Columbia College Chicago Strategic Planning

Achieving Our Greatness– Voice Your Ideas!

Faculty Senate
Friday, November 14, 2014
Room 401/600 S. Michigan Ave.
12:15-1:15pm

Questions pertaining to the Strategic Planning process presented by the following guests/Strategic Plan Committee Members:

Brian Marth, Director of the College Advising Center
Diana Vallera, President of the Part-Time Faculty Union

Our Commitment to Student Success (10 min)
In what ways should Columbia improve to ensure our students are personally, professionally, and academically successful? How should we define and measure student success?

• As a faculty advisor, sees students struggle with administrative issues when registering for classes (i.e. Student Financial Services (SFS), Health Center, and Housing holds), which students are unable to resolve due to personal finances, or just not knowing where to turn to for help
• SFS hold process is arcane and affects our ability to know how many students will enroll; affects student academic path because often students are forced to enroll the day before or of classes once the hold is lifted
• Students want to study a variety of subjects and the institution makes interdisciplinary study very difficult to maneuver;
  o majors start at the freshman level, if a student changes a major, that change can add length to the time on campus to finish a degree;
  o the college doesn’t necessarily need to follow the “2 year gen-ed, 2 year major courses” model, but can we develop ways to make the curriculum more flexible?
    ▪ Possible larger shared core; maybe all programs could offer a similar first year experience to provide fluidity for students
• Need someone with dedicated assessment of skills for graduate students in SFS; have previously made this request, but SFS states all agents are trained to help graduate students, but students/departments do not feel supported; let go of academic xenophobia and the rigid notions of what interdisciplinary study is
• Oasis is more labor intensive than necessary and lacks a feature to waitlist students for courses
• Get students to feel empowered to take control of their education – if advisors see a hold on a student record, give them the tools to fix it; students are not encouraged to be creative and inquisitive
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• Look at advising holistically – how do we advise, how are faculty given time to advise, look at what it will take students to graduate; faculty need time to advise correctly, or a more effective advising center
• Why do we still look at grades instead of portfolios and proficiencies? Focus on outcomes as opposed to grades.
• Since graduate programs melded into the system, grad students are now in the background; the institution is losing candidates because there are better options elsewhere; we need to make more of an effort to support graduate study, or figure something else out

21st Century Curriculum (10 min)
How can the College redefine itself and its curriculum to better prepare students for employment and lifelong learning in the 21st century?

• Curriculum change process is too long; technology moves too fast for curriculum approvals; possibly rethink the approval process
• The curriculum process does take too long, but it shouldn’t be allowed to change too easily; develop more open curriculum to allow for subsequent change
• Can we implement real-time student outreach on benchmarks from a metric standpoint, some sort of feedback or survey to show that we are hearing students
• Perhaps the metric used to serve students could also be used for alumni and businesses
• Can the college develop or support real assessment of what curriculum says – how is it assessed by performance criteria
• Updating LAS core: who do ALL students need?
• Flexibility in scheduling (e.g. a 2 week course offered over the summer has to be tied to specific dates)
• We cannot chase technology, but rather develop a robust curriculum
• Curriculum should be a stable structure to create pathways, students need a well-defined curriculum (e.g. To graduate from Columbia College Chicago, a student needs to be competent in “x, y, and z”.)
• Online learning: no vision, policy, or tools for people to follow to develop online courses; there aren’t any discussions as a college regarding online learning/courses
• Still have to have historical literacies, research, verbal, written, etc. – how we teach is up for further discussion, but the biggest challenge is how do we give students this and the experiential; give experience of applying first-hand
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knowledge by building it into the curriculum and encouraging faculty to work with students on the application of skills

• Redefine curriculum that we all buy into what we are selling – connect the dots to what the students are learning in class to real life (e.g. Show how Biology lessons can be applied in real life)
• APR (Academic Progress Reports) look very different from week 5 to week 6 – can the college look at the timeline of delivering APRs? Students are more at risk after week 5 than before; current students are more prepared than they were 10 years ago, but many don’t understand college and how seriously they need to take syllabi, policies, etc – how do we prepare students to succeed at Columbia?

Diversity and Inclusion (10 min)
How can we integrate the voice of “those who have been marginalized, neglected, or silenced” (“Redefining our Greatness,” Kwang-Wu Kim) into the educational, social, fiscal, and administrative fabric and processes of the College?

