



Strategic
PLANNING

Chancellor's Campus Dialogues October 10, 2007 – Campus Climate

Fifty-eight faculty, staff and students attended the Dialogue. The group began by identifying some of the assumptions held by the group:

- Belief that change won't really happen
- Fear about how resources will be aligned with planning
- Belief that in the past we have had difficulty prioritizing and aligning budgeting with our plans; can we do it this time?
- Attitude by some on campus that change is fine, as long as it doesn't impact "me"
- History of being good at talking about issues, but then not doing anything about them
- Fear that the potential negative State budget will adversely affect the positive momentum of our planning so far
- Fear that the State budget could paralyze us and prevent any new initiatives or effective change
- Attitude on campus that we need more time to assess the impact of the proposals
- The limitations of our physical plant are affecting our academic goals

Over 90 minutes, the group addressed a range of themes, focusing primarily on elements of the campus culture that need to be nurtured or changed; communication challenges; our budget process and need for more transparency; opportunities to expand our student population beyond traditional students; and the role of graduate education.

Below are notes taken during the discussion:

- We have a culture of cooperation: we are committed to doing what it takes to serve our students.
- One of the costs of this commitment is that our workloads have increased as our resources have been cut.
- Many faculty and staff want to change, but the difficulty of doing so wears us down. We want to be more nimble and responsive, but our own procedures and policies don't make that possible.
- We should be proud of what we have accomplished. We have done well. But as the Chancellor has described, there is a lot of competition and we need to change if we are going to compete. People understand this.
- One assumption we have is that the ideas of the strategic plan will just become added responsibilities—another add-on.
- Key word to remember is "transition." Our planning ideas will not happen all at once. They will be phased in, developed in pilot programs, experimented with.





- A student commented that there is a disconnect with students—few know about the planning or activities. Difficult to communicate or understand how the university is run. There is a real barrier between the main campus and hilltop.
- There is little understanding across the university of how the budget process works. That breeds fear of the unknown. We need to find ways to help people understand our budgeting.
- We talk about our “campus culture” but we’ve never measured it. We need to benchmark it—do a survey to find out what the communication is like. Then we can have a discussion about what we really know.
- We need the courage to address and change what are often self-imposed policies that hamper us from working effectively.
- We have a lot of “stars” at this university—great students and faculty doing amazing things. We need to support one another more—recognize the good work we are doing and celebrate it. We need intentional effort.
- What about re-thinking what the baccalaureate degree should involve—what the summation of the student learning experience really should be and then translate that into a curriculum that our students can accomplish in four years.
- This is huge!
- Yes, we need to do those big things—but what about also doing the smaller things that we can accomplish now, so we can see some success. Like how about fixing travel procedures. One form.
- Need to keep the big ideas alive and simultaneously tackle the smaller things we can do now.
- The Chancellor talked about the need for growth to support new ideas, especially in the face of State cutbacks.
- What about our student demographics? We know they are changing—not just traditional students.
- Comment about the importance of keeping graduate education part of our planning conversations.
- A discussion about the limitations of the budget and State inaction process focused on the need to find ways to increase sources of unrestricted dollars as well as examining additional revenue sources.
- There was support for looking at alternative methods for delivering learning—evenings, online learning, etc.
- As a university we need to do a better job of communicating to external constituents what we do and our value to the community.
- One barrier to cooperation is that UW-Eau Claire has a strong us/them attitude between faculty and staff. Some staff have heard faculty say that because two people were hired to work in Student Services that means having two fewer faculty. Chances are, the Student Services positions were funded by a federal grant, so those positions would not hurt faculty positions in any way. Instead, the positions would help faculty by taking care of student issues that would otherwise require faculty time. When planning, we need to get beyond this competitiveness between faculty and staff.