

# *Vision in Action*

## *Project Report*

### **Chapter III: End of the Beginning—Initial Decisions**

#### **III.1 Delivering the TCU Promise—TCU’s Strategic Agenda**

As a prelude to the Vision in Action (VIA) Project, Chancellor Boschini affirmed four basic assumptions that have served as important guideposts. He stated that TCU will:

- Become ranked near the top of Tier II National Universities
- Have a strong residential presence in and around its campus
- Seek modest increases in the number/types of quality graduate programs
- Work to increase its national visibility

From these assumptions and the two-year VIA process, a *strategic vision* for the University has emerged:

*TCU will become an increasingly more significant private university with a greater international presence.*

Achieving this vision will depend on the dedication and commitment of the entire TCU community. Specifically, it will require the alignment of strategies with goals, and the thoughtful investment of resources in those activities and initiatives that will allow us to make the vision a reality.

The following *VIA Strategic Goals* emerged from a conference: "Putting Our Vision into Action: The TCU Promise—Fall 2004 Symposium." These goals will be the cardinal points of reference for future strategic planning.

#### **TCU will:**

- **Recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff who can achieve their full potential at TCU**
- **Design a vibrant learning community characterized by distinctive curricular, co-curricular, and residential programs**
- **Sustain an environment in which rich personal interaction is enhanced by outstanding facilities and appropriate technology**
- **Accelerate TCU’s connection with the greater community: Fort Worth, Texas, the nation, and the world**
- **Couple wise financial stewardship with a well-planned entrepreneurial approach to academic opportunities**

The VIA project identified specific areas of institutional activity that contribute to institutional success. Improvement in the following areas will produce the functional outcomes that will determine success in achieving TCU’s vision:

- **Academic distinction**
- **Student selectivity**
- **Retention/graduation rates**
- **Quality of the undergraduate student experience**
- **Sponsored Research/Creative Activity**
- **Quality of the graduate student experience**
- **Implementation of new graduate strategies**
- **Quality of doctoral programs**
- **Philanthropic results**
- **Financial strength of TCU**

Critical to achieving improvement will be the design and implementation of robust assessment practices.

Table 2 presents a Strategic Planning and Management matrix which illustrates the connection between the VIA strategic goals and the functional outcomes identified above.

**Table 2: Strategic Planning and Management Matrix**

	<b>Functional Outcomes</b>									
	Academic Distinction	Student Selectivity	Retention/ Graduation Rates	Quality of the Undergraduate Student Experience	Sponsored Research/ Creative Activity	Quality of the Graduate Student Experience	Implementation of New Graduate Strategies	Quality of Doctoral Programs	Philanthropic Results	Financial Strength of TCU
<b>Vision in Action Strategic Goals</b>										
<b>Goal 1 Recruit and retain students, faculty and staff who can achieve their full potential at TCU</b>										
<b>Goal 2 Design a vibrant learning community characterized by distinctive curricular, co-curricular and residential programs</b>										

<p><b>Goal 3</b> Sustain an environment in which rich personal interaction is enhanced by outstanding facilities and appropriate technology</p>										
<p><b>Goal 4</b> Accelerate our connection with the greater community: Ft. Worth, Texas, the nation, and the world</p>										
<p><b>Goal 5</b> Couple wise financial stewardship with a well planned entrepreneurial approach to academic opportunities</p>										

This matrix will form a rigorous analytical template that will serve to guide academic and administrative support units as they develop and implement strategic and operating plans. The new strategic paradigm provided by the VIA project will require TCU’s operating budget be brought into alignment with strategies that present the greatest opportunity for creating a greater university.

The task for the Chancellor’s Cabinet is considerable. The initial steps will be aligning discretionary budget spending (amplified tangentially by the Trustees’ Strategic Initiative Fund) to the Strategic Vision. Subsequent and larger steps will be bringing existing practices into alignment; in the academic arena this will best be achieved through the existing schedule of program reviews. The parameters of review will be aligned with the VIA goals and outcomes will measured against the functional outcomes developed above. In this respect the recent initiation of the University Quality Enhancement Council will form the core of a centralized process of assessment.

