



WHITE PAPER ON THE DRIVE TO UNIVERSITY May 10, 2017

Introduction

Tusculum's Cabinet met with Credo strategic planning consultants on September 30-October 1, 2015 in Whitsett, NC. To begin the second day, the consultants brought a list of five planning themes which were narrowed to four themes. The final theme was "A Drive to University." While this theme sparked numerous questions during community input days, the subcommittee charged with reviewing this theme recommended that it continue in the plan. The subcommittee felt that this theme was a critical element in making the plan "strategic." The Strategic Plan with four themes – Strategic Growth, High Impact Academics, A Model for Student Success, and A Drive to University – was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 20, 2016.

At the February 2017 meeting, the Board of Trustees charged President Moody with bringing a report on the cost and benefits of transitioning to university status with a recommendation on whether or not to proceed. This report fulfills that charge.

Reasons for the Transition to University

There is a fairly limited body of research on transitions from college to university despite the fact that 532 of 3,036 institutions in the United States (17.5%) experienced at least one name change between 1996 and 2005. Most of the research and journalistic articles focus on four main reasons:

- Elevate prestige or increase access to resources.
- Increasing undergraduate and/or graduate enrollments.
- Define the future mission of the institution (or vision).
- More accurately reflect an institution's current status.

Research indicates that there was no statistically significant change in graduate program size or in undergraduate selectivity. James Owston (2007) concluded that "as a means to an end, the adoption of a university brand alone neither promoted nor sustained institutional enrollment" and that "university status neither prompted institutions to become more selective at the undergraduate level, nor did the new status promote institutions to raise tuition rates based on an assumed increased level of prestige" (p. 141-143).

Notably, schools that sought university status to reflect an institution's current profile and sought the input of a variety of constituencies in the process fared better. According to Owston (2007, p. 141-143), the four strongest markers for success included:

- Addressing stakeholder concerns in advance (such as faculty, student, alumni, board members, and the public).
- Having a well-articulated reason to change.
- Calculating projected and actual costs.
- Creating a marketing plan.

While most of the journalistic pieces from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *InsideHigherEd.com* focus on the prestige chase as reasons for the transition, colleges look at a variety of factors, judging by FAQs, press releases, and white papers. For Tusculum, the focus is on competition and differentiation, enrollment growth, and strategic planning.

Competition & Differentiation

Tusculum has used a group of 19 private college and universities from Tennessee, Virginia, South Carolina and North Carolina for various benchmarking studies since 2004. These analyses have included faculty and staff salary studies, retention and graduation rate comparisons, and other studies. The group of institutions (listed below) includes eight colleges which transitioned to universities in or after the year 1995 and five in or after the year 2005.

Benchmarking Institutions		
Institution Name	Year Became University	Highest degree Offered
Carson-Newman University	2014	Doctorate (1); EDS; Masters (8)
King University	2013	
Mars Hill University	2013	Masters (1)
Lenoir-Rhyne University	2008	Masters (16)
Anderson University	2005	Doctorate (1); Masters 4)
Southern Wesleyan University	1995	Masters (3)
Trevecca Nazarene University	1995	Doctorate (2);EDS; Masters (12)
Wingate University	1995	Doctorate (3); Masters (5)
Lincoln Memorial University	1896	Doctorate (5); EDS; Masters (12)
Ferrum College		Bachelors
Tusculum College		Masters (4)
Lees-McRae College		Bachelors
Montreat College		Masters (4)
Brevard College		Bachelors
Tennessee Wesleyan College		Masters (2)
Newberry College		Bachelors
Emory & Henry College		Doctorate (1); Masters (5)
Milligan College		Doctorate (1); Masters (7)
Catawba College		Masters (2)
Maryville College		Bachelors

The change to university of over 40% of the benchmarking institutions led the subcommittee on the Drive to University Theme to recommend developing a new benchmarking group to better fit Tusculum and where she is headed before conducting new salary studies. Developing a new benchmarking group and conducting a salary study are now second- and third-year initiatives in the strategic plan

In 2013, the 27 Tennessee technology centers were renamed Tennessee colleges of applied technology per Senate Bill SB0643. The Tennessee colleges of applied technology offer certificates and one-year diploma programs. This change in the name of technical colleges raises questions about whether or not the use of college for institutions granting associate and baccalaureate

degrees, let alone those which offer graduate degrees such as Tusculum, appropriately differentiates Tusculum from the Tennessee technical colleges which offer only certificates and one-year diplomas.

