

Strategic Directions 2020

Campus Conversations – Liberal learning, Co-Curricular, Values

October 7, 2014

1. What are the benefits of a residential, undergraduate liberal learning education in the 21st century?
Why continue with this model?

- Relationships – one on one in classroom, with staff – very valuable. Students like physically being with other students, don't get that online.
 - Unique relationships – exchange students, mentorship with faculty, easy access to staff/faculty
 - Understanding community/community development, contributing to community
 - Developing ability to think critically; variety of classes – not single focus like 2-yr schools, challenge thought process; adaptability, global awareness; getting education, not just learning a trade; prepared for change in careers, lifestyles, broad skillset
 - Less job change for students with lib arts background?
 - Living on campus – learn responsibility, built-in support network, get immersed in degree, learn from mistakes; investing in community if you live on campus
 - Student/teacher ratio better at small schools, better access
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- Growth and learning opportunities (clubs, groups, teams, organizations)
 - Direct personal contact (vs. online)
 - Focusing on the development of the whole person
 - Developing a sense of community (vs. a commuter campus)
 - Good network
 - Liberal arts teaches critical thinking that a specific career training program doesn't
 - Liberal arts...you can do whatever you want – not locked into a career track
 - Why continue:
 - As other institutions streamline, what we offer becomes more and more unique
 - Develop grads who are resilient and well rounded, flexible
 - Residential component aids in socialization and transition to adulthood
 - Opportunities to search around and find your passion
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- Importance of face-to-face interactions
 - Residential opportunity with access to outside technology
 - Safe place in a small community
 - Liberal Arts prepare students for the “unknown” jobs that are not yet created
 - Small setting, professors know your name, help with attendance (accountability) and approachability of professors (because they know you)
 - Get “pushed” by community/professors/etc. to succeed, which puts them ahead
 - Connection to college remains
 - Residential living increases learning outside of the classroom – from friends, roommates, classmates in study groups
 - Faculty/staff become friends, like family, live near the campus
 - Liberal arts prepare graduates to be both well-versed in their field and knowledgeable about a variety of topics outside of their major
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- Thinking about what employers are looking for – liberal arts skills/soft skills. These are often developed, practiced and perfected through experiences in our residential, undergraduate liberal arts environment
- It's about community. Having that opportunity to have an experience of learning while engaging with people in person, versus online education or texting or communicating online.
- Learning doesn't end at 4:30 and begin again in morning. It happens 24/7 in this model
- Forced to work with people and develop versatile skills that allow them to adapt to life and all the changes ahead (in the workplace & outside the workplace)
- So many students do not know how to live with other students. We have a model where we educate them and provide them with experiences that prepare them for life...not just how to do their job (as a technical skill) well

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- Residential – learning happens in and out of classroom – faculty attention, RAs, res hall director, emphasis on community in the res halls – consistent with classroom
 - Without residential piece, I would be more concerned about our community – sets us apart from other private schools in MN
 - Other schools are less invested in issues – food, security, community kitchens, students being part of the community
 - Liberal arts important in 21st c – positions students to be part of changing society – deal with change
 - Will change careers several times – we know that – better preparation through liberal arts
 - Heart of what we do is in the classroom
 - Challenge – have to cut apart idea that major automatically relates to a job – limits first job and even more others
 - Able to apply liberal arts skills to other areas – experiential learning is a huge part of that, helping them see the possibilities
 - Athletes who do EL come back and deal with things better – learn interact, growing as individuals
 - Residential – able to focus on their education full time, 24/7 – important time for identity formation

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- Close personal contact, mentoring environment, relationships
 - Integrated learning environment, holistic approach to learning
 - Engagement of students on campus is important to the success of students
 - Gender differences male/female and what is wanted by each group
 - Student/faculty ratios important to maintain the level of structure within liberal learning
 - The function of the budget as it pertains to how things will change
 - **Mentoring outside of the classroom
 - Connection with on-going faculty and staff

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- Fosters community, off-campus don't experience this
 - Place great value on this that other places can't claim
 - A place our alums want to come back to
 - Learning opportunities within community students live in is critical
 - Employers are looking for the liberal learner, think critically, intercultural competency
 - Liberal Arts degree – breadth, depth, allows students to explore something different
 - Joint relationship – capitalize on this gender-specific, educational opportunities, best of both

- Residential Living – opportunity to connect/talk with people, less scheduled, or in control of own schedule: How are you engaging with people here? So connected today with parents, HS friends – how do you connect with people here?
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2. What specific characteristics of CSB/SJU add value to the residential liberal arts model? How do we best highlight the Catholic, Benedictine tradition of CSB/SJU?

