Columbia College Chicago Strategic Planning

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Our Commitment to Student Success

Niki Nolin
Does Mark still use the term create a posse? They are asked to but aren’t given the tools to do this easily. Interdisciplinarity needs to be addressed quickly.

Pantelis Vassilakis
Head of Student Success defined it as employment and graduation. We are not an employment agency. We offer them an education. If we just want to graduate students we can just give them a degree. These are two important measures but the best way to measure is learning outcomes and whether or not students can show that they have met these outcomes.

21st Century Curriculum

Michael Niederman
Interdisciplinary work stressed with faculty and students. We have such an immature process in this area. It is a process we need to grow as a culture. There should be a book of 100 pathways through curriculum just as examples. We’ve made curricular structures that make it hard to get programs through and have an immature interdisciplinary structure.

Pantelis Vassilakis
Several students have said they see freedom in structure. We overwhelm them with options. We need more rigid structures to facilitate interdisciplinary study.

Debra Parr
Academic freedom is what we really need to fight for. There are no structures. You are trampling each other’s goals and objectives. You need ideas in place and structures. We need a better way to account for faculty time, use of space. We talk about internships but also mentorships are very valuable. Guidelines needed in college.

Steven Corey
We need to look at curriculum like we look at enrollment. Yesterday’s forum showed me that students don’t know what is being offered. We need to have those same structures for enrollment that we need for curriculum. What do other departments do? We have a divided faculty. I have legacy curriculum for lack of a better word. We need to have this conversation. What are we doing with our curriculum.

Ken Daley

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We need to discuss LAS curriculum. We talk about core but there are opportunities for LAS faculty to be integrated into many of the degree programs across the college.

Len Strazewski
Interdisciplinarity is 21st century curriculum. There is a lot of silo-ing that kills us. We have faculty with great sets of skills that have been silo-ed out. I have been here since 1988 and only recently has the college recognized that I can teach comic writing, etc. We have incredibly creative faculty that should be working in different departments with different students. I am in a battle over who gets to teach what kind of course. It is ridiculous.

Pantelis Vassilakis
There is tension between enrollment and this question of curriculum. We have to look ahead. There is no way to satisfy current demand and be looking ahead. Trust us. This is what other institutions sell. We shouldn’t be changing titles constantly to meet a marketing demand. We need to know what is going on in other areas.

Debra Parr
Does anyone find the course catalog helpful? Can anyone find it? It is not listed alphabetically by department. Students have said they do not know what we offer. There are things we can do at a technological level to give students better access to the curriculum.

Diversity and Inclusion

Carol Rozansky
This can be connected to any of the other areas on this list, both in content and in process. Education requires that every teacher takes a skills exam. Students of color and low socio-economic status were not passing. As part of our infrastructure we’ve started tutoring. This is not an easy topic but we need to look at how it is attached to all the other points.

Community Engagement

Pantelis Vassilakis
We’re shouldn’t be interested in the type of engagement that gives the community something but we should seek to get something. Best way is to brand ourselves. What do our faculty do? Students do? What are the valuable accomplishments in our field? Let us choose what we want to promote to the community. It is hard to engage a community when you have to explain who you are.

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Len Strazewski
Enrollment and community engagement. We’re lacking a professional infrastructure. Professional management that can facilitate what faculty need to do to move forward. For example, we have a lack of graduate education support. As another example, I am trying to access money from a grant but can’t find a way to get the money out because of our byzantine accounting structure.

Onye Ozuzu
We brought in a lecturer who is a specialist in hip hop with urban studies. Her status in the community and influence at faculty meetings has let us enter into the local street hip hop community. She shared learning that we couldn’t offer within the auspices of our set curriculum. With the CBA we are operating in an environment that provides no way to move resources from one area to another with flexibility. It is hamstringing us. We need to strengthen and clarify:
- 1- the qualifications we require in order for faculty to teach; and
- 2- A review process that allows us to make decisions about hiring.

Ken Daley
Community Engagement with respect to student learning. Internships are not something we’ve been able to do other than ad hoc department way. We need consistent support with internships in order to identify opportunities across city.

Optimizing Enrollment

Steven Corey
We need an honest conversation about what our size should be. I’ll throw out 8,000.

Len Strazewski
Adult learners, new programs, certificate programs. Journalism has two ideas for certificate programs. There is no process for evaluating or approving a certificate program. We don’t know where to take it. If we are serious about increasing enrollment we need a process with a target and resources behind it. It is stalling the program.

Peter Fitzpatrick
It is creating the support structures for these programs before they move forward. Especially on the international side of things. We create problems. There are several different bodies involved in the process for international students. To me it seems like everyone is not talking to one another. Other schools have heavily supported international offices. There is not much support nor clarity of process. There is

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much international interest in CCC since we are a different kind of school. We are a good match for many. But they have the support and we have hardly anything. Adult education can bring in new research, finances, could subsidize our undergraduate programs. We tried to get workshops going but they fell flat because there was no support, no advertising. Its not complicated, it just takes getting the right people together.

