

Strategic Planning Council Meeting Minutes

September 4, 2014

9:00-10:30 AM

In attendance: Paul Weizer, Jane Fiske, Arnie & Larry (via speaker phone), Jay Bry, Gail Feckley, Randall Grometstein, Sean Goodlett, Jamie Roger, Christine Shane, Jannette McMenamy, Annette Sullivan, Michael Greenwood, Sean Goodlett, Beth Walsh, Jessica Murdoch, Meg Hoey, Kisha Tracy, Hank Parkinson and Karen Valeri.

1. Opening of School – summary

- Strategic Plan – White Papers are due on 11/15/2014

- Mike Greenwood on Admission/Marketing– spoke of the importance of Liberal Arts core remaining. A lot of interplay with other committees recognized this as well. 12 people attended each session for Admissions/Marketing. Regarding the Presidential search, Chris Hendry noted the importance of identifying as an institution how we can be better without knocking what we do now. Mike agreed that the committee has addressed constructively and no negatives have occurred. They have maintained a supportive team.

- ▶ Larry spoke of a dynamic going on in the industry and the constant need to adjust in order to be nationally competitive. He spoke of the positive change/agile and embracing change.

- ▶ Mike said that questions pop up about marketing techniques and people are very ready to share opinions. The committee wants to hear positive-change-thoughts.

- Sean Goodlett on Finance – 40 people total went to 2 sessions. He gave an overview of the report of August and received feedback. Budgetary priorities – where is the emphasis? Net revenue/debt/cost reduction. What is the physical capacity of the university (3800 fulltime students). Paul noted the current headcount is 3801. Financial #/crucial = freshman filled in with transfers/dual-enrolled limited revenues. Where can we go to recruit new students/retention? Can we increase UG enrollment? Jay Bry said we need to look at the physical plant. GCE can help. What is the role of the foundation? Targeted marketing to Hispanic population is important. Some disparity of our enrollment versus city #s. We have potential growth and could pursue an aggressive lobbying action. Example being the UMASS system. It may be that part of the marketing question is lobbying.

- ▶ Larry Large spoke of capacity and looking at assumptions made to establish capacity metrics. Expansion of reach to students at private school that are having trouble. Paul mentioned alternate courses/hybrid/GCE numbers of non-traditional students are changing.

●Randall on Academic Planning – 15 people attended each session. She spoke of “Checklist for Change” and the business model with regard to academic efficiencies. Faculty need to define these efficiencies. On George Mehaffy’s presentation – he spoke of “barnacles” and increased responsibility added and full capacity. Raised some concern regarding time and feeling relevant, but how? Why is the education important to them? There is a need to connect the education to workplace.

●Beth Walsh on Community – 35-40 people attended the total of two sessions. Defining community by project will have different ratio of participants. Coordinating internships was very positive. Service-learning and community projects to be included in internships. Chris Hendry spoke of current activities and how they will play into our new strategic plan. How do we gather information from our community? Larry Large spoke of the process of plan. Larry: “we’ll see the reviewers and gather more information for further information”. Chris Hendry said we don’t brag enough about ourselves/we need to hear that. Jessica mentioned her request for Community of Scholars information and add community engagement to the inventory. Student inventory/Student development has a pretty good sense. Hank will gather student inventory. Building more relationships with city schools that have diversity. Annette Sullivan said these relationships do exist with teachers and students. We may need to provide information such as targeted marketing (bilingual posters for example).

●Kisha on Technology – 25 total attended. Needed to refocus from daily needs. Maheffy’s experimentation of failure. Faculty need to know more about online options. It can be overwhelming when there is a lack of knowledge. We are not at capacity. Student tech literacy – how can you gauge where the students are regarding ability. Technology tests/assessment – requiring students to take it prior to getting into (online) classes. A possible placement test for students? Faculty need more mechanisms, what they use for technology and what they want to use? How do we know our students’ technology experience? At this time Larry Large had to excuse himself. Kisha said the laptop requirement has not been in place for the past 2 years. Nobody at the sessions seemed to know this and some ironically thought it should go. Annette noted that faculty knowing about the technology for online courses is important. Cathy Canney and Mike Leamy created exemplary training. Kisha and her group want to know what we are lacking. There appears to be a need for an instructional technologist. We are hiring one now but are behind. Communication and collaboration are necessary. Jamie said he noticed (current) students are more interesting in getting their smart phones online over computers. There is training about how to use the technology (put on by GCE).

●Meg on Academic Values – 25 at first session and more at second. At the second session, some were inspired or upset. There were concerns about the change in the charge. The old charge was integral. Members and faculty felt it was changed without their knowledge. Some faculty felt positive. How do we arm the faculty for the future? Collaboration again is necessary. Many (faculty) felt overwhelmed but *want* to be involved. Faculty questioned overload/release time. How do we help develop them? There appeared to be a divide between the groups. Some say “why change when the status quo works OK?” The committee needs to do the readings. They are really focused on scholarship/teaching, but then their charge was changed to LA&S. Regarding the new charge – no one argues that LA&S is relevant to the core (this is very emotional charge for faculty). Arnie was asked for suggestions. He mentioned possibly needing to do work-about to change at Fitchburg (example: demographic projections). Specific work is done after the plan and continued. Enrollment goals have been met/skews the faculty to not see the bigger issue. Smaller conversations and look for “change agents.” The readings to help. Focused on work of faculty research/scholarship etc., Meg said it was clear that the discussion could not change operational contract. LA&S broadened tends. What does it mean to be a faculty in the future? Technology/literacy/new faculty members appear more collaborative.

●Christine Shane on Student Services – 16-17 attendees. There were concerns about the students and faculty respect. Need more counseling/made more aware. Advisor – more core classes. Need for professional advisors. At-risk students should be identified immediately and their needs addressed. Latino student ambassadors and peer advising is helpful. Commuters and veterans need flexible hours. Daycare for students with young children came up as well. Often faculty are not aware of the services available to students. Randall made note of connections with her students and how we differ and others. Small classes and personal attention is important.

Many questions were crossing each group and these are issues we need to keep an eye out for.

GCE Faculty Meeting and Professorial Development Workshops – August 26th (Paul and Jane). It’s important to add graduate faculty, extended campuses folks to committees not just and undergraduate plan. Including more graduate conversations with alumni and adjuncts, etc. Recognize LA&S and assess. Student involvement? Key survey.

2. Discussion/Comments on presentation by George Mehaffy

●Sean made note of Mehaffy’s comments regarding his grandson and SAT scores and how his grandson is from a wealthy educated family (not typical of our students). He enjoyed Mehaffy’s note advocating for retain and intervention/mentoring as well as

outreach for minorities. Sean also mentioned it being a good idea to create a specific **culture** of campus. The (current) LA&S model does not cohere. There is no idea of our culture that attracts new students and retains them. Developing a culture over the next five years may be an option.

The article ‘Who gets to Graduate’ was brought up. It’s important to have a coherent curriculum. LA&S thematic arrangements relevant to social change. Cohere around (student) research for example, a unifying force. Teaching life-long learners, problem solvers as well as critical thinkers. All of these leading to culture building. Values related to their undergraduate research. Example being a capstone where they have a community service project which is also interdisciplinary.

Minutes submitted by Jessica Murdoch and Karen Valeri