Town Hall Meeting- Staff

October 21, 2019

White River Room

What do you think of the 5 goals?

- Really excited
- Students in high school are not aware that college is affordable or what options they have and do not realize the importance of grades; we should partner with high schools to teach the importance of grades, applications, scholarships, financial aid, benefits of a college education, etc.
- Customer service is a concern across campus. There is not a set marker of expectations and individual departments are left to determine for their area. Several departments receive complaints and vented frustrations of other areas where they experienced poor customer service. Students go to certain areas for help to avoid other areas. Improvement in this would help with retention.
- Not all departments work together and come together for the student. There is a lot of pass around between offices which leads to frustration.

What are most crucial for student success of the 5 goals?

- Goal #3, increasing partnerships- want to see more work study/internships available
- Faculty need to be more involved to help students find job opportunities/internships
- Goal #5, should be engaging with alumni more to help with student recruitment, opportunities for students, and investing in programs
- Need an increase in communication with students regarding Career Services and job opportunities; students did not know what services they offered
- Need an increase in communication with students regarding what happens after college (retirement, resumes, what to expect after graduation, job opportunities); faculty should be helping
- Goal #2, we need to be more agile in changing with demands and programs; there are several online education programs that ASU does not offer (mentioned tech and business); need to be nimble to desires and needs; mentioned Nursing is focused within certain programs and does well; certain areas are valuable within the market and we do not offer
- Programs should be focused on where we excel
- Reach back to alumni to determine job rates and placement success
- Where are we with STEM programs? Agri? Architecture? Is Agri top 10 in nation? Where are the school/program rankings and broadcast that help in recruitment?
- Word of mouth marketing is the best tool to utilize; take care of them here and they will share; need to share more stories of students (ties into retention and recruitment)
- We need to realize sooner or later we have obsolete programs we have to let go of

- There seems to be a push for students to go to two-year tech schools; we need to focus on advertising the end goal and the long term benefit
- We need to market degree programs to match students' needs; "if you want to work in this, do this…"
- Need more education in what students can use different majors for in the job market (transferable skills)
- Offer education on career paths regionally, nationally, globally
- Students are applying to ASU and saying "I want to do this" and it is our job to help determine the path to get them there
- Academic advising is a major concern. Students complain of no communication, no help, etc. We need a focus on advising for retention and we need more professional advisors.
- Advisors need to be more engaged with the students; talk about life after college, what their goals are, help with classes, etc. (mentor)
- Customer service should be campus wide; we are all serving a purpose
- Students seem to find difficulty in registration, financial aid, and advising; need to understand the entire process
- Faculty/staff are not listened to. We have meetings similar to this every 5 years or so, but nothing comes from it. We should be utilizing our resources and resolving issues. There needs to be more community dialog across campus and using ideas from those that work with students every day. Need open communication across campus.
- Departments do not work together

What's missing?

- Where are we pushing on research? Based on slideshow it seemed to be the hard sciences and technology. Where does the library play a part in this? How can they grow?
- In-services/training between departments

Arkansas River Room

Overall impression of the five goals – what goal draws you in?

- Goal 2 – everything else come out of that one. Each of the other points comes from where we choose to invest.
- Goal 1 –make certain that all who are part of recruitment, retention, and advising have input.
    - ○ Consider people who don't necessarily have recruitment/retention in their title. The tutoring center is a dropout prevention entity. All staff have a role in retention.
- 2&4 – information silos have to be overcome.
- Overall the goals are written well, but the value of a liberal arts education and the development of higher-order skills aren't included.
    - ○ It's an issue that a consulting company wrote these.
- Environmental sustainability and green initiatives are not in the plan.

Anything else that should be added to the goals?

- Diversity and multiculturalism aren't included and need to be explicitly stated.
- There's a danger trying to find our identity locally.
    - Area is conservative and agriculture based.
    - Can we make our image nationally palatable?
    - How do we balance trying to make everyone feel welcome?
    - How do we tailor our messaging towards the community? Are we able to be bolder and braver about multiculturalism and diversity?

How can we keep you more involved?

