

## **Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) Update from 10.25.22 Meeting**

The following summary of the open forums was provided and reviewed by members of SPBC:

### Summary of Feedback from Open Forums

Open forums were hosted at the main and Rock campuses. There were seven open forums with roughly 100 participants. Data was collected from individuals and groups via Qualtrics.

The majority of participants believed the current strategic priorities from the 2017-2022 strategic plan remain relevant to our campus. During the open forum, attendees were asked to prioritize the objectives from that past strategic plan, as well as note any they felt may be missing.

The top three objectives most participants ranked to prioritize working on in the next strategic plan were retention of employees (#1), high quality academic programs (#2), and manage and allocate fiscal resources responsibly (#3). In addition, the open forum input resulted in identification of themes not readily defined in the last strategic plan. These missing themes were then also defined, ranked and compiled and could be classified as Inclusion and Advocacy and Institutional Merit. This resulted in a total set of five overarching themes.

These themes were identified based on the open forum discussions on priorities, goals, and recommended actions:

- High quality academic programs
- Good Stewardship of institutional resources
- Inclusion and Advocacy
- Institutional Merit
- Retention of students and staff

### High quality academic programs

Participant comments focused on maintaining the quality of academic programs, and ensuring the quality of new programs through a process of continuous improvement. The recommended actions included: increased focus on connection between academics and co-curricular programs, ensuring programs are able to adapt to a changing future (i.e., what will curriculum/delivery need to look like to address interests and needs in 5-10 years?), preparing students for life beyond their degrees, and ensuring viability of the institution's program array.

### Good stewardship of institutional resources

Participants noted a number of structures across campus that hindered productivity. There was a desire for innovation, collaboration, and operational efficiencies. These included: increased collaboration across units and sharing of ideas/resources, stable leadership, review of policies and practices that impede progress, advocacy to state legislature on behalf of UWW, accountability to mission, and reliable and evolving technology.

### Inclusion and advocacy

The well-being of students, faculty, and staff took precedent in conversations related to creating a welcoming culture. Attendees believed this essential to issues related to retention and recruitment of

students in particular, as well as employees. Discussions ensued related to supporting the needs of students who may not fit traditional views of “college-ready.” There was a desire to promote equity and diversity initiatives through a campus-wide strategy.

#### Institutional merit

Participants' comments focused on the need to promote the value and unique qualities of an education received at UWW. The recommendations included sharing accomplishments and engaging the regional community and external partners by making the University attractive to the region, reporting post-graduate outcomes, increasing integration between Rock and main campuses, and supporting self-directed student experiences.

#### Retention of students, faculty, and staff

Retaining students, faculty, and staff was a priority discussed at every open forum. Attendees elaborated on this indicating a number of actions that fall into other themes, such as creating a more inclusive culture of trust and belonging, adopting a customer service mindset- student focused decision making, and addressing inequity in pay. Based on the analysis of feedback, addressing actions in the other areas could have a positive impact on retaining students, faculty, and staff.

After the committees' review, three questions were asked and discussed in small groups, then shared:

1. Review the summary document and share your thoughts on the themes.
2. For each identified theme, what are up to three strategies we can put in place to move the work in that area forward?
3. For each identified theme, consider what happens if that theme is not in our strategic plan? Does the work of the University change?

#### **Notes from Discussion**

General:

- Not everything can/should be done at the institutional level
- Make goals measurable and realistic
- Make Language clear and consistent – i.e. students, faculty and staff not just students and staff or students and faculty
- Assessment of where we are and what work is being done already
- Communication about Strategic Planning throughout the process
- Perhaps the need of an outside assessor of current working environment.
- Use of surveys to measure faculty and staff work satisfaction.
- It might be helpful to review work of task-forces (mental health, Hispanic, and African American) for guidance or ideas in some of the areas
- All interconnected and build on each other.
- Themes map onto our value statements
- Themes are interconnected and there seems to be a common concept of breaking down silos
- There was recognition that whatever the plan ends up being, there will need to be financial backing. However, the budget constraints are real so there needs to be recognition of this when

selecting goals- we cannot afford to do everything and have to be mindful on how and where we spend money

