

STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FACULTY FORUM NOTES
Thursday, October 07, 2010

- *Is becoming “the premier public liberal arts and sciences institution in the nation” a compelling vision statement for you? Why or why not?*
 - Silly; no meaning, too vague; what does premier mean?
 - Address substantive issues that focus on what we can be
 - The vision should be something important
 - Think about the meaning of liberal arts for us in the next five years—given the economic circumstances (need to be creative). If we address things in the business as usual kind of thinking, we will not address the problems we need to become the kind of institution we want; develop students as we want them to become; need to define what it is that we want to do
 - Premier is ambiguous; should be able to point to some program that is the best in the nation
 - What does liberal arts mean in the public context? To what audience?
 - Public; notion of liberal arts may be different when apply the term public; obligations to the state (MAE in math); linked to mission but not directly to liberal arts. What does it mean to be a PUBLIC liberal arts institution? LAS is too difficult without the “public” in public LAS
 - Is the statement meant to be motivational? We don’t have world class . . . museum, etc.
 - Exhausted by the effort to define the liberal arts for us. Come to the point that we do not have to define it. Know what we mean; have a common understanding.

- *What is the most important priority for Truman over the next five years?*
 - To survive in the form it is more or less now. We are a really good school. Maintain the kind of dedication and priority to material covered by the teachers. Is a very good thing. Fact we do it without charging \$40,000 a year is good. This is a very important service we do. Important not to lose. Need to be able to continue to provide access. One colleague says we need to become private. Raise tuition. But would not serve society well. Mentioned that education historically was for the elite, those who could afford... concerned that moving back toward that
 - Nervous about certificate programs; on-line courses/programs. Antioch tried and is a disaster. Could these programs begin to eat up resources? Concerned we will lose what we have—students taking classes from professors here on campus. Could we lose focus on our mission?
 - Maintaining academic standards. High standards in classes; bright students who are challenged.
 - Maintaining the public liberal arts & sciences mission; since the concept is not defined in general. We should be the model.
 - Need to maintain our Strong majors bathed in the liberal arts and sciences experience. We should graduate students who can think, speak, work in teams, and hit their careers running.
 - Public mission—people who graduate will do things with a public purpose in mind. We need new kinds of institutions. We should graduate students who don’t just get a job—new enterprises; environmental purpose. Combine public and private enterprise. Social innovation. Incentives to

create a more sustainable society. Liberal arts and sciences are the keys. Graduates should do something more than get a job.

- *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 is going down and not up for a while
 - Faculty, departments, schools, programs that are good stewards should be recognized. How we take action will need to be changed. Need to be more proactive with resources rather than reactive
 - Technology—expectation that it will increase while budget does not keep pace
 - Educational practices—there will be fads in both educational practice and technology. Important to preserve what we have, what's important and not follow fads. Don't spend just because someone thinks it is the wave of the future or to keep up. Embrace that which is useful and we can afford
 - Tendency to underestimate time and staff commitment with new technology. Would oppose sacrificing teaching staff to support.
 - Aging faculty and distribution of faculty. No new blood coming in. Have to re-energize faculty who are older. If salaries stay low, we will not attract the best and brightest faculty. Really big issue—How will we attract when we CAN hire? New blood is important. Ideas change. Disciplines change.
 - Politics are getting very bitter and extreme. People are very anti-tax oriented. Difficult to govern to be bi-partisan.
 - How few state legislators know about Truman and what we do. Term limits create awareness challenges. Concerned that new legislators don't stop here anymore on their state tour
 - Sourcing that we do for food, materials should come from within the state—document that contribution to the economy. Re-circulating the money in the state economy.
 - Staffing—tension between the financial desire to have mostly non-tenured track faculty versus tenure-track faculty with academic freedom who can do their job well. Temporary may be a good business model, but does not support what we do well. Need faculty who are invested in Truman.
 - If tenure eliminated; salaries would have to be raised to become competitive. Since our salary level is lower; if we don't offer job security, why would anyone come here?
 - Students will need less remedial and more challenging course work.
 - Students will need more remedial—math skills are not there. Will remedial courses be at community colleges only?
 - Bright students do not work as hard in high school. Our academic expectations will not align with their experiences.
 - More attention to relationship with community colleges; articulation agreements; how do we maintain a Truman experience with a larger number of transfer students.
 - What is the funding formula for differing levels of higher education?
 - How can we attract more males? How can we attract more minorities?

- Parents like being bought... issue of forcing schools to compete with financial aid packages

- *In your opinion, what would be the characteristics of a successful strategic plan for Truman for 2011-15?*
 - A plan that can be assessed and measured in five years. Reasonable goals with a good assessment plan. Need an accountability mechanism built into the plan
 - Able to successfully speak to the various interest groups with which we work—legislators, students, parents, and internal audience.
 - Helps to coordinate different committees and task forces.
 - Document needs to be endorsed by the faculty senate. How do we excite the community around the strategic plan? What is the governance role in this plan? Need to be sure that others have a role in the process. Concern with buy-in of faculty in the plan
 - Focus on things that matter. Don't focus on things that don't matter. For example, assessment data was unprocessed without statistical significance. Either do it right or don't do it. Is a time waster if data not accessible. Another—five year reviews just sit on shelves. If we have to do them to satisfy state; just do it.
 - Ratio of time to produce the report compared to the time it takes to implement it. How implement the conclusions (which is often more time-consuming than just writing a report).
 - If we have fewer dollars and resources (including time), the plan should guide what we are NOT going to do in order to teach the students we have.

Other Comments

- Not compromise academic freedom in our efforts to gain private funding—donors not tell us what to teach
- Informally assessment is going on the classes daily as figure out what works and does not work. If we have a culture of assessment, we need to think about what happens in the classrooms. We have a culture of reports.
- If lean and mean; continue to be selective and have good faculty. Maintain quality. Not in best interests to serve lots of students. Would it be better to have fewer high-quality students? Raised the example of College of New Jersey. Will mean either higher state support needed or higher tuition.