



Strategic Planning Committee Notes

June 23, 2016

Werner University Center, Willamette Room

8:00 am – 8:30 am Continental Breakfast

8:30 am – 11:30 am Meeting

Present: Rex Fuller (Co-Chair), Laurie Burton (Co-Chair), Adry Clark, Paul Disney, David Foster, Camila Gabaldon, Megan Habermann, Mark Henkels, Ivan Hurtado, Cec Koontz, Paul Kylo, Melanie Landon-Hays, Randi Lydum, Adele Schepige, Chris Solario, Linda Stonecipher, Dan Tankersley, Steve Taylor, Shelby Worthing

Staff: Ginny Lang (Facilitator), Reina Morgan (Assistant)

Absent: Betty Crawford, Corbin Garner, Dave McDonald, Alma Pacheco, Peggy Pedersen, Ella Taylor

Recap and Review

Ginny commented that SPC has done a good job of accomplishing the first four steps of Kotter's 8-Step Process (introduced to the group by Paul Disney at the first SPC meeting) and that we will soon be tackling steps five through eight. From all reports, it sounds like people around campus believe that serious change is possible and they have some confidence that the strategic planning process is moving in that direction. We have a good start on identifying priority areas through the SWOT analysis and an interactive website is up and running.

As a reminder, things currently in the "parking lot" are the one page overviews, and finding effective ways of communicating directly with some of the groups on campus (ASWOU, staff senate, faculty senate) in addition to the town hall meetings.

A meeting and other event schedule for the rest of the year was provided.

President Fuller described the NWCCU meeting he attended this week in Seattle. Rex started out with an overview of changes related to governance in the state of Oregon and then there was a chance to talk about the report itself. There were no surprises in the questions that were asked. They were interested in hearing about the strategic planning group, which was well received as well as using areas of excellence in doing assessment.

President Fuller summed it up as an experience that allowed us to talk about both WOU's legacy and its future. We are well positioned to move forward and do not anticipate any surprises from the commission. The written report will be ready sometime in June and will be made available to the group.

Work plan for the coming months

The SPC should have mission recommendations agreed upon with any directions for revisions by the July 21st meeting. We should also have a good idea of the July 27th board meeting presentation outline.

By the end of August, we should have a draft outline of the document. Rex will lead the drafting process, but there will be plenty for everyone to do to assist with it.

By the September 23rd meeting we should have proposed mission, vision, and values statements as well as a draft plan outline.

An update presentation will be made at the October 26th Board meeting that includes any changes resulting from the ideas and feedback from the early October campus community town halls.

At the November 29th all campus town hall there should be a solid draft of a 10-15 page report.

The SPC should be ready to present the plan at the January 25th Board meeting and ask for the Trustees' approval.

Reports on Mission, Vision, Values

The committee started the discussion with feedback provided by the campus community in the survey that was sent out by David Foster and Group #2. Dan Tankersley commented that there was a wide range of perspectives voiced in the 30 or so pages of responses that came in. He felt that it was enlightening to read through it. There were two sets of priorities that create a kind of tension: one was access and affordability and the other was academic excellence and reputation.

Cec Koontz thought it would be useful to find an all-encompassing term to use when referring to those who serve students, whether faculty and staff, or Trustees, Alumni and Foundation boards, and others that don't fit into the usual categories.

Linda Stonecipher pointed out that it is a busy time of the year and appreciated how many people provided thoughtful responses. It is helpful to have these responses in addition to the voices that are in the room.

Paul Disney said that a strength of WOU is having a private small college feel at a state school price. President Fuller added that it was encouraging and enlightening to hear the stories from the commencement speakers. Those stories highlight great and noble public education goals. The investments we're making in these young people will change communities forever. Being a public university is meaningful, hard work, but it is important work to be doing.

Laurie Burton shared some insights from the advising conference that campus hosted: When students step foot on campus do they feel like they're home? If a student left would anyone notice? We need to have an environment where the answer to those questions is yes.

David Foster shared that with 70 people completing the survey it is clear that people have a feel for what WOU is and where we are, but in terms of where we should be there is a lot of variation. The challenge is developing a vision in which all feel they are a part of the future.

Group 5 – Mark Henkels presented

Mission

Primary purpose: Transforming lives through higher education.

How WOU's mission fits within the larger scope of public higher ed: WOU can and should be an empowering learning environment for students who seek personalized, community-based educational experiences.

The functions/activities that are essential to carry out the work of the university:

- Effective and collaborative teaching and learning.
- Smart, efficient, effective bureaucratic processes, resources, and systems that enable our work and students' navigation rather than impede it.
- Maintain safe campus, safe learning environment, safe and accepting space of difference.
- Concrete commitment to following through on plans for achieving programmatic and practical goals.
 - When we decide to do something and put effort into it we need to follow through with it and commit to doing it for at least several years. It takes a long time to build networks and for it to be worthwhile it needs to not just be a one-year thing.

