

**A Preliminary Road Map:**

*Report of the  
Strategic Planning  
Task Force*

**2006-2008**



February 3, 2006

Dear NAASS Member,

Our association is a strong network of dedicated professionals. Time and time again, we hear members tell us that people at NAASS are important to the member's professional and personal lives. Many professional associations provide for the intellectual and professional development of our membership as well as give voice about the profession to the wider community. This is, after all, our function and our duty as a professional association. What distinguishes NAASS is our volunteer culture which makes us care for one another in a very powerful fashion. It is, I believe, what makes our organization powerful.

Every organization, however, needs to occasionally remind itself of its roots and look forward to the future; an evolution of sort — some would say renewal. As agents of change in our own home institutions, many of us know that crafting the future is a deliberate art of planning. And so it is with NAASS.

In the fall of 2004, the administrative council struck an ad-hoc committee to initiate a strategic planning process for the association. The committee formed under the leadership of then President Carol Switzer, was chaired and directed by former president Bill Kops from the University of Manitoba. Over the next several months, the committee met to discuss the organization's strengths and weaknesses, as well as our values and goals. In October, 2005, the Administrative Council received and accepted the document prepared by the committee. This is that document.

This document sets forth a plan for change and rejuvenation of our association. It reflects deliberate and serious thought on the future vitality of NAASS as a professional association. This document has been tremendously valuable to the Administrative Council as it undertakes the direction of the association's affairs.

As a result of this document, the Administrative council has undertaken to develop strategic action steps that will give this document meaning and life. These steps are intended to guide the organization over the next three years. I would encourage you to read this document as this is a reflection of your association with other professionals in the field of summer and special term programming.

As president of NAASS, I would like to thank both the Strategic Planning Committee and the Administrative Council for their efforts with this document and further, with their efforts in leading this organization into the future.

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## Executive Summary

A position paper presented to the North American Association of Summer Sessions (NAASS) Administrative Council by then President, Cordelia Maloney, in November 2004 identified several pressing issues facing NAASS: (i) continuing membership decline; (ii) financial viability; (iii) the need to project a strong image to members and others; and (iv) effective use of administrative structure.

The Administrative Council readily acknowledged the need for an examination and analysis of these issues, and moreover, noted that this process needed to be accomplished expeditiously. As a result, the Council approved the formation of an ad hoc committee and charged it to review and expand on the issues already identified, propose both short and long-term objectives for NAASS, and suggest how the strategic planning work of the committee should be continued. The committee was directed to conduct the prescribed work within a compressed time frame and to deliver a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Council.

### Key Recommendations

The key recommendations are among many proposed by the task force, and speak most directly to the pressing issues facing NAASS.

- Establish an environmental scanning committee (ESC) to conduct annual environmental scans to identify significant external issues and trends, and to assess member interests and concerns. The ESC would submit an annual summary of its findings to the Administrative Council.
- Determine a specific target membership profile to include considerations such as overall number of members and composition of membership, and appoint a task force to develop a strategy and timeline for achieving the target membership profile.
- Establish a framework to ensure a dynamic strategic planning process is sustained in the Association. This may take the form of a committee to oversee the process on an annual basis as determined by the Administrative Council.
- Construct multi-year strategic and financial plans with goals, plans of action, revenue and expenditure targets to allow the Association to achieve expected results.
- Enhance mandates for committees with more substantive activities and greater delegation of responsibilities from the Administrative Council. As well, establish links between committees where appropriate.
- Assess the role of the Administrative Council, particularly the role of members-at-large and the Executive Secretary, and reassign duties and responsibilities to fit the Association's goals.
- Further develop the NAASS website to make it the primary communication tool of the Association.
- Review and conceptualize the assumptions and structure of the annual conference.
- Develop an "Advocate Committee" to identify opportunities and create a list of NAASS members available to speak about summer session at conferences of relevant non-summer session associations.

