SPAC Staff 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?**

- What is above "premier"? Everything we've done has been step by step. Like the part about "in the nation"; focus on getting name out. Motivating and realistic with our product.

- Rankings - we're "raw score best". Is it becoming or maintaining? We are known and have some national rankings. Our challenge is to be recognized as premier.

- Great vision but too vague. What does it mean? What are the elements of "premier liberal arts... in nation"? Sounds vague.

- Our students don't know what this liberal arts vision is at all. They don't have a clue what it means. And do they understand it when they graduate? We have been the premier for awhile and as they graduate and move out there, we have them to help maintain it. The longer we're out there the closer we get to maintenance. From a recruitment perspective, it's important we be recognized outside Midwest.

- Being liberal arts – does it limit who we can recruit in this economic environment? Do we need to go back to 1 and 2 year programs?

- Hear the point but thinks is our distinction. If we aren't that (liberal arts) what will we be in order to be distinct? Appreciates question of vagueness but can't come up with distinction. Must be distinct or can't survive. Lose the distinction and we won't attract the higher ability. We would be different. Feels responsibility for advancing what has already been built.

- "Premier liberal arts" makes graduates well-rounded. More flexibility to change with the world. Won't fall apart when change comes. Our distinctiveness gives us validity in state with funding. Governor likes us for our distinctiveness. Don't want to risk becoming an "extra" institution perhaps not needed in the state.

- Maybe the vagueness is a good thing since we do research too. Use the word "recognized" rather than "becoming". Need to be recognized as the "premier...". Need to work in student focus in the mission (as opposed to research).

- Is it compelling? On a daily basis am I compelled to do daily work to reach "premier"? Being student-focused is a more compelling piece to include. Maybe it should be more "service oriented" rather than "student focus". Open model; more flexible. "Student-focused" can set us apart (others too large; some places do better than others). It is a natural part of the environment we're trying to achieve.

(Summary: You like the idea of "becoming" the premier liberal arts because it gives us the stretch goal. Vague but makes us want to engage and find out what it means. "Premier liberal arts" gives us distinction and advances what's been built. Add student focus to be more compelling.)

Flip Chart Notes:
- What would be "above" or "beyond" this?

- Focus on being the best in the nation is good
- We need to be realistic given the students we enroll
- Have we already reached this and are we maintaining it? We have more work to do.
- What does this look like? It's somewhat vague, but vague can be good.
- Students may not know what this means. Even when they graduate. It is our graduates who need to help us 'maintain' this standing in the nation.
- Recruiting – We must be recognized outside of the Midwest
- Does this limit the students we can recruit? This is what makes us distinctive and not 'just another university.'
- This helps us advance what we've already built
- Our graduates have the ability to adapt to change
- The distinctiveness of our mission gives us leverage on state funding
- How do you advance when you 'become the premier.'
- We need to be student-focused
- This vision is a clear stretch goal
- Does this "compel" our daily work? The student-focus may be more compelling. Or should we be service-focused?

Summary
Need to add something about being student-focused
The vision statement is a bit vague, which makes for a good stretch goal
The vision is distinctive

2) **What is the most important priority for Truman over the next five years?**
- Focusing on students; meeting their needs; not having to eliminate programs that meet their needs.
- Getting students jobs after graduation or otherwise degree means nothing.
- Increasing graduation and retention rates; will attract others; the better you're doing with students the better they will support, go out and talk about Truman.
- Want them to have enjoyed, loved their Truman Experience; they can be successful and not be happy; say they would return to Truman (Don't limit the good experience to students but include staff and faculty too.)
- Community theme of President – "foster community for students". In that community we can be student-focused. Community can come too. This can't be built online like face-to-face.
- Maintaining quality; not letting quality suffer in these economic times (hiring adjuncts); maintain quality faculty, staff, students.
- Alumni – their experience needs to be so positive they will give to the University. Get them engaged while they are here and will support later.
- Having our doors open (not online). Keeping a presence and being relevant. Whole idea of 4-5 year education is something not everyone can provide.
- Efficiency and collaboration (not as many working on campus and students want more; fewer people so need to work together)

- Transformational experiences for everyone. More intentionally make available and affordable. Work into the curriculum for all who want it – service learning, internships, study abroad, research. Some programs can't fit it in. Make it a priority for experience to be feasible for all.
- Make sure Truman is relevant to the state so legislators and those who hold our fate aren't neglected. Want them to know what we're doing.
- Nationwide foster community of diversity and support from different backgrounds. Appreciate and supports differences.
- Technology is priority; more so as go paperless. Devote resources.
- Built reputation on assessment; where are we on that? Need someone in charge to coordinate.

Flip Chart Notes:

1. Student Focus
   - Keep our doors open to students – maintain this focus, and be relevant (student are here for 4-5 years, we have 4 years to help shape them, take advantage of this).
   - Provide intentional transformational experiences for all students who want one.
   - Meet student needs (keep in mind with reductions)
   - Place students in good careers when they leave here
   - Increase the retention and graduation rates
   - Make student-focused decisions

2. Foster a Broad Community
   - Maintain and foster alumni contacts
   - Keep Truman is relevant to the state
   - Enjoy, love, appreciate the Truman experience
   - Foster community (appreciate a diversity community)

3. Quality
   - Maintain quality of technology
   - Maintain quality in all we do
   - Are we keeping up with our assessment data? Is someone in charge of this?
   - Maintain and attract high quality faculty, staff, students and adjuncts

4. Efficiency
   - Efficiency and collaboration – student want more, but we have fewer people to help
   - Maintain quality of technology

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?**
   - Money won't be here for at least five years (generous assumption).
   - Students' needs/expectations will go up – they bought this education, what will they get back? The expectations will go up as they foot more of the bill.

