

Strategic Planning Sessions

Themes, Summary, and Recommendations

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Overview

Background

The current Miami Dade College Strategic Plan expires this year and the college has begun the planning process for the 2010-2015 plan. To date, the internal and external scans have been completed and summary data was available for presentation at the strategic planning sessions. As well, the vision and mission statements have been reviewed and have been shared with the college community for comment. A survey was recently sent to the college for input on the vision, mission, and values statements and to the community for input on the College's performance and future direction.

Purpose of Strategic Planning Sessions

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Sessions was to identify common themes, annual priorities, and draft goals for each of the eight areas in the plan framework. The outcome of each session is two or three goals/strategic priorities for each of the eight areas. The information gathered in the strategic planning sessions will be used in coordinated planning efforts to ensure a collaborative and inclusive planning process. The goals and priorities identified in each session will be reported back to the planning committee for consideration and integration into the final plan.

Summary of the Strategic Planning Sessions

Three sessions were held on January 11 and 12, 2010. Twenty-three deans (academic, student, and administrative) met on Monday, January 11, 2010 for a three-hour planning session (see transcribed notes – attachment A). Approximately thirteen executive administrators met on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 for a shorter one hour and fifteen minute session (see transcribed notes – attachment B). Finally, a small group of seven miscellaneous administrators met on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 for a three-hour planning session (see transcribed notes – attachment C).

Each session's agenda, questions, and results are described in each set of transcribed notes (see attachments). Following are the common themes, summary remarks, and recommendations for the planning committee.

Common Themes

Through the three strategic planning sessions, several key themes emerged. In all groups, the following points were identified and discussed:

- Rethink, redesign, and improve the delivery the college preparatory sequence.
- Re-engineer the college schedule to better meet the changing needs of a diverse student body (including course start/stop times, modes of delivery, etc.).
- Integrate academic and cultural initiatives.
- Concern was expressed in each group over the data in the internal scan pertaining to the success of MDC students in the state university system.

- Concern was expressed in each group over the many competing priorities that may be distracting the college from its core mission. A sense that the college is working to be “all things to all people” and not making strategic decisions about top priorities was expressed. Additionally, conversation occurred around the need to connect priorities to funding and to the mission of the college.
- Offering baccalaureate degrees is changing the institution in ways that may or may not be transparent. Programs have been added quickly and the college has not fully incorporated the baccalaureate degree programs and populations into the larger MDC culture. Additionally, the baccalaureate degree programs require changes to organization, support, advising, etc. that have not been integrated into the overall practice of the college.
- Alumni are an under-tapped resource of partnership and support.
- Innovations in resource development are essential.
- Multi-directional community partnerships will be a key feature of MDC success in the coming years (it was noted that community partnerships need to benefit both partners – not just the community and that the college could look to key partners for financial support).
- Concern was expressed over internal and external scan data that related to the economic climate – the groups were uncertain about the long-term viability of some observations – are they really new trends or blips due to the current economic situation.

Summary of Strategic Themes Discussion

In an effort to organize the thinking and conversation, the eight draft value statements were used to prompt conversation. In each case, groups were asked to consider the draft value statement and determine two or three things that the college needs to do or do differently in order to achieve its mission. Following is a summary of ideas related to each draft value statement. Full transcription of each groups’ ideas are included in attachments A, B, and C.

Exceptional Learning Environment

The course delivery system, curriculum review, and delivery modes were discussed and ranked highly in each session. Additionally, all groups noted the need for more thorough academic advising (both at MDC and in preparation for transition to the state university system) and the need for state-of-the-art technology (and appropriate resources to support integration) to support student learning. Participants also discussed the college prep program, baccalaureate degree programs, and a concern over the increasing ratio of part-time to full-time faculty.

Culture of Evidence

The discussion about this theme raised many questions about current benchmarks and the need to systemize the approach to evidence as well as the use of results. The need to imbed assessment and use of data in the curriculum and program assessment was discussed.

Exceptional Work Environment

In each session, discussion in this area centered around the current open positions and the need for employees to do more with fewer resources. Suggestions for achieving this value

included retooling the workforce and workflow, creative incentives and flexible work conditions. Additionally, each group discussed the need for appropriate and on-going professional development.

Quality Community Partnerships

The desire for successful partnerships with other education partners was a highlight of the strategic themes conversations, both with Miami Dade County public and private schools as well as with transfer institutions. Additionally, groups noted the need for financially effective (and potentially beneficial) partnerships to secure needed resources and opportunities for students as well as a need to tap into the large alumni base.

Commitment to Cultural and Academic Initiatives

All groups agreed that integrated cultural and academic initiatives would benefit the students, faculty and staff. Improved communication about cultural and academic initiatives was suggested. Additionally, groups discussed the need to leverage cultural initiatives in the academic programs. Finally, an awareness of the diverse student body was highlighted as a benefit to both cultural and academic initiatives.

Sustainability Practices

Embedding sustainable practices in the curriculum and day-to-day college operations was the key feature of the discussion related to this theme. Additionally, funding for sustainable practices was noted as a possible deterrent to more wide-spread adoption of such practices.

Resource Development, Operational Efficiencies, and State-of-the-art Technologies

Groups commented on the inclusive nature of this value statement and found that the three key areas included in this statement each deserved significant attention. Discussion themes centered on the need to allocate resources to the strategic areas of focus for the college, the importance of integrating technology to create operational efficiencies, and the need for the college to develop the ability to react and move quickly to take advantage of these areas.

Global Reach and Awareness

All groups developed ideas for increasing the global reach of the college but all questioned the viability of this value/goal in light of the current economic situation. Ideas for expanding global awareness included establishing online/virtual global experiences and connections for students and to build upon successful exchange programs that may be revenue-neutral.

Recommendations

After hearing three groups discuss each of these value statements in terms of the strategic plan, I would suggest collapsing the last four statements into the first four. There was not strong energy in the discussions around the last four statements (commitment to cultural and academic initiatives, sustainability practices, resource development, operational efficiencies, and state-of-the-art technology, and global reach and awareness). Additionally, these last four statements seem to be ways of achieving a few of the first four as follows:

Ways to create an exceptional learning environment:

- A strong commitment to cultural and academic initiatives
- A global reach and awareness that enriches the curriculum and student experience

Ways to create an exceptional work environment:

- Employ sustainable practices
- Develop new sources of revenue, operational efficiencies, and state of the art technologies

Prepared by Amy Bosley, January 2010