In Attendance:
Cathy Archer  Kristen Motz
Shelly Armstrong  David Pilgrim
Dave Eisler  Miles Postema
Fritz Erickson  Kristen Salomonson
Don Green  Jerry Scoby
Dorothy Hart  Dan Tuuri
Jackie Hughes  Deb Tyson
Mike Hughes  John Urbanick
Leonard Johnson  Leroy Wright
Michelle Johnston

Guests:
Mike Bouthillier, Scott Garrison, Dave Nicol, Jim Powell, Matt Wagenheim,
Visitors from Changsha Social Work College in China

I. Action
Approval of the meeting notes.
SPARC members approved the November 13, 2012 meeting summary.

II. Strategic Planning for 2014-2019

• Historical Overview

Chair Leonard Johnson provided background of the Ferris State University mission, vision, core values, and strategic plan. Many goals and initiatives in the current strategic plan have been completed; now is the time to formulate a process for a strategic plan for the next five years. He distributed the mission, vision and core values brochure and recommended using these statements as the foundation for a new plan.

• Developing a Conceptual Framework for the Next Plan

Provost Fritz Erickson shared that Sandy Balkema has agreed to co-chair with him in the project of drafting a Strategic Plan for 2014-2019. Dr. Balkema was in the core group for the HLC report, helped build stakeholder meetings and gather data as they did the foundational work on understanding the university, and was instrumental in writing the excellent accreditation document. Using the HLC report as a base, it may be possible to use a similar process to create a new strategic plan.
Provost Erickson requested suggestions regarding the philosophy and process to use in drafting a new plan. The plan should move Ferris continually forward.

**Philosophy:** There was discussion on determining components and concerns as well as how simplistic or expansive the document should be. The Plan should be aspirational: how bold do we want to be? Where do we want to go?

Does the Strategic Plan help us live our core values? Should the core values be the guiding principles of the Plan? We should decide who we want to be five years from now, and all of our actions should lead to this.

**Process:** Discussion about possible approaches included the following topics and ideas –

A new plan should be completed within one year, should be broad-based and inclusive. It should reflect our vision and values.

The process used in 2006-07 began with task forces to draft mission, vision, core values; these foundation pieces are in place. It may be best to use a similar process of stakeholder groups to listen, engage, and record comments. To begin discussions, there was a suggestion to use the bullets contained in the vision statement. Going through the sometimes messy draft iterations to gather feedback throughout the process will allow transparency and encourage more employees and students to provide input. We must listen to what is said; not what we think is said.

We must focus on quality and remember who we serve while being realistic and functional, using concrete metrics. The metrics should determine what the scale of success looks like and should move the dashboard needle. There must be buy-in to a point that the Ferris community will say, “This is what I can do to move the Strategic Plan forward.” The plan should stretch Ferris; should be a document where all employees can identify with the plan and clearly see the relevance of what they accomplish as being part of the plan of the university. Initiatives should be the parts of the plan, but not the plan; the goals should be at the macro level; initiatives at the local level. This is how the departments may align with the goals. An example was provided as “to and through” (a retention goal) – each person and department has a way(s) to help students with retention and can identify with the goal. To build goals with an emphasis area makes “winners” and “losers”; we need to be broader than that.

There should be focus on quality, concrete measures, and dashboard indicators. The goals should be concrete, collectively accomplished, and create actionable opportunities.

**Focus Groups:** These groups should be held where people are; i.e., open forums in colleges/divisions, with a facilitator in each to keep notes. Information should be defined clearly so that there is common understanding. An initiative should contain that initiative and not combine two or more in one statement.

**Core Group:** It was agreed that a beginning point will be an environmental scan. A small core group will encourage the outreach and engagement. They will perform the drafting work as an iterative process, based on the broad conversations, engagement and collected information, and then a task force will narrow and focus the goals, similar to the HLC and Student Debt Task Force processes. It was also agreed that Provost Erickson will choose 5-8 people who are best suited for this project.
When completed, we need to make the plan visible in each building and share how Ferris is progressing toward the goals. The university community will need to see follow-through.

Timeline: Provost Erickson will draft the process and distribute to SPARC for feedback by the end of this week. A final process will be laid out and ready to start next semester. Spring 2013 will be gathering information; the core group will work on initial draft during the summer; and early Fall 2013 will bring debate of iterations and redrafts. A final Strategic Plan document will be ready for November 2013.

The next SPARC meeting will be Tuesday, February 12, 2013, 3:00-4:30 p.m. in WCCC. The topic for this session will be the Strategic Plan process and progress to this point.

Adjourned 4:20 p.m.

Submitted by Elaine R. Kamptner