

## **Student Focus Group – Student Advisors (approximately 30)**

### **11/12/10**

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

- What does it mean and what is its relationship to costs?
- Not focused on students
- Daunting, maybe too hard to reach – can’t see as achievable
- Don’t really care if Truman is known well in the nation – want a vision statement that is more focused on what the students are experiencing while attending Truman
- Like it as a goal but do not like the expense that might be incurred trying to achieve it.

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

- Maintaining the “Truman Experience” which is a package of involvement on day one – undergrads get experiences here reserved for graduate students at other places
- Educational experiences and the benefits of campus traditions – pride, purple, friends, activities
- Need to keep classes relatively small and keep professors available to students
- Maintain a well rounded student – I am not talking about liberal arts – I am talking about a balance of out of class experiences including student organizations and activities.
- Keep students first; allow students to personalize their experience; keep the confidence that we have in students which allows many opportunities for growth and development
- Maintain a high quality faculty – tenure actually hurts the quality of the faculty – shouldn’t keep bad professors just because they are tenured
- We need to be able to articulate who we are and what we are about – when people talk about Truman, we are not all talking about the same thing – we are trying to do too much which has led to us playing catch up when we use to set the pace
- “Truman Experience” is the one thing and you must remember the Truman Experience is not just an education it is an experience.
- College is more than classes
- We need to see more relationships between our classes and our lives
- We need to preserve the community we worked hard to build
- Graduating from Truman needs to give you a “leg up” for your future life

*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:

- Decreasing

Staffing:

- Decreasing

Technology:

- Expand and play a more vital role
- Smart boards aren’t enough; elementary schools have them

- Faculty needs the expertise to use the technologies
- Need to stress the importance of technology in the classroom
- Lectures are really hard to follow without technology to enhance them
- In the future we will need to be more connected (internet) than we are now
- Face-to-face interaction with faculty and other students will still be important but needs to be combined with better use of technology
- Better inventory control to minimize waste

Political Realities:

- Don't focus on politics; do what is right for the students
- Service learning helps students make connections and also earns political points

Student Needs and Expectations:

- Mental health needs will increase
- Career center in critical and will play a very important role for students
- Students will need more and better academic support services

Higher Education Practices:

- Needs to be individualized; think of the individual needs of students and individual learning styles
- Need to offer lots of options
- Needs to be personalized
- Living-learning communities
- Real world experiences in what you are learning in class
- Can get out in four years
- Practical learning experiences in classes
- Some practical experience should be required

More or Other:

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

- Pushes us forward and maintains quality
- Ensures quality faculty, staff and students
- Down to earth; realistic
- Measurable and practical
- We need to actually achieve it.
- Need to have timelines and responsible parties
- Everyone knows about it
- Concise
- Discussed, distributed, and explained
- Share it externally
- Demonstrate improvement toward goals
- Town hall meetings are an effective means of communication
- Key points could be emailed out with a link to further information – remember our short attention span for emails
- Encourage professors to talk about it in class
- Students would be more interested in it if it applied to them.