

## **Potential Strategic Directions (8/21 Strategic Planning Retreat) and Combination of Directions**

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On August 21, 2018, the College of Education, Health and Human Services hosted a retreat with 97 participants spanning all four schools, and all roles within the college. Approximately fifty percent of the participants were current EHHS faculty, twenty percent were EHHS administrators and staff, twenty percent were Kent State staff members, friends of EHHS (alumni, retired faculty) and area partners, and the final ten percent were students. We struggled to find students who were able to attend the retreat, and plan to pursue feedback from students during the open feedback periods of the planning process.

The participants were split in to six teams representing areas of the Kent State University Strategic Roadmap. Each team worked through a series of group exercises informed by the Society for College and University Planning's Integrated Strategic Planning model. The teams were: Students First, Innovation, Research, Global & International Engagement, Regional Impact, and Organizational Stewardship. Each team was charged with identifying potential strategic directions and potential approaches for addressing these directions. It was anticipated that the teams' work would be mutually reinforcing and overlapping in some areas, while distinct in others.

At the retreat, twenty-four potential strategic directions were identified, along with some approaches that could be used to pursue these directions. Each strategic direction is presented (by planning team) with a brief description of the discussion leading to its identification. Selected approaches are presented in order to clarify what is meant within each strategic direction, but these will be revisited after the first open feedback period. It is likely that many of the identified approaches will be useful across multiple strategic directions. As expected, the planning teams' conversations often overlapped each other, and some redundancy in proposed strategic directions occurred. At the conclusion of this document, an explanation is provided of how the 24 potential strategic directions from the retreat were grouped in to the 11 presented on the EHHS feedback survey.

### **Students First Team**

#### Student support infrastructure

*This direction emerged from group discussion, particularly during the SWOT analysis. The team determined that diversity in our faculty, staff, and students, along with student support were top-ranked weaknesses for EHHS. The team unanimously determined that declining enrollment is a substantial threat to EHHS. After completing the SWOT and STEEP analyses, our team linked multiple strategic issues to this direction—infrastructure, declining student enrollment, and a lack of diversity.*

#### Student well-being

*This direction emerged from group discussion, particularly during the STEEP analysis. During the analysis, many student well-being issues were raised including: mental health, non-traditional student needs, and realistic career opportunities. Supporting mental health/student health is a strategic opportunity for EHHS. The team recommended the college do as much as possible to “support the holistic health and wellness of all EHHS students.”*

#### Instructional excellence

*In discussion throughout the entire day, instructional excellence was mentioned and held up as a major priority. Instructional excellence was a focal point of the STEEP and SWOT analyses. The team identified technology and quality of instruction as presenting strategic issues and opportunities (for improvement and growth). Providing the highest quality of instruction was determined to be central to our existence, and the importance of utilizing cutting-edge technology was also regarded as critical.*

## Communication

*The need for improvement in communication and marketing was present in discussion throughout the retreat. The team identified the following weaknesses: communication to students, communication within institution, and extent of public relations. Potential approaches included “improve our social media and internet footprint”, “improved communications in regard to student services available to EHHS students”, improve relevancy of marketing strategies”, and “improve strategic marketing and communications to advance EHHS mission.”*

## Innovation Team

### Identify and increase new markets for student enrollment and improved retention

*All participants agreed that improving enrollment through recruitment and retention should be a top priority for our College (noted in the STEEP analysis). In order to do so, the group suggested tapping into what they considered to be “new markets” of students throughout the U.S. Relative to other NE Ohio schools, KSU is viewed “favorably,” which should work in our favor. They did acknowledge that most of our prospective students are still probably going to be coming from NE Ohio or Ohio in general, but that we should try to focus our recruitment efforts outside of NE Ohio, as well.*

