COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION
Provost’s Council
Thursday, November 20, 2014

Strategic Planning Steering Committee represented by Dale Chapman (Cinema Art + Science) and Chet Kamin (Board of Trustees). Summary of discussion, not a transcript.

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

Susan Marcus, Associate VP for Academic Affairs:
We need more empirical data, measured against college-wide outcomes; we need to be willing to let go of “things we’ve always done” that don’t work anymore.

John Green, Interim Dean, School of Fine & Performing Arts:
Attended a conference overseas recently that was largely centered around these same questions, with the overarching theme, “What is our primary function as educators?” The consensus: to socialize our students (a concern superseding whatever happens in their majors). At every stage, we need to ask ourselves how we can ensure that our students leave this institution as educated, highly functioning adults capable of navigating a complex society.

Peter Carpenter, Dance / President, Faculty Senate:
When students don’t make it, it’s more often due to “an administrative hiccup that snowballs” than to academic problems; we need to do more to connect all these factors (academic, financial, emotional), including more counseling.

Murphy Monroe, Assistant VP for Admissions:
We need a college-wide commitment to student service; the paths that students can navigate to solve problems need to be clear and centralized – if they aren’t, we have failed our students. We need highly trained staffers who are both knowledgeable and accessible when students need help (a mobile app would be valuable).

Insook Choi, Associate Provost for Creative Technology Strategy:
We need to focus on practical outcomes. The college also needs a centralized IT.

Suzanne Blum Malley, Interim Dean, School of Liberal Arts & Sciences:
The lack of effective student services extends to the curriculum as well. The college explicitly used to not care about graduating students; that has changed, but it’s one thing to say we care – it’s another to put ideas into action.
**21st Century Curriculum**  
*How can the College redefine itself and its curriculum to better prepare students for employment and lifelong learning in the 21st century?*

**Stan Wearden, Senior VP & Provost:**  
Acknowledged concern about the turf-protection / encroachment mentality too many at Columbia seem to have – faculty are often too territorial about collaborating with those from departments outside their area of expertise, and that hurts students and our efforts to produce educated human beings.

**Peter Carpenter:**  
The arts could take a lesson from how liberal arts pitches itself; there need to be ways for faculty across schools/discipline to “find each other.”

**John Green:**  
A cultural shift is required at Columbia – programs need to be aligned in ways that make sense, the core needs to be revamped. He suggested that “we offer students too much choice.” We can’t force change into existing structures – we need to create new ones.

**Onye Ozuuzu, Chair, Dance:**  
We need to create curricular pathways to highlight the educational benefits of the smaller programs that are subsidized (in a de facto way) by larger programs, and connect those programs to an overall student experience.

**Susan Marcus:**  
We need to focus more on instilling a love of lifelong learning in our students (a process which encompasses all of the Strategic Planning topics).

**John Green:**  
We need to expand international opportunities; when students have them, they develop better.

**Diversity and Inclusion**  
*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?*

**Suzanne Blum Malley:**  
It’s easy to move in a small circle of people who share your beliefs and assume that everyone feels the same way, and it’s eye-opening to discover they don’t. Many different conversations need to be had about these issues, and we need to make sure that student voices are included.

**Insook Choi:**  
Courses that present multiple perspectives are important.

**Mirella Shannon, Associate Dean, School of Media Arts:**  
Sensitivity starts in the classroom – instructors have an obligation to ensure that minority voices of all kinds are being heard, and this must be holistically ingrained in the culture of teaching at Columbia.
**Susan Marcus:**
We need to have hard conversations amongst ourselves (about institutional racism / sexism / homophobia, our sense of privilege, etc.), and we need measurable outcomes for dealing with these issues.

**Suzanne Blum Malley:**
Spotlighted the Dance Department as a model.

**Pegeen Quinn, Assistant Provost:**
It’s important to be aware and respectful of the fact that people can have a variety of opinions, and to model this awareness and respectfulness in our own conversations.

**Stan Wearden:**
We often confuse intention with action (having your heart in the right place isn’t enough); we also need to examine our own behaviors – “What am I doing that’s causing this person / group to feel marginalized?”

