

## Strategic Planning Task Force

April 29, 2020

Task Force Members in Attendance: Stacey McCliff (co-chair), Carson Howell (co-chair), Barbara Dalene, Jay Olsen, Garth Sorenson, Kade Parry, LaFaun Barnhurst, Karen Johnson, Andy Nogasky, Fernando Montano, Alex Peterson, Jacob Thomas, Teri Clawson, Paula Robison, Larry Smith, Melanie Jenkins, Janalee Jeffery, Lisa Jones, Michael Huff, Marci Larsen, Paul Tew, Jeff Serrine, Katie Justesen, Emily Peterson

Absent: Mike Brenchley, Matt Green, Jeff Reynolds, Ben Scheffner

Others in Attendance: President Cook, Ryan Yorgason, Steve Hood, Heidi Stringham, Jason Springer, Josh Hales, Rob Nielson

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

Members of the cabinet joined the Task Force for this meeting. President Cook thanked the Task Force for all of their work, especially in a time where there have been so many challenges.

Carson Howell said that he and Stacey would like to thank everyone who has been a part of the Task Force. He explained that the Task Force broke into three subcommittees: quality, affordability, and accessibility. There was a lot of work within the subcommittees, and then the Task Force broke into stakeholder groups and did some more work. He then explained the strategy sheet that the group will look at today. As stated in the preamble to the strategies, the Task Force looked at the strategies that will give us a competitive advantage and propel Snow College forward. Carson explained that the Task Force came up with over 100 strategies and then synthesized them to see which items created competitive advantages.

Stacey McCliff said that we utilized feedback from stakeholders to develop these strategies. Overall, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

The group then looked at the five themes laid out in the strategy worksheet.

**Student Success:** There are three strategies listed under this theme:

- Train advisors to specialize by division, assigning the appropriate number of advisors to each division.
- Implement more robust student success supports and engagement opportunities throughout the college and curriculum.
- Launch an aggressive scholarship initiative focused on need-based, diversity, and retention scholarships, leveraging engagement with alumni and community.

Stacey added that in addition to these larger strategies, there will be smaller strategies that we will include in our recommendations to the cabinet.

President Cook asked the Task Force if they felt like these strategies captured their work well. LaFaun Barnhurst said that she feels like they do. The Task Force has a list of items pertaining to Student Success that are more specific, but what we've outlined is a big picture view of how to meet needs.

The President asked how the Task Force distinguished strategies from tactics. Stacey presented and discussed the spreadsheet that contained all 100+ strategies and discussed how we narrowed them down to the strategies on the current spreadsheet. In addition, the Task Force will provide the cabinet with a full list of tactics that can be used to accomplish the goals.

Dr. Hood asked if each particular strategy will have ownership assigned to it. Carson said that the list will be handed over to the cabinet, and the cabinet will make assignments.

**Academics:**

- Deepen quality goals for student face-to-face experiences through high-impact practices.
- Reevaluate and revise curriculum in all delivery formats to reflect inclusivity, contemporary content in academic disciplines, and needs of employers.
- Develop a robust online presence with the help of a professional instructional designer and a quality control process for online courses.
- Leverage CTE/technical education funding and infrastructure to offer high-quality, in-demand, and substantial CTE/technical education pathways that fit industry needs.

Carson mentioned that diversity and inclusivity are woven throughout all of the strategies. He added that the online strategy encompasses both traditional online courses and the new Snow Online program. He also pointed out that the strategies differentiate between CTE and technical education.

President Cook said it is good to have this distinction between CTE and technical ed. Technical education is competency based, open-entry/open-exit, and can be offered for non-credit, while CTE encompasses more options like traditional business and nursing programs. With the merging of technical colleges and the USHE system, we need to be offering both types of education. He said the focus on online courses is also important. We have to make clear to students, faculty, and others that what we did this semester in terms of online courses was an emergency pivot. In the future, we want to provide more support for our faculty in both vectors of online education (traditional online courses and Snow Online (competency-based)).

