



**Strategic Planning Committee Notes**

**December 2, 2016**

***Peter Courtney Health & Wellness Center, 205***

**8:30 am – 11:00 am Meeting**

Present: Rex Fuller (Co-Chair), Laurie Burton (Co-Chair), Adry Clark, Betty Crawford, Paul Disney, Camila Gabaldon, Corbin Garner, Megan Habermann, Mark Henkels, Cec Koontz, Paul Kylo, Melanie Landon-Hays, Randi Lydum, Dave McDonald, Peggy Pedersen, Adele Schepige, Chris Solario, Linda Stonecipher, Dan Tankersley, Ella Taylor, Steve Taylor

Staff: Ginny Lang (Facilitator), Erin McDonough (Executive Director, Strategic Communications & Marketing), Reina Morgan (Assistant)

Absent: David Foster, Ivan Hurtado, Alma Pacheco, Shelby Worthing

Review and recap

Ginny said the purpose of today's meeting is to take another look at the draft and discuss whether and how to incorporate ideas that came out of the town hall. The group will also review what happens next and discuss planning for implementation.

Rex commented on a successful town hall this week. He said that we are still on schedule and the plan is taking shape in a way that is aspirational, due to the group's diligent work.

Erin McDonough was invited to attend today's meeting, as the newly appointed Executive Director for Strategic Communications and Marketing. She will share ideas that her team brainstormed for getting the message out once the plan is complete.

Megan said she thinks that we are still missing some voices on campus, particularly classified staff. She will create a short feedback form for custodial staff in her building and share it for use with other groups. Camila suggested giving it to SEIU to distribute. Cec said she held two sessions for Finance and Administration employees and added some notes to the communicating x10 document.

Adry said that a lot of people were talking about diversity at the town hall. It is only mentioned in the community engagement section and there isn't much about inclusion.

Penultimate draft – are we there yet?

**M-V-V-P**

Dan said the mission is worded in a way that feels like we're talking to auditors and not the general public. He overheard a lot of discussion about the vision statement. The way it is phrased makes it seem like we aren't currently renowned. People think the

mission statement is too long, but he added if it is shorter it won't say everything it does now. Mark suggested some ways to shorten it, for instance cutting out "opportunity" and just saying we create success. Rex added that some universities create a tagline that attempts to capture the ideas, sort of like a surrogate for the longer mission statement.

Betty said that part of our success is graduating students with high self esteem and confidence. It isn't just their success in the job market, but also who they become. Camila suggested that taking "opportunities" out aligns it better with student success as the goal. Cec said the group she talked to thought it could end right after "personalized support." All of the pieces leading up to that are the reasons they chose to go to school here, work here, etc. That is the strongest part of our mission statement.

Cec received questions from people about "renown" and the verb tense. There was a suggestion that the vision statement be simpler by saying "To be a distinctive campus of choice in a student centered learning community." Laurie said she likes that it is shorter by not specifically naming students, faculty, and staff and yet it sort of implies that it is for everyone without having to state it. Dan said it needs to be reworded because it sounds like we as a campus are inside of a student centered learning community instead of BEING a student centered learning community. Dave McDonald agreed that the construction is awkward and that it doesn't have enough oomph to be our vision. We need something that moves us forward and makes what we want to be clear. You could make an argument that we already are that today.

Peggy said the feedback she was getting is that our mission and vision are too vanilla. It is generic and sounds just like everyone else's. Ginny said this is the place to be bold. Megan suggested that maybe this is a good place to include diversity and our goals, like being a hispanic serving institution. She also said that we should use simpler language because some things are written too advanced and can't be understood by everyone.

Mark shared that what he really aspires for is regional renown. Rex added that at our core we are a regional state university. Ginny pointed out that renown really is what others think about us. It doesn't get at our internal vision. Rex said when high schoolers across Oregon are asked which schools are must-see schools before making their college decision and we're in the top three, have we met this aspiration? Megan shared when students are asked why they chose WOU they often say they were touring another school and WOU was on the way so they decided to stop by. We need to be a place where people come intentionally and not just due to our location on Hwy 99.

Ella questioned the phrase "student centered learning community" saying what university is going to say they're not student centered? That should be implied. What is it that's going to make us renowned? What makes us stand out?

