

SPAC President's Administrative Council Forum

October 19, 2010

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

- On the whole - No. COPLAC isn't that widely known among peers. Mary Washington probably only other can say is competitive with Truman. Doesn't think it is a high enough target to aspire to.
- Doesn't resonate with a large audience (maybe faculty) but beyond that – have to explain “public”. “Liberal arts” raises too many questions.
- COPLAC but thinks of Miami of OH or William & Mary when describe “premier public liberal arts” – the “Public Ivys”. What is the target here? Are Miami of OH and William & Mary more what we're trying to shoot for? Would it be better if we took “public” out of it? No. we would be up against Washington University, etc.
- “Premier” seems arrogant. Not a vision but a hallucination. Nice to have high sounding vision but how know when achieve? “Premier” is biting off quite a bit but maybe not with “public”.
- Resounding answer is no. Don't know what it means, how to measure when its achieved. May be confusing to public. How far do you want to stray from what declare our vision to be? Believes came from President Dixon. Last time the strategic planning process was dysfunctional. Doesn't seem to be working; not much buy in.

Summary: Consensus, no it is not compelling. Public liberal arts institutions (COPLAC) are few and not that well known. The word “premier” seems to be the big problem; also, how do you measure such a statement. Or, to quote Warren, “it is not a vision, it's a hallucination, it is not realistic.”

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

- Student recruitment and success. Name recognition – everyone in state should know us. Don't have recognition we need in the Midwest. Must continue with marketing and recruitment efforts to make sure we're known.
- Maintain quality amid sabotage to the budget. Step up fund raising efforts. Funding is down; fiscal instability is what is driving all. How is our ability to become fiscally stable going to determine what we do day to day – redefine daily mission. Believe the fiscal situation is the big definer. How can we come out stable knowing state dollars aren't there? No more Golden Era.
- Student learning/success. If doing that well, everything else should be easier to do and can tell the story to the outside. Everything else is tough to do without developing characteristics of successful students.
- Enrollment, retention, graduation rates, scholarships, academic support All are tactics for student success - not stand alone. Conclusion is focus on student learning and success and all else falls into place if we can do that.

Summary:

Name recognition, in and out of state.

Maintaining quality in light of the severe budget problems.

Foundation, private resources.

Next big transformation may be in the fiscal area, what to do about fiscal stability and fiscal resources.

Student learning and success still number 1.

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/staffing tight and changing technology
- Can expect after these cuts state dollars will be at best incremental. Can't expect any windfall. Where we land next five years, percent of operating budget will be same or less.
- Could consider in effect funding is level. Tuition/funding leads to level staffing. Expand and enhance other sources of revenue.
- Staffing – smaller. Unsure how much what we do this year will help; may not be enough.
- Pressure on technology to be cutting edge won't go away. We will hit a tipping point and students will be largely reading digital materials.
- Political realities – Missouri is conservative; conservatism will continue. No talk on revenue enhancement. Talk is for smaller government. On November 2, 40% will be new legislators. How do we get in their heads and distinguish Truman? Identify where we can be strong globally and how Truman fits. Legislators drive our funding and how does this come back to prepared students who can help the state? What employers want – oral, written communication and teamwork. We need to do better at tooting our own horn. There is opportunity within these gloomy political realities to show what we're doing to be responsibility to civic and public agenda.
- Student needs/expectations – if going to keep academic profile need challenge but opportunity to engage and be leaders in academic and social pursuits. Do well but can do better. The more we can turn our students loose, the more they can learn and achieve. Our advantage is we don't have to remediate. Can invest in highly engaged experiences to become problem solvers.
- Set up opportunity to have a positive experience. Otherwise they leave with bad taste and focus on negative.
- Parent expectations are changing. Parents are molding students to think two-year first. More parent influence/direction where to go and what to expect. Parents in recent past took out double mortgage to send child to college – maybe not doing that now. Recession may be tempering parent expectations. If we can influence parents more, may get the students. May not see a lot of tempering in expectations within five years. May continue to see they want everything but no willingness to pay for it for awhile still. Could be tempered in future expectations in higher education.

- Continued focus on technology to change traditional experience in classroom. Won't have same learning experience. Develop methods in younger grad school students. They're eager to use different format than lecture. Hopes we can lead the way in breaking the mode of widget mentality: 3 credits = 50 minutes seat time (archaic notion). Will become relic. Where will Truman fit? Won't count credits the same. Will the accreditation discussion change this or vice versa? Example of MACC growth – 40% increase this fall, with much of the growth online. Students need to be engaged but not necessarily 9:00-9:50 MWF but in other places and ways. The science of learning tells us the widget mentality is not the way to learn best.
- Things are not going to get easier in the traditional sense. We need to find ways to distinguish ourselves. Political realities/budget can help us find innovative ways. Measureable objectives and solid goals are critical.

Summary:

Budget, staffing and technology:

- Tight, tight and changing
- Assume level funding with small incremental increases, not much larger budget from state than we get now
- Staffing smaller
- Expand and enhance other sources of funding
- Technology a bigger part

Political:

- Conservative. No talk of taxes or revenue enhancement. Smaller government movement.
- 40% of legislature is new – how do we contact and work with them? Communicate points with them: Truman trying to create better teachers, science and math, tout our strengths, show how we spend state money.
- Employers – communicate that we are educating students they will need with skills they have identified: communication skills, critical thinking skills, and teamwork.
- Emphasize Truman's accountability

Student needs and expectations:

- They are high
- We have v. good students, our job is to create opportunities for them
- Make sure they have positive experiences
- Parent expectations, what are they? Students will likely be going to community colleges in growing numbers, what kind of influence will this experience have on them and Truman?

Practices in higher education:

- Carol Twig, use technology in approaches to design/planning for learning: issues of seat time, new approaches to student learning.
- What will bring about these changes?
- Truman not in the forefront of online delivery, it is not our primary mode of education.

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

- Brevity; compelling – one that resonates with internal and external audiences. Something everyone can talk about. Envision a neat little pamphlet; vision and goals with two or three statements to support each goal. Something Admission counselors and everyone could spell out in a quick way.
- Collaborative – engagement from all constituencies including alumni. Evidence at homecoming getting on board; spirit is building. A written survey was distributed to the alumni leadership.
- Plan probably in the past was lacking the engagement of this group. We have to be responsible for creating strategies and do the work. In part not held accountable in making it happen. Be engaged with areas we work with to get opinions. Forums only one way to glean information. Only we will get them to feel engaged if we directly get involved. Helps us know what they can get fired up about. Will eventually need to form strategies in the respective areas. Bold, compelling, resonating – we won't get what we need just from the forums. Include everyone and they will feel more on board to develop and achieve the goals.

Summary:

- Brevity
- Bold, compelling
- Collaborative, engagement from all constituencies
- Positive reaction from alums
- Measureable objectives