SGU Strategic Plan
2015 – 2018

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I. 2015-2018 Strategic Plan in Brief (4 goals)

Goal 1. Strengthening the institution: open communication, transparency, future planning, shared governance, and sound fiscal and institutional practices

1.1 Promote transparency in SGU governance
1.2 Promote transparency in budgeting
1.3 Increase revenues and provide for sustainability
1.4 Increase enrollment at SGU
1.5 Increase student retention rates
1.6 Provide state-of-the-art technology to support student learning and streamline administration
1.7 Provide facilities according to the master plan's focus on Antelope Lake Campus
1.8 Conduct a comprehensive review of SGU’s organizational structure and make recommendations for changes as indicated
1.9 Strengthen family atmosphere and sense of commitment to SGU's future

Goal 2. Academic Enhancement: Strengthened and additional academic and community educational programs that meet the social, cultural, and economic aspirations and needs of SGU students
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2.1 Conduct internal review of programs and strengthen, expand, reduce, replace, or augment programs as indicated
2.2 Provide online courses, especially to serve students who otherwise cannot attend classes
2.3 Ensure that faculty and leadership are in place for academic programs
2.4 Strengthen existing, and develop more, Master's programs
2.5 Strengthen dual-enrollment offerings
2.6 Establish tutoring center
2.7 Provide systematic professional development opportunities for faculty

Goal 3. Lakol Wicoh'an na Wolakota: learning, practicing, and celebrating Lakota language, life ways, and values

3.1 Promote Lakota Language use
3.2 Practice Lakota life ways
3.3 Enhance the development of community partnerships for the purpose of strengthening Lakota language and culture on campus
3.4 Continue to develop Lakota History curricula, including through learning from knowledgeable community members

Goal 4. Tribal Nation Building: preparing students for a life of continual learning and engaged participation in their local, tribal, national, and global communities

4.1 Promote wellness, and alcohol and drug free lifestyles; support personal wellness of faculty, staff, students, and community
4.2 Expand GED program to prepare more people to pursue university degrees and certificates
4.3 Develop a wellness center
4.4 Provide opportunities for students to be involved in leadership and governance activities
4.5 Develop vision and plan for SGU bison and horses that provides a sustainable future
4.6 SGU develops and fosters discussion and actions aimed at developing viable alternatives for tribal government under the treaties
4.7 SGU contributes to land use planning for the Sicangu Nation
II. Background and Approach - Methods

This strategic plan is SGU’s first since the 2000-2004 plan was adopted in 2000. In 2013, a list of goals labeled “strategic outlook” was developed listing several priorities but lacking a plan for implementation. Both documents were reviewed by participants in the Tokatakiya Okolakiciye (Going Forward Society) and at All Staff meetings in March, April, and May (2000 strategic plan and 2013 strategic outlook, Appendix 1).

In March 2015, SGU administration approved a participatory process to be used to develop a 4-year plan to move the university forward. The Tokatakiya Okolakiciye (Going Forward Society) was formed and approved by the President’s Council. It conducted meetings to outline a strategic planning process and to ensure broad participation. Activities included conducting an initial SWOT analysis with 17 participants, establishing agendas for All Staff meetings to gather further input, and review of community needs that were already documented in the form of notes from annual Founders’ Days events and data from community meetings that SGU President Lionel Bordeaux conducted across the Rosebud Reservation in 2009. Those data provided easily accessible insight into the needs and aspirations of community members,
particularly with regard to their perspectives on the role of the university. (An overview of the SGU planning process is in Appendix 2).

All Staff meetings, each of which was attended by between 80-105 participants, were held in March, April, May, and June. The March, April, and May sessions were devoted exclusively to strategic planning. Participants included staff, faculty, students, and three Board of Regents members.

The Tokatakiya Okolakiciye met four times during the same time period, and facilitated the process by designing the planning process, compiling data, creating and discussing SWOT results, reviewing past plans and other available data.

A. Reviewing the Mission, Values, and Vision of SGU

SGU’s mission, values, and vision statements were reviewed and discussed at the All Staff meeting in March and by the Tokatakiya Okolakiciye. The review helped lay the groundwork for developing the major goals and strategies that were chosen for incorporation into the strategic plan. It provided a good starting place for discussion and for understanding the history and purposes of Sinte Gleska University. The current mission and purpose statements were affirmed; no changes were recommended.

SGU’s Mission has retained its essential character since the university was founded in 1970. It is a lengthier mission than many colleges and universities have nowadays, and it provides a clear explanation of the reasons why the university exists and describes its essential purpose.