- Separate male/female campuses, still interact
 - Men connecting better, more open about faith, more nurturing environment, support from friends, peers, different backgrounds
 - Sisterhood at St. Ben's, support from alum, connection through the school
 - Healthy rivalry – St. Ben's and St. John's
 - People that work here – loyalty, commitment, high % of alums work here
 - Students take Benedictine values to “real world” with them, Hospitality is a big one, relational give and take
 - Saying to everyone, welcome everyone, offering water at meetings, make people feel they belong, engagement with monastic community
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- The Benedictine traditions – hospitality, community, inclusion – are immersive for anyone who spends time on campus, whether you're religious or not
 - There's a willingness to have dialogues here that are not limited by our Catholic foundations
 - Focus seems to be more on values and less on dogma
 - Faculty-led study abroad programs
 - Why do we highlight the Benedictine?
 - The living communities of the monasteries
 - Benedictine friends; Companions on a Journey
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- Unique partnership between two residential liberal arts colleges
 - Monastic partnership
 - Benedictine values
 - Welcoming, little things (opening doors) Good example: Link bus (how people get off in order) and take that on as a responsibility after college
 - Single-sex and co-ed experiences. Opportunities to learn about yourself. Empowering
 - Catholic, Benedictine tradition is acknowledged
 - Pride in campus (cleaning up, etc.)
 - Longevity in employment
 - Ample opportunities for students to be involved in Catholic + Benedictine tradition – mass times, Benedictine friends, monastic presence at games, in class, etc.
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- Residentially, we are gender based. Allows conversations and experiences around gender that may not happen to this level on other campuses (they are organic amongst students)
 - A lot of students talk about community, but it is our Benedictine values that speak to that and serve as a foundation
 - Sense of identity development – different conversations that happen and where else would that happen again?
 - Expectation to interpret, apply: understand what students are learning in the classroom
 - Greater opportunities to not be the same in athletics; what about you as a women's team stands out? Celebrate differences vs. shy away from them
 - So many first years say they chose CSB/SJU because “it just felt right.”

- Students know they have value and can step out into the world believing they can contribute
- Much like other schools, students take or get a lot out of their time here, but we value how students give back/contribute to the experience here. Mutually beneficial relationship
- Strong alum connections

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- Campus itself – 3000 acres; opportunities for labs, classes, recreation
 - Two campus model, brother and sister campuses – unique
 - Women are #1 every day at CSB, men at SJU – adds a very different sense of value
 - High School students don't understand the integration – that the campuses are more separate
 - Focus on women's leadership / men's leadership but working together
 - Focus on gender perspectives – can do it better than anyone else
 - Hospitality, warmth, welcome – part of campus feel, have to come here to feel it
 - Is part of that where we are? Not in a metro area – helps us be part of a community? Insularity?
 - Two monastic communities on campus – how many other schools have that? Directly integrated with our students
 - Does an 18-year-old care? How do we present ourselves to them and their parents?
 - Monasteries as beating heart at center of campus – always here to keep things going, even when students and faculty are not here – never really closes for breaks

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- Benedictine values
 - Hospitality and Community
 - How people care for one another; family oriented feel
 - Listening and respect and dignity of each person
 - Hunger to learn what grounds (faith-based) people as they move forward in life
 - Sustainability
 - Permission, in face the challenge, to focus on gender
 - 4 year residency provides additional opportunities for students to engage, and for faculty and staff to engage them
 - Permission and encouragement to question
 - SELT → training for our work with student employees
 - Our two monastic communities and our partnerships
 - Our natural environment allows for opportunities that don't exist on other campuses (sustainability, spaces for reflection, etc.)
 - Need to get people to visit our campuses
 - We could do better if we had a “mission officer”

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- 2 campuses, gender-specific campus
 - People want you (student, staff, faculty) to be here and succeed; genuine, feeling of service to others; give students best experience we can
 - Monastic community presence as baseline, fundamental foundation of who we are; Benedictine values embedded in who we are and what we do
 - Embrace the word “rural” – beautiful space and place; natural; sense of quality, not materialism in buildings, spaces; feel safe here in environment
 - Long-range development of people – who they are, not solely what they do; giving back to community; way you do your work; how you treat people
 - Tradition of striving for excellence – searching for truth, desire to reach for perfection; opportunity to better develop their coping mechanisms

3. To reach the goals identified in the discussions at your table, what key strategies must be included in Strategic Directions 2020?

