

COMMENTS RECEIVED FOLLOWING STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM
January 12, 2015

GOAL #1. Foster student success through a robust teaching and learning environment supported by comprehensive student services.

Comments:

“Need to revise SBA courses from three credits to four credits as most other university classes. Currently, this causes problems with financial aid.”

“We should look at three versus four credit modules. We already use both and this leads to inefficient room use and limits the number of sections that can be offered.”

“I understand the need to assess and realign programs, but let’s not change for change sake. When change/realignment is appropriate, let’s make sure there are resources and support to ensure success of the new alignment. Everyone must be engaged and committed to a new alignment.”

Regarding reassessment and realignment of course scheduling, sequencing, and prerequisite requirements: “How is this possible within the first year when schedule and course prerequisite are already set?” “Better for Phase #2 than Phase #1.”

“Studies have shown graduation rates are higher among undergraduate students who take a public speaking course. Could this be added to general education as a requirement for all undergraduates?”

“The strategies for goal #1 include very little regarding ‘comprehensive student services.’ (Actually, only one strategy relates to student services).”

“To support enhancing student involvement, please look at staffing and resources in the Center for Student Activities to increase the range and participation. We are understaffed and under-resourced (financially and facilities) to do even more.”

“Our department positions are not being refilled after retirements even though student enrollment is still high. How can we remain ‘robust’ and ‘student-centered?’”

“My comment comes as a parent of a student rather than a staff member. Coming right from high school where students are used to online grades with feedback automatic and aware of how they are doing and what their grade is, here at OU grades are hard to figure. Some use Sail, Moodle, and other web

sites. It is confusing and hard to figure out and many teachers don't give back grades and tests until it's almost too late to adjust (example: grades posted at 11:50 p.m. the night before the drop date). At the 100 and 200 levels especially, faculty members need to be better about posting grades while students adjust to college-level classes. As a parent who previously experienced a private university, I'm surprised how confusing and difficult it is for students to know their grade. Please centralize grading and hold faculty accountable for posting grades and feedback in a timely manner. Student success depends on this."

Goal #1, Phase 1, Bullet #2 "should also include online students. This is a unique segment with specific needs."

"How do Continuing Education students/programs fit into Goal #1?"

"I am very impressed with Goal #1 strategies, specifically the ones that target an institution-wide enrollment strategy that includes graduate students."

"We need to think about implementing a day to welcome transfer students in the winter semester—the day before classes begin—a transfer student welcome as grand as the September welcome. Moving classes back one day, giving support services the opportunity to plan and implement for our transfer students."

"During discussion of Goal #2, Jim (Lentini) mentioned the need to finance faculty and research. I think we need to examine funding in student support in Goal #1, too. Some of the departments in student affairs have not grown since we have grown as a university. We need more personnel to manage our growing student need. For example, CSA has four professionals, the same number while student organizations have doubled.

"Will there be budget adjustments to cover recruitment of international students as well as extra-curricular programs for them?"

"To recruit and retain students of color to increase our diversity, the 'face' of the university needs to better reflect the student population we wish to have. Particularly, areas that are working with students initially and through their first year. There needs to be more people of color in roles that work directly with students."

"We should/must see the diversity/inclusion strategy as critical to this goal. Everything else depends on it!"

"We should utilize the term 'all students' to be more inclusive and diverse."

“We should offer more resources to junior and senior students, not just freshmen.”

GOAL #2. Be recognized as a strong research and scholarly environment focused on creative endeavors and on the discovery, dissemination and utilization of knowledge.

Comments:

“Keeping our reputation as a ‘faculty teach’ centered institution, while growing our faculty research...very little teaching/GA/TA opportunities for graduate students. As Dr. Wren stated, it’s a balance! And especially in the Social Sciences/Humanities!”

“Serious research universities provide up-to-date SPSS packages in addition to other statistical packages (e.g., SAS).”

“In order to attain any goals regarding research, the university needs to invest in statistical analytic software such as SPSS. Every university seems to have this except OU. This is useful for many fields.”

“To the point of tenure and promotion, current criteria may need to be examined vis a vis the strategic goals both for teaching and learning and for research.”

