January 29, 2015

University Planning Council

Minutes for Thursday, January 29, 2015


Absent: N. Norian, D. Torres, S. Earle

Guests: Valerie McMurray, James Neal

1. Welcome and Introductions

   - Chancellor Grant expressed excitement in chairing her first UPC meeting. She asked that this meeting be conversational so that she can learn what UPC members have on their minds.

   - She asked group members and guests to introduce themselves.

2. Brief prospectus - looking forward/looking back - Vice Chair Melodie Galloway

   - UPC developed an introspective look at who we are as an institution; the council discussed UNC Asheville’s identity, designation and mission.

   - There were several items to highlight for Chancellor Grant:
     - The rich student/faculty and student/staff relationships
     - Thoughtful planning for the future.
     - Deciding what programs and areas to feed with our energy.
     - Diversity in hiring
     - Greater campus accessibility
     - Undergraduate research

   - Professor Galloway shared some of the changes that she experienced in the past 9-10 years that emphasized the importance of the campus community.

   - Professor Galloway finished with the sentiment that UPC is excited about the future and eager to be a more active and useful body.
3. Conversation – a new beginning - Chancellor Mary Grant

- In order to build upon the incredible foundation that was laid, she needs to understand where we have been.

- If there had not already been a UPC, she would have wanted to put together this council.

- We do our best work when we get really smart people around the table and tackle ideas and problems collectively. We have a chance to dream big about what is next. The questions now are, how do we get there? How do we do it?

- This is an interesting time in higher ed, nationally, statewide and locally. Shortly after her arrival, Chancellor Grants said she experienced a leadership change at General Administration. What will be the next steps? She wants to look at how we take back the conversation about higher ed. At the AAC&U conference she heard conversations about affordability and students who are not successfully learning. Many of those panels and conversations do not pertain to us. This is a great community and we are doing a great job of educating students.

- We need to get our voice heard in a different way, because we are truly making a difference. We have the opportunity and the obligation to make sure more people know about us. At a recent Foundation Board meeting, people wanted to learn more about the students and faculty so they can be even better cheerleaders.

- We need to be bold and creative and make smart decisions.

Chancellor Grant asked the UPC members to share what was on their minds:

- UPC should be used for strategic thinking. It should be a group to discuss the big issues. The group came up with a good list, one of which is that we want to be one of the best colleges to work for. How do we go about achieving that goal?

- How can we showcase the data from institutional effectiveness. We have a great story to tell, with data to back it up.

- There was a concern regarding declining SAT scores in our in-coming classes.
  
  - Provost Urgo said that the Enrollment Management Committee has been taking a different tack in assessing applicants. Instead of admitting students with high SAT scores and lower achievement levels, they believe we can be more successful with students who are high-achieving, but may have lower SAT. He said it was a targeted effort, and that this is not a science but an art.

  - Provost Urgo said that the 100 or so students a year from the demographic he mentioned tend include a higher rate of ethnic and racial diversity.

  - At our December commencement, Dwight Mullen asked some tough questions, some of them related to admissions. Sometimes the overemphasis of SAT scores can be detrimental to diversity in the student population. SAT scores are a known indicator of family wealth.

- How do we achieve our goals surrounding diversity? How do we set those goals?

- Growth and Graduate Programs. Many faculty are opposed to graduate programs. The impression
is that there are various pressures to expand in that direction. If faculty members complain about teaching loads, and advocate for smaller class sizes, then they get told we don’t have the money. And that money comes from graduate programs. Growth and Graduate Programs are both the carrot and the stick.

- CFO John Pierce suggested that it would be helpful to have a forum on the budget pressures and where the money is going.

Chancellor Grant asked the group, if there was one thing that you would have me do regarding Diversity, what would it be?

- Listen to our community about what would have to change to be an attractive place to a diverse student, faculty or staff member.

- We need to be honest in our promotional materials. We tend to use the same students of color in our materials. And, we often ignore some good things we do around diversity on campus. When we host different looking populations on campus, some events are celebrated and publicized and others are not. The Latina community does not feel like this is a welcoming campus. We do not offer ESL, there is no place to practice English, etc.

- We need to show support for those who feel bullied, especially students. Recently, students organized a die-in. It was important to the students to see so many administrators support the event.

4. Planning our work for spring semester

Chancellor Grant asked UPC members what UPC should work on this year, and to send any additional agenda ideas to Christine Riley or Professor Galloway.

- Dreaming about the land use of the property acquisition.

- Review the Strategic Plan and Dashboard at the next UPC meeting.

- Discuss the changing faculty. The past year has seen 19 faculty searches with 10% turn over rate. The faculty are changing.

- Ways to work on intentionally building community. It can happen in small or big ways. We need to create new networks. How do we do that in ways that matter?

- Success with small group sessions; spend 30 minutes in small groups and then discuss the topic in the whole.

Chancellor Grant thanked everyone for the warm welcome to campus. She has come to a strong place, and she had nothing to do with that. It is the work of Anne Ponder, Doug Orr, the students, faculty and staff.

The meeting concluded at 4:51 pm.

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