How WOU's work contributes to the role/work of public higher ed in Oregon: Giving students an option to learn in a smaller, teacher-led community as an alternative to the larger university environment.

Vision

What WOU aspires to: To operate efficiently and cooperatively, focusing at all times on our students' well-being, and to provide the opportunity of transformation to all students.

We don't want any phrasing that indicates we are a last resort place that is only for the least prepared students and market ourselves as the school anyone can get into. We don't want to turn away top students because they see it as a place that you only come to if you didn't do well in high school or can't get into other places. This can be a challenge because you can get rewarded institutionally for focusing on underserved populations and you have to be explicit about it to get those rewards. It needs to be done in a way that doesn't make top students think this isn't the place for them.

Opportunities for excellence for public higher ed in Oregon: Liberal arts breadth with distinctive programs

Values

WOU's fundamental principles or core values:

- A diverse campus community strengthens the transformative experience
- We value lifelong learning, human diversity, environmental sustainability, social justice, and peaceful problem solving

Does it permeate the university?

Generally, yes, but sometimes we are too busy or understaffed and lose track of our core principles and values.

Do these translate into actions, behavior, and policies?

Often, but more in informal practices. Our formal structures and processes tend to represent external expectations or internal resource constraints, while as individuals we respond to student needs often in an ad hoc or informal manner.

Group 1 – Megan Habermann presented

Mission

1. What is the primary purpose?

Provide an opportunity for an accessible higher education for all Oregonians to achieve a degree. Provide effective learning opportunities, inside and outside the classroom to teach students academic, professional, and life skills to be competent global citizens.

2. How does WOU's mission fit within the larger scope of public higher education?

Area of the state that is affordable and desirable to live in, small community atmosphere with access to teaching faculty and staff that have a focus on student centered learning.

3. What functions/activities are essential to carry-out the work of the university?

- Dedicated faculty/high quality learning experiences
 - Provide outstanding, contemporary academic programs, regularly engage students in scholarship and require experiential learning via volunteering, service learning, internship, and co-curricular programs.
 - Variety of class styles and offerings
- Admissions/recruiting
 - Quality and focus in branding, marketing, and recruitment of/for the university, programs, and students
- Registrar/scheduling/records
- Business Office/Financial Aid
 - Ethical stewardship of capital and human resources
- Positive political connections to state legislature, governor, regional governments
- Support staff and Administration
 - Demonstrate broad, consistent, transparent communication across all sectors of the University
- Foundation/Scholarships
- Student Services/Affairs
 - First year live on requirement
 - New student orientation
 - Student employment
 - Leadership opportunities at no cost
 - Service learning

- o Sufficient and connected support services for all students
- Institutional Research and Assessment
 - o Regular assessment of goals and outcomes, using meaningful metrics, for all sectors of university function.
 - o Infrastructure (personnel, training, technology) in place to facilitate regular assessment/evaluation and data-informed actions across all sectors.
- Academic Programming
 - o Academic advising
 - o Faculty learning experiences
- Inclusive Campus Community

4. How does WOU's work contribute to the role/work of public higher education in Oregon?

Area of the state that is affordable and desirable to live in, small community atmosphere with access to teaching faculty and staff that have a focus on student centered learning.

Vision

1. To what does WOU aspire?

Western Oregon University will become regionally recognized for its success in providing a personalized educational experience that transforms the lives of students. Create and support niche programs, both academic and co-curricular, that are the best in the state/region and draw a wider variety of students to attend WOU.

2. What are opportunities for excellence within the realm of public higher education in Oregon?

- STEM Education/Training Cluster
- Experiential education and service learning
- Streamlining majors/minors with other requirements
- Specialized programs and degrees
- Financial literacy
- Connection and working relationships with business community
- Hispanic Serving Institution designation
- State leader in teacher education training and licensure at UG and GR levels across all disciplines
- State leader in training bilingual educators
- Development of contemporary interdisciplinary degrees that maximize our strengths across existing programs of study (e.g. A Prevention Science degree that could be an integration of Community Health, Gerontology, Public Administration, & Psychology)
- Develop seamless and functional transfer articulations with all Oregon community colleges across all relevant programs of study.
- Develop a contemporary, outcomes-based (not discipline-based) general education curriculum that is sleek (minimal credit hours), yet functional and efficient. This will facilitate realistic four-year degree completion opportunities, transfer articulation, and student success.

