SPARC
January 22, 2010, 3:00pm
Founders Room, Rankin Center
Meeting Summary

In Attendance:
Dan Burcham                John Norton
David Eisler               David Pilgrim
Claire Gould               Matt Pinter
Don Green                  Miles Postema
Rick Griffin               Mike Ryan
Kim Hancock                Kristen Salomonson
Mike Hughes                Jerry Scoby
Leonard Johnson            Mischelle Stone
Michelle Johnston          John Urbanick
Jim Jones                  Robert von der Osten
Ken Kuk                    Tom Weaver
Sheila MacEachron          Chris Westerkamp
Ian Nagy                   Helen Woodman

Guest: John Schmidt

Introduction:
Chair Johnson welcomed the group and encouraged all to prepare a nametag.

Discussion/Action:
December 11, 2009 Meeting Summary
• SPARC members were requested to review the summary from the last meeting.
  Vote: Approve the minutes of December 11, 2009.
  Motion made by Dan Burcham, seconded by Robert von der Osten
  Decision: Unanimous

Special Initiative Reports:
• VP Burcham provided information on the Haitian Relief effort; RSO’s are participating
  and events were immediately started following the devastating earthquake. There was
  discussion regarding potential for Study Away credits and ideas for this long-term
  project.
• VP Scoby shared an update from the Pedestrian Safety Task Force. They are a 15-
  member group; have met since November 24, 2009; and have gained input via three
  forums, Facebook, email, and a comment board posted in ASC. Additionally, Student
  Government did a study and offered recommendations. The Task Force is focusing on
  the three E’s – engineering, education and enforcement – while prioritizing on locations.
  Outside assistance will likely be necessary for review of unintended consequences prior
  to releasing the final recommendations. They are pressing toward a February 16 due
  date.

“Hats” and Imagining More:
• Chair Johnson shared a picture and story to encourage SPARC members to remove
  their Ferris “hat”, see beyond their current perspective, and be more clear-sighted and
  open. He sees his role as a facilitator to create the synergy necessary for SPARC to
  create something great for the University; the varied ideas in this group will sometimes
shift thinking and focus to take off in an exciting new direction. Moving into new thoughts and directions takes us to the Ferris Forward initiative.

Strategic Plan Progress:

- **Ferris Forward - Goal 6, Initiative 2: Designate a standing “blue sky” committee to review market trends identify opportunities and work with appropriate leaders and structures to facilitate the development of innovative programs.**
  - Members considered some of the issues that a “Ferris Forward” group would consider and how to clarify the vision.
  - New curriculum – go beyond pre-existing structures, next economies and industries
  - Looking at a diverse population and how to expand
  - Creating synergies – collaboration outside/other vendors and outside Michigan, explore new “cultures”, remote locations, satellite campuses
  - How we deliver programs, instruction and services
  - Economic and organizational models for funding
  - “Affordability”
  - Retention
  - Forecast future needs
  - Globalization – Study Away, overseas recruitment, expanding “view” of locals, expansion of curriculum
  - Marketing our uniqueness
  - “The best way to predict the future is to create it.”
  - Members split into groups to frame a charge for the “Ferris Forward/Blue Sky” group, and then shared suggestions:
    - **Group 1: Retention**
      - Create financial opportunities
      - Accelerated B.S./A.A.S. degrees
      - New curriculum – tie in with job market
      - Cultural issues
      - Donor culture / no connections
      - Collaboration with industry, community, vendors, etc.; as well as other universities
      - Keep students in Big Rapids (i.e. The Gate) for “free time”
      - Engage students (kinship to FSU)
      - Bottom line -- students need funding and opportunities!
    - **Group 2: The charge of this group will be:**
      - Survey our world for future needs
      - Then refocus our purpose to meet these needs
      - Discussion topics –
        - Study Away to include alumni, emeriti, students and everyone
        - Modular Learning
        - Associates to Masters
        - Meeting company needs
        - External Funding (World Bank)
• Group 3: “Blue Sky” Group as Central Repository to:
  • Collect great ideas from the University community
  • Vet/screen/synthesize/rank ideas
  • Assess need, efficacy, and feasibility
  • Present to SPARC
  • Synergy: collaborations across schools, faculty exchange program, innovative structures that don’t cost more, get students involved!
• Group 4: This group will serve as a think tank to collect and brainstorm possible futures for FSU. The group will be challenged to think entrepreneurially and identify and study relevant trends for future curricula to address a future economy and develop organizational opportunity.
• Group 5: To protect and enhance the opportunities by:
  • Identifying national and state trends – demographic, educational, cultural, political, etc.
  • Identify strategies that enable an honest critique of Ferris culture
  • Find ways to facilitate more effective implementation of good ideas
  • Set the bar at the top – building toward FSU as preferred institution.
  • See what is not apparent, maybe even what is not yet there.
  • Think boldly without fear
  • Considering – “blue sky” has connotations that are not positive; connect with great minds around the world; find ways for ideas to be heard…all ideas; don’t limit; think outside the numbers; prisons, high schools entrepreneurial.
• Group 6: Group is to generate ideas:
  • Within the framework of our mission and vision
  • Identify economic market and pedagogical development to which we can respond
  • Suggest possible new curriculum, synergies, structure, pedagogy.
  • Need people who are eclectic, including outside institution
  • Ideas need to be tested
  • But needs to be structure from implementation from ideas to action
  • Will there be resources?
  • Michelle Johnston, Sheila MacEachron and Don Green volunteered to draft a proposed charge and recommend a group name based on today’s comments.

Closing:
Chair Johnson asked members to look at the Goals and Initiatives in the Strategic Plan with new eyes for the next meeting.

Next meeting date:
The next meeting will be Friday, February 19, 2010, 3:00-5:00pm in the West Campus Community Center.

Adjourned 4:40pm
Submitted by Elaine R. Kamptner