

## Student Focus Group – Delta Sigma Pi (approximately 70) 11/15/10

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

- Didn't really care or understand what the liberal arts was about when I came here
- This vision is externally oriented – needs to have an internal focus and be student oriented
- It reflects what the administration wants not what students or prospective students want.
- To vague – there is no way to know if you have succeeded
- Subcategorized the school by referring to “public liberal arts and sciences”– narrowing its reach – leaves only a small window of possibilities
- What does premier mean?
- Need to improve the food in the cafeteria – better options for gluten free diets – fresher food.

*What is the most important priority for Truman over the next five years?*

- We need to catch up on technology and our internet is awful.
- Need to build the endowment
- Need to replace some teachers and raise the bar regarding our expectations of teachers
- Need to train faculty to use technology
- Need to re-evaluate our virtual desktop system.
- Need a more diverse student body from inside and outside the US.
- Need to recruit more heavily in neighboring states

*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:

- Decreasing budget
- Less state funding

Staffing:

- Reduction
- Need to be careful to support our core areas

Technology:

- Need to speed up the internet
- Need new and more hardware
- We are already behind – high schools have smart boards in all rooms
- Need to repair what we have
- Need to make sure this area is well budgeted
- I was surprised to see chalkboards in classrooms – they should at least be white boards – very antiquated

- More support for MAC
- Increase number of computers available for student use
- Need to change the light bulbs in the library – they're burned out all the time

Political Realities:

- Need to advocate better for Truman to keep our portion of state funding
- Need a broader base of employers
- Need to expand our reputation

Student Needs and Expectations:

- Textbook costs are too high, need a rental program and better buy backs
- Students expect opportunities for employment when they complete their degrees; need to provide more opportunities for internships
- Improve the website; needs to be more uniform through all levels
- Calendar system is difficult and out-of-date
- Need a better search engine
- Registration needs to be improved

Higher Education Practices:

- Northwest only charges \$150 for books and you get a laptop too
- Lack in technology here again
- Don't like course fees
- Need more opportunities for collaborative learning
- MS&T provides a vast array of tutoring
- Better options financially for out-of-state students
- Keep up and get more program accreditations

More or Other:

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

- Realistic
- Student aware
- Set priorities by it
- Focus on students
- Action and result oriented
- Faculty/student ratio needs to remain good compared to other universities
- Fiscally aware – need to keep costs down

A participant gave me a note after the meeting that said the following:

I didn't want to say this out loud because some students would definitely disagree. I believe that Truman needs to drastically increase its tuition and room & board. We are one of the cheapest schools in the region, and I believe that as we continue to grow and be more selective in the students we take we should increase our price to come here as well. This money could be used to make up for all the budget cuts and continue to keep us on top.