

Comments on Strategic Planning White Papers

As of October 23, 2009

The five Strategic Planning white papers will be posted until October 23. The comments on the white papers are provided here. This section will be updated daily as comments are received.

October 19, 2009

Dr. Brian Ogawa
Chair and Associate Professor, Human Services

Academic Programs White Paper

IA.

Please include community agencies in your list of broader community.

In 1. Should not these track the categories of the proposed General Education themes/categories?

In 4. It may be difficult for the university to "change quickly" to changing situations. This also may be knee-jerk reaction to cyclical events. The university also must see itself as helping to set the standards and directions of change in society as far as the type of services/professions are needed.

IB.

In 1. We are not a "personalized private education" institution. We offer personalized education within a public institution.

In 2. These categories lock in the current transformational experiences and seems to imply that the current structure is set for the future prior to the review that is supposed to be occurring.

IC. How do you define health care? Outdated medical model only? Or will you consider a more holistic understanding of wellbeing?

ID.

In 2. What about incentives for faculty to allow faculty to incorporate best practices in oncampus general education also? Our being enamored with online education for a variety of good reasons should always be balanced with not penalizing faculty efforts and commitment to quality oncampus teaching.

In 5. What is meant that our general education is a signature program?

IIB.

In 1. What is meant by "comparative advantages"?

In 4. While we need to be on the cutting edge of things, the cutting edge is volatile and being redefined continuously.

Appendix A:

I.C.3. You have a array of "health professions" that needs justification/explanation, especially since you include Social Work but do not include Human Services (which usually generates more credit hours and is an important conduit to the MSW Program)!

October 21, 2009

Deborah Altus, Ph.D.
Professor, Human Services

The Mission Statement:

“Washburn University transforms the lives of students by creating opportunities to develop and to realize their intellectual, academic and professional potential leading to becoming productive and responsible citizens.”

Is this sentence grammatically correct? Even if it is, I think it’s clunky (especially “leading to becoming...”). I’d make sure to run this by someone who is an English expert to see if it can be improved. Also, is there a difference between intellectual and academic potential?

The Core Values:

I would love to see the value of “transparency” added to the list.

Academic Programs White Paper

In the section listed below (from the appendix), I was very surprised that Human Services was not included. The HS program offers concentration areas in addictions counseling, victim-survivor services, mental health, gerontology, and other areas that are clearly related to health. If Social Work is considered to be part of a centralized health professions program, it only makes sense that Human Services is also included. As an additional rationale, all nursing students must take HS 131 (Human Development) and will take electives from HS, such as Death and Dying. Some Social Work students and Nursing students also take our certificate in Addictions Counseling, and Health Education students must take one of our courses in Gerontology. Please make sure Human Services is added in the final draft of this section:

3. A centralized location would include the following health professions programs
 - a. allied health
 - b. athletic training
 - c. nursing
 - d. social work
 - e. Student Health Services

In the section below (from the appendix) on the Center for Faculty Excellence, I was surprised that there was a statement about highlighting and promoting best practices in distance education, but no comparable statement about highlighting and promoting best practices in on-campus classroom instruction. I hope the latter will be added.

C. Establish a permanent Center for Faculty Excellence as a resource for faculty development.

1. Offer support and recognition of interdepartmental and cross-campus collaborations.
2. Offer support and recognition of research activities.
3. Highlight and promote the best practices in distance education.
4. Offer support and recognition for developing hybrid courses.
5. Offer support and promote the best practices in the use of technology within the classroom.
6. Offer support and promote the best practices in student advising strategies.
7. Track, encourage and celebrate faculty contributions to the community.

Regarding the first year experience, I’m glad that the University is pursuing this topic but hope it will keep in mind how to offer similar services to distance students. Similarly, it will be challenging to figure out how non-traditional students fit into this experience, given that they often have full-time jobs and families. I hope there won’t be additional mandatory requirements put on first year students. While such requirements might work well for traditional students who live on campus and are going to school fulltime, they would not work well for non-traditional students and might even deter them from enrolling.

Enrollment Management White Paper

Regarding, "Revise the webpage to improve access to information and make the page more attractive to students," what "webpage" are you referring to? Do you mean the Washburn website? If so, I would agree that much needs to be done to make it attractive and user-friendly. One very important step in this process would be to make sure that ALL pages on the Website are coordinated and have similar features and styles. Most universities have mandatory style sheets for all pages so that they are coordinated and conform to common style guidelines for both ease of use and aesthetic reasons.

I realize that online course offerings may need to increase in order for Washburn to be broadly attractive. However, I worry that a focus on getting faculty to teach online courses will turn into undue pressure on faculty whose strength lies in campus teaching. Everyone should be able to teach to his/her strengths, and nobody should be pressured or forced to teach online. Please note that this comment is being made by someone who teaches two online courses per semester, so I'm not talking about myself. I just want to protect faculty whose strengths (and preferences) lie in campus classroom teaching.