Values

1. What are WOU's fundamental principles or core values? Both explicit and implicit

- Academic Quality

- o Teaching-focused institution, small-group, community-based learning environment
 - o High quality teaching and learning
 - o Enriched learning experiences
- Accessibility
 - o Access to buildings and facilities (including ADA)
 - o Access to high quality education and employment opportunities
 - o Access to courses and efficient degree pathways
 - o Access to diverse socio-economic populations
 - o Access to financial resources
- Sustainability
 - o Sustainable finances and human resources
 - o Sustainable buildings, facilities and grounds
 - o Promoting an environmental ethos that characterizes Oregon and the Pacific NW
- Affordability
 - o Affordability and access for all populations
 - o Private school education experiences at state school prices
 - o Low cost-of living for students in Monmouth-Independence-Salem areas

2. Do these permeate the university?

Sometimes - but does not seem to be part of a consistent culture

3. Do these translate into actions, behavior and policies?

Sometimes - but does not seem to be part of a consistent culture

Group 2 – Linda Stonecipher and David Foster presented

This group focused on Vision.

Vision

To what does WOU aspire?

Cutting edge educational practices, small classes, flexibility to offer unique educational experiences —

- Intimate, hands-on
- Accessible and supportive environment for diverse populations
- Exploratory educational experiences
- Integrated curriculum
- First year experiences that are attached to student's desired career
- Purposeful on-campus experiences
- Creative problem-solving experiences

- Project-based learning

The group spent a lot of time focusing on the Vision: what we aspire to be. We aspire to do things in a different way than others and that separates us from the rest of the pack. One thing we can provide that others can't is an atmosphere that is intimate and hands on; a personalized educational experience with smaller classes, direct connections with faculty, and a welcoming

and supportive environment. We have things in place to help people complete their degree, because that is really their goal. Students don't just want to get into college, they want to finish college.

President Fuller shared that at SOAR he asks students what is special about the year 2020 and says "That's the year you will graduate." He has them promise their parents that they will see them at graduation so they have the mindset that they will finish their degree. We want students to graduate with a portfolio of high impact practices that they completed along way. Do all programs have these activities? Is that the Western way? Paul Disney shared that the opportunities exist, but aren't a requirement for every major. Mark Henkels added that probably every department has some form of a high impact practice available, but it hasn't been systematically presented as a cross campus thing. Steve Taylor suggested that if a student takes 180 credits at WOU then they're going to experience some version of these things along the way.

Melanie Landon-Hays suggested that we should have students take a class that teaches them about the university so that they understand the structure. As a first generation college student it can be difficult to figure out the system. Linda Stonecipher added that there should be something for all freshmen that allows them to link their career to this whole process. Chris Solario shared that the FYE classes have a component that involves researching their major and what they need to do to get where they're wanting to go. Megan Habermann said that students need to know life skills as well as how to succeed in their major and that FYE classes could be really helpful for this if there is faculty buy in.

Group 3 – Adele Schepige and Paul Kylo presented

Adele Schepige observed that many efforts on campus are like a roller coaster. Something causes momentum and we start working towards it, but then something happens (like resources being cut) and we plummet slowly down, but not all the way to the bottom. Later something else spurs us on and we start working our way up again, but we end up rehashing the same things over and over. It's been going on for at least 30 years. Some of the same conversations are going on today that were going on the day she stepped foot on campus. We need to get the infrastructure right so that we don't go so far down. We need to make sure that when someone leaves campus that their efforts and progress don't come to an end.

Mission

1. What is the primary purpose?

To be the educational leader and cultural center of the mid-Willamette Valley. Provide an excellent education that is accessible and affordable

2. How does WOU's mission fit within the larger scope of public higher education? It fits as we are going to lead the rest of the pack. There must be leaders and followers. We are an alternative in the region to the big three public universities. Our mission should be different from the big three. The mission of higher education and WOU's mission should align but not necessarily be the same.

3. What functions/activities are essential to carry-out the work of the university?

Educational quality, accessibility to programs, programs responsive to the needs of the local population and local communities. High quality, invested instructors and advisors. We need a range of programs and support for them. There is no one-size-fits-all to this. Flexibility, nimbleness to allow us to make changes as needed.

4. How does WOU's work contribute to the role/work of public higher education in Oregon? WOU provides the teachers for the schools and the workforce to fuel state and local governments with informed and prepared workers. We are part of a preK-16 and beyond system.

Vision

1. To what does WOU aspire? To be the best. To be student centered. We aspire to be student centered and a place that is welcoming. Not a second choice. A first choice. We aspire to be a university that is highly regarded for instruction, high standards for graduation, flexibility, smaller class sizes allowing more personal connections. Our graduates need to be viewed as a "must have", not as a "settle for".

2. What are opportunities for excellence within the realm of public higher education in Oregon? Being the most accessible university for all students. Breaking down silos and having a reputation for going the extra distance to make our students successful. Bilingual staff, personal attention to students in a less personal world, and face to face interactions through technology. A growing economy in Salem and the retiring baby boomers whose jobs need to be filled. Undergraduate research. Honors program. Service Learning opportunities. Internships and practicum experiences, school district partnerships.

