

Advancing to Excellence

Florida Polytechnic University 2018-2023 Strategic Plan





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A MESSAGE FROM CHAIR DON WILSON AND PRESIDENT RANDY K. AVENT

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DEAR FRIENDS:

When Florida Polytechnic University graduated nearly 200 students—including many members of our inaugural class—on May 4, 2018, it marked more than a seminal achievement. It marked a pivot point to a new phase in Florida Poly's continuing development.

Florida Poly was established on April 20, 2012 with an ambitious mandate–we would be a new kind of university and we would serve the whole state of Florida with a strong focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). We also had a clear economic mandate: to develop strong working relationships with industry and to offer industry-aligned majors in fast-growing high-technology areas. Our goal is not only to educate and graduate bright and curious engineers, scientists, and researchers, our goal is to be an engine that helps propel Florida's economy. Florida Poly will produce innovations and innovators, because Florida Poly is itself an innovation.

In creating Florida Poly, the Legislature and Board of Governors set specific and ambitious shortterm goals for the new university to achieve. Among those was the creation of a new STEM-focused curriculum, to have at least 1,244 full-time equivalent students and to achieve accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges by the end of 2017. To ensure success, the Legislature charged the Board of Governors with the responsibility for reviewing and confirming that all criteria had been met.

We are proud that Florida Poly has met all of its required benchmarks. Indeed, this newest of Florida's state universities is thriving, and we are prepared to address a new set of priorities for the next five years. These priorities focus on important trends in higher education and include Priority 1: Degree Alignment, Priority 2: Student Success, Priority 3: Economic Development, and Priority 4: Affordability and Efficiency. **Advancing to Excellence** is the strategic plan for how we will address these priorities. It outlines our vision, our goals, and the metrics by which we will measure our progress.

This plan is the culmination of a collaborative effort of Florida Poly's leadership and stakeholders. We are very grateful for the guidance, wisdom, and support we have received from our faculty, staff, students, University Trustees, the Board of Governors, elected officials and the community at large. We look forward to continuing to work together as we **Advance to Excellence**.

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Don Wilson Chair, Board of Trustees

Randy K. Avent President



CREATING A NEW UNIVERSITY-THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Creating Florida Poly addressed both a need and an opportunity for the state. Already home to many excellent colleges and universities, Florida's 12th state university was never intended to duplicate the other state schools. Florida Poly was an opportunity to create a new kind of university in Florida, one that addressed the need for a broad education steeped in theory and fundamentals to ensure students are lifetime employable while simultaneously preparing students for the workforce by emphasizing practical skills in critical thinking and real-world problem solving. One that focused on applied research in fast-growing and emerging high-technology areas that Florida communities have identified as strategic areas for economic growth. And one that listens and responds to industry needs.

The visionaries behind Florida Poly recognized that having an institution devoted entirely to the education, discovery, and application of engineering and applied sciences would fill an economic gap that Florida needed to address. Additionally, adding a strong STEM-based component to Florida's economy would provide more diversity and stability to our economy. Recognizing that the pace and importance of technological development could not be ignored, especially in the nation's third largest state, Florida Poly was created.

Creating a new university is an exciting, yet challenging opportunity that begins with building a physical presence, and developing a robust academic curriculum and attracting extremely talented students. Florida Poly's first building, and the only academic facility, is the iconic Innovation, Science and Technology (IST) Building designed by the legendary Santiago Calatrava. Winning more than 20 global awards and identified as one of the 16 most breathtaking buildings in the world, the IST Building is one element in attracting talented students with strong skills in STEM.

More important than having an iconic physical presence; however, was the need to create university programs that provided pathways for students to get high-paying jobs after graduation. To this end, the University created a unique curriculum in six technical disciplines that provided quality and diversity for students. In four short years since the inaugural class arrived, Florida Poly has a student body of more than 1,350 distinctively qualified students with representation from 30 states and 20 countries and an average accepted student SAT score approaching 1300. Our students are smart, they are driven, they are creative, they are risk-takers and they certainly excel in their STEM fields. Early statistics from self-reported data show that Florida Poly graduates are earning between \$50-70,000 dollars right out college, 83% are remaining in Florida and the majority are either employed or continuing on to further their education.