Learning Environment White Paper

In regard to the section on upgrading the facilities, I think it is important to include a statement that addresses the need to make the facilities optimally accessible to people with disabilities. I realize that the ADA requirements help with this, but I think we need to be more explicit about addressing accessibility by ensuring that people with disabilities are deliberately included on committees related to facility upgrades/additions to ensure that WU facilities address the needs of students/staff/visitors with disabilities.

Overall Comments

I was disappointed not to see anything about improving faculty/staff morale and retention. I did very much like the inclusion of the Center for Faculty Excellence, but this center doesn't fully address what I'm talking about. High morale of faculty and staff is essential to providing quality services and education to students. I have watched a number of talented faculty members leave WU because they weren't happy here. I don't think this problem has to require huge changes or resources, but could be addressed with some simple changes, such as providing more opportunities for cross-campus interaction (e.g., more opportunities to attend faculty colloquia such as those run by Tom Averill), and deliberately fostering a culture of appreciation and cooperation. One simple way for Washburn to be less "top down" and for employees to feel that their voices were being heard and acknowledged would be to ensure that regular reciprocal evaluations occurred at all levels of the University on an annual basis. For example, it would make sense for the department chairs to be evaluated by faculty at the same time that the chairs do their annual faculty reviews. Similarly, the chairs should evaluate the Dean at the same time each year that the Dean evaluates the chairs, and the Deans and VP should hold reciprocal annual evaluations, and so on, up and down the ladder. I realize that this is probably supposed to occur already, but it has not been my experience that it is being done. If reciprocal evaluations became part of the culture of WU, I think that employees would be more likely to feel that their needs and concerns were being heard and addressed.

October 21, 2009

Susan Bjerke
Assistant Professor, Biology

Academic Programs Strategic Directives

Many of the wonderful ideas contained in this White Paper require additional funding to successfully complete (ie. new academic programs, centralized location for all health science programs on campus). While I agree with almost everything in this document, I doubt there will be financial support to realize most of these ideas.

Asset Development and Stewardship

I felt that most the initiatives proposed in this draft are contrary to the wonderful ideas put forth in the other four White Papers. I strongly oppose outsourcing non-academic services; the community spirit of *all* Washburn employees was one of the major factors in my decision to teach at this institution. Outsourcing maintenance, security, etc. would only serve to further fragment communication between different University factions and limit institutional pride. Washburn employees are very committed to the University: they give during the faculty/staff campaign, they attend sporting events, and they have a vested interest in making this campus something to be proud of. Outsourcing may produce a short term financial gain for Washburn, but will lead to bitter feelings and a less efficient infrastructure in the long term.

I am alarmed that this committee is very focused on further increasing enrollment. I believe that many of Washburn's strengths (ie. small class size, faculty with terminal degrees, etc) would be compromised if student numbers continue to increase, with not enough accommodations being provided for more faculty members. Since I arrived four years ago, some of my classes have doubled in size. This changes the way I must teach, and diminishes the opportunity for me to engage each student in discussion about the subject. I believe some measure of restraint must be used when advocating for such a large increase in students over such a short period of time. In addition, some departments have very little room for additional growth, unless supported by additional faculty lines and physical space. Very little consideration was given to these circumstances in this draft.

I am strongly in favor of improving transparency in University finances. I believe a more visible process, with more chances for feedback from faculty and staff, could increase efficiency in many departments. I also am in favor of faculty involvement in recruiting. Instead of using additional funds to hire a Marketing Director (a waste of money in my opinion), why not take advantage of wonderful faculty members who would love to talk about their departments and programs?

I am also strongly supportive of additional fees for specific student activities. For example, in the Biology Department, a moderate fee (\$10-\$20/student per semester) would cover most costs of running the laboratories. This would free up considerable funds that could be used to hire more faculty members!! I believe students would also be in favor of this system: they only pay for what they use. While this would not work for all student services, I feel it would be a fair way to raise additional funds in some areas.

Enrollment Management

While I do not propose that we stay "transfer unfriendly," I also hope that University members focus on the overall goal of educating our students in a given field. I would hate to see educational standards decreased, just so that more students will attend this institution. Many, although not all, of the transfer "difficulties" have arisen because students taking "similar" courses at community colleges do not receive the same rigor and depth of information that is necessary to succeed in additional coursework here at Washburn. We do these students no favors by allowing them to transfer in these credits and then watching them fail at their first attempt in a class on campus.

What I think is an excellent idea (and one I don't think was mentioned here), is better communication with community colleges about our expectations and which classes do and do not transfer. Many students fail to speak with anyone at Washburn prior to taking community college courses, and so are unaware that the classes they take will not transfer in as what they are hoping. If students at the community college level are better educated about our requirements, I feel we can maintain our high academic standards while earning a more "transfer friendly" street credibility.

Learning Environment

In regards to equipment and furnishings, the committee got it entirely correct when they observed that funds need to be available for maintenance and repair as well as for new equipment. Especially in the sciences, where a new piece of equipment can be very pricy, having service contracts and/or the ability to maintain and repair these expensive machines, can prolong the life of an instrument by several decades. The current system has few available funds for these types of expenditures, but a small investment now could save many more dollars in the future.

