

# Plan for Pitt 2025

## Workshop Notes

Date: 1/14/2020

Participants: Graduate and professional students

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**Goals Exercise:** In this exercise participants broke into groups and discussed the definition of each goal included in the current Plan for Pitt, the outcomes Pitt should try to achieve for each goal in the next 5 years, and what actions Pitt is or could take to achieve those outcomes. Participants then rotated and reacted to the ideas already presented and added additional thoughts. (+ indicates other workshop participants agree with the idea; - indicates disagreement)

### Goal 1: Academic Excellence

- Define the goal – What does it mean to you?
  - Up-to-date/ state of the art educational tools; faculty access to training re: new tools
  - Invested professors (+)
  - Mastery of subject area
  - Reputation and name recognition
  - Grad-student specific (+)
  - Individualized
  - Diversifying programs
  - Emphasis on graduate programs (++)
  - Individual success = university success (++++)
  - Clear expectation regarding mentorship (+)
  - Regular evaluation of students and mentors
  - Secondary advisors to support student excellence
  - Retaining quality grad students and their achievements (+)
- Outcomes – What should Pitt try to achieve in the next five years? What does success look like five years from now?
  - Individual and personal growth (+)
  - Goals - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound (+)
  - In five years zero suicides across university; zero workplace sexual harassment (and more resources/support for survivors) (+)
  - Obtained desired job
  - Interested in cultivating the growth of others (including peers, mentors, and mentees) (+)
  - Acknowledge the value graduate students give the university as researchers, mentors, teachers (+)
- Actions – What is Pitt already doing that could help achieve success? What new things could Pitt do?
  - Prioritizing mental health and wellness, especially for graduate students (not just therapy dogs!) (++)

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- Supporting and encouraging personal, professional, and academic growth of grad students (+)
- Clarify who to contact if student is not getting the support they need
- Maintaining benefits package/spay that retain quality students, lessen the financial stress (emotional, mental) of attending grad schools so that students can succeed (+)

#### Goal 2: Research of Impact

- Define the goal – What does it mean to you?
  - Goals disparate, feels very silo-oriented (+++)
  - Unified attempts signals that impact
  - Do people know across campus those who are doing similar work? (+++)
  - What does impact mean? (+++)
    - Large populations
    - Knowledge
    - The “trendy” topic
    - Specific communities
  - Research -> different disciplines (++)
    - How can we expand the definition
    - Practical v. theory v. pedagogy
  - It is looked down by some faculty/programs when students want to pursue multidisciplinary efforts, to expand what their research could be (+++)
  - Ensuring grad students are viewed as active research producers -> supported in their work (+++)
- Outcomes – What should Pitt try to achieve in the next five years? What does success look like five years from now?
  - More support/higher increase of graduate students presenting research at conferences, other ways to promote their research (+)
  - Funding (availability, security) (+++)
  - Links of research cohorts (+)
    - Institutional support (continuation of research)
    - Flexibility for new ideas
  - Better recognition (in all forms) of the work graduate students do to support/produce research
    - Improve culture (+++)
  - Change in the overall culture of the professional/grad student space in the university
  - An understanding that academia is not the only place for research (++)

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- An increase to the different perspective in research by diversifying who is doing the research (+)
- Actions – What is Pitt already doing that could help achieve success? What new things could Pitt do?
  - Financial support (upfront) for grad student conference travel
    - Stipends, supplies (++)
  - Continuation of engagement for research cohorts (brown bag lunches, seminars are great start, but how does the work continue?) (++)
  - Share of best practices/professional development for students so they can learn skills like grant writing, or sharing ideas on how multidisciplinary can work (+)
  - Better compensation, networks, grievance processes for students (++++)
    - The ability to speak out without retribution, a variety of solutions for the variety of issues (+)
    - Signals that students are valued
  - Diversity the perspectives (non-traditional students) (+)
  - Professional development for non-academic jobs to help students take their skills outside of academia (+)
  - There are existing resources for most of this, but they are not always well advertised

### Goal 3: Strengthen Communities

- Define the goal – What does it mean to you?
  - Active industry mentors (++)
    - Connect with student leadership
  - Broaden community relationships (+)
    - Student involvement in communities (++)
    - Short courses for community members (+)
    - Need improved public transport to support these goals
  - Track % increase over time
  - Make sure communities have a place to speak up, address concerns within the institution (+)
- Outcomes – What should Pitt try to achieve in the next five years? What does success look like five years from now?
  - Track % increase in involvement in communities
  - How many neighborhoods involved in?
  - # of courses/activities/student hours outside Oakland
  - Communities' perceptions of Pitt's involvement (++)
  - Strengthen support, value to grad student leaders who provide a diversity of perspectives (+)

