



Strategic
PLANNING

Chancellor's Campus Dialogues October 22, 2007 – Academic Mission

Seventy-five faculty, staff and students attended the Dialogue. The group began by identifying some of the “best practices” for learning at UWEC on which our future should be built:

- Collaborative faculty-student research, inside and outside the classroom
- Student presentations
- Faculty/staff interaction; teaching focus
- Strong base of programs and large number of students offers a broad educational experience
- Public institution
- Our focus on teaching and scholarship of teaching & learning
- Transformative experiences
- Respect for our students

Over 90 minutes, the group addressed a range of themes, focusing primarily on the changing student demographics, the role of graduate education, the values of a liberal education and how the educational priorities of the university can be funded.

Below are notes taken during the discussion:

- Our student demographics are changing—we need to look at who we are serving and what our students will look like in the future. What about growing our graduate programs as a way to serve our region and contribute financially?
- We want a strong faculty/student undergraduate research, which support our departments. This is what you build a graduate program on.
- The question is whether we are a public liberal arts university or a regional comprehensive.
- The response to this question was “yes, and”—all our students receive a liberal arts education.
- Too often in regard to graduate education we have a scarcity mentality; assuming that adding a graduate program will hurt an undergraduate program.
- In past, having a graduate program has impacted negatively on the size of undergraduate classes.
- What is the financial model on which you base graduate programs? Need external funding? Need data on needs and opportunities.
- Some professional fields now require and MA as an entry-level credential and we need to respond to this need.
- In Nursing we need to grow our graduate programs in order to fill the shortage of instructors—need to grow our own.
- Graduate programs also attract international students, which add to our campus diversity.



- In light of the expected demographic changes, we may not be able to rely on undergraduates for student growth; numbers are declining. Need to look at alternate sources: online graduate programs, non-typical programs geared to nontraditional students.
- Need to look at graduate programs not as we have in past, with traditional models, but be more creative in exploring graduate opportunities.
- We need to maintain our resource base through undergraduate recruitment AND explore the development of new programs
- Growth is an important strategy. Without it a smaller institution will mean fewer faculty and staff, lower status in the System
- We need to look at our budgeting process. Redistribution will be needed. We've had significant changes in enrollment.
- Need to grow the university and focus on the strengths.
- Some faculty have been
- We cannot keep being all things to all people. We have looked at program prioritization and should look at that again.
- We need ways to continuously rethink how we allocate dollars internally.
- But are we prepared to deal with the firestorms that change will produce?
- Do we have opportunities in this region for more adult education? Globe University (new for-profit locating in Eau Claire) thinks so. What else is under our nose that we could take advantage of?
- If we are to improve quality and maintain the same numbers of faculty and staff we must grow our resources, while maintaining our selectivity.
- One program is that there is competition for FTE on campus, which blocks change. Need to assure people that changes will be transitional—not abrupt and immediate.
- One element of a liberal education is that of civic-mindedness—preparing future citizens. Also the idea that learning will be transformational. Can our students graduate without having any of their existing beliefs challenged?
- We need to talk about the values of a liberal education—civic mindedness is not being addressed. Our service learning program is seen as a requirement but not intentional or linked well to liberal learning. We are promoting “mandatory volunteerism”!
- International experiences and internships are also not always integrated into learning.
- Undergraduate learning must be connected and integrated.



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