October 21, 2014

University Planning Council

Minutes for Tuesday, October 21, 2014


Absent: L. Brown, B. Haggard, F. Santos

Guests: D. Eggers, Faculty Senate; V. McMurray, Blue Banner reporter

1. Chancellor’s Update

Chancellor Orr gave an update on the most recent Board of Trustees meeting, Chancellor-elect Mary Grant’s recent visit to campus, and items being considered by the UNC Board of Governors.

2. Update on 2015-17 budget

John Pierce gave an update on the recent campus budget forum, which was attended by about 100 people, the tuition & fee process currently underway, the budget scenario submissions that were required for Sept 29, and future plans for wider involvement in the budget development process.

3. Current Trends in Higher Education


4. UPC’s role in leadership/campus transition

Melodie Galloway asked UPC members to think about how we might support each other across campus during this leadership transition and come out a stronger campus as a result, and also to think about how UPC might best serve and advise Chancellor-elect Grant. If there are other ways of structuring UPC, now is the time to think about that so we can make those recommendations when Chancellor-elect Grant arrives.

5. Developing transition advice for Chancellor-elect Grant

UPC was divided up into 4 groups, each including a mix of faculty, staff and students. Chancellor
Orr asked each group to discuss the opportunities and challenges that we envision for UNC Asheville during this leadership transition, and also the larger transition in higher education.

6. Small group reports.

The following advice was reported out from the four small group discussions:

**Role of UPC:**

Revisit the role of UPC as more than an advisory council to the Chancellor [committee charge is currently determined by Faculty Senate document]. With our new Sustainability Council, where should their recommendations go for vetting? UPC? Senior Staff? Should UPC vet these recommendations as they do with the Strategic Plan benchmarks?

**Roles suggested for UPC:**

1. Vetting and/or prioritizing the recommendations of Sustainability Council
2. Vetting and/or prioritizing the recommendations of a Budget Committee [not an existing committee; currently under consideration]
3. Incorporating greater input from student members – how do we maximize their participation?
4. What if UPC functioned like a think tank? Create Brainstorming opportunities?
5. Serving as a sounding board for Chancellor Mary Grant – help with a listening tour.
6. Playing an important role in Campus Master Planning; that should be the next step in our strategic planning process. Vetting/prioritizing recommendations of Campus Master Plan process.
7. Connecting Chancellor Mary Grant’s vision with our vision
8. UPC could be on the front end – leading instead of following. Begin with the end in mind.
9. Where does strategic planning really happen? What is the right and/or safe place for suggesting big ideas, timely thoughts about future building, etc. Our vision has to become tangible.

**Student retention**

- We are starting from a position of opportunity, as our retention rates are not where we want them to be.
- Continue to focus on first generation and non-traditional student markets, which we have served well in the past, while not backing away from other existing priorities [traditional aged students, residential campus, etc.]. University 101 by John Gardner [founder of The First-Year Experience] – should be required in a class that all students take.
- Make slight adjustments in desired profile for applicants, reduce emphasis on SAT/ACT scores – this conversation is already underway.

**Teaching**

- We [faculty] need to take control of learning modalities more explicitly so there is not room for outside bodies to dictate what we do, e.g., provide x number of non-temporal MOOCs. We should do what we do so exceedingly well, and market it so successfully, there will be no need for external entities to look for ways for us to “improve.”
- Explore ways to use technology in our classrooms that are consistent with our pedagogical values.
- Emphasize the intrinsic and exponential value of the face-to-face experience in our marketing/branding materials.
- Explore ways to use technology that demonstrate the value of our approach and perhaps as a means to recruit students to our participatory experience.
- Course development opportunities with stipends may result in an organic evolution of teaching
(using new technology or not).

- Reframe the question regarding our size and the various forms or appropriateness of technology as: “What can we do BECAUSE we are small?” Answers may include, for example, there’s more interdisciplinary possibility here, or there are more opportunities for apprenticeship models.

**Community Engagement**

- Community Engagement is an increasingly important component of making friends and eventually raising funds.
- A downtown presence will be important for us in demonstrating to the community that we are truly engaged.
- Community engagement - reach out to local students, especially those from under-represented groups. Our image in the community is improving, but still has room to improve.

**Financial**

- College affordability is our strength, and it is being challenged; we need to always keep this in mind, despite the challenges of the economy, politics, etc.
- Financial literacy should be included in the basic curriculum for all students.
- Fundraising will need to be a larger focus of our work in order to meet the needs of the university.

**General**

- It may be a challenge to manage expectations around the things that will and will not change when Mary Grant arrives.
- It may be a challenge for faculty to discover that they will need to take a leadership role in making some of those changes occur.
- What does success look like? Looks different to different people, so how will we know when we succeed? We need benchmarks [in addition to what we already have on strategic plan dashboard]
- Our best resource is our human resources – this encompasses our value of face-to-face teaching
- We should strive to be one of the top colleges to work for – Consider the Chronicle of Higher Education’s “Best Colleges to Work For” survey in the future. Use 2015 as a baseline measure, as this would be Chancellor-elect Grant’s first year. Measure our progress over time. [recommended by 2 groups]
- Increase/improve faculty/staff/student interactions.
- Address faculty and staff salary equity problems – both market and equity issues. We need an institutional compensation philosophy – what would we be doing with salaries if we had the money to do it?
- Growth? What does it mean to us to grow – is it only in enrollment? Graduate programs? Expanding our geographical footprint? What kind of growth, and how much, is appropriate and desirable for us?
- Keep in mind our core values – how can they guide us during this transition? How can they help us adapt to a changing external environment? Committing to and focusing on our values can help us create Continuity, which is important to the university’s character and culture.