**CONVERSATION NOTES – STRATEGIC STATEMENT DISCUSSIONS – FALL 2009**


**Open Sessions (9/16, 9/18, 9/21/09)**
14 Participants (students, faculty & staff)

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

Comments:

[Mission]
- Keep "responsible," "creative," and "independent"
- Global citizen means understanding your place in the world and your responsibility.
- It's very faculty focused. It's what faculty do.
- This is exactly what we (as staff) support.
- The statement doesn't work for making connections with what staff do.
- Include a statement that acknowledges people are our most important resource
- This speaks, as it should, to what the College does.
- Our  students should appreciate the staff who make things run well, but who students don't see. Students have learned to respect contributions others make while they're here. That's important developmentally for students in making them good persons.
- We have situations where students don't act respectfully toward staff.
- Perhaps we say "productive lives as responsible and respectful…"
- It's missing the connection with our Presbyterian heritage. This means a lot to alumni and many people.
- It's missing student-faculty-staff engagement and individual student attention.
- I.S. isn't stated here – should it be?
- Tradition and culture are missing. Maybe if we include "tradition" one encompasses the Presbyterian heritage?
- What does "responsible global citizen" mean?  Respectful?  Appreciating and respecting differences?  One who picks up trash on campus, doesn't damage residence halls, opens doors for people?
- The word "community" should be in the mission statement. It can mean a lot of things: activities, your department, etc.
- We (students) do research, but I'm not sure I've learned creative solutions. We can identify problems, but we don't go after solutions. Is a graduate's life work to come up with solutions?
- The second sentence talks about the brain and not the developmental activity that occurs here. A more holistic approach to student development (as evidenced by our students who are involved) is what happens here.
- Global citizens – should we say "responsible citizens in the 21st century?"
- Does "global" turn off people who may never leave Wayne County Ohio?
- I don't come out of class thinking I want to change the world. We don't talk about global perspectives in our classes; you get involved outside of class.
    - My goal is to work to improve my life and the world around me.
    - Seminars and speakers are where we get access to global issues
    - Students value Model U.N. and Moot Court; we do these sorts of things better than other colleges like us.

- I.S. is really unique.
- "Relationships" is missing – those relationships students have with advisors, administrative coordinators, etc. Part of my job is to communicate with students and help them out.
- The one-one relationship between students and faculty is unique. It makes for a sense of community across the campus.
- [staff in academic areas] we are encouraged to be independent thinkers and we get the opportunity to know students
- We have valued everyone so everyone can engage with students.
- It's amazing the relationships that develop and endure between students and staff.  Just look at the wedding pictures in the Wooster Magazine and see how many staff show up in the "Wooster" photos.
- People working on campus are overly friendly.

[Core Values]
- We should define "diversity" broadly
- When we say "welcoming" we should also include "accessibility" and provide for those with physical disabilities
- The only way people will believe in the core values is for us to live up to them.
- Does everyone know we have core values?  Do staff know that we provide, and how we provide, a liberal arts education? Can everyone define, in our own terms, what  a liberal arts education is here?  Outcomes may be more easily defined. We likely have a number of employees who can't explain what a liberal arts education is.
- Everyone should be able to explain what a liberal arts education is, in his or her own terms.
- Independence of thought means independent minds working together.
    o We don't always work together (we don't execute well)
    o Less obvious in staff.  People think their opinions and thoughts are worth less because of the positions they hold.
    o I enjoy the differences in thought, but I don't need to agree with everyone.
- Academic rigor applies only to the academic side, shouldn't it?
- Social Responsibility: do employees learn about the Wooster Ethic in orientation?
    o Employees embrace a culture of honesty and trust, yet may not view students as having these traits.
    o Most people believe they are being told the truth, but not the whole story.
    o Staff believe what we say and that we are working to their benefit.
- Diversity is important.
    o This is well written.
    o We attempt to do it.
    o How do we define "diversity?" People who think differently?
    o Wooster prepares you for the world. It is very important to prepare people to work with people outside of their comfort zone.
- Intellectual honesty says we are individual thinkers and not a product of something else. The Wooster Ethic should be tied here.

[Vision Statement]
- It is very student focused, not institutionally focused
- It doesn't mention diversity or global engagement
- I interpret "secure" as achieving and maintaining
- We don't have the recognition [we deserve] right now
- What will we do to achieve the vision?

- How will Wooster be different if we achieve the vision?
  - Better preparation for life immediately after Wooster. Going to graduate school is taken for granted, but other options are not. "Wooster exhausts its undergrads."
  - Facilities: it's getting harder to do what you need to do (example: biology in current facility). Older facilities don't feel like they are on the same campus.
  - Administrative hurdles: I spend my time on administrative hurdles.
  - Teach us to use technology, maneuver the new website. Do students get enough technology training?
  - IT would make house calls to make sure my computer (and me) is up to date.


[General]
- I like the process; it's "rolling" rather than set in stone.
- What's missing is what we do outside the classroom
- We need to talk more about town-gown relationships. We have strong individual contacts, but not institutional