



Happy Campuses

Alliance for Innovation & Transformation

Moonshot Mindset: Building AFIT's Bold Strategic Vision for the Future

Founded in 1991 as the Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN), the Alliance for Innovation & Transformation (AFIT) began as a network of college and university presidents dedicated to learning from world-class organizations about performance excellence. However, by 2018, CQIN's leadership recognized that continuous quality improvement was no longer enough to address the extraordinary challenges facing higher education. To signal a shift toward innovation, CQIN rebranded as AFIT, focusing on driving transformation in higher education.

Five years into this new identity, AFIT sought to evolve further and build on the collaborative innovation that was naturally emerging among its members. To realize this vision, AFIT partnered with CampusWorks to lead a collaborative, member-driven strategic planning initiative designed to articulate a bold vision for its future.

Fostering Member Collaboration in a Virtual Environment

As a virtual association with members located across the United States, AFIT faced the unique challenge of engaging its geographically dispersed community in a meaningful way. Moreover, its leadership recognized that traditional strategic planning frameworks were insufficient for the level of transformation the organization sought. The goal was not just to develop a plan but to create a roadmap that could support a Massive Transformative Purpose (MTP) and inspire radical renewal in higher education.



CHALLENGE

AFIT needed a bold, transformative strategic plan to unify its geographically dispersed members and address the unprecedented challenges facing higher education.

CAMPUSWORKS PARTNERSHIP

CampusWorks collaborated with AFIT to design an agile, member-driven strategic planning process that reimaged its mission as a Massive Transformative Purpose and set audacious moonshots for the organization.

RESULTS

AFIT launched a visionary plan that energized its members, inspired widespread participation, and positioned the organization as a leader in shaping the future of higher education.

CampusWorks, known for its collaborative approach to strategic planning, designed an engagement process tailored to AFIT's needs. The initiative unfolded in several key phases:

1 Understanding the Landscape

The engagement began with a PEST Survey to explore the political, environmental, sociological, and technological factors influencing higher education and impacting AFIT's members. Insights from the survey informed subsequent focus groups and workshops.

2 Engaging the Membership

Remote focus groups brought AFIT members together to articulate AFIT's "Promise" and "Mindset" and provide input on the organization's direction. This collaborative feedback shaped the foundation of the strategic plan.

3 Reimagining AFIT's Purpose

During a Mission, Vision, and Beliefs Workshop, AFIT's Executive Committee revisited the organization's core values and focus. Inspired by exponential organizational theory, CampusWorks helped AFIT recast its mission and vision as a Massive Transformative Purpose (MTP): *"AFIT is a collaborative community of innovators leading the radical renewal of higher education."*

4 Shooting for the Moon

Grounded in member feedback and aligned with the existential challenges facing higher education, AFIT and CampusWorks identified three audacious moonshots:

- ▶ **MOONSHOT 1:** Transform AFIT member organizations into technology-driven powerhouses.
- ▶ **MOONSHOT 2:** Propel AFIT member organizations toward financial prosperity.
- ▶ **MOONSHOT 3:** Cultivate AFIT member organizations as incubators of human potential.

5 Phased Implementation

CampusWorks guided the development of a three-year phased implementation plan to ensure success:

- ▶ **PHASE 1:** Pilot key initiatives supporting the moonshots.
- ▶ **PHASE 2:** Scale successful initiatives and expand reach.
- ▶ **PHASE 3:** Optimize for long-term sustainability.

Built with agility in mind, the plan is designed to be revisited and refined as progress is made. It includes structured governance, practical resource allocation, and clearly defined, measurable actions.

Successful Launch

When AFIT launched its new strategic plan to members, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Members eagerly volunteered for pilot programs, expressed interest in serving on the Executive Committee, and inquired about opportunities to contribute. This excitement reaffirmed the alignment of the plan with member aspirations and needs.

Thanks to the partnership with CampusWorks, AFIT now has a bold strategic vision that empowers its members to shape the future of higher education. With its MTP and moonshots as guiding lights, AFIT is poised to drive transformative change, reinforcing its role as a collaborative community of innovators.

"At AFIT, our members are the heartbeat of our mission, so it was essential that their voices shaped our vision for the future. CampusWorks masterfully facilitated a collaborative, inclusive process that brought our nationwide, virtual community together to co-create AFIT's future. The result is a strategic vision that is not only ambitious but also deeply authentic to who we are and the transformative impact we aspire to have."

Erika Liodice

Executive Director, AFIT