### Improve the college’s ability to communicate who we are and what we do

*During the SWOT analysis, the team discussed two populations that we need to do a better job of communicating with: 1) our prospective student population, and 2) our alumni network. They felt we needed to communicate the return on investment (ROI) of Higher Education to prospective students. This is due to a declining view (in the United States) of the need for a college degree, along with students graduating with degrees they view as “unmarketable.” The group felt that students would benefit from learning more about what jobs they could pursue in different program areas, how much a degree costs, and what their potential salary could be in their career field. One team member also felt as if we had untapped potential within our alumni network, and majority of the team believed that better external marketing could help with recruitment, retention, and alumni engagement.*

### Prioritize diversity as a core value of the College

*The team acknowledged all of the diversity work our College is already doing, and noted that the term “diversity” was not included in our draft mission statement. Due to this fact, they felt diversity should be emphasized as a core value of the College to ensure that our stakeholders know that we are already doing the work to make EHHS more diverse and inclusive. In particular, they cited hiring more diverse faculty as a necessary approach to prioritizing diversity within EHHS. The team also brought up the need for more support for minority students, but the need for hiring more diverse faculty seemed to emerge as the main approach for this direction.*

### Emphasize importance of supporting mental health initiatives

*During the STEEP analysis, mental health awareness was categorized as “high impact” and “high likelihood of occurrence.” The team members agreed that this is an issue EHHS is already trying to create awareness of, but that we aren’t quite there yet due to lack of resources and proper physical space. They talked about how mental health awareness is a university-wide initiative, but that EHHS does great things for the cause—specifically through the Counseling Center. The team discussed several programs that KSU is already doing to promote mental health awareness, and how EHHS faculty, staff, and students could participate in those programs.*

## Research Team

Support culture of research with intention and infrastructure

*This statement reflects the group's conversation around the need for more resources (e.g., more funding, pre-award and post-award support), a desire to build mechanisms for collaboration (interdisciplinary, intercollegiate, intracollegiate funding and research; mentoring program), the need for expanded internal and external communication specific to research, and the group's recommendation to develop an incentivized structure of differentiation (e.g., specialize in teaching vs. specialize in research). Post-retreat feedback provided an example approach, and all other participants that responded indicated satisfaction with the way the PSD and approaches were summarized.*

## Global and International Engagement Team

Improve internal and external communication and communication planning

(Originated from group's original strategic directions 1 and 2)

*The team's STEEP analysis revealed a lack of student and faculty awareness, skills, and willingness to act to promote an inclusive and equitable learning environment, the existence of ever-expanding/ever-changing technology, including the digital divide, and a Kent-centric mentality as forces impacting the College. Relatedly, the team's SWOT analysis identified a lack of international and global awareness and communication as a college weakness, while also identifying several opportunities relative to partnership and collaboration development and sustainment that also related to communication.*

Increase funding and resources devoted to global activities

(Originated from group's original strategic directions 3, 4, and 5)

*The team's STEEP analysis revealed a lack of funding for international activities, limited research on the economic needs of the college international community, and the condition of college facilities as forces impacting the College. Relatedly, the team's SWOT analysis identified EHHS tenure and promotion practices that do not recognize international and global endeavors as a weakness, and the impact of the political environment on funding and international/global endeavors as a threat.*

Provide incentives to faculty to engage in internationalization of the curriculum

(Originated from the group's original strategic directions 4, 5, and 7)

*The team's STEEP analysis revealed a lack of student and faculty awareness, skills, and willingness to act to promote an inclusive and equitable learning environment and a lack of funding for international activities as forces impacting the College. Relatedly, the team's SWOT analysis identified EHHS tenure and promotion practices that do not recognize international and global endeavors as a weakness.*

Professional development

(Originated from the group's strategic directions 6 and 7)

*The team's STEEP analysis revealed a lack of student and faculty awareness, skills, and willingness to act to promote an inclusive and equitable learning environment and the existence of ever-changing/ever-changing technology, including the digital divide as forces impacting the College. Relatedly, the team's SWOT analysis identified tenure and promotion practices that do not recognize international and global endeavors as a weakness.*