**Insook Choi:**
These goals can be built into course outcomes, and those outcomes should be concrete, not abstract.

**John Green:**
These issues are at the core of our socialization efforts – not just for our students but for ourselves – and we need to be bold in dealing with them (“This has to be a spine of our institution”).

**Peter Carpenter:**
We need to look at race, first and foremost.

**Murphy Monroe:**
We need to take the kind of bold steps – making our housing gender-neutral, doing the same with our bathrooms – that force other institutions to take notice and emulate them.

**Community Engagement**
*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?*

**Susan Marcus:**
We need to build relationships with high school students and counselors.

**Peter Carpenter:**
Discussions at Civic Commons are occurring around service learning/outreach, and internships; in all these cases, no one really knows what anyone else is doing.

**Mirella Shannon:**
We need to serve the community, and that needs to be built into the curriculum and seen as an important outcome.
**Stan Wearden:**  
The college’s model of community engagement is moving away from a mindset of “We’re helping you – you’re welcome” to one based on a mutual exchange of benefits.

**John Green:**  
Our students don’t know the larger community very well (many of our faculty don’t, either).

**Pegeen Quinn:**  
We could build relationships with local nonprofit organizations, including collaborating with them on student projects.

**Mirella Shannon:**  
Agreed with the above, and emphasized that long-term relationships are crucial.

**Insook Choi:**  
Civic engagement needs to be strategic, including the branding of Columbia College Chicago as a civically-engaged institution.

**David Valadez, Assistant VP-Budget, Academic Affairs:**  
The efforts of staff members in this area shouldn’t be neglected, particularly in regard to coordinating large events.

**John Green:**  
The college could implement a “learning laboratory” concept, designed to guide the community to new ways of thinking about the arts and technology.

**Suzanne Blum Malley:**  
These topics need to be at the center of curricular initiatives, and need to go beyond a one-time class project – they must be built in all the way through.

**Optimizing Enrollment**  
*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.*

**John Green:**  
The question provides its own answer – we must look beyond undergraduate students. We need a robust graduate program, move forward with online and continuing education, and possibly open up the summer semester.

**Suzanne Blum Malley:**  
Summer opportunities should include distance learning. The college also should have some kind of mechanism whereby a professional might be allowed to enroll in a single course they want/need to take.
John Green:
Offering more options could keep students from going elsewhere to take core courses (something that’s often actively encouraged).

Mirella Shannon:
Online education would help the college retain students who work full-time, as well as others who cannot be on campus full-time.

David Valadez:
We need to open up our graduate programs to working students as well.

Insook Choi:
These programs need to be anchored to what we’re already doing to be successful.

Mirella Shannon:
Online courses require a different model and culture of how we teach – it isn’t just a matter of posting a few video recordings of lectures.

Onye Ozuzu:
Speaking anecdotally, students often want to take online courses because they don’t want to come to campus, for a variety of reasons (e.g., feelings of alienation or marginalization); they use distance learning as an escape from issues that may need to be addressed on an institutional level.

Stan Wearden:
We need to ensure that standards for online courses are consistent and “predictable” for students.

Aligning Resources With Goals
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?

David Valadez:
The first step is standardization – how we look at data and resources (e.g., budgets, use of classroom space) needs to be consistent.

Insook Choi:
Institutional goals need to be clearly defined.

John Green:
Our three-school structure needs to be redefined, and redesigned to serve our students; silos are endemic and systemic, and need to change.
Suzanne Blum Malley:
We need to stop incentivizing and rewarding the types of behavior that lead to the creation of silos; we need to stop seeing students as “ours” (i.e., belonging to our particular department or school) rather than Columbia’s.

Murphy Monroe:
Programs that aren’t working need to be eliminated.

Onye Ozuzu:
The faculty’s relationship to these goals (both full- and part-time faculty) needs to be addressed better.

Peter Carpenter:
The ratio of tenured and tenure-track faculty to students in many departments is out of balance.

Onye Ozuzu:
Agreed with the above, adding that in many departments, staff and part-time faculty end up feeling overextended and over-utilized.

Susan Marcus:
Staff members need support to navigate all the changes occurring at the college; HR could be encouraged to create more recognition/reward initiatives.

Stan Wearden:
Columbia College Chicago is at a point at which it needs to choose between doing a few things really well or doing a lot of things in a mediocre way.