

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

2030 Think Tank

Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2019, 10:00-11:30am

Lubar Entrepreneurship Center, 209

Present: Kris O'Connor, Jennifer Doering, Kathy Dolan, Jackie Fredrick, Alejandra Lopez, Margaret Noodin, Wikistar Otieno, Paul Roebber, Chia Vang, Leigh Wallas

Excused: Laretta Henderson, James Peoples, Stan Yasaitis, Scott Gronert, Connor Mathias,

Guest presenter: Dave Clark

Co-Chair Kris O'Connor called meeting to order at 10:02. Agenda was approved. Minutes from 12/2/2019 meeting approved by consensus.

Announcements: Jennifer presented a summary of last week's discussion on campus with former Regent Mike Falbo. Question asked whether bring Mike to speak with TT2030 given about half the committee was present at his presentation. Committee agrees that a more focused meeting is desired with a focus on vetting ideas with him for feedback as committee gets closer to finalizing recommendations.

Presentation of Retention & General Education by Dr. Dave Clark. Dave suggests we review the AAC&U Employment Report. We currently have highest retention rates in several years (~76%), but we consistently lose 2500-3000 (12.5-17.7% of total enrollments) each semester - students who are not graduated but also not enrolled in the next term. We are losing upper division students and need to better understand this. Why do students leave? The debt that students have is less than one would think. Some are getting jobs and not finishing their degrees. Student success work group key findings from May 2019 indicated that students feel isolated, they experience culture and academic shock. Resources are "consistently helpful" but they don't know how to use them or who to talk to. Students want more faculty input and peer mentoring. UWM needs to shift the culture to increase faculty engagement with students. Point was made that student engagement takes time but isn't included in faculty workload. We have professional advisors across campus and long ago moved away from faculty doing advising of UG students, which has had unintended consequences. We need to lay out how faculty can do advising/mentoring in proactive ways that doesn't include general education classes etc. Dave is assembling several workload neutral strategies to suggest to faculty to promote more engagement.

Paul Roebber asked to what degree does the economy with jobs being more available contribute to students leaving UWM. Part of the churn is a function of society with a percentage of students leaving because they decide a college degree isn't right for them.

The Panther Promise needs to be reinvigorated and renamed. The promise Model at University of South Florida and Dave is going there to see their model in action. USF has a 75% graduation rate and has two people whose sole job is to analyze the data and find students who are at risk of leaving using predictive analytics. Jackie asks if we have comparative data of similar schools to know how what quartile we are in. The Urban 13 is what is most commonly used for comparison on common metrics like 6-year

graduation rates. IPEDS database is what Dave suggests we use. Jackie suggests that part of the report will need to include the data indicating where we are relative to our peers. Kathy asked if Dave would share Scott Gronert's state of the college slides with TT2030.

Margaret suggests being careful about focusing too much on benchmarking ourselves to peers without also ensuring that we understand our own systems and what systems are not connected, for example, having as many as 6 advisors listed. We also don't have a system for recording what a faculty member says about a student to connect with the advisors. We keep comparing ourselves to others rather than looking critically at how to improve our own systems. How does a student walk into UWM and feel that all the people are working for the student. Can we map out the journey of our students? Faculty don't understand the journey of their students. We have systems that give students conflicting information. We have not addressed core service system issues that can also improve retention.

Margaret states that the student success group found big gaps in processes and information and training. We still have major multicultural issues. What are all the steps and info each process uses? There are barriers we can remove. It takes both – comparison of us to other institutions and for looking internally. We have parallel conversations on campus both with high level people and a core grassroots group of people who really understand how systems need to change that aren't being tapped into. Generally Navigate is working. At the UG level we have an excess of service units such as the inclusive excellence center isn't tied to the multicultural student center. One office is often using one tool working with a student and another office uses a different tool and mapping this could really help. One Stop never moved forward and it lacked buy-in of key people who are no longer at UWM.

If we mapped the current system, we could probably harness the info we need to start improving student retention in a meaningful way by improving the student experience of receiving information and advising. Dave indicates support to bring people together to do this. So what is the TT2030 focus and what are short vs. long-term strategies that TT2030 should focus on?

Leigh shared some thoughts on the grad side. The student life and supports are available, but unless a student looks for them, they aren't readily available. Can we move to virtual advising? With strategic position control and budget cuts, we don't have the personnel to offer this type of programming.

Members indicated we are siloed by our own administrative organizational structure. Advising and student life are siloed. Often student life doesn't understand advising and advisors don't know how to help a student navigate an issue in the dorms. Owning our own identity is key. Many of these things aren't difficult to change, but knowing what they are and doing cross training is key. We often don't know what the front-line experience of advising is. Need to bring the right people together to make positive changes.

It would be helpful if we had a grounding philosophy to direct this work. Dave indicates he wants to have the meeting to think through next steps.

General education has become a way of securing enrollments. We have over 700+ gen ed courses at UWM. We run many more than we need. Students rely on peer and self advising. Students don't see gen ed as a coordinated experience. APCC review continues to be difficult given APCC has no ability to hold courses accountable. Assessment in the courses is insufficient. The budget model and faculty governance has gotten us into this challenge. We need top down accountability to direct the direction

for GER. First one has to articulate a vision for what general education provides the students. Then one needs to “declare bankruptcy” on gen ed and recreate from scratch. We have clear policies for how to get courses approved but lack policies for limiting/removing courses. Another piece is looking at the budget model to understand what incentives there are, how to pool the gen ed resources centrally and allocate out to schools and colleges. Make sure that what we offer in gen ed has value to the development of the student and what is needed by employers.

Take away message – It may not take 10 years to do the above work, but there needs to be strategy in the near term. Strong recommendation is to get this work done quickly. Media relations puts out brilliant student stories and we should be aware how our website presents to this generation of students and be on the platforms students use.

Dave suggests MATC might be good for TT2030 to speak with related to promoting more fluidity between the institutions to promote student success.

Remaining agenda items deferred.

Future scheduling – Discussed the list of people who the co-chairs recommend to bring in to speak with the committee. Maybe the questions to the speakers might be posed differently to be more about visioning rather than the current state. What are the 3 key challenges and what need to change to be better. What is next? We may need to defer Dev to a later meeting. We can ask some people for a 1-pager from people to give to the committee. What is CIE’s plan around international students? Is there a long-term strategy for UWM to become a destination university for international students?

The committee recommends that 1-page summaries soliciting data from several different entities and consider whether TT2030 needs presentations vs. summaries for data gathering. There was support for bringing in the Panther Promoters as well as Tom, Pat, and Amanda as part of understanding our brand & visibility. After discussion, there was general agreement to bring in Drew to discuss budget modelling in the context of understanding better how budgeting can drive campus behavior and what the new budget model incentivizes. Beyond that, people were generally inclined to streamline the list or defer and bring certain people in later as a way to vet ideas.