• The Department of Creative Arts Therapies is developing a course with students, and faculty nominated by the students; will be taping 6 planning committee sessions; course will be co-taught by students who will have the immersive experience of learning and developing curriculum; Special Topic SP15, 1 credit hour, Deepening Our Understanding of Diversity: I Am Not Your Normal
• Don’t just focus on diversity, but also equity; develop courses engaging with the community so students can apply skills
• The Dance department held a 3-day workshop on diversity, which changed the way people think about equity; department sees differences in students (e.g. white students now recognize their entitlement)
• Be diverse in how we talk about diversity; should be part of the pedagogy
• Can Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provide faculty with information on how to accommodate students with disabilities in advance of teaching a course so faculty are prepared; students need more than 10 counseling sessions/semester
• Counseling Services resources contrast with other institutions; can use more group counseling, current counseling model is antiquated
• Extend student access to Counseling Services beyond fall and spring semesters (summer and J-Session)
• Counseling Services and SSD do not have enough resources to support our student body
• Hoping the Strategic Plan Committee engages with members of the counseling and SSD communities for feedback from their perspectives
• Creative Arts Therapies held their own suicide prevention training session, concerned about lack of suicide training on campus

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• There is currently a much different socio-economic mix of students on campus due to tuition and scholarship funding (read: lack of diversity on campus); too many administrative hoops in place for students-at-large to enroll in the college – lack of diverse age range in the classroom affects class dialogue and student learning

Community Engagement (10 min)
How can we recalibrate our efforts toward sophisticated community-engaged work that goes beyond pre-professional training and looks to communities not merely as sites of service, but rather resources of knowledge, crucial to the student learning?

• New Arts in Healthcare minor offered through Creative Arts Therapies is a way of integrating graduate and undergraduate students
• Possible non-block scheduling to allow for more community engagement
• The model of community engagement is part of critical learning – what do communities want? Hard to find time for budget and support of initiatives, look at non-traditional studies
• There’s a desire on campus for interdisciplinary study and student agency, can we look for community-based collaborations as part of curricular structure?
• We should be a site of service – let people know what we offer in this institution, re-instate outreach program for people who want to take a class out of interest; offer our services to the community
• Administration needs to get to know the faculty better and draw upon its own resources to see how faculty are engaged in the community
• Dialogue:
  o This seems like a loaded and slamming question/doesn’t understand
  o Dr. Kim doesn't like the term “service learning”
  o The College should have a discussion about this
• College needs a vehicle for taking students to various sites off campus as opposed to relying on public transit or walking
• Socially-engaged practice – draw from artists or institutions engaged in communities, create a minor or curriculum to support this engagement
• Provide pre-professional training + community engagement

Optimizing Enrollment (10 min)
As we seek to grow the size and diversity of our undergraduate student body while increasing selectivity, what opportunities should the College explore? Such opportunities include: providing meaningful programs for adult learners, professionals, international students, transfer students, graduate students, and distance learners.
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- Manage the college’s size; we’re too big and doing too much
- Examine the relationship with Enrollment Management; there are too many developmental electives, students are accepted into majors where they can’t perform well; are we recruiting seat warmers or potential successes? We are heading toward selectivity, but not all students are challenged. We need collaboration with Enrollment Management.
- Students used to be able to take courses out of interest, but are now too blocked by the curriculum to do so
- It all comes down to money; why are we looking to get new students – for money? Education? How do new recruits affect our current students?
- Demographic of 17-21 year olds is shrinking – question #5 is targeting new students, but higher education has to grow/age with the baby boomers as they age; baby boomers are interested in enhancing education but also in expanding experiences
- The institution looks at grad students as an opportunity for growth, but grad studies are marginalized; need to establish a graduate dean or office of graduate studies; College recruitment should incorporate grad studies as grad students are not being recruited effectively into programs
- Our administration needs to think about how we pay faculty – where is the administrative and budget support for this path?
- Need a provision for online education or low-residency programs, as they are income-generating programs; optimize enrollment and increase revenue with online education

Aligning Resources With Goals (10 min)
At Columbia College Chicago we have high aspirations for educational excellence and student success. Like other colleges and universities we also have competing demands for resources- money, space, people and time. How do we best align our resources with our goals? How might we nurture a collective culture to make the best use of our resources?

- Budget transparency
- Upper administration should be open about what portion of the budget goes into their budgets versus into departmental resources (VP salaries vs. department resources)
- Need attention on endowment to improve retention
- Make Moodle work better for students and faculty; provide templates for faculty to use
- Focus - we try to be too many things for too many people; focus on transfer students, or pick one thing to make it good

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- Need to be flexible so faculty can be incentivized (e.g. If propose a workshop that would bring in money, faculty should be recognized for ideas brought forth and experimentation
- Student experience – quality of faculty impacts them and faculty salaries are not competitive; put money where we want resources
- Faculty are stymied and get caught up in rules of engagement between departments
- Scheduling: everyone works on different systems and calendars – the college should set standardizes development or teaching days to allow for faculty meetings and collaboration
- Faculty have been told not to fundraise; alumni lists were taken away from departments, and were not allowed to run a scholarship benefit; no fundraising development
- Faculty are a tremendous resource that need time available for collaboration
- We did not accept transfer students for 5 years, but are not making good headway; Academic Affairs committee did research last year on online learning, but haven't heard any follow up; the Strategic Plan is a new process, but will it get the same results as others?
  - Suggestion: Provide previous research in Civic Commons to get answers