

LYNCHBURG COLLEGE
Strategic Planning Team

Minutes of October 14, 2008, Meeting

PRESENT: Co-chairs Steve Bright and Julius Sigler, Rich Burke, Rita Detwiler, Debbie Driscoll, John Eccles, Leslie Hatfield, Dan Lang, Tim Laurent, Joe Turek, Lisa Womack, and students D.J. Brown and R.J. Chittums.

PRESENTATION: Enrollment – Rita Detwiler

Rita Detwiler distributed copies of a memorandum summarizing the current state of enrollment/recruitment and the challenges the College will face in the next decade. The decisions of the College will always have a measurable impact on the recruitment and retention of students. Rita also shared handouts on the recruitment of Hispanic and Asian students. Rita then reviewed a portion of a slide presentation that was prepared by Kevin Crockett, President and CEO of Noel-Levitz, our Enrollment Consulting Firm. Between now and 2015, 22% more students are expected to enroll in college; approximately 80% of these will be students of color.

Various charts were reviewed showing demographic trends by ethnicity for the states that the College targets for recruitment. Debbie Driscoll reviewed a spreadsheet showing a breakdown of graduation rates by categories including female, male, students of color, and white/Caucasian students, and the three-year average of each. A separate handout showed five-year graduation rates by class year and ethnic background. The African American population earning a degree within five years at Lynchburg College has grown from 32% in 2002 to 72% in 2008. Related to financial aid, Rita reported that non-federal (private and state-sponsored) loans have increased 674% in 10 years. From the fall of 2006 to the fall of 2007, the average parent and private/unsubsidized student loan at LC rose 7.5%, but the number of families borrowing declined slightly.

Steve Bright pointed out that meetings and conference calls are held frequently with LC staff and Kevin Crockett to discuss issues related to the College's enrollment and retention. Julius Sigler pointed out that the College offers more now to help with retention, such as academic coaching.

While there are challenges the College faces related to enrollment and recruitment, there are also a number of opportunities underway that could positively affect enrollment in the next few years, such as the development of a Physical Therapy program, strong athletic programs, and technology (e-recruitment). Rita pointed out that the College's web site is critical to enrollment especially since approximately 80% of our students now apply online. Rita noted that from a recruitment standpoint, the College's web site is in urgent need of writing by someone with great expertise. Joe Turek pointed out that the visual design and layout is also in need of improvement. John Eccles added that how we market the content (the "look") of our web site is very important and the information needs to constantly be "fresh."

Rita's presentation is for informational purposes only; no funding is requested at this time.

PRESENTATION: Faculty Dialogues on General Education – Rich Burke

Rich Burke talked about the importance of general education to the overall academic program of the College. All students at Lynchburg College begin with the general education program. This is where we establish our standards and help students understand what learning involves as a college student.

Last year, Rich, Mari Normyle, Virginia Cylke, and Susan Thompson attended the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) conference which focused primarily on general education. The expenses for this meeting included \$900 for registration fees and \$1,200 for expenses, for a total of \$2,100. Of this total, \$1,500 was funded from the Curriculum Development budget. Rich is requesting funding to send four people to the conference again this year.

As a result of last year's conference, the Curriculum Task Force is proposing to re-design the general education program. The re-design of the program is included in the Strategic Plan and has also been the topic of discussion within the 2012 planning group.

To increase faculty participation in this process, the Curriculum Task Force would like to offer a series of faculty dialogues for the remainder of the current semester and during the spring semester of 2008-09. If funding is approved, the dialogues will begin the week of October 27th. Three dialogues will be offered each week, each will last 60–90 minutes, and each will focus on a different topic or issue. To encourage participation, food will be available (either snacks or meals, depending on the time of the dialogues). In addition, it has been recommended that a consultant be brought in to evaluate the accomplishments of the Curriculum Task Force and offer advice on how to best complete the re-design of the program. This would take place after the faculty dialogues are completed. The task force is also proposing that teams of four or five faculty visit a few other colleges to learn about their general education programs. Expenses for these trips would include gas, meals, and in some cases, overnight lodging.

The Curriculum Task Force is requesting funding in the amount of \$6,920.00, as outlined below:

- AGLS Conference for four participants: \$2,520
- Faculty Dialogues 1,200
- Consultant: \$2,500
- Visits to other colleges: \$700

Because the faculty dialogues are time-sensitive with the goal of starting them the week of October 27th, and because the SPT needs to hear more presentations before making any decisions on funding, Tim Laurent agreed to fund the dialogues from the Associate Dean's budget.

Joe Turek suggested to Rich that the task force may want to expand their proposal to include input from students, parents, alumni, etc., to gain a better understanding of what appeals to our "customers" related to the general education program.

REFLECTION:

- It is important to get parent and student input on what they value in general education.
- Peggy Pittas may be a good contact since she has been involved in general education and works with seniors through the Senior Symposium.
- We could possibly connect with Matt Brandon through the newly-established "online alumni."
- Has Rich explored other funding options?
- 51 credit hours out of the required 124 represent general education courses. This is a fairly modest and one-time expense with a high level of importance.
- If we ask for input from others (alumni, parents, students, etc.), we must be prepared for their answers.
- Some of the presentations at the SPT meetings include funding requests and some do not. Debbie will keep us updated on where we stand.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, November 4, 2008 • 11 a.m. • Schewel Hall 231

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Womack