- There needs to be more collaborative and interdisciplinary work.
- Turnout today was good but there is a lot of silence in the room. Not enough people feel safe to speak their minds.
- People feel like what they say doesn't matter.
- How much further has the centralized advising discussion gone? There are concerns among the college advisors.
- People saw the strategic planning information that was sent out and thought it was all a "one and done."
- Education is not mentioned as boldly as it should be in the goals.
- Are five goals too many? Do we need more or less?
- How do actionable steps come from this process?
- If the goals are going into a specific order put 5 first.
- In regards to goal #1, kids are working and having issue getting the course the need in their schedules and having problems with advising, etc. What do we do about that?
    - Promote Pack Support
- It seems like Napa had a more outsized role in the process than would have been anticipated. Did we get our money's worth?
- Inform people about how they can get involved with the working groups and other aspects of the planning.

Saint Francis River Room

Overall thoughts

- Goals are very "detailed"
- Smith lead that the bullet points are where we are now and what task forces will be responsible for clarifying
- Much of this is already in Mission/Vision, but now how can it be enhanced?

Goal 1 Discussion

- How can we make this happen?
- Making sure that resources are applicable to students we are admitting and recruiting. For instance, we have lowered admission standards, but now we need resources that

will serve lower achieving students. According to room we were already not prepared for our lowest deficiency students, how can we take on those with lower achievement?

- Faculty need to be aware for reach-out tools (such as Pack Support)
- Accurate communication for the purpose of recruitment, on website, etc.
- Clarification of language re: "further" recruitment to go beyond geographical region including age of students, etc.
- Parking and shuttle needed to encourage students to park away from center of campus to ensure ease of attendance
- Room/Building space is lacking in specific for Fine Arts (specialty classrooms such as practice and studio space)

Goal 2 Discussion

- Higher Education is expensive for 4-year degree and beyond. Students focused on "what can I do with this degree" and sooner rather than later. Can degrees be condensed in a way that can prepare students faster?
- What are our signature programs?
- Nursing, Education, Business, Agriculture...these programs do not distinguish us from other universities in the state.
- Perhaps we need to invest in programs that meet high needs areas, and devest in programs that are similar to other institutions. For instance, a Vet School.
- The Delta Center was asked to offer a Cyber Security program. In conjunction with industry, a full 4-year degree could be offered for electricians and then Engineering.
- Cross Discipline programs such as Data Analytics with Math/Stats and Business joining to offer
- Co-curricular being used to support new and existing programs to their fullest.
- While we have a 4-year program in Computer Science, industry still has to train students once graduated to actually prepare them for workforce.
- Students mentioned opportunities for job-shadowing were lacking and campus were unable to provide hosts, thoughts?
- Research Labs do this, but community would need to welcome this
- Campus needs to reach out to community to create these options
- MEP offers opportunities to explore campus buildings
- Incentives such as credit for coursework to volunteer across campus and community
- Working on campus as undergrad can encourage other view of eventual job opportunities

Goal 3 Discussion

- What is our role in the community besides granting degrees?
- Cultural opportunities
- Faculty/Staff assisting in the community, such as revitalizing downtown
- Partnership with community including the cultural aspects (Museum, Sports, etc) are a recruitment tool. However how can we involve the community to come to campus? This

can substantially help K-12 kids to come on campus and then want to come to school here. More summer camps and other visits by school aged children.

- The community is willing to accept services or invitations to campus, but our events are not well attended. How can this be corrected? Make sure there is a face-to-face connection between campus and community.

