

WARNER STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2008-2012

Executive Summary

Updated as of 9/29/08

Vision informing the plan

The future of our nation is threatened by the problems facing our educational system. Improving K-12 science and math education has been identified as a national priority – yet we face shortages of qualified math and science teachers, especially in the schools that need them most. Growing gaps in student achievement by race are particularly disturbing as minority students now make up 42% of the public school enrollment. And closer to home, the Rochester City School District continues to struggle with fewer than 40% of its students finishing high school on time, 66% living below the poverty line and 20% having experienced violence in their lives.

These issues are at the forefront of our everyday work at Warner, as we strive to prepare educators who can deal effectively with these challenges, study what causes these problems so that we can propose more effective solutions, and work to put these solutions into practice. As a research school of education, we believe Warner has an important role to play in addressing our national crisis by:

- 1. Recruiting and preparing highly-qualified educators who can be leaders and agents of change.*
- 2. Conducting research that helps schools and educators better understand problems, improve teaching and learning, and increase student achievement.*
- 3. Promoting and supporting effective education reform efforts.*

Warner is uniquely positioned to make a difference in each of these areas, because of our mission to promote excellence and equity in education by bridging research and practice, our location in an urban school district with significant problems and opportunities, and our track record of quality research and large grants to fund research and reform. We also believe that we have the capacity and opportunity to contribute significantly more to the nation's education agenda, provided that we can strategically grow our faculty and acquire new facilities.

Building on recent progress

This strategic plan capitalizes on the results of an intense period of restructuring and innovation since 2000, which led to remarkable growth and achievements. Among other accomplishments, we achieved national accreditation for the first time, established a new clinical faculty track, and created a new Center for Professional Development and Education Reform that secured over \$10M in grants and \$.5M in

contracts. Over this period of time, our budget more than doubled and faculty, staff and students increased by over 65% - as shown in the table below.

<i>Category</i>	<i>FY00</i>	<i>FY01</i>	<i>FY02</i>	<i>FY03</i>	<i>FY04</i>	<i>FY05</i>	<i>FY06</i>	<i>FY07</i>	<i>Change</i>
Faculty FTEs	20.3	23.8	26.1	24.6	31.5	29.5	33.6	34.9	+71%
# funded FT doctoral students	6	11	16	23	30	33	41	40	+567%
# credits	4514	4509	4909	5058	5530	6335	7144	7528	+67%
Financial aid (in \$1000s)	575	606	602	791	936	1061	1580	1691	+194%
Net tuition	2571	2694	3170	3290	3709	4515	4927	5446	+112%
Total core revenues	3653	3761	4400	4616	5232	6109	6756	7449	+104%
Grants & other operations	469	580	1154	1390	1384	1920	1768	2131	+354%
Transfer/surplus	-	-	-	-	-	625	850	640	

Despite this remarkable growth, we remain one of the smallest research schools of education in the country. These successes not only established a solid track record, but also created a momentum we want to capitalize on.

Results of SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis we recently conducted with input from Warner faculty, staff, students, and alumni, led us to identify the following main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

- *Strength:* Competitive advantage for bridging research and practice and for conducting interdisciplinary work; accredited state-of-the-art programs to prepare practitioners in key educational fields; comparative advantage for starting programs in emerging fields; solid financial situation; momentum due to recent growth and achievements.
- *Weaknesses:* Inadequate facilities; high tuition and thus a need for greater financial aid; lingering misconception that we are “too theoretical”; small number of faculty, especially senior faculty (which presents disadvantages in terms of national visibility and competing in mainstream areas); limited donor base.
- *Opportunities:* External funding available to support education reform; potential to serve significantly more students with minimal investment in faculty; potential for new collaborations with local schools and community agencies interested in improving education; promising junior faculty; undercapitalized network of local alumni.
- *Threats:* Uncertainty of government funding; unclear demographic trends; potential reductions in employees’ tuition benefits; new competition for Ed.D. students.

Strategic goals

Building on our mission and the results of this SWOT analysis, we have identified the following goals as the foundation of our strategic plan:

1. Increase the number of highly-qualified graduates to improve the educational services offered by schools, universities and community agencies.
2. Increase research output and impact to inform better educational scholarship, policies and practices.
3. Promote research-based reform efforts to effectively address significant educational issues in the region.
4. Secure the human capital needed to achieve the previous goals.
5. Secure the facilities needed to allow for growth and create a quality educational environment.

Goals #1 and #3 will also lead to increase our impact and visibility at the regional level, while goal #2 is intended to do so at the national level.

