

## II. Overview

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### A. Organization of the Plan

With a focus on providing extraordinary education, creating research with impact, building a dialogue with society, and fostering a community with distinction, Smeal’s strategic plan charts a course for making the college one of the “Top 5 Public” business schools in the nation over the next five years.

Section II lays out where we currently stand relative to our peers and offers a brief summary of the vision and goals that will close the gap between Smeal and the current top programs. This section also explains the process by which we arrived at the strategic ends and means described in the plan.

Section III explains in much greater detail that reaching “Top 5” status will not be measured solely by the myriad college rankings reported in the popular media; rather, the college is focused on achieving distinction by realizing goals that define academic quality.


To accomplish this overarching goal of excellence, Section IV puts forth specific priorities and initiatives for each area that will move us toward a top status. This section also describes “higher-order” themes, which transcend the specific goal boundaries and impact the entire college. Focusing on these integrative themes is vital to the success of each of the four areas’ priorities and initiatives.

Together, from the broad focus areas of education, research, dialogue, and community, to the detail of student/faculty ratio and doctoral stipends, this plan is a blueprint for continuing and enhancing excellence at Smeal, and positioning the college among the “Top 5 Public” business schools in the nation.

### B. Defining ‘Top 5 Public’

Our vision at Smeal is to be a “Top 5 Public.” Measured in various ways, this vision is achievable through our work on four fundamental goals over the next five years:

- Providing an extraordinary education for our students
- Supporting and producing top research that impacts the academy and society



'Top 5 Public' Programs have scholars who make a difference in their field(s), inspire in the classroom, and are leaders in the college and larger intellectual communities—they are “Towering Scholars.” “Top 5 Public” programs have faculty, staff, and students who are supported through budgets and endowments that help them to be the best.

- Continuing to build a rich dialogue with society
- Growing a diverse community defined by distinction, honor, and respect

A “Composite Top 5 Public” program was constructed to allow benchmarking on various dimensions. Drawn generally from statistics available through data from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and ratings media sources (e.g.,

*BusinessWeek*), this work compares averages of top peer institutions and Smeal along various dimensions. “Top 5 Public” is a metaphor for being a program that is performing at a similar or superior level on various dimensions to those programs that are considered as being “Top 5 Public” business schools in the media rankings for undergraduate and MBA. These programs include:

- University of California, Berkeley\*
- University of Michigan\*
- University of North Carolina\*
- University of Texas\*
- University of Virginia\*
- University of California, Los Angeles (MBA only)\*
- Indiana University
- University of Wisconsin
- Ohio State University
- Michigan State University
- University of Illinois

*\*Considered “Top 5 Public” in media rankings*

There are, of course, other publics and privates that can contribute to our aspirational model, and they have been utilized in unit plans. However, for the college’s overall plan, below we have defined a set of “Dimensions of Excellence,” and we have incorporated those dimensions in our planning discussions.

“Top 5 Public” means taking a leadership position in those attributes that define excellence and that, as a community and as a top public university, are critical for being a preeminent program. That’s why these dimensions drive much of the thinking in this plan. Dimensions of comparison with peers that are available publicly include:

- Endowment
- Class size (student/faculty ratio)
- Publications per faculty (total, in top journals, and impact)
- Classroom rigor (*BusinessWeek*’s “Academic Quality” survey)
- Contemporary curricula (Web site reviews)
- Placement and starting salaries

Other dimensions of excellence we support include:

- Learning leadership (e.g., pedagogy, student development, and instructional support)
- Research impact (e.g., citation indices)
- Diversity and climate (as indicated by climate assessment)
- Integrative thinking (cross-program and thematic leveraging of content)
- Curricular customization (choice within our resources)
- Advising (customized for the individual student)
- Assessment and continuous improvement

The following chart is a snapshot of how the college currently compares across a set of dimensions with other business schools. The comparison is done through creating a “composite program” along various dimensions from schools recommended by Smeal’s academic departments (see list above). We also look at the average of the Big Ten programs. More detailed information on the colleges included in the composite average and Big Ten average is included in Appendixes A and B.

