Strategic Planning Town Hall Summary
October 25, 2018

Overarching Themes

- Resourcing faculty
- Affordability/achievement of student goals
- Under-represented and first-generation students
- Meeting regional needs, with brand-building in return
- Recruitment/retention concerns

Areas of Progress

Campus culture, applied and/or industry-targeted learning, and the development of the Innovation Campus all were lifted up as significant areas of progress at Wichita State University. The campus community also sees itself as making progress in developing a rich campus culture, growing an increasingly diverse student and faculty base, and in numerous innovative initiatives.

Future Areas for Focus

One point of concern is ensuring that Innovation University concepts are applied across the board – specifically to more traditional disciplines and through collaboration and a redefining of programs that helps clarify potentially challenging aspects of the innovation concept. Additionally, a focus on student learning and needs must remain at the forefront. There was specific attention to stackable or applied education opportunities for job preparedness, as well as leveraging the Innovation Campus. A third notable theme is tying these initiatives into staff expectations, compensation structures and rewards, with incentives and rewards streamlined across campus.

Potential Differences Made

Many of the conversations tied back to goals of increasing enrollment and retention, quality job placements in the workforce, having an exciting story to share with alumni and prospective donors and building the university's brand among prospective students, industry and the region. The university community, as a whole, draws a notable connection between celebrating progress, digging into areas for focus/improvement, and anticipated university gains in core functions.

Themes by Topic

Applied Learning:

Progress points:

- Applied learning has entered the campus vernacular, with departments across campus looking for applied learning opportunities such as internships, coops and practicums.
- Innovation Campus, NIAR, and engineering departments are leading the way in applied learning, with opportunities also identified in law enforcement, fine arts, health professions and others.

Future areas of focus:

- Lifting up apply learning initiatives in areas such as English, Women's Studies
- Defining applied learning – ensuring that definition is the same across campus

Impact of achievement:

- Employment pipelines/internships/opportunities in industry as well as student preparation for marketplace needs. Workforce-ready with real job experience
- Increased enrollment

Assessment, Incentives, Rewards:

Progress points:

- The University's benefit, time off, and tuition assistance structures.

Future areas of focus:

- Uniformity in assessments, with clearly defined incentives and rewards tied to the university's strategic plan.
- Ensuring compensation structures are competitive within the Wichita region and benchmarked against peer institutions.
- Monetary incentives for taking on extra workload, opportunities to adjunct offered to staff, opportunities for advancement outlined and review non-monetary benefits

Impact of achievement:

- Better employee engagement and work satisfaction
- Increased employee morale and retention

Campus Culture:

Progress points:

- Enriched campus organizations provide points of engagement for almost any student.
- RSC improvements, addition of The Flats and Suites are creating a "community" feel and changing the image of WSU as a commuter campus

Future areas of focus:

- Connectivity – between campus and non-traditional learners or online students; campus and neighboring community; student services and cutting-edge technology

Impact of achievement:

- Retention – the building of campus culture assists with student engagement and students choosing to complete their higher education through WSU.
- Alumni pride – which leads to both resources and a broader informal recruitment base for future students

Community & Individual Partnerships:

Progress points:

- The university has undertaken numerous initiatives, with those lifted up including WATC becoming WSU Tech, Innovation Campus/Braeburn Square and related business partnerships, partnerships with other colleges, workforce badges, Fairmount community relations, economic development and more.

Future areas of focus:

- Continued workforce development, including certificates and badges, credentials for promotion, internships, mentoring, and industry partnerships
- Ensuring development meets real student needs, such as retail for fresh food. There is a sense that vocal students' needs are served, but other, quieter needs may be missed
- Cultivating additional partnerships, with a focus on relationship-building and clearly-defined expectations for partnerships.

Impact of achievement:

- Opportunity for WSU to become the community's "go to" organization, leading to applied learning opportunities, interdisciplinary collaborations, building of the university's brand and enrollment growth. "Creation of a virtual cycle of people choosing WSU."
- Improvements for disadvantaged ZIP codes and non-traditional or first-generation students, as well as advantages for the Wichita region through retention of talent and community advancement.

Inclusion:

Progress points:

- The university's emphasis on all types of diversity, including the creation of the President's Diversity Council and the new division. Also, there are a number of student organizations.
- Outreach to under-served populations and students, including tracking underrepresented, first-generation students or students of color. The creation of need-based scholarships, engagement with the community and outreach for adult learning.

Future areas of focus:

- Diversifying staff and faculty members to reflect the university's growing diversity. Growing in the campus' understanding of all types of diversity and inclusion and in the ability to discuss these topics via civil discourse.

Impact of achievement:

- Opportunity to reflect changing student populations, which would then reflect in branding

Innovation:

Progress points:

- The growth of campus, and specifically new buildings and new spaces
- Curriculum changes, including flexible learning opportunities

Future areas of focus:

- There is a stated desire for continued growth into the "Innovation" concept across campus, which includes incorporating all aspects of the university, working across disciplines and helping to transform negative mindsets/outlooks
- Looking at Wichita's job market and developing programs that prepare individuals for the workforce. This will allow stronger community engagement, showcasing of WSU's educational programs and resources

Impact of achievement:

- Achievement would allow stronger community engagement and the showcasing of WSU's educational programs and resources, as well as potentially be attractive to students, employers, and funding entities.

Interdisciplinary:

Progress points:

- Many of WSU's more innovative applied learning programs, MBA program concentrations and credit transfers and programs focused on workforce needs were identified as areas of progress.

Future areas of focus:

- Assessing interdisciplinary impact on general education, particularly looking for ways to enhance, structure and count cross-listed courses and to ensure students are being enrolled strategically in courses that enhance their studies.
- Consider stackability of badges and certificates with online programs, as well as methods of financial aid.

Impact of achievement:

- Tailored student education programs, which develop visible connections between coursework, applied learning and career paths, potentially bringing about greater opportunities for students, faculty, the regional economy and industry.