Strategic Directions History

(How did we arrive at the six themes?)

Introduction

Founded in 1858, Winona State University in Winona (WSU-W) was the first normal school west of the Mississippi River. In subsequent years, WSU-W has developed into a vibrant institution embodying the spirit and essence of a regional comprehensive university that primarily serves a more traditional residential student population. The main campus is located in southeastern Minnesota in the Mississippi River bluff country and shares its campus grounds with the island community of Winona.

Winona State University-Rochester (WSU-R) is located in the state’s third-largest metropolitan area, noted for its concentration of healthcare, technology, and educational institutions and serves a large population of post-traditional students that provides a unique “laboratory” for many of our distinctive community engagement programs. In 2017, WSU-Rochester will celebrate its 100th anniversary of serving the community of Rochester, Minnesota and its continuing partnership with what is now Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC).

As the Winona State University community faces the future, we recognize the traditions and successes of the past. Yet going forward, the health, vitality, and relevance of Winona State University in both campus locations requires us to evolve into new levels of excellence and dedication as we educate and prepare learners for a world not yet imagined.

Any beginning for strategic planning for both campuses requires the participation of the entire WSU community. In Fall 2012, President Olson launched his “Hopes and Dreams” sessions to gather ideas, proposals, and perceptions of the future of Winona State under his leadership. These data were gathered, digitized, and studied (see [http://www.winona.edu/president/Media/TLT_Preliminary_Concept_Categories.pdf](http://www.winona.edu/president/Media/TLT_Preliminary_Concept_Categories.pdf)). Further analyses of these data were conducted by WSU students and compiled in a report to the campus community (see [http://www.winona.edu/president/Media/Hopes_and_Dreams_Report_by_EL_614.pdf](http://www.winona.edu/president/Media/Hopes_and_Dreams_Report_by_EL_614.pdf)).

Planning must be based on more than opinions, perceptions, or reactions to outside potential challenges and opportunities. In Fall of 2013, the President met with the Cabinet to discuss the various reports on the Hopes and Dreams data. He characterized the data as falling under five general headings (The 5 P’s) that have since emerged as our guiding values: People, Programs, Price, Place, and Pride. He created three university shared governance committees (Long Range Planning, Finance and Facilities, and Improvement, Accreditation and Assessment) to oversee the processes for moving our Hopes and Dreams to the next level ([http://www.winona.edu/president/Media/Call_for_Initiatives.pdf](http://www.winona.edu/president/Media/Call_for_Initiatives.pdf)).
Initially, we introduced The 5 P’s (People, Programs, Price, Place, and Pride) as broad categories and planning priorities. We asked the campus communities to reflect on these areas and consider some questions under each heading (see http://www.winona.edu/president/Media/Call_for_Initiatives.pdf ) and asked for initiatives that would further clarify and begin to operationalize our Hopes and Dreams data (see http://www.winona.edu/President/strategicinitiatives.asp ).

The Strategic Directions Themes

The Strategic Directions themes were developed by a small work group, made up of members of the Long Range Planning and the Improvement, Accreditation and Assessment committees, with several objectives in mind:

1. The group sought to identify overarching themes as a means of organizing campus input on Hopes and Dreams, visioning the future, and initiatives. The theme development process considered:
   - Verbatim Hopes and Dreams comments submitted in AY2013
   - Analysis conducted by students in the Education Leadership course EL614
   - Analysis conducted by TLT
   - Group initiatives submitted between November 2013 and Jan 2014
   - 5P Planning Priorities outlined by President Olson in August 2013.

2. The group sought to identify themes that were cross functional and could relate to multiple campus focus areas including:
   - Academic Programs (e.g., Colleges, OCED, Summer School, Library, co-Curricular, International Programs)
   - Professional development (e.g., TLT, Human Resources, on and off campus learning options, Faculty Development and other bargaining unit professional development committees)
   - Institutional Advancement (e.g., Alumni, Foundation, Warrior Club)
   - Athletics (e.g., Intramurals, NCAA D2 Teams, IWC, Warrior Club, co-curricular)
   - Facilities (e.g., campus buildings, campus grounds, Facilities department, UCR, university properties)
   - Technology (e.g., Campus technology infrastructure, IT department)
   - Academic Support Services (e.g., Warrior Success Center, Warrior Hub, Wellness, Health and Counseling, Inclusion and Diversity, Housing and Residence Life, Dining, International Services, co-curricular)
3. The university strategic themes had to be broadly written to include the whole university community and to help all of us identify and support the underlying goals. Thus, the group sought to develop themes that could achieve broad buy-in by many campus focus areas.

4. The group identified the 5Ps as foundational values for the themes.

5. The group sought to establish a consistent format to present the themes and developed:

   1. Vision
   2. Goal narrative
   3. Objectives and Outcomes

6. The themes are written with the intent that existing and future strategic planning will align with the goals of the entire university.

The themes and key ideas were essentially "written" by the entire campus community! The themes framework reflects the collective wisdom, ideas, hopes, and dreams for the future of Winona State. Each theme has a Goal and Vision statement. Each Goal has Objectives that capture the multiple details, projects, initiatives, and Hopes, and Dreams identified by the campus community. The themes and ideas will guide us as we develop future strategic plans.

Assumptions

1. Winona State University has two primary locations, one is that is a more traditional, residential, destination campus, located in Winona and another serving a more urban and post-traditional adult-learner population located in Rochester, Minnesota.
2. The University is likely to experience budgetary constraints during the effective years in which any strategic plan is implemented.
3. Planning for WSU's future directions must be based upon data and implemented through data-driven decision-making.
4. All of the themes identified span University functional areas (e.g., ITS) and Divisions (e.g., Finance, Academic Affairs, Athletics, Student Life and Development).
5. The 5 Ps (Place, Programs, Pride, Price and People) are foundational values of the hopes and dreams of the institution and cross all aspects of the University.
6. Feedback from the campus communities at every step in our processes is an essential component that informs and shapes our new directions.

Feedback is an essential next step for building and fleshing out the comprehensive WSU strategic directions. As we work with this the themes and ideas over the next few months, we will prioritize and place the final Goals and Objectives on a timeline for implementation. We will
map our technology, facilities, enrollment management, and academic plans to the Master Strategic Directions. Additionally, performance measures, timelines, and implementation plans with accountable champions/leaders will be determined for each theme.