

University Council Minutes February 28th, 2006- Magnolia Room-UC

C. Coons Yates called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

Agenda: Next Phase of University Council's work – functioning as the Strategic Planning and Master Planning group

- **Background**
 - We have a strategic plan at VSU that was developed with assistance from consultants
 - Part of the process of developing the plan was a series of brainstorming ideas for what we want to work on at VSU. All those items were placed in the larger strategic plan and were never edited or refined and we never selected items to focus on. It was the expectations of the consultants that we do that. That is typical planning procedure. We are now at a point where we need to revisit the plan so we can use it strategically and help us make decisions.
 - We know that accountability and using assessment measures and benchmarking are important. We will be asked to indicate how we have performed, what progress we've made on our goals and initiatives.
 - Since we have a planning process which goes into our budgeting process, we need to show that we are progressing on the plan. So far, we have only done this anecdotally. It was M. Krotseng's hard work to gather all our accomplishments each year and show we had progressed in the plan. But we have never had a distinct process where we said we are going to move goal X forward by this much and be finished by this time and this is who is responsible for implementing it. This is the next step we need to take in the plan.
- **Next Steps in Rejuvenating the Strategic Plan**
 - We want the plan more strategic and we need to show that we are responding to our environment. We need to refine our plan and figure out how we are going to implement it in a more coordinated manner. We have had people working really hard on the plan but we have not had people working on specific items. It is much easier to tell our story and sell what we are doing if we can really show we have made marked progress in specific areas, rather than small steps across a vast number of areas. That is what we need to determine as a group. What are those areas? How are we going to move them forward as a campus? What are we going to commit ourselves at VSU to working towards? Ultimately, we have to link an assessment to the planning goals we choose to emphasize. If we do not, we will never know if we have accomplished the goal or to what extent.
 - Take a look at VSU's current plan. Over the next two months, the job of UnCo is going to be to recommend emphasis areas from the plan. Once endorsed by the President, we will commit to these as entire campus and community.
 - We will need to establish some performance indicators and assessment methods. We will rely heavily on M. Krotseng and her team by utilizing the data they already have to track our progression toward accomplishing our emphasis areas.
 - We will establish targets for how determining what adequate progress is on each emphasis area.
 - We will establish timelines for completion (these typically work in 1, 3 or 5 year lengths).
 - We need to remember when we choose our emphasis areas, we are not going to abandon the other things we do not choose which are already part of the Strategic Plan. We will still be committed to those items, but there are not the items we will focus on heavily right now.
 - This process will help the Budget Advisory Council when they are looking at requests for money next year. Potentially they will be able to target initiatives for funding that speak directly toward progression on our emphasis areas.
 - When we finish an emphasis and we have met our targets, we have a whole pool of planning items we can pull from. We can add and revise as we go.
- **Examples - James Madison University & Wright State University**
 - JMU created a plan based on their centennial. It is interesting because VSU is entering our centennial years.
 - Notice in the JMU plan, the first few pages are the introduction. Then they talk about their performance indicators. Their initiatives are what VSU calls strategies/action plans. These initiatives are the items they are going to commit to. The end of the packet, besides the six focus areas, they feature 23 continued commitment characteristics. JMU is pledging that they will not abandon but still be committed to those characteristics. They acknowledge they are important, but when it comes down to it and they have to make difficult decisions, they will go to the first six. Then other resources can be used to work on the other 23.
 - Wright State University packet. The first pages are the overall plan. WSU selected three goals the University wanted to work on. There are a set of strategies underneath. Then there are the performance

indicators. Next is the implementation report for what they have done so far. After the first four to five pages, there are examples of how all their units have responded. It is meant to show you that once UnCo makes a decision, there will be repercussions for the rest of campus. People will need to respond to how they are going to help us meet these goals. We won't be going into this blind, we have good models to work from that show us how other university's have incorporated similar planning into their processes.

