

Faculty Forum 2/10/03

At the Feb 10 faculty forum, faculty discussed issues in two separate areas. One area dealt with repeated concerns of faculty. The second area is a set of issues the faculty believe ought to be discussed and addressed in some fashion in the final strategic plan. While the intent is to focus on issues to be addressed in a strategic plan, there is some overlap between the two. It is also recognized that it is sometimes difficult to address a common vision when other issues continue to persist.

Issues for developing strategic plan

1. How do we best attract and **retain** good faculty
2. Clarity of expectations
Faculty have some concerns over expectations of both faculty and students and how those are to be used in the evaluation process. There is some concern that the current system may have a tendency to reward relaxed academic standards.
3. Institutional priorities
Related to number 2, is a set of institutional priorities. Faculty are spread very thin and they are concerned that without a set of priorities much of the faculty effort has little opportunity for making a substantial impact.
4. Workload
Workload at this institution is very high. In addition, depending on the model, there is a concern of inequitable workloads between colleges/departments. Depending on the model, either formal or informal, a case can be built for almost any department.
5. What is the appropriate **balance** between teaching, research, and service
6. Research (basic vs applied)
Related to 5, what is the appropriate balance between basic and applied research. What role, if any, does each play in the long term growth of the institution.
7. How do we effectively encouraging faculty to participate in campus decisions and shared governance
8. Facilities
Facilities are always an area of concern. Physical facilities are important for recruitment and student environment. Laboratory and equipment facilities are important for accreditation and maintaining a curriculum that is current.
9. Continued faculty growth & development & morale
10. Open line communication

Changes in education are occurring at a rapid rate. Faculty recognize the need for many of these changes but also recognize that many often have unintended consequence or simply lack the necessary details for good implementation. For change to work effectively better lines of communication both horizontal and vertical need to be established.

Issues related to faculty concerns

1. HPCNet
Faculty continue to have concerns over costs and benefits.
2. Allocation of resources
3. Aramark
There does not appear to be any evidence that privatization has led to improved facilities and maintenance or that it has saved any money.
4. Return to overhead
There is a concern over the formula for returning overhead to departments
5. Workload issues
Faculty remain concerned over the campus workload compared to comparable institutions and over the equity of workload between departments / colleges.
6. Evaluation of Administration/Faculty
Modern management seems to embrace feedback mechanisms for both management and employees.
7. College Structure
Many faculty believe that the current organizational structure has been fairly ineffective. Others believe it is.
8. Facilities
9. Freedom of discourse on campus
10. 7/10 rule
Small but important programs that are consistent with the mission of this institution continued to be plagued with the 7/10 rule.
11. Micromanagement (primarily of faculty interests)
Some faculty members are confused over the lack of a vision or strategic plan but that curriculum issues seem to be a matter of top-down management.
12. How many tenure-track faculty will we lose
We have had a reduction in faculty numbers and fewer tenure or tenure-track faculty.
13. Faculty/shared governance
14. Collapsing courses/programs
Related to number 12, faculty wonder what the long term vision is over the collapsing of courses and programs
15. Student self-responsibility
There is a concern that faculty efforts designed to help students develop self-responsibility over their own learning are being undermined.
16. Grading/Assessment
Why can't grades be used for assessment

Faculty Forum

2/18/03

At the Feb 18 faculty forum, faculty continued the discussion of how to build a shared vision for the campus. Five basic questions were posed for faculty consideration and discussion. Continued discussion led to sub-topics in some areas and few additional considerations that a strategic plan should consider.

Basic Questions to be Answered in a Strategic Plan

1. Are we an engineering and science school or should we place more attention on developing as a more comprehensive university?
 - a. There was a question of whether or not we have the option of choosing between engineering and science vs a comprehensive university. There seem to be some mixed messages on this issue and it is not clear how much flexibility we either have or do not have on this issue.
 - b. A related question is how big do we want to be?
Changing demographics are working against us. One approach to satisfy changing demographics is a concerted effort to serve regional students with a more comprehensive approach. An alternative approach would be to capture a stronger regional market.
2. What is the balance between teaching and research?
 - a. Should there be alternative paths for each area?
 - b. One concern in this area is that the alumni vision made it sound as if we all have to do the same thing.
3. What research should we as a campus support?
 - a. Should faculty pursue research based on individual interests or would the campus be more likely to be successful by stipulating specific areas of research that the campus is willing to support?
 - b. What should be the balance between basic research, applied research, and research to support economic development?
4. What pedagogical shifts should we embrace; e.g. technology-enabled learning, writing across the curriculum, first-year curriculum, integrated or linked curriculum ... ?
 - a. A strong concern is the role of technology-enabled learning. Some feel it may be too expensive for a limited market. Others feel the market needs to be more narrowly defined. Still others feel that technology should be more strongly linked to pedagogy. The feeling seems to reflect a concern that technology is driving the pedagogy rather than the other way around.
 - b. Some feel that distance education should be a separate item specifically addressed in a strategic plan.

5. What is our relationship to the community; e.g., course offerings, outreach, service, ... ?
 - a. Some felt that the value of community service should be redefined.
 - b. Some felt that a discussion of the relationship with the community should include a discussion of the cultural and educational opportunities a university can provide to a community.
6. The strategic plan should effectively address the role of academic freedom.
7. The strategic plan should address lines of communication and the role of shared governance.

Faculty Forum

2/27/03

The last of the faculty forums to discuss academic issues and future directions for SDSM&T was held on Thursday, Feb. 27. Much of the discussion reflected similar issues and concerns from the previous two forums. Most of the discussion is incorporated in the nine central points that follow.

1. A main issue of a strategic plan would address the central question, “What kind of school are we?” Everything else would be sub-servant to it.
2. The strategic mission should identify who we would like to be benchmarked against – who do we want to compete with? Examples given include

Cal Tech	Col. School of Mines	Black Hills State U.
Rose-Hulman	Dakota State U.	MIT
3. The strategic plan should stress our commonality. Are we just another state school or are we unique in our mission?
4. There is some belief that ownership of the curriculum by the faculty has eroded. A strategic plan should articulate the faculty role and responsibilities related to curriculum and other academic issues.
5. There is a fundamental question as to whether or not we will exist 10 years from now if we continue going as we have done. External pressures and changing demographics suggest that change is needed. The question remains as to the best direction that we should undertake to grow.
6. Whatever direction we decide to pursue it should involve more aggressive marketing.
7. There remains a concern of some faculty over appropriate mechanisms for ensuring student success. An argument can be made for raising academic standards as a means of inculcating student self-responsibility.
8. There seems to be a fairly common consensus that faculty simply do not see a common goal. A strategic plan with a clearly articulated common goal for the institution can do much to unify faculty and staff efforts.
9. How do we create a program here that is so exciting that students want to come to school here and stay ?