When approached about presenting on using assessment to pursue top tier status, I initially thought about using a roadmap as the metaphor. But a roadmap is a representation of an existing infrastructure to get from point A to Z. Our plan for top tier is not quite that well defined.

I chose instead a metaphor where the route from here to this fantastic and strange new world is not a road. Rather it’s an almost magical doorway, a gateway to the stars.
WHAT IS OUR DESTINATION?

- "Top Tier"
- Carnegie Basic Classification:
  - Research University / Very High
- "RUVH"
- "RU/VH"
- "R1"

UNLV Now: RU/H
WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Level of research activity: Amount NOT quality or importance

- R&D Expenditures
  - Science & Engineering
  - Other fields
- Science & Engineering research staff with doctorates
  - NOT faculty
  - Postdoctoral appointees
- Doctorates awarded
  - Humanities
  - Social Sciences
  - STEM
  - All other fields combined
- Full-time Faculty
  - Research
  - Instruction
  - Combination of research, instruction, and public service

Source: http://carriegieclassifications.iu.edu/methodology/basic.php
OVERVIEW

• “Top Tier” Goals:
  - Intersections with Student Affairs
  - PROCESS of finding intersections; NOT defining them
• Targets from The Top Tier Plan
• Where are we now?
• Strategizing how to get there from here

Looking at the Top Tier Goals, I’ll highlight where I see intersections with Student Affairs. Please understand that I am showing a process for finding intersections and then expanding on them to discern how to contribute to the Top Tier Plan.

I am not advising or instructing about what the intersections ARE or SHOULD BE. Those will be discerned through the division’s strategic plan. I’m sharing a process which might help you and your departments to prepare.

Targets – again, I’m highlighting a process for you to take back to your departments and teams.
FIVE GOALS: 1 AND 2

1. Foster a climate of innovation in which faculty and students produce high-quality, widely disseminated, and influential research, scholarship, and creative activities.

2. Be a national leader in education.
   A. Promote excellence in teaching undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students.
   B. Recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse body of motivated students through the strengths of our innovative learning experiences, access to mentoring and research opportunities, and our vibrant campus community.
   C. Our highly qualified master’s students, doctoral students, and professional students will distinguish themselves and UNLV through their contributions to research, the professions, and the arts.
FIVE GOALS: 3 THROUGH 5

3. UNLV’s School of Medicine, in collaboration with other health-related units on campus and with external partners, will foster cutting-edge research, use a creative curriculum, and provide top-notch clinical programs.

4. Stimulate economic development and diversification in, and enrich the cultural vitality of, our community by deepening and expanding reciprocal connections with our partners and leveraging our unique strengths to collaborate locally, nationally, and internationally.

5. To accomplish the other four goals, UNLV will continually develop and leverage the conditions necessary for success, which will include an effective organizational structure, a state-of-the-art infrastructure, a service-oriented culture, meaningful faculty engagement in shared governance, and the capacity for informed decision-making and informed risk-taking.
FOCUSED ON GOALS 2 AND 5

• Be a national leader in education . . . . Recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse body of motivated students through the strengths of our innovative learning experiences, access to mentoring and research opportunities, and our vibrant campus community.

• Continually develop and leverage the conditions necessary for success which will include effective organizational structure, a state of the art infrastructure, a service oriented culture, meaningful faculty engagement in shared governance, and the capacity for informed decision-making and informed risk-taking.
WHAT ARE OUR TARGET COORDINATES?
...FOCUSED ON SEVEN ELEMENTS

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Graduation
- Innovative learning opportunities
- Mentoring
- Vibrant campus community
- Conditions for success
Specific targets are set for the first three, but for the latter four, the “targets” are less precise.
RELATED TOOLS FROM TOP TIER PLAN

- Improve student engagement (as measured by NSSE)
- Improve quality of student educational experiences in teaching and learning (SSI)
- Employer satisfaction with our graduates (AAC&U survey)
- Alumni satisfaction (Dartmouth survey)
- Satisfaction related to student services, campus environment, and safety
To reach those targets, we need to know where we are now.
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Begin with the end in mind...
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- Effective organizational structure
- State-of-the-art infrastructure
- Service-oriented culture
- Meaningful faculty engagement in shared governance
- Capacity for
  - Informed decision-making
  - Informed risk-taking
When discerning these conditions for success, it might help to know how other similar offices operate on our benchmark campuses. Those campuses appear in the list on the left.