The first five years of Florida Poly were unarguably dedicated to bringing the University to life and largely driven by achieving regional accreditation. By the summer of 2017, Florida Poly had accomplished all six of the legislatively mandated goals, including student growth and receiving accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). With this, the University fulfilled its promise to the State of Florida to have an accredited institution devoted entirely to STEM and began to turn its focus towards the graduation of its inaugural class. This seminal event marked the end of the creation of the University and a transition to its next phase of maturation.



BACKGROUND

Looking ahead at the next five years in Florida Poly's growth, attention will turn toward maturing the organization, strengthening the core academic programs, and establishing Florida Poly's role in economic development. **Advancing to Excellence** is the strategic plan for how we will address these priorities.

The creation of this strategic plan followed a traditional development approach leading to a vision and roadmap for what the University can become. This opportunity was not taken lightly, and there were numerous stakeholders involved in the creation of its priorities. Faculty and staff participated in its initial development through several study groups, and we conducted individual and town hall-style meetings with faculty, staff, students, and community leaders to shape the final plan. The plan was heavily influenced by our State University System's 2025 Strategic Plan, and many of its goals are woven into our plan. Numerous iterations of the plan were also discussed with our Board of Trustees for guidance and final decisions.

Our approach in developing this five-year-plan followed a standard process that began by identifying emerging trends pressuring higher education for change. This investigation studied many areas that impact Florida Poly and included synoptic analyses of legislation, students, technology, industry, research, and higher education. An internal analysis of each trend identified our strengths and weaknesses, while an external analysis did the same for opportunities and threats. Together, these formed the standard SWOT process and led to the development of a differentiation strategy that included the "4 Ps" (positioning, priorities, performance, and payments) that often form a strategic plan.

Our differentiation strategy was largely governed by three primary characteristics which we used to define our positioning: (1) We are a new institution; (2) We are a small institution; and (3) We are 100% STEM.

POSITIONING

Florida Poly is a new institution and not bounded by legacy programs, traditional administrative structures and operational models that are not efficient. As such, the University can be built using flat organizational structures, centralized services, lean processes and automation. Academic programs can be defined through a combination of analyzing job markets and identifying those fields we think offer the most growth potential during the next 25 years. We have little entrenched bureaucracies and cultures and no historical programs that are no longer relevant. Although being new offers many

advantages, being new also means there is little capital available for building and growing the campus to meet our mission. This threat means we must be more creative in financing the buildout of the campus through non-traditional means.

Florida Poly is a small institution which means it can offer a "high-touch" model of education that primarily relies on instruction through full-time faculty. Projects provide the opportunity for students to use and practice what they learn in classes and are an essential component of the curriculum. These projects also provide academic experiences focused on teaching students to work in teams as well as pathways that prepare students to communicate ideas in the marketplace. As a small institution, we can build relationships with Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs) that other larger universities might ignore since they lack mass. But as a small institution that itself lacks mass, we must ensure we graduate the most talented engineering students in the State University System. Being a small institution also means we must provide an exceptional user experience to attract and retain the best students in the state.

Lastly, Florida Poly is 100% STEM which brings a unique and proud culture to our campus. Being solely dedicated to STEM education allows the University to provide industry-aligned majors in fastgrowing areas and to build strong partnerships with industry for economic benefit. Being 100% STEM helps our faculty and student body transition developments out of the lab and into the marketplace through licensing and new technology venture creation. But being 100% STEM also means many of our students need help improving their professional development skills in communications, building relationships, decision making, leadership; and setting boundaries. And it means we must be hawkish in controlling administrative costs to offset our expensive academic programs.

Taken together, these differentiating characteristics lead to our positioning statements that define the mission and vision of the University.

Mission Statement: "Serve students and industry through excellence in education, discovery and application of engineering and applied sciences."

Vision Statement: "Florida Poly will be a premier STEM university known for producing highly desirable graduates and new technology solutions."

PRIORITIES

Having identified the primary differentiating factors that set Florida Poly apart from other universities in the system, we then challenged ourselves to use these differences to our advantage. This approach allowed us to identify measures we can take, and those we must take and they form our Priorities. These priorities were shaped by the dominant trends and pressure on higher education and fall into four broad priorities: Priority 1: Degree Alignment; Priority 2: Student Success; Priority 3:Economic Development; and Priority 4: Affordability and Efficiency.

