

YORK COLLEGE
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
Minutes
September 26, 2005 - 12PM

Present: Co-Chairs Jerald Posman, Aghajan Mohammadi, and Helen Strassberg; Committee Members David Ajuluchukwu, Margaret Ballantyne, Lindamichelle Baron, Olga Dais, Janis Jones, Hamid Kherief, Paula LaLande, Tim Paglione, Les Raphael, Amrik Singh, Cheryl Smith, Michael Smith,

- **Approval of Minutes of June 2, 2005 Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and accepted.

Co-Chair Helen Strassberg began by saying that this meeting was called to touch base with everyone and see what the committees have done since the last meeting, and the committee will meet again in approximately 2 weeks from now to finalize things. We need to prioritize our recommendations, discuss what our approach will be to get input and feedback from the various college constituents and start working on recommendations for carrying out priority goals.

Subcommittee Reports

- **I. Strengthen Academic Programs**

Chair Margaret Ballantyne stated that her committee's key areas of improvement were:

1. Improve faculty search processes
2. Increase full time faculty ratios
3. Improve intellectual, artistic and cultural life and atmosphere of the college
4. Develop new programs
5. Develop outcomes and measures

Ideas and timetables for all of these areas will be reported after the committee meets again next week. The committee feels that most important activities for the college overall involve getting systems in place - activities that improve registration, advisement, financial aid, etc. Most of the academic recommendations depend on these systems.

- **II. Improve Retention & Recruitment and III. Improve Systems**

Chair Janis Jones said that her subcommittee and Linda Perry's met together and they agreed it was important to:

1. Improve advisement
2. Expand faculty and staff development
3. Integrate systems now

- **IV. External**

In the absence of the Chair, Olga Dais stated the areas that the committee found most important were:

1. Improving image and reputation ie. branding such as the tag "on the move"
2. Improving marketing and communications
3. Developing relations with internal and external constituents: What role does the alumni play in moving the institute forward.
4. Developing additional fund raising strategies

Some discussion followed.

It was suggested that there was a need to develop a degree program that would be offered in a block of time like 6 to 9 so a student in the program can be sure courses will be offered in a time frame that can be counted on.

Co-Chair Jerry Posman said that a number of York people met with Greater Jamaica Development Corp; Dean Perry, Cynthia Murphy and Michel Hodge are working on identifying projects that involve the community and the college. One is the renovation of Prospect Cemetery, which is on the campus. They want to make the cemetery into a cultural site, maybe a business cultural site, along with Rufus King Manor which has been designated an Underground Railroad site. The idea is to take these sites and see how they can be packaged. We can get the faculty and students to put together a business plan that would involve the cultural and business aspect.

The second angle is if you look down Jamaica Avenue the same store repeats itself over and over again. How many shoe stores, clothing stores, etc can there be? When a store is abandoned the storeowner has no plan so he opens another store of the same. Also there is no family restaurant such as Applebee's, Chili's, IHOP, not even a bookstore. How do you project a plan for the owner? Working with GJDC and looking at the whole business community and doing counts of the amount of people that goes into these stores, the college can work with the storeowners to develop a business plan. That may be something that would be of interest to students who want to go into entrepreneurship.

- **Current Status of Recruitment**

We have lost 20% enrollment in the last 10 years and our aim is to get it back. John Jay has gained 44% enrollment increase in the last 10 years with their Criminal Justice major. They are the only college with that major, which says something for the impact of majors on the recruitment of students. Our goal is a 3% increase in head count and full time students. We have hit the 3% goal but this is good and bad news.

The good news is that we did hit the target but the bad news is the type of students coming in as freshmen. The breakdown in the non-SEEK freshmen class is - of the 670 new freshmen, 25% have an over 80 average, 75% under 80 average (with 50% having an average under 75 and 16% an average under 70). If you have a 75 or 70 average it's very difficult to succeed, difficult to be retained in the school and difficult to graduate in 4, 5 forget about 6 years. We have to look into those numbers and find out exactly what it means. The problem is how to increase enrollment by 20% over 3 years yet tweak the type of students we have and get better students that match the other senior colleges. York was given the dispensation, 3 years ago, not to have the same standards as the senior colleges. Therefore, we were allowed to take in students if they had passed all 3 skills tests. We have to see how those students did compared to students that had to pass the SAT.

Our recruitment ads for York College are becoming effective. The installation of plasma screens and the Salk ad that was posted on major bus lines are both being supported by the Central Office of CUNY. They have put money on the line for these ads; so things are changing in terms of marketing the college.

We spoke to some high schools such as Hillcrest and John Adams and they don't know anything about York College. The issue is how does York penetrate into those schools. Faculty members and students need to get this out to the colleges. The high school counselors asked us if York College provides a 'college experience'.