As far as the library goes, I don't think anyone thinks the current physical and/or electronic resources are sufficient for our University population (students and faculty). A potential idea is to create partnerships with other small institutions so that individual costs for journals and electronic abstract indexes are kept in check, but students still have access to a larger pool of information.

I am strongly in favor of simplifying "student services" so that all of these resources are in one centralized location. I think keeping these service departments open past traditional hours is a grand idea, but may be impossible due to budget restrictions.

October 21, 2009

John Burns, MS, ATC, LAT
Lecturer, HPEES

Academic Programs White Paper

As the interim Program Director for the Athletic Training Education Program I would like to submit the following comments regarding the academic program white paper of the strategic planning committee. Appendix A proposes a "highly visible, centralized location for all of the health care programs on campus" and expressly includes the athletic training program. Listed below are my comments:

1. The ATEP has roots in the HPEES (Kinesiology) Department and strong ties to the Athletics Department. The impact of any change to this academic program must be carefully weighed regarding the impact the move may have on these 2 departments. The impact the move may have on Athletics is of concern as the University Athletics - Athletic Training Room serves as the primary clinical education site for the AT Education Program, shares space and equipment with the ATEP, and the Athletic Department Athletic Trainers serve as the primary Clinical Instructors and adjunct faculty. Moving the ATEP to a different department and/or location must not fracture that relationship or strain CI's serving both Athletics & Academics. The arrangement of the ATEP adjacent to Athletics location/facilities is not only convenient but essential to efficient program function.
2. The ATEP must maintain national accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). This is required so that graduates qualify to sit for the national Board of Certification examination. Currently, our ATEP is undergoing re-accreditation including an upcoming site audit (scheduled for Nov. 1-2-3, 2009). Any change in the ATEP organization must be carefully weighed to ensure compliance with accreditation guidelines.

Respectfully, John Burns, MS, ATC, LAT

October 21, 2009

Dr. Iris Wilkinson
Associate Professor, Human Services

Academic Programs White Paper

Why would Social Work be listed as a health profession and not Human Services???? I don't understand!

October 21, 2009

Sue Peek
Administrative Secretary, College of Arts and Sciences

As I read through the various white papers I thought how nice it would be if Washburn had Live Computer Online Help. As I'm web shopping I would almost never pick up the phone and call to ask a question, even if there were an 800 number. But I am likely to ask Live Help if it is available. I'm already on the computer, so it's very handy. The response time is generally no longer than a phone call and has always been a pleasant experience.

October 22, 2009

Tom Prasch
Professor and Department Chair, History

My comments on the white papers:

All of them stress some interesting common themes, in terms of defining Washburn's specific identity (focusing on teaching, small classes, direct interaction), doing better work bringing freshman on board (a number focusing on freshman experience), and coming up with strategies to face current economic crunches.

Most could use, by the way, one more round of proofreading, especially attuned to comma placement and to compound adjectives (many missing hyphens, but those exception categories like "low enrollment" often having unneeded hyphens). Most could also use a round of rewriting just to bring the writing out of bureaucratese.

Specifics:

The white paper that seemed best to fulfill its aims without raising questions was, in my mind, that on Student Life. This one seemed clear and solidly argued.

Academic Programs:

The section on programs highlights contributions from a range of fields but inexplicably omits the social sciences. If we're going to specify every other general-education territory (and you do: sciences, humanities, arts), social sciences deserves its place as well.

The specific discussion of general education should begin with a definition of it.

In the section on "organization," the discussion of reallocation seems at least somewhat misguided. Sure, we're unlikely to realize greater revenues through government sources or tuition hikes. But does that really mean that we "will be" constrained to "reallocation" as this document suggests? That ignores the other obvious source of income: growth of enrollment. I'm a bit weary of getting the negatives without the positives in this sort of discussion.

Although the introductory statement about ISS under Support makes that assertion about "academically centered" technology, the statement fails to follow through with the needed next step: ISS must report to the VPAA (or Provost if we get one of those).

The discussion of the First Year Center needs to include, especially since this is an Academic Programs document, a clear discussion of a required Freshman Experience academic offering. We need a course, not just a center.

Assets:

Why the Assets Management group wants to filch on the Enrollment Management group's territory is unclear to me.

The premise that we need to "establish performance measures" ignores the fact that we already have.

The premise that we need to "evaluate low-enrollment [sic; one of those hyphens] sections, degree programs and academic departments" ignores the fact that we already do. It also reduces academics to an unsuitable business model of delivery, lacks any sort of nuance, and raises some pretty big red flags. Such blanket assertions really should be rethought.

This white paper talks about retention very abstractly. More concrete solutions are needed.

Then argument for "fast-track" programs needs to be carefully evaluated. We do not want to water down Washburn's degree programs by making it all too easy.

The discussion in the appendix of workloads, with the clear implication that ours are too low, is hugely problematic. Most faculty would make exactly the opposite argument, of course. Our faculty is increasingly thinly stretched, and increasingly at a disadvantage compared to other institutions.

If this white paper is going to critique things like WTEs and foreign-language requirements, it needs something better than "anecdotal evidence" as a base.