The President asked the Task Force for their thoughts on the academic section. He asked if they feel like this captures a solid strategy that most faculty could get behind.

Michael Huff said that Snow College has an advantage for the undergraduate experience over larger USHE institutions, because of the high number of courses taught by faculty instead of graduate students or teaching assistants. We should leverage this advantage as we increase and improve our profile in the higher ed marketplace.

Kade Parry said that while the quality of our education is very high, there is room for us to improve our training of adjunct, concurrent enrollment, and online instructors. This pool of instructors is small, as compared to other institutions, but we can still improve.

Jay Olsen said that he feels like this section of the plan captures the unique ability Snow College has to meet rural education needs.

The President asked what the conversation was like regarding the distinctive value-adds that Snow College offers. We are a unique, front-line institution as it relates to rural issues, but there is no mention of our rural location in the plan.

LaFaun said there was discussion of our rural status. We see that some rural students are not going to college at all, and we need to find a way to meet those needs.

Andy Nogasky said that the Task Force did some readings about Generation Z students, and we saw a lot of parallels between Gen Z and rural students – they are more practical, and they place high priority on affordable education and career pathways. As a result, we feel that Snow College is in a better position than other institutions to meet the needs of Gen Z students.

Carson said that early on, we talked a lot about who we are as a college. The fact that Snow is a rural college was front and center in our discussions as we moved forward. Our strategic plan was not for a research university but for who we are.

Jay said that as you visit with rural students, you learn that many of them want to stay at home. This opens up the opportunity for them to understand that they can explore entrepreneurship and create business opportunities in their rural locations.

Katie Justesen said that the Social and Behavioral Sciences division is happy that the new proposed building will be a rural studies building. However, we still have a lot of students from Salt Lake County and other larger areas. She asked how we focus on rural studies while still recruiting a large number of non-rural students.

President Cook said that it would be interesting to have rural case studies where it's appropriate. We are trying to have rural students stay and grow, thrive, and understand things that are specific to a rural context. However, he can see where there could be a possible conflict between this focus and recruited non-rural students.

Michael Huff said that excellence, regardless of location, is always going to be a draw. There are small colleges, like ours, throughout the country that embrace the rural experience and own what they are. It's not an inhibiting factor because they have a reputation for excellence that draws students from everywhere.

President Cook said he appreciates this feedback and loves the collaborative process, because everyone brings their own perspective. His perspective involves leveraging our resources and getting a competitive edge in terms of funding. He asked what the conversations were about economic development and if economic development can be found in the strategic plan categories.

Carson said that the mention of economic development comes in terms of working with local industry and developing curriculum that meets their needs.

### **Recruitment and Retention:**

- Significantly strengthen marketing leadership to coordinate existing marketing activities, identify primary target markets, conduct important research, and develop specific strategies directed at clear market segments.
- Focus recruitment efforts on new media targets, prioritizing non-traditional, diverse, and international student populations; maintain successful existing recruitment activities.
- Market online programs specifically to non-traditional students working full-time jobs.
- Develop an easily accessible parent portal similar to those developed by other USHE institutions.

Stacee said that we heard a lot of feedback from stakeholders about marketing, and it was tough to come up with what we wanted under this theme. We already have a lot of successful marketing at the college, and we wanted to articulate that we need more coordination, support, and specifics for target markets. The Task Force will let the experts decide what these markets are and how to move forward with targeted strategies for them.

Stacee also added that we received a lot of parent feedback, which inspired our strategy to develop an online parent portal. With Gen Z students, parents are making more decisions, and so we wanted to include a component where parents could receive more information.

President Cook asked Teri Clawson to weigh in on this theme. She said that it is important to distinguish brand awareness from recruitment and make sure that we work on both. She expressed concern about having the marketing department determine market segments, because that is more of an enrollment function. Teri's team is currently working on it.

Stacee said that the intention of the Task Force is to say that there needs to be coordination between these two efforts.

