

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE MEETING

March 24, 2015 @ 3:00 p.m.

Cedar Breaks Room

Participants: Marvin Dodge (Co-Chair), Emily Dean (Co-Chair), Mitch Bealer, Paige Christensen, Briget Eastep, Mary Pearson, Deb Snider, Nicole Wangsgard, Jared Wilckin, Scott Wyatt, Terri Day, Jennifer Oberhelman (recorder)

Marv Dodge welcomed the group and handed out a survey to all and had them fill it out. It covered communication, culture, institutional discipline, leadership, decision processes, assessment, operating mechanisms, engagement, and alignment. He asked that everyone check the applicable boxes and at the bottom of each page write how many check marks. This information was then transferred to the last page, which is a grid. The participants were then asked to go to the large grids on the wall and mark them appropriately.

Upon completion Marv identified some of the grids that had lower marks and opened discussion. Some of the comments in the following areas were discussed:

General comments were that there have been many plans on campus, but it shifts before the results can really be measured and that there is no current strategic plan in place.

Communication

- Toilet Times seems to be one of the best ways of getting information out to the campus
- We are good at getting information out electronically, but it's hard to get people to read it
- We tend to have information dumps on employees
- People don't know who's calling the shots and making decisions
- Miscommunication is a problem
- There is a lack of background on decisions made. A policy and procedure should be in place and the idea of "this is how we've always done it" should be done away with
- The "jelly donut" problem is happening – information from the top isn't getting down to the line employees, and the reverse is true that information from the line employees isn't making its way to the top. It's getting stuck in the middle, the "jelly"
- Supervisors need to be trained on process
- Everyone has busy lives

Culture

- Fear of middle management is an issue
- Old vs. young, being open to change, staying current
- Community perception is shifting
- We should be more vested internally

- We must attract the home crowd

Discipline

- We have room to improve
- We are always recreating – 3-5 years should be given to make objectives either work or not work before changing

Leadership

- Will wait until change comes, not sure that's a bad thing
- Day to day activities with students isn't impacted by who's "sitting in the chair" and the impact isn't always felt by line faculty and staff
- More things affected by the Provost than the President
- How vested is administration in community and campus?
- Change is inevitable
- Not arguing with innovation
- Slow to change
- Success depends on how we're led because of location

Assessment

- Forced to strongly assess though accreditation at college levels
- Not sure of direction University wide, what are we trying to accomplish
- Easy to measure research, hard to measure quality teaching

Emily then conducted a time-line exercise. There were 10 large post-its on the wall labeled 2015 through 2025. Participants were asked to write on 10 small post-its what they foresaw for SUU and sticking it on the sheet of the year they foresaw it happening. The group was then split in two. The first group starting like items together, the second refined this process. The results are as follows:

Group A

- Aging faculty – problem of tenure with non-mandatory retirement (we have 75 year old professors) (2015)
- Attraction of quality faculty (2015)
- More retirements, less salary funding (2016)
- Keeping key faculty (2017)
- Many professors will retire (2018)
- Retirement of key faculty (2019)

Group B

- More transparency, better access to important measurable outcomes (2015)

Group C

- Liberal Arts designation (2015)

- Liberal Arts focus (2015)
- On-line education (2015)
- Resource allocation decisions (2015)
- Tech disruption – no more “chalk talk,” “star” professors teaching 1000’s of students in distance (2018)
- On-line programs – out-of-state graduates (2018)
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Group D

- Student life – how do you create a culture where students stay? (2015)

Group E

- Growth strategy (2016)
- Strategic planning in place – direction provided (2016)
- Brand image (2016)
- Branding of SUU education (2016)
- How SUU brand itself (2016)
- Higher academic standard – increase index acceptance score (2016)
- Alternative credentials to BA/BS – electronic badges & certifications (2016)
- Rewards system of funding by the Legislature – how can we influence or work towards that model and stay true to our core? (2015)
- Legislature attitudes about performance based funding (2016)
- Adaptable to changing deliverables (2016)

Group F

- Legislative support for higher ed. (2017)
- Rising costs of a residential campus experience (2019)
- Out of state tuition rates (2017)
- Increased costs of higher ed. tuition, texts, decrease in State support (2015)
- Cost of higher ed. (2017)
- Federal government regulation of higher ed., increased costs, decreased autonomy (2015)
- Diminishing State funding (2019)
- Keeping the SUU education affordable (2016)
- College department operating budget (2016)
- Mission Based funding (2015)
- Budget challenges may force larger courses (2017)

Group G

- Increased perception from community outreach (2017)
- A new business building may attract more business students (2019)
- Over emphasis on international recruiting (2017)
- Additional facilities – Business building and Performing Arts building (2017)
- SUU growth and facility challenges (2019)
- Listening to the market, especially the younger demographic (2017)

- Tech allow for students to proceed at different paces within the same class (2017)
- Growth of other institutes in our region, Dixie, etc. (2017)
- Need to address how we penetrate the “Utah County” bubble, especially given the “Y” and “U” rivalry (2015)
- Enrollment 10,000 (2020)
- Growth of SUU to 12,000 (2019)
- Decrease fertility rates equals decrease in college-aged population (2020)
- Increased competition with Dixie – we will need to differentiate and brand ourselves (2017)
- Expanding our programs beyond Utah (2017)
- Dixie State University growth (2017)

Group H

- Increased slump of those pursuing traditional college degrees (correlation between economy and pursuit of education (2018)
- Alignment of courses with accreditation standards (2018)
- Staying focused on high quality teaching, both face-to-face and on-line (2018)
- Cedar City economy (2018)
- Funding increases for instructors, salaries equal to peer institutions (2018)
- Being more proactive in political circles (2018)
- Professors may have to teach more courses to keep tuition down (2018)

Group I

- Adding new programs/degrees (2019)
- Expanding our programs to meet a global market (2019)

Group J

- Developing leadership within our colleges (2019)

Group K

- Partnerships with other universities (2020)

Many references were made as to growth. Critical mass is important because with growth comes the need for other types of support. Our grads become advocates for growth. If our message is excellence, our outcomes will increase. Dixie is growing so we must distinguish ourselves and must brand ourselves as the better choice. It would be good to cooperate rather than compete. We have the quality edge but not the political edge.

The question was asked is there a point the community wouldn't support more growth? There is a cap when growth does impact their daily lives (more traffic, etc.). This could cause concern. Should we offer discounts for events on campus to citizens of Cedar City to encourage their participation and buy-in? Free classes for senior citizens? These are all options.

Facilities must grow as our student population grows. The trend may be less brick and mortar, more technology, multiple use buildings, etc. Partnerships would be good (ATC, etc.)

Funding and the Legislature was discussed. It will be hard to replace faculty for the money available for salaries. If we're too expensive, what options do we have? Everything needs to be looked at. Utah parents and students are unsophisticated in regards to looking for value vs. cost. They don't understand value and tend to go to the cheapest option.

Should programs be cut to save money? Increase class sizes? We have an expensive model, small class size and Ph.D's teaching. We need to look closer at how money is spent. The programs for students (EDGE, etc.) are good, but are they necessary? We need better balance.

Brand was a topic that was discussed. We need to show clear differences between SUU and others in the area. We need to make SUU the easy choice. Resources should be better allocated. We need to better promote the good things happening at SUU.

Online education was discussed. Do we really want this? We must be able to compete and expand in the market. Blended learning needs to be explored. No one really knows where on-line learning will really go. At this point, 40% of grad students in Utah are on-line only.

This meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.