STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2017

MISSION
The Consortium is a nonprofit educational association committed to the advancement of higher education in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

VISION
The Consortium will be a national model for collaboration that creates new opportunities for student learning, faculty scholarship and research, and efficient and effective business processes.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
1. Create greater academic and research synergy.
2. Expand collaborative services
3. Enhance identity, visibility, and engagement in the District and metropolitan region
4. Expand and enhance Consortium Research Fellows Program
5. Expand and enhance Reach4Success
6. Ensure sufficient resources

1. Create Greater Academic and Research Synergy
The need for cooperation and mutual investment in academic programs and research has never been greater. Such synergy is a hallmark of other higher educational consortia. For example, the Five College Consortium in Amherst, Massachusetts not only fosters cross-registration, but has also created and oversees true shared programs and centers. These include numerous certificate and degree programs (click here for details). Five College Centers include East Asian Studies, World Languages, and Women’s Studies. Another leading example is the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), which has created numerous shared academic opportunities such as language learning and joint research efforts across the Big 10 members and the University of Chicago.

Given the quality and diversity of its membership, the Consortium should provide a wider array of shared academic and research opportunities. Doing so will help member institutions provide students pathways to faster degree completion and enhanced learning outside the classroom. Building on the examples of others, the Consortium will create a set of opportunities that best matches its strengths. Among the goals for academic synergy are:

- Use cross-registration to create accelerated degree program options.
- Expand shared study abroad programs.
- Create shared symposia, lectures, exhibitions, and other related programs that are specifically designed to engage multiple Consortium members.
• Create a central directory of service learning, community engagement learning, and undergraduate student research opportunities open through cross-registration or other cooperative programs.
• Create shared preparation opportunities for prestigious scholarship and fellowship competitions (e.g., Rhodes, Truman, and Fulbright).
• Create inventories of research and teaching lab facilities that are potentially shareable or available for rent.
• Create partnerships among academic programs (e.g., explore Consortium-wide centers or institutes, explore Consortium-wide sustainability program).
• Foster collaborative teaching.

2. **Expand Collaborative Services**
Opportunities exist for the Consortium to facilitate expanded collaboration and cooperation across member institutions in providing common services. Shared services have significant potential to both lower overall operating costs to members, as well as enhance the programs and services member institutions can provide. The goal is to ensure that there is increased value resulting from collaboration and cooperation. Specific goals include:
• Improve the processes underlying cross-registration.
• Increase the number of students taking advantage of cross-registration.
• Create central warehouse for course schedules to facilitate cross-registration.
• Create a joint job posting website to facilitate dual career and other faculty and staff hiring.
• Increase opportunities for joint procurement.
• Explore opportunities for shared back office functions (e.g., IT platforms and services).

3. **Enhance Identity, Visibility, and Engagement in the District and Metropolitan Region**
Although recognized as a positive group in the community, the Consortium is not as well-known, valued, or relied upon as it could and should be given the extent of its economic impact and the intellectual, cultural, and other assets its member institutions provide to the region. The desired outcome is for the Consortium to be the preferred resource for elected officials and economic/financial leaders to contact. Strategic goals here include:
• Launch a concerted communications effort to raise the visibility of the Consortium.
• Strategically utilize the opportunities that membership on key regional boards and committees offers.
• Emerge as the thought leader on higher education and the roles that higher education play in economic development and community enhancement.
• Provide a link to the Consortium on every member institution’s homepage.
• Develop agreed upon data reflecting community impact that are updated annually.
• Broaden and strengthen partnerships with other key economic sectors.
• Develop deeper partnerships with regional governmental entities.
• Provide Consortium-wide directories of experts willing to work with regional groups and organizations.
4. **Expand and Enhance Consortium Research Fellows Program**

Since its founding in 1981, the Consortium Research Fellows Program (CRFP) has had four primary goals:

- Provide our sponsoring organizations with high-quality research, technical, and analytical support by promoting partnerships with higher education.
- Engage university students in educationally-relevant professional experiences that enhance their knowledge and research skills and encourage their interest in future employment with our affiliated organizations.
- Encourage knowledge and technology transfer among government, partner organizations, and academia by involving university faculty in collaborative research projects.
- Expand the scope of the CRFP into new areas of research with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the corporate community.

Currently, the CRFP employs 40 graduate student fellows, two post-doctoral fellows, and 20 university faculty senior fellows. Those fellows are conducting research for two federal government agencies: The US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences and the Air Force Research Lab. The following organizations have expressed interest in developing a relationship with the CRFP to obtain fellows to assist with research: government agencies (Defense Manpower Data Center, Army Research Lab, Advanced Distributed Learning Co-Lab, National Defense University, Air Force Research Lab – Aero Medical Division, U.S. Army Installation Management Command – Fort Sam Houston, and U.S. Southern Command); quasi-government agencies (Institute for Defense Analysis, U.S. Institute for Peace); and Allied Organization (Gulf Coast Enterprises).

