



Strategic Planning Committee Notes

June 3, 2016

Werner University Center, Willamette Room

7:30 am - 8:00 am Continental Breakfast

8:00 am – 11:00 am Meeting

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

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

Absent: Alma Pacheco, Peggy Pedersen

Recap and review – May 20 Town Hall meetings

Overall there was optimism about the process and people were impressed and encouraged by what was presented. The comments and questions were great, as was the turnout. People are really hopeful that this process will address perceived needs so it is important to have concrete outcomes that improve processes on campus. The committee isn't hearing any new concerns that haven't already been discussed. Having the option to give feedback on the website is very helpful.

Further distillation of SWOT – focus on opportunities and values

Cec Koontz said she focuses on opportunities as the opposite of weaknesses rather than threats because they are all things we can grow from, learn from, and use to make us strong. Chris Solario said it would be good to continue to expand programs like SEP that serve first generation students and provide access to students that other campuses don't.

Mark Henkels suggested that we need to have a uniquely attractive product or way of delivering so that people realize our product is really worth coming here for. Dave Foster said a strength is our commitment to serving the kinds of students that we have, and yet we don't always coordinate things in a way that allows us to do that to the best of our ability. Everyone should see where they fit in the mission and values and create internal structures that will be better for our environment.

Paul Disney commented that it would be helpful to have a marketing working group and for that to start now rather than wait until the strategic planning process is over. Steve Taylor voiced that we must fix teamwork and communication first. There are basic, fundamental issues on campus that need to be fixed before we can move on.

Betty Crawford shared her frustration at trying to gather data as a volunteer. She took the persona of the parent of a student and tried to get basic information on the speakers that were presented this past year and no one was able to help her, or made much of an effort to help.

Paul Kylo said another opportunity we have is 8,000 alumni supporters in Marion and Polk counties that we don't do a lot of outreach to. We also have 6,000 alumni in the Portland/Clackamas area, but our biggest support base is within 20 miles of us.

Laurie Burton shared that there are departments that do outreach, but they are small efforts that aren't very coordinated. Randi Lydum added that if we are able to fix some of these issues then we will naturally have a better relationship with future alums.

Melanie Landon-Hays shared her thoughts that we are too small to be this inflexible with the things students need to do to graduate. Megan Habermann elaborated that we shouldn't be fearful of breaking processes or afraid of getting in trouble in order to help students.

Ivan Hurtado added that he can't think of a time that the university has really reached out to him. All of the opportunities he has had he pursued on his own. Corbin Garner explained that a lot of people are overworked, including the Alumni Association and Public Relations office.

Dave McDonald said a lot of daily operational stuff could be done better. There is an expectation that this planning process will make the university better in some big, bold way, but there are non-sexy behind the scenes things that need to be fixed in order to get there.

Chair Fuller advocated for thinking about what it's like if you walk through the process as a student and what it would look like if you really put student success at the center of the conversation. We might discover in the process that there are things we only need one form for, not seven. And offices need to be open and available to students during core hours.

We are in a choice higher ed market and we need to distinguish what is unique and different about WOU that helps students decide this is the place for them. We need a set of goals and strategies that lets us have a different world five years from now. It might be helpful to think about students choosing a school based on the community it is in and market ourselves as the mid-Willamette valley, or as "15 miles west."

Steve Taylor added that we should be marketing our cost of living. Monmouth is quite affordable compared to Corvallis, Portland, and Bend. Chair Burton said the safety of our campus and community is another good bragging point.

In response to a question, Chair Fuller commented that WOU is pursuing a joint opportunity with Chemeketa Community College at their downtown Salem location. Salem is underserved with no four-year public university presence there. Mark Henkels warned that WOU has offered classes in Salem in the past and it was mostly students from Monmouth who took the classes.

Linda Stonecipher reported that she went to the portfolio presentations for the Information Technology program and observed that students from all different lines of work are pursuing the degree and are choosing the program because of its online delivery.

Ella Taylor commented that we should have a values based strategic framework and emphasized the importance of having a collaborative and cooperative environment in which communication flows both horizontally and vertically. Laurie Burton noted that an inspirational Ted talk that addresses this idea is in the shared folder.

Adry Clark said she thinks people feel cared about at WOU. It shows up in the small class sizes and staff and faculty knowing their names.

Dave Foster said we need to inspire and empower people. We need to welcome transformative, deep learning. How those values manifest themselves in the way we do things will be different for different students and programs. We have to match what we do to who we serve. We shouldn't be afraid to choose the best option, knowing it will be supported.

Data and evidence to support emerging themes (work group reports)

Linda Stonecipher spoke for the two Strengths work groups. She mentioned that some strengths are hard to formulate in a way to look for data. For instance, we have a beautiful campus—but do we have a way of knowing that's a reason why students come here? The group talked a lot about Hispanic students and some ways to attract them to WOU as well as some holes in the data, possibly from not really having an institutional research (IR) office per se.

Chair Fuller suggested thinking about what the measures for each item might be, how to benchmark periodically to identify if things are trending in a positive, flat, or negative way. There ought to be some indicators of quality, like an 18:1 student ratio, but what kind of faculty? Having all part time adjuncts is different from having full time faculty. We can articulate some of these things in a way that allows us to distinguish ourselves.

Ella Taylor commented that we strongly support students from diverse backgrounds, but what does that really mean and how can we grow it? We have to purposely decide that's a direction we want to go in order to get there and if we do there are huge amounts of dollars available to support students to be successful.

Megan Habermann shared that there was a general lack of data, but that the data her group did find did not refute any of the claims they were working with.

Dan Tankersly said that his group was also unable to find much data. However, he found the IPEDS data interesting, and mentioned several specific examples. His group had a hard time finding information about what programs are effective and how to gauge that effectiveness.

