

Deans' Strategic Planning Session

Dr. Welty, Consultant

Wednesday, 12/3/14

9:00AM, HAZY 361

Attendees: Bill Christensen – AVP; Deans – Jeff Jarvis, School of Visual and Performing Arts; Kyle Wells, School of Business & Communication ; Eric Pedersen, School of Science & Technology ; Carole Grady, School of Health Sciences; Don Hinton and Addison Everett, School of Humanities; Rich Paustenbaugh, Library ; Gary Koeven, Chief Information Officer; Becky Smith, Dean of Academic and Community Outreach

(Note: this is not a transcription of quotes – just highlights of the individual's comments.)

Question: What are DSU's areas of strength?

Health Sciences is a strength. In the past 14 years Carole has been faculty and then administration, the Nursing program has grown from 35 students to 200. There are seven new Health Sciences programs. The programs have great completion rates. The St. George area also has seen the growth of the medical center and services.

The community is a strength. The community has a deep passion for the visual and performing arts.

The Institution and the community are tied directly. Over the history of DSU the community has kept the institution alive and the institution has in turn been responsive to the needs of the community. These ties cannot be broken.

The Criminal Justice Program is very strong on the “digital side”. The program has had a strong influence across the world. This program is a strong asset for DSU.

The location and our surroundings are a strength. These factors draw students and talent from the north of Utah.

DSU owns property at the mouth of Zion National Park. DSU has a facility with access to the geological formations of Zion. His area is starting a program with experiential learning that is attracting regional as well as international students. There are residential facilities on this site too.

There is good collaboration with other entities like the DXATC and school district. There is the ability for various organizations to put aside personal agendas and interests and collaborate on what is best for the students.

Brenda Sabey, the Dean of the School of Education, is unable to attend this meeting. But Brenda would say that another strength is DSU's alliance with the K-16 community. The ties go beyond Washington County. AVP Bill Christensen added that the School of Education has received the first DSU endowed faculty chair – in Elementary Arts Education.

Question: What Challenges Exist at DSU?

Resources – both physical and human. We are adding faculty and are short on office space.

DSU is a land locked campus. We have to find space to put faculty and students. Where do we put new buildings? The physical campus is keeping us capped at 9,000 to 10,000 students. We have the opportunity for explosive growth but how do we meet that growth by expanding the campus?

We need student housing. DSU is primarily a commuter campus. A lot of our students work and see an education as a hope for their future.

We need to build the development culture. There is a lack of donations for scholarships. His area in the Visual & Performing Arts cannot compete for the student talent who are offered scholarships to attend other institutions.

DSU is an open enrollment institution. This presents issues as students entering are not prepared for the college experience.

DSU has done a good job of keeping the technology current. But this is being done continually with "one-time" funding. We need a plan for infrastructure replacement on an ongoing replacement schedule. We need to be able to keep our technology state of the art.

A lot of our graduates are moving north or south for employment. To keep our student talent in the community we need to help foster the growth of clean industry and expand the service industry to higher end jobs. We need to see the economy grow in this area.

DSU was a two year institution until 2000 and stayed in that mode until 2008. DSU has to be able to provide an educated population to the region that will attract industry with higher paying jobs. Kyle Wells added that without the business here in the region, we cannot attract the talent.

We need to get past the institutional struggle of the "Rebels" name and all that is connected to that image. DSU needs to connect to the land and our surroundings. But the Rebels issues continues to be an issue for some community donors. Gary Koeven added that we need to get beyond the Rebels issue and not keep re-visiting it. This was agreed around the table.

Moving from the community college model has caused internal changes that need to be dealt with. Faculty and staff roles have changed and this has put a lot of stress on current management systems. We need to learn how to manage this stress.

We need to evolve further. We need a focused plan with different visions and expectations. We need to address our Community College and Four Year missions.

