

## **Planning Day 2004 Discussion Group on Academic Programs**

Conveners: Steve Light and Bob Ackland  
Recorder: Bob Davis

### **1. What is/should be our distinctive niche within SUNY? Who are we? (What do we do better than anyone else?)**

We have a distinctive community. We do a great job of blending liberal arts and professional development and should build on that strength.

We should emphasize flexibility through learning communities which will allow us to better see the interrelations among programs. This will allow us to market ourselves better and make teaching more enjoyable.

We should become more significant in the individual student's life. "Closeness is better". Smaller class sizes are necessary to know the student and to show them that we care. We should increase faculty-student partnerships and develop a mentoring process between each faculty member and a few students. In addition, we need to increase the new student's sense of connectedness to the campus and faculty (e.g., Freshman Experience).

More independent work should be required which will help to empower students and improve the relationship between faculty and student.

There needs to be a strong commitment to faculty development to help us learn how to engage in ways to teach more effectively. We need to find ways to make students aware that we are here for them.

We need to better address career plans for students in the undergraduate curriculum, and to better accommodate non-traditional students by having programs address them more effectively.

### **2. What programs should we try to grow? Which programs fit best with our mission and "brand"? What are the criteria for growth or reduction?**

Over the next 5-10 years we should consider Ph.D programs to see if it is feasible to offer the degree or to work in collaboration with other Ph.D programs to offer joint Ph.D degrees.

We should establish ourselves as a regional university. We should develop new graduate programs and grow existing ones to recruit students from both within and outside the region.

A proactive committee that is broad based and non-partisan should be developed to develop programs and interdisciplinary curriculums that is based on other SUNY offerings, market forces, curriculum trends, and our existing program strengths. This committee would consult with departments and the administration. We need to respond to service needs or market forces for program development that is distinctive within SUNY. Target 4-5 programs that would serve growing areas.

A special in-service program for students in their 5<sup>th</sup> year should be developed to better help them prepare for graduate school (e.g., part of a 5 yr MST or as part of a graduate program).

### **3. What role should distance learning have?**

The Nursing Department would like to expand into a graduate program, in part, through distance learning.

Distinctions must be made between web based and other distance learning options like PictureTel to meet the needs of different audiences.

While one concern expressed was that we may lose “teacher/student connection” using distance learning practices studies have shown that this is not the case.

The intent of distance learning was to attract new students but we are only attracting our own students. Is there a population of students we can attract via on-line courses? We need on-line degree programs not just on-line courses that will draw students who are not our own students.

Our winter and summer programs offer the potential to use on-line courses for our own students and for students outside our college during the academic year.

**Planning Day 2004**  
**Discussion Group on Enrollment: Recruitment and Retention**

Conveners: Bob Karp and Frances Hagen-Dumenci  
Recorder: Pat Higgins

**What kind of a student body do we want to have?**

**Size:** We were at 5,900 just before the MOU of 2000-2005 was signed, which projected an enrollment of 6,500 by 2005. We reached 6,200, but enrollment has now declined to about 6,000 (headcount). Our projection of 6,500 was based on a budget model that insured that our resources would increase along with the size of our student body. That did not happen. Not only did our state allocation not increase, we were also not able to keep all the tuition we generated. Hence, we should probably aim to maintain our current enrollment, but not to increase it.

**Geographical Origin:** 1. The proportion of our students who are from the North Country has been increasing, but high school enrollment in this region is now declining. Hence we will need to work harder to maintain our local enrollment levels and/or seek replacements.

2. The increase in the number of international students has been great for our campus. This level should be maintained or increased.

**Retention: What is a realistic goal, and what do we gain from putting resources into increasing retention?**

We now have an overall retention rate of 77.8%. We could increase this by keeping more seniors here for their final few units, but other than increasing the rate, the rewards would be small. Our freshman attrition (at 26-27%) is better than the national average for public comprehensive colleges, but we may be able to lower attrition by addressing the needs, enhancing the freshman experience, and developing more pre-emptive programs. We could increase retention by a couple percentage points at the freshman level; that would be worth \$1,000,000 to the college.

How much support should we provide to students with marginal academic records?

Of the 269 deposit paid undeclared students, 114 have less than 1000 SAT, 26 have less than 80 HSC and under 1,000 SAT, and 49 have less than 1000 SAT. We traditionally put first year undeclared students in heavy ready courses, but we do not test them for reading comprehension, or support them in developing reading comprehension.