- Money!
 - More housing – for residential experience for everyone
 - Continued integration of Benedictine values
 - Diversity of faculty and staff to reflect student population
 - More support for international, first-gen students (housing, food, breaks)
 - Priority upper class housing for out of state students, international
 - Expand/prioritize experiential opportunities, diverse curriculum, education – short trips, study abroad
 - Continue to push/market study abroad, word of mouth
 - Five day a week language classes – get through books quicker
 - Keeping tuition affordable – financial aid, four-year price lock?, tuition precautions
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- Increase recruitment efforts to regrow the monastic communities
 - Be thoughtful about the degree programs we offer to keep up with trends and keep our facilities relevant
 - Focus on using technology in a humane way
 - As the monastic communities age and there are fewer religious in academic/admin roles, how do we keep that close contact for students?
 - How do we ingrain the positive cultural indoctrination into our mission and day-to-day operations moving forward?
 - Continue staff and faculty development, of course
 - Increase/improve alumnae/i engagement (to help carry on and pass down tradition if there are fewer monastics for that role) (also to build strong employment/networking relationships for a pathway to success)
 - Strengthen clubs/teams/organizations to offer leadership and growth opportunities and the development of mind/body/soul. (Also to spread CSB/SJU name recognition and reputation)
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- Focus on women’s education and men’s education, both separate and together
 - Keep class size small
 - Discussion/plan about the age of the monastery and how that special and unique characteristic of our campuses can continue without monastics or with aging monastics
 - Maintain endowment, increase value
 - Highlight benefits of being rural while balancing world perspective
 - Support systems in place for changing demographic of students
 - Attract international students to stay in community after graduation
 - Tenure professors, attract quality faculty/staff → especially diverse faculty and staff to match student demographic to provide support and understanding
 - Transportation: to St. Cloud + beyond (groceries, clothes, jobs, etc.) constant, consistent, reliable
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October 8, 2014

1. What are the benefits of a residential, undergraduate liberal learning education in the 21st century? Why continue with this model?

- Liberal arts educate whole person, not just job training
- Residential makes students connect w/ diverse others. Can't get on-line
- Learning how to learn critical 'cause will face new problems
- Smaller, more intense class/interactions, allow us to do much more. Real learning, not a credentialing approach
- Residential allows coordination of in and out of class activities
- Help students learn to think and challenge status quo – vs. training excellent sheep
- Concern that younger faculty focused on discipline rather than broader liberal arts. More emphasis on scholarship and publishing. Declining sense of community connection. Rewards are departmental.
- Small liberal arts approach helps students who might not make it in large, impersonal setting. Need this for changing demographics.

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- Becoming even more important. Thoughtful discussions. Personal connections.
 - Exploration
 - Exposure to the different opportunities really helps students to learn and grow
 - Our programs provide flexibility
 - Consider “Media-free” zones on campus
 - Shrinking family size – how does this connect with our current buildings
 - Good for our students having them live on campus
 - Size is a competitive advantage

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- Opportunity to be full-time, fully immersed in the formation of the mind
 - Holistic society
 - Integrative learning experience; integration of residential life and academic learning
 - Intellectual role models integrated into everyday experience
 - Connections formed with Res Life and faculty
 - Formation of the person; identity development; immersion experience
 - Model keeps faculty/staff invested in the mission
 - Personal, invests in people and relationships; immediate and long-term
 - The model is superior to other models, in general – soft skills, not hard skills

2. What specific characteristics of CSB/SJU add value to the residential liberal arts model? How do we best highlight the Catholic, Benedictine tradition of CSB/SJU?

