

CONVERSATION NOTES – STRATEGIC STATEMENT DISCUSSIONS – FALL 2009

Faculty (9/18/09)

(17 participants)

Questions posed to frame the conversation: “Is this the Wooster you know?” and “If not, what’s missing?”

Comments:

[Mission]

- We do a fine job with what’s outlined in the mission statement – that’s what I.S. is about.
- There is nothing about the range of students we take in. They’re not the elite. Part of our mission is to take in a diverse range of students.
- The mission should capture the range of our core values.
- Are we wanting to become an elitist place?
- In describing students, it’s missing “potential.” We encourage students to develop their potential.
- The mission reads as if we provide these to students. We open the opportunity to students and they come with theirs (opportunities). We create what is Wooster together.
- I find that there are students who prod me.
- The mission is about outcome; it doesn’t speak to the process of education. It needs to explain what we are doing here. Is teacher-scholar a process? Can a process be part of a mission?
- We’re a top 10 teaching college because students have driven me to be there. So the mission has outcomes for faculty as well.
- Need to capture more of the uniqueness of Wooster in the mission statement (can you know it’s Wooster without the name of the college in the statement?)
- We don’t talk about the “whole person.” We should say more about spirituality, the whole person, vocation, our Presbyterian connection. Maybe “communications skills” goes and this fits there? The “whole person” is what the liberal arts creates.
- In the last part of the mission, change “solutions” to “create knowledge.” This is a powerful statement. We provide a supportive research community that does this.

[Core values]

- “Capacity and seriousness” [of students] – we also want them to empower themselves
- “Liberal arts & sciences” we think of the sciences as part of the liberal arts, so there is no need to call the sciences out separately
- “Global citizens” we don’t go into our classrooms with the express intent to create “responsible global citizens.” Are we intentional about doing this?
- We are more intentional about having students be responsible than we have in the past.
- The world is becoming more of a collage, even here in Wooster.
- Why don’t we include the term “diversity and global engagement?”
- Should “social responsibility” be “social and environmental responsibility?”
- Lose the statement about “capacity and seriousness” in diversity. We take students from where they are.
- “Capacity” reeks of SAT. “Motivation” is more descriptive.
- Students are willing to work and give it a try.

- “Potential,” “motivation” are good substitutes to use.
- Our students are self-selected for their willingness to do the work.
- What does “students who engage our mission” mean? Do we need to describe this?
- I.S. is not mentioned. Should it be?
- There is a “campiness” about Senior I.S.
- When one reads the catalog about I.S. it’s powerful, it’s “co-learning.”
- The convocation address was a pep rally. Students honed in on the concept of “production of knowledge.”
- Students value what is here and are proud of the place they are a part of.
- “Intellectual honesty and academic rigor” value is odd here. It could be picked up elsewhere. It’s also only three lines.
- What we do values the whole person and we need to capture it.

[General]

- Where is “Wooster is just good people?” There are a lot of words around the idea, but the concept of “an overall ‘good place’ ” isn’t here. How do we get this across?
- We’re collegial and cooperative in our learning, not competitive (“competitiveness” v. “competitive camaraderie”?)
- Some of our character is our geography. “East coast is competitive. We’re Midwesterners.”
- We graduate “thinkers” and “feelers.” We are empathetic and compassionate. When I interviewed at Wooster, I felt like it was home. We have a warm, fuzzy feel.
- The integration of teaching and research is what drew me; it’s seamless, not parallel.
- What makes us distinctive?
 - Student –faculty interaction
 - Research and teaching