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President's Innovation Advisory Council

This proposal is an initiative of Office of Academic Affairs and comes from Sonja Armbruster, Mehmet Barut, Mark Glaser, Holger Meyer, Shirley LeFever, Dennis Livesay, and Carolyn Shaw.

Background:

President Bardo is looking for ways to continue to advance WSU's mission. Last January, seven individuals from across campus were asked to visit the Brookings Institute to learn more about Brookings's work on sustainability and innovation districts. This visit sparked an intense dialogue about what steps WSU might take to promote sustainability and innovation on campus and in the larger community. The outcome of several months of discussion is a proposal to create an Innovation Advisory Council to the President.

Purpose:

To advance the mission of the university *to be an essential educational, cultural and economic driver for Kansas and the greater public good* through improved and intensive cross campus collaboration and communication.

Structure:

The initial Council will consist of the seven founding members. The founding Council members will develop a process to establish a permanent Council to consist of at least 11 members, but no more than 15.

Membership:

- Half of the members will be faculty members - a process of selection will be developed in conjunction with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
- Remaining membership will include representatives from the college deans, staff and students.
- The Provost or designee will serve as an ex officio member.

Staff: Tonya Witherspoon, Director, Commercial Ventures and Applied Innovation, Office of Research and Technology Transfer (ORT), will be providing support to this Council and facilitating its work.

Working Groups:

The Council will coordinate the efforts of two Working Groups. These groups will report their activities to the Council. Initiatives will be provided in information sharing sessions with the President's Executive Team, the Faculty, UP and USS Senates, and other constituency groups as appropriate. Members of the Council will provide the initial leadership for two Working Groups.

The two Working Groups will be open to participation from Faculty, Staff and Students across campus. The groups will have the following focuses and charges:

Inward / Student, Faculty and Staff Development Focus

- Identify current successful efforts on campus and facilitate sharing of these ideas and best practices.
- Establish goals to advance sustainable innovation on campus related to applied learning, workforce development, co-curricular activities, processes to encourage sustainable innovation, and similar efforts.
- Provide development resources to those who want to engage in curricular, program, or other redesign efforts.

Outward / Community-Economic Development Focus:

- Review/reiterate a vision for the campus in the community
- Identify strengths within the institution/among faculty that can potentially enhance our impact in the region
- Identify partners in the community that would help advance our institutional and community goals
- Identify national trends in educational-community partnerships that would fit with WSU assets.
- Establish goals to advance sustainable innovation in the community related to educational access, solving community problems, improve community well being, and other related issues.

Overarching Goal:

To open up a broader dialogue on campus regarding university-wide innovation. The conversation will begin with a broader examination of current conditions, to be followed by a more focused discussion on tactical responses to the social and higher educational environments in which we find ourselves today. We anticipate that a series of town hall discussions will explore the questions framed below, with some focused on internal impacts and challenges, and others focused on external impacts and challenges.

Initial questions to be explored include:

1. *What is the purpose of higher education in society today?*
 - explore the changing social environment and its impact on higher education practices and its impact on community development.
2. *What do our students want and/or need to be “successful” after graduation in employment and beyond? What does our community want and/or need to be “successful” in economic development and other areas?*
 - identify challenges that the changes in society present to higher education and to community development.
3. *How do we provide knowledge and skills that our students and the broader community need in the context of our mission statement and applied learning commitment?*
 - identify possible responses to the identified challenges

Moving Forward

- Expand the membership of the Council to fill the remaining open seats.
- Provide direction to Tonya Witherspoon regarding what resources will be needed to start a broader dialogue on campus, and that will facilitate the efforts of the Working Groups.
- Raise awareness on campus and invite faculty, staff and students to join the working groups.
- Plan for and schedule town hall sessions or other events for dialogue focused on the three initial questions presented above (Fall semester).
- Working groups will develop goals, action plans and success markers (Spring semester).

Note: This initiative is being proposed with the idea that the creation of the Advisory Council and subsidiary working groups will provide new energy and ideas to advance WSU's mission and Strategic Plan. The existing Strategic Planning committee will continue to work on implementation, focusing on approval of applied learning experiences in each program. With leadership transition on the Strategic Planning committee, its work might eventually fall under the umbrella of the Advisory Council to make sure the efforts of these groups are complementary and do not overlap.