- Missing any targeted discussion of advising students and mentoring faculty

#### High quality academic programs:

- should this be more focused on being adaptable?
- Future seems to be more and more online/hybrid
- Adapting to the new student face
  - Students seem to follow more of a non-traditional way of attending higher ed.
  - More asynchronous to be more adaptable amongst changes in student learning desires
  - Later or weekend classes with some child care available for returning adults.
  - Engage Internal Faculty and Staff as potential students at UWW.
  - how do we adapt to students that are “less college ready” than students in the past?
- Communications/Sit downs with local High Schools to see what practices high school Juniors and Seniors are accustomed. For example, students who don’t turn in assignments in some WI high schools, still receive credit of 59% and most college professors would give a 0% on that assignment.
- Becoming a leader in preparing students/preparing for students by how we prepare to take in different demographics
- Rephrase High Quality Academic Programs to Innovative Delivery of Student Learning
- Advising is essential for successful students
  - Recommended action to send each advisor a list of all advisees that have not enrolled in the next semester.
- We need adaptable academic programs to meet changing needs/interests of students, shifting expectations and curriculum to support these students
- High quality academic programs need to be rephrased, should include areas outside academics as well; if academic focus maybe target innovative delivery models

#### Good stewardship:

- Rebuild trust through transparency
- Breaking down silos will lead to increased collaborations and operational efficiencies- it is more efficient to work together than to have all units work on each goal individual, pooling ideas and resources will be beneficial to all
- Perhaps retention of staff would fall here
- Create a hiring pool for similar positions to expedite the hiring process.
- Good Stewardship will help with showing merit to the region
- Leadership stability. i.e. longevity of leadership will stabilize moral and prevent from duplicate efforts
- Inherent problem/conflict between good stewardship and retention at times.
  - Sometimes good stewardship means making difficult choices on budgetary items.
- Clarity in what are all the resources available on the institutional/departmental/Individual levels.
- Checking on the burnout level of faculty and staff. Comment made at table that noted that most superpowers mentioned were to get more work done.
- Good stewardship: consistent conversations arose around budget

#### Retention:

- Staff retention is more cost effective than recruiting, hiring, and training. The quality of work experience is important, and we need to tease out what it is that makes staff retention difficult, is it just money? We should consider a job satisfaction survey and regularly assess what staff are saying about their experience at UWW.
  - In both students and faculty/staff
- Does this fall better under the other categories
  - Suggested under Good Stewardship (staff) and/or under Inclusion and Advocacy (students)
- Mentoring faculty is crucial in retaining faculty and staff
- Some comments at table:
  - “I would be a student at Whitewater if...”
  - Most days I make it through the day on coffee because I don’t have time to take a lunch/ lines are too long to wait for meals on campus.
  - Same people tapped for several things and very little is given to others, politics?
  - Everyone above me is “Interim”
  - I don’t even know what all is available or what work is being done where.
  - Advisor for a student org. “I go to every meeting and get involved where possible”
- What resources available to students can be made available to faculty and staff as well?

#### Institutional merit:

- Institutional merit: regional benefit of UWW
- Streamline “good news” to UMC
- Be a leader in preparing students that are good at learning new industry innovations on the job
- Promote Hired Before Graduation more.
- Put out statistics about people working in the field they studied at UWW.
- Strategies- employment index by graduates, how many students are working in their field, measure the equity gap in each academic program

#### Inclusion and advocacy:

- Student readiness, what are differences between high school and college experiences? It doesn’t seem we understand enough about what students experience in high school, which might be helpful in helping us prepare students for college.
- Mental health overall has been a challenge, how do we prepare for students that are coming to UWW that already feel isolated?
  - Some students have had to do without services they needed through the pandemic. Specifically, students with disabilities, but also mental health services are in high demand and have prolonged wait times for appointments.