## **Strategic Planning Process**

Although the charge to the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) did not specify that it engage in a classic strategic planning exercise, the committee decided that the value and utility of its work would be vastly increased if it were to engage as fully as possible in a formal strategic planning process, including the creation of directional statements: vision, mission, values, and strategic goals. The following directional statements were developed:

### **Vision**

The North American Association of Summer Sessions (NAASS) is a vibrant, member driven organization recognized as the authority in matters related to summer and special sessions. Through both institutional and individual memberships, NAASS provides outstanding educational activities, mentoring, and consulting services to assist its members in developing exceptionally successful summer and special sessions. Information is shared among members throughout the year. The Association partners strategically with other premier higher education organizations to maximize the knowledge base and scope of professional contacts to its members. NAASS sponsors the definition, execution, and publication of research in areas relevant to its membership. It advocates, where appropriate, the importance of summer and special sessions programming within higher education institutions.

### **Mission**

NAASS strives to identify emerging trends and best practices, and to facilitate the exchange of information among leaders in higher education in order to continually increase academic quality, student services, and fiscal success of summer and special sessions.

### **Values**

In fulfilling the mission, NAASS is committed to:

- Promoting learning and scholarship to a diverse student population.
- Representing the varied interests and concerns of all members in all communications and activities.
- Promoting effectiveness, accountability, and transparency as a professional association.
- Ensuring the financial vitality of the Association through a dynamic strategic planning process.

## Strategic Goals

1. To enhance the knowledge and skills of higher education professionals involved in summer and special sessions by identifying the most significant current and emerging issues, promoting the exchange of information, and providing a wide range of professional development opportunities. (Professional Development)
2. To enhance the value of summer and special sessions by identifying best practices and by fostering innovation and research. (Quality and Research)
3. To establish and maintain a vital, energetic professional community. (Membership)
4. To respond to evolving needs of members by continually assessing and refining the Association. (Evaluation and Continuous Improvement)
5. To develop, maintain and follow strategic and financial plans that ensure the health and overall effectiveness of the Association. (Fiscal Accountability)
6. To maintain a positive awareness of summer session within higher education circles, and advocate, where appropriate, for the importance of summer and special sessions in higher education. (External Advocacy)

## Implementing the Strategic Plan

The strategic goals as outlined will enable NAASS to attain its vision in the foreseeable future. The recommendations identified under each goal have been articulated with a minimum of detail to allow the Administrative Council, with input from the broader membership, to develop a more detailed plan for action.

When reading the report, please keep in mind the context in which this study was undertaken — the limitations of time and the particular nature of the charge — and the possible implications for further study. It is suggested that the Administrative Council consider the implementation of the ideas outlined in the SPTF Report, *A Preliminary Road Map*.

## Background to the Report

A position paper presented to the NAASS Administrative Council in November 2004 by then President, Cordelia Maloney, identified several pressing issues facing NAASS:

- Continuing membership decline
- Financial viability
- The need to project a strong image to members and others
- Effective use of administrative structure

The paper also noted several inherent structural impediments: NAASS' one-year presidential term; the lack of a strategic plan for the Association; and the essential absence of structure to support continuity from one administration to the next. Mobilizing to respond in a comprehensive manner to these and other important issues presented a significant challenge to the Association. The Council readily acknowledged the need for an examination and analysis of these issues, and moreover, noted that this process needed to be accomplished expeditiously. As a result, the Council approved the formation of an ad hoc committee and charged it to:

- Review and expand on the issues already identified
- Propose both short and long term objectives for NAASS
- Suggest how the strategic planning work of the committee should be continued

The committee was directed to conduct the prescribed work within a compressed time frame and to deliver a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Council.

### Strategic Planning Task Force

By way of acknowledging both the difficulties involved in launching a strategic planning exercise and the limits of the time available at the conference, the Administrative Council (at the conference in Halifax in November 2004) appointed an ad hoc committee. The committee was charged to explore the issues listed above and deliver a report to the President and the Administrative Council by the end of April 2005. The report was to include: a proposed strategic agenda for the next two to three years, a list of near term initiatives; areas for further research and development; and a proposal for continuation or evolution of the committee in its advisory role. The committee, which adopted the name of the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF), consisted of Bill Kops, Chair (University of Manitoba), Karen Heikel (University of Minnesota, Duluth), Tom Kowalik (Binghamton University), Allyson Morris (Regis University), Carol Switzer (Arizona State University), and ex-officio members Cordelia Maloney (University of Illinois, Chicago) and Aaron Thompson (Eastern Kentucky University).