“Sinte Gleska University provides a model for Indian-controlled education. It is an institution governed by people rooted to the reservation and culture, concerned about the future, and willing to work to see the institution grow. It provides each Lakota person the opportunity to pursue an education and does so in a way that is relevant to career and personal needs. Sinte Gleska University graduates will help determine the future development and direction of the Tribe and its institutions. The mission of Sinte Gleska University is to plan, design, implement and assess post-secondary programs and other educational resources uniquely appropriate to the Lakota people in order to facilitate individual development and tribal autonomy (SGU Catalog 2013-2015, p. 13).

SGU’s values describe how SGU employees are expected to act. They prescribe proper rules of behavior and are guides for how the Mission should be carried out,

- woohitika (bravery),
- wacantognaka (generosity),
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- woksape (wisdom), and

SGU’s vision statement describes the path that SGU has chosen to walk upon as it moves toward the future.

“In its goal to promote sovereignty and self-determination, Sinte Gleska University has adopted as its vision the seven basic criteria which the United Nations uses to define a sovereign nation.

1. Land—Sinte Gleska University works to teach people about Otiwota, their homeland, the place of their birth, the place where spirits return.

2. Language—Preserving and perpetuating the Lakota language has been a standing goal of the Sicangu Lakota Nation and at Sinte Gleska University.

3. Spirituality—We demonstrate our spirituality through prayer and ceremony, song and dance, and our emphasis on relationship, respect and reciprocity.

4. Leadership—The University reflects the cultural heritage of our ancestors and the traditional virtues of woohitika (bravery), wacantognaka (generosity), woksape (wisdom), and wowacintanka (fortitude), which help form our Lakota universe. Within the context of those cultural and traditional values, the University’s Board, administration, staff and students are encouraged to provide classroom-based, community-based and regional and national leadership.

5. Social Systems—At its most basic level, the University is a reflection of tribal social structures. It is representative of community based tribal leadership, traditional (tribal) educational systems and family support systems.

6. Economic Systems—Sinte Gleska University has begun to play an increasing role in the development of economic activity on the Reservation. The University works to develop individuals who are mindful of tribal economic systems and who will contribute to the overall improvement of the tribal nations.

7. Governance Systems—The University emphasizes the development of tribal self-governance and self-determination in its academic and community programs and through its support of tribal goals and entities (SGU Catalog, 2013-15, p. 15)."

Summary remarks: Review of Mission, Values, Vision
Reviewing the foundation documents and discussing them together during the All Staff meetings helped participants understand the fundamental reasons why SGU exists, and what the vision and aspirations of the founders were. Reviewing the mission and values served to reinforce the collective understanding of the essential role that Lakota culture and values are accorded, to provoke thoughtful discussion about the role of higher education for individuals and the community, and to understand the role of SGU in supporting and furthering tribal nation building.

B. Conducting SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analyses

SWOT analyses were carried out both by the Tokatakiya Okolakiciye and All Staff Participants in March and April 2015. Data was gathered through brainstorming sessions, including a gallery walk during the April All Staff meeting, and by groups of between 8-15 persons working together.

In each instance where SWOT input was gathered, the aim was to ensure consistency and comparability, and each component was clearly defined:
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- **Strengths**: attributes of SGU that help us accomplish our mission;
- **Weaknesses**: keep us from accomplishing our mission and realizing our vision;
- **Opportunities**: potential avenues open to SGU that could help the university achieve its vision;
- **Threats**: conditions in the external environment that jeopardize the ability of SGU to carry out its mission.

Once SWOT data were compiled, results were distributed to all faculty and staff by email, and hard copies were distributed during All Staff and Tokatakiya Okolakiciye meetings. During the April All Staff meeting, 80 persons broke into eight groups of faculty, staff, and students to review and prioritize SWOT results. Detailed results are included in Appendix 3.

**C. Reflecting Community Input**

SGU is fortunate to have a significant documentation of community input from its annual Founders’ Days celebrations held each year in February, and from an ambitious effort mounted by President Bordeaux in 2009 that gathered input from every community on the Rosebud Reservation. Summaries of community input were reviewed at All Staff meetings in March and April, and during Tokatakiya Okolakiciye meetings. Copies of reviewed materials are in Appendix 4.

Because SGU is a tribal university, its links to the community are particularly strong. Gaining and making use of community input is especially critical, and the strategic planning process took that into consideration, resulting in the integration of a number of significant community ideas and concerns into the strategic plan.