- The financial need will grow, adjustment needs will grow with changing demographics.
- Nationwide world expectations will change and influence what we do.
- There is already a push to graduate more students and increase STEM participation; we will be expected to meet charge for readiness and college completion.
- Upgrade technology.
- Political partners will change, need to re-educate.
- Be realistic on changing demographics; more transfer friendly (goes back to different needs and expectations) but not sacrifice quality.
- Will we play any role in public education? (Reference to high number of high school dropouts.) Early awareness about college preparation is critical.
- More intentional about finding alternate funding; external funding.
- Importance of engaging students in real life problem solving; opportunity to create transformational experiences while meeting needs of community. Opportunity to take what we know about learning and support community.
- Can assume everyone will need to do more with less; continually assess priorities and activities; what do we value the most? Plan will be need to be organic in nature. Plan needs to include "gotta dos", not "nice to dos". Look at institutional priorities and continually review; more with less; not enough time but must devote time to assess and measure – do cost/benefit analysis; needs to be agile and measureable.
- Collaborate more internally and externally.
- Assessment – so much collected and then nothing done with the data. Need results rather than just looking at the data. We have no office of assessment.
- Look at our campus population and who is eligible to retire - how this could change the institution. Need a succession plan; loss of so many with historical knowledge and expertise could cause dramatic change.
- Continuous communication. It used to be a trickle down to all departments. That doesn't happen now. Too much happens at the top that doesn't get distributed. It seemed changes then were for the good of the university. Now it seems they are for the good of a specific department. We need to have the whole university in mind with changes.

Flip Chart Notes:
1. Scarce Funding
   - Money will be scarce (maybe for up to 5 years)
   - Student financial need will increase (and there will be a demographic shift as well)
   - Upgrade technology
   - Find funding

2. Student demographic shifts
   - Student financial need will increase (and there will be a demographic shift as well)
   - We need to be realistic about the changing demographics of new students, and more transfer-friendly

3. Higher expectations
   - Student needs and expectations will increase according to their out-of-pocket expenses (in other words, if they have to pay more, they will expect more).
   - Upgrade technology
   - Create transformational experiences for students in the Kirksville community

4. External Influences
   - There will be global/national influences to what we do
   - Obama Challenge – Readiness and college completion challenge to Colleges and Universities
   - Political partners will change, we'll need to re-educate them
   - Cooperate with other Universities
   - Collaborate more.

5. Continuous planning and evaluation
   - Assume we need to do more with less. We need to do continuous assessment to ensure our focus is on the right priorities. We need more organic planning, more agile and measurable.
   - Collaborate more.
   - Do something with the assessment data that we have
   - Do succession planning

4) **In your opinion, what would be the characteristics of a successful strategic plan for Truman for 2011-15?**
   - Keep the faith – positive attitude in daily doings.
   - Accessible to full community. Once complete can find in multiple places, guiding everyone – not just directors. What will we do with it when finished? Address how it applies to me.
   - Measureable elements.
   - Organic – look, measure, change if needed.
   - Easy to understand and easy to explain. Make sense to everyone; if can understand, can buy in to it, especially outside campus.
   - All departments need to understand their part in it.
   - Coalesce it all with actionable statements that can be put in to practice; include examples.
   - Allow to preserve affordability.
   - In the end it needs to preserve, protect, advance the values of the institution; be centered around who we are collectively and who we want to be.
   - Bold and powerful; not just tucked in drawer; has some teeth, powerful, easy to understand, makes sense, can get behind, not much legalese, not fluffy, defines what Truman is as distinctiveness, motivate people to be part of it.
   - Body of the document needs to be achievable (can be bold too). Vision should be bold but can't set us up for failure.
   - Keep in mind the greater good; decisions that are good for all – students, employees, state, etc. Staff are disgruntled because of not being made aware of many things; might not be reading the communication but project negative. Could have goal that brings in every department. Plan needs to be focused on university in general for the greater good.

- Buildable without losing elementary function to go to the next level. Needs to have short-term and long-term goals; small on the way to long-term substantial goals.
- Bold is almost a feeling, motivational, all feeds in to the greater good for Truman.
- Organizational plan that isn't vague so could reference where some responsibility lies; a point of contact for issues.

Flip Chart Notes:

1. Measurable and Achievable
   - Achievable
   - Buildable – keeps elementary functions visible during roll-up. It has long- and short-term goals.
   - Measurable

2. Focused on the "Greater Good"
   - Bold and powerful, and has some teeth
   - Not fluffy, clear, motivational
   - Focus on big picture/greater good
   - "Keep the faith" – positive
   - All departments feel a part of this
   - Preserve affordability

3. Agile
   - Somewhat organic/change when needed

4. Preserves who we are
   - Preserve, protect, advance the values of who we are and who we want to be
   - Preserve affordability

5. Accessibility and Accountability
   - Keep it accessible to everyone
   - Easy to understand and explain (this will get buy-in)
   - All departments feel a part of this
   - Use actionable statements

6. Responsibility Centers (need to ensure there is someone responsible for all items)

Parking Lot –   Communication! We need to have better communication overall.
                  Community-building lacking in current plan