

PRESIDENT'S PLANNING GROUP

Tuesday, September 4, 2007

5:00 p.m. • Hoffman House

In Attendance

Dr. Bruce Anderson

Dr. Don Dale

Dr. Jane Flood

Dr. Lawrence Hass

Mr. Adam Hirsch '09

Mr. Tilghman Moyer

Mr. Michael Bruckner

Ms. Karen Dearborn

Dr. Jack Gambino

Dr. Marjorie Hass

Mr. Christopher Hooker-Haring

Ms. Alison Schnall '08

Mr. Ken Butler

Mr. Kent Dyer

Ms. Karen Green

Dr. Randy Helm

Ms. Heather Mill '10

Ms. Lauren Shanahan

1. History of the Planning Process

The President gave a brief history of the original Strategic Planning Process, which took place in 2003-2004. He described the discussion process, whereby data was compiled by the Senior Staff and presented to the PPG for discussion. Initiatives were developed and shaped by the PPG, then presented to the Board of Trustees, with additional input sought through campus forums and requests to alumni and parents. Some of the many topics under discussion were enrollment size, from which it was decided that the College should maintain a stable enrollment of approximately 2150; debt load, from which it was decided that the College could comfortably take on debt to pay for several of the proposed initiatives; and adding graduate degree programs, from which it was decided that they should not be one of the College's priorities. The PPG also looked at the College's resources, competitors, and challenges. The PPG developed a Mission Statement, which was widely reviewed by all constituents. Based on all the data, the President drafted the Plan in May-June 2004 and presented it to the Board of Trustees, who gave him feedback toward a final draft. The Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in October, 2004.

An important tenet of the Plan was that it must be flexible to allow for changes that might happen as the Plan was, and continues to be, implemented. The Multicultural Center and the Senior Year Experience are examples of important College initiatives that were not part of the original Plan, but were added after the Plan's implementation date. The President noted that we also spent more on facilities than we had planned, which has been a major deviation from the original Plan. The initiatives have been well received and most are in the process of implementation.

The PPG developed a five-year plan that was detailed, with a sketch for the next five years, knowing it would be necessary to return to the Plan for more detailed planning. The President stated that initiatives concerning a Faculty Village, expansion to Seegers Union, and other items all await implementation. He noted that new initiatives may rise out of the coming discussions, as well. He stressed that the PPG must remember that circumstances have changed since the Plan's inception in 2004 and the Group must be prepared to deal with those changes.

The President asked for advice on the replacement of a Staff Associate for the PPG, explaining that Ms. Justine Franz will be unable to attend meetings this fall. All in the Group stressed the importance of having a Staff Associate voice at the table.

2. Review of Mission Statement

The President noted that the Mission Statement has been adopted across a wide range of offices and departments which have used its language in their own mission and action statements. He called the Group's attention to the collation of responses received thus far from a request for comment sent to the Trustees and the Muhlenberg community on the Planning Documents (Mission Statement, Fundamental Institutional Values, Strategic Planning Goals, Strategic Planning Principles). He noted that the, as the deadline for comment is September 10, the discussion will not end at this meeting, since more comments will undoubtedly be received. Discussion followed.

3. Review of Fundamental Institutional Values

The President asked for comment on this document. A faculty member said that this document could be a very useful reference as academic departments begin to delve more deeply into assessment. It was noted that the Fundamental Institutional Values serve as an important adjunct to the Mission Statement, expanding at greater length on the ideals in the Statement. Discussion followed.

4. Review of Strategic Planning Goals and Principles

The President asked for comment on the Strategic Planning Goals. Responding to more comments from the community, several edits were discussed.

President Helm asked Chris Hooker-Haring for an Admissions forecast. Mr. Hooker-Haring stated that, beginning in the 2009 admissions cycle, the Northeast United States will see a decline in the number of college-bound students, a trend that will continue until 2018. Discussion followed concerning that trend and its implications for the College.

5. Review of Benchmark Group

Deferred to our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Butler