Goal 4 Discussion

- What can we invest in?
- Appropriate resources instead of just investing in what we already have or can't useIf online is where we are going, what kind of facilities do we actually need? Online students are non-traditionally aged who require technology assistance, and we do still need physical facilities for face-to-face students for specific hands-on programming.
- Certificate programs that are industry-based and specific for the area's needs
- For instance, Banks used to offer courses such as Accounting through A-State for their employees for continuing ed programs
- Adding these courses to transcripts as continuing ed or professional development

Goal 5 Discussion

- What does "Every Red Wolf Count" mean for Staff members?
- What is our work place culture?
- Students report that campus offices are dismissive, rude and customer service is a major issue. To retain students, this must be corrected.
- Student examples say the reason I came here is because everyone was friendly, and the reasonI stayed here was because faculty and staff were friendly, but this is by and large not the case.
- What is the issue, resources or motivation? Not having enough staff leads to this
- Parents report having vastly different experiences with their own students interacting with technology and staff differ widely between our campus and other campuses
- My Campus no longer being single sign-on
- Cross training is an issue when one person is "out" and there is no one else to answer questions
- Perception of morale problems, should there be distinction between those who will be seen and those who are not because of what students see? Such as GAs teaching courses who are not willing to be "teachers"
- First Friday videos to provide information campus wide for the purpose of getting word out on campus's service
- Informing students re: campus policy/procedure to guide students of who to talk to or how to accomplish something
- Cutting positions, small raises and duties/responsibilities shifting could cause low morale

Auditorium

<u>What are your overall impressions of the goals?</u>

- A staff member wanted to know if there were metrics established for the goals yet.
- A staff member stated that goal number 1 seemed to be focused on students that are already here. The staff member suggested that we start recruiting when children are a lot younger so that we can build brand loyalty.
- A staff member commented on how they really try to work brand loyalty into their job on campus to encourage the younger generation to want to come here.
- A staff member commented on the lack of diversity in the strategic plan. She was surprised by the lack of mandatory diversity training that we have on campus.
- Many of the staff expressed concern about the culture on campus. These staff asked about the most recent climate survey and about best place to work standards in the goals. The staff were concerned that our staff are underappreciated and often assumed to be "lower class". They also feel like if staff were more included then we might have more school spirit to help with goal number 5.
- Another staff member indicated that after starting here two months ago, she still hasn't had all the training she needs, and she has no mentors to help her. The staff member suggested something like an FYE for our staff members. This would help support the staff and give them a network to rely on so they could help the students. The staff member indicated that as staff we are frequently who the students go to for support and we need to have the support we need to help them. The staff think this might also help with goal number 5 because if the staff feel more included then they will promote the culture more effectively.
- A staff member mentioned that it might be a good idea to take students through staff member offices when they are on tours so that staff members can help talk up the school and feel as if they count.
- A staff member comments on goal number 3. She works at the museum and stated this goal really fits in with the mission they are trying to accomplish at the museum. They want to bring in the community and get more kids on a college campus to showcase what we have to offer.
- Another staff member mentioned goal number 3 as where her job fit best. They mentioned there is incredible expertise and intellect on this campus. The small towns and rural areas are looking for that. There is a difference in education and training. When we are out in the community, we are talking more about what their students can do to make a living, but we have lost the conversation of the value of true education. I've read recently there are few English majors, but companies like them if they can communicate. Sometimes we forget to talk about true education in the holistic sense.
- Another staff member mentioned goal number 5. As far as culture goes, there is very little communication between departments.

What is missing from the strategic goals?

- One staff members mentioned that she isn't very proud to be from Jonesboro. The staff member again mentioned that diversity seems to be missing from the plan. There should be mandatory training for cultural diversity and religious diversity. We also need to make plans to keep our faculty and staff that are diverse.
- A staff member asked about the intentions behind goal number 2. Dr. Terry answered by saying that there are 300 engineer positions in Jonesboro, but we only produce around 85 engineers a year.
- Another staff mentioned how our staff positions have evolved in the last few years. We are increasingly making the support staff offices like procurement and travel efficient at the expense of the administrative assistants in the departments. It might be time to start looking at pushing some of the workload back to those auxiliary departments so that the staff are no longer a jack of all trades, but a master of none.
- The staff talked about the need for a new climate survey and for the old survey to be displayed publically. The most recent survey was completed 2 years ago and is housed in the diversity department.
- Dr. Terry closed by asking the staff to email Dr. Damphousse with any further suggestions and also to answer the questions, if I were chancellor what would I change? Please send those emails to kdamp@astate.edu.