

LYNCHBURG COLLEGE  
Strategic Planning Team

Minutes of November 18, 2008, Meeting

**PRESENT:** Co-chairs Steve Bright and Julius Sigler, Debbie Driscoll, John Eccles, Leslie Hatfield, Dan Lang, Tim Laurent, Mari Normyle, Ed Polloway, Joe Turek, Lisa Womack, and student R.J. Chittums

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as presented.

**PRESENTATION: 5-Year Financial Plan – Steve Bright**

Steve distributed a handout and briefly reviewed 10 assumptions related to developing a 5-Year Financial Plan for Lynchburg College. Referring to Assumption #8, “will not go head to head for elite student,” Dan Lang asked where this leave us with Phi Beta Kappa. Steve said that there would be a cost involved to increase financial aid to the point where we can attract those students. Related to #10, “Strategic initiatives will be funded,” Steve noted that even in tough economic times, we should not ignore strategic initiatives. Instead, we must continue to move forward. Joe Turek asked if any consideration had been given to LC starting an online/distant learning type of program. Julius Sigler said that a survey of faculty interest was conducted on this topic and the topic has also been discussed in various other groups on campus. However, no one has expressed enough interest in online learning to step forward and take the initiative on such a program. Julius pointed out that some trustees feel this could bring additional revenue to the College and do not realize the up-front costs involved and detail in establishing the curriculum. Joe added that there are a few faculty members who are keen on exploring this topic further.

The budget model for the financial plan was developed with a conservative approach and includes a projection of 550 freshmen each year. A 3% increase per year in tuition, room and board rates is also included in an effort to keep the price of an LC education below \$40,000 for a few more years. Related to total revenue, Steve pointed out that the Auxiliary Enterprises generate a significant amount of revenue for the College. Steve also pointed out that the net available for strategic initiatives in the 5-Year Financial Plan are negative amounts for years two through five. However, these are not huge negative numbers and since we are budgeting conservatively, these numbers will become positive if more than our projected 550 freshmen enroll.

Next, Steve summarized eight scenarios that could positively impact the financial situation of the College, as follows:

1. Demand for LC education increases
2. Retention increases by a certain percentage – persistence grants
3. Income from T. Brady Saunders endowment increases
4. Gain more commuter students from the community
5. Steady growth of residential slots each year
6. Improve Annual Fund giving
7. Successful campaign to increase Endowment for Scholarships
8. Add Physical Therapy Program – projected annual return after five years

Dan Lang asked whether or not we have enough residential beds if we reach a total of 600 new freshmen. Steve said that we have just purchased another house that will hold six or seven

students. In addition, we have the option of housing students at Walden Pond, should the need occur. Joe Turek added that he is more concerned as to how we would education an additional 50 students, specifically referring to the student/faculty ratio. Julius Sigler pointed out that increasing our smaller class sizes by one or two students is very manageable. Steve added that we do have a limit on how much we want to increase our class sizes; we just need to determine what that limit is.

Mari Normyle asked if one additional positive scenario could be included, which would be to increase Access students by 25-50. Steve said that would be good as long as it can be quantified.

Steve then summarized five challenges that the College could face, as follows:

1. Enrollment event – decline
2. Endowment/investment lose real value
3. Discount rate increases
4. Personnel cost increase disproportionately
5. Unforeseen event – Pandemic

**REFLECTION:**

- Joe expressed concern about the hiring freeze and Tim Laurent indicated we have a slight “cushion” with adjunct faculty.
- The question was raised as to how the handout on the financial plan would be used. The possibly of sharing a modified version (less numbers) with the campus at an open forum or at a session for budget planners was mentioned. Joe noted that this would be a good opportunity to gain input and get people to work together for the good of the institution.
- Steve said people have been asking what they can do to help with the economic situation and planning. His response was to work on retention, recruiting and quality in the classroom.

**PRESENTATION: Academic Support Services – Mari Normyle**

Mari Normyle shared a PowerPoint outlining the various services offered through the Academic and Career Services office. She reported that 9-12% of entering freshmen register for some type of disability services. The result is the improvement in academic performance and retention rates over time.

Academic Coaching: The academic coaching program was developed to help students who are placed on academic probation. This could be as many as 80-100 students in any given semester. The GS 104 course was redesigned around new curriculum and two part-time staff positions oversee the program. Approximately 180-200 coaching meetings are held weekly.

Retention: A chart showing the fall to fall retention for the class of 2007 was reviewed. The five-year average for Lynchburg College was 73% from 2003-2007 compared to the National Average of 71-72%. Students who participate in the Scholarship Competition retain at 85-90%. Westover Honors students retained at 85-90% from the freshman to sophomore class. Retention for transfer students has increased from 74% in the fall 2003 to 82% in the fall of 2007. In addition, the retention rate for students who begin in the spring semester is 100% to the fall semester, which is a significant improvement.

The Highways: Mari referred to the online social networking “highways” that have been created for freshmen (The LC Highway) and sophomores (The Hornet Highway). In December, a network for parents called the Hopwood Highway will be launched in hopes to increase communications with parents. Faith Jones has been working on the highway projects a few hours each week being paid with borrowed funds from an unfilled position in Student Development. Mari noted that they may be requesting funding for a position for 10 hours per week so that this project can continue, depending on how the project develops.

Next, Mari reported on ways to better understand and reach out to our various grade classifications. They would like to develop ways to “welcome” sophomores to their majors, such as the SOBE convocation event this fall, and conduct a career development assessment and establish a team to focus on the “senior year experience” so we can better support our students “out” of the College with job searches, etc.

Concluding her presentation, Mari summarized their funding requests as follows:

- Continue coaching and transfer positions (two part-time hourly and one full-time position)
- Establish a position for Highways (10 hours/week for 40 weeks @ \$19/hour = \$7,600)
- EmployOn Funding (\$5,000/year – Academic Equipment Budget?)
- Career Development assessment (est. \$2,000 in consulting expenses)
- Expansion of achievement & persistence initiatives – forthcoming

**NEXT MEETING**: Tuesday, December 2, 2008 • 11 a.m. • Schewel Hall 231

There will be no presentation at this meeting. This will be a time to review requests to date and determine where we stand.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Womack