## **Defining and Executing the Charge**

Although the charge to the SPTF did not specify that it engage in a classic or full-blown strategic planning exercise, the committee decided unanimously during its first teleconference meeting in December 2004 that, despite the constraints and special conditions of its charge, the value and utility of its work would be vastly increased if it were to engage as fully as possible in a formal strategic planning process<sup>1</sup>. The SPTF felt further encouraged to proceed in this way because of the expertise of two committee members, Tom Kowalik and Aaron Thompson, in facilitating this kind of process.

The SPTF met on a number of occasions via teleconference between December 2004 and April 2005 to set the agenda and timeline for the work, to develop the particulars of the review and planning process, and to review and discuss results at various stages in the process. Also, there was a face-to-face meeting on March 4, 2005 in Chicago, where the majority of members were attending the annual meeting of the North Central Conference on Summer Sessions. In addition to the meetings, the work of the task force was conducted electronically via e-mail.

The strategic planning exercise undertaken by the SPTF consisted of three parts: 1) Environmental and Organizational Scan (SWOT); 2) development of directional statements; and 3) development of recommendations. The Environmental and Organizational Scan, which sought to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (challenges) to the Association was conducted via an online survey of NAASS members. The survey was sent to 348 members; 64 (18.4%) responded. While the SWOT was being conducted, the SPTF itself engaged in a collaborative, iterative development of directional statements (vision, values, mission, strategic goals). Subsequently, using a similar process and referencing both the directional statements and the survey results, the task forces developed a set of recommendations.

## **Findings and Recommendations — and How to Read Them**

The SPTF feels strongly that what follows in this report is both informed and of significant value to NAASS. The report is written to reflect the confidence the SPTF has in the findings. However, those reviewing the report are reminded of the context in which this study was undertaken: the limitations of time and the particular nature of the charge — and what this may imply for further study. Please also note that where the term summer and special sessions is used in the report, it is meant to be inclusive of summer session and other sessions of a similar nature, e.g., courses are offered outside the regular session and taught in a compressed format.

## Environment and Organization

The environment consists of factors external to an organization that directly and indirectly influence it. The health and well being of an organization are dependent on the environment in which it functions and NAASS is no different in this regard. In an effort to determine what factors influence the Association, the SPTF conducted an online survey of members. This process, known as environmental scanning, allowed members to contribute their perspectives to the strategic planning exercise on trends that are impacting summer sessions, generally, and NAASS, specifically. The survey also polled members regarding the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities facing the Association. The members' responses were summarized and are outlined below.

### Trends Impacting Summer Sessions and Their Implications for NAASS

The membership was asked to identify the trends they felt were impacting summer sessions, and the implications of these trends on NAASS. Following are the most frequent issues cited and their implications for NAASS:

- **Increase in online course offerings:** Online courses at universities and colleges across North America continue to increase. This trend is seen in summer session as well as in other terms. In instances where delivery of online courses is not controlled by summer session, enrollments in summer may decrease, which could result in a decline in interest in NAASS. Conversely, where online courses are offered as part of summer session, the resulting enrolment growth could have a positive impact on the Association.
- **Changing structures/leadership roles in summer session:** Changing structures of summer sessions at universities are occurring in a variety of ways, including decentralization of summer session to colleges, split of summer session from continuing education units, and change in reporting lines of summer sessions to the office of the registrar. This trend may result in the disappearance or diminishment of the role of the summer session dean/director. This could result in a decrease and/or change in the composition of NAASS membership.
- **Rising tuition costs:** Rising cost of higher education results in a loss of summer session enrolment at universities as students find cheaper tuition alternatives such as community colleges or they simply chose to work in summer to earn regular session tuition. If summer enrollments decrease, NAASS membership could decline as a result. On the other hand, the pressure to speed up time to degree may add to the importance of summer session and impact positively on NAASS.
- **Loss of distinctiveness of summer session:** Blurring of the traditional mandate of summer session occurs when intensive courses are offered year round and summer session becomes part of year round planning. This changes the focus away from summer session as a distinct term. Units (deans/directors) with more general responsibilities will likely not have as great an interest in summer session and value less a membership in NAASS.
- **Impact of international issues on visa restrictions and study abroad:** International issues that translate into visa problems for foreign students and decreased mobility of an institution's students affect summer session. Given that international programs are a key part of many summer sessions, this diminishes

both the enrolment and comprehensiveness of programming in summer session. The difficulties resulting from international issues could also have negative influence on NAASS membership.