Relationships/partnerships

(Originated from the group's strategic direction 8)

*The team's STEEP analysis revealed a lack of student and faculty awareness, skills, and willingness to act to promote an inclusive and equitable learning environment, the existence of ever-expanding/ever-changing technology, including the digital divide, a Kent-centric mentality, and the complex political arena both domestically and internationally as forces impacting the College. Relatedly, the team's SWOT analysis identified 1) the Gerald Read Center and its initiatives, 2) the college's internationally-engaged faculty staff, and 3) EHHS leadership supportive of internationalization and international/global efforts as strengths, a lack of international and global awareness and communication as a weakness, strengthening and enhancing diverse and sustained partnerships that emphasize international and global endeavors, including those with other KSU divisions (e.g., Office of Global Education) as opportunities, and the impact of the political environment on funding and international/global endeavors as a threat.*

## **Regional Impact Team**

### Foster a collaborative culture

*Collaboration was identified as a weakness on the primary SWOT analysis and received top-two support during the second phase of the SWOT analysis. This finding was corroborated by the STEEP analysis; therefore, it was pulled to the list of top priorities by the group and the "improvement of collaboration" was voted as one of the top potential strategic directions. Through discussion, it naturally came out as the top priority as it guides the other PSDs.*

### Strategize service and outreach

*Professional outreach was identified as a substantial strength on both the primary and second-phase SWOT analysis. The second-phase SWOT analysis results led to a vibrant discussion of what EHHS expects, defines, and values in service and outreach. Because of the lack of emphasis EHHS puts on service and outreach for faculty and staff, it was out on the list of top priorities by the group and the "strategize service and outreach" was voted as one of the top potential strategic directions.*

### Develop new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships

*Partnerships were not only identified on both the SWOT and STEEP analyses, they were also major themes of the "Important Components of Regional Impact" activity. During the SWOT analysis, partnerships (potential and existing) were listed as both as a strength and opportunity. EHHS has the potential to have a tremendous impact on the region through the sheer amount of partnership opportunities, both corporate and non-profit, that can be connected through the program areas in addition to existing partnerships. Because of the great potential, "Develop new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships" was voted as one of the top potential strategic directions.*

### Commit to diversity

*Lack of diversity was identified as one of the top two "Threats" in both phases of the SWOT analysis. Participants identified the lack of diverse hires, lack of diverse student enrollment, and lack of understanding of the term "diversity." Diversity should include non-traditional students, regional campus students, staff members, etc. Due to the potential impact to hiring and recruitment practices, it was on the list of top priorities by the group and "Commit to Diversity" was voted as one of the top potential strategic directions.*

### Promote wellness across environments

*During debriefs of the SWOT and STEEP activities, it was determined that we have one trait that unites the college: wellness. All of EHHS programs promotes a type of wellness (social well-being, emotional wellness, or physical wellness). An overwhelming majority of the team members believed it was important to include*

*wellness, as it has the potential to be the missing piece that finally unifies our college into one unit instead of four schools. "Promote wellness across environments" was voted as one of the top potential strategic directions.*

### **Organizational Stewardship Team**

Focus on continual communication of outcomes with stakeholders and alumni

*During the SWOT analysis, team participants commented several times on the overall strength of our College, programs, and services and the potential lack of knowledge among stakeholders of our programs and services. The group, as a whole, thought more should be done to market our strengths among all stakeholders.*

Understand market characteristics to identify viability and growth opportunities in both online and traditional program offerings

*Team participants discussed both course redundancy (weakness) and online program development (opportunity) throughout the SWOT analysis. These discussions led team participants to address the need to examine program viability in order to determine if adjustments are needed. Most team participants agreed that online program development is an area that should be further examined.*

Explore opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship that increases the financial sustainability of the College

*The team discussed a number of areas of potential growth fiscal responsibility throughout the SWOT analysis. Team participants agreed that programs and partnerships should grounded in education but also fiscally prudent, if not profitable, for the College. Examining student fee structures as well as exploring innovative ways of delivery of services to students and stakeholders are areas for further consideration.*

