

## PPG – Introduction to the Task

### 1. Tightrope issues for how we do the work:

- Audacious but realistic
- Transparency v. confidentiality
- Tacking: forward progress v. consultation/review by other constituencies (Campus community; Parents; Trustees; others?)
- Conviction v. Flexibility: “it is a bad plan that does not allow for modification.”

### 2. What will be the same:

- The plan must be based on a **realistic financial model** that assures a balanced budget.
- The process must be as inclusive, consultative, and transparent as possible to ensure that the resulting plan represents “**a shared vision**” of the path we will pursue together. This means that faculty, students, and staff must be represented on the central planning committee (a new PPG) and that trustees must be appropriately involved through the existing committee structure of the board as well as “committee of the whole” discussions. In addition, key documents and recommendations will be shared with the campus community at large, as well as with parents (through Parents Council), alumni (through the Alumni Council and alumni gatherings around the country, and the community (through the Board of Associates).
- The plan must be **mission-driven**, and it must be **strategic** (that is, it must leverage existing strengths to respond to imminent challenges and to advance the College). We must continue to evaluate new initiatives on the basis of **enrollment impact** as well as cost.
- The planning process will be **data-driven** and include **benchmarking** with peer/competitor institutions. While we should be prepared to take risks we will not make strategic decisions on anecdotal evidence, personal hunches, or comfortable preconceptions.

### 3. What will be different:

- The plan must address the new **demographic and economic realities** that challenge Muhlenberg and colleges like ours.
- There will be more emphasis on **innovation by substitution** and **cooperative sharing**. We cannot count on significant expansion of resources as we did in the first strategic plan: there is no appetite for expanding enrollments nor is it realistic to believe we can launch a new capital campaign immediately. We will need to focus more intensely on sharing resources and on reallocating resources from activities, programs, and projects of lesser or marginal importance to opportunities offering greater promise. As one result, **the bar for major construction projects** will be much higher.

### 4. What issues are likely to be important?

- We must seek to strengthen Muhlenberg’s competitive position in a rapidly changing admissions marketplace.
- We must review the current importance of previously identified priorities from the earlier plan that have not been completed (e.g. greening the campus core, construction of a new art studio building).
- We must think even more boldly and creatively about important emerging trends in pedagogy, outcomes assessment, public policy, technology, and the shifting structure of higher education.
- We must consider ways to leverage our LVAIC consortium and other collaborative opportunities to add value at low cost.
- We must consider how to make the most efficient use of our resources (facilities, academic schedule, academic calendar, time to degree, etc.).

### 5. Questions about the timeline, topic list, or approach? Suggestions?