

# Strategy Discussion: Preparing for 50!

(2032)

June '19 Board Meeting  
NYC

# Purpose

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1. Pull together all the strands of our strategic work and thinking
2. Leverage and focus the efforts of school and board
3. Make sure working on the right issues in the right way
4. **And most importantly ...**  
**Ensure that UWC-USA is on a sustainable journey to deliver on our mission!**

# Strategy Set-up Discussion

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**Purpose:** Recap and reminder of work to-date.

1. **“Good strategy/Bad Strategy”** - framework for strategic thinking
2. **Diagnosis** – Strengths and Weaknesses
3. **Guiding Policy and Agreed direction** - Strengthening foundation is first priority (Oct '18)
4. **5 Strategic Goals** (Feb '19)
5. **Chair’s Perspective** – Substantive issues and process

**Victoria: Strengthening the Foundation** – latest thinking and progress

# 1. Good Strategy/Bad Strategy

Prof. Richard Rumelt, 2011

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Signs of a bad strategy	Tests of a good strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of a clear <b>diagnosis</b> (or wrong diagnosis)</li><li>• Mistaking long list of <b>goals</b> for a strategy</li><li>• Failure to make <b>choices</b></li><li>• <b>Fluff</b> – abstractions masking the absence of thought</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A <b>good diagnosis</b> - simplifying the overwhelming complexity of reality by identifying certain critical levers</li><li>• A <b>guiding policy</b> - an overall approach to overcome the obstacles identified in the diagnosis</li><li>• <b>Coherent actions</b> - steps that are coordinated with one another to support the accomplishment of the guiding policy</li></ul>

## 2. Diagnosis: Strengths

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- **Mission** - inspiring, important
- **Students** – diverse, challenging
- **Staff and faculty** - mission-driven
- **Location** – “unique”
- **Davis family relationship** – committed, inspiring, sustaining
- **Alumni** – maturing and increasingly engaged
- **Other**

# Diagnosis: Challenges

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- **Financial model** - under-funded
- **Donor base** – thin. Alum base still small. (Dominance of Davis relationship)
- **Competition** - increasing
- **Facilities** – aging, ad hoc, deferred maintenance
- **Location** - challenging; particularly for senior staff (turnover)
- **UWC movement model** – complex; inefficient
- **Other**

### 3. Guiding Policy – “macro framing of our choices”

Macro choice:	“Strengthen the Foundation”	“Innovate for Impact”
aka	Get our house in order...	Go for gold.... !!
Financials	Live within our means – conservative <5% draw?	Invest – run short-term deficits; draw 5%+
HR/Staffing	Good, solid, lean “Head of School”	Great, invest in leadership, etc. “President” (+ Head?)
Board	Governance	Governance +++ Fund-raising, networking, etc.
Facilities	Maintain (+ upgrades)	Transform
Cap Campaign	\$40+M (endowment) + facilities?	\$100M??
Student size	200 to 250?	200 to 250??
Etc, etc, etc.		

# Guiding Policy: Implications. “Foundation” = first priority ( per Oct ‘18 meeting)

	“Strengthen the Foundation”	“Innovate for Impact”
Mindset	Fix the basics; get it done!	Explore options; think big! (Take risks??)
Approach	Linear –known best practices, simple project plans Mission/Values alignment = guiding star	Learning /evolutionary – brainstorm, test, try
Roles	<b>Board: confirm high level goals</b> <b>Ops/Tactics: Delegated to school</b> <b>Board = resource and sounding board</b>	Primary focus of board (working with staff and community)
Probability of success	90%+	50%?
Time frame	3 years	10 to 15 years
Etc?		

