

Fitchburg State University  
Thursday, October 2, 2014  
Strategic Planning Committee meeting  
Minutes

In attendance: Paul Weizer, Jane Fiske, Annette Sullivan, Arnie, Jannette McMenemy, Meg Hoey, Sean Goodlett, Michael Greenwood, Kisha Tracy, Randall Grometstein, Beth Walsh, Chris Hendry, Cathy Daggett, Jay Bry Larry Large, Steve Swartz, Jessica Murdoch, Karen Valeri

**1. Working Group Chairs update**

-Meg – Academic Values

Focus on LA&S curriculum. Was not at the last meeting, but read minutes. Came away with conclusions: LA&S Education is relevant, not something we want to lose on this campus. However, there is no cohesive outcome, that's the way many people feel at this time. Not really pulling all the pieces together to help students achieve competency ("high impact practices"). Need to start with what we really want rather than something people feel good about and are connected to.

Sean – Finance

First set of five concrete goals:

- 1. Meeting or exceeding 80% retention rate (5% increase over five years). A goal (from) guidance from a BHE Task Force.
- 2. Doubling of Hispanic enrollments (18-20%) and cutting in half the gap between Hispanic and aggregate rate.
- 3. Connect retention to graduation rates (improvement of graduation rates of 5%). Call for Hispanic to improve by 5%.
- 4. Similar 5% increase on transfer students
- 5. 5% increase for "murky middle" (students who pass 2.0-3.0 where half drop out). Specific goals for these students.

Michael – Admissions and Marketing

Second draft (working on). Need a resource for all marketing and communications needs. Working group very excited. Recommendation is a framework for university based on best practices. Arnie, "message content?" MG we lack information with regard to what our customers are looking for. We aren't as grounded in analytics as we should be. We need informed thinking. Forecasting how our customers behave. Arnie, "market research?" MG, yes. More organized and disciplined approach. PW, "Admissions goal?" Michael and Jessica, yes, conversations about Admissions became operational and didn't want to cross that boundary.

### Kisha – Technology

working on draft (1/2 draft done). Three recommendations tweaking:

- 1. Assess status of online learning. Deliberate holistic institution-wide approach needed
- 2. Promote a culture of experimentation. Committing resources to faculty (center for instructional technology). Providing funding and time for faculty.
- 3. Reevaluate digital literacy of our students. Assess how they are ready prior to taking certain courses.

### Randall – Academic Planning

Meeting this afternoon. Some ideas she's mentioning now, they (her group) haven't heard yet. Ways in which curriculum can be improved. A goal regarding degree completion. Six year rate for completing and that's an incomplete measure (looking at first time college students). Randall regarding Larry's comment, purchase of analytical tool(s). Reviewed LA&S program and instructors' experiences, data would be much more useful. General goal, not with numbers, adopt degree completion (armed with package of data), look at curriculum and see where it needs change, etc. Tap a new market, students who've done some college and not completed. Potentially large market of people who may be persuaded to come back and finish. Get in touch with them, what would it take for you to come and complete. Spoke with Cathy Canney regarding program development (Masters). PW, program reviewer from Bridgewater State on campus yesterday, learned that they have graduate only faculty and graduate only departments. Not sure this is legal. If possible, that opens up opportunities.

### Beth – Community – meeting tomorrow afternoon

- 1. Increased service learning in local community. Partnerships with agencies
- 2. Engage local community (what's "local"). Meaningful long-term benefits with community. Do we go to schools, do they come to us, etc.
- 3. Economic Development (modified Clark model to draw faculty to the local area)

### Christine – Student Services – meeting Monday to start draft.

- Issue of diversity and retention rates. Hispanic as well as Veterans population.
- 1. Creating a VP position
- 2. Financials (\$million+ athletics, etc.)
- 3. First year experience, finding cohort of students and giving a first year experience. Identify the students who are disadvantages, and may need help.
- 4. How do we get our faculty and administrators to reflect community?
- 5. Religious diversity, college only geared to Catholic/Christian
- 6. Advising – professional and individual advising
- 7. Internships/ambassadors (peer to peer counseling on campus)

