

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
ACADEMIC VALUES GROUP

The Academic Values group met on 9/11/2014 and will meet again on 9/25/14.

One of the persistent themes to all discussions about the successful faculty member of the future has been the request that release time be evaluated on this campus. Towards that end the discussion began the following question:

How might a new approach to the assignment of release time help the institution face the national strategic challenges as outlined in various readings?

The ensuing discussion ultimately concluded that the overarching values or strategic “umbrella “ was one of student success; in particular increased student retention and an increase graduation rate were identified. The importance of research was introduced but the ensuing discussion appeared to be focused on faculty rather than student success.

The second part of the meeting as well as the discussion today will be focused on the LA&S program. Several points of agreement have emerged from previous discussions. First, there is a strong consensus that a Liberal Arts and Sciences education is still relevant and in fact, is essential to many of the professional majors we have on campus. A second general theme has been that while we state a general set of objectives (or values) with the LA&S program, the program is more about courses in particular content areas rather than achieving the overall objectives.. The discussion began with the following questions and will continue today on the LA&S guiding values.

How do we make the LA&S program relevant in the new climate of Higher Ed? What guiding values should be embedded within our LA&S program? How do we ensure the transformative nature of a LA&S education? What values do we wish to instill in our graduates? Have we engaged them to be future citizens of their community and their state?

The discussion brought up many ideas but the broader consensus at the end stated that our goal should be a dynamic, generative, engaged, and aware community of learning. We should develop a “picture” of our graduate and ensure that our curriculum, advising, use of technology, and faculty involvement are all unified around our learning values and the building of stronger relationships among all stakeholders.