Identify key value constructs that facilitate engagement and a culture of care that boosts progress of faculty, students, and staff

*Team participants identified morale (employee and student) to be a significant opportunity via the SWOT analysis. Many members agreed that a top-down approach to developing or enhancing a culture of care throughout the College and University is an area for further consideration. This culture of care would not only provide an avenue for voices to be heard but also become part of the "DNA" of EHHS.*

Develop consistent and continuous data-driven accountability systems that highlight student success

*Several team participants discussed the need for improved tracking of student successes and alumni. A current trend among donors is to be more involved in programs or scholarship to which they are donating. As such, several team members see the need to provide more detailed information regarding successes of both current students and alumni to both current and future donors. This same data may be utilized in improving student recruitment as well.*

An explanation of how the potential strategic directions from the six planning teams were combined into eleven follows on the next page.

## Combination of the 24 Potential Strategic Directions → 11 Potential Strategic Directions

11 Potential Strategic Directions	Planning Teams' Aligned Potential Strategic Directions (24 Original Proposed)					
	Students First	Innovation	Research	Global and International Engagement	Regional Impact	Organizational Stewardship
Accountability for Student Success	■					■
Collaboration (Internal, External)			■		■	
College Culture						■
Communication (Internal and External)	■	■	■	■		■
Diversity	■	■			■	
Entrepreneurship, Sustainability		■				■
Instructional Excellence	■					
Internationalization				■		
Partnerships				■	■	
Research Infrastructure			■			
Well-Being	■	■			■	

### Accountability for Student Success

Potential approaches within this direction included developing accountability systems that collect data that can be used to highlight student success as well as enhancing the support structures in place for our students to move them from prospective students to graduation. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the planning teams intend to impact recruitment and retention, student satisfaction, and highlight student success.

Group(s): [Organizational Stewardship](#), [Students First](#)

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Develop consistent and continuous data-driven accountability systems that highlight student success - Organizational Stewardship
- Student support infrastructure - Students First

### Collaboration (Internal, External)

This direction centers on the benefits of internal and external collaboration. Many of the disciplines within EHHS are, by nature, interdisciplinary. Collaboration can occur within the college to enhance the climate, launch projects, and enhance the community. External collaboration can and should occur in a variety of spheres. Existing partnerships must be identified, and both new *and* existing partnerships must be tracked and maintained with care. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the college will enhance the culture of collaboration by adopting an intentional approach to collaboration, as well as raise the profile of the college by intentionally engaging with partners to solve important problems.

Group(s): [Regional Impact](#), [Research](#)

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Foster a collaborative culture - Regional Impact
- Develop new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships - Regional Impact

- Support culture of research with intention and infrastructure – Research

### College Culture

The KSU Climate study informed this direction, which incorporates a variety of approaches to facilitate engagement and a culture of care that boosts progress of faculty, students, and staff. Elements of this direction include recognition of faculty, staff, and students, increasing the quality of programs and services, and ensuring faculty and staff can best use their unique strengths. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the planning teams intend to enhance both the morale and effectiveness of EHHS, while encouraging EHHS to be stronger as a college.

Group(s): [Organizational Stewardship](#)

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Identify key value constructs that facilitate engagement and a culture of care that boosts progress of faculty, students, and staff - Organizational Stewardship

### Communication (Internal, External)

Five groups focused on communication as a direction—internal communication, external communication, and communication *about* specific things (like international activities, innovative programs and practices, research, etc.). The planning teams were in agreement that EHHS needs to focus on telling its “story.” By focusing resources and energy in this direction, we can impact recruitment, retention, development of relationships with alumni and friends, partnerships (local, global, and international), and raise the profile of the college.