**Relation between recruitment and retention:** The better we do at retention, the less stress there is on recruitment.

**Need to develop local ties:** Students are not going as far away from home as they used to, unless there is a very special program or some other special feature of the institution that attracts them. Students in Lake Placid are going to Potsdam, because of the special relationship they have with Potsdam. We—including faculty—need to work more with our local/regional high schools and teachers to develop special relationships. We could also involve local/regional high school students more in campus activities.

Do we provide an environment that encourages our top students to stay?

In 300 level classes, some students cannot understand the discussion, which makes top students wonder why they are here. How much responsibility should we have to prepare the weaker students.

Retention is higher among top students than among weaker students. A freshman experience program could support study skills, but we haven't been able to mount this for all incoming students. Departments need to work on what they can do to keep our top students here.

Faculty must be more involved in recruitment and retention. One way is to work with Admissions to develop a marketing package.

For Fall 2003, 864 group 2 students were accepted; 225 became deposit paid; 310 group 1 students were accepted; 77 became deposit paid. Faculty involvement and contact with accepted group 1 and group 2 students could increase this. This can be delicate, however; some students may appreciate faculty calls, while others may view this as harassment. Faculty may need more training. Calls from other students may be better received.

Similarly, when better students come to visit the campus, we should do something special for them, such as encouraging them to visit classes; and we could encourage better freshmen to visit upper level classes as well.

Enrollment council discussions, like this discussion, have moved from focusing on the college as a whole to focusing on programs and departments. More specific information should be given to department chairs, such as the names of majors who have not returned.

Personal relationships and a sense of connectedness always comes up as an important factor in retention. We need to focus on this even more than we do, in recruitment, retention, and alumni affairs. We need to be more consistent with our relationship building. Some departments say they are too busy to meet with prospective students and their parents. We also need to look at our websites; are we building connectedness there?

We also need to feature our best students in our brochures and web sites. ISS is developing such a brochure for international students. Our web site does this, and public relations does "home towners" as much as possible, given staffing limitations. But we must also remember that most of the students we are recruiting are not in group 1. Focusing too much on the achievements of group 1 students may be intimidating for them. We need to show students how to get from group 3 to group 1.

North Country counselors are very supportive of our college. We need to get the word out to more counselors in other parts of the state.

Whatever the issues with our application pool, enrollment numbers, and retention rates, our graduation rate has been second or third among SUNY comprehensives for the last 12 years. The students we attract are persisting through to graduation better than at comparable institutions.

Should we be putting more resources into getting better students, rather than supporting students who are unprepared? It is unclear whether examples of students who seem to be totally unprepared for college and/or totally unable to benefit from resources provided are the "average" group 3 students who make up the bulk of the college's student body, or special admits, or occasional admission mistakes.

**Planning Day 2004**  
**Discussion Group on Campus/Facilities**

Conveners: Ray Guydosh and John Homburger  
Recorder: Sue Spissinger

**1. What should be the priorities for capital improvement and equipment funds?**

Jose DeOndarza asked how facilities outdated for modern instructional methods could be updated to meet state-of-the-art instructional needs.

John Homburger – With all studies done, we need to find balance between antiquated facilities and critical maintenance. Embedded in that is the criticism that we underutilize facilities...for example, we may have a total of 12 labs but only use 6 because the others are so outdated/not conducive to effective instruction...we need to articulate what our real needs are.

The new facility committee is exploring what are the academic and student needs for 5-10 years down the road...lack of technology; size and fit (scheduling); dedicated space issues.... the committee is reaching out to understand program needs.

**Process: In the past:** guidebook based on engineering studies, architect, interview campus groups, campus plan, academic plan (new programs, mix of programs), trends (long-term)...

Now...asking all those questions....and looking at \$34 million capital plan:

- \$14 million in plans presented to Executive Staff
- \$20 million plant adaptation still under review

John Homburger noted that we can modernize a specific facility...and do not have to wait for a full building rehabilitation in order to do so. All facilities and needs for academics, students and support areas are under review. John Homburger also stated that we have asked for \$6 million in additional funding for electrical infrastructure needs as a consequence of the power failure last December.

**2. Do campus buildings and other facilities need to change to accommodate new and existing programs?**

Ray Guydosh asked about the appropriate use of space/dedicated space – How could we improve allocation of space....

John Homburger responded that space assigned to Deans (Dean/Administrator in charge) who can assign space as appropriate (office space); classroom space is assigned through registrar, hopefully to assure most efficient use. Dedicated space needs to be identified and then fairly allocated and utilized. There will always be dedicated space due to physical needs: arts, sciences, etc.

Committee will inventory all space and what it is used for...not in space assignment function.

