

## Town Hall Meeting- Faculty

October 23, 2019

Black River Room

### Overall impression:

- The goals seem to be extremely general and not specific with no clear path forward.
  - George Mason implemented a strategic plan and the focus wasn't so much about what they were going to do, but what they weren't going to do, not where they were going, but where they weren't going to go.
- Goals do not address resource issues (financial or human); there are no boundaries or attention to limits of resources
  - Choices are going to be forced eventually due to resource limitations
  - Where do we want to spend money and at what cost to other areas?
  - Currently functioning on a smaller number of people
- Several questions on how the goals were determined
- Goals seem to be all about academics, but what about where money is spent? Athletics, student services, etc.
- With goal #1, are we concerned with just increasing headcount or revenue? We need a set metric
- To what end are we spending money? Example: consulting service a few years ago
- We experience budget cuts each year, shouldn't that be a priority in the goals? How do we become financially viable? The goals need to be focused on the changing markets (first generation learners prefer face to face, increasing online market) and becoming financially viable so we aren't filing chapter 11 a few years down the road
- Georgia State underwent a re-branding and they are no longer facing an enrollment issue and they focused on goal #1. They cast a wider net to bring in more students.
  - Significant opportunity and potential in this area for ASU (Memphis)
- Recruitment and retention should be the priority
  - High school students in this area do not see college as an option due to finances or don't feel "smart enough"
  - Marketing should focus on addressing these concerns and that money is not a matter, we work with your grades, etc.
  - They need to know their options

### Which goals should be prioritized?

- Goal #2: The world is changing and the market is changing, we have to be changing too and the resources should match
- Look ahead to what employers will want/need 5-10 years from now and start producing that skill set now, not just what their immediate need is (Goal #2)

- Not enough faculty to support the demands of the local area; several programs need money in advance to build the program in order to support the demand; students are turned away because they don't have the support or the facilities needed (60 qualified applicants turned away each year-nursing program)
- Goal #4- The hours are not available for the research. Everything is focused on the student and the running of the program, there isn't time to complete the scholarly piece. Some programs are very labor intensive.
- Cultural goal- Faculty should know their contributions matter and there should be trust, support, appropriate resources, and know what they do matters. Current feeling of everyone just works, works, works and no one cares. Programs should be supported and cuts shouldn't be made if they are producing something. There is a feeling from upper administration that people are very interchangeable and not real people.
- Programs have seen a tremendous increase in efficiency where student growth has taken place, but the support has not changed. Losing faculty due to lack of resources and support. It's hard to allocate resources away from students to pursue tenure. There will always be accreditation concerns and tenure concerns.
- Goal #4 has been on strategic plans for 20 years and it's all the same issues. We've been becoming a research institution for 20 years. Everything is a great idea, but what are we not going to do? We have limited resources, what will be cut or what will we stop doing? We need to decide what our primary mission is.
- Goal #3- Why is this a goal? Explained to build a relationship, get more investment, etc.
- Goal #4- there is a student component to research with recruiting and convincing students to come here from the beginning versus going to a community school for the first 2 years. Engaging research can feed goal #1
- Teach or learn are not mentioned in any of the goals, something is missing. What is our mission? What about teaching? It is the bulk of what we do. If zero students show up, we would not be here. Something about this not being mentioned in the goals does not sit well.
- Getting them a job or what job they get when they graduate cannot be our only focus, students are here to learn something and find fields to focus in as well

#### What is missing?

- Teach and learning should be in the goals
- Emphasize what we have to offer (research), goal #3 stands out from the others, emphasize to the community what we have to offer
- Need to quantify nonuse value
- Goal #4- we need to build more centers of excellence like ABI, these are magnets for the University
- How and when will this plan be implemented? What will we do differently this time versus the other times? Concerns with implementation and assessment
- The goals don't talk about the value of a liberal arts education

- Goal #5 seems to be focused on football. Concerns with spending vast amounts of funding on the football program with questions about the budget and where the money is going. At what point do we cut losses? Games are empty and have been for years. Are donations strictly because of the football team? Would people not donate to academics?
- Make a goal that is linked to education; concerns that we are discussing dropping academic standing and no mention of making cuts to athletics, what does that say about our priorities and University? (talking about moving back from R2 to M3)
- Athletics should not be prioritized over academics; seems like it has always been prioritized over everything else