Personnel from most of the organizations listed above described limitations that would require them to integrate a small number of Consortium fellows at first, then increase over time at a pace commensurate with budgets and research needs. Others suggested an immediate need for as many as 20 or more Fellows. The CRFP’s current staff could sustain a workload of 85 student fellows and 30 senior faculty fellows. Our continued ability to provide an effective and vibrant program will be a function of increasing staff as we grow the CRFP.

The CRFP has provided Consortium fellows almost exclusively for federal government agencies. As such, we are familiar with government processes associated with placing fellows in those agencies. An important component of our vision for the CRFP’s future is working with quasi-government and allied organizations (e.g., non- and for-profit contractors and businesses). That will require CRFP personnel to learn about and adapt to new partnerships and processes.

As the CRFP expands into new research areas and organizations, and increases the number of fellows, strengthening our relationships with the Consortium universities and other accredited institutions of higher education becomes one of our most pressing concerns. With the approval of and working with the chief academic officers (CAO) at our Consortium universities and other institutions, we will reinforce our existing relationships and develop new ones that benefit students, universities, and sponsoring organizations.

**Specific Goals for FY2014 - FY2017:**
• Increase the number of student fellows from our Consortium universities:
  o Currently, our student fellows attend 16 accredited universities across the U.S. Only three of those universities belong to the Consortium. Our goal is to work closer and communicate more frequently with Consortium university chief academic officers, department chairs, program directors, and professors and students to increase the CRFP’s relevance and the number of students who are placed in fellowships to conduct off-campus applied research.
  o At several non-Consortium universities, we maintain pools of students who cycle into the CRFP as others graduate and as additional research opportunities emerge. We will pursue the application of that model with our Consortium universities.
  o Some universities require that their graduate students conduct on-campus research in order to receive tuition waivers and other benefits. We will work with graduate school personnel to ensure that all CRFP graduate student fellows are not penalized for engaging in off-campus research.
  o We will work towards employing 85 student fellows and at least 30 senior faculty fellows by FY2017.
• Increase the number of sponsoring organizations:
  o Our goal is to adapt to new roles in working with new government and non-government sponsors. We will seek out and investigate the extent to which we can form alliances with new sponsoring organizations and adapt to previously unfamiliar methods for placing fellows in those organizations. We will seek ways to encourage and respond to cooperative agreements in addition to government contracts to increase the ease with which we manage policies and procedures.
  o We will strive to develop a partnership with at least one new organization per year.
• Maintain our reputation of integrity and support:
  o Based on work from the past three decades, the CRFP has developed and maintained a solid reputation of integrity and support of its fellows. While we desire to expand our reach, and will continue to work towards that objective, the welfare, mentoring, and academic progress of our student fellows continue to be top priorities. The CRFP personnel will do all we can to remain firm advocates for our fellows and the universities from which they are drawn.

5. **Expand and Enhance Reach4Success**
Reach4Success (www.reach4success.org) is a multidimensional college access program that targets students and their parents/guardians from middle school through high school in the metropolitan DC area. Services are also available to undergraduate, graduate, and adult student learners. It is located in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. The program is conducted in partnership with American Student Assistance (headquartered in Boston). While Reach4Success is primarily focused on understanding and accessing student financial aid, it also operates the College Information Center in the MLK Library. It offers a variety of programs, including Get Financially Fit for College and The Financial Aid Roadmap. Strategic goals include:

• Increase number of trained and certified financial aid coaches
• Develop wider array of programming for adult learners at both the high school and college levels
• Expand partnerships to increase opportunities for adults to receive credit for prior learning
• Increase breadth of programming for test preparation (e.g., TOEFL)
• Expand financial aid programs to include upper elementary students and families
• Increase and improve programs on basic financial literacy and college planning for lowest income families

6. **Ensure Sufficient Resources**

In order to provide the highest level of service to member institutions and to the region, it is essential that the Consortium have the necessary resources. The Consortium has just completed a process of reviewing and enhancing its IT needs. The Consortium will undertake a formal review of staffing requirements and the advantages/disadvantages of collocating as many programs as possible, as well as an analysis of appropriate levels of financial resources to meet program needs. Also under review is the physical space needs that result from current and planned programs. The current lease will expire during the period of this plan, the results of the previously listed reviews will inform the decision regarding office location. These reviews will result in the first ever multi-year financial plan for the Consortium. Specific goals include:

• Complete staffing, fiscal, and other reviews.
• Complete gap analysis of needs.
• Identify potential collaboration/partnership opportunities with member institutions to close gaps.
• Develop multi-year financial plan to address resource needs for addressing gaps for board review.