PERFORMANCE

Performance in each priority is measured in one of three ways. State University System motivated metrics align our institution to State University System common performance goals that are identified as part of the system's Performance Based Funding metrics. Strategy motivated metrics align ourselves to our strategic plan and strengthen our differentiation, maturity and values. Peer motivated metrics align the University to similar institution's performance goals and require that we identify a requisite set of peers.

To identify this requisite set of peers we examined similar institutions across the United States. Our process used the type of institution, size, quality of students, and mix of programs as a method for screening and resulted in the following list of peer and aspirational peer institutions.

With our positioning, priorities, and performance in hand, a strategic plan consisting of goals and metrics for each priority can be created. Since our budget is defined by the state legislature each year, payments will be part of the yearly budgeting and operational planning process.



		TYPE	UG SIZE	SAT	ACT	% Match
ASPIRATIONAL	Stevens Institute of Technology	Private	226%	111%	114%	75%
	Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology	Private	160%	110%	110%	95%
	Colorado School of Mines	Public	334%	109%	114%	100%
	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Private	454%	108%	110%	73%
	Worcester Polytechnic Institute	Private	321%			87%
PEERS	Missouri University of Science and Technology	Public	500%	106%	107%	76%
	NM Institute of Mining and Technology	Public	114%	104%	100%	72%
	Michigan Technological University	Public	421%	103%	103%	70%
	Clarkson University	Private	237%	99%	100%	64%
	Florida Institute of Technology	Private	263%	97%	100%	53%

Table 1: List of peer and aspirational peer institutions for Florida Poly. Institutions were chosen based on the type of institution, undergraduate body size, quality of student, and similarity to Florida Poly. Similarity to Florida Poly was calculated as the percentage of students that graduated in similar degree programs as those at Florida Poly. All values are normalized to Florida Poly.



DEGREE ALIGNMENT

Dr. R. Gnoo

Build Prominent Programs in High-Paying Industries

By building prominent programs in high-paying industries, our students will have meaningful careers in exciting industries and our state will have a workforce that helps attract important industries that drive economic growth. The University has made significant progress these first five years by creating a project-based curriculum and attracting high-quality students through generous scholarships. We have grown our facilities and built a productive faculty and staff that are excited about building a new University.

To further strengthen our impact these next five years, we must continue to shape the quality and diversity of our incoming class to attract a strong and balanced student body. Having a strong incoming student body is critical to our success, but so is having an accomplished faculty body that can deliver a strong curriculum in important undergraduate and graduate programs. Our first priority focuses on five goals that help us achieve both.

Goal 1: Enroll a high quality and diverse incoming class

In striving to become the premier STEM public institution in the southeast region of the United States, Florida Poly will increase the academic quality and diversity of its incoming undergraduate students. **By 2023, our undergraduate student body will be at least 1,450 and our graduate student body will be over 60. Our incoming student quality will increase to either an average SAT score over 1300 or an average ACT score of 30, and more than 20% of the reported enrolled incoming freshmen will be in the top 10% of their high school graduating class.** If achieved, these metrics compare well against our peers. To begin competing with our aspirational peers, however, we will need to improve class diversity to attract the best students both inside and outside our state. **By 2023, the percentage of females on campus will increase to more than 20% and racial diversity will approach 10%.**

Goal 2: Grow a faculty body committed to excellence

Florida Poly will grow a faculty body committed to excellence across the tripartite mission of teaching and advising, research and scholarship, and professional service. **By 2023, more than 40% of our faculty will have participated in internal professional development programs aimed at improving instructional effectiveness and 70% will have taken advantage of our professional development funding.** The University's student-to-faculty ratio will be comparable to our peers while we simultaneously monitor the number of student credit hours taught by adjuncts. **Our goal is to have a 18:1 student-to-faculty ratio with no more than 5,000 student credit hours taught**

by part-time adjuncts. Together, these will help us become a premier STEM university and ensure closer and more productive interactions between students and faculty.

