer institutions include:

- Texas A&M University-Kingsville will be a nationally recognized public university. 11
- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to becoming one of the leading centers of higher education in the Gulf of Mexico region while serving the intellectual, cultural, social, environmental and economic needs of South Texas. As a result, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi will invigorate and strengthen the region and state through its educational programs, research initiatives and outreach efforts. 12
- The University of Louisiana at Monroe will be recognized among the best-performing regional universities in the South. 13
- Texas Southern University will become one of the nation’s preeminent comprehensive metropolitan universities. We will be recognized by the excellence of our programs, the quality of our instruction, our innovative research, and our desire to be a contributing partner to our community, state, nation, and world. 14
- As an “institution of the first class,” Prairie View A&M University will continue building on a historical foundation of teaching, research, and service. Excellence through Imperatives will lead us boldly with imagination and vision to serve the state and beyond with solutions for new problems and needs. The institution will provide educational experiences leading graduates toward professional practice and meaningful societal participation; service opportunities will be enhanced through leadership development, service learning, and community outreach; and research will be conducted that includes the creation, dissemination, and assessment of new knowledge and practice. 15

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Inspired by a shared commitment to improving our communities, Indiana State University will be known nationally for academic, cultural, and research opportunities designed to ensure the success of its people and their work.\textsuperscript{16}

Norfolk State University will be recognized nationally for its outstanding academic programs, innovative research, scholarship, and global outreach, advancing the transformative power of education to change lives and communities.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{MISSION}

A mission statement is normally longer than a vision statement, and it conveys the overall mission and purpose of the institution. In some cases, the vision statement may be longer than the mission statement, but this is uncommon. SUBR’s mission statement is as follows:

The mission of Southern University and A&M College, an Historically Black, 1890 land-grant institution, is to provide opportunities for a diverse student population to achieve a high-quality, global educational experience, to engage in scholarly, research, and creative activities, and to give meaningful public service to the community, the state, the nation, and the world so that Southern University graduates are competent, informed, and productive citizens.\textsuperscript{18}

According to surveys of key stakeholders (i.e., faculty, staff, administrators, parents, students, alumni, employers, and community members), all largely agree the “university’s mission is realistic in light of its resources.”\textsuperscript{19} However, the same surveys suggest that the university could do a better job aligning its budget to its institutional mission and demonstrating its commitment to public service, as established in the institutional mission. Moreover, at least 75 percent of each stakeholder group believes that moderate to substantial change is necessary to achieve this mission, which should guide the institution’s strategic plan development.

\textbf{CONTEXTUALIZATION}

In addition to mission and vision statements, many institutions incorporate at least one of the following in the introductory context for their strategic plan:

- Values,
- Challenges,
- History of the institution
- Institutional facts


\textsuperscript{18} “Southern University and A&M College Mission Statement.” Southern University and A&M College. http://www.subr.edu/index.cfm/page/1157/n/865

These may be included in a formal section, such as the Values and Guiding Principles sections of the strategic plans for the University of California, Merced; Missouri S&T; Morgan State University; North Carolina A&T State University; Norfolk State University; Indiana State University; and the University of Louisiana at Monroe. However, there is also a variety of others means by which institutions present this information. If SUBR desires to incorporate this information, the Chancellor’s Welcome presents a similar body of text. However, a thorough review of the context in which the university finds itself and the challenges that it faces can help establish a strong foundation for prioritizing goals and initiatives. Moreover, this review can help ensure that strategic planning is aligned with the institution’s situation and challenges.

**GOALS AND ACTIONS**

The heart of the strategic plan is centered on the goals and actions it sets forth. Among strategic plans at peer and aspirant institutions, there is a wide variety of formats and structures employed. However, strategic plans normally have either three or four tiers of structure for goals and actions. These tiers cover the umbrella goals of the institution, the strategies and actions for achieving those goals, and defined metrics and targets to measure progress and performance. Many institutions provide objectives within high-level goals, which are typically few in number.