- I have spoken with the President and starting in May, Kate and I will begin an educational campaign with all deans, department heads and directors. We will spend the summer working with them to bring what they are already doing in line with the changes we are going to make. We will not abandon them to figure out how they are going to respond to the emphasis areas on their own. We are committed to assisting them through that process so their previous planning fits seamlessly with this new aspect of emphasizing specific areas that we target for marked progression.
- What we need to do is what WSU really emphasized; taking ownership of responsibilities. We need to indicate who will be committed to completing a project on time and attaining a certain bench mark. Collectively all those efforts will then move us forward in completing the total goal with greater efficiency and depth of progress than we have experienced previously.
- We have to put the plan out there and ask 'how are you going to support the plan?' If departments have other goals they want to work on that are not directly aligned with the plan, that is fine. We want to know those things too, but we also want to know how they are supporting the emphasis areas.
- UnCo will be the ambassadors for the plan. You need to make sure that as we discuss our recommendations over the next 2 months, you are comfortable with the decisions we make. You need to feel you can explain our decision making process to anyone on campus and that you personally support the emphasis areas we select. If you don't feel you can support them, then you need to indicate that here, in our discussions. Once we have made our recommendation for what emphasis areas we endorse to the President, I want to know that we, as a collective body of representatives for across all areas on campus, can defend those decisions if necessary, and that we are all comfortable advocating for their effectiveness and motivating others to embrace this part of the planning process.
- I acknowledge that this will be difficult. That the decisions we make may not be popular at first and it may seem to some as if they goals they wanted most are not emphasized in our first set of selections. But if we continue to try to show progress in every area, that progress will be slow and will be hampered by scarce resources, both personnel and financial. Whereas, if we put our collective campus efforts behind a few core emphasis areas we will be able to demonstrate much greater growth at a much faster pace. Then we can rotate in all the other goals we want to accomplish as we complete our first selections. This is the challenge of the planning process.

Need to do for next meeting:

- Before the next meeting, review the VSU plan and the two external examples. Look for potential areas that you think we ought to emphasize. These can be broad or specific. Ultimately, you need to come up with six. We will settle for a smaller number ultimately, but we want a larger pool in order to open our brainstorming discussion next month. I will collect these from you via email a week prior (March 13th) to our meeting. What I am looking to see is overlap. Then we can look at categories of ideas you thought were important goals to emphasize and use that to start our discussion.
 - Email me the six emphasis areas by March 13th and we will start with that at our next meeting.
 - You can look at VSU's action plans or strategies in our strategic plan to select your emphasis areas. If you think there is something pressing and is not in the current plan, that should be an emphasis area, do not hesitate to bring that forward.
 - Think about bench marks that VSU needs to be reaching.
 - I would like to devote the next three or four meetings to having this discussion. It will take awhile for us to work through it, revise our ideas, and get comfortable with them.
 - Start thinking timeline. Typical timelines are one year, three years, five years, or ten. We are going to eliminate ten. We need to decide do we pick items that we can complete in a year two or three and why? We need to justify the timeline and select one timeline for everything we choose to emphasize.
 - This will help ensure that the whole campus knows what we are working towards and when we want to accomplish it by. We want everyone on campus to speak with the same focus. What are our 3 most pressing goals? What are we trying to achieve? How will we know when we've done it? What is each person's roll in doing this? These are questions everyone on campus should be able to articulate an answer to once we select the emphasis areas. We want to unify people around these issues so we are working as a campus team to accomplish them.
 - By the end of April, I would like to have this information out to campus.
- **Questions**

- “The time frame/timeline gives hope that pressing issues might be something we evaluate if there is a consensus to use the best option. I would hope our efforts here would rejuvenate into an interim plan.” (C. Harmon) That is why I told the President I would work with the divisions and departments, ultimately they will be responsible for implementing what we give them.
- By March 13th, J. Gaskins will have finished the completion module on the database. You will be able to enter what date an item was completed on. There will also be a narrative section to show what you have done. That information can be pulled into a report that I can have that will show everything we have done for the strategic plan. Jason is thinking ahead about how we can roll that into the annual report process. Jason is also looking at ways to roll over initiatives and be able to skip years. We are looking at linking initiatives together and how people that have similar initiatives show it is completed, and it reported for everyone. Pulling initiatives mid-year to review by the BAC is something we are looking into. Once we can do this, we will start allowing people to enter initiatives on a rolling basis and the planning process will have an added flexibility

Meeting adjourned 4:00 p.m.

Next meeting March 21st, 2006, 3:00 p.m-5:00 p.m. in the Cypress Room (UC)

Attended:

Christy Coons Yates
Ralph Allen
Brad Bergstrom
Jim Black
Denise Bogart
Honey Coppage
Laverne Gaskins
Charles Harmon
Kurt Keppler
Louis Levy
Traycee Martin
Russ Mast
Joe Newton
Ruth Salter for Marsha Krotseng
Scott Sikes
Tim Yorkey

Not Attending:

Jeremy Baker
Bob Bell
Wilson Huang
Mike Meacham
Walter Peacock
Herb Reinhard
Maggie Viverette
Dr. Ronald Zaccari

Guests:

Rob Kellner (Auxiliary Services)
Joe Mattachione (Auxiliary Services)
Sementa Matthews (University Relations)

Recorder: Kate Gurley