

Student Focus Group – Residence Hall Association (approximately 35)

11/4/10

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

- Big goal. How? Is it achievable? But it is compelling
- What does it mean – doesn't say anything
- Confusion w/political “liberal”. Students need clarification about what liberal arts means
- Not focused on people and relationships on campus and our own qualities
- Do we have to compare ourselves to other schools? That is a secondary goal. We need to focus on building community
- Liberal arts tends to focus more toward academics; we need to maintain academics but also the out-of-class experience
- Low tuition is very important to students; become the premier anything would make the price go up
- May be a vision practical for a bigger school but it is not financially achievement for us.
- Diversity is very important for us particularly our international students – why not be the premier in the world?
- Large goal but it is important to dream big, something to work toward, attract more students
- Need practical steps toward goal

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

- The experiences I have out-of-class- have been where I have learned the most – these experiences must be maintained
- High quality professors are important along with the out-of-class experiences
- Enrollment numbers are critical
- Low cost and high academic quality needs to be maintained
- Hope to maintain what is already here and expand by checking out those things that are underutilized – could find better ways to generate revenue.
- Truman was my second choice because I didn't believe it was the best because it was so cheap – need better marketing
- We need to get our name out more – a lot of people don't know who we are
- Don't sacrifice the current value of the degree for alumni or current students
- Need to focus on drawing students out-of-state
- Need to really go beyond the Midwest with our reputation
- Residence Hall amenities and experience is very important

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:

- Cuts on the state level
- Beginning to move away from government funding
- Need other ways of funding – go to alumni, etc.,
- Need to invest in ways to make gains

Staffing:

- Smaller staff everywhere on campus
- Stop tenure so we can keep the good teachers rather than the bad teachers
- Need to be sustainable
- Need to be careful where we cut
- Be innovative
- We have a good staff that work very hard for what they get
- Beneficial to use more students as TAs to help get work load off professors and we need to make it appealing for the students
- With staff resources you can only cut out so much before the viability of the office is in question

Technology:

- We lack when compared to similar sized universities
- We lack in both software and hardware
- Need a faster internet
- Need to look at sustainable options in technology; there will be upfront cost but it will eventually pay off
- Need to have better support for the technology that we have (ie. 24- hour computer labs)
- Faculty need more training and desire to use technology – if they do not know what they are doing it interferes with the effectiveness of class
- Need to use e-books and keep text book prices low

Political Realities:

- Students want to be heard.
- Need to feel like the school is here for them
- Need to have face time with faculty, staff, and administrators

Student Needs and Expectations:

- Students need to be heard
- More convenient hours and more access to facilities at night
- Need more options for when classes are offered in some majors
- Classes can be bigger in some cases
- More technology use in classes
- More technology and resources

Higher Education Practices:

- Some classes at Truman do not seem necessary
- Classes can be recorded using capture technology
- Can have more on-line classes but need to have teachers available to interpret
- Use more on-line resources instead of expensive textbooks

More or Other:

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

- Needs to reflect student opinions – sometimes students get forgotten in the academic realm
- Highly specific trackable goals so we can know we have accomplished them
- Need objectives so we know the “whys” behind the goals
- Don’t lose the “personal” aspect of the University in the pursuit of goals