Enrollment Growth

Through an examination of a SACSCOC list of name changes, a total of 31 private colleges that moved to university status since 1988 were identified. Data were drawn from IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) databases to examine enrollment changes after the transition to university. While there were seven or eight colleges which made the transition to university in five-year spans in the 1990s, that number declined to four colleges per five-year span from 2000-2009. Seven colleges made the transition from 2010 to 2014.

Transitions by Year	
Years	# of Institutions
1988-1989	1
1990-1994	7
1955-1999	8
2000-2004	4
2005-2009	4
2010-2014	7

In conducting additional research, Virginia Wesleyan College and Lynchburg College have announced transitions to University for 2017-18 and 2018, respectively.

ENROLLMENT CHANGES BY NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS			
Enrollment Change	Total Enrollment	Undergraduate Enrollment	Graduate Enrollment
Less than 0	4	6	4
0-99	4	3	9
100-199	7	10	9
200-299	2	1	6
300-399	4	3	1
400-499	2	2	0
500+	7	4	1

ENROLLMENT CHANGE AFTER 5 YEARS AS UNIVERSITY					
	Year of University Status	Total Enrollment	Undergrad enrollment	Graduate Enrollment	Int'l Students
Anderson University	2005	868	648	200	-3
Averett University	2001	71	31	40	-23
Bellarmino University	2000	-21	-60	39	-5
Belmont University	1991	100	-30	130	na
Bethel University	2004	1671	1350	321	9
Brenau University	1992	381	254	107	na
Brescia University	1998	-49	-23	-28	46
Campbellsville University	1996	256	165	91	42
Carson-Newman University	2014	166	-5	171	7
Christian Brothers University	1990	35	-64	99	na
Freed-Hardeman University	1990	319	108	211	na
Gardner-Webb University	1993	593	338	255	na
High Point University	1991	288	181	107	na
Johnson University	2011	326	167	159	14
King University	2013	345	796	69	8
Lee University	1997	841	457	181	97
Lenoir-Rhyne University	2008	358	110	248	19
Lipscomb University	1988	52	33	19	na
Mars Hill University	2012	40	44	-4	-26
North Greenville University	2006	459	309	150	-14
Pfeiffer University	1996	137	231	108	41
Queens University of Charlotte	2002	490	510	-20	27
Reinhardt University	2010	145	160	-15	2
Southern Adventist University	1996	576	474	102	25
Southern Wesleyan University	1994	156	133	23	-1
Trevecca Nazarene University	1995	172	-47	219	-6
University of Pikeville	2011	692	398	294	32
University of the Cumberlands	2005	1862	113	1344	49
Wheeling Jesuit University	1996	-61	136	3	13
William Peace University	2011	170	170		7
Wingate University	1995	-92	-93	1	8
Average		366	255.6	154.1	15.3
Median		256	160	107	8.5

The overall impact on enrollment of transitioning to university appears to be somewhat mixed. While the average change in total enrollment five years after the change to university status was

366 with a median of 256, four institutions actually saw enrollment declines ranging from 21 to 92 students. Also, there is no clear evidence that the growth which did occur resulted from the change to university. It could easily be a result of ongoing enrollment trends which was harder to calculate from the available IPEDS data. Only nine institutions saw overall enrollment increases by more than 400 students in five years after the transition to university. The change in undergraduate enrollment averaged 256 with a median of 160, and six institutions showed declines ranging from five to 93 students. The change in graduate enrollment five years after the transition to university status averages 154 with a median of 107, but four institutions show a decline in graduate enrollments. One institution (William Peace) does not report any graduate or first professional enrollments

International students increased on average by 15 in the five years after the transition to university. However, seven institutions transitioned to university before IPEDS began collecting data on international students. Six institutions reported declines in international students five years after making the move, and another six institutions saw an increase of fewer than 10 international students.