Goal 3: Improve instructional effectiveness and consistency of quality

With commitment to serve students through excellence in education, Florida Poly strives to improve instructional effectiveness and provide consistent quality. Florida Poly will use the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory to measure student's satisfaction with instructional effectiveness, and we will strive to be 5% above similar institutions. We will achieve ABET accreditation for four programs by 2020, and we will continue to improve the curriculum to increase graduation rates and to create sustainable practice-based learning opportunities for our students. We will also continue to propose unique programs that grow our academic mission and help attract Florida's most talented students.

Goal 4: Grow the number of academic programs in strategic disciplines

Proactively growing academic programs in STEM will help generate programs aligned with industry demands and standards to produce highly desirable graduates. As our student population grows, the growth and diversity of academic programs will also need to grow. New programs will be chosen to complement and strengthen the existing programs, to support identified needs in Florida's underserved industries and to create new industries. **By 2023, Florida Poly expects to have five additional new programs offered in engineering or applied-science disciplines.** The introduction of online learning education options will also be important for Florida Poly to be in line with trends in higher education. **By 2023, Florida Poly will have assessed how online programs can best complement in-class options and will begin offering student credit hours in some form of distance learning education.**

Goal 5: Mature and grow the graduate program

The growth of graduate programs is the next step in Florida Poly's development. **By 2023, Florida Poly will build upon existing master's degrees in Engineering and Computer science with tracks in Robotics, Control Systems, Logistics and Data Analytics.** Two additional tracks will be developed to broaden graduate degrees linked to a growing economy, and we will steadily build the graduate cohort to 40 incoming students per year. More than 10% of our students will work with industry in the development of their theses while the remaining students will work on federal initiatives that develop capacity in support of federal research.



STUDENT SUCCESS

Prepare Students for a Lifetime of Success

With national student success rates in engineering being low, and the lack of "retreat" majors at Florida Poly, this priority is critical to our long-term success. Early work at the University centered on building academic success services that included a digital library, mental health counseling, and advising and tutoring for our academically challenging classes. Later, career counseling and connections to internships became important as our students transitioned into their majors. Student development advised our Student Government Association as they represented the interests and concerns of the student body and supported clubs and organizations that built academic and social programs. Student development also established intramural athletics, wellness programs, self-development, and preventative programming that helped create a responsible and growing student life on campus.

Building strong programs in industry-aligned majors serve our students at graduation, but broadly educating them and helping them graduate on time serves them for a lifetime. The University will continue to grow and mature efforts that help students achieve their goals now in their academically challenging programs. But success in classes does not always translate into success in the workplace, so we will also build skills outside the classrooms that help our students become elite problem solvers that can work together in teams to solve poorly defined problems. These skills are increasingly important in the workplace as the complexity of problems being addressed by industry and our government increases. Finally, professional development skills like leadership, communication, and business acumen will give our students confidence and help them be successful throughout their career.

Goal 6: Help students achieve academic goals

We will help our students achieve their academic goals by supporting academic success in the classroom and through student-centered programs. Academic goals will be measured by retention rates, four-year graduation rates and six-year graduation rates for First Time in College (FTIC) students. Our retention and graduation rates will be aligned with our peers and aspirational peers and will also be measured against all institutions in the State University System. By 2023, our first-to-second year retention rate will be over 85% and our four-year graduation rates will be over 48%, while the six-year graduation rate will reach over 70%.

Goal 7: Build essential skills in communication, leadership, design, and business

Florida Poly graduates are expected to develop deep technical skills to solve complex problems as well as soft skills that will serve them throughout their career. Communication, leadership, and an understanding of the business environment will provide students with greater opportunities to continue their education or be employed in their field of study. Our curriculum is constructed to help students build communication, technical, leadership and design skills. **By 2023, 75% of graduates with a Bachelor of Science from Florida Poly will achieve job placement or continue their education to advanced degrees. Florida Poly graduates who become employed will earn salaries at or above the average wage in Florida at the time of graduation**.

