Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional Identity and Vision

Thursday Nov. 2nd, 2017    3:00-4:00 PM RSS Room 353

Present:

Alex Kasman, Jen Wright, Jeri Cabot, Mike Braswell, Irina Gigova Ganaway, William Bares

Summary of purpose: This ad hoc committee will produce a survey report that will be used by the Faculty Senate to help it to for example, determine how proposed new academic programs fit our identity. With input from faculty colleagues and staffers with an interest in College identity, such as admissions, marketing, and budget, we can come up with a set of important questions to get the discussions started. Feedback on the discussion questions will be gathered using Qualtrics online surveys during the Fall 2017. Once we have a set of questions, we can schedule and invite groups of different people together to discuss in small groups during the Spring 2018.

Alex:

The goal of this group is to facilitate discussion among the College community about its identity and vision and to report findings to the Faculty Senate.

Some possible questions include:

Are we a liberal arts school?
What are academic expectations?
Some say lower standards to keep up
Some say keep up standards

William – What will be the outcome of the discussions?

Irina – Yes, we can shape the message.

Alex – Discussion could change things.

William – Can we get input from students?

Alex – Yes, online surveys, days to bring in people to talk in small groups

Jen – Can reach out to departments or existing committees to solicit questions?

Alex – Yes, we want new input, especially beyond department chairs.

Todd – Yes, the Faculty Senate gave us a charge to e-mail all to invite feedback.

Alex – I am most concerned about reaching faculty, and small groups of interested staff such as from advising.
Jen – Will we only have time to solicit input on the most frequently-suggested questions?
Alex – We should be open to insightful questions and choose best, regardless of how many times a question is suggested.
Jen – Our goal is to put together a survey report that guides our institutional vision.
We need to also consider the format of the data so that we can easily analyze survey responses.
Jeri – We may look at current vision statements. Vision 2050.
Irina – I think we should begin with free-form responses to guide selection of the discussion questions.
William – We can run a pilot survey before sending out a survey to all by mass e-mail.
Jen – Yes, that would be the way to do it.
Alex – Reads current draft solicitation for 1-5 questions. Reads from the 2005-2006 President’s statement that included the phrases - comprehensive university, deeply rooted in liberal arts tradition.
Irina – Reads the draft questions that were distributed prior to the meeting.
Todd – We could just ask respondents if they agree with 2050 vision statement.
Jeri – For SACS we had to tell them what we are and needed this vision statement.
Alex – I think academic quality is a great question – do we seek best students from wherever they come from, or focus on serving those coming from the area as they come to us?
Jen – We can show six sample questions, ask respondents to rate the priority of these six questions, and allow them to propose additional questions.
Irina – volunteers to be chair.
William – volunteers to be chair.
After discussion, William will be chair. Members will take turns keeping minutes. Chair will call next meeting and preside with input from all.
Irina – I can contact the staff advisory committee, to know if we can get input from staff members during their normal work day hours.
Alex – We want lots of different groups, getting together to talk, why are students changing? Our endpoint is to get small groups of different people together.
Jeri – We used these types of discussion groups during the recent climate surveys.
Todd - An outside company organized the climate discussion sessions.
Jeri – It was Rankin and Associates. We can propose a menu of dates and times, encourage supervisors to encourage their people to attend.
Irina – Would it be worthwhile for us to visit regular departments and staff meetings?

Can we get the online survey results to determine the discussion questions back by end of Fall 2017?

Jen – Yes, we can get those results. I frequently run Qualtrics surveys in my own research. We can reach out directly in department meetings to promote the survey and encourage participation.

Alex – Information Technology should be involved for the vision of what technology needed.

Jen – I can enter our survey into Qualtrics.

Mike – We should also think of gathering expectations from a new student perspective since sometimes perceptions do not match reality after they arrive on campus.

Jeri – The city is always linked to our identity.

Irina – We need the same message going out from admissions, etc. to avoid disconnects.

Jen – Likewise, the expectations for new faculty do not match reality. Some expect to teach 20, but in practice end up with larger classes.

Alex – We are not being untruthful, it is more that we haven’t updated the messages frequently enough.

Todd – 2008-09 was last time for a strategic plan, President Benson updated the plan.

Mike – Is there a formal ratio of the number of out-of-state to in-state students?

Alex – No, there is not an exact ratio, but state law makers have their own rule of thumb.

Irina – Recruitment comes back to budget issues.

Alex – Yes, our staffers who deal with budget issues need to be involved in forming the questions and subsequent discussions.

Irina – Who else to contact about the survey design?

Todd – As courtesy, we should let the staff advisory committee know.

Discussion to summarize proposed questions. See addendum 1.

Discussion of next meeting time and place.
We agreed to meet Nov. 30 4 pm in the same room.

Adjourned: 3:50 PM.
Addendum 1. Summary of Draft Questions as of end of this meeting

Preface to survey text...

1. What is the function of “a university” and higher education in the 21st century?
2. The College of Charleston is a “liberal arts and sciences” institution. What does this definition mean to you and should it be preserved?
3. What is the optimal size of the College (and of classes) concerning its identity, location and budgetary situation?
4. What concerns, or fears do you have regarding the current status of the College? (e.g. quality of students, budgetary situation, loss of identity, etc.)
5. How do we repackage and improve what we already do? Do you have ideas for curricular or institutional development that could support the mission of the College?
6. Do we want to attract the best students from wherever they come, versus focusing on the local population and meet them where they are?

Addendum 2. Original draft of suggested questions distributed prior to meeting.

Questions for general faculty discussion (2017/8):

1. What is the function of “a university” and higher education in the 21st century?
2. The College of Charleston is a “liberal arts and sciences” institution. What does this definition mean to you and should it be preserved?
3. What is the optimal size of the College (and of classes) concerning its identity, location and budgetary situation?
4. What concerns, or fears do you have regarding the current status of the College? (e.g. quality of students, budgetary situation, loss of identity, etc.)
5. How do we repackage and improve what we already do? Do you have ideas for curricular or institutional development that could support the mission of the College?

I am thinking that 3 and 5 should not be part of the survey:

1. What is the function of “a university” and higher education in the 21st century?
2. The College of Charleston is a “liberal arts and sciences” institution. What does this definition mean to you and should it be preserved?
3. What concerns, or fears do you have regarding the current status of the College? (e.g. quality of students, budgetary situation, loss of identity, etc.)
4. Would you be willing to participate in a series of campus wide discussions about the identity and future of the school?