

Pre-Retreat Assignment for DDDH Fall Retreat Participants

The first afternoon of the retreat will build a case that: 1) the external environment is changing in ways that are challenging higher education at the national, state, and local levels and 2) the campus is committed to the Vol Vision/Top 25 initiative as a response to those challenges. On Tuesday morning, the Provost will update the progress on Vol Vision/Top 25 and begin our discussion, in earnest, about how departments and colleges can and should embrace the challenge of Vol Vision/Top 25 at the unit level. We will hear about progress to date, how this journey is already underway, and how it is changing strategic decision-making and resource allocation on campus.

Three sessions on Tuesday are set aside to consider ways in which units can pursue their own “Top 25” strategies. In the first session, we will hear from some campus initiatives already underway. These presentations will highlight a range of approaches. The second session will require your pre-retreat assignment (below). We will create break-out groups in which each of you will share one idea regarding how your unit can pursue Top 25 status in your discipline. In the final session, we will bring the groups back together for report-outs and a plenary discussion.

With that framework in mind, everyone must be prepared for participation in the second day by doing the following pre-retreat assignments:

1. Review the pre-retreat materials that have been posted on the retreat web site, specifically the Vol Vision Overview and Action Plan.
2. Prepare a thumbnail sketch of a “Top 25” initiative that engages your unit.

This can be an initiative that is already underway or it can be completely new. It can be a departmental, college, or interdisciplinary initiative, and it may include internal and/or external partnerships with academic and/or non-academic units. It is unlikely that incremental change on the margins will create significant consequences for your unit or for the campus – so think boldly, but realistically in your brainstorming.

Your written idea should be no longer than one paragraph and should include:

- a. What are the key features of the initiative?
- b. How does the initiative “fit” into the Vol Vision/Top 25 goals and play to your unit’s resources, culture, and strengths?

This idea should be something that you can share in a 3 minute “elevator conversation” with your colleagues at the retreat.