

CONVERSATION NOTES – STRATEGIC STATEMENT DISCUSSIONS – FALL 2009

Staff Committee (9/10/09)

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

Comments (in sequence of the conversations):

[Core Values]

- Diversity and inclusivity: we don’t refer to socioeconomic status. We’re unable to meet the need of students who want to come here. We need to make it affordable for students who want to be here. We want to be the good place that good kids can afford.
 - The College making an effort to make it affordable has mattered for generations. We may lose a lot of support if we become the elite institution.
 - The solid middle class is who gives back and supports Wooster.
 - Need to add an element that addresses affordability
- Expand the diversity statement to include more people than just students
- Independence of thought: think more of classroom setting, but this has improved with the new administration.
 - The staff’s ability to express thoughts depends on supervisor. Not everyone is comfortable sharing ideas.
- The culture of honesty and trust seems to be getting chipped away at in these times.
- Social responsibility is important and resonates with us, but we’re not there now and we need to get there.

[General]

- We’ve come a long way in this regard (re: communication)
- Change is scary
- Communication from the top is great, but it just stops at the mid-level.
- We talk about culture, but only academically. It’s not relevant to employees. Should we talk more about aspects relevant to employees? Faculty follow these objectives but we don’t see them as relevant to us.
- The employee culture is missing from these statements. The ideal Wooster employee cares, is honest, and it’s a community.
- Staff members don’t volunteer for things unless they are paid to do so. We need to instill that [volunteerism] in people; need to instill that volunteering is important.
- If morale is high, employees will want to step up.
- Morale would improve if we had training, recognition, fairness, trust in the administration, work divided equally, consistency in policies and procedures across the board.
- Maybe the document should also say “it’s a fun place to be” it needs a little lightening up
- Mention “helpful and friendly custodians”; they often help crying students
- Add something about an “environment of care”

[Mission]

- Academic reputation and liberal arts tradition are what we say we are.
- This really focuses on just the academic side and students.
- It’s the Wooster I used to know, want to know, but not what I see right now.

- Doesn't say much about the employees we want and the institution's responsibility to support employees.

[Vision Statement] How will we know we have achieved our vision?

- Enrollment goals are met, we're not thriving because of our numbers (we should be turning away kids)
- Everyone is happy
- We want to come to work every morning
- We want to feel like part of a community and not just waiting for Friday to come
- You're part of this college and proud of it, and the College is proud to have you
- Mutual loyalty
- Upper and middle management could use training. Maybe some people shouldn't be managers. Managers need to be "wholly dedicated" to their employees and the College
- Offices are fully staffed
- We can add new programs
- Departments are providing and encouraging employee development
- We have top notch facilities and campus. Campus looks like it's being taken care of and maintained.
- Endowment has grown to provide financial aid
- Employees have fair and appropriate compensation
- You can feel that we are thriving
- Employees care enough to pick up trash.