

Strategic Planning Group Two Thesis Statement Draft #6

January 9, 2008

Introduction

Strategic Planning Group Two considered the questions gleaned from President White's April 2007 Chapel talk:

“Through faculty and students, through discussion of curriculum, faculty development, tradition and innovation, how do we learn more about our success and what challenges lie before us at the same time we consider what we have to teach the rest of higher education, the rest of the nation? ... What should the citizens of the 21st century be thinking and learning? What are the central questions that should drive our curriculum moving forward?”

The committee engaged in deep and meaningful conversations over the course of eight meetings. Committee members developed a thesis question and six central principles, which are listed below. The ideas marked with bullet points are illustrative of the types of tactics we believe allow us to achieve our goals.

Thesis Question

How will Wabash College provide opportunities for dramatic growth for students of potential through sustained engagement in all aspects of their college experience, and do so in a supportive environment of close, personal relationships?

Central Principles

Teaching and learning in a global setting

- Students will engage in the study of languages and cultures, including those not presently offered (Asian, African).
- All students will have a cross-cultural (eg. international, urban) learning experience that challenges their normative experience and self-understanding.
- Wabash will commit to the recruitment of international students and faculty, and other visitors who will enrich and enhance our intellectual and artistic community.
- Wabash will work with students to help them understand and appreciate their role as stewards of the environment and as responsible citizens of the world.

Teaching and learning that is interdisciplinary

- We will strengthen our commitment to all-College courses, including Cultures and Traditions, and to exploration of multidisciplinary teaching and learning.
- We will create a campus environment that reflects liberal arts learning for faculty and staff that includes release time for staff and faculty to participate in all-college courses.
- Wabash will provide team-teaching opportunities that pair veteran, as well as veteran and new faculty, in and outside their disciplines.
- Wabash will provide incentives (course load reduction, release time) for the development of innovative interdisciplinary courses.
- Wabash will establish funding, resources, and partnerships with nearby and distant institutions that allow us to expand our teaching and learning opportunities.

Teaching and learning that deals forthrightly with diversity in all of its manifestations

- Wabash will develop curricular and co-curricular opportunities for critical exploration of the nature of a college for men.
- Wabash will develop curricular and co-curricular opportunities for exploration of the Wabash educational mission to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely.
- Wabash will develop an informed understanding and create a supportive environment for members of our community who represent different genders, sexual orientations, and abilities, and who come from different racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Wabash shall provide students with opportunities for self-exploration for a deeper, richer understanding of their own lives, experiences, and cultures.
- Wabash will create an orientation program for new students, faculty, and staff that is intentional in its focus on diversity.

Teaching and learning that occurs in an environment of well-being that will attract and retain students, staff, and faculty

- Wabash will generate financial resources that allow Wabash to expand the faculty and professional staff in order to provide a balanced, reflective, and holistic approach to teaching and learning.
- Wabash will strengthen the whole experience of our first-year students.
- Wabash will expand and encourage wellness opportunities for students, faculty, and staff, including better nutrition for the whole campus.

Teaching and learning marked by close relationships inside and outside of the classroom

- Wabash will create new opportunities for faculty/student and student/student research and scholarly engagement both during the academic year and summer.
- Wabash will promote new opportunities for faculty/student engagement fitting for a 21st century working world.
- Wabash will foster in its students the sheer joy of reading and learning and a deep appreciation of human creativity expressed through the sciences, humanities, and the fine arts.

Teaching and learning sustained by a Wabash faculty of excellence that the College will recruit, retain, and develop in order to carry out our distinctive educational mission.

- Wabash will create robust academic support services to enable faculty to carry out most effectively Wabash teaching and scholarship
- Wabash will develop strategies support to develop faculty in all their roles throughout their careers.
- Wabash will develop strategies with incentive packages for recruiting new faculty beyond compensation to include reduced teaching load, pre-tenure sabbaticals, and other means of teaching and scholarship development.
- Wabash will develop an improved year-long orientation program for new faculty and staff, which will include faculty release time for course development; opportunities to audit and learn from all-College courses; team-teaching opportunities with veteran faculty in and outside their disciplines; and the development of a mentoring program that pairs new faculty with veterans.
- Wabash will create support services for faculty and staff families to aid in the relocation to the College community with emphasis on partner/spouse employment, schooling, housing, child care, etc.

Teaching and learning that is reflective, innovative, and state-of-the-art

- Wabash will encourage and support faculty and students to find ways of improving teaching and learning.
- Wabash will ensure that our students and faculty have access to the technology and resources needed to reach their goals.