<b>DIMENSIONS OF EXCELLENCE: BUSINESS SCHOOL COMPARISON</b>			
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Smeal</b>	<b>Average of Composite Top 5 Schools</b>	<b>Average of Big Ten Schools<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Operating Budget (2006-07)</b>	<b>\$48,745,959</b>	\$73,925,554	\$63,169,825
<b>Business School Endowment (2006-07)</b>	<b>\$72,958,336</b>	\$292,650,487	\$147,440,296
<b>Participating Faculty (2007-08)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>124</b>	140	113
<b>Full-Time Enrollment (2007-08):</b>			
<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>5,492</b>	1,494	2,860
<b>MBA</b>	<b>174</b>	661	320
<b>Executive MBA</b>	<b>100</b>	188	132
<b>Special Master's</b>	<b>30</b>	196	186
<b>Doctoral</b>	<b>69</b>	59	76
<b>Total Full-Time Enrollment</b>	<b>5,865</b>	2,446	3,465
<b>Undergraduate Full-Time Enrollment to Faculty Ratio (2007-08)</b>	<b>44.3</b>	10.7	25.4
<b>Total Full-Time Enrollment to Faculty Ratio (2007-08)</b>	<b>47.3</b>	17.5	30.8

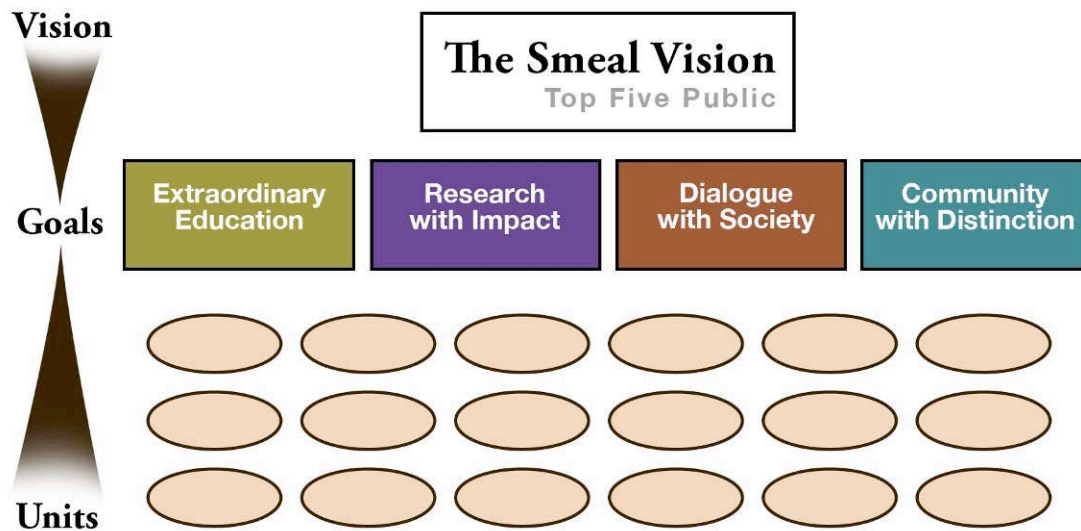
<sup>1</sup> A participating faculty member actively engages in the activities of the school in matters beyond direct teaching responsibilities. Such matters might include policy decisions, educational directions, advising, research, and service commitments.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes Smeal.

Smeal’s operating budget is 34 percent less than the average of the composite “Top 5” programs, yet our enrollment is almost two and half times greater, and our undergraduate enrollment is more than three and half times greater than the average at top five programs. Among Big Ten schools, we have twice the average undergraduate enrollment, but we operate with only a little more than three-quarters of their average budget. Smeal’s student/faculty ratio is almost three times the average at “Top 5” schools and more than 50 percent higher than the Big Ten average.


## C. Planning Process

The planning process of the college can be represented in the graphic below. Driven by a vision of being a “Top 5 Public” program and a series of strategic goals, each of the college’s 27 planning units crafted its unit plan to maximize the ability of the college to reach each goal. Details of the planning process are described in this section.



In June 2007, Provost Erickson sent a note to all University-level units asking them to engage in a strategic planning process that would result in an articulation, and an implementation plan, for where the unit would be in five years. Responding to that memo, two committees of faculty and administrators were engaged at Smeal to begin to flesh out a vision and a set of goals for the college. These discussions of the strategic direction of Smeal were derived from earlier discussions and initiatives begun in the fall of 2006. The general concepts that resulted from those discussions were presented in fall 2007 to Smeal’s Board of Visitors (BOV) and Penn State’s Board of Trustees.

The feedback from all of the bodies involved was then presented to the Management Committee at Smeal in December 2007, and the request for comments at that meeting was met with many suggestions and insights during the meeting and afterward. Those comments have been included in various ways and places in the current planning document.



