

Minutes – Strategic Planning Steering Committee (Revised)

Thursday, January 15, 2009

8:30 a.m.

409 Miller

Present: Mark Prus, Bill Buxton, Mark Yacavone, Nasrin Parvizi, Mary K. Murphy, Sheila Dai, Raymond Franco, John Shirley, Janet Duncan, Greg Sharer, Peter Dady, James Reese

Absent: Lynn Anderson, Joan Sitterly, Chris Cirmo, Caroline Kaltfleiter, Carol Van Der Karr

Overview

M. Prus began the meeting by reporting that the survey had gone out with amendments. R. Franco added that he had distributed the amended survey to members of the Alumni Board and the College Foundation Board. To date, 210 responses have been received. Of that amount, 150 responses have been summarized; Merle Canfield will forward the remaining 60 responses to C. Kaltfleiter for integration.

Timeline

Prus reported that the timeline established by the committee will be announced by President Bitterbaum during the Spring Open Meeting on January 16:

- By 30th of January – have a draft mission statement for dissemination to the campus community, and schedule some sandwich seminars and an open forum for mid-February to give the campus an opportunity to provide feedback.

Review of responses

The goal of the discussion, according to Prus, was for committee members to provide feedback on the draft summary of responses prepared by Carol Van Der Karr. This will be followed by the appointment of a subcommittee that will be charged with preparing a preliminary draft of the mission statement. A suggestion was made to discount statements that take the mission in a different direction.

Discussion: The discussion centered on whether the focus of the College's mission statement should be making a difference or providing quality teaching to prepare students for the job market. B. Buxton expressed concern that the committee might be drifting from the purpose of the mission given that most of responses are supportive of a good citizen/making a difference concept. According to him, offering classes that lead to degrees and preparing students for their vocation is SUNY Cortland's mission and what we do. The other committee members however considered Cortland's primary mission as providing learning opportunities for students, a process which includes, not only quality teaching, but also other forms of learning outside the classroom - experiences that are pertinent in the development of a model and well-rounded citizen. Proponents for the good citizen model stress the following points: that having a good content background and becoming a good citizen are not mutually exclusive; that students come to Cortland vocationally-minded but leave with an appreciation of much more, e.g., becoming civically-minded; and that there are students who made a difference in areas that had nothing to do with what they studied in College.

Other recommendations

- The statement could be summarized by focusing the reader on what we do, why we do it and who benefits
- Given the goal to increase graduate enrollment, there is a need to explore how the mission statement will reflect both the graduate and undergrad experience at Cortland.
- Quality teaching is not exclusive of the goal of providing students with an opportunity to learn. One cannot discount the fact that we do have strong liberal education and professional programs.
- If the opportunity to learn is the focus, we can integrate quality teaching, hiring practices and everything we do into the statement
- Content as well as helping students to become better individuals have been part of SUNY Cortland's fabric for years. The new mission statement should reflect both.

Consensus: Develop a short mission statement and integrate some of recommended ideas as part of our core values, values/commitments which should feed into the mission statement.

Action Item: A subcommittee comprising B. Buxton, J. Reese, J. Shirley and C. Van Der Karr will develop a draft per the consensus reached.

Other Announcements

- Franco announced that he and Prus will speak with Steve Paxhia, an alumnus who has had some experience working with strategic planning, and is willing to come in and support the process. During the call, Paxhia will be updated regarding progress made thus far.
- M. Yacavone announced that the strategic planning website will be up by January 16 and pertinent documents will be uploaded

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 23 @ 8:15 a.m.

*Submitted by:
Eunice G. Miller*