- **Forecast of future downturn in enrolments:** Demographic trends suggest that by the end of the decade there will be fewer high school graduates, which, in turn, will impact university enrolments. If the trend is a decline in post-secondary age students, this will predictably decrease enrolments in summer session, which could have a negative influence on NAASS.

### **Organizational Strengths and Weaknesses**

Recognizing the strengths and challenges facing an organization is critical to plotting future direction. The idea is to develop strategies to build on strengths and overcome obstacles. NAASS has significant strengths on which to build, but it is also faced with a number of challenges or obstacles that must be overcome if it is to continue to be successful in the future. The membership was asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges facing NAASS.

#### **STRENGTHS:**

- NAASS is recognized for a sense of camaraderie with members who are open and welcoming, and are always ready to share their expertise. The Association has membership breadth with a variety of institutional types represented.
- NAASS offers a great opportunity for learning because of the open, collaborative, ready-to-share attitude of its members.
- NAASS provides good value for money by offering a range of member services, including a listserv, annual conference, newsletter, and publications.
- The annual conference offers an opportunity to meet colleagues and discuss topics that are relevant to summer sessions.

#### **WEAKNESSES:**

- While its members are a primary strength of the Association, lack of membership involvement is a weakness. NAASS appears to some to be closed; resembling an “old boys/girls club.” There is limited recognition of the breadth of member expertise, which results in limited participation by the majority of the membership, and restricts interaction other than at the conference.
- Because NAASS restricts its focus to summer sessions, it is not widely recognized in academia, and as a result is marginalized. Its narrow focus is at odds with the multi-tasking of members who perform a variety of non-summer session roles at their institutions. NAASS appears isolated for a number of reasons, including few connections to other organizations, an influence that is primarily limited to North America, and no apparent long-term vision.
- Member services are considered by some as a weakness, specifically it is difficult for some members to attend conferences because of the cost and time required to travel to distant locations. Others judge conference topics as not substantive, and still others find it difficult to maintain an interest in the Association other than attending the conference. For example, the newsletter does little to connect members to the Association.

## **Opportunities and Challenges for NAASS**

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- NAASS could take a more active role to lobby/advocate the position of summer sessions to governments and university administration.
- NAASS could broaden membership on a number of fronts — internationally, with links to other organizations, and inclusion of community colleges.
- NAASS could be more active in developing and disseminating research, national data, and best practice in summer session.
- NAASS could actively seek to collaborate with other relevant associations and organizations.

### **CHALLENGES:**

- Membership needs to be stabilized and targets set for recruiting new members.
- NAASS needs to develop new means to ensure an ongoing connection with members over and above the conference. The organization also needs continually to evaluate the annual conference in terms of its relevancy and cost to members.
- The context of summer session is changing, and NAASS needs to respond meaningfully to the changing role of summer session and summer session deans/directors.
- Technology in learning is growing rapidly in higher education, and NAASS needs to respond to the impact online learning is having on the traditional role of summer sessions.

## Directional Statements

### Vision

The North American Association of Summer Sessions (NAASS) is a vibrant, member-driven organization recognized as the authority in matters related to summer and special sessions. Through both institutional and individual memberships, NAASS provides outstanding educational activities, mentoring, and consulting services to assist its members in developing exceptionally successful summer and special sessions. Information is shared among members throughout the year. The Association partners strategically with other premier higher education organizations to maximize the knowledge base and scope of professional contacts to its members. NAASS sponsors the definition, execution, and publication of research in areas relevant to its membership. It advocates, where appropriate, the importance of summer and special sessions programming within higher education institutions.

### Mission

NAASS strives to identify emerging trends and best practices, and to facilitate the exchange of information among leaders in higher education in order to continually increase academic quality, student services, and fiscal success of summer and special sessions.

### Values

In fulfilling the mission, NAASS is committed to:

- Promoting learning and scholarship to a diverse student population.
- Representing the varied interests and concerns of all members in all communications and activities.
- Promoting effectiveness, accountability, and transparency as a professional association.
- Ensuring the financial vitality of the Association through a dynamic strategic planning process.