Learning Environment:

That new buildings wish list isn't going to happen soon. That being the case, we need to prioritize. With, of course, the library at the top of any prioritized list.

Enrollment:

I'm somewhat troubled about the suggestion that online offerings are really so simple and straightforward a solution as they are presented to be here.

It also seems clear that we need to target community-college populations more directly.

Those are my basic responses. Let me know if you have questions. Tom Prasch

October 22, 2009

Kim Morse, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of History

Asset Development

All of the committees had to work through a great deal of material and had difficult tasks to accomplish. I think, perhaps, that the Asset Development committee had the most difficult paper to write. I like specifically their recommendations on communication, transparency, and flat rate tuition. That said, I do have a few questions.

Under University Operations, point four on evaluating low enrollment courses, programs, and departments we need to keep in mind that some courses are low enrollment for valid pedagogical reasons. Though some departments may not produce many majors, there may well be valid philosophical reasons for them to exist in a public university whose value is more akin to a private liberal arts college. We also know that one of our assets is our small class size and faculty-student interaction. Though small may not immediately communicate economic value in FTE generated in one course or one program, small may have value in overall enrollment numbers. Would it be possible for the committee to clarify what they meant with that point?

Similarly, when the committee says "Evaluate appropriateness of faculty teaching loads" what does the committee mean? Do they mean that faculty's load is too heavy, too light? Is there a way to clarify the point? The point becomes a bit clearer in the appendix. Is there a way to bring that clarity into the white paper itself?

Outsourcing must be pursued carefully. While we may recoup some savings in outsourcing short term, we may lose face with our community partners. Financial savings may not be worth it in those cases. Other outsourcing options (google campus for e-mail, for example) may not produce similar complications with off campus partners. In short, savings must be placed in contexts that involve economic and political criteria.

Enrollment

Increasing the overall university size to 8000-9000 will be extremely difficult if we draw from the same sources we always have because the growth rates in the area are flat or shrinking. Does 8000-9000 mean full time enrolled or part time? If part time, the number is slightly more feasible by working with new markets. No matter what, to increase to those sort of numbers will require substantial resource investment, an investment that may not withstand careful cost-benefit analysis once one factors in the increased faculty and staff costs associated with providing Washburn quality courses and services to a population that much larger.

I am struck by themes that appear across white papers. All white papers emphasize the need for a comprehensive first year experience in one way or another. All but Asset Development note that diversity will be our reality. Most noted improved communication and transparency as university priorities. Three noted the centrality of the library to the creation of university culture. Can all of those goals (first year experiences, diversity, communication, transparency, the library) and the substantive program resources necessary to support them be accomplished with the current organizational structure? A First Year Experience requires resources from the three vice presidents, as we are now structured. Diversity requires working towards university goals using the same complicated steps. In that light, I think Academic Programs recommendation for a Provost becomes all the more compelling.

I wish you the best as you sort through all of these complicated matters.

October 22, 2009

Kevin Halgren
Assistant Director - Systems and Network Services

In response to the request for comments on the white paper:

Academic Programs Strategic Directives

I submit the following for your consideration:

The overall bullet point structure of the document should be revamped something like as follows:

Introduction

I. Topic Area

A. Issue (should be descriptive of the nature and scope of the issue)

i. Identified problem or area of concern(where applicable)

a. Specific corrective, prescriptive, or preventative action (where applicable)

Example:

Introduction

Intro text

I. Programs

A. Washburn must ensure that academic units must meet the current and changing educational needs of students

i. To enrich our broader community, Washburn needs to serve as a primary resource for K-12 education etc., Washburn will:

a. Continue to enhance foundational education in math, science, etc...

b. Emphasize organizational structures that promote interdisciplinary learning, etc..

Grammar:

Appendix A, I, D, 1

"Utilize the best teachers to grow programs – teaching the featured courses"

Statement is unclear, the dash should be eliminated and language reworked to make the idea understandable.

Appendix A, II, A, 3

"All regents institutions in Kansas has the provost structure"

"has" should be "have"

Appendix A, II, B, 4

"The Shawnee County provides 27 percent of the total Washburn General Fund budget, and would only growth in size concurrent with the growth of taxable sales within Shawnee County."

Should read something like "...will only grow to the degree that there is concurrent growth in taxable sales in Shawnee County"

Appendix A, II, B, 5

"Take process of program review seriously"

Is poorly phrased and is not prescriptive of necessary changes to address the perceived problem.

As it currently stands, this statement does not fit with the point being addressed.

Appendix A, III, A

"Technology at Washburn University must first support the academic mission of the institution"

Suggest removing "first" and "academic" Suggest "Technology at Washburn University must support the Mission of the institution. At present, faculty are in agreement that existing technology and support fail to meet the Academic Mission of the University."

Comments:

Appendix A, II, B

"The growth of existing programs and the creation of new programs will be funded by the reallocation of existing budgets"

Reallocation of budgets will not magically create new money. There needs to be a method to determine funding priorities and, ultimately, winners and losers.

Appendix A, III, A.

