

Planning Assumptions July 2011 – June 2016

Economic

1. Inflation will remain under 4% and short-term interest rates are likely to remain low in the short term and then gradually continue to rise. However, healthcare expenses and the cost of oil will continue to significantly outpace inflation.
2. Banking practices, access to general banking facilities and credit markets, will continue to evolve as financial institutions recover from the economic crisis.
3. Unemployment and the labor markets will continue to dominate the general economic recovery.
4. The exit strategy for the stimulus plan will have a significant impact on inflation, monetary policy and overall economic recovery.
5. The implications of the impact of Health Care Reform will have to be evaluated for businesses and individuals.
6. The economy will improve gradually over the long term, but the short term forecast is weak.
7. Fund raising trends include the following: 95% of the money is coming from 10% of the donors; people are making larger gifts to fewer charities and feel more strongly about having a purpose identified for their gift, rather than giving to a general fund. Attention to natural disasters will continue to divert charitable giving away from higher education.
8. Increased cost of living will lead to a shrinking number of middle class families in the greater Metropolitan area and will press workers to find second jobs, limiting their access to education.
9. Fund raising in the not-for-profit sector will continue to be highly competitive; corporate and foundation giving will continue to become more restrictive; cost of fund raising will get increasing attention.
10. Federal and State government policy will emphasize economic recovery. Whatever investment is made in education will emphasize K-12 over higher education. Funding decisions about higher education will be influenced by the tension between access, affordability and assessment of outcomes.
11. Welfare policy will increasingly limit access to four-year programs as associate degrees and vocational certificates are preferred.
12. Vicissitudes in employment opportunities may make higher education seem more important or attractive to adult students.
13. State and local governments will continue to suffer from revenue pressure and remain fiscally challenged for the next several years and state budget procedures will present increasing economic challenges to higher education.

Social

14. The availability of federal dollars to Higher Education will be directly connected to defense spending and economic recovery.
15. Federal and State support of education will continue to diminish and be subject to competing political agendas.
16. Increasing social/personal/health problems continue to impact the institution as higher education is expected, sometimes in law, to assume responsibility in dealing with these issues.
17. The increase in diversity will remain a major fact of life for the nation and institutions of higher education. Implications of diversity, ethnic as well as socio-economic, will not be adequately addressed.
18. Social networking such as *Facebook* as a means of communications is becoming pervasive and institutions will be challenged to integrate it effectively as a communication tool.
19. Traditional age women and their families will continue to undervalue liberal arts and women's colleges.
20. Issues of civility are likely to dominate quality of campus life and expand into electronic communications.
21. In the American Catholic Church there are rising expectations regarding the issue of Catholic identity for Catholic higher education.
22. The demographics of the Ursulines of the Eastern Province will continue to require the College to be vigilant and creative in sustaining and promoting its Ursuline heritage.
23. Rate of career changes in a lifetime will continue; new and shifting career paths will increase.
24. Aging of American population will have significant impact on society and higher education.

Competitive

25. Higher education will receive increased scrutiny on the issue of cost and college tuition will continue to be a focus for public policy discussion.
26. Women's colleges will continue to experience challenges in this planning period.
27. The case for liberal arts education will need to be made more clearly and more widely publicized as the society, particularly students, increasingly view higher education as a commodity to be judged by occupational returns for investment of time and money.

28. Aggressive marketing among all higher education institutions will be a source of increased competition; therefore institutions will need to project a distinct institutional image and a positive presence in the media.
29. The addition of the Wellness Center has enhanced CNR's marketability (recruitment of student athletes).
30. Competition for adult students will continue to increase. At the same time, declining access to public institutions, due to decrease in state aid to the public sector, will represent opportunities for the independent sector of higher education.
31. The issues of student outcomes including employment and indebtedness will loom larger in public perception impacting admission and retention decisions.
32. Student expectations will continue to expand regarding living facilities, classrooms, labs and technology: modern facilities, user-support, broadband access to multimedia content, along with its use in the learning environment and online administrative services such as registration and billing.
33. As public institutions seek additional funding, competition will intensify for diminishing federal and state funds as well as funding from foundations and corporations.

Technological

34. Institutional success will increasingly depend on effective electronic marketing for enrollment and fund/friend raising.
35. The role of technology will increase as an academic tool, as the subject of academic study, as a vehicle for communication, marketing and fund raising and for administrative and pedagogical support.
36. Occupational and career paths will continue to assume technological competence.
37. Higher education institutions will be increasingly challenged to shape technology and its uses to human purposes.
38. Higher education institutions will incur greater demands and regulations to maintain appropriate technological security as students make increasing use of instant communication, self publication tools and social media.
39. Emerging technologies will bring significant challenges to traditional faculty roles in the teaching-learning paradigm. Institutions will be challenged to provide cohesive learning environments as students make increasing use of instant communication and self-publication tools.
40. Distance learning activities, full online programs as well as hybrid and blended courses, will dramatically increase but will also become more regulated.

41. Speed of change in technology will continue to accelerate obsolescence and cost.
42. Higher education will be increasingly challenged by ethical and social issues associated with the increasing number of new websites and software.

Demographics

43. The number of high school graduates in the northeast region, our primary recruitment area, will decline over the planning period; the composition of the college-going traditional age cohort is equal in importance to the size of the cohort.
44. The adult student population will continue to constitute more than 50% of college enrollments nationally.
45. The fastest growing segment of the population seeking education will be adults searching for retraining or second careers.
46. The college-going population will bring increasing challenges to provide access to students with disabilities and those economically and educationally disadvantaged.
47. Students will come with new expectations in learning style and communication style that emphasize multitasking, informality, immediate feedback, social networking and multisensory stimuli.

Political/Legal

48. Colleges will continue to experience the impact of external regulations on curriculum, access and administration and the costs associated with them.
49. State and federal support for higher education will be contingent on accountability; financial aid regulations will continue to become more complex and contain biases against non-traditional students; compliance monitoring costs will increase.
50. The national political environment will depict higher education as a national resource to be regulated. Public call for accountability and the high cost of federal and state aid have added regulatory and reporting responsibilities.
51. The state and federal government will continue to view institutions of higher education in terms of the benefits of research and the economic contributions made to local communities, rather than in terms of access and empowerment of individuals and the benefits of a learned populace.