MUW Council on Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE)

October 24, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Present: Brian Anderson, Aaron Brooks, Magan Evans, Xander Hall, Tina Horton, Carla Lowery, President Nora Miller, Clear Moore, Jennifer Moore, Leigh Anne Puckett, Chanley Rainey, Stephanie Salvaterra, Jo Shumake, Barry Smith, Tracey Watkins, and Ethan Wilkins

Absent: Christi Dickerson, Penny Mansell, Anika Perkins, and Scott Tollison

I. Approved the minutes from March and September (Shumake, Lowery).

II. Discussed PS #3538 and decided to continue policy revision digitally.

Rainey proposed revisions to PS #3538, including substantive revisions aimed at simplification as well as grammatical and organizational edits intended to distinguish the ex officio members from the appointed members and to clarify that the chair is chosen from among the members and not in addition to them. In addition, Rainey pointed out that the current membership lacks representation from Enrollment Management, Development & Alumni, and Athletics, while Student Affairs is only represented because one of their staff happens to be the VP of Staff Council (an ex officio position).

While the grammatical and organizational edits met with general approval, the substantive revisions and concerns about a lack of inclusion spurred extended discussion. Lowery emphasized the importance of requiring the appointment of staff who report directly to the president and the need to ensure that the university's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) liaison is always on the council. Moore suggested that perhaps the policy should require "two at the administrative position of director or higher" while dropping the required number of direct reports from three to two. In addition, Rainey suggested that the SACS liaison could be added as an additional ex officio member. Members also considered adding language similar to that requiring faculty selection from each college, school, and library. Lowery suggested that University Counsel might be excluded from such a distributional requirement, since only Human Resources reports to Counsel.

Anderson asked that discussion continue digitally, and Rainey agreed to follow-up over email and facilitate online collaboration.

III. Discussed the process by which PIE Council will formulate its recommendations regarding the university's strategic priorities.

Members considered the "Priorities at The W" document from 2021, how and for what purpose different audiences might access its content, and the level of specificity needed under each goal.

Anderson reminded the council that there are currently 5 strategic priorities, each with a number of specific goals, and that the university needs to consider revisions, expansions, and cuts that may be needed to create a set of priorities and goals that should orient the university for the next five years. He proposed that the council expand into PIE Plus (™) in order to involve more representation from across campus, including Student Affairs, Athletics, Development, Enrollment Management, Facilities Management, Human Resources, Honors College, Director's Council, and QEP) and outside members, such as alumni.* The goal is to have our membership and mission nailed down before the group reconvenes in January.

Anderson also walked the council through the timeline, which he planned to email to members after the meeting: Draft revisions in January go out to listening sessions with faculty, staff, alumni, and students; February meeting will be long and will involve incorporation of feedback into the draft priorities as well as a vote on the final document. Given breadth of representation on PIE Plus (™), it is hoped that we can send the document voted on in February straight to the President's Cabinet for approval.

Brooks and Lowery suggested using (and agreed to help Anderson create) a Microsoft Team as a repository for data that speaks to university performance trends related to each of the strategic priorities as well as important information that isn't directly captured under current priorities. In addition to the repository, the Team can be set up to solicit input from members.

The council discussed the elements that should go into a summary statement that can be shared with those invited to join PIE Plus (™): e.g., a synopsis of what PIE Council does, a broad statement about the need to set the university's priorities in light of external pressures, and a statement signalling that these priorities are impactful--for example that they are used to guide the university's allocation of resources. Anderson will craft these ideas into a brief statement to share with recruits.

IV. The Council adjourned at 2:33 pm.

Submitted by Chanley Rainey.

PIE Council's will next meet on Jan 23 at 1:30 p.m. in Welty Conference Room.