Institutional Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting held on: February 4, 2022 @ 1:30 pm

In attendance:

Members:

Timothy Lynch, Interim President

Michael Parrish, Provost

VP Hope Berte

VP Jennifer Borrero

Interim VP Robert Wallace

AVP Carlos Serrano

Prof. Alyson Bardsley

Prof. Katie Cumiskey

Prof. Catherine Lavender

Prof. John Verzani

Prof. Cindy Wong

Guests:

Jessica Collura, Interim Chief of Staff/HR

Michael Cavagnero, Dean, Division of Science and Technology

Alexander Scott, AVP for Enrollment Management/Dean of Admissions

Committee approved minutes from previous meeting held on December 6, 2021.

President Lynch gave opening remarks and updates:

* Speaking to many individuals and groups on campus; learning and affirming that there is a palpable sense of pride among campus constituents and a passion for participation
* Going on a listening and learning tour; getting a better sense of challenges; mission to engage with college in meaningful ways
* There is a desire for greater communication from all members; desire for transparency on the budget, personnel decisions; relationships with Central Ofc.
* There are perceptions that decisions are made by administration without consultation or an understanding of why; a feeling of concerted efforts and plan to keep folks in the dark – which is not the case; there is no desire to exclude or marginalize voices; All admin are of like mind and aim to be transparent, accessible, and communicative
* Enrollment is down 13% from last spring which has a sizable impact on our budget
* We have an issue with retention, a leaky part of the pipeline
* There is concern about new student engagement
* There is more competition; traditional pipelines are narrowing; need to be more nimble, creative and responsive; need provide better customer service in classroom and beyond
* Focus on adult learners looking to re-engage education; assist in career development; certifications, etc.
* OTPS: not a lot of disposable income to dispense; looking to seek additional funding from City/State
* Legislative Forum was first exposure to elected officials; received warm reception

Discussion –

* Need a better way to communicate enrollment needs; how do we best engage with faculty and deans to support increasing enrollment?
* Concerns raised that there are a lot of ad hoc task forces taking on tasks that are within the charge of governance committees; it’s not always clear who is on the committees; often faculty are not involved; need to think of ways to increase faculty input and involvement
* Suggestion made to look at task forces and see where the work runs parallel with governance, overlaps with governance, and/or usurps governance practices; don’t want to duplicate efforts
* There is a concern that IPC is charged with overseeing strategic planning but yet not involved in review/assessment of Strategic Plan

Enrollment Growth Task Force – guests Michael Cavagnero and Alex Scott gave presentation:

* Charged with broadly surveying challenges to and opportunities for enrollment growth at CSI, and with making recommendations for improvement
* Expect about a 10% national decline in enrollments for 2 yr and regional 4yr colleges
* NYS is hurting but NYC is stable although competition is increasing as other schools are increasing outreach and offering discounts
* As a result of COVID19, many are leaving NYS and there is a labor shortage
* There are 9 people on the task force, someone representing each major academic area
* Co-Chairs meet weekly
* Committee has a fairly broad charge; asked to make recommendation for long term solutions
* Task force reviewed charge; divided up responsibilities and created focus areas
* They need and will seek input from stakeholders -both on and off campus
* Members are gathering suggestions, soliciting feedback and collecting data
* Issue – how to best reach out to faculty at large; what mechanisms can be used to engage with faculty; how do you get them involved?
* External vendors; met with consultants; how can they help? Future growth areas; class efficiencies; access to large databases in the region, can they contribute to the effort, if so how?
* Timeline created; work expected to be completed in May
* Task Force recommendations will be given to President and President will determine next steps

Discussion:

* St. George is working on Strategic Plan and branding; there are unique opportunities for St. George; should be included in focus groups
* Concern raised that only few faculty members are on task force; and that faculty leaders are not up front and center for consultation/data collection
* Question raised - If four-year colleges are doing better, are we putting too much effort into 2 yr. programs and not enough into 4 yr. programs
* Suggestion made that faculty staff and students should be consulted by the task force for information and data; utilize the resources at CSI
* Concerns about task force raised: committee is too small; charge is too broad especially for such an accelerated timeline; committee is too junior; not interested in idea of farming work out to a consultant which is costly for the college and college has better use for the money
* Co-chairs indicated committee struggled with broad charge and short timeline
* Concern - Something needs to be done about retention rates, losing 1,400 students from last Spring; Why did they leave? Need immediate short term solutions instead of focusing on long term solutions
* Suggestion that the charge of committee should include DEI; 1st generation students should be embraced; include data from COACHE survey; it may be that retention failure may be due to inequities
* Concern raised that there are constant false equivalencies when we only choose 1 person from each area to serve on a committee– HSS does not have enough representation; 1 single person cannot cover this large division
* Suggestion made to add career and scholarship office as another source for the committee
* We are an Hispanic Serving Institution – Suggestion made to explore what that means for us as a college
* Need to start remedying our failures; are our high school partnerships/30,000 degrees program helping to build our enrollment profile?
* Need to share knowledge so everyone knows what is going on – need to communicate more and do outreach
* Suggestion made that we should be focusing on both short term and long term solutions – as opposed to one or the other;
* There is a need to plug holes immediately – stabilize and then decide what programs to invest in or sunset
* We need to be less risk averse; not too predictive; be innovative; take some risk in reinvesting in programs
* Suggestion made that we need more tenure track lines/research
* Everything is subject to review; some things might need to be sunsetted if no return on investment – there should be no expectations or entitlements
* Concerns raised that morale is low; a lot of people feel disempowered; need a broad base buy in; decisions don’t have to be top down, community should weigh in and help make decisions
* Concern raised about Strategic Plan expiring this year – how will we move forward? Need a clear path toward that process
* Concern raised that the charge of task force looks like Strategic Plan process – and that this will end up being the strategic plan process in the end; IPC should have a lot of input in Strategic Plan; everyone should weigh in
* Students: two kinds: strong affinity v. weak affinity to CSI; losing those with weak affinity in droves; need to increase those with an affinity and help support them to succeed and graduate
* Suggestion to look at enrollment in classes; curriculum changes needed; what do students want? Departments should look at curriculum and programs
* Suggestion made that we need to be strategic and stay aligned with demand or we will continue to suffer; need to adapt and embrace new opportunities; keep an open mind and keep up with the times or get left behind
* Concern raised that it is hard to get new students and retain them; the sense of urgency is there for staff, but there are new challenges every day; we react and try to address