The group used a process for writing and best practices. Chris H, specificity of having a goal as a VP? Christine, the notion that student services or students don't have a voice within administration; have to work through a dean. Chris H., pre-dates people in position now. Christine, structural only. Student support services is huge. Need to think about services in

place. PW, title change only. Prioritization, expensive items, not sure if we can do all. Christine, we will rank. Put it out there and see what happens. Jannette, averages don't take into consideration, different interventions to keep students here (net revenue gain affected). Different set of interventions, more expensive. Sean, excellent point, need to be realistic about what it means to increase certain demographics. Don't throw one out (murky middle), for another. Must take care of lower socio-economic backgrounds and/or disadvantaged groups. Net revenue gains (murky middle) and serving disadvantaged students. Jannette, careful about prioritization, efficiencies to help the largest number of students. Jay, what are we currently doing that we don't have to do anymore? Randall, question on financial aid and students who don't know how much they'll have to pay (if they stay longer, etc.). Raise financial literacy of students? Christine has not come up in her group. Meg, loan training. Randall, students often have no idea. Chris H., our students know and have understanding about financial literacy. Larry, Economist article metrics about family income. Median dropped 4%. Significant, look at state's contribution – it's gone down. Loan crisis elevated awareness on part of students. Chris H. more students than ever before asking for some sort of \$ support/education.

## 2. Open Forum

-Jane – how we might get campus input and participation at this time? Get more attention drawn to strategic planning. PW, limited number of faculty. Christine, worth a shot in good faith. Sean, timeline for white papers, productive use of time? Nice, but after white papers? Steve, makes sense (what Sean said). Giving them something to look at. PW, forum say Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> (All College Period). All 7 working group chairs. **Monday the 17<sup>th</sup>, open SPC meeting.** After white papers are due. 3:30 PM, could be an open forum.

## 3. GCE and Transfer Students

-Jane – keep on radar

## 4. Capstone

-Paul – George Mehaffy, integrated Capstone. Will update with details (after speaking with Portland State contact).

## 5. Discussion

-Jane, hit on "murky middle" several time. Please read article.

- PARCC – Annette (attached and posted on website)

-see attached (handouts)

Can't move forward with a strategic plan without addressing PARCC. Preparing students for college. Standards adopted by 46 states, P-16. Jenn Berg is one of the fellows.

Central MA reediness center (unfunded; gone). Susan Lane from Dept. of Higher Ed., our liaison. October 28<sup>th</sup>, 9-12:30 and December 9<sup>th</sup> here on campus. Need involvement from our LA&S group. Jane sent out an article regarding K-12/higher education

relationship. How to serve students who'll be looking different. Student graduates from HS and passes PARCC, and then they should be ready for college. Adjusting how Mathematics and Writing are taught. Students who will be coming to FSU will have been taught differently.

-Meg, PARCC pieces are linked, very clear what we are trying to do, where we are heading with assessments (what we are doing with them).

-Sean – going back to schools, a good half of the students cannot write or read at a collegiate level. Pressure to do away with the little remediation we do. Getting HS much better information about their students when they arrive.

-Annette, students *should* be better prepared (FHS level 3), making progress at elementary level. We'll see better prepared students in the future.

-Sean Leven 1 school in Fitchburg isn't Level 1 in say Newton.

-Annette, correct. Always going to be a group of students who don't come to us as prepared as they should be.

-Larry, not distinctive to MA, sees a missing piece. Students come to be taught (v. coming to learn). Student responsibility for the learning.

- "Murky Middle"

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/09/10/maximize-graduation-rates-colleges-should-focus-middle-range-students-research-shows>

- The Vision Project 2013 "Within Our Sights" (attached and posted on website)
  - Jane – do connect with the features. Sean has incorporated this into his group as well.
  - Annette working with PARCC. Lot of tie ins. PW, Board of Higher Education needs to approve after Board of Trustees.

## 6. Timeline

11/15/14, white papers due.

Come out to campus in January, more forums (campus wide)

### vii. Reminders

1. Meeting schedule – hold open weekly meeting time just in case (will plan to meet bi-weekly)

2. Working Group Chairs – next meeting Miller Oval 10/8,12:30-1:45

1. SPC – next meeting Hammond 314, 10/16, 9-10:30

2. Data Library

3. Keep reading!