

Strategic Planning Council meeting
Minutes
July 24, 2014

In attendance: Jay Bry, Cathy Daggett, Jane Fiske, Michael Greenwood, Randall Grometstein, Meg Hoey, Christine Shane, Annette Sullivan, Kisha Tracy, Beth Walsh, Paul Weizer, and with consultants Arnie and Larry on speaker phone.

1. Five minute report (not written) from each working group chair indicating 2-3 biggest items thus far
 - Beth for Community – 1. Their group does not have a good sense of what FSU is doing regarding community outreach. Individual departments are doing things ad hoc, but it's hard to set a sense of what all are doing and reducing duplication would be ideal.
 - 2. The working group would like to have FSU campus -wide make a concerted effort to establish relationships with local businesses and non-profit internships.
 - 3. Connection with residents via Twin Cities Community Development Corp. (CDC)
 - Kisha for Technology – The committee has narrowed down to 5-6 main questions. They have found that there are not a lot of mechanisms in place for faculty classroom (technology) needs. There also doesn't appear to be a clear system on prioritizing funding. At their next meeting, Mike Leamy will be discussing online and distance learning. The group will also be narrowing down their survey questions.
 - Meg for Academic Values – This group will be meeting today @ 1:00. They have nailed down questions and developed a list of readings. Meg stated the group will be thinking *forward* and not emphasizing problems.
 - Michael for Admissions/Marketing – This group is set to meet on August 20th. They have had lots of ideas on branding and see no dissatisfaction with current marketing and its centralized approach.
 - Cathy for Financial Structure – Their group has been vetting questions and had both Jay Bry and Pam McCafferty at recent meetings to clarify things. The groups' focus is on identifying items to increase revenues and/or decrease costs.
 - Christine for Student Services – The committee has met three times this summer and has scheduled five upcoming focus group meetings. The committee has found student service departments to be overstretched. Attention will be focused on underserved population as well as diversity. Christine spoke of "student persistence." Also, Chris Cratsley came to the committee's last meeting to talk about numbers. The Fitchburg community consists of 20% Hispanic and Latinos. Issues of sustaining students with a

large first-year drop-out rate were discussed as well as innovations such as expanding the bridge program. Christine briefly mentioned (student) mental health and stress issues.

- Randall for Academic Planning – The committee has met each month (June and July) and will meet in August as well. They have spent time wrestling with the current mission statement. They are focusing on three broad categories and then will narrow their focus again. Non-traditional students as well as lifelong learners will be considered.

2. Website Updates – meetings and minutes

- Please submit your minutes to Carla

3. Summer Reading Discussion

a. in general

b. new article posted under courses documents – ACE Presidential Innovation Lab
<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Beyond-the-Inflection-Point-Reimagining-Business-Models-for-Higher-Education.pdf>

- Paul – noted how this article capsulates many ideas from the books recommended and cover major issues in higher education today. Page 4 refers to the Higher Education Authorization Act regarding competency based education. Students could complete a class by showing they have mastered the skills in the subject. This is easier to demonstrate with courses, for example, in the computer science department versus liberal arts courses. Universities need to rethink how they serve different populations.

On page 2 the reports refers to finance and how public funding for higher education is eroding nationwide. Tuition levels may have reached a ceiling. Problems with increasing tuition can result in pricing ourselves out of the market. New markets such as the (age) 25+ as well as lifelong learners are populations to consider.

Reducing costs of what it takes to educate a student need to be examined (some solutions are online learning).

Page 8 talks about the importance of remembering what business we really are in. It is important to not try to take on too much. Paul referred to the book he is reading *Abelard to Apple* which speaks of “mission creep.” Instead of trying to be everything to everyone, we need to evaluate who we are and what we want to do.

- Arnie then spoke of competency based coursework and the need to be careful examining accumulation of credits. Internal policies with regards to faculty evaluations need to be in place. Students are not earning credit for prior experience, but prior learning instead.

- Mike also spoke of “mission creep” and how he’s confident FSU will rally around our renewed mission and accept that we can’t be all things to all and knowing this will help calm everyone down. Mike also emphasized there are things the group should *exclude* in the mission.
- Arnie spoke briefly of universities’ unknown strategy to increase its student body and to justify any growth and to realize growth is not continual.
- Randall mentioned the 18 year-olds who live in dorms and experience the college experience, wondering what the #s are regarding commuters and residents. The decrease in enrollment has not been in residents. Paul noted that dorms are full and the lifelong learners are, of course, a different market.
- Christine then spoke of the “best practices” cohort model UMASS uses regarding housing and for example their “scholars’ dorm.” Many of our commuters are very engaged and often live in apartments very close to campus. Christine also made note that we are not just a business and have a social and cultural mandate.
- Jane spoke about this article as well saying how we need to really examine who we are, what is it we do and who we do it for and redefine what we do as an institution and how there will be differences in how we do things now.
- Randall let us know about the “gap year” and how Tufts University is adopting this model where they support incoming students who are not quite emotionally ready for college. Not everyone is ready after high school and struggle during their freshman year. There appeared to be interest in exploring more about the gap year. Annette mentioned FSU’s bridge program and Paul noted how that’s a shorter term as well as serves a small population. Randall – Tufts sets up a campus connection (as well as a job) for these students. Meg asked if these gap year students needed to pay for this experience. Randall was unsure at this time, but most likely some payments are required (not likely not the \$50k+/yr.).
- Arnie let the group know of the “pre-K-20” program the state of Oregon is incorporating. While this is still a premature process, it looks at achievement compacts and attainment goals, deals with (student) preparedness and online courses and puts accountability on students. Annette mentioned the pre-K-16 model Massachusetts uses as well as the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) program. PARCC examines what it means to be ready for college. There is a big push in Massachusetts via grants.
- Christine said how transitioning to one school from another is not a new concept. Fitchburg High School, for instance, could support loyalty to FSU by having a gap year in place. Christine also mentioned consolidation with sister colleges.

4. Data Resources – in process

- Paul – data that is useful to working groups will be kept in a central location. Some groups (financial and student services for example) have asked for demographic data. Pam McCafferty and Anthony Wilcox will connect. Paul emphasized looking at broader/national perspectives and considering how we will position ourselves as a university while also making FSU unique. Jane added that it's important to know more about our students.

- Christine on competency based education: does it work? We know employers are looking for creative hires and team players. Do we know what the labor force looks like? Annette let the group know that the Vision Project would have this information.

5. Plans for August

a. end of summer summary paper with one slide per group

-Jane and Paul will have a presentation the day before classes start. There will likely be breakout sessions for each group where the FSU community can attend.

b. continue reading

c. Revisit Mission/Vision (what makes us unique and distinctive)

Randall said it would be a good time to reassure the community that we are a Liberal Arts university.

6. Agenda for August 21st

-will be forthcoming

7. Items from the floor/Open Discussion

- Larry emphasized the need to build interest on part of people coming back (promoting the work we are doing). Also, Arnie said through transition of a new President there shouldn't be a hiccup. Paul emphasized that the new president would have values in line with our plan.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM

Minutes submitted by K.Valeri