

**Strategic Planning  
Issues Raised at the Faculty Meeting of  
November 6, 2007**

**Handout A (November 27, 2007)**

The Dean opened the discussion by identifying four broad externalities:

- Demographics
- Globalization
- Local and regional development
- The nature of a liberal arts education
- Technology

**Faculty Comments**

- Could the Dean or the President set parameters on the kind of review we undertake so that we don't develop plans that violate budget or other constraints?
- What is really "strategic"?
- Changes in demographics are the top strategic issue.
- Many hiring issues are raised by the prospect of many faculty members retiring over the next twenty-five years; how are resources (positions) going to be reallocated?
- We will have an opportunity to hire a more diverse faculty when the baby boomers retire, but chances are the competition will be great.
- Do we have an academically diverse student body? What do we want our student body to look like?
- We should consider issues regarding demographics, globalization, local and regional development, the nature of a liberal arts education, and technology.
- We need to look at facilities.
- Consider off-campus programs: do we have enough? too many?
- We want students to feel safe and welcome; how can we be proactive in accomplishing this?
- What can we do to make Hamilton really inviting to diverse people? The faculty has a responsibility for the environment.
- There is no structure to facilitate discussion and action on transforming the campus climate. Faculty should institute a committee to deal with this.
- The Social Justice Initiative spoke to establishing a diversity-intensive requirement, a permanent slot in orientation for discussions about diversity, and a cultural center.
- What is "multi-cultural"? Can we broaden the discussion?
- Let's not ignore our past. The Hamilton College diversity strategic plan was good, and we should talk more about it in the context of data from Dan Chambliss's research.
- Consider governance and the extent to which we have a fragmented community. What about having student participation on committees?
- Let's figure out what our natural strengths are and then expand them.
- Hamilton accomplishes good things though faculty/student/administrator relationships and our policy decisions need to keep that in mind. Consequently, the need to know other people on campus is a strategic concern.

**Strategic Planning**  
**Issues Raised at the Open Meeting of the Faculty**  
**October 22, 2007**

**Handout B (November 27, 2007)**

**Faculty Workload Issues**

- 2/2 teaching load
- Review of workload, including committee work, advising, research expectations, expectations of summer work, etc.
- If we increase rigor with respect to student work, will that mean that students expect more time from faculty?
- Evaluating faculty service
- Review committee structure and decide if some decisions could be made in other ways
- Should we enlarge the faculty?
- Should advising be outsourced to professional (non-faculty) advisors?
- We need to review teaching spaces and technology in teaching spaces, especially in those buildings not scheduled for replacement or refurbishment
- Support for scholarship, leaves, timing of leaves, etc.
- We want students to get to know a professor well each semester; faculty members need to make a reciprocal effort

**Curriculum**

- The quality of our student body has increased; has the faculty kept pace?
- Grade inflation
- Trinity has a strong community involvement in Hartford; is there something we could do to decrease alienation between Hamilton College and the surrounding region?
- How are support services for students working? Also, what about support for our academic programs such as support services in the new Science Center?
- Repetition of learned skills is important. How do we ensure that the skills acquired early in a student's career are revisited later?
- Can we regularize the senior project so it is uniformly rigorous?
- Our curriculum is an open one, with hardly any requirements. Is that working? Is that what we want?
- More and more students are trying to engage in non-traditional academic experiences, including semesters away. Are there limits? Do they need to spend more than two years at Hamilton?
- How do we respond to the pressures of shifts in demographics, shifts in disciplinary boundaries, and changes in pedagogy?
- Are we getting more students who are focusing on one or a few departments? What is the meaning of a Hamilton College liberal arts degree?
- How do our department structures and plans meet the needs of our students? Are departments and concentrations outdated concepts?
- Where does Admissions go to recruit students? Are we attracting more of the same kind of students we have now, with a lot focusing on relatively few concentrations, or are we trying to find more students that will pursue a broader range of majors? That is, how do we attract a more academically diverse student body through admissions?

