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## Findings and Recommendations

### CUMU Strategic Direction 2018–2021

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December 14, 2017

*CUMU is dedicated to its member institutions and to the creation and dissemination of knowledge on the issues that face our urban and metropolitan campuses and the communities they serve.*

CUMU members are well known as vibrant and forward-looking institutions. Many academic innovations and trends were first envisioned at urban and metropolitan universities and colleges. Our innovative nature is our greatest strength. In a world facing complex challenges, our members are leaders of action in partnership with their cities—working together to create innovative solutions essential to a brighter future – locally and globally. Urban and metropolitan colleges are vital resource hubs contributing to educational achievement and economic activity. Our member campuses recognize the challenges of change facing higher education and CUMU offers a vibrant platform to explore and share.

Founded in 1989, the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) is the longest-running and largest organization committed to serving and connecting urban and metropolitan universities and their partners. During Fall 2017, CUMU surveyed its member and non-member stakeholders and conducted interviews with key member presidents and chancellors. Based on their feedback, the following key priorities have been identified for 2018–2021:

- Build connections and cross university partnerships.
- Communicate and celebrate effective and innovative strategies.
- Extend public policy strategy.
- Expand membership portfolio and value.

#### BUILD CONNECTIONS AND CROSS UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Stakeholders indicated that one of CUMU’s core strengths is its ability to build connections across its member institutions, and there is support for the expansion of those efforts. In addition to the annual conference, two other opportunities received significant support: cross-community networks and small and focused regional meetings.

**CUMU will facilitate two cross-community networks that build stronger connections between member institutions, and enhance collaboration.**

**Network 1:** Finalize plans for and launch urban university research network, with a designated individual responsible for managing and growing the network.

**2018:**

- Announce initiative Q3 2018
- Identify individual responsible for managing and growing the network
- Determine resource needs
- Gather at the 2018 conference
- Identify common research interests that may inform cross-community research.
- Explore partnership with Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA).

**2019:**

- Design 1-2 shared research areas
- Identify funding opportunities and develop proposals

**2020:**

- Begin shared research agenda.
- Continue to seek funding

**Network 2:** Finalize plans for and launch anchor network in partnership with the Democracy Collaborative (TDC), with a designated individual responsible for managing and growing the network.

**2018:**

- Announce partnership in Q1 2018
- Identify individuals responsible for managing and growing the network
- Determine resource needs
- Develop and launch pilot remote learning resources, as well as associated communications.
- Gather at the 2018 conference
- Announce call for MUJ special issue, in collaboration with TDC, on anchor work (to be published February 2019)
- Participate in larger anchor conversations and efforts (e.g. AITF) to encourage coordination of efforts

**2019:**

- Identify funding opportunities and develop proposals
- Continue to collaborate with other initiatives when possible

**2020:**

- MUJ will publish an issue, in collaboration with TDC, on anchor work (February 2019)
- Continue to seek funding

**CUMU will share innovations and effective practices.**

CUMU will continue to offer an annual conference. Additionally, CUMU will create space for groups of university administrators/faculty to gather (e.g. provosts, government affairs, etc) as interest groups during annual meetings to facilitate member institution dialogue and exchange. In addition, CUMU will develop and offer a series of regional meetings to be held annually focused on key topics of interest. In addition, CUMU will:

**2018:** Launch interest groups during annual conference

**2019:** Hold first regional conference

**2020:** Hold second regional conference

## COMMUNICATE AND CELEBRATE EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

CUMU founders created the organization to provide a platform for like - minded institutions to support one another and strengthen the “metropolitan university” identity. This value proposition continues to receive support across the stakeholder groups. Feedback suggested that CUMU should continue to enhance its efforts to share innovative and effective strategies and serve as a champion for its member organizations.

**MUJ will examine and expand its impact.**

In 2016, MUJ shifted from a paper - based journal available only to member institutions to an open access (online) journal. Results from the survey, interviews and feedback from the executive committee indicate that it remains a valuable mechanism to share and learn strategies that enhance the urban mission. Results also indicate that the broader audience and new platform require an examination of its readership and approach to the dissemination of the innovative work of urban and metropolitan universities.

MUJ will continue to publish 4 issues per year. In addition, MUJ will:

**2018:** Expand and engage the editorial board to provide guidance and develop innovations in the dissemination of information that is helpful to urban and metropolitan universities.

**2019:** Explore and implement alternative platforms and communication approaches to identify and disseminate innovative and effective practices worthy of replication.