### **White River Room**

#### Overall impression of the five goals?

- I think they were done broadly on purpose but they seem like they will be hard to measure.
- I think the process is upside down, we have to have a strong mission statement before we dig down in to goals. Our mission statement is a tagline. Other universities develop a strong mission statement first. This process is very troubling.
- I don't see how these five goals are different from any other university. When I came here, we had a heart for the delta but I don't know who we are now.

#### What would you want to highlight for a mission statement?

- Former dean said "serving the delta while reaching the world." People come here from all over the world.
- I'm a first generation college student and from a rural area, that's why I was drawn here. We need to start with goal one and recruit from a broad range of student preparation and areas.
- Goal five, I'm a nuts and bolts person. The dorms are run down and the windows aren't washed on our building. What are we doing to improve our image?
- The dorm situation is bad for recruitment purposes.
- There's a lot of talk about investment at a time we're having to give money back.
- It hurts to view the investment terminology when you're giving money back because your budget is being cut.
- It's hard to be positive about a plan for the future given having budget cuts and stuff dumped on us, where we are now.
- The bureaucratic process is too in the way.
- I don't think we can meet any of the goals.

#### What goal can you support the most?

- I can support goal two the least. We can't predict the jobs of the future. Are these companies helping fund these new engineers?
- The institution moves slowly. Can we move quickly enough to meet these future needs before the opportunity passes us?

- Engineering is working very actively to get support from companies in the area.
- Perhaps part of the planning process could include a course correction mechanism should needs change in the future.
- Goal two and three are interrelated very closely.
- Goal two is scary for the liberal arts. What if you're not in a signature program? The arts are included in goal three.
- Are we training a workforce or helping people live a quality lifestyle?
- I don't see the word education anywhere.
- Goal three, we can bring the delta back in. Train a workforce and improve the community.
- Nothing says what students should look like as they leave. We need to make leaders and critical thinkers.
- We need to make the case why university education is important. Industry partnerships are great, but we won't continue to be a university of this size if we only focus on career training.
- The goals only speak to economics and the workforce, not education.
- We get the critical thinking skills in the liberal arts. They don't just develop it in business school or their degree program.
- Goal three is different from goals two and four, but two and four are nearly identical. Goals three is about the capacity of the university to be an incubator for culture in our region. The cultural impact concept is massive.
- There's nothing about early engagement, not concurrent, but early partnerships and exposure to the university, such as fun and scholarly things to build connections to the university.
- I'm having a hard time understanding how these five goals were shaped up.

If there was anything you could add, what would it be?

- Ethical budgeting
- In goal five, the word improve is inappropriate.
- Education needs to be added as well as ethics and citizens. Not everyone is a leader. We need engaged citizens.
- Goal three, replace community with the words "in the delta region." We will be missing a lot if we don't emphasize our connection with the delta region.
- The mission needs to reflect that.
- Are we going to be an R2 or an M1?
- The amount of capital needs to be an R2 is more than what we have.
- If we're going to invest in other areas, we have to decide where we take that from.
- We have to know who we are not as a university.
- We can't know who we aren't if we don't know who we are.
- When we first started adding doctoral programs we changed from being the low cost provider to the delta. The online programs were originally for the delta.
- We don't highlight what we already do well academically, like nursing, education, and our museum.
- Library found it wasn't being trumpeted enough during a consultant visit.

### Final thoughts

- I think you can flip each one of these each one of these. Actively invest can be divest what doesn't meet the needs of the future.
- What do we grow or add? What do we focus on?
- Was this consultant language?
- There's a desire for greater emphasis on a mission statement and goals coming from that.
- We must find out who we are before we find out where we will invest.
- We need more on the role of the university in education.
- There's no mention of retention and persistence.
- This is a band-aid to fix our budget issue by grabbing a low hanging fruit.
- Is the purpose of higher education changing from education to workforce prep? That's the role of vo-tech and community college.