An attempt was made to examine endowment growth after the change to university, but there is a six-year gap in IPEDS data from 1997 to 2003. It appears to be related to the move from GASB to FASB standards for private institutions. In examining those universities whose data were available, fourteen showed two years of growth in endowments and three showed a mix of growth and decline in the two years after transition. However similar to enrollment, it is difficult to determine if the growth is a result of the transition to university, part of a campaign, or the result of other factors. For eleven institutions, no inference can be drawn about the direction of change in endowments due to the gap in data.

Pursuing university status solely for enrollment and/or endowment growth seems unlikely to produce immediate results in either area without other factors at work.

Strategic Planning: Mission and Vision

One impetus for a transition to university for Tusculum comes from the recent strategic planning process. In working with consultants from Credo, a theme or goal on Drive to University emerged. Tusculum's Cabinet met with Credo strategic planning consultants on September 30-October 1, 2015 in Whitsett, NC for a planning retreat. On the second day, the consultants presented a list of five planning themes which were narrowed to four themes after further discussion. The final theme was "A Drive to University."

The Credo consultants came to Greeneville and Knoxville for three days (November 9-11, 2015) of meetings to gather input from stakeholders. Sessions included a brief presentation about the process and draft plan, and provided time for input. Sessions were held with students, faculty and staff (at both Greeneville and Knoxville), and community (through the President's Advisory Council members which included a number of alumni). During the student and faculty and staff sessions, several questions were raised about this theme; and in fact, 15 of 112 responses were essentially questions about process, costs, impact on accreditation, etc. (see table below). Some did raise concerns about the impact of moving to university status on the institution's focus on teaching and undergraduate students. Other comments emphasized steps needed to move to university including improving infrastructure, developing a competitive compensation system, developing student support systems, and changing the culture. The session with the President's Advisory Council members was very positive about the drive to university.

As result of the questions and concerns raised during community days, the consultants asked the subcommittee on the theme to begin deliberations on whether or not to retain this theme in the strategic plan. After deliberations, the subcommittee of faculty and staff recommended that the Drive to University theme remain a part of the strategic plan. The subcommittee felt that this theme was a critical element in making the plan “strategic.” While most of the objectives and initiatives identified under the Drive to University theme were in years two through five of the strategic plan, the theme of Drive to University was retained.

Themes from Community Days input	# of responses
Not Priority	13
Need to develop and support Academic Programs	12
Improve recruitment of International students and athletes, and improve diversity	10
Need to develop the Infrastructure	10
Why??	8
Need to increase Faculty/Staff Development, especially for research	8
Concern about loss of Student focus	8
Concerns about Loss of Uniqueness/Mission	7
What are Standards?	2
What is process/motivation?	5
What are Costs of Change?	4
Need to develop competitive Compensation system	4
Would require a Culture Change	4
Need to develop Support Systems	3
Priority	2
How do Alumni feel?	2
Tenure?	2
What is Impact on Accreditation?	1
Not necessary to increase Enrollment	1
Other	5
Grand Total	112

As subcommittees worked on the four themes in the plan (Strategic Growth, High Impact Academics, Model for Student Success, and Drive to University), commonalities across the committees emerged. Expanding graduate programs emerged from the strategic Growth, High Impact Academics, and the Drive to University subcommittees. Expanding and improving faculty and staff development and compensation also were themes in High Impact Academics and the Drive to University.

