University Planning Committee Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2018

Attendance:

Present: Alford, Bodnar, Callaway, Chacon, Comer, DeLuca, Farnsworth, Fitzgerald, Humphrey, Kirgis, Lindsay, Schafer, Schwarze, Semanoff, Stark, White, Whittenburg.

Absent: Atteberry, Barnes, Chacon, Comer, Manuel, Ratto-Parks

Mission/Identity subgroup update:

- Presented another draft document for consideration and discussion by the group and
- At Faculty Senate some expressed a dislike for the “MT Ways”.
  - Seen as provincial or parochial
  - “Ways” represents the past rather than moving forward
- These are preliminary recommendations. We have gotten to these recommendations quickly in order to give Faculty Senate time for feedback. And then we also have time to refine and adjust, especially the wording and language.
  - We can call it the UM Core for now. And then later on we can come up with something compelling to students.
  - The intent of this group is to provide guidance to our faculty leadership and new Provost to identify the design imperatives for the Gen Ed curriculum moving forward.
- The two main issues we are seeing are interrelated and may have a common cause. One is the lack of STEM and the other is the Montana Ways. Are we working on a marketing plan or an organizational plan? If this is an organizational plan, then I agree we need a sixth community to reflect the sciences. We need to explain the purpose of this identity document. Will this guide a restructuring of the University, including a restructure of Gen Ed?
  - There is not a binary distinction between organization and marketing.
  - UMHM has allowed us to go beyond just our college and intentionally develop interdisciplinary programs.
  - This is more organizational than marketing but we are trying to define what makes us unique. Science and Technology would be low-hanging fruit if we think this would help resolve the community's concerns. I do think it lends itself to forward-thinking organization.
  - If we add a sixth community for science and technology, the humanities is the sole discipline left behind. We already heard that feedback amidst the STEM comments.
- Presentation of a graphic with 6 intersecting circles. Individuals do a great job of reaching out across communities but we aren't incentivized to do so. In fact, rather the opposite. We want to show a commitment to interdisciplinarity. The center is the core.
  - I really like it. It emphasizes the core. We could really orient around our core and achieve our interdisciplinary goals.
• If we are going to six communities, we are covering all the bases. Some sciences are not things that make UM stand out, relative to others in the nation. If we add sciences, we should rewrite the justice group to expressly include humanities.
  o I thought this was an exercise in planting flags and being distinctive. Our strongest labs are often related to the environment or health and human development communities.
• If we add STEM, it is a failure of imagination rather than a failure of the list of communities. Programs could belong in communities, even if they are not expressly named. STEM may even be a fading paradigm.
  o Can't we be aspirational as well? If we don't have science as part of looking forward to what we can do, we fail in the scheme of what a liberal arts education offers.
  o This is more important externally than we realize. How can we better message that Science is actually a part of a liberal arts education?
  o I was under the impression our science program was really good and better than MSU.
  o This is the single biggest point of feedback.
  o Partnering with external partners, it would be helpful to have a science and technology community.
  o The President emphasizes the survey of the top 1% scientists. There are 3 in the state of MT and all three are at UM.
• There is a concern that if the humanities are relegated to the core, we are sending a message that the scholarly component of that discipline is diminished. There are a lot of humanities programs with rich scholarship production. One of the concerns is that they become a service department if they don't find themselves in the communities.
  o If we express this properly, the core is the heart. It's what drives this whole University. Without humanities, science is nowhere. We have the core/heart that makes UM tick. And we do not mean to say it's not a scholarly element.
  o Humanities might be part of artistic expression and communication. The language could be rewritten to be more inclusive of the humanities.
  o I also see humanities fitting in justice and policy, and environment & sustainability.
  o I disagree that this is a messaging question. It must be demonstrated. The only way we are going to avoid the Stephens Point narrative is to flip it around and propose changes to strengthen the core. We have to demonstrate that the core is so essential that every student has to have it.
• We built these five communities based on things we actually do well as a University. Not particular faculty who are outstanding. If we lose sight of this, we lose what's really special about particular areas of intellectual endeavor that have emerged as special at UM.
  o The communities can still be a north star. We are not a specialized University. We have a mission to educate a broad swath of the population. It’s valuable for us to have broad offerings and articulate the areas where we focus and how we can reimagine our core.
  o Let’s have six areas, with a strong core and remember it’s a preliminary discussion. Our strength is in the "and" we train people to work at the intersection. That's what the world needs from a university today.
• Students who live in this region, with a passion for any of these areas, need to be here. This is not every university. It's distinctive. It's very clear about what we do here. Helping people find a community on campus is critical to retention and this could be a real driver.
• The existing Gen Ed we have now is not just a turf war. There are reasons why people think these various requirements are important for students.
• The piece we are dancing around is that 42% of the academic affairs budget is the “core” budget. Our enrollment is tumbling. We are disinvesting across the entire university. We cannot be too focused on who’s getting percentages of cuts, we should be looking up to see where we are going. We are going to get beyond this and grow again and be better than ever. We want to bring along as much as possible but we have a $10 million shortfall and the President has to make decisions.

• Suggestion to add Science & Technology as a community of excellence and rename the Business and Entrepreneurship community is approved.

• Should we keep the Montana Ways?
  o The criticism may be hyperbolic, but it is reflective of the tension between branding and showcasing what makes UM distinctive while showing that the core is about exposing students to a wide range of different cultures and ideas.
  o When we say "Montana" do we say the state of Montana, or University of Montana? I think we are saying this is a UM way.
  o The Mission and Identity group has talked about this at length and place is imperative to our ability to recruit--not to the Oval, but to Western Montana. I'm not sure people have actually read the entire Identity document (it was not shared with Faculty Senate in its entirety). Much of this feedback is already addressed if people read the entire document.

Meeting adjourned.