Request for background on current work in progress

Mark Henkels asked for more information on the WOU recruitment plan, the big picture for alumni connections, and what strategies we currently have for general fundraising. Dave McDonald said that this is another example where we don't effectively communicate. The committee agreed an overview for those areas would be beneficial.

Assumptions

Steve Taylor inquired how the data is related and why it is needed to come up with a strategic plan. Paul Disney responded that some assumptions have to be made in the planning process but the more assumptions that can be turned into facts the better. Chair Fuller added that it is to test the SWOT analysis against who we really are rather than who we think we are. There were issues brought up with the registrar's office and yet we graduate more students. Are we still accurate in saying that we are welcoming? The Northwest report said we have a beautiful campus, but what if they had visited on January 22nd? We need to be able to see what is generally the case rather than just an individual encounter. If we don't check the assumptions that came up in the SWOT analyses for validity then we will be really off track if we build a plan around assumptions that aren't true.

Shelby Worthing offered that the student perspective might be different than what we see, even if what they perceive isn't based on fact. It would be helpful to have an intake and/or outtake form to tap into that evidence.

Crosswalk between NWCCU and SWOT

Chair Fuller said the final report from the site visit team has been completed. The next step is a meeting on June 23rd with Cat McGrew, Provost Scheck, and President Fuller and the NWCCU Board to discuss the report. The results of the Board's vote on accreditation status will be available in July.

The committee discussed a few specific concerns that were brought up in the report.

Page 5 of the NWCCU Report

The current articulation of the mission statement and core themes appears to be out of alignment with institutional passions. Conversations on campus reflect energy and excitement around student access, success, institutional adaptability, innovation, diversity, and environmental sustainability. The institution could benefit from a renewed discussion of mission and core themes; the resulting shared ownership of the mission could then advance future efforts to plan for and fulfill the mission.

Page 21 of the NWCCU Report

The institution must assess the needs of its end users through a technology planning and budget process that aligns with the educational mission. This is particularly important in the case that the institution plans to expand online course and program offerings.

Page 22 of the NWCCU Report

The Evaluation Committee expresses a concern that the institution needs to develop an ongoing, systematic planning and budgeting process that involves appropriate constituencies.

Page 27 of the NWCCU Report

Evidence of meaningful assessment is anecdotal and decentralized. The decentralized nature of reporting structures, limited access to institutional data, generic mission statement, and campus culture thwart assessment efforts. The WOU faculty, administrators and staff could benefit from challenging their own perspectives, more clearly articulating their strengths, and demonstrating their successes. The institution needs to critically analyze system functions, ways of knowing and beliefs, and devise plans and actions for self-improvement.

Chair Fuller voiced that this concern (Page 27) really resonates with what the SPC has been talking about so far. If we do this work well then we will be able to do a lot of other things better too, like regional accreditation.

Dan Tankersly said that the words used to describe our passion can all be found in the mission statement so he doesn't understand why the Report's Page 5 recommendation was made. Chair Fuller commented that we need to make sure our mission is one that we aspire to and reflects our values and passion, and then we need to do a better job of communicating that mission to all corners of the campus community.

Mark Henkel voiced his frustration that the report doesn't capture how WOU operates on the academic side

Chair Fuller said that mission fulfillment will be the ultimate measure of alignment. We need to move more and more to evidence of things in our mission. What is it we expect to have happen while students are here? High impact practices are something we do well—academic excellence showcase is an example—and it is within our control. We say we prepare our students for a fulfilling life, but how do you measure that?

Dave Foster asked how we connect the things in our mission to what we teach. Students have opportunities to participate in various activities that could lead them to a fulfilling life, but there need to be really explicit links so people can make the connection: "This is one of my values, is why I'm here, and it fits with the university's mission."

Paul Disney said it was recently decided that LACC coursework must be able to show a learning outcome. About two thirds of the departments responded, but some departments are boycotting the concept.

Chair Fuller elaborated that we also need a common idea of what we mean by assessment. Simply providing grades in class is not program assessment. When you look at how a cohort did—a graduating class of students—what insights can we gather about whether or not changes should be made to the program? That culture was not evident to the reviewers. We need a shared understanding of what we mean when talking about assessment.

Steve Taylor commented that there is a ton of assessment data compiled every year and sent to the dean's office. There is no response back when it is submitted and they hear nothing about it after that point. The report is criticizing assessment when it all really was done.

Ella Taylor added that many turn in data that goes nowhere because we have such a stretched infrastructure. It's nearly impossible to take everything from each department and organize it in a coordinated fashion. Nobody means to purposely not use stuff, but where do you fit that in with all the other job responsibilities? Staff and administrators are stretched thin and we're seeing the result of that.

Dave Foster expressed that faculty might not buy into needing more administration to deal with assessment data because they aren't seeing a meaningful connection to what the faculty do on a day to day basis.

Ella Taylor commented that we clearly need an IR office because right now people want to know where their data went. Adele Schepige said that we have been doing all of this assessment for years and that collecting data is part of our culture.

What's next, questions, assignments

The time for summer meetings will be 8am-11:30am.

June 23rd

July 7th

July 21st

There is a WOU Board of Trustees meeting on July 27th and the SPC will provide an update report. Committee members should mark this on their calendars.

June 23rd assignment: Values, mission, vision

Are the value and mission statements serving us well? There is a list of questions to guide the workgroups. After thinking about it individually, groups should synthesize their answers so we end up with one single document for each group.

The goal is to revise the mission statement by the end of summer. Once the mission statement is revised there will be a conversation with campus (probably the 2nd or 3rd week of fall term) to allow for final revisions.