### **Auditorium**

- No mention in goals "Broad Liberal Arts Education"
- "Invest" - if this referring to budget, how is this sustainable when budget cuts continue to be made and infrastructure (both physical and image) are not available?
- Faculty driven decision on R2 or M1, but goals seem to suggest that staying at R2 is goal. How does this affect tenure review?
- Funding will be tied to goals according to Dr. Hanrahan and this will continue to be supported through process including infrastructure.
- What do we want for instance the research piece to look like if we are to stay R2?
- Time is highest commodity to make this happen as faculty load currently is not conducive to research intensive university.
- Did committee look at data that suggested that NEA and A-State is benefitting from R2 move? No, but ABI certainly has data that lends itself to this
- Funding strategically and adapting to change - increase investment in one area would could decrease in investment in another area...how can this be accomplished? ---
- Initiatives are created when money is available but nothing is taken away or condensed when needed
- Creative Thinking that is fostered by Liberal Arts education, but there is no mention of this in Goals perhaps in future workforce needs goals as well as culture goal
- *Robot-proof* book was a guide for planning and included this concept and can be added in sub-goals
- Interprofessional connection and how they can be created and how can we get out of silos? Intentional connections between varied groups should be made
- Communication between areas increases campus culture and cultivates these connections
- For instance, the recent MyCampus change
- Graduate School/Education is not addressed directly in goals and instead seem to be focused only on undergraduate education (this was not the intention)

- Status of Graduate School (internal hire for Dean)
- Reconnect with students who began college education but did not complete degrees and could this be an answer to lagging available HS students (this is one goal of the 870 plan)
- Last graduating class was 43% international and online, there should be further training for Faculty for this change in modality (faculty center revamp coming)
- Investing more in study abroad/research; taking cross-discipline trips for students
- Funding to take advantage of study abroad/internship opportunities. Where does fundraising fall within goals? All of them
- Capital Campaign might need to be implemented that coincides with Strategic Planning to allocate money for initiatives
- Alumni relations needs to be improved
- Recruitment is lacking - one anecdote: one person's child experienced a table was set up at event and no physical/verbal reach out was made to students
- Paperwork reach out is promising, but still does not match other university's promotional reach
- Recruitment is looking to build team by college to improve efforts and build face-to-face reach
- Community reach out is important, how can this goal be accomplished if A-State and Jonesboro's relationship is tenuous?
- Former administration had difficulty with this, but Dr. Damphousse has made connections tighter as have new deans with industry and community
- Well done strategic plan is inspiring, but Goal 1 is not inspiring and perhaps rewording is needed or reordering; such as commit to improving graduation rates would be more inspiring to begin list with
- Institution should strive to be the lead in state for LGBT or Veterans for instance where we without a doubt are the institution for a targeted group like these in the state
- Things like improvement in First Year Convocation are vast improvement, but how do we get students here from competitive schools, perhaps targeted groups could answer this
- Having gender neutral bathrooms in each academic building, this could be a selling point that does not require a great amount of money
- Targeting groups such as becoming a green campus in addition to the above could also be a positive
- Apply a best practice to centralized advising model; this would be modified in that still having college experts, but still be able to reduce loads with more generalized advising
- Completion Commission put through for decentralized model, but instead case-management for those who are having difficulties, withdrawing from courses, etc.
- IRB process is "slow" and if this is going to be a research-intensive university, this must be corrected
- Is this a problem with not enough staffing?
- Creativity should be highlighted and could be inspiring language
- Students and parents report having difficulty in reaching the correct office and how those on the front line are rude; this is not an isolated incident and kindness can go a long way

- Transfers between 2-year colleges should be focused with better advising; with new appointment, this should be improved after this semester
- Mexico students are working on exchanges and 2+2 for collaboration on both campuses
- Skills such as flexibility, communication, creative thinking, group work, etc should be emphasized for students who are being prepared to graduate with degrees but not a clear idea of their career path; we need to be able to prepare these students and this does not appear directly in goals
- Can we require students to live on campus for better climate?
- Are we trying to become a more research-intensive university?
- Because of our move to R2, but the infrastructure and resources do not support this at the time; hopefully informed constituents are going to be involved in further planning to ensure that this happens

