

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
FULL GROUP MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2014
HAMMOND TOWER ROOM 314 9:00-10:30AM**

In attendance: J. Fiske, P. Weizer, J. Murdoch, J. McMenemy, K. Tracy, E. Walsh, S. Goodlett, M. Greenwood, M. Hoey, J. Roger, S. Swartz, C. Shane, R. Grometstein

The meeting began with a discussion of a potential survey. Working group chairs reported about discussions held in their groups about this topic. For example, Sean discussed that Finance has considered items about academic priorities. Kisha mentioned that an email discussion had occurred among members of the Technology group about how to ask questions that would get at the perception of online courses/teaching and mechanisms to change the culture to allow experimentation with technologies.

Concerns were then raised about the timing of the survey, and the idea that perhaps we are “too late to the game.” The group thought that data would need to be obtained by the first week of October to allow ample time for discussion and integration into the white papers. Other concerns were raised about the reliability of the data, as well as our ability to compile data that is actionable. The end result is that a survey will not be administered at this point in the process.

Jane asked if we could have open question sessions during the meetings. Kisha suggested we could have large forums after the white papers are published.

Paul is concerned that the vast majority of the SPC is not looking at the site and/or readings. Christine said that she has been giving the Student Services Working Group hard copies of the readings as well as posting them on BlackBoard.

Discussion ensued regarding the *New York Times* article “Who Gets to Graduate?” which examines methodology to help students graduate. Two ways are giving students a sense of belonging and the confidence they have the ability – that failure is not an option. Sean suggested that in order to do this we need “really good” institutional research. Randall indicated that we have data that we do not use through CSI (College Student Inventory). Steve Swartz: we need to apply the Expanding Horizons model to a larger pool. Paul: student services are fragmented – we need to consolidate. Jannette: we need to set out a systematic plan for student success—marry academic and cultural identity. Christine: infrastructure needs to support culture change – need a faculty buy-in. Student Services Working Group has been discussing the theme of “Fitchburg Family”, empowering and engaging the students with a culture of belonging. Sean agreed that a “we believe in you” approach would encourage engagement. It would be a “shift in mindset” and type of communication with students. Jane: The three main components of the TIP (Texas Interdisciplinary Plan) that are discussed in the article are: extra instruction; advisors; peer mentors.

Student debt was discussed. Paul said that our three year default rate is 9.7%, higher than most of our sister institutions. Advising was also discussed. Randall asked if we should relax our course requirements and also go to open sources textbooks. Jane: it seems when faculty work harder –students do less. Is faculty becoming enablers for students not to take responsibility for their education? Regarding retention, we retain 78% of freshman and sophomores but we drop to a 51% graduation rate. What happens to those students?

Meeting ended with comment by consultant via teleconference that the decision to discard the survey was a good one and that the group seems to be on track.

Meeting adjourned: 10:30am

Respectfully submitted: Gail Feckley

DISCUSSION KEYWORDS/THEMES:

Culture of success
Belonging
Engagement
Empowerment
“Fitchburg Family”
Survival
Retention
Lens
Focus
Expectations
Ownership
Perspective
Context
Support
Safeguards
Infrastructure
Facilitation
Enabling
Data
Talking points
Student debt/financial aid
Debt/no degree
Peer advising
Cohort models (red ed)
Faculty buy-in
Realignment of resources