**STRATEGIC GOALS**

The strategic goals for the university summarize and synthesize what the institution is seeking to achieve through its strategic planning. These goals are typically broad, incorporating several components. Some institutions prefer more or less hierarchy, with goals grouped into themes or with goals that are directly measurable.

In determining the content of the goals, state and university system limitations and input from various stakeholders are the main drivers. For SUBR, it is important to consider the demands of the strategic planning process for the university system as a whole, the Louisiana Performance Accountability System (LaPAS), and Louisiana’s state planning for public postsecondary education. In considering SUBR’s stakeholder survey results, it is difficult to rank institutional goals across stakeholder groups. However, through ranking
goals by the percentages of respondents rating a given goal as very important or somewhat important (as opposed to somewhat unimportant or very unimportant) an approximate ranking of the goals is as follows:

- Supporting the overall academic success of students (Most Important)
- Increasing overall graduation rates
- Increasing overall retention rates
- Creating opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and credentials in high demand fields
- Identifying new sources of funding for university activities
- Enhancing the university’s regional and national reputation
- Increasing the graduation rates of under-represented students
- Improving the employment placement rate of students after graduation
- Improving communication with key stakeholders
- Increasing the retention rates of under-represented students
- Increasing support for the academic success of under-represented students
- Increasing grants and contracts activity
- Enhancing institutional network capacity
- Improving alumni engagement
- Fostering greater engagement with the local community
- Developing programs suited to dual enrollment of articulation agreements between the University and Baton Rouge Community College
- Building environmentally sustainable campus facilities
- Improving the recruitment of non-traditional students (Least Important)

Some of these goals are sufficiently broad to warrant multiple supporting objectives, while others are fairly focused. For example, supporting the overall academic success of students could incorporate several components, while increasing overall graduation rates could potentially be split specifically into four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation rates.

**OPERATIONAL GOALS OR OBJECTIVES**

Some strategic plans support goals directly and exclusively with specific actions or strategies, as well as metrics and indicators. However, many strategic plans include objectives within broader goals. The objectives ground goals that typically span a variety of related areas. Examples of objectives for the goals identified in SUBR’s stakeholder surveys could include those listed below. These are neither exhaustive nor necessary to include, but

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Hanover provides these examples as relevant sample objectives to inform the institution’s strategic planning efforts.

**Goal: Supporting the overall academic success of students**

- **Objective:** Ensure high-quality academic counseling throughout the university
- **Objective:** Ensure that students who are falling behind receive additional academic support
- **Objective:** Expand tutoring and other academic assistance programs

**Goal: Creating opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and credentials in high-demand fields**

- **Objective:** Identify high-demand fields that fit with the mission of the university and complement the institution’s current offerings
- **Objective:** Add new programs and expand current programs in high-demand fields

Sections III and IV of SUBR’s Stakeholder Survey analysis report should inform the strategic plan objectives, especially with regard to prioritizing specific components within larger institutional goals. Each objective, in turn, has an accompanying metric or target, as well as a strategy or action to meet the target.

**METRICS AND TARGETS**

Goals and objectives should have specific metrics or targets associated with them to guide implementation and measure progress. For example, an objective concerning graduation rates could establish target graduation rates for a specific year. An example from SUBR’s previous strategic plan is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal: Increase student graduation rates annually</th>
<th>One of the corresponding objectives: By 2012, increase the six-year graduation rate at SUBR to 55%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline: 2002-2008 (6 year period) graduation rate was 30.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targets may also be defined as the implementation of a plan, the creation of a department or program, or the completion of an action (such as the identification of appropriate programs to develop).

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

The specific actions or strategies within each objective or goal ground the broader direction in concrete actions and policies to be taken or implemented within the institution. While specific targets are important for clarifying the measure of success, it can be difficult to

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identify the actions and strategies that lead to achieving an objective. For example, while an objective that specifies a target graduation rate is very clear, a wide variety of factors affect graduation rates. As a result, it is very important to specify what actions and strategies the university will undertake and implement, and what actors and entities within the university are responsible for each action and strategy. Notably, this leads to the planning for implementation and assessment, and many of these actions are only implied in the strategic plan document. However, it is important to have an implementation plan that translates these goals and objectives into a working plan.  

