To embody its mission of preparing a “diverse student population for a wide range of professional careers by providing undergraduates with a strong foundation in the liberal arts, graduate students with advanced professional preparation, and all students with a commitment to academic excellence,” Plattsburgh State University should strengthen its traditionally solid liberal arts programs and expand its professional undergraduate and graduate programs and graduate ventures with other universities. Its curriculum should anticipate and respond to marketplace needs, changing demographics, student/parent interest, and SUNY competition. Its programs should be attractively designed and named, and must be adaptable to changing times and needs in order to prevent unnecessary program and faculty cuts. The college should commit itself to programs that have long-term viability and are not tied to narrow faculty specializations, and it should continue its commitment to a vital General Education program, student enrichment, a regional mission within a 150-mile radius of Plattsburgh, and the local community. The curriculum should also facilitate student recruitment, retention, and prompt graduation, and should create the most-optimal match between quality programs and their costs, and the college’s facilities and human resources. A vital curriculum depends on a vital faculty. Competing for and hiring outstanding faculty and staff and supporting their professional growth should be a major college priority.

A long-term, college-wide Academic Planning Committee (APC) is essential for a healthy curriculum. The college should create an academic planning group representing the college’s divisions, largely composed of faculty who are trusted to make nonpartisan decisions for the college as a whole. This body should have or should develop broad expertise in curriculum direction nationwide and should become knowledgeable of the present health of local programs. In anticipating the college’s future curricular opportunities and needs, it should consult with academic units, which have the best expertise in understanding their curriculum; external evaluators; administrators; and representatives of areas that might impact curriculum planning, such as fiscal vitality, recruitment, technology. This body should be proactive and make recommendations, not just respond to crisis situations and requests for academic change from academic units. Whenever possible, the APC should recommend creating new programs and mergers of existing programs that require a minimal shift in financial and personnel allocations. Each year it should update a three-to-five-year academic plan for the college. Its membership should be elected through a campus-wide election for perhaps two-year terms with no limit on the number of terms that can be served and half of the members coming up for election each year.

Ongoing communication between the campus and the Academic Planning Committee will be crucial. An APC website should be set up to receive campus input and to report on all academic planning initiatives, and an electronic newsletter should serve as a campus-wide academic planning forum.
Among the specific suggestions campus members made for academic direction are the following:

Explore five–year combined bachelor’s/M.S.T. and bachelor’s/M.S.Ed. programs as well as graduate and cooperative ventures with other colleges, such as sharing M.B.A. and Computer Science M.S. degrees with Clarkson University.

Develop online undergraduate and graduate courses to expand our academic reach.

Develop new programs in fields like Health Science, Gerontology, Law Enforcement, Athletic Training, and Physical Therapy.

Support interdisciplinary, diversity-oriented, and international studies courses and encourage community-service involvement.

Advertise how concentrations of courses that cross departmental lines can prepare students for careers rather than relying totally on a majors/minors approach.

Reduce the paperwork involved and the barriers erected by bureaucracy in instituting academic changes.

Strategic Planning Committee
Academic Programs Interest Group Conveners:
Robert Ackland (Literacy Education)
Ron Davis (Journalism)
Rich Higgins (Admissions)
Taher Zandi (Psychology)