- We're concerned about gender in a way that similar schools tend not to be
- Both men and women come to appreciate the emphasis on gender (Even those who resist this initially)
- Do other colleges have the FR model? Esp. benefit FY men This is distinctive
- Do others have faculty-led study abroad programs? This is distinctive

Catholic:

- Our colleges emphasize access to “something beyond” – the life of prayer/worship goes on always in the background, and some students participate in that life

(It would be interesting to have focus groups with seniors to ask about their experience)

- Perhaps “Benedictine” is more open than “Catholic”; emphasizing our Benedictine heritage allows us to raise questions of value

(Both terms are contested, in a useful way – the definitions are questions/topics of discussion)

- We need to emphasize the link between liberal arts and our way of living “Catholic” and “Benedictine”: We’re always questioning. → So we model the questioning for our students.
 - The Catholic intellectual tradition is part of our lived tradition
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- Service learning – giving students opportunities to give back – experiences beyond college
 - Faculty resident program – unique model – contributes to community. Commitment to relationships – ties the fabric of community.
 - Learn how to talk to each other about more important issues – spirituality groups – males are able to develop
 - Opportunities to engage beyond their professional job – professional development
 - Faculty providing care for individual students – balance of scholarship and individual attention
 - Affinity of alums giving back
 - Keeping Benedictine values in mind throughout work
 - Men’s campus/women’s campus – monastic model – most genuine aspect – monastic community serves as model for affinity and residential liberal arts
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- Value of monastic presence in the residential model at SJU and in general; CSB students find this in the Ben. Sisters model
 - Key mentors for SJU students tend to be faculty members or FRs
 - Land base and stewardship of land; how land gets used
 - Gender – maybe as much a liability as asset – segregation
 - Athletic program
 - Benedictine expression of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition – very welcoming to non-Catholics; culture is welcoming, inclusive, diverse; strengthens intellectual tradition by allowing diversity
 - Coordinate relationship lends to more faculty and resources

3. To reach the goals identified in the discussions at your table, what key strategies must be included in Strategic Directions 2020?

- We’re accepting students who may not be “prepared” in the same way that our students have been in the past – WE MUST BUDGET FOR THE AREAS THAT SUPPORT OUR INCOMING STUDENTS AND ENABLING THEM TO SUCCEED
- IA needs to be nudged toward the areas of need (not guided by the priorities of donors)
- Faculty need to work more closely and fruitfully with student affairs
- We need to be strategic about faculty mentoring and hiring: unless we emphasize the value of liberal arts and our mission, the result is departmental focus
- We have no training of new faculty in the Catholic + Benedictine traditions; A first-year seminar for new faculty would be valuable (and would help us develop relationships across departmental lines)
- We need to create opportunities for faculty and staff to interact (talent show during accreditation)
- Presidents and chief academic officers could invite small numbers of people for dinner (crossing lines of discipline, etc.)
- Personal contacts are rewarding but don’t happen unless we create structures that invite them/make them possible
- P. 25 SD 2020, paragraph 3: “CSB and SJU prepare students for post-college success...” THE LIST DOES NOT INCLUDE CLASSES. If the quality of the academic experience is central to our

preparation of students for their futures, this must be evident in the SD documents and in the structures we create.

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- Expand FYS program → FYE program (reading, writing, communication + additional transition programming); FYE can help us maintain solid retention in the face of changing demographics
 - Need to be mindful of how much work FYS currently entails before adding more. Would have to rethink entire model.
 - Should we explore summer orientation model? May help ease transition logistics; other transition supports – Business Offices/financial aid visit to FYS? RA programming?
 - International/Intercultural LEAD students provided peer mentors to participate in experiential learning programs (e.g. College Bound, 10-day excursion); Create opportunities for conversation + engagement about issues of inclusion

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- Better integration between academics and residential life; co-curricular integration
 - Better spaces for non-classroom co-curricular conversations
 - Professional development on Catholic/Benedictine: Benedictine Heritage Tours, Collegium model; issue is getting wider engagement from the 80% not inclined to participate
 - Continue to look at gender; make sure people who work here have experience/knowledge to lead and engage in conversation around that
 - Maintain and support connection we have with monastery. Both of these communities are getting smaller; how do we keep that legacy alive?
 - Continue to provide experiences to keep skills developing that employers look for and life requires
 - Develop/strengthen integration/collaboration between student development and academics
 - A first-year experience program from a student development perspective, not just FYS. Also intentional with sophomore, JRs & SR as well
 - Awareness of diversity in our community and continued conversations around inclusivity, ensuring the strong liberal arts experience
 - Remain cognizant of what employers want, then ensuring all areas on campus (staff, faculty, administrators, mentors, supervisors, etc.) engage in conversations around liberal arts skills students are learning and articulating those to employers (ex: why they are a benefit, how they've experienced & developed those here)
 - Transportation opportunities for students who don't have that to still engage in experiences in surrounding community
 - Nurture and further explore bridges between alums and their organizations and our students engaging in internships/employment opportunities (understand points on campus that alums/organizations might connect with and how to create collaborations in campus, thinking big picture how those relationships might work – alum offices, career services, experiential learning, faculty in depts.)