### Strategic Goals

1. To enhance the knowledge and skills of higher education professionals involved in summer and special sessions by identifying the most significant and emerging issues, promoting the exchange of information, and providing a wide range of professional development opportunities. (Professional Development)
2. To enhance the value of summer and special sessions by identifying best practices and by fostering innovation and research. (Quality and Research)
3. To establish and maintain a vital, energetic professional community. (Membership)
4. To respond to evolving needs of members by continually assessing and refining the Association. (Evaluation and Continuous Improvement)
5. To develop, maintain and follow strategic and financial plans that ensure the health and overall effectiveness of the Association. (Fiscal Accountability)
6. To maintain a positive awareness of summer session within higher education circles, and advocate, where appropriate, for the importance of summer and special sessions in higher education. (External Advocacy)

## Recommendations

The strategic goals, with accompanying recommendations, are designed to suggest what might be done, i.e., to provide a road map for action. Some recommendations are more specific than others, and still others provide examples to illustrate what may be considered (but are not specific recommendations). Additional examples may be found in Appendix B.

### Goal 1 — Professional Development

To enhance the knowledge and skills of higher education professionals involved in summer and special sessions by identifying the most significant and emerging issues, promoting the exchange of information, and providing a wide range of professional development opportunities.

1.1 Further develop the NAASS website to make it the primary communication tool of the Association. For example:

- Create searchable database of literature, research studies, and information on marketing best practices
- Post “article of the month” or “profile of the month” of an outstanding program, research project, or an individual accomplishment

1.2 Develop innovative informational materials and events to increase professional development opportunities and contact with members. For example:

- E-newsletters with more frequent and substantive content
- Weekly or monthly “Summer Session Tips for Success”
- Scheduled online chat groups on selected topics of interest
- Explore online delivery of special topics (e.g. how to successfully market your summer session or how to develop a successful summer session financial plan)

1.3 Develop mentoring and consulting opportunities for and among members. For example:

- Provide on-going mentoring for new administrators by experienced member for a period of up to a year
- Develop a program of invitational on-site visits to “best practice” institutions on topics/issues of marketing, research, programming, etc.
- Develop NAASS consultancy to provide program reviews for interested institutions

1.4 Review and conceptualize the annual conference. For example:

- Reexamine the roles and responsibilities of the program chair and conference host
- Conduct research on who attends and why
- Link the program to the environmental scan information to develop conference themes and topics

## **Goal 2 — Quality and Research**

To enhance the value of summer and special sessions by identifying best practices and by fostering innovation and research.

2.1 Recognize the importance/centrality of research and foster research activities about summer sessions. For example:

- Actively identify topics/issues for research. Topics could be linked to data from the environmental scan
- Encourage scholarship by “outside” researchers (those not involved or responsible for summer session, e.g. faculty members in education)
- Foster the development of research skills and practice of NAASS members
- Develop and distribute position papers and monographs on summer session issues, such as faculty compensation, organizational structure teaching in compressed formats
- Continue to fund research relevant to summer sessions

## **Goal 3 — Membership**

To establish and maintain a vital, energetic professional community.

3.1 Determine a specific target membership profile to including considerations such as:

i) overall number of members; ii) composition of membership, including public/private, regional representation, universities and community/two-year colleges, non-summer session members.

3.2 Appoint a task force to develop a strategy and timeline for achieving the target membership profile.

3.3 Review the role of the Membership Committee to ensure effectiveness in light of membership strategy.

## **Goal 4 — Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

To respond to evolving needs of members by continually assessing and refining the Association.

4.1 Establish an environmental scanning committee(s) (ESC) to conduct annual environmental scans to identify significant external issues and trends, and to assess member interests and concerns. The ESC would submit an annual summary of its findings to the Administrative Council.

4.2 Enhance mandates for committees with more substantive activities and greater delegation of responsibilities from the Administrative Council. As well, establish links between committees where appropriate (e.g. ESC and membership committee).

4.3 Assess the role of the Administrative Council, particularly the role of members-at-large and the Executive Secretary, and reassign duties and responsibilities to fit the Association’s goals.

4.4 Establish a framework to ensure a dynamic strategic planning process is sustained in the Association. This may take the form of a committee to oversee the process on an annual basis as determined by the Administrative Council (this role may be assumed by ESC mentioned above).

4.5 Ensure measures of performance and timelines are established for the implementation of the recommendations of the strategic planning process (this is the responsibility of the Administrative Council).

### **Goal 5 — Fiscal Accountability**

To develop, maintain and follow strategic and financial plans that ensure the health and overall effectiveness of the Association.