Group(s): [Global and International Engagement](#), [Innovation](#), [Organizational Stewardship](#), [Research](#), [Students First](#)

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Communication - Students First
- Focus on continual communication of outcomes with stakeholders and alumni - Organizational Stewardship
- Improve internal and external communication and communication planning - Global and International Engagement
- Improve the college’s ability to communicate who we are and what we do – Innovation
- Support culture of research with intention and infrastructure - Research

### Diversity

Most planning teams incorporated one or more specific references to diversity within the college as an area for growth, through recruitment of students and faculty as well as ensuring our definition of diversity is truly inclusive. Inter-cultural communication and cultural competency are also elements of this direction. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, we will enhance our college’s focus on inclusive diversity, and ensure it is treated as a priority in our work with students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders.

Group(s): [Regional Impact](#), [Innovation](#), [Students First](#)

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Commit to diversity - Regional Impact
- Prioritize diversity as a core value of the College – Innovation
- Student support infrastructure - Students First

### Entrepreneurship, Sustainability

At least two planning teams focused in on identifying new markets, opportunities for programmatic innovation, and entrepreneurship. In order to do this, research must be conducted to ensure we understand the markets in which we operate, as well as our prospective students and collaborators’ needs. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the college will pursue a research-informed approach to innovation and development in academic programs and services, and ensure the college operates sustainably.

Group(s): **Innovation**, **Organizational Stewardship**

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Understand market characteristics to identify viability and growth opportunities in both online and traditional program offerings - Organizational Stewardship
- Explore opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship that increases the financial sustainability of the College - Organizational Stewardship
- Identify and increase new markets for student enrollment and improved retention - Innovation

### **Instructional Excellence**

This direction centers on providing a high-quality instructional experience, as well as incorporating appropriate technology. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the college can continue and enhance the excellent instructional experience of students, while ensuring appropriate technology is available to support instruction, the student experience, and faculty needs.

Group(s): **Students First**

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Instructional excellence - Students First

### **Internationalization**

In order to enhance the college's work around internationalization, the planning team felt it was important to increase funding and resources devoted to global activities, provide incentives to faculty to internationalize the curriculum, and offer cross-cultural communication professional development. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the college can continue building on our existing globalization and internationalization work while expanding our engagement with international partners.

Group(s): **Global and International Engagement**

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Increase funding and resources devoted to global activities - Global and International Engagement
- Professional Development - Global and International Engagement
- Provide incentives to faculty to engage in internationalization of the curriculum - Global and International Engagement
- Relationships/Partnerships - Global and International Engagement

### **Partnerships**

Two teams identified the importance of maintaining existing relationships as well as forging new ones for collaboration, innovation, and funding. In order to do this, we must reward the work associated with forging and maintaining partnerships, and highlight accomplishments in this area. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the college can increase the number, engagement, and sophistication of our partnerships to provide opportunities to students, faculty, and staff for growth.

Group(s): **Global and International Engagement**, **Regional Impact**

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Relationships/Partnerships - Global and International Engagement
- Strategize service and outreach - Regional Impact

### Research Infrastructure

The planning team observed a need for more resources (more funding, along with pre-award and post-award support), a formal mechanism for collaboration and mentoring (interdisciplinary, intercollegiate, intracollegiate), as well as looking at the structure of faculty roles to enable greater success. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, the college can identify and implement additional mechanisms to support faculty as they increase faculty research productivity and raise the research profile of the college.

Group(s): Research

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Support culture of research with intention and infrastructure – Research

### Well-Being

Multiple planning teams identified the importance and current focus Kent State University is putting on the well-being (physical and mental health) of students, faculty, and staff. Examining the college's programs, it is apparent that well-being or wellness is a common thread across all programs. By focusing resources and energy in this direction, we can leverage our strength in promoting wellness across environments, continue to innovate, and have an impact on the well-being of our region as well as our own community.

Group(s): Innovation, Regional Impact, Students First

Original Contributing Potential Strategic Directions:

- Emphasize importance of supporting mental health initiatives - Innovation
- Promote wellness across environments - Regional Impact
- Student well-being - Students First