

Strategic Priorities Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 1, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Zoom Video Conference

Attending: Melinda Lowe, Kimberly Dorsey, Mea Ashley, Kelly Bennett, Brooke Carter, Lyndsay Cumberland, Amanda Dahl, Kendall Dunkelberg, Andrew Garner, Glen Halbert, Jessica Harpole, Margaret Hayward, Iika McCarter, Tammie McCoy, Chad Murphy, Nicole Patrick, Anika Perkins, Amanda Clay Powers, Hillary Richardson, and Karleigh Shelton

The meeting was called to order. Each group presented their goals and a brief description under each.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The W is on a mission to create a welcoming, diverse, equitable and inclusive campus climate for all. As the university strives to reach the highest levels of academic excellence, it's also essential that the university foster an environment where all members of the campus community can flourish. Diversity recognizes the value of varied perspectives which helps drive innovative solutions to an ever-changing world.

Goal 1: Create an inclusive and equitable campus climate reflective of the growing diversity in our communities, state and nation.

We will work to create an environment in which all campus community members are welcomed and supported, and differing perspectives and contributions are sought out and valued.

- Conduct first university-wide climate survey
- Implement training; develop toolkit for conducting search committees
- Enhance diversity training for faculty, staff and students; implement diversity training in UN101: Introduction to College Life

Goal 2: Communicate mission and or vision statement on inclusive values.

Diversity crosses all aspects of the university community. We will communicate and promote widely to all key stakeholders The W's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

- Create tab off homepage showcasing diversity efforts
- Create diversity video from the president
- Include diversity statement on publications

Goal 3: Connect internal and external constituencies to opportunities at the university.

In understanding the needs of the campus community, we will work to connect communities to one another to create a sense of belonging, trust and credibility for all groups, including internal and stakeholders of The W family.

- Promote affinity groups on campus
- Educate vendors about bidding opportunities
- Connect students with alumni

Goal 4: Capture, promote and enhance overall curriculum and programming that enhances multicultural awareness and understanding

Create opportunities for the campus community to gain awareness of cultural differences, to be open to diverse perspectives and to have the ability to interact effectively with people different from themselves.

- African-American literature concentration
- Common Read Initiative (CRI)
- Cross reference themes and education in the classroom and/or programming, where appropriate

There was discussion about keeping the goals broad enough to include every under-represented group on campus and laying a good foundation for DEI going forward.

Community Connections

GOAL 1: Cultivate collaborations to create healthy and vibrant communities.

One of the university's strengths is its emphasis on a holistic approach to health and wellness that focuses on all aspects of a person's well-being. The W should capitalize on current academic, community outreach, and other initiatives to increase collaborations between campus units and public communities through regional partners and online audiences.

GOAL 2: Provide outreach to underserved and diverse populations of our communities

We are committed to identifying our communities' underserved and diverse populations, understanding that they are not limited to just one group or demographic. The university can increase inclusive initiatives to provide better access to campus resources, programming, and outreach efforts to enhance our communities' well-being.

Suggestion was made to provide outreach to the community, with a focus on underserved and diverse; this broadens the goal.

GOAL 3: Forge meaningful and engaged partnerships that provide real- life experiences for students

By enhancing relevant partnerships with businesses, hospitals, nonprofits, K- 12 schools, community colleges, and other agencies, The W will provide real- life experiences. These partnerships create future employment opportunities, develop civic awareness, and enrich the student experience. Developing internships, community, and service-learning activities will create mutually beneficial exchanges and serve our communities by providing a future workforce to support economic and personal growth.

GOAL 4: Contribute to the cultural enrichment of our communities

The W serves as a cultural hub for the campus and broader communities. By utilizing our liberal arts emphasis and creativity of our campus community, we can provide accessible, inclusive,

and diverse events and programming to enhance cultural competencies and enrich the lives and perspectives of all within our communities.

The University will foster **Academic Excellence** by:

GOAL: Providing a comprehensive academic experience

MUW is committed to an academic environment that fosters critical thinking, excellence in written and oral communication, creative expression, and civic engagement. By capitalizing on the university's personalized learning environment our goal is to create and instill in our students an attitude of active engagement and investment in their learning. We also commit to creating opportunities for co-curricular programming through the cultivation of diverse campus communities.

GOAL: Creating life-long learners and valuable members of today's global economy

MUW is committed to providing high quality accessible resources and services to support excellence in learning, teaching, and research for our students and faculty. With emphasis on developing and enhancing student research, creative activity, and faculty mentoring, we hope to create new opportunities to produce and share original work with other researchers, future employers, and graduate programs.

GOAL: Providing resources to foster excellence in the teaching

MUW is committed to enhancing accessibility in all traditional, hybrid, and online learning environments. By creating an equitable learning experience with a foundation of instructional support and innovation for faculty and staff, we will offer a rich learning environment and university experience for our students.

GOAL: Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff

MUW is committed to enriching the learning experience of our students and the campus culture through an investment in attracting and retaining a diverse group of faculty and staff. We will continue to create a welcoming environment by investing in our rich campus community and additional support that will contribute to retain current and new faculty and staff.