**III. Strategic Planning Inputs**

**A. Community Inputs**

1) **Community needs assessment**

Community input, from the 2009 visits to 21 communities and from Founders’ Day forums in 2013 and 2014, covered a wide variety of topics but there were identifiable clusters of responses ranging from the need for increased access to technology, for online course delivery, to the need for strengthening Lakota language and culture.

Frequent concerns voiced by community members are listed in bold, with quotes and paraphrases about those topics from community participants included below each.
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- **Needs for transportation, more education, more economic opportunity**
  - “Need for education and technology in communities”
  - “SGU needs to have ‘think tank’ forums in Mellette County, such as in education, land, population, voting, economics and funding, roads, law & order, governance and culture”
  - “SGU can assist the community in its economic development planning”

- **Governance and concerns about it**
  - “Need for ethics in government, land and with our other issues today”
  - “The community is viewed as small, and, therefore voiceless-no one listens”
  - “Have very few in attendance at community meetings”

- **Need for more computer access and technology**
  - “SGU needs to look at community delivery classes through satellite system”
  - “Need for personnel to teach correct computer usage”

- **Need for healthier food, health information**
  - “Sugar Diabetes needs to be addressed and health education regarding treatment and readings needed”
  - “Health education is needed in all aspects of health care to better understand contract”
  - “Health care and off-reservation versus on-reservation eligibility needs to be addressed”

- **Cultural preservation**
  - “Need to return to tribal culture, especially the language”
  - “SGU needs to return to having courses in the communities again, especially in the language, history and ceremonies”

Other subjects community members identified in the 2009 forums included inadequate law and order, concerns about vandalism, needed training for people returning from prison, need for parenting classes, need to strengthen the community, desire to strengthen the GED program, need for community assistance in developing business plans, and need for increased involvement with SGU in the communities.
ii) Annual Founders’ Days Forums

SGU hosts Founders’ Day Forums on campus every February. Documentation from those forums is in written and video form. Written information from the 2013 and 2014 forums was used in the Tokatakiya Okolakiciye meetings and during All Staff meetings as part of the input that was considered in development of the strategic plan. Principal, recurring themes, and some of the many specific recommendations that community members shared are in the bulleted list below:

✧ Land and land use by Lakota people – land needs to be used by the people and is an important economic consideration
✧ Protecting mother earth – example: stop Keystone XL pipeline
✧ Technology is a tool to use to enhance education and Lakota Language learning
✧ Economic Development, sustainable development needs to be pursued
✧ Traditional governance principles need to be studied and applied
✧ SGU needs to develop CDs for beginning language, common everyday phrases
✧ Take tribal song and dance to the communities, teach drumming and dancing, need help making regalia, teach parents basic sewing
✧ Develop partnerships with tribal programs in order for programs to hire our graduates
✧ Draft curriculum to change law and order, train our own judges, prosecutors, and attorneys because too many of our young people are being prosecuted in federal court and too many children are being placed in white homes through the welfare system
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✧ Develop student-operated businesses to build entrepreneurial base
✧ Develop culinary arts program and auto mechanics program
✧ Sinte Gleska University will provide dual credit for Todd County High School students
✧ Todd County Schools and Sinte Gleska University will work together to develop a plan for joint vocational education programs
✧ It is incumbent upon us to redefines and restructures education for our students
✧ We need to define to the outside world who we are (history), many dysfunctional things here but that’s what the world sees and hears

**iii) Summary discussion – community input**

Community participants repeatedly speak to the basic economic, social, and health needs that mark the reservation community. They look to SGU to assist, and often to take leadership roles in addressing those needs. Their expectations are aligned with SGU’s mission and purposes and that alignment speaks to the way that SGU’s mission differs from those of most colleges and universities. In addition to preparing individual students for success in terms of standard metrics, SGU is charged with preparing them to “help determine the future development and direction of the Tribe and its institutions,” and to ensure that its programs are “uniquely appropriate to the Lakota people in order to facilitate individual development and tribal autonomy”. Facilitating tribal autonomy can be understood as “tribal nation building,” which has been incorporated into the strategic plan as a major goal.

The incorporation of community input into SGU’s plan aligns it with SGU’s mission, and at the same time poses a serious challenge. There are a large number of substantial, fundamental needs that have to be addressed, and prioritizing those according to the limited resources available is an ongoing challenge.

