

MINUTES FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Community Working Group
3 October 2014
(3:30 – 4:45 pm)

Attendance: Committee members: Elizabeth Walsh, Robert Carr, Joshua Spero, Nicholas Capasso.

Visitors: Jane Fiske; Jannette McMenemy, Michael Kushmerek, Anthony Wilcox, Nancy Yasko (Alumni Board, FSU)

Minutes passed, 3 voting members in attendance in favor.

Discussion focused on drafting the Working Group's paper (4-6 pages) for early November deadline. Drafting already has good foundation from previous meetings and key is that, based on the 3 objectives below, for which the Group's agreed since August 2014 are the focus of the paper's drafting, the group should center its drafting on:

- * Opening paragraph/executive summary type approach;
- * One page/possibly 1-2 pages per objective;
- * Closing paragraph to tie everything together.

Group discussed framing three objectives to begin drafting process. Important to keep in mind that a theme running throughout our Community Working Group's sessions has been the essence of returning to a "college town" (or, perhaps, more aptly) – "University City" community – again. How are University's connections with our City can expand and, hopefully, most productively prosper over the duration of this next Strategic Plan's 5 year timeframe. Such notions could become part of the opening paragraph/executive summary overview.

Other key points raised in the 3 October meeting:

- Required needs assessment between University and community – what we already are doing to synchronize, eliminate redundancy, where we need to improve.
- Try to ensure a win-win for University-community (local population, businesses, non-profits, government agencies)

Discussion for the objectives 1-3:

1. Increase service learning and internship opportunities locally/downtown Fitchburg community:

- High impact practices from recent data/recent national studies (student interest in service learning) to anchor this first objective's approach – success rates for students, benefits to community;

- Advance partnerships in community;
- Enabling involvement and direct immersion of local practice, where “rubber meets road” for student learning/internships and faculty sponsor’s mentorship/supervision/& travel to service learning/internship site -- with interaction with community’s partner
- Broaden local impact in Fitchburg
- Building blocks: City/localized/immediate community and extended metropolitan region (**first time effort – to concentrate/blanket community with service learning, internships, field studies**), then build/develop with City of Fitchburg more broadly, taking into account what efforts our students already interning and our faculty already researching/engaging/developing in communities across the North Central MA region, state-wide, Washington, DC/nationally, and internationally
- Alumni impact on developing local focus – strategically concentrated to help change economic landscape –

2. Engagement of local community:

- Expand from University to City of Fitchburg, particularly with local school system to increase knowledge/make more attractive for students/teachers/administrators, and advance numbers of students who would apply to University (when they haven’t considered such an option in previous years);
- Draw-in Latino/Latina community on greater scale;
- Serve as large a community as possible – incentives for people to feel welcome, outreach, bilingual – (example of Fitchburg Art Museum’s outreach to both Latino/Latina community/&/beyond) for mutual community engagement – civic engaging;
- Formalize relationships, ties, and programs with key strategic partners – set measurable goals with key strategic partners;
- Increase mutually, symbiotic, beneficial ties with key strategic partners – locally – on Fitchburg’s Main Street/just off of Main Street (Fitchburg Art Museum, for example)

3. Economic development:

- Help City of Fitchburg advance significantly, especially downtown that connects much more so with University, even as University’s achieved enormous re-connection with North and Main Streets (via its investment, outreach, re-development)
- Increase capacity of local community to help City grow, employment rise, seed community with students who stay as alumni, advance the University-City partnership
- Modified “Clark Model” locally – expansion across downtown – investment at a range of levels: scholarships for local students, financial incentives for faculty to live locally
- Establishing a University sponsored entrepreneurial center, potentially on Main Street that would only begin to be considered with University-community

discussions, partnership development, best ways to proceed, etc. (should be considered as part of a future needs assessment)