

Staff Focus Group – New Student Programs Employees (approximately 15) 11/17/10

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

- Not realistic without a bigger endowment
- Sounds somewhat arrogant and false – focus is on competition instead of the quality of what we do
- Why wouldn't we want to be the best?
- Doesn't say anything to students – we need to characterize what the “Truman Experience” is for students.
- Don't like the inclusion of “public” – puts our reference on a second tier of quality
- Focus needs to be narrowed down – premier in what?
- Should we have national aspirations? Is a regional focus more realistic?
- How will we know when it is achieved?

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

- Preserving our reputation through these difficult economic times
- Being fiscally responsible
- We need to prepare to deal with the demographic shifts in the students who come to Truman that are going to happen while staying true to our mission
- Maintain or enhance our academic quality and high expectations of students
- Need to broaden the area from which we recruit
- Need to have better outreach to and financial aid for underrepresented groups
- Need to maintain undergraduate research opportunities and small class sizes
- The number one complaint we get is the lack of course availability – this hurts current students and the recruitment of potential students
- We need to develop efficiencies in the registration process
- Need to continue and enhance the use of assessment to demonstrate the value of what we do
- We need to see the financial challenges that we are facing as an opportunity to change for the better – poor morale results from the lack of innovative thinking and a willingness to try new things – we need to get energized by the possibilities
- Learning communities
- Innovation without an increase in work responsibilities
- Endowment of \$100,000,000
- Finding smarter ways to use scholarship workers

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:

- Decrease in State funding; an increase in fees

Staffing:

- If enrollment numbers increase we will need more people to help those students in the Student Success Center – we may have to charge a fee for tutoring to hire more student workers

Technology:

- On-line course offerings
- More and increasing expense for technology
- Need upgrades frequently

Political Realities:

- Lack of faith on the part of State and federal governments regarding how higher education uses funds and the lack of documentation of results
- Turn over in the State legislature

Student Needs and Expectations:

- More poorly prepared students
- Our students need more developmental skill works
- Need to refine admission screening and then create strategies to support students whom we admit better
- The needs of transfer students should be a priority
- We need more innovative articulation agreements

Higher Education Practices:

- Increasing peer lead academic support
- Peer mentoring programs
- Hybrid courses combining technology and traditional face to face teaching strategies
- We need to do a better job of articulating the importance of the residential component to learning outcomes and the power of student interactions with each other
- Truman Experience might really be the “Truman condition” or the Truman attitude

More or Other:

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

- Leads to high placement rates
- Is effective and doable
- Focused and inspirational
- Provide a baseline of where we are and where we are going
- Readable
- Memorable for the right reasons
- Outside, unique, use technology
- Guide decision making
- Communicate uniquely and widely
- Speaks to students – gets them engaged
- Simple language

- Everyone understands the implications for action
- Living document that we continue to refer to in our decisions and actions