"Technology at Washburn University must first support the academic mission of the institution"

If technology support doesn't effectively support the business (administrative) side, the Academic side won't have the funds or students to function. A focus balancing resources across academic/administrative domains and an effective process, involving the VPAA and VPAT, to effectively determine and prioritize academic and administrative technology needs and demands would create greater efficiency.

Appendix A, III, B and C

Recommend attempting to manage new Centers within existing structures to minimize additional costs

Final comment:

Ultimately, in order to meet strategic plan goals and stay competitive Washburn must:

1. Increase sources of income and/or
2. Improve productivity of its existing workforce and capital equipment
 - a. Invest in appropriate technology and training
 - b. Engage in Business Process Analysis or equivalent study to ensure processes are performed efficiently and effectively and that unnecessary or less valuable work is eliminated or curtailed
 - c. Make effective use of its capital assets and purchase future assets with a view toward the strategic goals of the University
 - d. Focus internal investments on those areas likely to result in the highest return on investment

October 22, 2009

Dr. Brian Thomas
Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy

Academic Programs Strategic Directives:

I strongly support the the following items in this paper:

- * Emphasis on improved transparency and communication from the administration
- * Promoting the primacy of academic programs, especially those supporting general education
- * The suggestion to move authority for information technology to the VPAA and make that sector more focused on supporting academic programs
- * The emphasis on the importance of the Library

Asset Development and Stewardship White Paper:

A few comments:

- * A lower faculty teaching load, or at least a flexible load, would allow faculty more time for reflection to improve teaching, as well as to be productive in research. The latter can lead to an enhancement of finances by making grant proposals more likely to be funded.
- * Communication must be improved across campus - we seem to have a systemic problem of important information not being transmitted, especially from the top down.
- * Transparency in finances must be improved - no more last-minute, back-room deals.
- * Campus activity fees are a good idea.
- * We must be very careful about the desire to increase enrollment - we do not want to lose the important asset of small classes with personal attention from faculty.
- * We must do better at marketing WU as a place where students get close attention in small classes and where all students have opportunities, not just the top ones.

* The admissions office needs serious scrutiny - in my experience, they have a lot of difficulty with keeping track of information, communicating efficiently and effectively, and in many cases just communicating accurate information. An example - their phone number is not even on their website (and they were not aware of this until I pointed it out), and the website itself is not helpful or easy to navigate.

Enrollment Management:

* Dropping the non-resident tuition policy is a good idea.

* The website really needs to be clearer, easier to use, easier to find important information. The recent update did very little to help with this, though it looks a bit nicer.

Learning Environment:

* Yes, academic and administrative computing should be separated so that academic computing can function with more efficiency and flexibility.

* Support for faculty research and travel should be increased. In particular, the university should have a fund to cover page charges for publication, or at least to assist, when needed.

October 23, 2009

Dr. Rick Barker
Associate Professor of Computer Information Sciences

I am concerned about portions of two of the white papers, Academics and Assets.

In the academic white paper, I would have preferred to see something about traditional liberal arts education that should be the foundation of a university degree. In particular I think there should be a 5th item in part B of Section II Organization:

5. while maintaining a the resources for a traditional Liberal Arts Degree.

Within the Assets white paper, in three different sections I found some portions disturbing. There was an underlying thread that the faculty load is too low and then appeared to want to add extra duties to faculty responsibilities. As within the Academic white paper, I am concerned by the total absence in the Assets white paper of an acknowledgment of the need for a traditional liberal arts foundation (including some low enrollment classes) for a university degree. See below:

University Operation:

Steps 4 and 5 are of concern, we need to maintain the resources, both departments and faculty, for a traditional Liberal Arts Degree.

Marketing, Admissions, and Recruitment:

Step 4, how will that impact the discussion on faculty load?

Educational Programs:

Step 1, who would decide significant? The faculty in the discipline or an administrator?

Step 2, add while maintaining academic rigor.

October 23, 2009

Dr. Gloria A. Dye
Professor and Department Chair, Education

Please give consideration for Department of Education to become a School of Education.

October 23, 2009

Dr. Matt Arterburn
Assistant Professor, Biology

Comments on Strategic Planning White Papers

There are many great strategies and goals laid out in this document, many of which could move Washburn in exciting new directions. I do have some questions and concerns about some of the proposals, mostly in cases where I see potential for new initiatives to alter or reduce the features of Washburn that are particular strong, such as class size and student:mentor interaction. These defining characteristics of the Washburn experience are a strong draw for students, as well as for new faculty like myself. Obviously with any change comes risk, so I'd like to register both my support for many of the proposals and a few concerns about some.

PART I - ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

COMMENT #1 - Regarding Academic Plan

- This entire plan is very well written and makes substantial, progressive suggestions and includes supportive citations and examples. This is an excellent academic plan for the university. My compliments to the committee that assembled this document.

PART II - ASSET DEVELOPMENT

COMMENT #1 - Expanding on Point #2 of Retention (retain open enrollment policy) AND Point #4 of Educational Programs (expand Washburn Tech)

Consider Washburn Tech as a transition point for conditionally admitted students.

