

Minutes of Planning Committee

February 20, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. Members present included Bauer, Bryant, Catalano, Conte, Craig, DeWine, Foit, Freeman, Lazorik, O'Donnell, Radford, Scott, Steinhagen and Vickers.

The meeting began with a power point presentation originally prepared for the Board of Trustees. The presentation described progress on the Strategic Plan to date, summarizing the ways in which 142 of 158 strategies have been implemented and the gaps that still remain in the implementation process. The largest gaps include internship programs, integrated marketing plan, support for student life, development of career focused minors and certificates, and the completion of fundraising for the Dyson Baudo Recreation Center, the Rickey Science Center and the Brown Petroleum Building renovations. All in all, the implementation has been a great success. The presentation also summarized progress to date on the extension of the Plan

A calendar for the committee's work over the next few months was distributed and approved. The schedule is an ambitious one, calling for systematic discussion and review of each goal, open community meetings in early April, and the completion of the document by the time classes end for the semester.

The committee acknowledged the possibility of a half-day to day long retreat on a Saturday later in the semester if needed to complete its work. After committee discussions of the various goals, the Chair will write drafts to share with the group. Several ongoing projects, such as the development of the technology plan, the salary study, and the work being done to plan for development and alumni relations will be incorporated into the plan.

The committee turned its attention to Goal 1, which addressed enrollment growth in the initial plan. The committee reaffirmed its commitment to a strategy of increased quality and selectivity in admission, consolidating at 450 new students per year until the quality markers are reached. There will also be goals for retention and graduation rate. The committee recognizes that as the retention and graduation rate goals are reached, there will be modest growth.

The committee had a lively discussion about the role of graduate programs as a part of the growth strategy of the College. The points made in favor of graduate programs include the following:

they are consistent with the last strategic plan to provide quality and depth in programs and to serve the region

they are consistent with the last plan and the general mission of the College in a way that degree completion programs and other options investigated in summer 2002 are not

they will help attract and retain strong faculty; that they have some appeal in the recruitment of undergraduate students (e.g. the P.A. program)

they enhance the quality and reputation of the College

they will remain a small part of the overall program of the College. (The President mentioned 250 full-time graduate students as an outside target number, with the recognition that there is no present plan to introduce an array of programs that would bring the college to that number.)

Reservations about graduate programs fell included the following:

A sense that the College is introducing too many too fast without a clear idea of the overall goal

Student concern about quality in the programs

Concern that the graduate programs might diminish the undergraduate programs, which are the central mission of the College.

The committee agreed that part of the open presentations of the plan must be discussion of graduate programs, and assurance to all constituencies that their role, although potentially significant, is to build quality and to complement, not supplant the undergraduate program.

The Committee turned its attention to Goal 2, which was to extend the financial resources of the College. There is general agreement that the commitment to balanced budgets will remain, and that the plan forms the basis for the next campaign. There was general sense that the open budget process using the BAG and the Planning Committee as well as the Cabinet is an improvement, but that there needs to be more direct feedback to the departments that submit materials to the BAG so that they know the disposition of their requests. The administration offered to provide periodic updates to the campus so that all would know what is included in the budget and that when year-end funds are distributed, the departments will be told that the awarding of those funds was tied to the requests that were submitted. The Plan can contain somewhat more language about these reporting expectations.

The Provost distributed a form for academic program evaluation and enrollment numbers for all programs. It was agreed that at the next meeting, the committee will do the academic program reviews and will address goal 4, which deals with such reviews and ongoing planning.