Keeping in mind that our student body is more diverse than most campuses in our current or aspirational Carnegie class, the Tier One documents also identify four MSIs in our aspirational class. One of them also appears in our benchmark list.

In preparation for strategic planning, it might also help to look closely at RU/VH institutions that recently moved from RU/H to RU/VH. Find out what the transition was like in Student Affairs on those campuses.

Let's look at the conditions for success more closely and consider what kinds of information might be useful when benchmarking.
Under this heading are some ideas for elements of effective organizational structure. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive.
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- Effective organizational structure
- State-of-the-art infrastructure
  - Information Technology
  - Space utilization
  - Sustainability

Under this heading are some ideas for elements of effective organizational structure. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive.
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

• Effective organizational structure
• State-of-the-art infrastructure
• Service-oriented culture
  – Policies, processes, and procedures that foster student success
  – Customer satisfaction
  – Inclusion
  – Faculty and staff development

Under this heading are some ideas for elements of effective organizational structure. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive.
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- Effective organizational structure
- State-of-the-art infrastructure
- Service-oriented culture
- Meaningful faculty engagement in shared governance

Under this heading are some ideas for elements of effective organizational structure. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive.
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- Effective organizational structure
- State-of-the-art infrastructure
- Service-oriented culture
- Meaningful faculty engagement in shared governance
- Capacity for
  - Informed decision-making
  - Informed risk-taking
While one could argue that “F” is the best answer, the best practices (if not, in the case of theory, the only practice) for developing B-E includes a review of data.
Let’s look at data related to the seven targets identified so far.
UNLV IS A SCHOOL OF CHOICE

SCHOOL OF CHOICE:
What percent of students tell us UNLV is their top choice?

- 59%
- 62%
- 74%
- 83%

Source: Student Satisfaction Inventory, Spring 2014
Portion of UNLV students favorably endorsing satisfaction by Choice to Attend UNLV

p=.000

Met Expectations
- 1st choice: 86%
- 2nd Choice: 81%
- 3rd Choice: 67%

Satisfied
- 1st choice: 78%
- 2nd Choice: 68%
- 3rd Choice: 46%

Source: Student Satisfaction Inventory, Spring 2014
...BUT THE TARGET IS ABOUT YIELD STATISTICS?  
How do (or could) you contribute to making UNLV a prospective student’s top choice?

When you have a program or service that receives favorable reviews from students, or better yet, which is associated with retention or some other valuable evidence of student success, be sure to let Admissions know.
RETENTION
RETENTION RATE OF 80%
First-time, full-time, degree-seeking, first-year

- 74%
- 68%
- 51%
- 30%
- 29%

Source: Office of Decision Support
Making UNLV a top-choice institution among our admitted and enrolled students might help increase the retention rate. (Maybe! The data here is correlational and retrospective.)
HOW DO WE RETAIN 80% OF FIRST-YEARS?

• Track return rate of students we actively support
  – Student employees
  – Substantial contact

• Ask about (or monitor) their pre-registration
  – Are they registered for next term?
  – Are they registered for 15 hours next term?

• When they leave, find out why and inquire about their “re-entry” plan.

Here are some ideas about things to do with the students with whom you have a relationship. These actions could convey to students that “even” people who are not involved directly in their degree program want to see them succeed.
GRADUATION RATE

Image: https://www.unlv.edu/commencement/student-speaker
GRADUATION RATE: 6-YEAR (TARGET=50%)

- 47.1
- 40.5
- 36.8
- 34.5
- 29.6

Source: Office of Decision Support
No target for the 4-year rate, but it’s important to be aware of it because it contributes to the 6-year rate.
HOW DO WE GRADUATE 50% WITHIN 6-YEARS?

• Similar efforts as retention but for every year
  – Monitor return rates
  – Monitor pre-registration (and enrollment loads)
  – Inquire about reasons for skipping a term—or leaving
• Celebrate graduations—visibly!
• When we find out why someone left, can we “fix” that reason?
• Program and policy review
• Understand success stories

As on the slide for retention, these actions are examples.
IMPROVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Image sources:
https://www.unlv.edu/getinvolved/student-orgs
https://www.unlv.edu/hotel/organizations/gma
Our first-year students participated in more HIPs than their peers in our Carnegie class. Three HIPs were counted: learning communities, service-learning, and research with faculty.