### **Mockingbird Room**

#### What's your overall impression of the five goals that have been identified?

- They don't see the word teaching in any goal. Why is that?
- The first impression is that these goals don't capture the primary responsibility of the university, which is to educate.
- The goals seem corporate and cold to some. Where are the students talked about as real people? For a community with a great deal of heart and talent, these goals seem to forget students.
- Goal #5...who are our students? Let's consider the demographics. We have to think very carefully and respect the type of students we are serving. What does diversity look like on this campus? We need to make this a climate in which students cannot just survive, but thrive. Really remember Every Red Wolf Counts.
- If we have a large percentage of our students who are online, how does goal #5 help them?
- Things have to start with faculty if we want to have a good culture and some feel as though we don't have it.
- Is there any structure to show that one goal is more important than the other?
- The goals seem to say one thing but some recent actions show otherwise.
- If we are going to be an R2 institution, we need competitive graduate assistantships that are more comparable to other institutions. This would also help with goal #1 in recruiting students.
- Leery of a centralized advising model. Both for advising, FYE, the library, the Writing Center, etc. we have to support them.
- We need to recruit students, but we need to make sure we have the resources for the students once they get here. Don't let them in if you're not going to support them when they get here.
- We pay a lot of attention to freshmen, but forget people as they progress past that first year.
- Some of the goals are very broad and it can be implied that teaching is in there.
- Suggestion to add to goal #2 to add something to do with teaching
- There are going to be bullet points to elaborate under the goals

- The steering community has a heightened awareness to debt levels and making sure students are able to pay back their debts
- Goal #5 should have bullets that show we are putting our money where our mouth is
- To include more of the online students, there has been an idea suggested that online students use Zoom to present at Create at A-State.
- There will be an attempt to prioritize the list in some sort of way. In phase II, more departments will be assigned certain goals so that they may focus on them more heavily. A suggestion for goal #1: There needs to be greater engagement from the campus community in the recruitment of students. There is concern that our current scholarship program seems to make our college less competitive, and it seems as though there are a lot of decisions that are being made without much campus consultation or knowledge; rather, it seems to be done by one certain department.
- If we want to maintain our research institution status, we should focus on funding our library. Perhaps incorporate this in edits to goal #4.

What goals would you support the most? How do you see prioritizing these goals?

- We need to figure out the “Who are we” question. We need to make sure we are investing in the library, create more competitive graduate assistantships, etc. if we want to stay on this R2 level.
- We just became R2 almost overnight, so has there been a change of resources to accommodate this change? Or are we more appropriately named at the M1 level? Do we realign the resources for this new level; is it what the faculty want?
- If the faculty wants to stay at R2, what sacrifices are they willing to make? This will create more work for everyone involved if they believe it to be worthwhile of upholding.
- Maybe individual departments should have more community outreach. At the community town hall, people asked, “What can we do to help?” We suggested internships, job shadowing, jobs, etc. and we should take them up on the offer. A student said at the town hall meeting that they want and need these opportunities.
- There are feelings of stumbling blocks preventing departments working together
- Students are turned off by the dormitories they have to live in.
- A student recently went on a tour of campus and the word they used to describe their first impression of the university was “unprofessional.”
- A-State doesn’t send out much recruitment material
- Research funds have grown greatly and there has been a lot of R2-level work put into this.
- Suggested bullets for goals #2 and #3, perhaps give some sort of recognition for it and make it easier for faculty to work together.
- Agreement that it would be worthwhile to add goals for campus beautification efforts for these older dormitories

Is there anything you would add to the draft?

- As faculty members, we are evaluated on teaching, service, and research. These need to be represented clearly in these goals.
- At R2 status, we need to think about more tenure-track positions for staff.
- Add a planning component to these goals to adjust financial priorities if we want to make these changes and keep R2 status if that's what we want.
- If we are a system, let's start acting like a system.
- There's no mention of the athletic system in the plan. Athletics are the doorstep to any institution and our recruiting tool.