Values

1. What are WOU's fundamental principles or core values? Both explicit and implicit Staying relevant. Staying solvent. Educating students. Building and maintaining relationships with students: present, past and future. Equity. Opportunity. Individual responsibility. Lifelong learning. Service/community. Educating citizens who are also students. Commitment to students and learning, contribute to sustainability local to global.

2. Do these permeate the university? No. I think they are given lip service, but they are not coordinated or pervasive. They sometimes surface and then go underground. Lack of consistency. Certain departments or divisions and individuals probably act on the values more often and consistently than others.

3. Do these translate into actions, behavior and policies?

No. I think staff work in isolation and the values come from individuals or in departments and are not shared campus wide. There are many walls and barriers to student success. Sometimes they do but people are not aware, or the action is taken sometimes, or by certain people who know; but if they leave, then incoming folks do not know. Maybe we assume and we should not.

Group 4 – Paul Disney presented

Mission

1. What is the primary purpose?

To provide a rigorous and transformative learning environment that prepares students for a successful life and leadership in a global context.

2. How does WOU's mission fit within the larger scope of public higher education?

WOU's focus on providing a transformative learning environment by utilizing and emphasizing the benefits of a smaller size, liberal arts environment to our students, including first generation students, sets us apart. Our location and size make us well situated to serve Oregon's largest population bases.

3. What functions/activities are essential to carry-out the work of the university?

To be a highly functioning 'access' institution, there needs to be infrastructure to support diverse students with preparation/readiness to succeed in a rigorous academic environment.

- An alignment between divisions and departments that creates clear pathways and flexible support to students
- A learning ethos that is focused on student success and adapting to changing academic and economic landscapes, based on data and qualitative information.
- As a learning organization, ongoing evaluation and reporting of effectiveness should be coordinated and integrated into our daily processes.

We need to be continuously improving and involved in the needs of the market in order to assess how we are meeting those needs. Students need personal coaching. Based on an AACU webinar, most students aren't leaving universities for financial or academic reasons, but instead because they feel like they don't belong.

4. How does WOU's work contribute to the role/work of public higher education in Oregon?

WOU prides itself on being the only, four-year, public 'access' institution that makes the qualities of a smaller, liberal arts institution available to most high school graduates: Smaller classrooms, individual attention, and student focused. Our proximity to the majority of the state's population further adds to our accessibility and positions us well for future initiatives.

Vision

1. To what does WOU aspire?

To be a leader in the provision of transformative learning for diverse students through the integration of a rigorous liberal arts curriculum and experiential learning.

- Excellence in our interactions and student/faculty connections (personalized education)
- Excellence as educators and advisors/mentors to help chart our students' future paths as professionals, leaders, and compassionate global citizens

2. What are opportunities for excellence within the realm of public higher education in Oregon?

- True access for students of diverse social, economic, ethnic, etc. backgrounds
- Commitment to degree completion in four years (at least as an option - clear roadmap to students for some degrees)
- Credit for "life experience" for non-traditional students
- Leadership development in state government and local business
- Gerontology
- Fine Arts
- ASL (Center of Excellence for NW)
- Personal coaching for first generation, low income, and high risk students

Values

1. What are WOU's fundamental principles or core values? Both explicit and implicit.

Explicit:

- Accessibility (financial/first generation)
- Personalized instruction
- Liberal arts education in today's global society
- Equality/social justice
- Appreciating diversity
- Develop citizens who can think critically
- Develop future leaders that are prepared to meet the challenges of the global society
- Individual freedom
- Creativity

Implicit:

- Humbleness
- Scrappy underdog, we can get by with little; sometimes not ambitious or grand thinking enough
- Small town (good and bad) – sometimes parochial
- Controversy/functional conflict avoidance
- Individual freedom – sometimes to the point of collective efforts being resisted as infringing on freedom

2. Do these permeate the university?

Yes - but could be improved upon

3. Do these translate into actions, behavior and policies?

Incompletely

Working groups

The five work groups have been divided up into three new groups; each will choose new leaders who were not leaders in their past group. For the July 7 meeting, Team One will draft a values statement; Team Two will draft a vision statement; Team Three will draft a mission statement.

What's next, questions

Ginny recommended that work groups share ideas with the other groups if they come up with suggestions that relate to the other concepts as they prepare the section that they are responsible for.

President Fuller suggested that as people work on this assignment they think about what evidence of success or mission fulfillment might look like. It can be quantitative or qualitative. If we have an accreditation team come back next year to evaluate campus what evidence would show in order for them to reach and report different conclusions than this year's report?