A number of qualitative and quantitative metrics that will be used to measure our progress and success with respect to each of these goals, as well as specific targets, are identified in the full text of the Warner Strategic Plan. The most important quantitative metrics and related targets are reported in the table located at the end of this document.

Key strategies and initiatives

Pursuing our five goals will require complementary strategies – as identified in the table below and more fully articulated in the text of the Warner Strategic Plan.

Goal:	Related strategies:
GOAL #1: Increase highly-qualified graduates	1a. Keep existing programs on the cutting-edge through innovation 1b. Develop new programs in emerging areas 1c. Engage in proactive and strategic student recruitment
GOAL 2: Increase research output & impact	2a. Provide support and incentives to increase research productivity 2b. Capitalize on new ways to disseminate research 2c. Pursue opportunities to achieve greater national visibility
GOAL 3: Promote reform-based reform efforts in the region	3a. Secure grants to fund research-based reform initiatives 3b. Collaborate with other agencies towards common goals 3c. Collaborate with the Rochester City School District in reform efforts 3d. Educate the public on key educational issues
GOAL 4: Secure needed human capital	4a. Hire needed faculty contingent on student enrollment 4b. Better capitalize on local alumni as a resource 4c. Pursue greater diversity and inclusive climate
GOAL 5: Secure needed facilities	5a. Secure temporary additional space to prove growth potential 5b. Build a new facility that will allow for future additions

A number of specific initiatives have already been developed within each of these strategies, while we also remain open to new opportunities that may present themselves over the next five years. While all the twenty-five initiatives identified in

the full text of our strategic plan will play a role, below we highlight the ones with the potential to make the greatest impact:

- A. Build a new Warner facility** (*addressing Goal #5*): We propose the construction of a new 50,000 square foot building on River Campus to house the Warner School as well as state-of-the-art classrooms that could serve both College and Warner students. This bold move is necessitated by recent and planned growth in faculty, staff and students, as well as strategies designed to position Warner more centrally as a community resource and to create an optimal teaching and learning environment for our students and faculty. We need to acquire not only *more* space, but *quality* space that builds a strong Warner School community and capitalizes on best practices for teaching and learning. The building will house all Warner personnel and classrooms, and provide critical community spaces and facilities for events and community-focused professional development. In addition, the building will benefit the College by creating more classrooms undergraduates could use during the day and facilitating their planned expansion by using the prime space that will be vacated on the Quad. (*See attached Warner Building Proposal for more detail*)
- B. Launch an accelerated option for Ed.D. programs** (*addressing Goal #1*): Consistent with new developments in the field, we will offer our part-time Ed.D. students, who constitute over one-fourth of our students, the option to complete their program in three years through a more structured series of courses and a field-based dissertation supported by a year-long seminar. This new option will allow us to produce better prepared educational leaders for our region, increase enrollment and graduation rates, and compete for the best students.
- C. Secure new scholarships through gifts and grants** (*addressing Goal #1*): Scholarships are critical to attract the quality and diversity of students we want to serve, especially given our high tuition. We will proactively seek gift and grant opportunities for scholarships, especially to increase diversity, attract students in areas of greatest need and shortage (such as math and science education), and secure the most promising Ph.D. students.
- D. Transform the Center for Professional Development & Education Reform** (*addressing Goal #3*): Established in 2001, this Center has been instrumental to our ability to engage in education reform in the community and compete for major reform grants. As we move forward with our reform agenda, we need to strengthen the infrastructure provided by the Center by developing capacity in promising new areas, establishing funds to provide seed-money and financial stability, and expanding professional development offerings to local educators.
- E. Establish additional endowed professorships** (*addressing Goal #4*): Endowed named professorships represent the highest recognition in any academic field. At

present, Warner has four such professorships. Adding to this number will significantly enhance our ability to attract and retain the best faculty.

- F. **Establish a mini-grant program for faculty** (*addressing Goal #2*): In the spirit of fostering faculty grant-seeking and engagement in significant research projects, we propose to institute a program that will enable faculty to compete for internal funding to support worthwhile projects for which they sought but did not receive outside funding. This program is especially designed to support our junior faculty (representing more than two-thirds of our faculty) at critical times in their research activity, fuel long-term projects, and seize unique opportunities.

Concluding thoughts

This plan is intended to make a real difference at a crucial time in the history of the Warner School, the University, and our society. The plan is made up of key strategies, enabling tactics, and fiscal considerations. What may not be so apparent in the exposition is the strength of purpose we have in our mission – but the plan would not exist without this most important ingredient.