

Minutes – Strategic Planning Steering Committee (Draft)
Thursday, December 4, 2008, 8:30 a.m.
409 Miller

Present: Mark Prus, Bill Buxton, Carol Van Der Karr, Mark Yacavone, Caroline Kaltfleiter, Chris Cirmo, Lynn Anderson, Nasrin Parvizi, Mary K. Murphy, Don Sawyer, Raymond Franco, John Shedd, Janet Duncan

Absent: James Reese, Greg Sharer, Joan Sitterly

REVIEW OF MINUTES (11/20/08)

The minutes were approved with the following correction: to replace the all instances of the term “Strategic Planning Committee” with the correct name, “Strategic Planning Steering Committee”.

REVIEW OF MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

M. Prus reported that as part of the homework assignment, _____ had forwarded to him the Strategic plan of St. Mary’s College of Maryland (attached to agenda), and the following is Bill Buxton’s attempt at summarizing Cortland’s mission statement: “SUNY Cortland is dedicated to offering the public an affordable education at one of the 20 best teaching colleges in the United States.” John Shedd, who came in later, also completed his homework by summarizing the plan to 3 sentences.

M. Yacavone reported that he had researched the strategic plan and process of Roanoke College, a private liberal arts college, which reduced its full-page mission statement to 3 sentences. C. Kaltfleiter reported that she had researched Reed College, another private liberal arts college having a 3-sentence mission statement and six priority points. D. Sawyer also went over the mission and vision of SUNY Oswego, one paragraph each, followed by key points.

C. Cirmo expressed concern that the mission statements of the colleges mentioned above do not reflect or highlight public good (since they are private) - a strong focus of SUNY Cortland’s mission.

Prus pointed out that the goal of the homework was not to adopt the mission statements of other institutions of higher learning, but to find commonalities in the process; not to change the mission or mission statement of SUNY Cortland, but rather to tweak the statement and make it succinct. He reiterated the need to have a concise mission statement, with the Strategic Steering Planning Committee taking the lead to develop it. The campus would participate more in defining the vision and aspirational goals over a period of time.

Discussion: The body agreed to involve the campus in the tweaking of the mission statement. There was consensus to work top-down as well as bottom-up during the planning

process. (Cirmo reported that the LRP has prepared a proposal with regards to gathering faculty input). There were two differing ideas regarding a preferable format for sending out the current mission statement: The first, recommended by Lynn Anderson, called for sending out the full mission statement to the entire campus for feedback, and asking each person to highlight two priority items in order of importance from the current mission statement. The second, a recommendation for the group meet and reconstruct the current mission statement (i.e., come up with five important ideas they consider as a summary of the mission statement), and include a number of framing questions before disseminating it to the campus community for feedback.

Bill Buxton recommended that the reality of the next several years in terms of the budget situation be considered when discussing strategic priorities so that the new plan is not unpopular like the current one. The response was that the economic conditions should in no way affect the college's mission, the mission statement or drive strategic planning, even though priorities will be set up during the planning phase based on the economic situation. Bill, in response, pointed out that the committee was for strategic planning and not to address mission and vision, but was informed that strategic planning does begin with the mission and the vision.

Lastly, there was concern that faculty would be inundated, thereby affecting the rate of response and resulting in complaints from faculty/staff. In that light, and given the need for full faculty participation, Chris Cirmo agreed to put a hold on his request for departments/units strategic plans so that everyone will focus on the mission statement.

Decision

- Put out the current mission statement in its entirety now to the campus community for feedback regarding priorities and let them know that a response is not anticipated until after final grades; but as soon as grades are in, they should take some time and look at it and provide a response. Communicate our understanding of the timing (exam), but also the urgency about developing a strategic plan to guide the Institution - especially in light of the current economic crisis.
- The paragraph model will be used for the mission statement and vision statement, followed by goals that will be outlined.
- A subcommittee comprising Mary K. Murphy, Lynn Anderson, and Carol Kaltfleiter will craft a statement to accompany the mission statement when disseminating to the campus community and present it to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee next Thursday (December 10)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Submitted by:

Eunice G. Miller