- How do we manage an open curriculum?
- It may be that an open curriculum attracts students who already know what they want to major in. Admissions material sent to my son seems to market what are already our largest concentrations.
- Should we put pressure on students by assigning them advisors in the area they tell us they want to major in?
- To what extent are faculty members involved in recruiting students? Should we consider the athletic team model of recruitment?
- Should we limit students to one major?
- Should we require and interdisciplinary minor?
- How do we help faculty keep up with technological advancements?

### **Diversity and social consciousness**

- Our students don't seem to be deep thinkers about social issues. How do we address that?
- How do we define ourselves as a community? How do we redefine ourselves to be more hospitable to a wider range of the world's people?
- Trinity has a strong community involvement in Hartford; is there something we could do to decrease alienation between Hamilton College and the surrounding region?
- We need to continue efforts toward better racial and socio-economic diversity, retention, and support services that lead to increases in diversity
- How best do we provide support services for minority students, and how can we ensure their academic success?
- We need enough people in any particular group so that they feel comfortable and supported

### **Advising**

- Grinnell has, for about 30 years, required a first-year course in which a professor teaches a class of 12-13 first-year students and also serves as advisor to those students. The course focuses on "college-level writing, oral presentation and discussion, critical analysis, and information literacy" [from the Grinnell website] while expecting that the student-advisor relationship is strengthened by the classroom experience. Does that make sense for us? Instead of a senior program?
- Should advising be outsourced to professional (non-faculty) advisors?
- We don't really evaluate advising except in the aggregate. We should do more.
- Students seek a "home" and coherence; how do we help them find coherence outside of a major?
- Do students value their advising time with faculty more or less than the social time they spend with faculty?

### **Other issues**

- What should be the size of the student body? Should we have 2000 or more students?
- Is a divisional structure appropriate? What is the relationship between disciplines and divisions?

## **The “Anchors” for Subcommittee Discussion**

(These were in the original planning proposal and removed to postpone content discussions until the planning process was approved)

**Handout C (November 27, 2007)**

- What do we want to preserve?
- What do we want to change?
- How do we encourage diversity?
- How does our work help create a welcoming environment for future generations of students?
- How does it contribute to our relationship with the local and regional community?
- How does it relate to our concerns about globalization?
- How does it contribute to a focus on success for all students?
- How do we address external opportunities and threats?
- How will our work engage alumni?
- How will we assess progress?

## Subcommittees & Timetable

Handout D (November 27, 2007)

Academic Program  
Residential Life and Co-curricular Programs  
Athletics  
Student Recruitment and Retention  
Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Development  
Ethics and Academic Freedom  
Shared Governance and Administration  
Resources, Facilities, and Environment

### Suggested Process for Subcommittees

1. January-February: Fact and perception finding: what are people worried about? Are there aspects we can be doing better? Do we have aspirations in this area that we can work toward in the next five years?

a. Keep fellow subcommittee chairs informed – post informal minutes or reports to the Steering Committee listserv. Gordon Hewitt and Mike Debraggio, and I will be on this listserv and will offer guidance and support as appropriate.

b. Work through Steering Committee to call for open campus meetings as needed (but fairly often) on specific topics.

c. Invite key personnel to subcommittee meetings, or assign subcommittee members to interview personnel as needed.

d. Time can be used more efficiently and meetings held to a manageable number if tasks are divided up among subcommittee members

2. February-March: Setting priorities: Once the subcommittee has a clear idea of the issues and challenges at hand, it should select those that it believes ought to be our focus over the next five years. Priorities may be specific (“create a summer master’s program”) or may call for further study (“explore options for summer academic use of the campus”). The subcommittee does *not* have to present a plan for accomplishing its priorities—that task is post-strategic plan.

4. April: Interim subcommittee reports circulated to all subcommittees

5. May: Interim reports (which may have undergone revision), alterations to the planning structure, and other changes to the process as determined by the Steering Committee are tendered to the Executive Committee.

6. August-September: subcommittees reconvene to revise and finalize reports, in light of Executive Committee responses to the May report.

7. October: Subcommittee Reports due to the Steering Committee.

8. December: Steering Committee Report due to Executive Committee.

9. January: Executive Committee publishes a strategic plan