

Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

March 11, 2020

The Strategic Planning Committee met on Wednesday, March 11th at 11:00 a.m. in the Sandridge Student Center Banquet Room. Present were Mr. Jamie Adams; Ms. Courtney Boaz, SGA President; Ms. DeAnne Boseck; Ms. Bethany Campbell; Ms. Pam Clark, Recorder; Ms. Phyllis Claxton; Dr. Joe Delap; Ms. Jackie Gooch; Mr. Jeff Guenther; Dr. Diann Hammon; Ms. Laura Beth Horn; Ms. Belinda Krigel; Ms. Sarah McAbee; Mr. Mike McCoy; Ms. Rachel O'Sullivan (Ferguson proxy); Mr. Derrek Smith; Dr. Jackie Smith; Ms. Debra Vaughn and Dr. Philip Way. Guest attendees were Ms. Felicia Mucci, Ms. Morgan Stanford, and Mr. David Walker. Mr. Ronnie Chronister, Dr. Keith Ferguson, and Dr. Darlene Turner-White were absent.

Dr. Way called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He asked everyone to introduce themselves for the new members. Dr. Way asked for any amendments or an approval of the February minutes. There were no amendments to the minutes and they were approved on a voice vote.

The focus for the meeting was to set institutional goals and targets for the next three to five years. The members were divided into four groups to discuss and make notes on preselected targets.

Group 1: Recruitment, Success, and Student Experience

Members: Ms. Courtney Boaz, Ms. Bethany Campbell, Mr. Jeff Guenther, Ms. Sarah McAbee, Ms. Felicia Mucci and Mr. Derrek Smith. Group notes for defined targets include:

The Title III grant has outlined some very specific strategic goals for retention and diversity to include into the master university strategic plan for the next 3 to 5 years.

Recruitment - total, diversity, quality

- Diversity (from Title III): While Athens State's diversity has improved in recent years, as a campus we are striving to make our student body better resemble that of our primary feeder institutions. Our primary feeder institution's student body is 17.4% African American and 5.3% Hispanic, while Athens State's enrollment is 13.9% African American and 2.6% Hispanic. The five-year goal is to increase diversity of underrepresented populations among students to reach 16.0% African American and 3.5% Hispanic.
- Enrollment: The most recent strategic plan sought 1% annual growth in credit hour production and enrollment. Enrollment is comprised of both recruitment (new students) and retention (continuing students). Due to the projected downward population trend in Alabama, it might be wise to use other enrollment metrics. Examples recruitment metrics include yield (the number of admission applications that result in student matriculation) or a change in new students pegged to regional population projections. Possible retention metrics are annual change in credit hour production by college, student FTE by college, and college- or program-specific retention rates. Both enrollment and retention metrics are important, as the state's proposed performance-based funding model would emphasize degree progression and degrees conferred.

Student Success - retention rates, graduation rates, and career readiness

- Retention (from Title III) over five years:
 - Year 1 retention will improve from 71.6% to 76.6%
 - Year 2 retention from 55.6% to 58.6%
 - Year 3 retention from 32.3% to 35.3%

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- Career readiness measurements: Evaluate students' career readiness upon entering ATSU compared to their career readiness following completion of UNV 300 and UNV 400. This would require incorporating a pre-assessment in the first semester within UNV 300 and a post-assessment in UNV 400 or other set class taken closer to the end of the curriculum.

Student Experience –

- The group briefly discussed new initiatives in Student Activities and the Student Success Center; however, discussion time expired before the group was able to identify any specific targets.

Group 2: Curricula and Pedagogy

Members: Mr. Jamie Adams, Ms. DeAnne Boseck, Dr. Joe Delap, Dr. Jackie Smith, Ms. Morgan Stanford, and Mr. David Walker. Group notes for defined targets include:

Curricula – new, level, quality, agility

- The group's conversation began with an idea for a new area of academic focus: Homeland Security.
- This area of specialization is not available elsewhere in North Alabama and therefore constitutes a niche degree/ minor opportunity that takes advantage of the strength of our Criminal Justice program. It makes sense to begin with an 18-hour minor/ certificate program attractive to FBI and other law enforcement professionals in the region.
- Other opportunities for curricular innovation will be informed by conversations with Boards of Visitors, community college partners, the Strategic Array Team, and Incubator Teams from across the university. Our agility in determining new programs and bringing them quickly to market addresses the Governor's 2025 initiative.
- Quality of programs is assured by the integrity and qualifications of our Faculty and attested to in our program and institutional accreditations.
- Metric: Number of new credentials that reflect our agility and proficiency in addressing workforce needs.