5.1 Construct multi-year strategic and financial plans with goals, plans of action, revenue and expenditure targets to allow the Association to achieve expected results. The financial plan should specify revenue sources, and allocations for administrative support such as research, marketing, and communications. Multiple revenue sources to consider include membership dues, conference fees, regional conference fees, fees for arranging consultations, mentoring, program reviews, etc.

5.2 Review the findings of the SPTF and determine the activities and resources required to develop a more detailed strategic plan for the Association.

### **Goal 6 — External Advocacy**

To maintain a positive awareness of summer session within higher education circles and advocate, wherever appropriate, for the importance of summer and special sessions within higher education.

6.1 Develop an “Advocate Committee” to identify opportunities and create a list of NAASS members available to speak about summer session at conferences of relevant non-summer session associations.

6.2 Publish articles in journals that are not typically focused on summer session, e.g., *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

6.3 Develop various publications, e.g., benchmark studies in summer session, and publish and market to institutions offering summer sessions.

## Implementing the Strategic Plan

The strategic goals as outlined will enable NAASS to attain its vision in the foreseeable future. The ideas identified under each goal have been articulated with a minimum of detail to allow the Administrative Council, with input from the broader membership, to develop a more detailed plan for action. Input from the newly created committees identified in the recommendations will enhance the process to formulate the detailed plans. These recommendations are presented to the Administrative Council as the charge of the council is to direct and manage the operation of the association.

The future of NAASS arises from its accomplishments to date, and from its willingness to meet the challenges, concerns and opportunities that lie ahead. Initiating improvements and change under the priorities outlined in this report will enable the Association to fulfill its vision as one of the premier professional associations in higher education in North America.

## Appendix A

### NAASS Strategic Planning — Online Survey

What trends are you seeing/experiencing that may have an impact on summer sessions over the next few years, e.g., trends related to technology, government regulations, organizational changes, changes in higher education, etc.?

What, in your view, are the implications of these trends on NAASS?

What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of NAASS?

What are the most significant opportunities and challenges facing NAASS?

What is one suggestion you could offer to help improve NAASS?

## Appendix B

### **Suggestions for Change (not included in the report)**

Specific suggestions mentioned in the survey of NAASS members, but not included in the report, are listed below.

#### **Strategic Goal #1 (Professional Development)**

- Identify those institutions at which summer session has become decentralized and make an assertive outreach effort to contact staff recently assigned SS responsibilities — send NAASS literature, show value of membership, offer to mentor, refer to website for ideas, tell them they are not alone and building a successful summer session does require some special knowledge and skills
- New Administrator's Workshop — add more of a follow up component
- Online Book Club — interested members can read and discuss books about higher education, leadership, etc.
- Work with national leadership seminars (the ones that travel around the country) to provide a discount to NAASS members
- Re-define criteria for funding to broaden possibilities to include program development
- Provide funds to outstanding individuals for their own professional development
- Offer assistance for members desiring positions of institutional authority
- Online seminar series — e.g. Canadian Associations of Distance Education and University Continuing Education offer such series
- Summer and special programs quarterly magazine (instead of a newsletter)
- Subscription to Summer Academe included in the membership cost
- Promote NAASS at all regional and sister organization conferences and meetings

#### **Strategic Goal #2 (Quality and Research)**

- Expand definition of “research” to widen net
- Have the research committee find out what people want to know about and then solicit researchers — place call for research proposals in Chronicle and other relevant publications
- Facilitate organization of research partners (among members) — special funding considerations — work with other organizations to fund research projects where the topic(s) overlap summer session and other areas
- Give special recognition, e.g., an award system, for excellent research
- Ask individual members to volunteer a “profile” describing their research interests and expertise
- Look for areas for partnership — get the word out to members about our research grant but need to inform faculty members outside of Summer Session
- Market research to those outside of summer session
- Work with ERIC to set up special literature category for Summer Session
- Continue to research and define the various objectives summer sessions achieve at institutions and for students

