

UNL Survey Research and Methodology Program/Gallup Research Center

Strategic Planning

Summary of Strategic Priorities

1 Become the premier US program in cross-cultural, cross-national survey research methodology.

This priority provides the framework for several other priorities described below. It follows from our core goal to substantially improve UNL's capacity for advanced training in survey research methodology and, despite our modest size, to raise our visibility nationally and internationally as a leading program by maximizing on the special expertise of our core faculty. It reflects our commitment to declared values of the University; the pursuit of excellence and a learning environment that prepares students for success and leadership, provision of access to research and activities that foster discovery, responsiveness to diversity of ideas and people, and an engagement with academic business and civic communities throughout the state and beyond.

The strategic plan outlines numerous action items envisaged to achieve this goal. These will be ongoing activities; annual achievements towards it will include development of courses and an increase in the comparative focus of publications and student theses. The priority also presents a challenge to the unit and the University to secure the finances needed to be able to meet various pre-requisites (additional faculty, working and teaching space, technical back-up).

2 Increase our teaching contributions to the premier US program in survey methodology, the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM).

This priority reaffirms our commitment to consolidating UNL-SRAM as a top-notch program in survey methodology, aiding us in attracting strong faculty and students to UNL. It is consistent with core University values referred to in priority 1. Our success will be measured by the degree to which we strengthen UNL presence in the JPSM in the coming year and beyond. A number of the specific actions planned to realize this goal relate to technical considerations, such as multiple-way teleconferencing and teaching space, as well as JPSM expectations and requirements for instructors and courses.

3 Expand and enhance the existing relationship in teaching, training, and research between the UNL Survey Research and Methodology Program/UNL Gallup Research Center and The Gallup Organization, Omaha.

Our existing excellent cooperation with The Gallup Organization takes many forms, as outlined in our strategic plan, and plays a critical role in the success and continuing growth of UNL SRAM/GRC. This collaboration provides a unique opportunity to engage in teaching and research with business and civic communities locally and further afield.

Actions the unit will explore to realize this priority include discussing the potential of cooperation in international and cross-national research and teaching. Measurement will be monitored in terms of intensified and/or new initiatives together over the course of the next few years.

4 Establish international networks of collaboration in teaching, research, joint proposals, training, and exchange to heighten the international character of the UNL SRC/GRC unit and its program.

Building on the strong international connections of our core faculty, this priority is our second major initiative to excel in teaching and research whilst further defining

our particular comparative and international profile. Numerous specific actions outlined in the unit's strategic plan are currently being pursued. Our benchmarks for success are based on increased co-operation in teaching, exchanges, research and publications.

Priorities 5, 6 and 7 relate to new administrative and technical aspects of the UNL-SRAM Program and the GRC as the University considers the best location for the program within the University.

5 Secure a permanent budget for the Survey Research and Methodology Program/UNL Gallup Research Center to create the stability needed to sustain and enhance a Unit culture and identity that will promote growth in excellence.

6 Decide on a university "home" for the Survey Research and Methodology Program/UNL Gallup Research Center consistent with the marked interdisciplinary character and needs of the Program and its faculty.

7 Solve pressing needs for working space and technical support shorter term; longer term secure an on-campus location for SRAM/UNL GRC.

Securing a permanent dedicated budget for the program is an ongoing priority that relates to realizing other priorities. It reflects the challenge to find resources needed to realize our commitment to excellence in the Program and Center. Deciding on a university "home" is part of the 2005 brief from the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to the Program and the Transition Team and relates to our commitment to ensure a learning environment that optimally benefits our students and the University. It looks to strengthen growth in excellence and performance by maximizing existing potential and resources and increasing collaboration. Priority 7 reflects that certain basic pragmatic requirements must be addressed to be able to target the growth in excellence in teaching, research, networking and consultation outlined in our strategic plan. Progress towards all these priorities is partly dependent on decisions external to UNL SRAM/GRC. The aim is to achieve priority 5 and 6 by 2007; priority 7 is in part only possible longer term.

8 Intensify research collaboration and output related to the comparative research goals of other priorities

Intensifying connections to comparative research collaborations, such as large-scale international survey programs, will help us to create the program profile targeted in priority 1 and further defined in priorities 2, 3, and 4. It is also a means of adding critical mass to the activities possible for such a small number of core faculty.

Underscoring values of diversity and outreach to communities across the world, we seek to create opportunities that inform teaching and foster discovery, providing students with experience in real world research environments. Progress will be incremental and directly and indirectly measurable over time.

9 Target Program growth in excellence

We reaffirm commitment to this priority. Action points developed to assist us meet our objective include developing internal databases that will enhance mentoring and monitoring, recruitment, and internship placement as well as reviewing and refining recruitment procedures and outreach. Our progress across time will be charted in the databases.