We asked new students just out of high school on their first day at York, “When you walked in the door what was your reaction?” The response was 1) It was big and 2) It looks like a large high school.

Cheryl Smith added that the new SAT Program seems to be helping with recruitment. SAT classes are held Saturday morning at York and the afternoon is used to acquaint students with York. The program started 2 weeks ago and already has 40 students enrolled.

Margaret Ballantyne noted that high schools can be invited to participate in college events such as Hispanic Heritage Month.

VP Posman mentioned that the college has received a \$500,000 grant from the city for an observatory, to be placed outside the Classroom Building.

The new student representative Amrik Singh presented a few questions to the Academic subcommittee.

- **In terms of academics are any special programs being implemented?**

Margaret Ballantyne’s responded that the committee was talking about some new programs on the undergraduate level. Mr. Singh suggested that in the computer science major, York needs to concentrate on a particular aspect. Robotics or 3D animation and 3D gaming would definitely attract high school students. Robotics we can tie into the Aviation Institute here because automation is definitely becoming standard in the industry.

- **Is there anything particular that the subcommittee is doing that relates to the Registrar?** The evaluation of credits is not done in a timely fashion and that is a serious issue. We can’t wait for 5 or 6 weeks to know if we’re going to graduate or not.

Co-Chair Jerry Posman said that what he thinks works is that a number of colleges have implemented the Degree Works Program. To use this program we need money to buy the program and the technology to operate the program. DegreeWorks can identify what the student needs, such the remaining courses to complete the graduation requirements. We’ve thought of inviting one of the colleges to come out to York to explain how it works and the what the benefits are.

Another idea is looking at data from all of the schools to see where our college is in comparison to other senior colleges.

General Discussion and Comments

- **How do we get the word out?**

Olga Dais asked if there was going to be some mechanism as we start doing things that are positive, that will be systematic? We have to get perks out ie. tickets to the Met.

Everyone spoke of events that have happened that no one knew about. Margaret Ballantyne said we had a famous author here, we’ve had plays here, but no one knew about them. We need a generic mechanism to get these things out. Helen Strassberg said that now that the theater is set up there are 4 series going on there, ie. the play about Miles Davis, etc. David Ajuluchukwu commented that people don’t know we have a basketball team or a good swimming coach. Paula Lalande spoke of her students going to Lincoln Center. Jerald Posman suggested that we need brochures

indicating what's going on – speakers, events. Amrik Singh stated that we can go into the high schools or have teachers bring students here.

Helen Strassberg asked if there had ever been an attempt to start a student radio station. Amrik Singh felt that we need to get students involved in broadcasting. Paula responded that what we are really talking about is improving the quality of student life.

- **Banners**

Margaret Ballantyne said that this month is Hispanic Heritage Month and there's no banner outside advertising that. Cheryl Smith suggested that we buy banners that can be used again. For example, the Registration banner can stay the same just change the dates on the bottom, and the banner used for Hispanic Heritage Month can also be used for African American Month. The banners can be used year after year.

VP Posman said banners don't cost that much. We have money in the capital budget from the city and Paula Lalande said that banners are about \$200.00.

- **Additional Advertisement**

David Ajuluchukwu suggested the use of corporate sponsors.

Jerald Posman said that York has to convince people that we are a quality institution.

Lindamichelle Baron brought up the need for working with the parent liaisons at the high schools. Cheryl Smith said that Evita Belmonte has been able to get a list of parents and principals so we are connected to parent liaisons.

Janis Jones suggested using the community newspapers. There's no cost to advertise in the Queens Chronicle. Olga Dais said to use the NY1 community board on television.

Janis Jones said to run it by Patrick Madama's office so he is aware of what is going on, even though he may not have the staff to do the work himself.

Assessment Overview

- Dr. Mohammadi gave a powerpoint presentation on assessment called The Tiger and The Dragon.

There is a general understanding of assessment. Everyone has discussed it, but one thing that is missing is a "system".

Assessment is actually a system. It is synonymous with a 'culture of evidence'. It allows us to answer the question: 'How do we know we met our goals?'

Assessment is the systematic process of collect managing, analyzing and using data to see whether our students are learning. The focus is on the students and on measuring the integrity of all academic, administrative and financial programs.

It is a quality assurance program. It answers such questions as what do students know or not know. This comes under outcomes of learning as opposed to teaching. The information can then be used to make decisions about how to teach.

The assessment loop is made up of educational goals and questions, gathering evidence, interpretations and using the result to modify the process.

- **The meeting was adjourned at 1:30PM.**