**III.2 University and School/College Decision Agendas**

Planning should always be a facilitator of, not an impediment to, timely decision making. Important decisions affecting both TCU’s short-term results and long-term position have been made throughout the VIA process. Early on in VIA, Chancellor Boschini affirmed basic planning assumptions, stating that TCU will:

- Become ranked near the top of Tier II national universities

- Have a strong residential presence in and around its campus
- Seek modest increases in the number and types of quality graduate programs
- Work to increase its national visibility

Around the same time, the Trustees affirmed the decision to maintain Division 1A in football and Division 1 in other sports when it approved TCU’s joining the Mountain West Conference.

During the VIA process, the following decision agenda evolved:

- Size of undergraduate enrollment and residentiality target
- Graduate education strategy, including size, mix, financial aid, and standards
- Campus Master Plan and initial facilities investment priorities
- School/college positioning
- Future pricing strategy
- Future faculty model
- Centers/institutes strategy (framework for developing distinction)
- Allocation of initial VIA funding

### **III.3 Trustee Actions**

#### **A. November 2004**

At the November 2004 Board meeting, the Trustees approved a resolution instructing the administrative staff of the University to commence facility planning design and financing plans for:

- A new student center
- A related parking structure
- A new student residence facility
- Conversion of the existing student center for academic space
- Remodeling and Renovation of Milton Daniel Residence Hall

#### **B. April 2005**

On the morning of April 14<sup>th</sup>, the Trustees attended a symposium to update them on the Vision in Action project. Provost Donovan presented a PowerPoint (presented in [Appendix Q](#)) on VIA strategic planning efforts to date. That presentation focused on three primary areas of emphasis: holding undergraduate enrollment, defining a residentiality target, and exploring a new graduate framework. Minutes of the symposium and Trustee discussions are included in [Appendix R](#).

The following day, at the regularly scheduled Spring meeting, Board Chair Roach introduced—and the Trustees adopted—a summary of the previous day’s symposium, including the following guiding principles:

#### Undergraduate Enrollment

- 7200 should be regarded as maximum undergraduate enrollment in order to more ably fulfill the “TCU Promise.”
- Selectivity as well as the flexibility to increase diversity must be part of the enrollment process.

- Maintaining undergraduate enrollment will enhance opportunities to increase faculty/student ratios, achieve optimum residentiality, and improve graduation rates.

#### Residentiality

- On-campus living provides unique opportunities designed to ensure enriched student experience, successful graduation, and a lifelong relationship with the University.
- Currently the University finds itself in a “catch up” mode in response to student need for on-campus or University-authorized housing.
- Future housing plans must consider affordability as well as compliance with desirable living configurations for students.
- Academic experience goes beyond the classroom (including living, dining, and co-curricular space)
- University plans must consider the realities of additional housing in regard to privatized vs. university-owned facilities.

#### Graduate Programs

- The Board of Trustees must hold the Administration accountable for a sound, thoughtful, and timely approach for enhancements to graduate education as part of the ongoing strategic planning process.
- Such an approach should include careful analysis of community needs, the viability of both professional and traditional advanced degrees, and the assessment of existing programs.

In addition to adopting these principles, the Trustees formally endorsed the Administration’s proposed priority initiatives:

- Maintaining undergraduate enrollment at a maximum of 7200 students over the next five years
- Enhancing residentiality to approximately two-thirds of the undergraduate enrollment
- Enhancing the capacity for graduate education over the next decade

### **III.4 VIA Funding Methodology**

On July 18, 2005, a group of University faculty and staff came together at the request of VIA co-chairs Donovan and Munson to discuss funding for VIA initiatives. The Trustees had approved \$1,800,000 for the 2005-06 academic year specifically for VIA activities. This fund is projected to grow to \$11,700,000 for the 2009-10 academic year. Monies for VIA are by their nature not incremental. Rather, such funds are designed to provide “seed” money to seize opportunities to create new programs that further the goals of VIA. The participants were asked to design a prototype application, decision process, and assessment methodology. Two structured focus groups consisting of the following individuals were employed:

#### Focus Group 1

Cathy Coghlan, Facilitator  
 Shawn Kornegay, Recorder  
 John Singleton, Recorder  
 Karen Baker

Marcy Girton  
Brian Gutierrez  
Tracy Syler-Jones  
Rhonda Keen-Payne  
Dan Powell  
Dan Short  
Steve Weis

Focus Group 2

Catherine Wehlburg, Facilitator  
Donna Johnson, Recorder  
Darron Turner, Recorder  
Mike Butler  
Bonnie Melhart  
Mike Russel  
Ann Sewell  
Scott Sullivan  
Hao Tran  
Cheryl Wilson

Sharon McAteer, Conference Recorder

Each group worked to develop a Request-for-Funding prototype through a structured series of topics. At the end of the day the two groups came together to discuss their separate thinking. A side by side comparison of the group recommendations is presented in [Appendix S](#).

