



ETSU 125

Progressing toward ETSU's 125th Anniversary

Culture and Outreach

Task Force Meeting

Date: October 19, 2012

Time: 7:30 – 9:30 AM

Location: President's Conference Room

Attendees: Dishner (chair), Fowler-Argo, Miller, Raines, Eason (by phone), Grzych, Harker, Herrin, Jessee, Shubert (by phone), Lewis, Russell, Smith, Rivera.

Guests: Brian Noland, Jeremy Ross

MINUTES

Dr. Dishner opened the meeting by explaining that we would be discussing the results of the “idea generator” exercise from last meeting, as well as ideas brought to her attention from other sources, in an attempt to find and group important themes that we might want to pursue. We would also be discussing whether we needed to invite any resource people to inform us regarding aspects of the university and/or issues we needed to be apprised of in order to achieve our goals.

Dr. Noland addressed the group to give an overview of the planning process across campus. He emphasized the importance of the task forces in asking big questions (“what ifs”) and building a vision for ETSU’s future in an environment of dramatic changes (e.g. MOOC’s) and financial challenges in higher education. He informed us that “nothing was off the table” in terms of possible goals or changes, and encouraged us to think big, noting that we should not let current policies or structures get in the way of our ideas. Mr. Ross added that he would be communicating with various round tables, community forums, and other groups and sharing their ideas with the relevant task forces throughout the process.

Dr. Dishner encouraged the group to think into the future, be creative, and deeply consider the president’s priorities regarding framing ETSU’s mission for the future and accepting the concept of entrepreneurship (“getting out of the public mode of thinking and into the private mode of thinking”). In terms of big ideas that would not be off the table she discussed the idea of a university name change, the revival of the Distinguished Presidential Lecture Series, and looking for new, technology-enhanced means of reaching our goals (harnessing social networks, apps, etc.).

The group was then asked to generate a list of themes that they saw from the idea generator list. This list was later revised as certain themes were consolidated. This is the revised version:

Geography

Story/Core Values

Welcoming/Joy

Fine Arts

Culture

Students

Marketing-Branding/Communication

Community Connection



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During this process, the task force members elaborated on several of these themes, and a few related ideas. I have summarized these below.

Ms. Jessee discussed the importance of defining/re-defining what we mean by community and campus by thinking bigger. She also pointed out the importance of considering who the various audiences are for ETSU's message, and how we need to shape our message to emphasize ETSU's value to these various audiences, as well as demonstrate what makes us different. She brought up the concept of branding, and noted that large companies (e.g. Kraft) own hundreds of trademarks: ETSU needs to identify its trademarks for the various populations it serves, and consider offering different "products" to those different audiences. She emphasized the importance of changing our mindset, and that of the region, regarding ETSU's role – that we were an international university, that we were distinctly different from the 2-year school(s), and that we needed to be a leader in recognizing that the college experience is changing for students. Dr. Grzych and Dr. Dishner also made points related to this, acknowledging that students with different demographic profiles (many commuters, many adult students) have different ideas of what the "college experience" is.

Dr. Herrin brought up the concept, borrowed from Thomas Friedman, that we have the opportunity to "upload our culture to the world" via technology. Several examples of this were mentioned by various task force members, including Eason who noted that teaching presentations in his Sim Lab have been joined in real time by students from around the world. It was noted that ETSU could do more to tell these stories about sharing our culture, about contributing to international education, etc. Dr. Dishner noted that these stories could help the many students who "don't know their dream" learn to dream big, as well as set ETSU apart as a unique and prestigious institution.

Dr. Herrin also noted the importance of breaking down the barriers that might discourage or frustrate those who wanted to take more entrepreneurial paths. Dr. Lewis pointed out that we should look for financial opportunities, and reiterated the president's charge to "dream big" and not let issues of policy or other bureaucratic constraints get in our way. She also emphasized the importance of getting faculty and staff out of their "silos" to share ideas and come to agreement on a common message that would help our major stakeholders, students and the public, see the ETSU community has having a shared, focused vision.

Issues related to community and diversity were also raised by Dr. Dishner and Mr. Rivera. Dr. Dishner noted that we should ask ourselves what ETSU has to offer the community in terms of enrichment opportunities – not simply educational, but cultural and artistic. Along these lines, Mr. Raines mentioned the possibility of partnerships between Johnson City and the university that might lead to greater enrichment opportunities in terms of the fine and performing arts. In terms of diversity, Mr. Rivera spoke of his own experience of being recruited to ETSU as a student and how he was surprised to learn about all of the opportunities that the university offers for those wishing to experience education in a multicultural environment that values diversity. He also encouraged us to think about doing more to both educate the public (and prospective students) about these opportunities, and to provide more support to the university's multicultural programs.



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The group then spent some time physically putting post-its with many of the ideas they had discussed, as well as any new ideas, under the “themes” that had been identified. Dr. Dishner will record these and send them to the group for review prior to the next meeting.

Some final thoughts included the importance of educating parents about the opportunities available at ETSU (Mr. Raines), and the importance of sharing stories about our exceptional faculty members (Mr. Rivera).

Tasks:

It was agreed that the following information may be shared before the next meeting:

- Randy Sanders’s (CASS) presentation on the variety of logos prevalent at ETSU (contact Dr. Herrin)
- Study (if available) regarding economic impact of fine arts center opening downtown (suggested by Mr. Raines; possible contact: JC Chamber of Commerce, City of Johnson City Planning Commission?)
- Ideas collected on post-its relating to the various themes identified in the meeting (Dr. Dishner)

The following resource people may be contacted in order to provide information relevant to some of the task force’s work:

- Myra Jones (eLearning) to discuss the university’s resources and strategies related to online presence (social networking, portals, apps) , online education, logistics of international collaborations via the Internet, etc.
- Dr. Ramona Williams (Enrollment) re: admissions and recruitment strategies, particularly related to diversity and different student ‘audiences’ (traditional, adult, online)

In conclusion, Dr. Dishner invited all of the task force members to come up with a “what if” idea on par with some of Dr. Noland’s examples (e.g. “What if we had a pharmacy school?”) for consideration at the next meeting.