President Cook said that as he's looked at some of the documents (such as the SWOT analysis) that the Task Force has developed since January, it seems that marketing has frequently been discussed and needs to pop up to the top of things that the college needs to work on.

Michael Huff said that Snow College is getting buried by other schools in terms of publicity. He wants to see more of us.

Carson said that our hope is that the strategies are broad enough that as the cabinet starts looking at possible tactics, there will be flexibility to add things to accomplish what we need to.

The President stated that he likes the idea of implementing a parent portal. Kade said that we have a list of information for parents on a webpage, but we do not have a highly developed portal, like other institutions have. He cited UVU's portal ([www.uvu.edu/parents](http://www.uvu.edu/parents)) as an example of what we could do.

Paula Robison was in the stakeholder group that gathered information from parents. She said that based on the input they received, parents want to be more involved and received more information. They're often the ones paying the bills, and they want to know what they're paying for.

### **Employees:**

- Enhance compensation for full-time and part-time faculty and staff.
- Implement measures to control overload and burnout; administrators and supervisors should evaluate the load of employees and work to even out the task distribution.
- Develop the campus community to help attract and retain diverse faculty and staff.

Regarding compensation and workload, the President said, HR is coming close to its next iteration of a salary comparison study.

Josh Hales, director of HR, said he would like to hear from the Task Force about their thoughts on compensation. If you compare Snow College to other schools throughout the nation, our salaries are behind. However, if you look at total compensation, which includes benefits, that gap closes quite a bit.

He asked if Snow College should be solely focusing on closing the salary gap, or if they should be taking the compensation package into account.

Fernando Montano said that compensation is important, but we also need to develop a more aggressive campaign to attract diverse individuals. He believes that mandatory diversity training should be included in the strategic plan. He said it is key to attract faculty and staff from different backgrounds. Without that, it is more difficult to attract students from different backgrounds and support them from the beginning to the end.

Stacey replied by saying that we will pass on all of the strategies in the spreadsheet and some of those strategies deal specifically with diversity. In addition, the Student Success strategy about support systems is important. We want to make sure that first generation, students of different backgrounds, and international students have supports in place.

Regarding compensation, Larry Smith said that we still occasionally have problems attracting employees for what we offer, but we are making more progress with newer faculty. We also need to make sure that long-time faculty feel they are properly compensated, especially compared with new faculty offers. Compression issues are more concerning than offers to new faculty.

Janalee Jeffery said to make sure that part-time and adjuncts are also included. Larry added that we should consider including cost-of-living adjustments for part-time employees and adjunct instructors.

President Cook said that we should make sure we're taking care of employees from a benefit/salary standpoint, workload balance, etc. We should also think about providing counseling benefits and making sure that employees feel appreciated and recognized. One thing he has noticed is that some institutions apply for "Best Places to Work" recognition. Maybe we can work toward having a goal of being a "Best College to Work."

#### **Infrastructure:**

- Invest in technology infrastructure to remove any technological barriers for students, faculty, and staff.
- Develop a capital facilities prioritization list which supports the College's strategic priorities and growth, including a Center for Rural Studies and Community Development building in Ephraim and student housing in Richfield.

Stacey said that, after marketing, technology was probably the topic that came up most. There is only one strategy listed for technology, but there are lots of tactics that fall under that strategy, including designating Wi-Fi, internet, e-mail, Canvas, and printers as no-fail systems. For capital facilities, the strategies specifically identify two facilities that should be prioritized – the Center for Rural Studies and Community Development in Ephraim, and student housing in Richfield. However, other facilities, such as married student housing and an urgent care facility, could also be included.

This strategic plan will now be handed over to the cabinet, who will move forward will making assignments and implementing these strategies. Carson mentioned that Ryan Yorgason, project manager, and Beckie Hermansen, director of the Office of Institutional Research, are resources for the cabinet as they move forward.

President Cook said this strategic plan is a terrific platform, and he couldn't be happier with the work. He looks forward to moving forward with the cabinet on implementing measures. He said that this strategic plan puts Snow College in a much better position moving forward.