- Aside from a freshmen experience course and a survey system, there are very few suggestions in the Retention section for explaining how a 10-15% increase will be achieved. These initiatives alone may not generate the desired level of improvement.
- Could we explore the possibility of utilizing Washburn Tech as a transition point for conditional/probational students, to give them a solid foundation in reading, mathematics, etc. before entering Washburn proper? This might help accustom these students to the college experience while limiting the courses they initially take. This could retain Washburn's commitment to open enrollment while better serving conditional students in their transition to a four-year university experience. However, admittedly it might be jarring to divide students' time between the two campuses.

- Whatever plan is implemented, I think all parties are committed to improving our current system, in which a new conditional student can sign up for pre-medical chemistry in their first term, fail, ruin their GPA, and leave Washburn. A system of advising and support needs to be in place to limit these occurrences.

COMMENT #2 - Regarding the elimination of low-enrollment courses & departments and change of degree programs

How will decisions to eliminate courses/programs be made? Who will decide?

- Some extra language might be helpful to establish at what level(s) assessment of programs and courses will be carried out. Especially when suggesting that programs or whole departments be cut, it needs to be clear who will participate in the process (ie, departments, divisions, academic affairs committee, etc.) when such dramatic changes are required. Perhaps these nuts and bolts are not meant for such a broad document, but it is something to perhaps consider.

COMMENT #3 - Regarding Revenue sources, Marketing, Admissions and Recruitment

- There are many great ideas put forth in these two sections. This was very well thought out and successful implementation of many of these initiatives should enhance the expression of Washburn's image and quality.

COMMENT #4 - Regarding Enrollment

Will an expansion of the student body affect class size and the Washburn experience?

- Expanding Washburn's enrollment to as high as 9,000 (a 50% increase from current levels) may risk compromising Washburn's signature and most attractive feature: small class size, low student:mentor ratio and personalized academic experiences. Such an increase would need to be coordinated with a concurrent increase in resources and faculty to maintain the characteristics that make Washburn stand out among our counterparts.

COMMENT #5 - Regarding accelerated programs

Does accelerating students through our programs significantly increase revenue in the long term?

Will the proposed accelerated programs provide our students with an academic experience that is suitably rich and immersive?

- I am curious as to whether accelerated programs, which could end up effectively of rushing students out of our school, would really contribute to retention, recruitment or revenue in the long term. Won't moving students quickly through Washburn mean they will spend less time less time living in the LLC (less revenue), using our campus resources or interacting with their peers and mentors (our signature feature)?
- I worry that an accelerated experience will be a less rich experience. The idea also seems antithetical to both the spirit and logistics of the Transformational Experience, which is designed around student immersion in an academic and/or cultural environment.
- Decreasing the amount of contact students have with our campus community may also shrink the size and commitment of our alumni base.

PART III - ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

COMMENT #1 - Regarding transformational experience & scholarships

Could making WTE optional free up some funds for new scholarships to encourage enrollment?

- The Transformational Experience provides excellent opportunities for student scholarly and cultural activity and is a boon to Washburn’s reputation and academic standing. However, recently, serious weight has been given to making the Transformational Experience program optional or “honors” rather than required. This is based at least partly on the perceived “transfer-unfriendliness” of the program.
- I believe strongly that the WTE needs to be available for students who want this experience. However, if it is made optional, how much of its current funding could be redirected into scholarships to attract new students? This might get “two birds with one stone”: increasing transfer friendliness and encouraging new enrollments with financial incentives. Is this possible with the current budget structure?

COMMENT #2 - Regarding non-resident tuition and flat full-time tuition rates

These are excellent ideas.

- Recruiting students from contiguous states will open an entirely new source of quality students. This would need to be well-coordinated with marketing efforts, attracting students based on the quality of our programs, the competitiveness of our tuition and our record of student success upon graduation.
- Is this permissible within our current funding structure?

COMMENT #3 - Regarding expansion of online courses & accelerated programs

Will accelerated programs yield more revenue in the long term?

Online courses are not feasible for all academic programs.

- Is there a chance that accelerated programs could *negatively* affect enrollment and revenue? It seems like students would spend less time on campus, less time living in on-campus housing, less time using the services at the union, etc.
- Students may be more disconnected from the university and student success upon graduation could decrease because they will experience less mentorship, advising and career placement from their department.
- Online courses work very well in some areas, but are not feasible for some segments of Washburn’s offerings, particularly health-related degree programs for which Washburn is known, as these require hands-on work.

October 23, 2009

Dr. Shaun Schmidt
Associate Professor, Chemistry

Comments for Asset Development and Stewardship White Paper
 DRAFT 10-16-09

My comments are of a general nature. The Asset Development and Stewardship plan seems to be a fairly traditional business approach. Questions that seem to be effectively answered include: "How can we crank out more widgets (student credit hours)?", "How can we increase profit margins by eliminating costs (primarily salaries and wages)?", "What product lines are not productive and should be cut (University operations point 4)?", "How can workers crank out more widgets (by potentially increasing faculty contact hours) and thereby decreasing research/scholarly/leadership/community service activities which don't directly generate widgets (please view

http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation.html)?"