“I am really glad that the committee is looking at tenure and promotion and the balance between research and teaching. There are real opportunities into marketing ourselves as a strong research university that does not adhere to the publish or perish model. There are very strong researchers out there that are more interested in quality of research rather than quantity. We can recruit them if we have the right environment.”

“Research lab space is a huge issue if we plan to increase research in science and engineering.”

“I’m not sure where this fits, but in goal #2 there was a focus on attracting quality faculty. What about attracting and retaining quality STAFF?”

“I acknowledge the importance of academic and quality faculty as well as degree programs at Oakland University. However, I hope we also look at attracting and keeping quality professional staff. What do we do to promote staff growth and advancement as well as promote collaboration between faculty and AP’s?”

“Dr. Hynd continually speaks about faculty. What about staff?”

GOAL #3. Become a leader in serving the needs and aspirations of our communities and region through expanded community relationships, institutional reputation and visibility, and engagement.

Comments:

“I am concerned over maintaining balance between Goal #1 and Goal #3. Goal #3 is outstanding, but how do we maintain that balance of providing support for Goal #3 in collaboration with Goal #1, not at the expense of Goal #1.”

“Create a “speaking stars” program—faculty/staff who are “experts” on a subject, who are available to speak at K-12 schools. We constantly receive requests for a faculty member to speak on various topics (i.e., religion, Dante’s Inferno, college preparedness). Henry Ford Community College implemented this program and has made amazing connections with the Dearborn area.”

“I hope the committee will look at supporting and examining student employment as a way of meeting goal #3. Student activities, Student Congress, Housing, Campus Recreation, Career Services, etc. all have valuable student employment opportunities and support and compliment education outside the classroom and engage students in leadership development and connections with the community.”

“More opportunities for students to be involved in service-learning through scholarships and academic credit. Most students have to pay out of pocket expenses to be involved.”

“The ability to achieve this goal can be aided by examining promotion and tenure guidelines. Perhaps we need to change the OU statement and request everyone to bring their statements in line.”

“Many faculty who have been engaged locally have paid a price in promotion and tenure, especially promotion.” (Example: MPA Program)

“In the Phase 2 goal that references help solving local and regional issues: I would strongly suggest changing this word to address. This seems more collaborative and partnership based rather than fixative.”

“Continuing and professional development as a group (PACE) can help with this through their programming. Ask Michelle Piskulich or Lori Crose about this.”

“Engage OU alumni—don’t just hound them for money, especially young alumni who do not have the money yet but someday they will. Nurture them first as valued alumni (before that as valued undergraduates) and the financial contributions will follow.

“Within Goal #3, perhaps use or convey ‘political voice’ or ‘national sense’ in strategy statements. Many of our academic programs (faculty) lobby, travel to Capitol Hill, and influence policy, rules and regulations.

GENERAL COMMENTS

“One thing relevant to the success of all three goals is evaluation of allocation of teaching resources. The Health Science program has undergone tremendous growth. It is the largest major and offers the largest classes on campus without a corresponding increase in resources. I can personally assure, for example, that I would be better able to foster student success and spend more time on research if there were teaching assistants for classes like HS 301 (n=100), HS 302 (n=150) and HS 201 (n=200).”

“What are we going to stop doing in order to fund the strategies proposed? How will that be addressed?”

“As a department chair, it would be helpful through our personnel statement to strengthen faculty differentiation and not just what do I get out of teaching.”

“I recommend the Strategic Planning Committee read the work of Ronald Barnett, who has written several books on the university in the 21st century. These include Being a University, Imagining the University, and The Future University, among others.”

“Oakland University can be perceived to lack a national/regional identity. To combat this perception, OU should strive to provide the ‘Ultimate Student Experience.’ OU has the space to do this without leaving campus.”

“I am concerned about the lack of true effort for interdisciplinary planning, research and teaching. Currently, there is no incentive. Therefore, similar departments in different schools look out for themselves instead of working together.”

“It is hard for faculty to know what kinds of related work may be going on in other departments. It is made worse by competing and non-overlapping terminology. The use of ‘centers’ has potential if we can facilitate connections across disciplines.”

“Will there be benchmarking completed of current outcomes to compare with future outcomes?”

“The affirmation statement is the most important piece of this entire process. Without this statement, the rest of the work will not be successful.”