Driving Digital Innovation

Executive Committee Update

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Implementation of the Driving Digital Innovation thematic priority is support by a collection of activities initiated directly in response to the Strategic Plan RFP process plus additional activities initiated by various groups in recognition of the importance of this thematic priority. As a result, efforts are already underway in support of three strategies.

The **education-focused strategy** is supported through a combination of several degree programs, a new university-wide center focused on security, and one projected funded through the strategic plan RFP. Applications for two relatively new undergraduate degrees in Data Sciences and Cybersecurity Analytics and Operations are increasing significantly. Both programs are designed to leverage expertise from multiple units across campus. The new Center for Security Research and Education brings together expertise from multiple units to more effectively highlight and leverage Penn State’s strengths. Finally, a project was funded through the RFP process that will build on Penn State expertise in the area of immersive environments, and the University has invested in Adobe Creative Cloud access for all students, which includes tools for immersive content creation.

The **research-focused strategy** is currently supported through a project funded through the RFP process as well as the ICS plans for co-hires in 2018. The RFP process is supporting an initiative focused on establishing a digital infrastructure that will facilitate the secure sharing of health-related data, increasing and streamlining opportunities for collaborations between Penn State Hershey and various colleges at University Park.

The **economy-focused strategy** is supported through a variety of initiatives out of the office of the Vice President for Research including Invent Penn State, expansion of the LaunchBoxes across the commonwealth, and converting IST Startup Week to Penn State Startup Week to more effectively highlight entrepreneurship and innovation across campus while providing Penn State students with the insights, knowledge, and confidence they need to pursue their own startup. Two projects focused on access to broadband and wireless technologies in communities across the state have also received prototyping support, including one funded by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania to generate real-time mapping of access in all counties across the Commonwealth. Penn State researchers are also working with partners such as the Schlow library and local borough to extend wifi access through the use of TV whitespace.

We anticipate additional proposals through the second and third rounds of the RFP process that will address aspects of this strategy as well as additional initiatives that will move forward separate from the RFP process. These new efforts will include proposals for additional degree programs and efforts focused on coalescing and more effectively highlighting Penn State’s strengths in relevant areas.

We will also be reaching out to several groups to initiate discussions regarding possible additional projects, some of which may result in proposals for round three of the RFP process. At this time, we anticipate additional efforts focused on data sciences and security education and research, more effectively addressing accessibility of a Penn State education for students with disabilities, improving Penn State’s digital infrastructure in support of both education and research, and entrepreneurship that leverages the opportunities that digital technologies provide.