October 21, 2010

Minutes from the meeting of the Academic Programs strategic plan working group

In attendance:

Susan Calovini, Jennie Ebeling, Rob Griffith, Beth Hennon (notetaker), Susan Kupisch, Kristy Miller, Don Rodd, Pete Rosen, Brian Swenty, Donna Teague, Melanie Bacaling (student)

The meeting began with a review of the basic process and timeline of the strategic plan process in general, and for the Academic Programs working group in particular. A brief refresher course on the academic portion of the most recent strategic and tactical plans was included. Clarification was made as to the primary goal – rather than a set of broad principles (as in the current plan), the goal is a set of clearly identifiable/implementable concrete items.

- The group expressed the desire to begin thinking of options without being overly restricted by practicalities. As the process moves forward, restrictions and limitations due to available resources can then become a part of the process.
- A desire to build from previous successes was expressed, but with the flexibility to adapt to changes that have occurred in resources, personnel, and priorities since the development of the past strategic plan.
- Links to other working groups were also discussed.

The existing strategic plan’s academic goals were summarized as relating to structure, curriculum, pedagogy, support of faculty, and student outcomes.

- Discussion regarding the breadth of the focus of the current group followed. This group is to focus primarily on the curriculum aspect from the previous plan, though modifications to structure, pedagogy, faculty support, and student outcomes may likely be relevant as a side issue to plans for curriculum.
- Again, the discussion of the broad-based nature of the current goals versus the specific, implementable nature of the desired goals followed.
- One metaphor discussed whether the focus should be on “inputs” or on “outputs”
- Clarification was made that this is intended as roughly a 5-year-plan, with overall goals of enhancing, stabilizing, and/or growing our enrollment.

Further discussion followed on the types of items that might be relevant to consider for the new strategic plan.

- Issues relevant to the general education program
- Issues relevant to specific academic departments/programs
- Issues relevant to resources and organization/structure
The group discussed possible academic programs that might be worth considering further:

- Enhancing/providing additional support for existing programs that help establish UE’s reputation either by being stellar, or unique, or nationally ranked, ...
- Identifying and supporting programs that provide a notable “draw” for prospective students.
- Developing new programs that would develop UE’s reputation and recognition
- Discussion concerned undergraduate programs, graduate programs, and adult education options.
- A concern was expressed that we must remember to think about both what programs might be desirable to add or expand, and which ones might require a reduction.

Finally, goals were set for the next meeting (October 28th): Members were to think about the topics discussed already, focusing on:

- Future directions of UE
- Concepts or themes that might provide a better strategic goal than simply the creation of an individual major (ie, that might include the creation of that major along with ____)
- Ideas of 5 or 6 most critical and essential changes within the academic programs