## 4. Feb '19 Recap: Confirmed 5 goals to capture UWC-USA's Strategic Direction

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1. **Mission-driven people:** Attract and retain mission-driven people who recognize their power to be positive change agents in the world, starting with the values-based learning and living community that is UWC-USA.
2. **Excellent Programming:** Strengthen and develop programming that focuses the students on their power as change-agents for peace and sustainability in their own lives, in their face-to-face and virtual communities, and in the unique context of the places they find themselves in the world, starting with their two-year experience at UWC-USA.
3. **Integrated systems:** Identify, select, and implement integrated systems to support decision-making and the student experience, ensure a satisfying work environment, and maintain an excellent interface with internal and external members of the UWC-USA community.
4. **Safe and inspiring campus:** Develop a campus that is safe and conducive to leveraging the tremendous diversity our students bring to create a global, values-based community focused on developing student agency for good in their learning and living communities.
5. **Advancement and Funding:** Develop a sustainable financial model for UWC-USA to address the projected structural deficit in 2023.

## 5. Chair's Perspective: **Substantive Issues**

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### Tough “board-level” strategic issues

1. **Level of aspiration** – “good school” or “leader/innovator” (of movement and more)?
2. **Leadership** - what type leader do we need/want? How much do we invest in senior team? What structure best supports aspirations?
3. **Board composition and priorities** – how do we align to support above – skills, committees, process, succession/pipeline, etc.
4. **Immediate priorities** – where/how focus our efforts to drive progress?
5. **Facilities/Location** – how do we coalesce around a plan and reduce distractions?
6. **Financial policy/”risk”** - when/where are we prepared to run deficits to invest for future and improve quality?
7. **Budgeting** - how do we allocate funds – program, admin/development, facilities?

## Chair's Perspective: **Process Issues (re: Strat Plan)**

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1. **“Paper Churn”** – avoid multiple re-drafts and wordsmithing; boil things down into simple “plain English” list
2. **Complexity** - kills energy and progress. If it looks/feels complex, it probably is. Simplify!
3. **Dichter’s Dictum** – always start where you left off. If change/modify – explain why
4. **Beware of “uninformed PMO”** – Project Managers that just ask people to fill in spreadsheets and timelines don’t add value. They need to be able to contribute, understand the issues, exert judgment, etc.

# New work/thinking starts here

- Victoria picks it up here!

# Actions: People, Program, Systems

- Mission-driven people; Excellent programming; Integrated systems

<b>Coherent Actions</b> <i>Strengthening the Foundation</i>	<b>Coherent Actions</b> <i>Innovating for Impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fill key positions</li><li>• Rationalize compensation structure, approach</li><li>• Rationalize balanced approach to Academic/ExEd/Res Life, including in calendaring and timetable</li><li>• Restructure, staff, residential life</li><li>• Initiate values discussion, reflection; develop values vision statement, code of conduct</li><li>• Develop employee life-cycle plan, including on-boarding, orientation</li><li>• ID, assess, propose, select SIS, SBS</li><li>• Public interface: website, phone tree, parent communication</li><li>• Reconvene SPC to develop objectives with SLT, finalize strat plan</li><li>• Share strat plan with community, develop cross functional teams/action plans</li><li>• Continue restructuring towards distributed leadership model</li><li>• Develop internal communication plan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze relevance of Harvard Impact Study for UWC-USA programming</li><li>• Incorporate work of UWCCDC</li><li>• Implement findings of ISAS self-study</li><li>• Align with IO strategy</li><li>• Build new partnerships focused on Native-American, first generation, and refugee students</li></ul>

# Actions: Facilities/Grounds and Advancement

- Safe and inspiring campus; Capital Campaign

<b>Coherent Actions</b> <i>Strengthening the Foundation</i>	<b>Coherent Actions</b> <i>Innovating for Impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undertake safety review of vehicles, determine action plan</li><li>• Bat mitigation</li><li>• Classroom expansion, upgrade OSH</li><li>• Close out master plan/landscape plan</li><li>• Engage relocation study</li><li>• Determine direction for hot springs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undertake location study</li><li>• Determine direction with Master Plan</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop strategy to replace \$2M Davis Family Challenge</li><li>• Develop staffing plan, remote approach for advancement</li><li>• Develop campaign case statement and structure based on finalized strategic plan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct Alumni Survey, Focus Groups</li></ul>