NOVA’s mission and strategic plan (Strategic Vision 2015: Gateway to the American Dream) form the basis of college-wide and individual unit annual planning and evaluation processes. The goals elaborated in the strategic plan are carefully crafted to ensure that NOVA achieves its mission. Furthermore, NOVA’s mission and strategic plan are linked directly to the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) mission and the VCCS strategic plan. NOVA’s Administrative Council, led by the College President, functions as the College Planning Committee and oversees the development and implementation of the strategic plan and, along with the NOVA Board, meets to review, assess, and revise the College’s mission and strategic plan once every three years.

On October 18, 2010, the NOVA Board met with the Administrative Council, as well as approximately 100 local stakeholders (both internal and external to NOVA), in a Strategic Planning Work Session to review, assess, and revise the College’s mission and strategic plan for 2010. This work session allowed for presentations from members of the local labor market, as well as from College representatives, to spur group discussions and evaluation of NOVA’s goals. Ten small groups, including one NOVA Board member and one Administrative Council member in every group, were each given one facet of the strategic plan to evaluate and discuss. At the end of this meeting, NOVA Board members met to summarize findings from this meeting and to discuss next steps.

The Strategic Planning Work Session opened with two presentations from experts in the Northern Virginia labor market: Economic and Employment Trends by Dr. Steven Fuller (Dwight Schar Faculty Chair and University Professor; Director, Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University) and Demographic Trends and Projections in Northern Virginia by Dr. Fletcher Mangum (Mangum Economic Consulting; Member, Governor’s Advisory Board of Economists).

Following these labor market presentations, Dr. Robert Templin, Jr., NOVA’s President, led the presentation of three background reports related to NOVA’s Strategic Vision 2015:
1. Report on the White House Summit on Community Colleges;
2. Progress report on the 2007 version of the NOVA 2015: Gateway to the American Dream; and

With these presentations and reports as background information, ten tables were set up for an hour-long session of small group discussions and brainstorming on the following topics:

- College Access
- College Access for Underserved Populations
- Student Success: College Completion
- Student Success: College Transfer
- Student Success: Employment
- Student Success: Closing the Attainment Gap
- Excellence
- Needed Programs and Services
- Emergency Planning and Management
- Financial and Physical Resources

Each of the ten groups was given one of the above topics along with a list of questions to discuss. Certain groups were given topic-specific questions and all groups were given the following general items to stimulate discussion and brainstorming:

- Please review the current goal statements in the strategic plan regarding [topic].

- Based upon what we know about the needs of our region, what are the goal statements around [topic] that need to be considered in our revised strategic plan? Goal statements are descriptions and/or outcome statements regarding NOVA in the year 2015.

- Based upon our goals around [topic], what are the strategies and/or actions that the College needs to consider in support of our strategic plan? These strategies and/or actions should be seen as occurring in the next 3-5 years.

Following this work session, as part of the overall planning process, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (OIRPA) compiled the ideas and suggestions resulting from these group discussions to revise the mission and strategic plan. A revised version of Strategic Vision 2015: Gateway to the American Dream was approved by the Administrative Council November 2, 2010 for presentation to the NOVA Board. On November 15, 2010, the NOVA Board formally approved NOVA’s revised mission and strategic plan for 2010.