

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY SENATE

AGENDA

MEETING NOTICE: Monday, December 8, 1997
Room 107 CH 3:30 p.m.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- I. Call of the Meeting to Order
- II. Informal Statements and Proposals
- III. Approval of the Minutes
- IV. President's Report
- V. Committee Reports
 - A. Rules Committee - Elmer Hoyer, Chair
 - B. Academic Affairs Committee Report concerning the Strategic Plan Draft - Larry Paarmann, Chair (*green attachment*)
- VI. Old Business
- VII. New Business
- VIII. As May Arise

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

William Terrell	President	3220	Box 78
Jean Eaglesfield	Vice President	5073	Box 68
Christopher Brooks	Secretary	6194	Box 14
Elmer Hoyer	President Elect	6314	Box 44
Donna Hawley	Past President	5724	Box 41
ELECTED BY THE SENATE			
Deborah Baxter		3103	Box 53
Tina Bennett		6694	Box 14
APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT			
Donald Byrum		3551	Box 67

From: Larry D. Paarmann, chairman of the Academic
Affairs Committee

To: Faculty Senate Executive Committee, William
Terrell, President

Subject: Report of the Academic Affairs Committee
concerning the Draft Strategic Plan

Date: Tuesday, November 25

The Academic Affairs Committee has voted on and approved the following report to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate on the Draft Strategic Plan.

A strategic plan is one of the most important documents that a university produces. It outlines the very essence of what a university does; It is tied directly to a university's mission; It charts a course for the future that impacts how the university will spend its money, recruit students, faculty and staff, and gauges the university's effectiveness as an institution of higher learning; It places a careful emphasis on certain features of the university culture to distinguish it from other competing universities. As such, the formation of a strategic plan is a formidable undertaking which, by definition, requires input from all of its constituencies, and requires much public discussion, debate, and revision before it can be validated. Unfortunately, that is not how the proposed strategic plan was shaped here at Wichita State University. As a result, both its process and the document are deeply flawed. Below are some specific comments about the *process* and the *document*.

The Process

The Academic Affairs Committee believes that a more broad-based appeal for input should be made, especially to the Faculty Senate, but also to other organized faculty groups such as the Graduate Council, AAUP, and individual Colleges. Since a university strategic plan is of vital interest to the faculty, why was there not sufficient time allotted for formal faculty involvement through the Faculty Senate? Also, since strategic planning is taught in several of our own colleges, we wonder why our own expertise was not utilized.

The Document

Mission Statement

The Committee is concerned about the relationship between the Draft Strategic Plan and the Faculty- and Regents-approved mission statement, as contained in Section 1.02 of the Faculty Handbook, and in Section 1.02 of the Kansas Board of Regents Policy and Procedures Manual (1995 edition), respectively. The Committee believes that there needs to be a more direct connection between the Strategic Plan and the Mission Statement. Since a university strategic plan should implement the mission, why is the University Mission Statement not specifically referred to in the Strategic Plan? The Draft Strategic Plan reflects

incompletely and even incorrectly some of the crucial points in the Mission Statement of the University, and especially from Section 1.03 of the Faculty Handbook (Directions for Development). For example, at the very end of Section 1.02 of the Faculty Handbook, and also at the very end of Section 1.02 of the Kansas Board of Regents Policy and Procedures Manual, it says "The university faculty and professional staff are committed to the highest ideals of teaching, scholarship and public service, as the university strives to be a comprehensive, metropolitan university of national stature." And in Section 1.03 of the Faculty Handbook it says "Wichita State University will: . . . 7. Recognize and reward effective teaching as well as both basic and applied research. 8. Offer significant service to the region, state, and nation." The Committee believes that the Draft Strategic Plan is out-of-step with these, as well as other, statements and sentiments expressed in duly approved university documents.

Metropolitan University

The Committee is also concerned about the use of the word "metropolitan" in terms of research and focus. Should the faculty of this university only engage in research that is beneficial to the community or region? Surely this cannot be, as funding often comes from outside the region, and even if its immediate impact or use is regional, it very well may have significance at the national or even international level. It appears that there are significant differences of opinion as to just what a "metropolitan" university signifies. Is the mission of the University significantly affected by its location within the city limits of Wichita, or does its location merely affect opportunities off campus, the availability of additional resources, changes in the full-time/part-time student enrollment ratio, etc.? The term "metropolitan advantage" should be a real advantage for everyone involved, and not a restriction! The Draft Strategic Plan appears to be out-of-step with the Declaration of Metropolitan Universities, as it appears on the University Web Site: "We, the leaders of metropolitan universities and colleges, embracing the historical values and principles which define all universities and colleges, and which make our institutions major intellectual resources for their metropolitan regions, reaffirm that the creation, interpretation, dissemination, and application of knowledge are the fundamental functions of our universities . . ."

Who Does the University Serve?

Also of concern to the Committee and related to the above, is the apparent need to identify and state who it is that the University serves, and identify how our metropolitan location affects the answer. Vague terms, such as region, are not very specific or useful. And also, since national recognition and leadership of the Faculty is highly desired, if not required, and national recognition of the University greatly assists the University in many ways, such as obtaining grants, attracting highly qualified new faculty, etc., the interests of the University extend beyond south-central Kansas. Perhaps the immediate concerns of the University are regional, but its Mission cannot be limited to the region without trivializing even its regional concerns.

Research, Scholarship, and/or Creative Activities

Basic and applied research should both be encouraged: hopefully there is not an intent to emphasize one over the other and yet the document makes frequent use of the term "applied research." In some disciplines, the focus and training is more applied research than basic, and vice versa. Also, in some disciplines terms such as "creative activities" would perhaps be more appropriate than research or scholarship, and should be included. The Committee is also concerned that there is no specific mention of the role and development of graduate programs. Given that we have many high profile graduate programs in a variety of Colleges within the University and given that enrollment in the Graduate School has increased steadily over the past five years while undergraduate enrollment has struggled, this omission is especially baffling. What is the relative importance of teaching, scholarship, and service to this University? Why is the statement on research, scholarship, and professional service not integrated into the Strategic Plan, rather than appended as an afterthought?

The Meaning of Education

Faculty members desire to be seen as educators, and more than just facilitators of learning. A major goal of the Faculty is to educate, to transmit theories, perspectives, values, approaches, techniques, and tools of academic and applied disciplines: this is much more than facilitating. More discussion and debate are required on this important topic. As it is, those disassociated with education have a difficult time understanding the professorate. We do not need to fuel a limited idea of the educator.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom fundamentally shapes and influences both scholarship and teaching. The Draft Strategic Plan should have the tone of explicit support and commitment in this direction.

Role of a Student

Some explicit emphasis on the responsibility of a student needs to be made, encouraging active and responsible participation in all activities that they are involved in. Statements 2.C and 2.E in the Draft Strategic Plan, as examples, seem to focus entirely on the University providing something for the student; This needs to be balanced by explicit statements as to the responsibilities of the students. The idea of the student as a customer of the services that the University provides is fundamentally flawed. Tuition is necessary, but it is not the "price" of an education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many concerns and questions that need to be considered, and much open debate involving the Faculty Senate, before any Strategic Plan can be acceptable to the Faculty.

cc: Strategic Plan Task Force