Conferees from each group assembled on July 22, 2005, to work out the differences and develop a single document. Conferees included:

Karen Baker  
Brian Gutierrez  
Bonnie Melhart  
Rhonda Keen-Payne  
Dan Powell  
Mike Russel  
Ann Sewell  
Hao Tran

Their deliberations resulted in the application and process for VIA funding, presented in [Appendix T](#).

### **III.5 Concluding Activities**

The TCU community traditionally comes together early in the fall semester to celebrate the opening of the new academic year. The 2005 Convocation was held at 11 AM in the Ed Landreth Auditorium on the TCU campus. Chancellor Boschini spoke of TCU's 133 year history. He also chose the occasion to speak of the two year VIA Project and his dreams as they relate to the future of TCU. Chancellor Boschini's remarks can be found in [Appendix U](#).

The TCU Trustee Executive Committee held their regularly scheduled meeting on September 13, 2005. Chancellor Boschini asked Provost Donovan to provide a report on the strategic planning process, *Vision in Action*. Provost Donovan introduced two notebook documents: “Vision in Action: Defining TCU’s Preferred Future, Executive Summary” and “The College and School Plans - Strategy in Focus.” Provost Donovan reviewed the Executive Summary with the Committee and reported that planning documents had been symbolically turned over to the Chancellor at a recent meeting of University administrators. He reported the Town Hall concept would continue to be used as a means of allowing the University community to participate in pertinent discussions. Such a meeting is scheduled for September 14 and will focus upon the retention or successful graduation initiative. He reported that a process had been developed by which faculty and staff could make application for funds from the Trustee's Strategic Initiative Fund.

Provost Donovan pointed out points of convergence between school and college plans as well as the intent to conduct feasibility studies for possible graduate programs. He reiterated that wise stewardship was key as strategic planning initiatives are linked to campaign priorities.

Chairman King suggested that a final summary of phase one be presented at the Fall 2005 Board meeting with a summary to be distributed prior to the meeting for Trustee review. Trustee Alexander emphasized he did not view the process as being over but as an on-going process by which the University can continually plan and assess existing programs. He noted that the Board should be apprised of ways it can be actively involved on an on-going basis as well. Chancellor Boschini noted that he views the process as now moving to a second phase during which the University must decide which projects should play a prominent part in campaign planning and as well develop periodic reports to the Board concerning University progress towards VIA initiatives.

Trustee Schollmaier indicated he believed the report diluted the importance of a residential presence for the University. Provost Donovan responded by stating that VIA documents clearly report desired residentiality as two-thirds of the undergraduate student population.

Chairman King indicated that VIA would be featured on the agenda for the Fall 2005 Board meeting and that a condensed summary of the effort should be available to trustees.

## **Epilogue: VIA Vision and Transition to Continuous Planning**

### **VIA Vision**

The strategic vision for the University that has emerged from the VIA process is:

*TCU will become an increasingly more significant private university with a greater international presence.*

Accomplishing this vision will depend on the dedication and commitment of the entire TCU family. Specifically, it will require the alignment of strategies with goals, and the shrewd investment of resources in those activities and initiatives that present the greatest opportunity to contribute to achieving the vision.

VIA has identified specific areas of institutional activity—levers for competitive movement—that contribute to institutional competitiveness. Improvement in the following areas will determine success in achieving VIA’s vision.