- Support activities of members who aspire to positions of institutional oversight. Develop a way to have our voice heard and understood no matter at which institution
- Develop a virtual directory on the NAASS website, listing individual members who are willing to consult and mentor. Refer those seeking this type of service to the “Mentoring Directory.” Also might include names and schools of members willing to host visits from others interested in observing and learning about Summer Session operations
- On-going mentoring for new administrators — sign up veterans for a year long agreement to mentor a new member — go beyond the new administrator’s lunch at the annual conference
- Budget for mentoring whether regional meetings, consulting, on site visits
- Set up the service that links experienced and new members throughout the year — start with lunch meeting at the conference followed by scheduled meetings (virtual) throughout the year with evaluation meeting in one year at next conference
- Honor top summer session faculty with an award

### **Strategic Goal #3 (Membership)**

- Conduct a comprehensive survey of members, non-members or former members
- Determine what aspects of belonging to a professional association are expected and what would cause “customer delight”
- Establish a mindset and culture within NAASS that every contact with members and potential members is an opportunity to meet and exceed expectations
- Be a leader in higher education in developing innovative programs
- Ask current international members of NAASS to be a representative for the association to their summer session organization
- Assist members in becoming involved
- Have more personal contact with members
- Do a cost-benefit analysis of membership — what is value for money? — what are people prepared to pay? — are we charging too little? — members may be prepared to pay more for improved quality services
- Develop a strategy to identify target membership — review existing assumptions about who our potential membership, determine what competition exists from other organizations, define types of memberships, and determine how to reach new members
- Expand our definition of who qualifies to be a member; focus on recruiting individual members from current member institutions, particularly non-summer session staff (registrars, admissions officers, housing office, etc.)
- Increase recruitment of associate members; include community colleges; offer “dual” memberships in partnership with other associations and regional summer session organizations

- Once a target membership is defined, do a demographic profile (title, responsibilities, % time devoted to summer, etc.); determine what services they most value/need (be certain to carefully include the needs of our expanded target membership in our plan for expanding); draft communications and recruitment message to expanded target membership
- Develop standardized protocol for member recruitment and retention, e.g., letters to prospective members, personal calls from members of NAASS, etc.
- Encourage designated types of schools to attend the conference and perhaps meet beforehand to discuss issues that pertain to their institutions
- Provide complimentary membership to NAASS for one year or offer a guarantee that a member will like their membership or we will refund their dues
- Ask each current member of NAASS to bring one new member to the association next year — provide them with an incentive if they do
- Invite institutions who are near the conference site to attend the conference and join NAASS
- Offer conference price incentives — “first timer” discount (? price your first year membership and conference fees); substantially reduced rates for multiple members from same institution
- Reach out to other related organizations — currently connections with American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and Association of Continuing Higher Education — others in continuing and distance education and higher education administration — specific opportunity to present at their conferences — dual memberships — periodic joint conferences — shared professional development events — develop a task force to explore this, identify potential partnership opportunities
- Think of the value the partnership will bring to NAASS and its members; offer value-added opportunities through the partnership for the other organizations
- Schedule a joint conference with another organization with topics specific to each organization and ones that will overlap
- Forge partnerships with summer session associations from other countries
- Invite key personnel from other organizations to attend NAASS conference at discounted rate
- Invite the organizations to contribute information to our newsletters and vice-versa
- Offer conference discounts to members of “sister” organizations
- Send a NAASS representative to these conferences to promote what we are doing and network, network, network
- Establish a partnership with NAFSA: Association of International Educators and/or other international educator’s organizations
- Contact with international organization not necessarily focused on summer sessions, examples Network of European Summer Schools, European Association of International Education, Canadian Association of University Continuing Education

#### **Strategic Goal #4 (Evaluation, Continuous Improvement)**

- Elect vibrant, dedicated officers
- Increase the president's term to two years — too much of a revolving door, which results in “starting over” each year — suggest a 4-year stretch — one for president elect, two as president and one as past president
- Change our name (drop/change North American)
- Document the NAASS organization and administrative structure:
  - Welcome package to new Administrative Council Members
  - President's Manual updated and given to new members at post conference meeting
  - Outline structure, responsibilities, and expectations of each committee

<sup>1</sup> *Strategic planning is generally defined as a set of actions that leads to the definition of an organization's mission, the formulation of its goals, and the development of specific strategies that will be implemented to achieve those goals. A strategic plan offers a “road map” of options, identified through a thorough analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, but should not be seen as a rigid, highly specific plan. A sound strategic plan will enhance an organization's credibility and discipline. Ultimately, strategic planning is a process of looking both inside and outside the organization to see if the game plan fully maximizes opportunities and avoids pitfalls.*