Strategic Planning Council  
and Core Group

Chaired by Dean

General Membership

- Entire Committee
- Core Group

Core Group Membership

- Committee Co-chairs
- Senior Associate Dean
- Faculty Advisory Committee Chair
- Staff Advisory Committee Chair
- Board of Visitors Chair and Chair-Elect
- Business Round Table Chair
- Vice Provost for Educational Equity

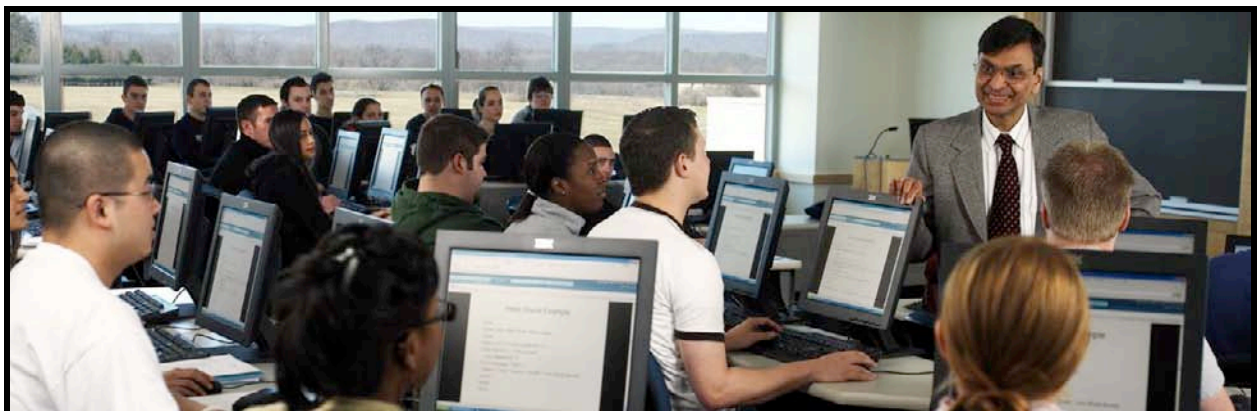
Based on all of these discussions, a planning template was prepared and distributed to all 27 planning units of Smeal, including research centers, academic departments, support units, and programs. A series of questions (Appendix C) was posed as a basis for the plans that each unit prepared. Parallel to this effort were sessions with the college’s Board of Visitors to discuss vision, goals, and the preliminary results of all the unit plans.

To review the plans (including the input from the Smeal Board), a Strategic Planning Council (SPC) was formed. The 53-member SPC consisted of a “core” group and five committees: a committee representing each of the four strategic goals of the college and a fifth committee representing budget and infrastructure issues/assessment (complete membership is found in Appendix D). The “core” group represented our various stakeholders as well as the chairs of the committees that provided

recommendations and insights for each of the strategic goal domains. While the SPC was composed of the core and the members of all the committees, getting fifty-three members together was impossible, if not unproductive. Accordingly, after an initial kickoff meeting of all members, the SPC meetings were primarily with the core (see sidebar). Committee chairs were responsible for their own committee meetings and represented their respective committees at the SPC meetings.

The SPC was given the following objectives:

- 1) Assess each unit’s plan in terms of its ability to help the college realize its goals and determine priorities for the college in terms of emphasis and investment.
- 2) Explore and recommend cross-unit initiatives that would help to more efficiently and effectively implement the college’s goals.
- 3) Establish college-level strategic competencies, investment priorities, and critical tactics to reach the vision of a “Top 5 Public” program.



In early spring 2008, each committee presented its review of the twenty-seven plans. The priorities that these committees recommended are presented in Section IV. A fifth committee (Budget and Infrastructure), using these priorities and unit-specific requests, continued to craft a long-term budget for investment in each unit.

In late April, looking at tentative budgets and after discussions with the SPC, a request was made to the provost to delay the plan's delivery date of July 1 to prepare a different view of the college's structure, budget model, and its role in the larger University community. A committee of faculty and administrators met in June and July to discuss what those alternatives might look like.

The planning cycle was completed with drafts of the strategic plan being distributed to the SPC and the full BOV, and a meeting was held to discuss their insights and input. With this input included, a second draft was distributed to the whole Smeal Community, and an open meeting was arranged to get feedback prior to the submission of the plan to Old Main. That feedback is included in this version of the plan.