- Academic distinction
- Student selectivity
- Retention/graduation rates
- Residentiality
- Sponsored programs results
- Graduate enrollment proportion
- Doctoral degrees awarded and recognition/ranking of programs
- Philanthropic results
- Financial strength

### **Trustee’s Strategic Initiative Fund—Initial Investments**

Initial VIA funding decisions for the 2005-06 academic year, totaling approximately \$400,000, were made during the spring semester of 2005. These allocations include:

- A significant increase in funding selected graduate stipends with the strategic intent of increasing the number and quality of individuals attracted to the TCU graduate program;
- Commencing the “Successful Graduation” initiative, a program that aims to decrease undergraduate attrition significantly within five years;
- An academic CD, whose purpose is to better prepare incoming freshmen for the challenges of the new environment that they are facing. This CD links to the “Successful Graduation” initiative (above) and to more robust strategies with respect to academic advising and preparation;
- Establishment of a Center for Child Development, emphasizing the training of personnel who can give direct aid to children from challenging backgrounds; and
- Support for aspects of the Transitions Program for undergraduates, a program that takes a holistic approach to the problems and possibilities facing our students.

### **Making VIA Investments through the Trustee’s Strategic Initiative Fund**

Each school/college Strategic Plan contains proposals for enhancing the competitive position of the unit, and, by extension, the University. The first step in making VIA investment decisions is to extract a strategic developmental agenda from each school/college plan, an agenda that provides a logical path of sequenced actions (and one that clearly presents the interdependencies of actions). With these developmental agendas in hand, University leaders can use the “levers of competitive movement” as criteria in evaluating VIA grant proposals.

The initial application cycle for Trustee’s Strategic Initiative Fund grants will commence with the opening of the 2005-06 academic year. The grant application will be available with a submission deadline of October 10, 2005. \$1.4M of the initial \$1.8M will be made available for initial year funding. Project evaluations and announcement for 2005-06 funding will conclude no later than Nov. 16, 2005. This calendar will be evaluated to determine the application cycle for future grant periods. A copy of the grant application can be found in [Appendix T](#).

### **VIA Linkage to Advancement Activities**



A key component to the future of VIA and continuous planning is direct linkage with University advancement activities. Planning for the next comprehensive campaign is currently in process at TCU.

The colleges, schools, athletics, student affairs, library, and other units have submitted major funding objectives. These proposed objectives emerged from unit-based plans and, along with those from other areas of the University, are being reviewed and prioritized. The Development Office is assessing the fund raising feasibility of these objectives. Many of these proposed new programs, enhancements to existing programs, building projects, endowed funds, and scholarships, (among other funding initiatives) will become featured objectives of the next campaign.

Once the list of featured objectives is determined, the Chancellor and Provost will seek endorsement from the TCU community. The Board of Trustees must then approve these proposed campaign objectives.

Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Don Whelan will make a presentation on the status of campaign planning and implementation to the Board of Trustees at the annual fall meeting in November 2005.

### **Transition to Continuous Planning**

The major milestones of the 26-month *Vision in Action* Strategic Planning Project are highlighted in the project calendar below.

<b>CALENDAR FOR <i>VISION IN ACTION</i> STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY SUMMER 2003 – FALL 2005</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
June 27, 2003	Strategic Planning Group Retreat directed by Chancellor
September 1, 2003	Appointment of Strategic Planning Co-Chairs and Steering Committee
September 1, - December 15, 2003	Review and complete <i>The Commission on the Future of TCU</i> Report Card
September 15-16, 2003	Initial meeting with Strategic Planning lead consultant George Kaludis and selected University staff and Trustees
November 17, 2003	Chancellor appoints members of the Economic Review Committee, Research and Data Committee, and strategy papers groups
December 2, 2003	Chancellor hosts a dinner for the members of the strategic papers groups and outlines his expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size, Mix, and Residentiality</li> <li>• The TCU Experience</li> <li>• Academic Directions</li> <li>• Connections to Communities: TCU,</li> </ul>

