Focused Initiative Life Cycle — Draft Structure

Dedicated administrative support enables two linked cycles: a 3–5 year focused initiative cycle and an annual challenges cycle.

COMPONENT 1 · FOUNDATION

Administrative Support

Research Strategy Division reporting to the Provost and Vice President for Research

Staffing

- Director
- Project manager
- Connector

Functions

- Catalyzation activities
- Collect & compile ideas and proposals
- Coordinate review and decision steps
- Connect faculty & initiatives for cross-collaboration
- Proactively scan for opportunities

↓ supports both cycles

COMPONENT 2 · 3–5 YEARS

Focused Initiative Cycle

Define USU's research strategy and focused initiatives through an open call for strengths.

↻ **Repeats every 3–5 years**

1 · SOLICIT

Farm ideas — open call for strengths

- Faculty & research groups
- Research strategy & networks
- Third-party operations
- Public & USU community
- Extension
- Funders: federal (NSF, NIH), state, philanthropy, industry
- Closer relations to funding

Admin support collects & compiles input

→

2 · REVIEW

Review & recommend

- Provost & Deans Council
- Vice Presidents
- Research Council
- External person / perspective

↕ Feedback loop with idea sources

Focused initiative review criteria

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3 · DECIDE

Decide & resource

- Possible deciders: VPR, President, Provost
- Criteria defined
- Budget & resources defined by focused initiative

COMPONENT 3 · ANNUAL

Challenges Cycle

Define challenges and projects within each focused initiative through a continuous solicit-and-review cycle.

↻ **Continuous annual review**

1 · SOLICIT

Farm ideas — formal solicitation

- Faculty proposals defining challenges
- Grassroots & early-career faculty, colleges
- Advisory / internal councils
- Industry & policy
- Advancement & philanthropy
- Extension & community
- AI-assisted horizon scanning

Admin support collects & compiles input

→

2 · REVIEW

Ad hoc council per focused initiative

- Faculty, administration, external members and staff
- Meets regularly but can convene quickly
- Recommends challenges / projects

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3 · DECIDE

Final decision rolls up

- Possible deciders: VPR, President, Provost
- Resourced within the focused initiative's budget

Open questions — focused initiative cycle: How do we capture and support strong work that doesn't qualify as a focused initiative?

Open questions — challenges cycle: Review criteria; development cycle timeline; challenge life cycle.