

CONVERSATION NOTES – STRATEGIC STATEMENT DISCUSSIONS – FALL 2009

Staff (9/17/09)

(26 participants)

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

Comments:

[Mission]

- It doesn’t say “each and every student will excel” nor mention diversity. This is different than what we said our priorities were on the old website.
- Students are saying classes are not up to their expectations because the number of classes was cut and there are not enough faculty.
- “Engaged” – how do we focus on making students excel? Is it engagement? The old website focused on how we achieve student success.
- There is no reference to I.S. or independent learning, which distinguishes us. How do we produce independent thinkers?
- “Global citizenship” seems “far away” from what we have. Maybe “global stewards”? It doesn’t feel as connected as “responsible members of a community.”
- It’s not the Wooster that would have accepted me. It reads that we produce intellectual, esoteric people. It’s not really us. Many of our graduates have gone on to service professions. It’s missing the human dimension of Wooster. It reads that “we make really smart people.”
- It’s not a warm statement; it lacks intimacy. It’s a cool statement. It needs to get the idea of community back.
- The social aspect is missing.
- Comments we get from student orientation tell us that warmth and friendliness is important to parents and students.
- We need to produce graduates who care about the institution. Perhaps this is part of social responsibility?
- Tradition and culture is missing. This distinguishes us, but it is not stated here.
- This is a very philosophical statement.
- We mention communication skills but we don’t say anything about writing skills.

[Core Values]

- Should we have statements of what we don’t value?
- Campus stewardship is missing, especially the responsibility to maintain facilities and giving back to the College after graduation.
- These are intellectually based, but there are people who work to provide services and support the College.
- Students need to take more responsibility for day-to-day things (e.g., take out the trash). We will maintain, but they are grownups and need to take responsibility.
- In “diversity and inclusivity” the phrase “so long as they have capacity” is off-putting. Do we only accept diverse people if they meet these standards? Do these standards not apply to everyone else? This doesn’t speak to the average student. I give back because Wooster gave me a chance. Perhaps re-word this to “opportunities are there if you embrace them?”

- It's important to temper "diversity" so that we're not overusing it.
- Is elitist OK?
- You need different core values for different groups.

[Vision Statement]

- This is a balancing act for alumni; some alumni remain passionate about us being a regional college.

[General]

- We don't have as much contact with students. Primarily because we have taken on more job responsibilities. Students could benefit from more interaction with staff. We like working with the students. We like students and want them to like us and engage with us. If we don't have the time to listen and engage with them, that's not good. We're the first ones to see them in the morning.
- "Community" is being lost. The concept of community is missing from these statements.
- Do we need rewording of the documents for different audiences? Is this a document only for the President and Board of Trustees?
- We used to have preventative maintenance people. Things are not maintained as well. Our procedures bog us down.
- We need to keep up so visitors are appropriately impressed. We're letting things go.