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN AND ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE**

Implementation and assessment are critical components of the strategic planning process. While a strategic plan document may not include an explicit implementation action plan, the broader strategic planning process should clearly identify the template for implementation and assessment. These can be referred to as action plans.

An implementation template should address the following for each objective:

- The action to be taken;
- The outcomes expected or desired;
- The criteria for judging success, such as a specified value for an indicator;
- The strategy and method for evaluation;
- The actors and entities responsible and accountable;
- The timeframe, including the scheduled time to start and complete; and
- The resources required to accomplish each task.

It can be productive to address these issues at both an institution-wide level and at a department level. While it is critically important to have a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the institutional strategic plan, departments may find it easier to implement a plan specifically tailored to the department, which would dovetail with the actions of all other departments. The comprehensive implementation plan ensures, however, that objectives and tasks are not lost when splitting actions across departments.

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# Appendix

Figures A.1 and A.2 present the strategic plans at peer and aspirant institutions, respectively. The title presented is the title as it appears on the document, which is linked in the corresponding footnotes.

## Figure A.1: Peer Institutions’ Strategic Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Strategic Plan Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prairie View A &amp; M University</td>
<td>Prairie View A&amp;M University Member Strategic Plan for the Texas A&amp;M University System; System Strategic Plan 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Southern University</td>
<td>Strategic Plan 2009-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Louisiana-Monroe</td>
<td>2013 2018 Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk State University</td>
<td>Building a Legacy of Excellence 2012-2018 Strategic Plan 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama A &amp; M University</td>
<td>Focus 2015: Blueprints to Excellence 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana State University</td>
<td>Pathway to Success 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas A &amp; M University-Corpus Christi</td>
<td>Strategic Plan (FY 2011-FY 2015) 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia State University</td>
<td>N/A (none identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee Technological University</td>
<td>Strategic Plan 2010-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas A &amp; M University-Kingsville</td>
<td>Strategic Plan FY 2011-2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26 [http://www.tsu.edu/TSUstrategicplan.pdf](http://www.tsu.edu/TSUstrategicplan.pdf)
30 [http://irt2.indstate.edu/ir/index.cfm/sp/index](http://irt2.indstate.edu/ir/index.cfm/sp/index)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Strategic Plan Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of William and Mary</td>
<td>William &amp; Mary Strategic Plan FY2014-2018^34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers University-Newark</td>
<td>A Strategic Plan for The New Rutgers^35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson State University</td>
<td>N/A (none identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry</td>
<td>Vision 2020^36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The College of New Jersey</td>
<td>Strategic Profile 2012-2015^37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri University of Science and Technology</td>
<td>Strategy for Success^38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Merced</td>
<td>Beginnings: A Legacy Renewed for the 21st Century^39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan State University</td>
<td>Growing the Future, Leading the World^40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Massachusetts-Lowell</td>
<td>UMass Lowell 2020: A Strategic Plan for the Next Decade^41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina A&amp;T State University</td>
<td>A&amp;T Preeminence 2020^42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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^34 [http://www.wm.edu/about/administration/strategicplanning/_documents/strategicplan_fy14_18_040413.pdf](http://www.wm.edu/about/administration/strategicplanning/_documents/strategicplan_fy14_18_040413.pdf)

^35 [http://rci.rutgers.edu/~presiden/strategicplan/UniversityStrategicPlan.pdf](http://rci.rutgers.edu/~presiden/strategicplan/UniversityStrategicPlan.pdf)


^41 [http://www.uml.edu/docs/UML%202020%20exec%20summary_tcm18-50453.pdf](http://www.uml.edu/docs/UML%202020%20exec%20summary_tcm18-50453.pdf)

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