Tim Cozzens
(1) What size should we be and resources. Maybe this exists, but it would be helpful to have a college wide view of what the cost is per student per department. What is the allocation of space and resources per department? It would be interesting to have that view from the get go.
(2) As we talk about optimizing enrollment, we can’t forget that as we increase standards we are bringing in a group that is frustrated by the lack of rigor. Those are students that we want to keep but they have to be supported when they are here.

Debra Parr
We need to call into question the idea of growth. We need research before we take a stab at a number. What constitutes a good faculty student ratio? We’d love to be accredited but they have high standards for the ratio and contact hours. We have always had low contact hours because we were cramped. There were too many students. As Tim pointed out, a student body more prepared brings challenges we are not prepared for. Students find the lack of academic freedom here frustrating. They want to do things across the curriculum that they can’t (they are going to Hampshire and SAIC). Last summer, it was frustrating for faculty to spend tons of time preparing for things that fell through the cracks because there was no structure in place to help these programs be successful. There is no doubt they would be successful (such as summer workshops and adult education). We have faculty eager to do it. We should do low residency programs. We are researching it.

Pantelis Vassilikis
Increasing enrollment requires investment. We need to focus on what we can do for our current programs. Work backwards. What is the number we can accommodate for our senior level courses? Work back to incoming classes to max number of courses we can offer to incoming students. We did this and came up with 625 students. This incoming class has to be equipped and prepared. I prefer appropriate and substantiated selectivity. Working backwards, what are the qualities our students need to have in order to be successful and graduate? We should not make the question -- how many should be entering – our only focus. How many students do we need to keep running so we open more classes. We are opening the floodgates. Doing something new requires investment.

Carol

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I have a hard time putting together the first sentence. We go right into people who have already graduated. I’d rework that. In Early Childhood Education we have offered workshops (“seminars”). We knew there wasn’t a process so we invented one. We have a lot of names and addresses and used them to promote the program. But we didn’t know where to keep the resources and if we have access to them. Who is doing this and how do they get paid? We have one faculty membe doing this and being paid but I think this comes from the none budget, and some co-teach with her. If we don’t get the money in the department, where is the incentive? I wouldn’t mind sharing the money for overhead for the college. We wanted to use it for scholarships.

Niki Nolin
We need more support for graduate students. There is very little support for graduate education. I am new to it and I am astonished by the lack of support. MA program planned and approved and no way to promote it. I would also agree about workshops. The book and paper center and anchor offer workshops and it is unclear where the money goes.

Michael Neiderman
I am looking for focus rather than frenetic activity. For example, we had summer workshops that weren’t supported and they failed. We fire lots of rockets and hope to hit something. I think the target number is bigger than 8,000 but it should be a methodical approach.

Aligning Resources With Goals

Michael Neiderman
I know we need to look forward, but the College needs to look at the damage of the last 3 years. Everybody has a story. Every year the big knife comes and whacks us. The college is different because of it and that has been ignored. Unless we solve the deep seeded issues before we move forward we won’t overcome the problem.

The damage that has been done has to be part of the picture as we move forward. ]

Rosita Sands
I think we have to prioritize our goals. We need to make a priority those things that make our programs distinctive. We need to support the things that make us stand out – what attracts students to what we have to offer as opposed to DePaul and Loyola.

Sandie Allen

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For years the college has funded those marquee programs and enrollment continues to decline. The resources allocated to the bread and butter areas have been thinner. While I am respectful to those marquee areas – the students’ dollar has to be spent more wisely.

Ken Daley
We need nuts and bolts attention to processes and procedures that are fair and open – our budgets, how we replace faculty – a process we can all contribute to and have a fair shot being successful.

Debra Parr
I totally agree. There is a real discrepancy across the college about what the goals are. There is disagreement across and within schools as to what the goals are. Disagreement about what the needed resources are. What Ken is talking about for replacing faculty – that has been a moribund process for years. To Michael’s point – it has been damaging. To the marquee programs that get highlighted and those of us running the bread and butter programs funding the marquee programs... structures, systems, college-wide is critical at this juncture. The deans have fought it for years and the time of that is over and we hope the provost leads it out.

Steve Corey
There has been confusion from the very top with a president who doesn't like that we call ourselves an arts & media college. Many of us came here because that is what we are. We have an identity issue from the top that we need to clarify.

Len Strazewski
There was a board study to determine the elements Columbia needs to attract donors. In a survey, the people who attend events didn't want to give money because they didn't see us as a strong academic institution. That needs to be our target – increase the academic programs. We need to have real targets about what our resources are buying and how to fund our brand.

Michael Neiderman
Columbia was at one time thin at the administrative level. We now need less administration and more support. We need more support and less administration. There is no other way to say it.