**B. SWOT Analyses**

SWOT analyses carried out by mixed groups of faculty, staff, students, and including three Board of Regents members and the SGU President, provided large amounts of input to each of the four dimensions.

Top strengths identified included Lakota language and culture, strong faculty and staff, family atmosphere and values, and the provision of educational opportunities.

Weaknesses focused overwhelmingly on the need for more open communication, increased transparency, better collaboration in general, the need to act according to Lakota values, and the lack of sufficient resources to support the operation and develop new initiatives.
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Opportunities identified clustered around outreach to the community, recruitment of students, emphasizing our strength in Lakota language and culture, offering more academic majors, and providing online courses.

Major threats cited were the fact that SGU is on probation, that funding sources, especially grants, are not secure, and that socio-economic issues facing the community that students live can adversely affect their ability to achieve their educational goals.

Alignment of SWOT findings and other input to the strategic plan are described in the tables that follow.

![SWOT Weaknesses - numbers of responses from Gallery Walk, March 2015 All Staff](image_url)
IV. The Plan – Alignment with Mission and Stakeholders

Four major goals and attendant strategies, with columns indicating alignment of those strategies with the mission, values, vision and stakeholder input are listed in tables 1-4 below.

1. Plan in Brief - Alignment with Mission, Values, Vision, Community Input, SWOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1. Strengthening the institution: open communication, transparency, future planning, shared governance, and sound fiscal and institutional practices</th>
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## 2. Plan in Brief - Alignment with Mission, Values, Vision, Community Input, and SWOT

Goal 2. Academic Enhancement: Strengthened and additional academic and community educational programs that meet the social, cultural, and economic aspirations and needs of SGU students

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<td>2.2 Provide online courses, especially to serve students who otherwise cannot attend classes</td>
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<td>X</td>
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3. Plan in Brief - Alignment with Mission, Values, Vision, Community Input, and SWOT

Goal 3. Lakol Wicoh'an na Wolakota: learning, practicing, and celebrating Lakota language, lifeways, and values

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<td>3.4 Continue to develop Lakota History curricula, including through learning from knowledgeable community members</td>
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<td>X</td>
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SWOT Strength Summary - March 2015
### 4. Plan in Brief - Alignment with Mission, Values, Vision, Community Input, and SWOT

**Goal 4. Tribal Nation Building: preparing students for a life of continual learning and engaged participation in their local, tribal, national, and global communities**

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V. Implementation

Implementation of SGUs plan hinges on collaboration of all SGU faculty and staff. Effective and continuous implementation of the plan will require that SGU devote a combination of leadership and managerial strategies to the effort. Those strategies must enlist the continuing support of the Board of Regents, the SGU President, the management team (President’s Council), the Tokatakiya Okolakiciye (Going Forward Society), managers of divisions, and department chairs.

Key individuals responsible for addressing strategies and ways of working under each the four major goals have been identified, but it will be up to the Board, the president, management team, and the Tokatakiya Okolakiciye to monitor implementation and to make adjustments as needed. Regular, bi-monthly, reviews are called for by the plan and administration needs to conduct those reviews along with Tokatakiya Okolakiciye and needs to make regular updates to all staff and faculty concerning implementation and challenges that may stall the process.

A key aspect of implementation is the budget process. Many of the items under the major goals require funding that is separate from standard budget lines and those need be taken into consideration during the participatory budget process slated to begin in summer of 2015 so as to be reflected in the FY 2016 budget year, which starts October.

VI. Measurement

Measurement is closely linked to implementation. Each of the “strategies and ways of working” in the work plan (at section VI below) lists a possible evaluation protocol. The Assessment Coordinator is being charged with the task of carrying out needed measurements, including conducting indicated surveys, doing qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis as prescribed.

VII. Work plan

The work plan is attached as Appendix 5 and is displayed in an excel sheet format on the university website. The work plan is subject to change and changes will necessarily include needed insertion of status updates that describe progress toward goal completion and challenges that occur. Other aspects of the work plan, including budgeting information, are also subject to change. It will be the responsibility of the Tokatakiya Okolakiciye to update the work plan on SGU’s website.
VIII. Appendices

Appendices to this document are available online and they include the following four documents plus supplementary materials.

Appendix 1 - 2000 strategic plan and 2013 strategic outlook
Appendix 2 – Strategic planning process – Tokatakiya Okolakiciye
Appendix 3 – SWOT results
Appendix 4 – Documents reflecting community input
Appendix 5 – Work plan (action plan for strategic plan)