Answers to these questions which are presented in the white paper will generate modest short term gains. But without proper perspective they will lead to the demise of the quality of education that Washburn currently provides and can capitalize on in the future. The problem with the white paper as it currently exists is not in the answers provided but in the size of the questions asked. We need to quit trying to compete with the local community colleges for a few hours here and there and start acting like we are competing with the Truman States in the country. (Yes, a major paradigm shift!) We need the Asset Development and Stewardship subcommittee to ask and answer big questions like:

"How can we leverage our outstanding Nursing Program to provide the region with the large number of nurses we will need for the foreseeable future as the Babyboomers are getting up in age?"

"How can we leverage our outstanding science programs and develop partnerships with the medical, pharmacy and veterinary schools in the country?"

"How can we further develop our Department Education offerings to help develop the current teachers and provide the influx needed in the future?"

"How can we leverage our leadership in Business Education?"

"How can we sell a Washburn Education as a truly transforming experience (aka a name brand that is worth the cost) and not just cheaper than the generic regents school down the road?"

October 23, 2009

Dr. Patti Bender
Assistant Professor, Health, Physical Education, and Exercise Science

Academic Programs

1. **"Emphasize organizational structures that promote interdisciplinary learning and application of knowledge."**

a. Understand the difference between *"interdisciplinary"* (Boundaries are taken down between disciplines and fundamentally new thinking results.) and *"multidisciplinary"* (Contributors represent their areas and cooperate to produce work that is broadened by multiple perspectives.). At Washburn, it is common to say "interdisciplinary" and mean "multidisciplinary." Because the new Values statement includes *innovation* as a core value, interdisciplinary work is the better goal.

b. Organizational structures that would promote truly interdisciplinary work would ignore or dissolve traditional departmental identities. Scholars would be free to explore all ideas, and peer review, not the university, would decide whether their contributions had merit. Washburn is way behind in this respect, but universities across the country have dared it and are already reaping the benefits. We need to catch up.

2. **"Continue to provide a personalized private education..."** This statement is inconsistent with later suggestions to increase online courses and otherwise package educational modules for consumer convenience. A personalized private education is time intensive and effortful for the student; that's why it is so valuable. We need to be clear about what we really want to accomplish. "Reduced contact/easier" and "excellent" rarely travel together.

3. Goals re: **"health care programs"** This section lacks understanding of the relationships between and health-related programs and the needs that they have.

a. Why these choices? For example, why include "social work" as a health care program but not "health education and promotion"?

b. Why is it “necessary” for health care professions to be closer together? Athletic training needs to be where athletes are, not where other health care workers are. Do any of the other health care professions need to be near athletes? Are the organizational and spatial requirements of nursing the same as those for respiratory therapy?

c. On the one hand, we argue for interdisciplinary relationships, and in the next breath, we say that we should segregate areas by interest. I would argue that it may be better for allied health to be near Psychology and athletic training to be near Business and nursing to be near Political Science than for allied health, athletic training and nursing to be in their own conclave.

d. Do we intend to use the Student Health Services as a lab? Is this wise? How would privacy issues be resolved?

IIIA. Technology: Technology includes more than computing. Add a statement to include the many other kinds of technologies that may be important to fields of study and practice. (e.g., equipment in the lab sciences, devices for therapies, etc.)

First Year Center: “Centers” at Washburn have generally performed poorly. They understand the requirements of later majors far too poorly. I’ve spent a career correcting the mistakes of our advising “centers.”

Establish a permanent Center for Faculty Excellence as a resource for faculty development: We do not need a Center for Excellence. We need real and tangible support. Here is a partial list:

1. Pleasant and workable offices
2. Ergonomically adjustable furniture and equipment
3. Health and wellness programs at no cost, just as they are for students
4. Freedom to study what we wish
5. Freedom from reports that aren’t read and committees that are ineffective
6. Reduced faculty loads: teaching, committees, reports, advisees
7. Free time during our work days to invest as we choose
8. A place to meet casually with other faculty, without an appointment
9. Walkways and gardens and open spaces, in and out of doors, for thinking and contemplation.
10. Recognition that thinking and contemplation are important to our intellectual lives.
11. Places to “study” as distinguished from the in/out boxes that are our offices (designed for student and administrative ease)
12. Adequate laboratories for our research, whatever a “laboratory” might be for our fields
13. More money for travel
14. Research expectations that are realistic for the load we carry and the resources available to us.
15. Recognition of the differing needs of faculty at different stages of their careers and support for them
16. Light, facile administration that makes it possible to be innovative (vs. slow engines that ensure our ideas will be outdated or co-opted by others before we finally get to pursue them)
17. Recognition of the importance of an intellectual life for the faculty member and an intellectual climate for the university

A general comment about “Centers”: In the main, Centers are things for administrators to point to as accomplishments. Money is spent on a building and on more administrators. Meanwhile, the real work awaits. Start doing the real work that needs to be done. If a building is then called for, build it. If more organizational help is needed, hire it. But don’t start with the extras; start with the work.

