

Question #1 – Is becoming “the premier public liberal arts and sciences institution in the nation” a compelling vision statement for you? Why or why not?

Needs Better Definition

- How would this be measured? How do you know that you've achieved this? It may not be helpful if we don't know we can actually do it.
- We don't want to 'hang our hat' just on rankings, as this could backfire on us
- What makes a good vision statement? Some characteristics might be that it reflects attention and contrast. This vision statement has some attention, but maybe not the contrast needed.
- There are several problem words: “liberal arts and sciences institution” – some people don't know what this means, and it means something different to everyone.

Needs to Guide Us

- A vision statement should look into the future and provide a stretch goal.
- A vision needs to happen in context
- A vision statement needs to be inspiring. This statement is lofty, but how does it translate to something we do on a day-to-day basis.
- A vision statement should capture what we're about.
- Our vision statement needs to be personal (this one does not seem to include the personal component).

Maybe once we have our goals defined, this will better inform any modifications needed to the vision statement.

Question #2 – What is the most important priority for Truman over the next five years?

Allocate Resources to Reward Quality

- We need to reallocate resources to what we want to be good at.
- Invest in quality faculty in the right areas.
- Fundraising – everything depends on cash flow
- Acquire the necessary resources to maintain quality in all we do.
- We have to fix our systemic deficiencies so we can pay faculty appropriately. The way we're doing this now is not sustainable.

Articulate the Totality of the Educational Experience

- Define, articulate and build the out-of-classroom experience gained through the residential experience
- Totality of the educational experience (aimed at those who leave 'home' to get an education)
- Translate the good press we get to actual feet on the ground and in the door at Truman. The press we get must be relevant to students, and capture their attention. Marketing strategies are key.
- Remain “personal” to students. We have to stay personally attached to students. Students know the people here, and we can't let this slip away.
- Remain “personal” to the entire community.
- How do we reach ALL students?
- Truman needs to enhance learning technology – it is pivotal to attracting students. This could also enhance the residential experience.

Define Who We Are

- Is Truman a national or a regional University? We need to figure this out. Very few institutions have the quality of students that we have.

Question #3 – What assumptions about the next five years are reasonable for us to make regarding budget, staffing, technology, political realities, student needs and expectations, and practices in higher education?

Budget

- Money will be tight, and we need to “build down.” We can’t expect more from students or the state.
- Maintain our enrollment (at what number?)
- We need to understand the new models for sustaining institutions

Political Realities

- We’re not likely to get any more funding
- Sister institutions will claim they are more efficient and effective (based on faculty-student ratios). High quality is our asset.
- For-profit and gainful employment are key. We need to emphasize our low default rates.
- We need to remain an affordable high quality institution.
- Tout our graduation rate
- Our strength is access (in terms of affordability)

Staffing

- Staffing will be less
 - Our ability to hire quality faculty is diminishing.
 - We need better succession planning.
 - The model we used in the past for faculty development won’t work anymore. People reaching retirement age will cause a contraction through the system.
 - We can’t place our “product” at the lowest cost, it’s not good business. But, students won’t attend Truman without low cost.

Technology

- Higher expectations all around, more demanding, and this has implications for skills in our employees. Many students have higher technology skills than faculty.

Student Needs and Expectations

- Students expect financial assistance, and they will have more needs for personal attention.
- The growth in student population will be from a different cultural group, the growth is in the current minority populations.
- Rubrics for predicting student success may need to change. We can’t just use the ACT/SAT as predictors anymore.
- Student mental health needs will grow.
- We need to focus more on forms of highly engaged student learning.
- Conversation needs to be about completion
- Students expect more than courses in their degree programs.

Question #4 – In your opinion, what would be the characteristics of a successful strategic plan for Truman for 2011-15?

Bold and Agile

- Needs to lift the bar and take some risks.
- Be brief (serious thought and reflection will come later)
- Set priorities, not a long laundry list

Provides Guidance and Accountability

- More connection to what we do, it needs to close the loop and show accountability
- What is every department’s responsibility to achieving the plan?

- No more “grope and hope”
- Connected to the budget process
- Something to guide our actions
- Want to know if we’re failing along the way (don’t just wait until the end)

Reminder:

Everyone was asked to try and provide opportunities within their areas to engage the faculty and staff on these questions, using department meetings, etc. Members of the SPAC are available to assist with the discussion if needed (just contact Lou Ann or Doug).

Feedback for this phase is due by the end of November.