Engagement and Regional Taskforce Meeting 2/3/2020

Remarks and Direction from President Golden

President’s Comments:

It is important as Wichita State University, the place that South Central Kansas is relying on to overcome economic disparities, health disparities, educational disparities, stop the outward migration of millennials that feel that they need to go get an education and go to Dallas, Oklahoma City or wherever to have a robust and healthy lifestyle.

Jay’s idea is that WSU build a unit that focuses just on community engagement. He has found that Wichita State has many strong activities but sees less and less of them are coordinated. We have limited resources. We want to get more. We don’t know what everyone is doing and able to keep track to share with the community what we are doing. The unit would serve as a coordinating unit. It will be relying on staff, faculty and students as well as partners to really be impactful. He stated that rather than call it community engagement office, it’s really engagement and prosperity. He wants a guiding light that shares what we are trying to do. Prosperity is not just monetized but a quality of life. If you think of it as multiple circles: Build relationships with the community, the local school districts, churches, the city and county and go into South Central Kansas.

**Community**: We have to have strong local relationships. As an example, he attended the Fairmount Association Meeting. We have to continue doing that. We have to find out what the needs are from the school district to looking at how we work with the city and county. If WSU is going to build micro-enterprises and entrepreneurship that, it cannot be done in isolation but we have strong partners in that. If we are going to recruit talent, we have to retain talent. Retaining talent requires the city and county to work with us so we have the amenities that people feel comfortable and want to stay.

**South Central Kansas**: If we are looking at a new dental school, even if we’re not building a dental school but there are communities in South Central Kansas that are facing real issues. Wichita State could provide activities that run the gamut from health, education and economic. If it’s economic -- could we take our micro-enterprise, students and teams when they graduate and work with the communities so that the community could go in as part of the micro-enterprise program to provide them a resource of support.

This office is important because we cannot be all things to all people but we have to try to prioritize. Prioritize on what we currently do, as well as how we can get more of us engaged across campus and have a mission driven university to service South Central Kansas.

Jay noted his plan to get a bus with Shocker stuff all over. The bus will be used to take faculty into communities in South Central Kansas to find opportunities where Wichita State can partner. This is something that he is proposing, and as a part of shared governance, the taskforce to is to evaluate and see if this is viable path for the university.

He finally noted that Wichita State has a Diversity and Community Engagement office but he believes that we have so much work to do with both diversity and with community engagement, that each requires a separate effort.

He will check-in at forty-five days and then again at ninety.

Based on what you heard, what are your thoughts, reactions to the vision as shared?

* Still not sure exactly what he is looking for. Need to tie down exactly what he wants.
* Acknowledged can’t be all things to all people – how do we prioritize
* Counted nine institutes currently at Wichita State that work with outside focused work; are they all doing something different or was there a second one built to fill a gap from the first one; do we streamline what we have to increase resources.
* Removed the word “community”, why? ( noted that the language was used it in verbal narrative) if this is about building partnerships and an relationships
* Engagement is also important to build relationships and trust
* Interesting to hear about lack of inventory and the importance of university investment in the work with grant-funded programs
* Sustainability is questionable given reliance on grant funds in community
* Like the coordination, makes sense to have a designated place to build an access point
* Big, bold, idea
* Like the decoupling of the work but we need to understand the work of each group and why we have what appears to be duplicative,
* There could be some loss in coordination and re-organization
* Scale inventory to look at outside too (School district, City, County) – Lots of egos involved.
* Could be a way to limit the “siloed” living of some of our efforts
* Diminish possible confusion related to which office I should contact, who does what?
* Devote an office to expand current efforts to region
* Technical fix = create an office, adaptive piece? Just creating an office won’t solve the problem
* Could the responsibility of an inventory be the work of the office.
* Liked engagement of faculty on bus tours, need to tap into that expertise
* Include students in the engagement work to allow students to see other things going on in south central KS, might help them want to stay.
* Bus may be more than an invitation, must be tied into their work. Incentivize, engage those who are less engaged (students)
* Make sure not a replication of privilege.
* Make the case for benefit, why is this important for students. What do they gain?
* Growth of university mirrored in the growth of the city/region. (If you study animation but there aren’t animation jobs)
* Building culture connecting shift space, adding First Friday,
* Connect students with the chamber in a meaningful way to demonstrate partnership (ecosystem)
* Bus tour, this is what we have… what do you need. Desire pull rather than push.
* Not here to help, rather we’d like partner on your goals.
* Are we focusing too much on diversity that we can’t focus on the “average”
* We are working on Fairmount and haven’t accomplished that yet
* Tie WSU engagement work to the student experience.
* Clarity is needed around:
  + What is the goal?
  + What happens on the bus?
  + Have we done all we can do here?
  + Where is the border?
    - What is south central KS? Everything not in the NE corner?
* People think there is a “shock fence” around the campus. Need to correct that.
* Holiday Shutdown… how do days out of class impact community engagement?
* How does campus parking impact community engagement?
* Are folks allowed (welcome) – Yellow and green lots, but where do guest park. I don’t understand the color. Wichitans’ don’t want to walk.

What comes to mind when you hear engagement and regional prosperity through the lens of a university? Individually? Collectively? Not to define it, but what are some of the ideas, examples?

* Hearing all voices, having an inclusive space; making sure WSU is in all areas, try to create those experiences on campus.
* Remove barriers and providing college access to the community and empowering students
  + Low tuition, moderate requirements for entry.
  + Prepare students to be engaged citizens
  + Wheel that spins upward
  + Purpose-driven
* GED to Ph.D. programming, meet the needs of community where they are…
  + Access point for any type of educational/development need
* Social mobility
* Engagement = hearing all voices, community feels heard
* Making sure we are developing understanding of culture so we can replicate cultural dynamics
* Two way exchange, Listening and response
* How to keep students in Wichita, jobs and community reflect the students’ needs
* Work with the community to make sure that we have the industries needed
* Allowing spaces for community to come onto campus.
* Explaining the resources that are available to community members, resources that are outward facing that don’t only focus on students
* Linking the goals and missions of stakeholder organizations and using resources (shared) to accomplish more.
* Inventory of the Centers (those folks who are outward facing) what is really happening?

Learning to Date

* AcTivation Team from Strategic Planning
  + Hard to define the audience, not static all over the place
* APLU IEP “Innovation & Economic Prosperity” self-study
  + Underway at WSU. Lead by Tonya Witherspoon
* ECU call, opportunities to learn from others.
  + High Authority campus leaders
  + Need faculty engagement
  + Carnegie process is helpful; self-assessment is important
  + APLU membership
  + Must be built into faculty T & P process, incentivize
  + Created a faculty development program around engagement and how it leads to research and grants
  + Started the process in 2006 and still working on it

Next Steps

* Next meeting: four times the group will meet and not all will meet; reviews and studies of institutions;
* Continue learning / WSU / outside WSU
* 45-day check-in (have 3rd meeting prior to that); final meeting with revisions close to the 90-day due date
* Student experience: remember how/why what we’re doing is important to the student experience