A general comment about “Faculty Development”: Multiple suggestions in the appendix are about improving delivery to students, with single, vague “support and recognize” statements for the other work that faculty do. Recognition is empty when it lacks understanding. We don’t need more news releases or awards. We need mutual awareness between colleagues, which comes through sharing and common experiences, not through awards and announcements. We need appreciation from administration, which comes from Chairs and Deans knowing what it is that we do, what we teach, what our interests are, and knowing that well enough to have a conversation about it, unrehearsed and unprepared.

“Central to the intellectual, cultural and social growth of the campus are the University Libraries.” How can this statement be made and then followed by ideas focused only on the students? Just as important to the intellectual, cultural and social growth of the campus are the **Faculty**. As library expansion and function are considered, please include consideration for the way that faculty will use it, the ways that their collaborations might be aided, the possibilities for serving as incubators of thought. The students leave in four years. The faculty remains. The library building and resources need to be designed with consideration for both.

Asset Development

Outsourcing: Remember to consider the effect on our sense of community when we outsource. Washburn already suffers from a lack of cohesiveness and mutual identification. Be careful.

Performance measures and economics: Remember what our business is. We thrive when we retain all of the voices, not only the popular ones. Is the most popular field the one to keep, economically? What about when the winds change, and popularity moves elsewhere? Take a long view. Universities exist for centuries.

Faculty load: This is the most important issue. The quality of work done here depends on it, at all levels. Get this right, and we have a chance at the rest.

Educate Campus departments about... maximizing revenue and minimizing expenses. This is condescending. We are fully aware of the limits of revenue. We have been squeezing water from stones for years. Factory productivity models have problems when transferred to this business. We need to be smart financially, not to meet financial goals but to meet our real goals—scholarship, teaching, and service. When we initiate as though the financial goals are our real ones, we set the wrong targets.

Enrollment: We should not increase enrollment. We do not have the faculty nor the classroom space nor the library and other resources to support them. Students are more expensive than what their tuition provides. We should figure out how to do better by those we have before taking on more of them. Note the later comment about “small class size” being a distinctive quality. Without the ability to hire more faculty, increased enrollment eliminates small class size.

“Caring faculty holding terminal degrees in their fields”: The minimum requirement to remain in (4-year) college teaching is the terminal degree. This is like saying “We have great doctors here; they all passed medical school.” If we are going to market ourselves, we need more than minimum requirements and to compete against more than junior colleges. Change to: “caring faculty who are intellectually engaged in their own academic lives and in those of their students.”

Faculty efforts at student recruiting: What would you have us *stop* doing so that we can take this on? We are already overloaded by our current responsibilities.

Retention: The “science” of retention is not sufficiently advanced to know what to recommend. It’s like lasting love in a marriage; we all want it, but who knows, for sure, how to get it? Therefore, setting specific goals when we don’t know how to achieve them is premature. Let’s work at it, but let’s not get too wrapped up with numbers that are really wishes.

Educational programs: Harder requirements could be viewed as “disincentives.” Writing, exams, upper division, lots of math... Give me any program, and I’ll find a requirement that is a “disincentive.” This is silly. We create our educational programs to have academic integrity, based on national standards and the judgment of a learned faculty. We espouse “integrity” as a core value. Nowhere did we list “ingratiating” as a value. Our job is not to change our programs so that they appeal to the 18-year-olds without mature perspective who may want to come here. Our job is to do such a good job with such an excellent program that we attract the kinds of students who will thrive here and then tell others about us, and we have businesses begging for more of our graduates.

Learning Environment

“Generally speaking, the physical environment of Washburn is in good shape...” If this means other than maintenance, I disagree. We lack casual meeting spaces for students and faculty. Like Topeka itself, we lack a central core that draws people to it. We lack outdoor paths for walking and contemplation (“Paths” are not sidewalks), and we lack spaces with easy access for easy sharing between students and faculty across the university.

I suggest a Plaza to be built between the Union and Mabee Library. It could have a snack bar, tables with umbrellas, gardens adjoining. It would be a spillover for library traffic, an attracter of people toward the library and Union, and a pleasant space to bring guests to the university.

I suggest the redesign of our go-nowhere sidewalks to create a system of interesting paths and smaller clearings for casual study and meeting. See the efforts of Clemson University. It has taken these goals to heart and created a campus with a vital sense of community and engagement.

Where is the faculty? Why is it that there are no suggestions for improving the learning environment for faculty? We really need to get away from the idea that we all got trained in graduate school, and now we simply dispense what we learned. If we are not all learning, actively and continuously, then we are not fulfilling the purpose of a university. We are not simply a dispensing facility!

Please re-do the entire learning environment section to show that it is all of us—faculty, students, staff, administration—who deserve good learning environments. We need a culture of learning, a place where learning is loved and respected, where curiosity is prized and innovation is constant. We need faculty to know what each other is doing, to stay alive intellectually, to generate the kind of electricity in the air that infects everyone who steps on campus. We need a learning environment that inspires, nurtures, and invigorates... everyone.