Pedagogy – experiential and modality

- The emergence of adaptive learning and competency-based pedagogy nationally and, to a limited degree, on our own campus allows for efficient, affordable pathways with open modalities leading to certificates and other micro-credentials focused on validated learning outcomes. Our Faculty should partner with their community college counterparts to agree on what these learning outcomes should be across the four years of current and prospective pathways to bachelor's degrees.
- The University should also expand employment of prior-learning assessment to document skills that are demonstrable and applicable to credential programs.
- The experiential learning goals for the next three to five years is laid out in our QEP and documents the engagement of a large percentage of our students in hands-on learning leading to credentials and lifelong career success.
- Questions remain as to exactly where we are going with Distance Learning. A Distance Learning Strategic Plan is being developed.
- Metrics: Number of High Impact Practices incorporated into academic-program components and percentage of programs/courses that are QM certified.

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Group 3: Financial Resources, Philanthropic Resources, Human Resources, and Facilities

Members: Ms. Phyllis Claxton, Ms. Jackie Gooch, Mr. Mike McCoy, Ms. Rachel O'Sullivan and Ms. Debra Vaughn. Group notes for defined targets include:

Financial Resources – appropriation, tuition, grants, efficiency

- Continue to maintain tuition increases relative to CPI.
- Expand grant awards to \$1 million annually (program and research).
- Increase state appropriation to a level comparable to peer institutions.
- Utilize current and future resources, through the University budget process, to increase and maintain reserves to NACUBO's recommended standard of 6-9 months.

Philanthropic Resources – donations from various sources

- Achieve bicentennial capital campaign goal of \$20 million through building sustainable relationships with alumni and community for the future of the University.

Human Resources – recruitment, development, retention, diversity, culture

- Review the University salary structure on an annual basis to ensure market competitiveness.
- Provide professional development opportunities to incentivize faculty and staff to develop relevant skills and experience.
- Create and maintain a culture that promotes faculty and staff retention through continual review and targeted efforts to improve retention.
- Identify needs and/or areas of concern via an employee Diversity Survey.

Facilities

- Maintain current facilities and add space and buildings as needed through planning and strategic resource allocations.

Group 4: External Relations

Members: Dr. Diann Hammon, Ms. Laura Beth Horn, and Dr. Philip Way. Group notes for defined targets include:

How to measure/capture what we are doing now for a baseline and to build upon going forward.

- Discussion to consider: What influenced students to come to ATSU?
 - Faculty visited at high school/ community college
 - Alumni event
 - ATSU event
 - Advertising, etc. If so, which component was effective?
- Consider adding survey for new students to respond to or adding a new question to an existing survey. Complete in new UNV 300 course beginning in the summer or fall.

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- How much outreach are we doing? How could we be more effective at doing it?
 - Faculty serving on boards
 - Faculty as guest speaker/presentations
 - Guest speakers on campus
 - Alumni activities
 - Community service projects
 - Visits to other campuses
 - Recruitment via other avenues
- Faculty serving on boards/guest speaker, etc. – find out from each college how many faculty members are serving on boards off-campus. Examples: Advisory at other colleges or businesses. Serving on community boards such as Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Way suggested an activities report. We discussed the fact that faculty already report the names of the organizations they serve and speaking engagements/presentations in their self-evaluations. But the hours are not documented.
- Guest speakers on campus - Track number of visitors to campus for speaking events with clubs, etc. How many industry visits are being made? Derrek has begun asking for an activity report from clubs. This information could be included/captured with that report.
- Another question - How to measure quality of interaction discussion? Does a long visit vs. a short visit matter? Maybe or maybe not.
- Considering more involvement with alumni. Perhaps request that the Office of Alumni Affairs send information to members asking for volunteer involvement as mentors or guest speakers. Track these events...number of attendees, etc.
- If alumni or faculty members will mentor – provide opportunity along with UNV400. At least one meeting, more if desired.

The next meeting is planned for April 15th at 11:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Pamela D. Clark