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- Actions – What is Pitt already doing that could help achieve success? What new things could Pitt do?
  - Presence on transportation planning board
  - Course development (+++)
    - Integrated into communities
  - High school students involved in Pitt programming (+)
    - How many apply and are accepted?
    - Do they stay?
    - Graduate?
    - Stay involved as alumni?
  - Create more shared spaces for community engagement (+++)
  - Grad student dedicated spaces (+)
  - Increase marketing of outreach opportunities
  - Keep/increase “perks” (Pitt Arts cheap seats, free bus, museums, etc.) (+++)
  - Be a good neighbor

#### Goal 4: Diversity and Inclusion

- Define the goal – What does it mean to you?
  - All are welcome
  - Gender equality (esp. women in STEM) (++)
  - Underrepresented groups in leadership positions and tenure-track positions (+++)
  - Make advisors more aware of/sensitive to related issues (++)
  - Write an Honor Code to hold offenders accountable
  - Everyone held to the same standard (+)
  - Anti-bias (required training for all, and coursework for all students at all levels)
  - Breaking down stereotypes (+)
  - Careful not to use someone as a statistic but rather value people based on merit (no “token” individuals) (++)
    - Also not using the same person over and over again as the “woman” in a committee
- Outcomes – What should Pitt try to achieve in the next five years? What does success look like five years from now?
  - Have reviewers/committees be blinded as much as possible to diversifying characteristics until after selected from candidate pools (++)
  - Look into statistics on applicants to various positions
  - Advocacy and activism on campus
    - Is there evidence of this?
    - Does the university support it ?

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- Actions – What is Pitt already doing that could help achieve success? What new things could Pitt do?
  - Education on diversity and inclusion (+)
    - Trainings, workshops – available, not required; tailored for each population (and required!) (+)
  - Diversity candidate pool (attract a range of individuals) (+++)
  - Application “double blind”; acceptance on merit and not demographics (+)

### Goal 5: Embrace the World

- Define the goal – What does it mean to you?
  - Very related to Goal #2 (research of impact)
  - Work done in countries that are experiencing upheaval (+)
    - Puerto Rico example (but consider safety!) (++)
    - Students get experience, but also research of impact in places that truly need it
    - Climate change (++)
  - Where does Pitt/Pitt students stand in international/national leadership areas (++)
    - International telecommunication union
    - Where do we get involved? Do we stop at conferences? Or do we want to contribute to institutions of change?
  - We have many different stakeholders here at Pitt, but are we really looking at how that impact the community, how it impacts the world (+)
  - Students come to school, then leave
    - How do you transition so students take what they learned for an impact for good (++)
  - International students (+)
  - Getting out of your lab to see the real world (++)
- Outcomes – What should Pitt try to achieve in the next five years? What does success look like five years from now?
  - Seeing an increase, a stronger culture that accepts more diverse (language) outcomes
    - More languages spoken, supported (+)
  - Increased global engagement
    - Trying to make a difference where it is in need
  - Monitor carbon impact (++++)
    - Decrease
    - Building small steps (reusable lunch boxes), to more critical areas like carbon footprint, fossil fuel divestment

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- Spread awareness (+)
  - Encouragement of building relationships outside of Pitt (+)
  - Another dimension -> outside academia to business, non-profit, etc. (++)
- Actions – What is Pitt already doing that could help achieve success? What new things could Pitt do?
  - Stop charging students for alternative spring break activities (- -)
  - Grants for students/faculty to build relationships/ do research with people outside Pitt (geographic-wise, non-academia) (++++) and flexibility in graduate timeline (not a setback) (+)
  - Hold more conferences to bring people together (+)
  - Flexibility to allow students to take initiative to run/start events that allow networking, etc. (+)
  - More Pitt-run/sponsored conferences around the world (+)
  - Getting Pitt outside of Pittsburgh (+)
    - Relationships established around the world, centers, conferences

### Goal 6: Foundational Strength

- Define the goal – What does it mean to you?
  - Build more diverse and inclusive faculty
    - All identities, international, LGBTQ, race, gender, employment, and background
  - More non-tenure track from industry (++)
  - Make it possible for non-tenure track faculty to make it tenure track (+++)
  - Admin leadership should reflect practical/academic experience in the field
  - Visiting professorships from industry
  - Improving digital footprint (+++)
    - Handshake
    - Pitt Commons
    - Free short courses (+)
  - Access to information (academic journals) (+++)
- Outcomes – What should Pitt try to achieve in the next five years? What does success look like five years from now?
  - Non-tenure -> tenure track faculty
  - Visiting partnerships
    - Industry professionals (+)
    - Ease of finding information (+)
  - Valuing the role/place of graduate students at the university -> a source of that foundational strength even in their shortened time here (+)
  - “core” skills all graduates of disciplines should have

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- Actions – What is Pitt already doing that could help achieve success? What new things could Pitt do?
  - Department website admins
  - Revise tenure track applications to value industry/practical experience (+)
  - Mentorship toolbox (+++)
  - Institutional support for grad student leaders at Pitt (++)
  - Invest in grad students and faculty, not law firms, by allowing unionization