

STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FACULTY FORUM
Wednesday, October 13, 2010
Notes

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

- Nice to shoot for the vision, but that kind of rhetoric can come back to bite you; what is achievable with the resources you have. Setting that kind of goal—is it reality or rhetoric?
 - Although Truman has never officially stated it, students have unofficially adopted “Harvard of the Midwest.” Causes Truman not be taken seriously.
- Thought of the vision can be overwhelming. In heart’s desire, it is where we want to be.
- What does it mean in terms of allocation or re-allocation of resources?
- Some hesitancy to embrace the vision in regards to how we have defined liberal arts. We have select pre-professional programs. Relates back to the mission change and the difficult decisions that were made to transition to the liberal arts.
- Our vision of the liberal arts—does it mesh with a national perception of the liberal arts?
- If we are comparing ourselves to the rest of COPLAC, it is a strong case. If talking about William and Mary, it is a big leap. The latter comparison changes what it takes to make this a realistic objective.

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

- I thought it was survival.
- Quest for resources. I would like it to be that we ensure we have a robust curriculum.
- Increase the quality of a liberal arts education. Worried that we will start sacrificing quality of instruction and quality of the institution when state resources are diminishing
- Beyond survival and reaction to the economy but to set our priorities to remain true to the mission; need long-term decision-making
- Need to market ourselves to the public—to demonstrate the value of higher education as a public good.
- Invest in marketing to communicate how good we really are.

- Determine how we strategically position ourselves and our product. The curriculum is our product. We must determine how we will position ourselves relative to others in the higher education market. Need to know why students pursue higher education.
- Access to education. Has become less about what you know and more about what you can do.... Consumer mentality
- How to communicate that higher education is more than a ticket to a career. Need to define the Truman experience/LAS
- Communicate the value of a liberal arts education versus get a better job
- Truman is schizophrenic—Truman has not moved out of its comprehensive background and not embracing its liberal arts focus. Either break with the past or acknowledge we are going to do both.
- Aligning ourselves with the changing demographics. Backgrounds of students are changing. Our bread and butter pool of middle-class, Caucasian students, is shrinking. We need to be able to accommodate the change and embrace that or downsize with our market.
- Target under represented folks to expand the student pool.
- Rather than competing against others; how can we work together to demonstrate the benefit of higher education to the general population.

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?*

- Lot of progress on how people learn and should adjust our pedagogies accordingly. Lecturing least effective way to present information for students to learn. Mentioned National Center for Academic Transformation
 - Learn best: relaxed alertness, experiential learning, reflection
- Fear that we are running on our reputation rather than reality. Changing pedagogies could make our uniqueness a reality. Address budgetary issues through educational process.
- Assume that budget is not going to get much better.
- Hard to stay at the cutting edge of technology—things are changing quickly.
- Truman is slow and in the dark ages with technology. Will we always be lagging? Realities of being a public institution in Missouri, we will not have the resources to be at the cutting edge of technology. Never make a name for ourselves with technology. Students who want a technology intensive education will not come here. We are wasting our resources on some things
- Pressures for change, budget pressures, pedagogical changes, technology will increase stress levels among faculty and support staff. If little institutional support, may see higher turnover,

fewer implementations of pedagogical changes that are effective. Do not hear about support of faculty and staff like we do for students.

- All universities are facing the same reality—this time of change could be an opportunity. Look at this relative to other universities rather than five years ago.
- Community college enrollments are accelerating—over 50 percent of students start there. Private colleges are funding part of their tuition from endowments. They also are struggling.
- Governor and legislature want institutions to work together. Some schools may lose programs. Need to be complementary rather than compete
- Students will be more needy—emotionally, financially, etc. Will put pressure on support systems
- Students seem to want more of an economic return on their education. Moving away from a liberal arts notion and to a professional or vocational perspective.
- Students are looking for certain values at the end—use the liberal arts to meet some of those needs. What are the students going to get from their education—pedagogy, technology. Market and link the liberal arts concepts to the values students want at graduation. There is higher expectation of services.

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

- Short, targeted
- See some specific activities; not just philosophical. This is what we are going to do. Action items included.
- Address financial resources
- Should have some measure of boldness or innovativeness. People should say, “oh, yeah, Truman. That’s where . . . “ It should unify us. It should help us move in a common direction.
- Let the plan be bold, inspirational. Should not be the last plan just tweaked.
- Students are looking for sustainable practices. We could market that. Could be an important piece of the plan. We are moving in that direction.
- Rather than a specific stop for students of a certain age. We should become sources of expertise for this region. This would make us relevant in the public life of the region and state. Say something about how we are going to use the University to take advantage of the location. Such as green initiatives, food and consumption, rural folklore. Tie that together as a package—this is what Truman does by being in this location. Cuts across student, faculty, community experience. Our connection to the location is how we become more relevant to the state. This is why it matters that we are in this area.

- In the past had internationalization of the curriculum. Is it still on the radar?
- Should specifically address alumni, cultivate stronger alumni relationships, and prepare students to be alumni.. continuing relationship to the institution.
- Tackle problem of education in this country. Be the place in Missouri where you come to learn how to teach people or to refresh your skills as a teacher.
- As part of the process, communication internally about what is getting done at Truman. With external stakeholders share about what we do and plan to do. So much potential for communicating what we already do with external stakeholders. Lots of stuff never makes it to public notice. Potential to raise Truman's profile by communicating with other groups
- Progress review or timeline in the plan. Include how we will measure accomplishments and adjust as we go along.
- Data driven evaluation of the plan. Someone needs to be held accountable for parts of the plan.
- Plan establishes establish some kind of philosophy of teaching and learning. Truman's assessment encourages reflection. The plan focuses on creating human beings who love learning for learning's sake. Fears students are happy to get out because their education is a lot of jumping through hoops. Grade focused now. Plan should focus on how help people learn in a more humane way.
- Address how faculty governance affects achievement.
- Promote curiosity and seeking knowledge.

Other Observations and Comments

- Student perceptions: Why work hard when won't get a job—have the worst papers seen in recent years
- How academics and staff are valued in the community. Need to consider academic staff and faculty.. how treated and supported; Told was a dime a dozen and replaceable. Consider the wishes and desires of faculty and staff.
- Bridge the gap between what students learn while they are here and what they actually practice in the schools. Need to connect with reality
- Closing the cultural gap with schools and employers—partner and build relationships.
- One giant piece of assessment data is alumni feedback—an opportunity to reflect upon their college experience at Truman. Gettysburg alumni gather right after school year ends. Used as a relationship builder and development activity.