His observation is that many of our students are still in a Community College mind set. They are not committed to staying at DSU for their entire college career and might leave for "something better" that comes along. We need to transition our students out of this mind set. We need to keep our students from shopping for a new institution once they finish their Associates Degree. Becky Smith added that getting connected with the high school counselors would help give our local students the DSU vision.

Question: What are the Academic Programs that Need to be Considered?

We need professional programs in the Arts – BA, BFA, etc. This transition is very challenging as it pushes against an open enrollment philosophy.

Industry is demanding developers and programmers. They are looking for human talent in the technical areas. Our programs need to grow to meet these industry demands. We need new graduate degrees. Industry does not want the lower end graduate. We also need inclusive and interdisciplinary degrees.

Feedback that all of Higher Ed is getting is that our graduates need not just technical but communication, problem solving skills, etc. We have to open to a large scale re-evaluation of what we do in liberal arts and general education.

We need to look at degrees in the languages. We have a strong Spanish program but we also need to look at a Chinese and other language degrees. Students in the school district immersion school programs are coming to DSU with two years of Mandarin Chinese.

We need to develop accessibility to our programs. We can do that through more online education. But we need to provide quality online education. We also need the development of more blended classes. Our programs do not need to be fully online. We need to identify when it makes sense to have a fully online program and also which benefit more from blended courses. We need to help the campus culture change in its attitude towards online learning. There is high resistance from the faculty to these changes.

He recently attended a conference where Education in 2030 was discussed. Education of the future will become cheap and free. The “whole person concept” has to be considered. The aspect of experiential learning will be key to our online delivery. This is the missing link.

There is some resistance to innovation. The “portal” approach is an example of such resistance. Faculty and staff are attuned to doing things the way they have always been done. Also, faculty/staff do not always feel they have the resources needed.

There is both a challenge and an opportunity for the institution. DSU can develop an online presence that leap frogs other programs around the country by eliminating the problems we find with those other programs.

Question: What are issues with Faculty recruitment and retention?

DSU policy has set salaries at 90% of equity to our peer institutions. What this does in reality is to put DSU at the bottom 1/3 of our peer institutions. This is a policy that was created here. A few years ago there was some attempt to bring salaries into line and the average professor’s salary went up 30%. But there is still much to be done.

One of our problems is that we pride ourselves on doing more with less. We can’t remain the lowest tuition and bring things up to new levels.

DSU has been doing well in providing opportunity funding for professional development. We are doing better in this area than many of our peer institutions.

We need better support and assistance for our adjunct instructors. We need to train them and give them support. We also need to get adjunct pay increased.

We need to provide better training for our Department Chairs. This also goes for new Deans.

We need to address workload release and how that relates to the range of duties required from Chairs.

A vast majority of our faculty wanted to be “here”. They might not be happy with the salary offered but for family or other reasons they want to be in this area. When trying to recruit or keep talent without those ties – we struggle.

We need to do a better job of recruiting women and minorities.

Branding of DSU – we tend to think in regards to student recruitment. But we need to include faculty. Outside of Utah DSU does not present a positive picture. Faculty candidate pools are affected by DSU branding.

A vast amount of the DSU faculty was regional in the past. It is not that way anymore.

There has been a shift in the faculty. DSU is not their destination. They will come to DSU, get experience, and then move on. Faculty are no longer just staying here.

Health Sciences has a number of faculty looking at retirement.

When he came to Dixie a mentor told him he was committing professional suicide. This is how going from a research to a non-research institution is viewed by faculty candidates. There is little time/resources/incentives for research at DSU.

Potential hires for his area in the Visual & Performing Arts will need to be highly specialized. The adjunct pool is being used up. They will end up making do with the people available and have to do repeated searches.

Deans commented that the issue of good candidate pools is already a problem.

Question: What is one thing you want to tell the strategic planning group?

- Whatever comes out of the process – use it
- Determine who we are and who we are not
- Meet local community expectations/needs
- Dream and be realistic with the plan
- Focus on the things that are not “glamorous”
- Reorganize so we are no longer training and sending our students up North
- Need to focus on crafting creative student experiences