The University will continue to enhance **Financial Sustainability** by:

GOAL: Developing a strategic budget model

MUW will continue to develop business practices to safeguard and enhance the financial health of the university. Our budget model will maintain a commitment to investing in new resources that ensure a successful student experience.

GOAL: Enhancing and maintain campus infrastructure and facilities

As appropriate for an historic public regional university, MUW will develop support for infrastructure and operations through grants and other development opportunities (i.e. federal, state, local, non-profit) to improve security, stability, and access.

GOAL: Investing in faculty and staff hiring and development

MUW is committed to recruiting, hiring and retaining outstanding faculty and staff. To ensure this we will work to pursue funding opportunities to enhance and create equitable salaries that are competitive with peer institutions across the region.

It was felt that “diverse” faculty and staff should be added in the wording for recruiting, hiring and retaining.

DEGREE COMPLETION

The University will cultivate a comprehensive approach that enhances recruitment, retention, **Completion** and student success by:

GOAL: recruit a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body to ensure a vital university community

To maintain and strengthen the university community all constituent groups should engage in recruiting a diverse student body for both undergraduate and graduate programs. The W is one of the most diverse public universities in the state and should continue to provide educational opportunities to all under-represented groups.

GOAL: provide a wide range of academic programs to meet the needs of today’s student

The W remains committed to its mission of providing a liberal arts education and professional programs to prepare students for a wide range of careers. The W is now classified as a doctoral granting institution. Its graduate programs show potential for growth at a time when the undergraduate recruitment will likely be more competitive.

GOAL: provide equal access to advising, mentoring, and support services to all students

With a continued emphasis on student advising and related support services, the university should help students choose academic pathways that match their interests and skills and lead to completion in a reasonable time. The W should support students with services such as peer mentoring, tutoring, and career counseling to meet the needs of the whole student to ensure retention and progress toward a degree. Equivalent support services should be made available to residential, commuting, and distance students.

GOAL: assist students to maintain financial, emotional, and mental well-being

Acknowledging the students financial, emotional and mental well-being are directly connected to student success and degree completion, The W should continually review scholarship structures, disbursements, and work-study opportunities to assist students with identified areas of need. As part of this, The W should enhance opportunities to support emotional and mental well-being through counseling, advising, and mentoring services.

Suggestion was made to use “holistic” in the goal and to have some type of marketing to ensure students are aware of services available to them

GOAL: support students through degree completion and into their careers

To connect students with desirable outcomes of degree completion, The W should make strategic use of advisory boards and employer surveys to ensure that academic programming provides students with competitive knowledge and skills that translate into job placement. The W should also provide opportunities for access to internships, preceptorships, conferences, and other professional opportunities for career engagement.

Instead of “job placement”, “leaders in their field” might replace.

ADVANCEMENT EXCELLENCE

GOAL: CONTINUE A CULTURE OF GIVING

To ensure we reach the next level of excellence, The W must continue a culture of giving that encourages participation through gifts of time, resources and talents that strengthen and improve the institution. We must provide structures that can align constituents more closely with their interests and background at the university. The W should encourage this culture at the time students enroll at the university and continue to reinforce it throughout their educational progress and beyond.

GOAL: FOSTER PRIDE IN THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS PROGRAMS

By continuing to foster alumni pride, The W can be successful in its first-ever major gifts campaign designed to support key university initiatives such as academic program enhancements, athletics, campus improvements, scholarships and recruitment. These constituencies can be valuable ambassadors for the university in recruiting potential students, as well as mentoring and helping retain enrolled students.

GOAL: OFFER MORE PROGRAMMING REPRESENTATIVE OF DIVERSE ALUMNI BASE

While planning events, affiliations will continue to be developed through academic college alumni groups and other identifiable constituencies. Increasing participation in programming such as Homecoming, special events, and Alumni Office activities while broadening access to all alumni by offering virtual options will be key.

GOAL: PROVIDE RESOURCES TO ASSIST STUDENTS FINANCIALLY

To ensure students have adequate financial resources to complete their studies, private contributions will be elicited to provide greater academic opportunities through awards. Scholarship structures and disbursements will be continually reviewed and aligned to support existing and future programs, services, facilities, and activities.

GOAL: ENHANCE SERVICES TO SHAPE CAREER-READY GRADUATES

Continue to provide an environment that will enhance classroom experiences and assist students and alumni with career goals. By introducing emotional intelligence career training, students can develop critical competencies to help them successfully interact with co-workers and clients to build the foundation as a high-performance team member in their profession. This training advances effective communication and collaboration and provides resources to navigate career-related challenges and conflicts.

There was discussion about format as well as the use of “should” or “will” and how specific each paragraph should be. It was decided to use “will” instead of “should”. The thought was brought forward about whether the initial paragraph under each theme was necessary, but perhaps an overall paragraph before the themes with consistency being important. The decision was made to leave the paragraph under the theme. The document draft should be submitted to President Miller by Wednesday, April 7 with campus listening sessions to follow, perhaps the week after graduation.

There was no further business, so the meeting was adjourned.

