WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN

President Ruud has asked several of the various divisions and units around campus to develop Master Plans, and one of those is the Academic Master Plan. At the December 1, 2014 Faculty Open Forum regarding the Academic Master Plan, President Ruud mentioned that all of the plans he has commissioned will inform the University of Northern Iowa's next Strategic Plan.

What Does an Academic Master Plan Do?

- An Academic Master Plan (AMP) describes the academic mission of an institution, which is used to drive the future of the university.
- An Academic Master Plan delineates the strategies needed to accomplish the academic mission of the university.
- The Academic Master Plan informs other university planning processes.
- The Academic Master Plan drives improvement processes for the university.

Other universities have used similar processes for developing an Academic Master Plan (see, for example, Shippensburg University's Academic Master Plan, http://www.ship.edu/Provost/AMP/).

The AMP integrates with existing planning processes occurring at the program, departmental, college, and university level, as well as with the University's ongoing commitment to self-review and best practices outlined by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Indeed, the development of Ship's first AMP represents a natural evolution and extension of the University's existing strategic planning and budget processes.

The AMP focuses on academic issues as well as academic and administrative supports for the university. Academic planning is an activity based on the mission, vision, and values of the university and its overarching goals. This plan informs all of the other university plans, e.g., departmental plans, college plans, facilities master plans, the strategic plan of the university, etc.

Another example is from Minnesota State, Mankato (http://www.mnsu.edu/academicplan/overview.html).

- The Academic Master Plan serves as a guide for important decisions concerning resources, curriculum development, technology deployment and use, planning processes, staffing and a variety of student success initiatives.
- The Academic Master Plan recognizes and reaffirms the value of faculty guidance and input in decision-making and resource allocation in instructional areas of the college. Communication and accountability are the foundations of shared governance and this Academic Master Plan seeks to prioritize and facilitate improved communication between faculty and other campus groups and departments as we work to promote student learning and success.
- The Academic Master Plan provides a flexible overall framework for the development of specific college and department plans.
An Academic Master Plan is a core component of robust integrated University strategic planning linking vision, priorities, people, services, resources, and the physical institution in a flexible process of evaluation, decision-making, and action.

**What Types of Questions are Asked in Preparing an Academic Master Plan?**

1. **Where are we now**, in terms of an academic mission & current practices? If we don’t make any changes, where will we be in 5 or 10 years?
   a. What types of students & faculty are we currently attracting and will we continue to attract, without changing anything?
   b. What academic programs, services, support, and facilities are we using (and will continue to use, without changing anything) to attract these students and faculty?
   c. What are we hoping our students know, value, and are able to do by the time they graduate from UNI, based on what we are currently doing?

2. **Where do we want to be?** What will make us distinctive and competitive into the future?
   a. What types of students & faculty do we want to attract in the future?
   b. What do we want our students to know, value, and be able to do by the time they graduate with a degree from UNI?

3. **How can we get there?**
   - What are the academic programs, services, support, and facilities we need to accomplish where we want to be in the next few years?

**What Assumptions does Senior Leadership Have about the Academic Master Plan?**

- The AMP should be aspirational. It should help us prioritize things on campus, and should help external constituencies see what makes UNI distinct. (E.g., “Come to UNI so you will be able to do these things, so that you will have these experiences.)
- Everything we do is important, but not everything is a priority. Even if something is not in the AMP, it does not mean it will be eliminated.
- The document needs to be a living document and be adjusted over time – it is not a 5-year document that can’t be changed. There would be an evaluation and re-approval process built into the plan.
- There will be eventual measurements of the goals put in, but that is not the focus initially when developing the plan.
- The document will be used to guide budget priorities.