Most initiatives in the Drive to University theme are targeted for years two through five of the strategic plan including adding one or more doctoral programs (years four and five), developing a new faculty workload policy (year two), and conducting an investigation into best practices for

White Paper on the Drive to University, May 10, 2017

university structure (years two through five). However, two initiatives (evaluate and assess 100% of GPS programs and implement student self-service module to provide online registration) are year one initiatives. Master's degree programs in Family Nurse Practitioner and Accountancy were initiatives under the Strategic Growth theme.

The Drive to University was also captured in the revised vision statement that was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 20, 2016. The new vision statement reads, "Tusculum will be a premier university passionate about engaging students in transformational experiences that prepare them for meaningful careers and fulfilling lives of civic engagement/service."

Costs

The overall costs of transition to university vary by institution and approach. Lynchburg College has estimated a cost of \$375,000 to \$525,000 for the upcoming transition (Lynchburg College, FAQ).

The main costs come under the headings of marketing and branding, signage, and athletics.

Marketing and branding costs can vary as some institutions have launched major rebranding campaigns including website redesign, new media materials, social media messaging, and new admissions materials. Some of the costs of marketing can be reduced by moving to a transitional logo with just the institution's name and without using the word college or university. This allows for older print materials to be phased out and newer materials phased in on a regular replacement cycle. Tusculum announced this step via internal email on April 4, 2017. The institution will also need to have a new website ready to launch at the time of announcement with a redirect for any searches for Tusculum College. The webmaster and Communications Office should be able to provide reasonable cost estimates for the web redesign process.

Admissions materials may be phased out using a transitional logo as well to reduce costs. Marketing would need to provide cost estimates for all marketing materials through the transition.

Signage includes major entrance signs to the college, fleet vehicle signs, and arboretum signs. The Director of Facilities should be able to provide some estimates. The Director of Facilities would also need to work with the cities of Greeneville and Tusculum to address local signage and directions to the institution. The Director would also need to work with TDOT to have highway signage which may include fees to expedite the process.

Finally, Athletics would need to convert uniforms, signage (on scoreboards in arena, football and baseball stadium) and other materials. It may be possible to transition costs through use of transitional logos, but as athletics uses multiple logos this may be a more complicated and potentially costly process. The Athletics Director should be able to develop estimates for these costs.

Process

According to Owston (2007, p. 141-143), the four strongest markers for success included:

- Addressing stakeholder concerns in advance (such as faculty, student, alumni, board members, and the public).
- Having a well-articulated reason to change.
- Calculating projected and actual costs.
- Creating a marketing plan.

White papers and frequently asked question documents from a number of institutions typically reference surveys of students, faculty and/or alumni as part of the decision or announcement of transition. These types of surveys can assist in articulating reasons for the change, inform marketing plans, and address any stakeholder concerns. Although discussion of the Drive to University came up during the community days in November 2015 and with members of the Alumni Executive Board and others, there have been limited opportunities for feedback and no surveys of stakeholders have been undertaken to date.

As indicated in the previous section, the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing, the Director of Facilities, the Athletics Director and others would need to work with the CFO and Vice President to calculate costs for the transition.

A marketing and communication plan would need to be developed and then shared with Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. Once approved, the plan would need to be shared with faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Delivery of elements of this plan would need to include the Chair of Board and other Trustees, the President, Cabinet, and ideally faculty and students from both residential and graduate and professional studies programs.

Key elements of the marketing and communication plan would include:

- Website redesign, ready for launch with announcement, and including search redirects from Tusculum College.
- A website about the change with background information, decisions and FAQs.
- Press conference and news release.
- Target date for launch, and earlier dates for transition of printed materials.
- Plans for transition of diplomas from Tusculum College to new name with a transition period, where student could possibly select between names. Also a decision about cost (and who pays) for re-printed diplomas for alumni.
- Timetable for signage changes, both on campus and off campus.
- Identify key dates and opportunity events to promote the change, such as opening convocation, graduations, alumni weekend, Nettie Day, etc.