- 66% of our first year students participated in one or more HIP
- 58% of their first year students did.

THIS MAY REFLECT MORE INTENTIONAL EMPHASIS ON H.I.P. PARTICIPATION OVER THE PAST THREE (3) YEARS.

For seniors, six HIPs were counted. Our seniors trailed their peers in our Carnegie class.

- 74% of our seniors participated in one or more HIP
- 85% of theirs did.

The decision to participate in HIPs does vary somewhat by student characteristics, but the intersections are complex and difficult to interpret neatly.
While our students’ ratings are significantly different in some engagement indicators, the sizes of those differences were either trivial or small. WE HAVE NO MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCES FROM EITHER OUR CURRENT OR ASPIRATIONAL CARNEGIE CLASS.

Arrows indicate if our students’ ratings were significantly higher or lower than our current Carnegie class. HOWEVER, the size of the differences were small.

Upward arrows on indicate we are slightly ahead of our Carnegie class. Downward arrows indicate we are slightly behind our Carnegie class. Dashes indicate no statistically significant difference.

Differences between trends for first-year and senior students could reflect changes made in the past three years to enhance the first year experience and boost retention. More analysis will be needed.
Our students’ ratings of the quality of their educational experiences lag behind that of students at other institutions in our Carnegie class. The difference is statistically significant.

NOTE: NSSE underwent significant revision between 2012 and 2015, so even though this item remained the same, direct comparison is not necessarily appropriate.

The 2015 figures become our new baseline.
PREDICTORS OF OVERALL EXPERIENCE

For both first-year students and seniors at UNLV:

1. Quality interactions with faculty
2. Extent that courses challenged them to do their best work
3. Quality of interactions with fellow students

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement: Spring 2015
How can you cultivate each of these starred items?

PREDICTORS OF OVERALL EXPERIENCE

For first-year students only

★ Perceived gains related to acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills
  - Instructors’ providing feedback on a draft or work in progress
★ Institutional emphasis on attending campus activities and events—such as, performing arts and athletic events.
★ Trying to better understand another person’s views by imagining how an issue looks from that person’s perspective
★ Enrollment status (full time vs lower; FT was higher)

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement: Spring 2015
How can you cultivate each of these starred items?

PREDICTORS OF OVERALL EXPERIENCE

For seniors only

★ Perceived gains in writing clearly and effectively
  • Instructors teaching course sessions in an organized way
★ Institutional emphasis on providing opportunities to be involved socially
★ Perceived gains in solving complex, real-world problems
  • Preparing for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students (inverse)
★ Institutional emphasis on helping students manage non-academic responsibilities—such as work, family.
★ Number of high impact practices (HIPs) in which the senior participated.

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement: Spring 2015
IMPROVE QUALITY OF STUDENT
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN
TEACHING AND LEARNING
UNLV Satisfaction through the Years:
UNLV Percent Satisfied with Mean UNLV Ratings

Source: Student Satisfaction Inventory, Spring 2014
UNLV significantly improved on 11 of the 12 scales between 2011 and 2014. The 11 are shown here. The 12th is Safety & Security. We showed no significant improvement on that one, but the scale is only four items, and two of them are parking related. Those two parking questions declined since 2011.

In all, however, we lagged behind other institutions nationally.

Students rated the importance of each of these scales, and the four of these with the highest importance ratings are boxed in yellow.

The item with the red star is one that most of us in Student Affairs cannot affect directly since most of us do not teach.

The yellow stars are more related to Student Affairs, especially the two with the arrows.

The remainder are much more global and could be impacted by interactions with any faculty or staff member on campus.
EMPLOYER SATISFACTION WITH GRADUATES

AAC&U Survey
SATISFACTION RELATED TO

Student Services
Campus Environment
Safety
Highlighted in yellow are the items most directly related to Student Services.
Highlighted in orange are the SSI scales most directly related to campus environment.
The last scale, Safety & Security, consists of only four items, and half of them pertain to parking. It showed poor reliability in the most recent administration. I believe we have other, better metrics to inform us about safety on campus.
Satisfaction on some of these items could be improved by making sure to communicate clear, reasonable expectations. Transparency can let students know what to expect.