Goal 8: Embed projects in a sustainable manner to enhance professional development

Engineering and applied science students must learn how to use their classroom technical skills to solve real-world problems in a multi-disciplinary team setting. This effort will build a strong foundation for hands-on, real-world projects that will enrich the professional development of Florida Poly students. Project-based programming will be a theme throughout all years at Florida Poly culminating in a senior capstone project. **By 2023, more than 50% of these projects will be supported by industry. Also by 2023, we will grow entrepreneurial efforts to more than five per year, and we will also offer more than 10 undergraduate research opportunities per year.**

Goal 9: Support students through work experience programs and career opportunities

Florida Poly is committed to support all students through work experience programs and career opportunities so that graduates achieve fulfilling post-graduation careers. Internships are a requirement and offer students the experience to grow in their professional careers and enhance their skills in real-work, industry environments. By 2023, Florida Poly expects 85% of its graduating students will have completed an off-campus internship with an industry partner.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Grow a High-Technology Economy Around Florida Poly Attracting and building a high-technology ecosystem around Florida Poly is imperative to its future growth and success. Building partnerships with industry to help them solve their problems and providing talented graduates that enable growth are two important elements that underlie that ecosystem. In our first five years, we built more than 200 industry partnerships and have grown many of these to include multiple levels of interaction. External research grant proposals have grown each year as we hire more faculty and make important investments in research infrastructure. Soon, we will break ground on our state-of-the-art Applied Research Center, and that will also become an important element in attracting a high-technology economy around the University.

To continue growing our economy, we will need to build a strong research presence that focuses on applied research to help our industry partners translate research out of our labs and into the marketplace. A necessary component of that partnership is to make sure it is well defined, realistic and sustainable. We will also need to continue growing our campus and building facilities that co-locate academia, industry and government so they can work together on today's complex problems.

Goal 10: Conduct and execute a realistic and sustainable industry interaction model

Building strong relationships with industry means both partners have complete understanding of their roles, responsibilities and expectations. Industry and academia have not always co-existed well, and there are often differences of opinion regarding expectations. Academics are rewarded for conducting fundamental research (basic and applied) while industry awards market entry. This often creates what's called the technology "valley of death." Translational research, where markets drive the fundamental research agenda and fundamental research enables markets, is a popular approach for fueling innovation and economic growth. More than often, though, industry primarily just wants access to students that are well prepared for the workforce and able to think critically. In this goal, we will work with industry to develop a realistic and sustainable interaction model that governs and measures how we best work together.

Goal 11: Conduct applied research to strengthen University impact

Conducting Research and Development (R&D) at Florida Poly generates new technologies, solutions, products, processes, and know-how that attracts industry to the campus and helps stimulate economic development. Our primary focus to date has been building the institution and its undergraduate programs, but as we enter this second five years, we will begin growing our research.

By 2023, just two years after our Applied Research Center is completed, our faculty will generate more than 50 government or industry grant proposals per year across all academic departments, and we will win more than five awards each year. Because R&D return on investment is complex and spread over many years, expenditures are a good way to indirectly measure R&D impact. By 2023, our R&D expenditures will have grown to more than \$500K annually.

Goal 12: Develop extended campus to support University growth

The University will need an aggressive capital growth plan to support its students, faculty, and staff by 2023 and to meet its mission. Currently, we have three campuses spread across Polk County with limited facilities at each. As we grow, both in the number of students and in our mission, we will need new facilities that add to our instructional, academic support and instructional support spaces. By 2023, we will have a new Applied Research Center in operation and will be requesting funding from the state for a second building to support campus operations. But with declining state budgets and a push to reduce capital outlay for state projects, we may need to think differently about how to build our campus. So by 2023, we will have also developed a plan for building out our campus using combinations of Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) and leased spaces in surrounding areas. Our goal is to influence the development of the surrounding property and to create a research park that brings together industry, academia, and government to work on common complex problems.



AFFORDABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

Maximize Value for the Student

A STEM degree offers our students opportunity and mobility while contributing to the growth of our economy. These degrees demand expensive resources at the same time more and more pressure is being placed on the University's operating budget. Additionally, students and parents expect a learning experience filled with academic quality, innovative safety measures and an overall enriching student life, but do not want to incur the debt typically associated with university degrees. Affordability and efficiency are thus essential components in our efforts to maximize value for the student.

