Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional Identity and Vision

Tuesday Feb. 20th, 2018     4:15-5:15 PM RSS Room 353

Present
Jen
Jeri
William
Alex
Todd

First item of business was to draft a brief statement from this committee to the faculty meeting on Thursday that will address the Presidential search committee.

Alex: What we should say is that one thing we learned from the discussions is this: the faculty and staff do not feel that they are involved in decisions and this has negative effects on morale as well as impacting the decision process by failing to actually make use of their important viewpoints.

Draft Statement:

“We are an ad hoc senate committee formed before the president’s announcement to organize campus wide discussions of faculty and staff on our identity and our vision for the future. In the responses to our online survey and the six discussions (involving close to 500 employees of the College), one thing that has been made clear is that faculty and staff emphatically desire a higher degree of shared governance and a greater level of campus-wide dialogue. We believe that this evidence strongly supports the position of the senate in requesting a recomposition of the presidential search committee.”

Jen: What is next? When is the next senate meeting?

Todd: March 13th is the next meeting. Items due March 1.

Jen: April?

Todd: April 10 with agenda deadline of March 29.

Jen: We don’t have time for second round of in-person discussions comparable to the first round. But, we could do a survey.

Irina: We can report on what we’ve done so far.

The committee membership agreed to proceed with Jen’s suggestion of formulating a second online survey.

Jen: If we shot for March 1st for something on Qualtrics and had until after break to collect that would work. The hard thing is going to be putting this in a format we can use. What do we want?

The committee next discussed comments mentioned by participants in the six discussion sessions.
Alex: On what we need to do: is it find a buzz word or stick to tradition? On quality, everyone says “quality hasn’t dropped”, but I don’t think it is true.
Irina: “We have to dig deeper.” is spin

Jeri: Undergrad Academic Services said quality has dropped.

Jen: Breaking silos, increasing communication.

Alex: We should rewrite the questions for the next online survey now that we know what people are actually saying.

Jeri: If we shrink, are we still tuition driven? The University of Virginia (UVA) built endowment and now is independent of the state.

Jen: Former College President Benson had tried to follow UVA’s approach, but did not succeed.

Irina: UVA model is based on state getting out of our business.

Jen: We could go through the discussion session notes and come up with paradigmatic statements: “college is a business and should be run like a business” or “distance ed is needed…” or we could say “here are some general positions, where do you fall?”

Jeri: We can’t be everything to everyone. You can’t say you want non-traditional students if they have no way to get here, no way to park here. And we’re not vet friendly because we don’t accept the credit they earn?

Todd: Is there a way to combine? I do like this yes/no but we did that the first time right?

Jen: First online survey was questions, not answers.

Todd: I also like what you said Jen about crafting half a dozen position paragraphs and allowing people a similar thing. So, there could be one line things that could be contradictory and a person could pick both, but there are more overarching paragraph-form statements “Liberal arts are valuable and we should continue to do it…”

Irina: We could include things from the existing presidential statements and plans.

Jen: Do we want to each tackle a question? Do we each want a session?

Alex: Questions are Identity/Liberal arts/Engine of Growth/Quality and Internal climate/Community.

Irina: People agree that we are “liberal arts” but not what that means.

Jeri: Business question, if we’re getting no money from the state, “pull lever” for more students.

Jen: So three of us work on one and three on the other?

Jen: If we tried to meet to talk about it next week then I could put something into Qualtrics.

Alex had to leave and so handed over minutes to William.
Irina: Suggested we use three broad areas to guide our construction of the next online survey to separate the business details from the who we are question.

Jen and Irina volunteered to review session notes to form questions about community/climate.

Jeri and William volunteered to review session notes for questions about who we are?

Todd volunteered to cover the business/practical issues.

Mike and Alex (not present) can also work with Todd.

All: We agreed that we would like for this ad hoc committee to continue functioning for next academic year in a discussion about volunteering for the list of available committees for next year.

William: Summarizing to-do items for next meeting. We will work on reviewing session notes (see shared folder in Google Drive) to form draft statements, such as “We are a liberal arts institution” or “I would like people to communicate across divisions.” that will appear in an upcoming Qualtrics survey where respondents will be asked to agree/disagree (possibly on a 7-point Likert scale). We can also draft several multi-sentence summaries or draw text from publicly-posted current or past institutional identity statements to seek agree/disagree responses.

The three broad areas and assignments are as follows:

1. who are we?
   - should we be liberal arts or job training – can’t be all things to all people
     - Jeri    William

2. how do we do it well?
   - business model, experiential learning, operations of the College
     - Todd    Mike    Alex

3. How do we create healthy climate?
   - community - morale – communication – interdisciplinary interactions
     - Jen       Irina

We will keep note of any other major themes if we find any that do not fit under these three broad areas.

We will work to create next version of survey in two weeks.

Todd, Alex, and William plan to be at the Thursday faculty meeting to present our statement on the makeup of the Presidential Search Committee.

We will request an agenda item (by March 1st) to present a brief summary for the March 13th Faculty Senate meeting. Ideally, we would also present more detailed results for the April 10th meeting.

We agreed to hold our next meeting Tuesday March 6th 3 pm

Adjourned at 5:15 pm