

Strategic Planning Questions – Student Union and CSI Staff Members 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?
 - Personally, this is not the most compelling vision statement for Truman State University. After attending the discussion panel a few weeks ago- I feel that the University’s vision statement should express more than just a liberal arts and sciences institution. The vision statement should express how Truman’s experience for a student is unique . I feel that the vision statement can demonstrate the unique experience as a public liberal arts and sciences institution by including within the statement about being “student-centered environment”. When describing Truman to perspective students as a Truman Alumni – I focus on how Truman is a student centered environment and thus enhances the liberal arts and sciences education you receive here.
 - I hesitate to say yes to this one, as it makes sense to me as a great mission, but it is not compelling to me personally. I went to the COPLAC website to learn more about how a liberal arts and sciences education is promoted through Student Affairs (i.e. how this ties into my position), and found their mission statement, which is more compelling for me... “Dedicated to the advancement of high quality, public liberal arts education in a student-centered, residential environment.” I assume that being a public liberal arts and sciences institution highly ties into the work of Student Affairs and creating a well-rounded, educated, socially responsible student. However, I like that the COPLAC mission actually mentions the “student-centered, residential environment.” We could use better words, but perhaps we could incorporate that into our SP mission, so that it is more compelling to everyone that works outside of academics.
 - It is a good university with a safe community. I am not sure how Kirksville would survive without students. I notice when they are missing. I have no opinion about the statement other than do not lose the community-university connection. Work to help these relationships.
- What is the most important priority for Truman over the next five years?
 - I agreed with many of the statements that were determined at the SP session I attended. The statement that I agreed with most was Laura’s thought we must keep our doors open to students. I feel that students currently know that faculty and staff are accessible and here for them- this is a crucial component of Truman and one we must maintain as things change. I also feel that we need to maintain being a student focused University and supporting our mission to provide a high quality experience while here. The majority of our students discuss and elaborate upon what they call the “Truman Experience” – I feel that we need to make sure to maintain the atmosphere both in and out of the classroom that creates the unique experience for Truman students in having a liberal arts and sciences education.
 - Wow, that’s a loaded question. I agree with you though...our most important priority is keeping our doors open. Beyond that, I think it would be not losing our student focus and our mission to provide a high quality experiences amidst all the other struggles (low pay for faculty, staff, and programming; renovations; increased tuition; etc.).

- Upgrade wages and salaries, we need to continue to reward professors and qualified staff for work; we need to be aware of the people doing the work and the work inefficiencies/inequities across campus; staff needs to be better informed and we need to work harder at reinforcing professional staff with “thank you’s” and positive attitudes. I also do not think we spend money wisely. For instance, we purchase expensive furniture that has a certain appearance but is not functional or rugged.
- 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?
 - Again, I agree with the assumptions that were determined during the SP session that I attended. Students will expect more for their dollar and for their education. We need to maintain and keep up to date on all technology – the upcoming generations have grown up with technology and will expect to have that technology at their finger tips. Funding will continually change and most likely decrease in the upcoming years- staff and faculty will be expected to continue to provide programs and events for students at a large level, but with less funding. We will need to focus more on collaboration and streamline / simplifying processes on campus.
 - I agree with the assumptions that were determined during the SP session that I attended. Primarily, students will expect more for their dollar and for their education; technology will become an increasingly integral part of education; funding will continually decrease and even if it goes up in a few years, we will never be at a comfortable level again; and staff will be expected to do more on less, which should compel us to collaborate and streamline programs, so that we are offering only what is most beneficial to the University and students. I think it all boils down to simplicity – simplifying our offerings and our structure to be more effective.
- In your opinion, what would be the characteristics of a successful strategic plan for Truman 2011-15?
 - A successful strategic plan will have fluidity and achievable objects. Having a Strategic Plan that is simple to understand is vital and must be a document that can be referenced by all departments on campus. I feel that the plan must be motivating and capable of being referenced continually during the years it is in use.
 - Again, I agree with a lot of what was discussed during our session. Key characteristics include simple, achievable objectives; motivating, long-term goals; accessibility to the plan; education within each department/office regarding how the plan directly applies to their work/what they can contribute; and finally, a no-nonsense approach to our situation, meaning no flowery language and no beating around the bush in regards to what must happen to make us financially and in many other ways sustainable over the next five years.
 - Make it understandable to all of the community not just the academics and talking heads.