Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional Identity and Vision

Thursday, January 18, 2018 4:00-5:15 PM RSS Room 353

Present:
Alex Kasman, Todd McNerney, Jen Wright, Jeri Cabot, Mike Braswell, Irina Gigova, William Bares

Approval of minutes from previous meeting.

Discussion: With the survey of faculty and staff closed (with 440 respondents and over 170 volunteers to participate in future discussions), the group’s attention during this meeting turned to the best manner of organizing the first round of general discussions in early February. The survey had indicated that all six questions we posed received between approximately 70% and 80% support from respondents, making it impossible to eliminate any of them from the first round of discussions. The challenge is how to cover all these questions as efficiently as possible in a manner that reflects the sentiments of the broad and diverse campus community.

The Committee agreed quickly that it preferred general group discussions to separately convened small groups. The Stern Center Ballroom is the natural venue that can accommodate a great number of participants that can sit around separate tables and engage in conversations. The Committee also favored duplicating group sessions at two different times to accommodate diverse teaching and work schedules.

Over the course of its deliberations the Committee considered two main options.

Option 1: To start discussions with the first three questions, with several separate tables dedicated to each of those questions. There will be a scribe assigned to each table that can transcribe the conversation around the table. In the first round, we will allow 15-20 minutes for discussions, have participants mingle with other tables covering the same question for greater exchange, and finally have tables present their conclusions to the rest of the room. After this the participants can move on to the next three questions, repeating the process outlined above.

a. After some deliberation, the Committee dismissed this option as likely to take too long and not enabling a truly broad and representative conversation of the issues.

b. Alex Kasman suggested limiting the number of issues discussed in favor of reaching a sense of consensus on key topics. Jen Wright responded that the Committee’s mandate is really twofold: 1) to identify issues of concern and 2) to identify the issues we all agree upon, achieving a sense of campus unity.

c. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the survey seemed to have identified the issues of concern and that at this point we need to get a sense of what faculty and staff agree upon. Hence, we moved on to...

Option 2: Dedicate a week to one big topic and use the group sessions to allow for a common discussion. We will reach out via e-mail to the 170 volunteers to inform them of
the scheduled meetings. In addition, we will advertise the sessions broadly via Yammer, the Faculty Speaker, Ed Pope, and the Staff Advisory Committee, hoping to bring in more participants. Upon reflection, we agreed that the six original questions from the survey can be paired over the course of three weeks. We will have two sessions a week for those on a MWF or a TR schedule. After each session we can post the responses of the day and allow those not able to attend to chime in.

**Drafting a schedule:** After consulting the availability of the Stern Center, the Committee drafted the following schedule (Jeri Cabot has made the reservation requests and we are waiting to have the dates and hours confirmed):

**Week 1: Questions #1-2:** What is the function of a university and higher education in the 21st century? The College of Charleston is a “liberal arts and sciences” institutions; what does this definition mean to you and should it be preserved?

- Wednesday, Jan 31: 8:30 - 10-30am (Committee members present: Todd McNerney and William Bares)
- Thursday, Feb 1: 2 - 4pm (Irina Gigova and Alex Kasman)

**Week 2: Questions #4 and #6:** How do we repackage and improve what we already do? What ideas can we develop for curricular or institutional development that could support the mission of the College? How can we best leverage our unique traits including geography, history, and culture to stand out from other colleges?

- Tuesday, Feb 6: 12:30-2:30 (Mike Braswell and Todd McNerney)
- Wednesday, Feb 7: 3-5pm (Jen Wright and Alex Kasman)

**Week 3: Questions #3 and #5:** How should we manage or respond to pressures to grow College enrollment as the region continues to grow in population? How should we balance maintaining high academic standards with the desire for high retention and graduation rates?

- Tuesday, Feb 13: 1-3pm (Mike Braswell and William Bares)
- Wednesday, Feb 14: 2-4pm (Irina Gigova and Jeri Cabot)

**Final remarks:** We will encourage all participants to bring laptops for note-taking. Ideally, we would like to receive both notes that reflect the nature and flow of the conversation and the final summative conclusions of each table and subgroup. Those documents will be posted for all to see. The Committee discussed the best way to collect and share these responses. It decided to investigate the creation of a separate e-mail account for the work of the Committee.

**Next meeting:** February 20th, 4-5pm at RSS 353