Steering Committee Meeting Notes
09/16/09

Five Areas of Cultural Change

- **Leadership Changes**

  o Focuses on our roles and what the importance of what individuals do – what we're all about. The narrative through this is what we've been able to do in spite of major leadership change. The accomplishments have occurred during all of those times.

- **Shared Governance**

  o Perhaps too much detail on the Handbook Consolidation in this version.

  o The potential is there for it to be ideologically driven, not educationally driven.

  o Rob: Worry about out Board of Trustees and the decisions our board makes. Feel like we have a board that's not particularly engaged and at risk of being more ideologically driven. That has the impact that has the potential to have a profound impact. Don't know what to do about it, the board is elected. Think the board is capable of making decisions that are not in the best long term interest of the students of this area. That is an area that is almost out of our control right along with state level financing. Rob's perspective as a long term faculty member feels the leadership of the college at that level at one time was "fighting the good fight" for the institution. Now, a very different feeling about the leadership at that level and the long term health of the institution is a concern.

  o Gary: This needs to be addressed somewhere. People will talk about it if they are asked.

  o Rob: I get the feeling, and I try to ignore this as much as I can, but I get the feeling sometimes that the board doesn't like us very much. That the board feels like people need to be whipped into shape and straightened out. I'm afraid that at some point they are going to get what they want and it's going to be a disaster.

  o Gary: Whether intentionally or not it is permeating the institution. In this document, Renee calls us "stakeholders" not employees. But symbolically we have changed the name of all of the handbooks that we put together now to employment or employment policies or employee handbook. That is an indicator of what is taking place at this institution over the last 5, 6, or 7 years. I view my role here as less of a stakeholder than I did a decade ago. Feel more like we are being treated as employees. I may be speaking only for myself, but I don't think so. I feel like it permeates from the board and our last president. But it has spun down into the things on campus.

- o Rob: The worst thing that can happen is for people to start working the comp/clock(?) time. If you start feeling like an employee then if we're going to punch a time clock then it changes the attitude. So in terms of challenges, I would say that one of the challenges that we are really going to have to face is to make sure that faculty and staff remain invested in the mission of this institution. And the way that they remain invested is to feel like they have an immediate and on-going say in the development and operation of the institution.

- o Sher: It's a summary in some ways of the pieces that we talked about. Ultimately we all need to feel proud that those, whatever that list is, we feel proud that we're working together to make it better. And it seems to feel like we're not doing it together and that we're not being supportive for doing new things because it'll make that better, it's very demoralizing.

- o Rob: A long time ago Gary said something about governance and that real governance is bottom up and when governance becomes top down, then it changes. We have had a tilt for top down, and even the board, but we've had more of a focus of top down and if it continues to tilt that way then at some point the change will be noticeable to students.

- o Gary: The tension is there now.

- o Sher: Apathy in faculty is very physically and strongly felt. (*couldn't quite hear this statement*) and to the extent that students have….. Our enrollment dropped after the last situation and it was hard to know whether people were unhappy with things at the top or whether it was some other variable.

- **Building a Culture of Assessment that Builds on a Long-standing Commitment to Student Learning**

  - o *Positive focus*

  - o *Passion in the #'s. change the Demographic trends to: Accomplishment should be the critical element (prove success/results*

  - o We used to focus on the fact that we are a residential campus

  - o We haven't talked seriously about what is an appropriate mixture of on-line vs. face-to-face instruction. We need to have some serious discussion about how to better integrate technology into out instructional program. What are the expectations of the engagement of faculty to students? We have worked very hard to move into the kind of on-line world that we now have, but in the rush to get there, maybe in our future, it is time to stop and take a breath and say here we are now is this is where we want to be. Is this the kind of thing that's going to work?

  - o The umbrella of maintaining a campus climate of intensive student engagement in the face of emerging/changing technology.

  - o Because we are a "highly residential college" there is a challenge that we're facing of adapting our instructional model to a new environment.

- o The facilities part of that is how we're managing the infrastructure - staff, training, and delivery of education.

- **State-level Changes**

  - o *Financial – we are dependent upon mineral funding – we must react instead of plan because of financial restrictions from the State.*

  - o *Innovation – not focus on Core Elements.*

  - o *Funding dependent on enrollment*

  - o Rob: Past performance is no guarantee of whatever that line is. It's like the stock market. Before there was a community college commission, when the commission was first formed and then when the formula was first developed, the concern here was that the formula was going put us on a downward spiral and that because of the FTE driven and everything, because of the fact that we weren't positioned to compete in the formula the way that some of the other colleges were, that we were doomed to eventually spiral down. I'm not sure that that's not still the case.

- **Increased Student enrollments and International Student Population**

  - o *Continuation of Student based (focused)*

  - o *Student access*

  - o We need to talk not only about increased enrollment but also about the idea of access.

Looking Forward: Five Challenges

- **Continue to innovate, implement changes, and use data for institutional improvement, student support, and curricular improvement.**

  - o Data driven decision making and assessment.

  - o Student success in developmental courses (Math, English)

  - o New developmental areas (computer skills) (financial management training)

  - o Developmental foundation

- **Replace faculty and staff approaching retirement while maintaining instructional curricular vitality.**

  -NWC is going to have to replace a lot of faculty, to the extent that the quality of our instruction here has anything to do with the fact that the faculty today, in three or four years, a lot will not be here.

  - o "To maintain the quality and vitality of faculty."

- o 25 to 30% turnover in the faculty and probably higher in the staff due to retirement, with anticipation of turning faster.
- o Succession policy? In Strategic Plan. Data needed.

- **Track transfer students to ensure that degree programs are preparing students for transfer, and focus on graduation and retention rates.**

  - o Transfer Issues – if we're the biggest in the state then we need a process/articulation survey. We need to focus on the fact that we are heavily oriented to academic transfer students – 70%, while other colleges in Wyoming, that focus is 35%.

  - o System to prepare students for transfer

  - o Process for insuring transfer smoothly

  - o Focus on retention continuation

  - o Retention/completion rates

- **Create a schedule for planning as well as a systematic assessment method.**

  - o Planning challenges – sustain our process.

  - o 20 years ago we got dinged on planning; 10 years ago we got dinged on planning. We are now creating a new planning regime that's only two years old. Any examination of the last 10 years shows that we have not been good at planning.

  - o Assessing our plans

  - o Institutional planning. Did we meet our goals? We have not been consistent in this.

- **Maintain an engaging campus environment in the face of changing technology.**

  - o *Mixture of on-line vs. face-to-face – better integrate technology into…*

  - o *Maintaining Campus climate in face of emerging/changing technology facilities*

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- What percentage of classes does a typical student take on-line?