Pierce Council
October 8, 2010

In Attendance: Richard Abel, Bill Beardslee, Jed Donelan, Jim Earle, Rob Hannings, Bob Lawson, Diane Monico, Kyle Mulcahy, Allan Rachlin, Adam Stahl, Paul Tedder, Judy Tomlinson


Introductions: Newly elected Diane Monico was introduced. Diane is a representative from the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. Her office is in Concord, and she teaches in the graduate program for teacher education.

Strategic Planning: The question was raised about the status of the Strategic Planning Committee. It was suggested that some public notification be sent out by Richard Marshall that might update progress and name the members of the committee.

The Forums: The latest revision of the Guide and the schedule for proposed forums were distributed.

As people know, the Guide has been reduced from four to three approaches. Some members had concerns that important pieces were lost as we transitioned from four to three approaches. Some effort has been made to incorporate into the remaining three models those “lost” pieces.

Ideally, the Guide should be no more than four pages long. If it gets too wordy, it creates a burden on the time constraints, condensing conversation, which creates a challenge for the moderators. As such, the section entitled “What Critics Say” has been omitted from the Guide. It will be copied and provided to the moderators to help guide discussion, but will not be provided to forum participants.

As the moderators reviewed the Guide, they had some concerns relating to some of the language contained in the Guide. As an example, there was a reference to “coddling” students. The moderators believed this had negative connotations and should be replaced with more neutral language. These changes, although few, have been made.

The Guide will be posted on the Pierce Council Web page by next Wednesday, October 13 - should all go as planned. This is being posted for public consumption so that people have an opportunity to read and think about the Guide before the Forums actually begin.

Concern was expressed that Athletics have not had the opportunity to view the Guide prior to the document being made public. Behind this concern is the notion that athletics are currently a prominent part of the university, and each model carries implications on the Athletic program. Up until this year, one of our student representatives had been involved in athletics, but he has since graduated, leaving somewhat of a void. This issue has been discussed at a previous PC meeting. As a matter of courtesy, Athletics should be encouraged to read the Guide prior to the forums, or they may be taken off-guard.

An on-line discussion board will also be created as we commence the Forums. This has the potential to generate additional feedback to the Center, which may provide another source of rich data for the Center’s final report. It also enables community members another vehicle to express thoughts that may take shape after reflecting on their Forum experience.

There was a discussion about the schedule for the University Identity Forums. There are three designated student forums that will run concurrently on Wednesday, November 10, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. These will take place after an abbreviated Student Government Association (SGA) meeting. Pizza will be served to the student participants, and the President has committed to make refreshments available at all forums. His budget will cover all costs. With respect to the scheduled that was issued, some of the dates are still tentative (In fact, Lebanon still needs to be arranged). Jed will check with Joni to determine if final dates and times have been established.

Jed is conversing with Dawn Stevenson, Director of Institutional Research, to develop a pre and post forum survey. The primary purpose of the survey is to gauge whether or not participants positions have changed as a result of participation in the forum. There was limited discussion about whether to incorporate open-ended questions in the survey. Although they may provide valuable insight, they are typically not used because of the time it takes participants to complete their answers. The design needs to be efficient. The questionnaire should be not more than one page in length. Jed will forward draft copies to council members and gladly welcomes feedback. The survey should not be shared with any one outside the council, however, as this might compromise the integrity of the results.

All Council members are encouraged to attend at least one Forum. It was also suggested that Council members introduce themselves as members of the Council, but should guard against prejudicing the dialogue.

Jed raised the question about next steps for the Council. It was suggested the final report submitted by the New England Center for Civic Life resulting from the Forums may inform our next steps. The Center’s reports tend to be both thorough and thoughtful. As such, there may be some value in waiting until this time to have this discussion, which would likely bring us to late January or early February. After we have reviewed the report as a Council, we will need to determine a way to make the report public and elicit feedback. At this point, it might also make sense to forward the report to the Strategic Planning Committee.
Doug Challenger is on sabbatical and is working on a documentary about Franklin Pierce, its past and possible future. He feels it might be valuable to attend and film certain segments of the forums. Pierce Council was asked whether it would have objections to his filming. While Council members could certainly see great value in him filming for the documentary, several members wondered also if it might inhibit discussion. Some may feel intimidated by the camera and microphone. There was general consensus that he might find an alternative way of filming without actually imposing on the dialogues. As an example, he might consider interviewing participants either before or after.

There was a question about whether the final report will attribute certain perspectives to constituent groups. As an example, it might be helpful to understand that faculty generally felt compelled one way or another about a certain issue, and equally as important to know that students had particularly strong sentiments about these or other issues.

**Next Meeting Agenda:**
It was decided that the next meeting should be dedicated to issues and concerns that we may have neglected as we have been moving forward with the forums. At one point, not too long ago, it was decided that a portion of the Pierce Council meeting would be dedicated to on-going issues. Recently, we have gotten away from this. Therefore, people are asked to forward a list of any issues or concerns (i.e., Calendar, Emergency Notification System, Performance Evaluations, etc.) that they would like to have discussed at the next Pierce Council meeting. Jed and the President will review this list and develop an agenda.

**Other Issues:**
Concern was raised about both the President and Provost being absent for this and the last meeting. On the one hand, it is good news that the Council is able to operate in their absence. On the other hand, their presence is greatly missed. Their leadership and insight is something that other Council members value greatly. The Council was quick to recognize the imperative nature of both the President and the Provost’s job, and that their responsibilities frequently take them away from the campus. As a Council, we recognize that this is the nature of their responsibilities, and to advance the University requires that they make these sacrifices on behalf of our students, us and our colleagues. The Council wonders whether there is not a way to schedule meetings so that at least either the Provost or the President can be present, with perhaps an unrealistic preference that we make every attempt to schedule meetings when they are both in town. It was suggested that this subject be discussed at the next meeting when the President and Provost are both in attendance.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Earle

**Schedule of Meetings:**
- Nov. 12, 2010
- Dec. 10, 2010
- Jan. 21, 2011
- Feb. 11, 2011
- Mar. 11, 2011
- Apr. 8, 2011

(All meetings are scheduled from 2-4PM in the Alumni Lounge.)