Additional steps in the transition process would include:

- A formal vote by the Board of Trustees.
- Signed articles of amendment to the corporate charter.
- Signed application for registration of assumed corporate name.
- These documents would need to be filed with the State of Tennessee, Department of State, Business Services, and will include roughly \$40 in filing fees.

- Inform the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) of the name change.
- Inform other organizations of the name change including TICUA, CIC, NCAA, SAC, IPEDS, NC-SARA, etc.

Recommendation

Based on the information provided herein, discussions with students, and correspondence with one president whose college recently transitioned to university, I recommend that the deliberation continue when the new president is hired. Another consideration could be making this change prior to the initiation of a doctoral program. In the meantime, a decision needs to be made whether to continue the new logo that presents “Tusculum” rather than “Tusculum College” when supplies of letterhead and business cards are exhausted. This prepares us to either continue with Tusculum or return to Tusculum College when a final decision is made. There is a lot to be said for tradition. The only reason that this topic arose was related to the recruitment of international students and their perception and reluctance to attend a college versus a university.

The actual costs for transition are variable. Based on information from a variety of sources, the range of costs to anticipate are between \$375,000 and \$1m. Please keep in mind that some things in those estimates include activities that would need to be done regardless of whether the name change is or is not made, such as printing of business cards, stationery, etc., and maintaining and enhancing our online presence.

Sources:

- Peter Koku, “What’s in a name? The Impact of strategic name change on student enrollment in college and universities” *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, Vol. 81(2), p. 53-21
- Kit Lively, “Why Colleges Want to Be Called Universities”, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 13, 1997.
- James Owston, “Survival of the fittest? The Rebranding of West Virginia Higher Education (doctoral dissertation, Marshall University, 2007)
- Peter Schmidt, “Most College Chase prestige on a Treadmill, Researchers Find” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Nov. 10. 2008.
- D.C. Spencer, “College and University Name Change: A study of perceived strategy and goal achievement” (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2005).
- Mitchell Wellmon, “What’s the Difference between a ‘college’ and a ‘university’?”, *USAToday*, March 1, 2017.

College & University Materials

- Berry College, “College or University: What’s in a Name?”, *Berry Magazine*, Winter 2010-2011, pp. 10-11.
http://www.berry.edu/uploadedFiles/Website/President/_Assets/Documents/Essays/2010-2011Winter_CollegeorUniversity.pdf
- Franklin Pierce: Move to University Status, Notes by Functional Area from July 5th Work Session: Timeline for Publications/Print Materials/Media Relations (accessed 9/22/2013, no longer accessible)
- Franklin Pierce, Presentation to Community, 2013
- Lynchburg College, “College to University FAQ”,
(<http://www.lynchburg.edu/aboutlc/college-to-university/university-of-lynchburg-faq/>) (accessed 4/26/17).
- Lynchburg College, “Lynchburg College to change its name to Lynchburg University” (Press release, accessed on 4/26/17, <http://www.lynchburg.edu/news/2017/02/university-of-lynchburg/>)
- Mars Hill College, The Transformation to University Status, Strategic Plan 2012-2017
- The Question of University Status for Bridgewater State College: A White Paper Prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Trustees, May 8, 2007 (mscunion.org/news/071002.pdf)
- Richard Stockton College, Pan-College Task Force on University Status, Final Report 2014.
(http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/human_resources/content/docs/Portal/Pan-College%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report--passed%209-3-14--2.pdf)
- St. Augustine’s University, University Status Frequently Asked Questions
- Thomas Edison State University, From College to University,
(<http://www.tesu.edu/about/university.cfm>)
- Virginia Wesleyan College, “Virginia Wesleyan Announces Transition to University Status” (Press Release, accessed 4/26/17, <http://www.vwc.edu/news-a-events/news-releases/virginia-wesleyan-college-announces-transition-to-university-status>).