Rex posed the idea of turning the vision back to student success and use "Be the best known university for student success." When we admit a student we're going to do everything we can to get that student their diploma. Let's have that be what we're known for. Corbin agreed that it would be good to state that we are student centered and explain how. Dave McDonald pointed out that we currently have seven bullet points

that define our vision. We can use that same structure. He asked “How are we going to be successful enough that in 30 years we aren’t worried about enrollment? You can drive 30 minutes and find several other schools just like us - except they are private.

Steve suggested that things that target a specific group or method should be addressed in tactical plans. Right now we just need the broad statements. He asked if we’re really going to start from scratch when we picked these things for a reason after working on it for over six months.

Peggy said that diversity, inclusion, equity, etc. always seem like add-ons rather than the plan having a substantial focus on them. When it isn’t mentioned until many pages into the document it doesn’t seem important. We should be more direct about it.

Dan pointed out that the piece about being public is important. Inclusion and the public good should be an important part of our value system. Rex said we have a responsibility and a calling as a public regional comprehensive university. Those are things that matter. At the same time, we don’t want to make it sound like we only care about educating Oregonians.

Megan suggested “Become renowned for being a...” and Melanie suggested “We strive to be known as Oregon’s...” Ginny cautioned that the vision statement and mission statement are beginning to sound alike so look at them side by side. Cec shared that in the focus groups she hosted safety and security came up as strong values, especially from an inclusion standpoint, but also in regards to physical safety and security.

Corbin said he likes the word “lasting” in the mission statement and thinks it bears more weight that way. Betty said that she likes the word “accessible.” Being accessible to our students is an important part of who we are and it can also refer to affordability, disabilities, etc. Ginny added that accessibility is also included in the values section.

Dan suggested the statement “WOU gives students access to lasting success through transformative education and personal support.” Adry recommended using the word “promotes” rather than “gives.” Randi said she doesn’t feel that you can “give” students success. Corbin said using a word like “promote” takes away some of the responsibility for it happening and that we need to take responsibility for creating that success.

Erin pointed out that the vision makes most sense when the group is sitting around talking about what they want it to be. She asked if there is a reason we aren’t putting it in more normal language. Her suggestion was “Be the best known opportunity for doing everything we can do to get all students across the stage with a diploma ready for life.”

Ella suggested using something like “Be the best known opportunity where everyone can succeed.” We want everyone to succeed. The goal isn’t to weed people out. Megan said she likes including students crossing the stage as part of the vision. Even as a non-academic staff member seeing students cross the stage is the most important thing.

Dan suggested using the Board chair's statement of going from best kept secret to best known opportunity. Ella said that it is a little too vague; the concept we are going for is success. Dan pointed out that this will be coming right after the mission statement which talks about success. Dave McDonald added that the mission statement and vision statement won't always be next to each other so they need to be able to stand alone.

### **Student Success**

Adry suggested that the whole document needs to be read with an equity lens because how inclusive we are doesn't come through. Rex said people seem to think if something isn't in our goals then it's not a priority, but if it is in our values then it IS important to us. He asked what we can do to bring it out more in all of the sections?

Ella said that if it's not included in every component then it gets lost. We limited it to community engagement but it should be infused in all of them. Mark suggested that if it's essential to a section then it should be there, but if not, then it doesn't belong there.

Chris said he thinks it should be included in the student success pillar and should be in the (WHICH?) statement. Megan agreed that it should be included in both and pointed out that section 2.2 is really specific about transfer students being successful. If we are specific there then we can also be specific about having an inclusive learning environment. Ella agreed that we should talk about degree pathways for other diverse communities just like with transfers. Laurie pointed out that before we were talking about taking specifics out so that it's inclusive for everyone on campus and they can see themselves in the plan. Rex said that section 2 should be pathways to success for all students. We know that if you're a first generation hispanic student, for instance, there are unique challenges, just like there are for other groups of students. We should figure out a way to talk about pathways for ALL students rather than narrowing it to certain groups. Ginny asked Ella to work on this section with Chris and Rex.

### **Academic Excellence**

Steve suggested changing the wording from "student centered" to "student initiatives." Everyone agreed. Mark voiced that people want to make sure that the general education review process fully involves the faculty.

### **Community Engagement**

Adry said that the consensus she was hearing is that it is vague and has a lack of commitment. It says that we acknowledge and support you, but there is no direction or accountability. There are some places in the pillars that talk about establishing processes, but not for diversity. Should we have similar language for that?

