

Strategic Planning Committee
Community Relations Working Group

September 5, 2014 Meeting Minutes
Hammond 314 @ 3:30pm

Committee Attendees: Nicholas Capasso Robert Carr, Christopher Hendry, Joshua Spero, Beth Walsh (Chair)

Absentees: Daniel LaFond, Renee Scapparone, Karen Leary, Megan Pierce

Guests: Rala Diakite, Jane Fiske, Maria Jaramillo,

Meeting called to order at 3:40pm

Minutes of the August 18th meeting were reviewed; motion to accept by Josh Spero and seconded by Robert Carr; unanimously approved.

Discussions:

- Beth Walsh (Chair) distributed attendance sheets for the September 5th meeting to be signed by all committee members in attendance for the meeting.
- Discussion began with a review of the September 2nd Fall Assessment and Development Day break-out sessions. Overall, the reception to the Community Working Group's three provisional objectives (Campus-wide internship coordination, community engagement, and economic development) was extremely positive. Noted was the need to keep the discussion focused on strategic, not operational goals.
- Strategic Partners
 - Christopher Hendry and Nick Capasso led the discussion of creating and maintaining strategic partners, i.e., those entities, agencies, and nonprofits who support and fulfill the mission of Fitchburg State University, such as the Fitchburg Art Museum, the Twin Cities CDC, the Chamber of Commerce, and the United Way. Conversation focused on the importance of the use of the memorandum of agreement (MOA) to formalize Fitchburg State's collaboration with strategic partners for a designated period of years. Focus was on determining what relationships we currently have in place and deciding whether, in light of the strategic plan, whether such relationships reach the level of strategic partnership, in order to have a portfolio of MOAs for the new president to review. Those relationships that are not at the level of strategic partnerships may continue but will not be supported by strategic partnership funds; there are other sources of funding on campus, however, such as Professional Development funds, which may be available to support relationships below the strategic partnership level.

- Campus-wide Internship Coordination, Crocker Center, and REDI
 - The group discussion again focused on the concern that we know that many faculty and staff are participating in community activities, on their own and in conjunction with other offices on campus such as the Center for Professional Studies, but we simply do not know about all such activities. Such knowledge would be useful as both a marketing tool and to better able to coordinate and collaborate with each other.
 - A plan is already being formed whereby the campus-wide internship coordination, the Crocker Center and REDI will be combined into one office/position, with a mission to provide community outreach. Both REDI and the Crocker Center were funded through the capital campaign, but the mission for each was fairly narrow and yet, not clearly defined. As a result, the Crocker Center and REDI have funds that remain unspent. The question becomes how we include all of these under one large umbrella with an anchor in the community.
 - Discussion focused on the fact that although the Community Working Group has met several times over the summer, with the advent of the fall semester, we have a new audience with perhaps, new ideas. Suggestions/comments were made as follows in this regard:
 - Create links for faculty to know what funds are available across campus and how to apply for them;
 - Deans also have small budgets to support faculty projects;
 - Possibility exists for faculty to pool funds from several sources on campus;
 - Could create a grant system for distribution of Foundation funds; the university would receive data, reports, etc. as to result of such projects; and
 - Collaboration of majors and/or departments on projects, for example, Theater and Humanities collaborating on current project.
- Community Engagement/Economic Development/Diversity Discussion
 - Discussion centered around two issues:
 - Attracting Hispanic students from primary, middle, and high school schools in the area and retaining them;
 - Suggestion was made to increase the number of people in campus offices who speak Spanish;
 - Seek ways to insure that community feels comfortable visiting campus, the new “President’s house,” etc. We may have to go to the community rather than expecting them to come to us;
 - Make it clear that students and faculty who visit or intern in community are from FSU; make clothing with FSU logo available to them, e.g., Future Falcons t-shirts;

- Comment made that Fitchburg Art Museum is facing same challenge as FSU due to barriers to access such as language, minority population was not made welcome prior, and socio-economic issues. Suggestion to get together with other institutions who have similar issues and compare strategies;
 - Suggestion made that we hire more diverse faculty and staff; we have opportunities in our own backyard to do so.
 - Comment made that this discussion echoed issues in Abelard to Apple (Richard DeMillo), on the SPC reading list and that perhaps we should change from a University to a Multiversity.
- Clark model
 - Work with area banks on preferred lending program for faculty who purchase homes in FSU area;
 - Keep in mind that Clark did not purchase all property in the surrounding neighborhoods, but targeted spots within the area; we don't want to look like we are taking over the whole area.

ACTION ITEMS:

Beth Walsh will send an e-mail request to the Community Working Group to submit questions to be included in the University's SPC-sponsored survey. The survey may include questions for the faculty, staff, students, community, local businesses, etc. The Community Working Group should propose questions that concern community issues, but are not limited to topics the Community Working Group has already discussed.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, **September 17**, 2014 @ 9:30am-11am in Hammond 314

Meeting adjournment at 5:10pm

Respectfully submitted by,
Beth Walsh