### **3. What changes would we like to see in student support/student services facilities?**

G. Withrow noted that the Bursar, registrar, financial aid and academic advising were meeting to better serve student needs...common web page, cross training, etc. Need to be physically co-located for at least "front office" operations. G. Withrow also noted that each office believes current structure is not effective....need for colocation of facility to better serve students.

John Homburger noted no facility available right now but cross training to start this summer; create front end and move either front end or back office somewhere else in the future.

### **4. How much emphasis should be given to strengthening the technological superstructure?**

John Homburger stated that technology funds would be embedded in everything we do in terms of planning for facilities.

### **5 & 6. How can we better use the city and our surroundings? Should we relocate any programs or offices into downtown buildings?**

John Homburger reported that the Mayor approached the College and asked if TAC/SBDC could create a presence in downtown area (Federal Building). It would help increase access and positive presence downtown...somewhat postponed and heading toward January 06 potentially.

Several faculty raised the issue of clinics and serving external communities, etc. and increased pressure/demands on space. How do we plan where we need to be in 3-5 years? John Homburger responded that past practice was political and silo building; new facilities planning process open, based on planning, and looking for knowing where we are able to go programmatically for 5-10 years.

E. Brohel stated that we have operated on a closed campus mind set; will that change and be more focused. D. LaPorte raised the work of prior committees such as the Sibley Hall Committee – clinics and outreach plan...where is/are the plan/s... John Homburger – prior plans and proposals are still available and Capital Planning Committee are reviewing all previous plans....slow down caused by leadership, campus climate and change in Fund. It was noted that enrollments drive programs....assessment of programs – what's shrinking – can we still do all and add more programs. He also indicated that we need to evaluate where we are, where we need to go and how...Information will go to all and Capital Facilities Plan.

Ray Guydosh stated that the recurring theme seems to be how are decisions are made?

John Homburger noted it flows through chairs, supervisors, deans, vice presidents and executive staff.

**7 & 8. How can we encourage appropriate community use of our facilities? How should we utilize our financial and human resources to achieve these goals?**

7 & 8 were not specifically addressed save for the notion that more systematic planning is needed and that proposed uses (by campus or anyone else) must be fully vetted.

**Planning Day 2004**  
**Discussion Group on The Plattsburgh Experience/Student Life**

Conveners – Bill Laundry and Bryan Hartman  
Recorder – Holly Heller-Ross

**1. What makes us unique?**

We are not that unique, but the Plattsburgh Experience as conceived by the S.P committee could make us unique. That means a strong foundation for all students in experiential activities and learning in and out of the classroom, specific to disciplines, including co-curricular.

Needs more administrative support.

*Maybe coordination, faculty/staff recognition - High emphasis on this*

(Look at #5. Issue of selectivity – 2<sup>nd</sup> highest SUNY graduation rate with level 3 students)

**2. What should be our faculty profile?**

(All tenure-track, full-time, with high salaries!). Perhaps we can't set a campus-wide ideal ratio.

- 1) May be departmental driven – one dep't needs more practitioner based, professional links, another needs more full-time, tenure track
- 2) May be enrollment/planning driven – if new programs envisioned or if enrollment is very cyclical, need more flexible faculty staffing ratios, we need data showing how faculty ratios impact enrollment and retention.
- 3) College might create additional categories of employees (faculty) (*idea from Charlie Simpson, if more followup is desired*)  
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- 4) Emphasis on recognition and salary (e.g. Time and resources) for all faculty and staff, full or part-time, tenure-track or adjunct

3. & 6. What should the role of electronic media (especially the Web) be in our teaching? And how much emphasis should be given to strengthening technological infrastructure?

Classroom/teaching lots of tech integration as students need it for professions and grad school - need to expose students to various technologies – jobs are demanding it

- No imposition of technology pedagogy

- Maybe Center for teaching effectiveness could help faculty define role for D.L and Web courses and how to do it

- Infrastructure – needed infrastructure linked to academics and student goals

Huge discussion on info overload, (*how to prevent, yet communicate everything?*)

**4. What changes would we like to see in student support/student services?**

Better Advising and Mentoring – training and rewards

- Jan transfers – need more support

- Consider 24/7 student services

- International student needs – more training, planning for everyone to support students

- Earlier use of Career Planning, more use of Learning Center
- More space needed for SSS testing

**5. How much emphasis should we place on study abroad and international experiences, service learning, and internships and practicum experiences?**

Lots of emphasis

Maybe a requirement

Lots more coordination/support

Focus on Quality experience not just Quantity

**7. How should we utilize our financial and human resources to achieve these goals?** Didn't really get to in time allotted, except to try to spend \$ smarter,

Suggestion to use the alumni network more for; student recruitment, career network, Plattsburgh Experience, and fundraising.