Megan suggested that it should link to the University Diversity Committee (UDC) plan and that people fear that section 4 will supersede the committee's work. We need to emphasize UDC's importance. Rex said he sees it the other way around. By having it listed it validates the work of the UDC going forward. The UDC plan (and all other campus plans) need to be matched up to fit the strategic plan, not the other way around.

Corbin suggested creating a sixth pillar on diversity and inclusion. If it is a priority for our university then it makes sense to give it a separate section to show that it is important.

**Accountability** - No comments.

**Sustainability and Stewardship** - No comments.

What happens between now and January 25, 2017? Who is assigned to what?

The next meeting is on January 13th. The polished plan will be available prior to that meeting for the committee to read and sign off on so it can go forward to the board.

Rex said he hopes that this is a plan that everyone can say has hit the mark. He and Laurie will review the discussions from this meeting and make changes to the document. If there are substantial changes on the 13th we'll have to decide what's next.

He reminded the group that there is also a report due to the accreditors by March 1st and there's also work going on related to core themes. Once the strategic plan is approved the next challenge will be integrating it into the other planning processes on campus. Budgeting will be one of the first. A draft proposal has already gone out for review. Alongside that will be technology planning. That conversation is underway. The master plan for buildings will also need to be revisited. The governor's proposed budget included money for OMA so the university has decisions to make about how it will be used. If we use the plan for these things, then three years from now no one is going to say the plan just sat on the shelf. We said in the beginning that the plan must be readable and useful as a guide for decisions, etc. and that's where we're going.

Ginny asked about using the week of January 15th to preview the plan with campus. Steve said if the document doesn't change very much then he's not sure there's much value, but if there are substantial changes people should have a chance to see it.

Erin and her team have begun to brainstorm communications ideas. She prefaced her comments by saying that these thoughts are aspirational and void of consideration for timeline or budget. She shared a variety of possible tactics to use to relay messages to different audiences. She said some will be short term so that people learn about it quickly; then the focus will shift to how it will be integrated into all of our messages across campus.

Erin suggested using a tagline that can be used widely. The full plan won't fit on coffee sleeves, but a tagline will. During the first six months there might be a big push to get the mission statement out there and after that it might be the tagline. Her team came up with some taglines based on the phrase "forward together" on the front of the plan. The taglines correspond with the mission and pillars: together we transform, together we succeed, together we learn, together we engage, together we lead, together we thrive.

Ginny asked the group to continue to look for interesting things to put on the website. Rex and Laurie will present the plan to the board on January 25th. Rex asked that

members attend the board meeting, if possible. He expects the strategic plan to be on the agenda around 2:30-3pm. The meeting will be in the Columbia room.

### Implementation plan

Rex said to think about implementation as carrying the plan forward into other processes. The university-wide budget committee, for instance, will be providing feedback and recommendations during the budgeting process, which will need to fit with the strategic plan. Another example is deciding how to use the OMA building. If we think in terms of student success, we could use OMA as a place where students go the first time they're on campus and all the student services they need are available. It should be a welcoming place with room upstairs for prospective students to stay with their families so they can see what the college experience is like.

Laurie said that the master plan committee is in charge of the use of buildings, but as with the earlier discussion about the diversity committee, there isn't widespread understanding of the purpose and responsibilities of the committee. People don't know when they meet, who's on the committee, etc. It needs more accountability and transparency. Rex added that the committee has done some planning, but it was done in the absence of a strategic plan. The plan has to adapt to opportunities and be consistent with student success.

Megan said that people she talked with think every department on campus should be required to do something regarding the plan e.g. creating a department strategic plan so that it really becomes campus wide. She suggested creating a tool to help departments and assign strategic planning ambassadors to each department to assist as needed.

Rex said that milestones and timelines will be established to indicate that goals are being achieved and to show progress. Reporting on strategic planning progress will be a topic for the state of the university address each year. Mark added that it could also be incorporated into the annual reports that division chairs turn in. He suggested providing guidelines for how to make the reports align with the plan.

Steve said we've done a good job of including people and expanding participation which will eliminate fear of the plan, but now everyone is focused on the action/tactical items. We need to have a timeline for people to develop their own tactical pieces.

Rex said the writing team will have the next draft out well in advance of the January 13th meeting. He will also look into getting a January date held in case we decide another town hall meeting is necessary.