Being a new university, Florida Poly has been aggressive in using modern business practices to reduce its operational cost and maximize value for the student. We have a flat organizational structure with centralized services and have created process improvement programs around lean/six-sigma. We created a culture of excellence and are growing communication, awards and professional development programs that offer our employees pathways to promotions. As we enter these next five years, we need to remain student centered and work hard to reduce administrative overhead that restricts important funds to the academic enterprise. We will continue to spread the word and build support for the University, and we will also continue to value our employees.

Goal 13: Create a strong student user experience

As a small institution located more than 10 miles from downtown Lakeland, we need to provide a superior user experience that attracts and retains quality students. This user experience should create positive emotions and attitudes about the University through meaningful and relevant experiences with it. Students should be an integral part of helping define and build that experience as we provide student-centered services that meet their needs while helping them mature. To measure our progress, the national student satisfaction inventory survey (Noel-Levit2) will be administered to the student body each spring. This survey compares our student perception of their user experience with other four-year public universities. Using three questions that give insight into the overall student experience, Florida Poly will have a 5% positive gap to similar institutions.

Goal 14: Concentrate spending on academic programs

Being a STEM institution with expensive programs, it is imperative that we carefully grow our administration such that we maximize funding spent on instructional efforts. With increased regulatory pressures, this is a difficult and challenging task in today's environment. Even small institutions need a threshold administration that, in comparison to its student body, may seem large. By 2023, Florida Poly will reduce its relative administrative expenses and will commit more than

30% of its overall expenditures on instructional effort. We will continue to keep our average cost to the student (net tuition and fees per 120 credit hours for resident undergraduates) close to average across all universities within the State University System, and we will have an overall Board of Governor's Performance Based Funding (PBF) metric that is at or better than average across the State University System.

Goal 15: Continue advocacy efforts to support University growth and reputation

As a new institution, it is important we continue to develop support and funding for our operations. Many offices contribute to our advocacy efforts and help strengthen our reputation, build the University's brand, and secure funding to support our students and programs. During the next five years, the Office of Government Relations will continue to work with the legislature and our advocacy groups to ensure our requests are known and adequately funded. Additionally, the Department of University Relations will provide services across the entire University and will continue outreach efforts throughout the community. **Together, we will build relationships to promote advocacy, enhance state financial support, impact public policy, develop stronger industry partnerships, ensure positive public perception and support fundraising.**

Scholarships are an important element in attracting talented students to Florida Poly and keeping our graduates in Florida. Scholarships are generally funded by donors who want to provide needed resources to our students through endowments and restricted funds. **During the next five years, we will increase our endowment to \$1.5M while raising an additional \$5M in new scholarships.** Development efforts also support University operations by providing unrestricted funding sources. **By 2023, we will have raised an additional \$5.5M in support of University operations.**

Goal 16: Ensure a highly effective organization

Our employees are the greatest asset we have to ensure a highly effective organization and the successful execution of our mission and vision. As such, we will hire, train, retain, and promote exceptional employees who are dedicated to the University and provide them with increased opportunities for professional growth and development. We will continue to implement data-driven decisions for increased efficiency and effectively design and support a successful organizational structure. We will also continue to increase efforts promoting a positive culture and an environment in which excellence is encouraged.



CONCLUSION

As a new university-and a new kind of university-Florida Poly has been guided by a strategic plan that enabled it to meet an ambitious set of goals during its first five years, including; accreditation, class size, campus infrastructure, curriculum development and industry relationships. Having successfully achieved these goals and graduated its inaugural class, Florida Poly is entering a new phase.

Advancing to Excellence is our plan for the next five years. It is the product of a standard collaborative strategic planning process that includes input from each of the University's constituencies. By leveraging our differentiating qualities to address the megatrends facing Florida Poly, and by focusing our attention on the four priorities we have outlined, we believe we have developed a challenging but attainable set of objectives and the means for measuring and evaluating our progress, while being consistent with the goals of the Board of Governors and the State University System. The results of the work ahead should benefit thousands of Florida Poly students and create a potent new engine for Florida's burgeoning high-tech economy.

We are grateful beyond words for the leadership, insights, understanding and hard work of people from every facet of the Florida Poly family in developing this plan. Without them, this would not be possible.

Now, we look forward to implementing this plan and preparing for a future of excellence.







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