**2020:** Continue to develop and implement communication strategies to extend the reach of the journal.

### **CUMU will enhance its visibility as an organization that champions urban and metropolitan universities.**

Over the next three years, CUMU will enhance its communications strategy through targeted emails, blog posts and use of social media platforms (i.e. LinkedIn and Twitter) to champion our organization, its member institutions, and the communities we serve.

#### **2018:**

- Highlight and celebrate member institutions
  - Create and share profiles of each member institution to highlight how the institution is advancing the urban identity.
  - Identify and share successes of member institutions through digital communications.
- Enhance use of Membership Data Dashboard as an interactive tool that empowers users to visually inspect CUMU membership locations and compare and extract membership data for inquiry, decision making, and to inform internal and external colleagues.
- Integrate a guest blogging strategy into the communications plan to help ensure a diverse voice is represented through the CUMU newsroom.
  - Identify guest bloggers from executive committee members, community partners, and affiliates and partners of CUMU.
  - Schedule six guest posts for 2018.
- Complete an SEO audit to ensure CUMU's website is being seen in relevant internet search terms; enhance and rework web content based on audit results.

### **CUMU will recognize faculty, administrators and institutions for their efforts and impact in the field.**

Continue to partner with the Swearer Center on the Lynton Award. Each year, the award will be presented at CUMU's annual conference. MUJ will invite the submission of a manuscript from the awardee for conference issue of MUJ. In addition, MUJ will publish an issue focused on Lynton's legacy, the award, and advancing community engaged scholarship (November 2018).

Develop new awards and recognition program(s) to highlight individuals and institutions doing exceptional work to move the field forward.

- Finalize the Barbara Holland Award for Scholar Administrators.
  - Call for nominations in Q1 2018.
  - Award first recipient at Conference 2018.

## **EXTEND PUBLIC POLICY STRATEGY**

There is strong support for CUMU to contribute advocacy and public policy support. CUMU's involvement in the Washington Higher Education Secretariat provides an opportunity to engage in public policy initiatives. Additionally, the feedback suggests that CUMU may wish to partner with other organizations that have expertise and experience in this arena.

### **CUMU will take an active role in advocating on behalf and disseminating policies and legislation that are pertinent to our members.**

Through participation in the Washington Higher Education Secretariat, CUMU will develop and engage in relationships to address trends and challenges confronting higher education and to develop beneficial responses.

#### **2018:**

- CUMU will incorporate a discussion of public policy activities and concerns related to urban and metropolitan universities in each executive committee meeting. This will help to identify key strategic policy related issues to disseminate strategically across CUMU membership and new networks.
- Explore engaging a firm or partnership with an organization with expertise in this area.

**2019:**

- Increase participation in legislative and public policy convening led by other associations
- CUMU will continue to intentionally focus on policy issues during the annual conference.
- Increase communications

**2020:**

- Evaluate impact of policy related strategy.

## EXPAND MEMBERSHIP PORTFOLIO AND VALUE

CUMU focuses on creating a space to understand the distinctiveness of the mission of urban and metropolitan universities through meetings and conferences, an internationally respected journal, outcome - based research, advocacy and public policy support, sharing best practices, and building rewarding connections among our membership and with our community partners. In the past 3 years, we added 36 members, resulting in the biggest period of growth since founding. We currently have approximately 90+ member institutions. Despite this success, feedback suggests that CUMU needs to involve more institutions in meaningful ways to better advance its mission.

The executive committee feedback indicated the value in expanding the membership. While there was general support for international membership, most of the feedback reflected on the challenges of adequately supporting meaningful involvement of member institutions outside the United States.

**CUMU will expand its membership in ways that enhance its mission.**

**2018:** Establish a membership subcommittee of the executive committee to identify, vet, and accept new member institutions. This subcommittee will develop guidance related to identifying and sustaining membership.

**2019:** Develop a more robust membership on-boarding and engagement program to ensure new members get immersed in the networks, communities, and activities of the Coalition.

**2020:** Implement membership on-boarding and engagement program

**CUMU will seek the involvement of an international perspective.**

Over the next three years, CUMU will seek international speakers for each annual conference and MUJ will include international voices. Additionally,

**2018:**

- Establish international membership task group of the executive committee to determine best approach to international membership.
- CUMU will identify and explore involvement in international networks (e.g. Talloire).

**2019:**

- CUMU will implement recommendations from task group
- CUMU will become more involved in international networks.

**2020:**

- CUMU will assess the impact of its efforts to incorporate an international perspective.