

OPEN FORUM MINUTES

April 8, 2008
2:30 pm

Union Theatre

Panelists: Shirley Baugher, VPAA; Mel Hudson-Nowak, Co-Chair, Change Team; Bill Knight, Asst. VP, Institutional Research; William Mathis, Co-Chair, Change Team; Patrick Pauken, Senate Chair; Sherideen Stoll, VPFA; Ellen Williams, Senate Vice Chair; Rich Hebein, Senate Secretary

The purpose of this semester's forum was to hear a brief report from the Change Team, to hear presentations from the VPAA and VPFA on financial issues facing the University, and to take questions. This forum replaces the regularly scheduled SEC/VPAA Conference for April. About 125 attended. A phone-in line was available for questions, and the forum was on live feed to campus offices and the Firelands campus. A video recording can be viewed at <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/provost/events/040808.html> . Pauken called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

Change Team

Mathis said that the President appointed the University Strategic Planning Group, known as the Change Team, in February to coordinate all planning efforts into a strategic ten-year plan for the University. Previous efforts had been isolated. Hudson-Nowak said that this was a university-wide effort. The twenty-five member committee was drafting a plan this semester and would engage the entire campus in the fall. The resulting plan is intended to be flexible and would be implemented by the Leadership Team, consisting of Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. Knight said that the implementation would be done in phases. Communications are important: There is a brochure. Also see <http://www.bgsu.edu/strategicplanning> or write strategicplanning@bgsu.edu .

Where Does the Money Go?

Stoll said that many people have been asking this question and that she would try to provide some answers. She said that the State Share of Instruction has gone down while tuition and fees have gone up. Institutional aid to students has gone up significantly. Total salaries, wages and benefits account for about 60% of Total Budgeted Revenue for 2008, and operating expenses are about 39%. She said that the Early Retirement Incentive Program had cost a total of \$34 million from 1994 to 2003. Undergraduate enrollment has stayed about the same from 2002 to 2007 as have enrollments at the "four corner," sister institutions with which we are being compared in Ohio's Master Plan. (These are Kent, Miami and Ohio.) Institutional aid to students at these universities has remained about the same or decreased. Her Powerpoint presentation is available at the site above.

Student, Faculty, Staff Information

Knight gave a presentation of data comparing BGSU with the other four corner institutions. Retention rates have gone up and down from 74% to 82% since 1972 to present. There does not appear to be a correlation between retention rates and percentage of tenure/tenure track faculty. He reported that the Board of Regents had suggested an alternative group of peer institutions for BGSU rather than universities within Ohio. See the site mentioned above for more information.

Planning at BGSU

Baugher referred to the economy and State's Master Plan as drivers for the future of the University. She said that enrollment management was critical and that they had hired an external consultant to help with this. The number of high school graduates is peaking and will decline while competition for them increases. She observed that the colleges were requesting more money for faculty for next year than was being freed up by retirements and resignations. Nevertheless, she had authorized ten, new tenure track positions because of the importance of building faculty strength even in difficult times. She said that we have to work collectively to make decisions and that she intended to continue the dialog. Her presentation is available at her web site.

Questions

Pauken opened the floor for questions. Williams asked whether we were simply "buying" our students and whether cutting back on that would jeopardize our enrollments. Stoll said that we had started to cut back on student aid but could not predict how this would affect enrollments. She said that we needed to collect more data.

“How will the state achieve its goal of increasing the number of students at the college level?” Stoll said that this would occur more at the two-year campuses than at the four-year campuses. She said that we would probably be taking more transfer students. Baugher said that this becomes an issue of the quality of instruction at the two-year campuses. She said that we needed to refine our partnerships with them.

There were several questions about facilities and the state’s recent cut in capital expenditures. Stoll said that we needed to make repairs and reconsider our capital priorities. Baugher said that there has been a lack of investment by the state in campus facilities. She said that it was necessary to interest donors in bricks and mortar.

She invited people to email her their concerns at provost@bgsu.edu .

Pauken thanked the participants and the audience and adjourned the meeting at 4:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Hebein, Secretary