

Muhlenberg College Strategic Planning Process
President's Planning Group Meeting
Monday, February 8 • 5:00 p.m.
Seegers Union 112

PRESENT: Ms. Cynthia Amaya '01, Dr. Bruce Anderson, Mr. Adam Bernstein '12, Rev. Peter Bredlau, Mr. Michael Bruckner, Mr. Ken Butler, Mr. Kent Dyer P'07, P'10, Ms. Laura Eldon '11, Mr. Glenn Gerchman (guest), Ms. Beth Halpern (guest), Dr. Randy Helm, Ms. Karen Green, Mr. Chris Hooker-Haring '72, P'09, P'10, Ms. Connie Harris, Mr. Chris Jachimowicz (guest), Dr. Trevor Knox, Ms. Christine Lake, Dr. Elizabeth McCain, Dr. Lisa Perfetti, Dr. John Ramsay P'12, Mr. Roberto Rivera, Ms. Jan Schumacher (guest), Dr. Stefanie Sinno, Mr. Jordan Sones '10

Student Life/Student Services

1. Opening Remarks – President Helm

The President reminded the Group of the Campus-Wide Forum next Monday evening in Miller Forum. He distributed a draft of a Web-based form that will be developed for the submission of initiatives from the community. He asked for comments on the instrument.

2. Rev. Peter Bredlau: Conversations About Vocation

Rev. Peter Bredlau explained his proposed initiative, a campus-wide conversation about vocation in the wider definition of that word – how to discover one's calling, what it is that one is passionate about, how one's 'work' affects one's life. The initiative will center on the "why" questions inherent in choosing a vocation. The Chaplain stressed that this is not a determinative initiative, but rather a campus-wide discussion which grows out of a Lutheran heritage that says to us, "There is a reason why we are called to the careers we choose." This would be a unique program among all Colleges; no other institution of which Rev. Bredlau is aware is doing anything like the kind of discussions this proposed initiative would undertake. Dean of Students Karen Green spoke in support of the initiative, saying it could strengthen the Reflection piece of the Senior Year Experience. The President asked Rev. Bredlau and the entire group to consider what more specific sets of activities might need to happen and who might be the leaders of such an initiative.

3. Introductory Remarks – Karen Green

Ms. Green said that her division is engaged in education, just as surely as those who work in the classrooms of the College. She is interested in building bridges between academics and co-curricular life. The ideas of 'curriculum' and 'outcomes assessment' can be applied to co-curricular life, though in slightly different ways than they are used in academics. She introduced the staff who accompanied her to the meeting, Ms. Beth Halpern, Director of Community Service and Civic Engagement; Ms. Jan Schumacher, Director of Residence Life; Mr. Chris Jachimowicz, Director of Student Leadership and Greek Affairs, and Mr. Glenn Gerchmann, Director of Seegers Union. Ms. Green's hope is that the initiatives presented are forward-thinking and will serve the College as well in 2015 as they will in 2010. She spoke briefly about those departments not involved in Strategic Planning: Campus Safety, Health and Counseling Services, giving reasons why those departments were included in the conversations but did not submit initiatives.

4. Four-Year Developmental Curriculum

Ms. Schumacher presented an initiative that will convene a group of staff to take a look at the wealth of activities that are already happening and find ways of connecting events with a more intentional plan. She stressed that there was no desire to direct or manage events, only to find a way to make students' paths into leadership more directed. Mr. Chris Jachimowicz spoke about the sophomore year as a critical year in keeping students engaged on campus and thinks that this initiative would help students keep focused as their first year on campus ends. Ms. Connie Harris spoke in support of the initiative from a development perspective. The President stressed that this is a review of activities to see how they align with our mission and goals, rather than a mechanism to somehow standardize the experience. Ms. Schumacher and Mr. Jachimowicz answered questions from the President and Dr. Elizabeth McCain. Provost John Ramsay spoke in support of the initiative.

5. Mission-Critical Work of the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement

Ms. Halpern said that the purpose of the initiative is threefold: to expand the travel capacity of the College by allowing students to drive themselves *and* expand the kind of data that the Office collects; to reinforce support for the recognition of community service in the curriculum *and* to enhance office visibility through a re-design of the website and an increase in campus communication; and to deepen our understanding of outcomes through a better system of assessment, through creating a developmental model for community engagement, and through collaborating with the Multicultural Center to engage the campus with issues related to diversity. Discussion followed.

6. Becoming a "Strengths-Based" Campus

Mr. Jachimowicz explained the StrengthsQuest program and the StrengthsFinder tool, which provides students with an individual profile of talents that can be applied to every facet of their lives. Members of the Dean of Students's Division have used the tool and have found it to be a very successful program. The tool is inexpensive enough (approximately \$12 per person) so that every student could participate, if desired. The StrengthFinder tool is not only practical for students, but may be used for staff development, as well. Funding and staffing for the program are not an issue at present. Mr. Jachimowicz then took questions from the Group.

7. Living-Learning Communities

Ms. Schumacher said that the College Committee on Campus Life is interested in developing living-learning communities on campus. She spoke about the history of efforts on campus and the successes and challenges of the different types of programs that have been attempted. Like the Center for Ethics, the First Year Seminar program, and the Faculty Center for Teaching, CCCL feels the need for a faculty Director of the program. The President asked if faculty apartments were considered as a way of enhancing the living-learning experience. Discussion followed.

8. Summer Meetings and Conferences; Commuter Students

a. Formalizing a Summer Meeting and Conference Program

Mr. Gerchman introduced an initiative to make better use of College facilities during the summer for conferences and meetings. He also spoke about the kosher kitchen facilities that will be available once the Union expansion is finished and the Hillel renovations are complete, which will make our campus a more attractive venue for a wider number of groups. A short discussion followed.

b. A Selection of Services that address the needs of commuter students

Though the current number of commuter students is very small, demographic shifts suggest that a slightly larger number of students may choose to commute to campus in the future. Evening and summer school students also are in need of services the College does not currently offer. Mr. Gerchman also spoke about a possible summer meal plan, increasing the amount of technology available in Seegers Union, internships and employment opportunities for support of summer programs, and a space set aside for commuting students to rest and work. A short discussion followed.