If we are transparent and student do indeed hold correct and reasonable expectations but their satisfaction is still low, then how do we change our processes to help students succeed?
**GREATER OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT**

Largest gaps between Importance & Satisfaction

How can you help raise satisfaction in these important aspects?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>This institution shows concern for students as individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Student activities fees are put to good use. *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Student Satisfaction Inventory, Spring 2014
Students involved in co-curricular activities were more satisfied than students who were not involved.
From NSSE, we find similar pattern: higher satisfaction among students who were involved in cocurricular activities.

NSSE includes questions about working on campus, off campus, volunteering for community service, and providing care to dependents. Only two of those factors were significantly associated with students’ ratings of the quality of their experience here: cocurricular involvement and working off campus. 80% of involved students compared to 73% of not-involved students rated their experience as good or excellent. Among students working off campus, the difference was in whether the rating was good or excellent: more students working off campus rated their experience as excellent.
REMEMBER?
PREDICTORS OF OVERALL EXPERIENCE

For both first-year students and seniors:

1. Quality interactions with faculty
2. Extent that college provided them to do their best work
3. Connections with fellow students

Do any of these relate to quality of cocurricular involvement or working off campus?

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement: Spring 2015
Correlation .348, p<.001.

https://www.unlv.edu/getinvolved/student-orgs
https://www.unlv.edu/hotel/organizations/gma
OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION: NASPA CONSORTIUM STUDIES

😊 Campus Activities & Student Involvement (NACA)
- Career and Professional Aspirations
😊 Fraternity & Sorority Life (AFA)
- Mental Health & Counseling (CCAPS instrument)
😊 Orientation (NODA)
😊 Recreation & Wellness (NIRSA)
😊 Residence Life (ACUHO-I)
- Student Conduct (ASCA)
😊 Student Union Programming (ACUI)

More information at http://www.naspaconsortium.org

All of these studies are available for us to use at no additional charge because we are a Campus Labs member campus. Of the nine studies, seven are endorsed or cosponsored by the related specialized professional association. An eighth (MHC) uses the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) instrument, 62 validated items covering eight syndromes: depression, general anxiety, social anxiety, academic distress, eating concerns, family distress, hostility, and substance abuse. That instrument is widely used by counseling center directors across the nation.

We use six of these studies:
- Two annual:
  - Orientation
  - Residence Life
- Four tri-annual (once every three years)
  - Recreation & Wellness (2016)
  - Student Union (2016)
  - Campus Activities (2015, 2018)

We don’t have room for another in rotation with NACA and ACUI this spring, but we do have room for an additional study in spring 2017 (with FSL) and spring 2018 (with NACA).

Some may be administered in the fall—e.g., MHC, FSL, NIRSA, and ASCA. (Orientation is administered in the fall only)
WHAT ABOUT DIVERSE STUDY BODY?
Thanks for asking!!
Our students are more diverse than their peers at institutions in our Carnegie class: Self-Reported First Generation (60% at UNLV – 39% at others) Only 5 other participating institutions in our Carnegie class are designated as MSI: 2 HBCUs and 3 HSIs. None were AANAPISI. In our aspiration class, there are four—shown earlier.

- In our aspirational Carnegie class, none of the NSSE participating institutions were designated as MSIs, so I cannot benchmark them via NSSE.

UNLV compared to participating RU/H institutions

Working off campus
48% of UNLV first-years – 26% of others’ FY 66% of UNLV seniors - 53% of others’ seniors

Providing care to children, parents, or other relatives
47% of UNLV first-years – 21% of others’ FY 48% of UNLV seniors – 33% of others’ seniors

Commuting to campus
88% of UNLV first-years vs 66% of others’ FY 95% of UNLV seniors vs 88% of others’ seniors

Cocurricular Involvement
47% of UNLV first-years vs 68% of others’ FY 46% of UNLV seniors vs 57% of others’ seniors
KEY TAKEAWAYS?
THANK YOU!

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UNLV Office of Campus Life Assessment
http://classessment.wordpress.com
(in process of moving to the UNLV.edu domain)
IMAGES


• Images on “Student Engagement” slide downloaded on November 12, 2015 from the following sites:
  - https://www.unlv.edu/getinvolved/student-orgs
  - https://www.unlv.edu/hotel/organizations/gma