	<p>Fort Worth Region and Texas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for Athletics</li> <li>• Learning Resources</li> <li>• Technology Infrastructure</li> </ul>
January 15 – May 15, 2004	Strategic paper groups identify critical issues, define information/data needed to answer questions, interview/survey individuals/populations, offer recommendations and identify high level resource implications
January 16, 2004	Vision in Action communication plan accepted
March 10 – December 3, 2004	Eight (8) Town Hall meetings held over the lunch hour inviting input on selected topics
March 24, 2004	Environmental Scan Conference held to assess trends in society and higher education and their impact on TCU
April 17, 2004	Freese & Nichols selected to develop an updated Campus Master Plan
April 19, 2004	Economic Scan Seminar held to review the essential elements and trends of the TCU economy
May 20, 2004	Update of Technology Master Plan completed
May 24-25, 2004	VIA Steering Committee reviews drafts of six strategy papers
June 1, 2004	Strategy papers sent to Kaludis & Associates for synthesis
June 15, 2004	Strategy papers and Technology Master Plan posted on VIA website for review
June 20, 2004	Kaludis Consulting returns synthesized document to Drs. Donovan and Munson
June 29, 2004	Meeting of VIA Steering Committee and six conveners to review synthesized document and seek Cabinet approval
June 30, 2004	Drs. Donovan and Munson send official charge to deans for school/college-based planning papers
July 1, 2004	Synthesized document posted on VIA website for review
August 30, 2004 2-5:00 p.m.	Mini-Conference on strategic agenda with VIA Steering Committee and conveners
September 11, 2004 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	All Campus Conference featuring synthesized strategic document
Prior to November 5, 2004 (Fall Board of Trustees meeting)	Master Plan Revision returned from planning firm
Mid-December 2004	Submission of school/college-based planning papers followed by review
January 24, 2005 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.	“VIA: Finalizing Our Strategies” – Drs. Donovan and Munson review the results and preliminary recommendations resulting from

	the strategic planning process
January 25, 2005	Chancellor reviews and discusses VIA recommendations to the Board with the Cabinet and Dr. Munson
February 3 & 4, 2005	Presentation and discussion of VIA to Board of Trustees at winter meeting
April 14, 2005	Trustee VIA Symposium in advance of Spring 2005 Board of Trustees meeting
May 18, 2005	VIA update given to Executive Committee of Board of Trustees
May 31, 2005	Completion of Outline of the Project Report which will reflect the milestones of the VIA project
June 1, 2005	Develop the calendar and theme for the capital campaign
June 1, 2005	Provost announces initial Via funding initiatives for 2005-06 academic year to Academic Deans
June 15, 2005	Establish in conjunction with the Office of Marketing and Communications a plan to inform and continually reinforce the notion of strategic planning, assessment, and continuous improvement for all TCU stakeholders
July 1, 2005	Submission to the Chancellor of the recommended operational plan to insure planning, goal setting, assessment, and continuous improvement are embodied in the TCU culture of the future
August 22, 2005	Opening luncheon for all faculty and staff. Theme of Chancellor's remarks: thank you to the community and progress report of VIA efforts with emphasis on moving forward.
August 2005	Retention consultancy and intervention strategies begins (concludes 2007)
Fall 2005	Beginning of the undergraduate advisement audit

*Revised 5/15/05*

To reiterate TCU's VIA vision:

***TCU will become an increasingly more significant private university with a greater international presence.***

In detail, TCU's Preferred Future emphasizes that the University ethos will embrace:

- High Quality
- Brave Visions
- High Purposes

In practical terms this means that the University will accelerate its commitment to:

- An expansion of the boundaries of knowledge;
- A literate response to the solving of problems and engagement with possibilities;
- An assumption of responsibility;
- A commitment to ethical standards;
- A deep respect for human dignity and human rights; and
- A commitment to the development of the full potential of all members of the University.

At the same time the University will constantly reference a heritage that is both firmly rooted in academic tradition and rich in personal history. In effect, TCU will embrace the ethos that connects its origins with its future.

*Vision in Action—the Project* concludes with the publication of this document. *Vision in Action—the Strategic Methodology* begins with the publication of this document. TCU is committed to a strategic philosophy that is dependent on the dedication and commitment of the entire TCU family. Specifically, the methodology requires the alignment of strategies with goals, and the shrewd investment of resources in those activities and initiatives that present the greatest opportunity for achieving the vision.

One of the major features of continuous strategic planning is the ongoing identification and exploration of strategic issues—as one set of issues is addressed through the planning process, another set is defined. For TCU, the first set of post-VIA Project strategic issues includes:

- Further development of distinctive schools as a means of achieving desired institutional positioning and furthering creation of strong interdisciplinary programs;
- School/college engagement with the broad strategies (stable undergraduate enrollment, 2/3 residentiality, targeted growth in graduate enrollment) articulated through VIA, e.g., optimum school/college size within 7200 undergraduate enrollment; and
- Preparation of support unit strategic plans to facilitate achieving the primary VIA goal—raising the academic profile of the institution—and implementing the academic strategic plan

By embracing continuous planning, TCU can transition with confidence to a dynamic and well-planned future.