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- Need to maintain institutional morale as we go through these changes
 - Need transparency about type of students we can afford – getting them here, retaining them, services they might need
 - Do we need more resources for first gen, and minority students? Faculty development and residential life
 - Students who come here from afar and more metropolitan – students feel isolated, may not have a car, how do they even do an internship?
 - Transportation should be a priority – connect students with st. Cloud and the Cities, esp. international students and national (LA, TX) students

- Same issue w/ Gorecki and dorms – how are we making them feel at home when stuck here on break?
- Everyone within community needs to help people outside understand what the liberal arts is and why it's valuable
- Help students articulate it as well – value of their liberal arts experience, study abroad, EL, athletics
- Students should learn Benedictine values as part of 2 theology courses – missed opportunity
- Pay more attention to Catholic intellectual tradition – not just Catholic identity

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- Maintaining key strengths that already exist
 - Finding ways to communicate Benedictine values to current and prospective students
 - Need efforts in experiential learning opportunities and other high impact practices (internships, collaborative learning, gender/diversity/global learning); need continued and sustained efforts in those areas
 - More conversations about integrative learning – how do faculty and staff embrace the missions, interdisciplinary conversations
 - Recruiting – how do we enhance connections with out of state students? Once students arrive here, they usually are impressed
 - Athletic programs are a tool for recruiting, esp. with girls and women (The example of cutting Nordic program we raised; it was mentioned that we lost talented recruits as a result of this)
 - We are not a disability-friendly campus, esp. with students with physical limitations. Also, it is important to maintain and enhance services for students with learning differences
 - It is critical to maintain small student/staff and student/faculty ratios to foster close relationships that are key to recruitment, retention, and the experience that students desire
 - In terms of curricular development, we have some high impact practices but lack sequencing in general education, since the Common Curriculum is a series of distribution requirements and are not integrated well with the disciplines
 - Faculty and staff development on issues to improve all areas, such as training on diversity and race issues.

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- Physical plant – maintaining peaceful quality we have now of space and place
 - Extraordinary at creating efficiencies to move forward – 1 business office; What will hinder change or not?
 - Enough space for students to live in, upper-class being put in soph. housing
 - Invest in recreational space for students
 - Better job “tooting our horn” – how to best articulate this
 - Develop learning outcomes for common curriculum: What does it mean when we say “we develop young people”? How do we expand on L.O within Student Development and embrace as an institution, not just one division?
 - Student employment/athletics/other – name examples and identify stories/opportunities and what experiences they will leave with upon graduation
 - Pay attention to student: faculty ratio – critical – being consistent
 - Pay attention to expand space – to better foster relationships, programs, development opportunities

1. What are the benefits of a residential, undergraduate liberal learning education in the 21st century? Why continue with this model?

- Opportunity to practice being with people not like themselves – more relevant now rather than less so
 - Can't assume that students will naturally learn how to interact with diverse groups – this provides intentional models, practice
 - Constant changes w/ technology – need more abstract skills and thinking rather than specific job training – shape the future, not just respond to it
 - Residential – more influence over out-of-class activities and connection to in-class ideas
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- Teaches you how to think & problem-solve
 - People having more responsibilities because of more being asked of them
 - Skills, abilities (communication, critical thinking, dialogue, etc.)
 - Have to be a well-rounded individual
 - Obsolescence prevention
 - Learning to live, work, learn w/ different people; populations; more workplace benefits
 - Our structure has built into it the opportunity to make mistakes
 - Technology has inhibited face-to-face contact and direct communication
 - We give them permission to learn, explore, grow, and ask questions
 - Multi-versant w/ technology and people – selling point w/ admission
 - Students have the ability to synthesize and use knowledge
 - Encourage relationships and mutual development of the experience
 - “The Johnnie & Bennie Way” can shape the student experience

2. What specific characteristics of CSB/SJU add value to the residential liberal arts model? How do we best highlight the Catholic, Benedictine tradition of CSB/SJU?

- Gender education (CSB and SJU are separate) – We can have men-only and women-only classes
 - Break from thinking about opposite sex
 - Not in Twin Cities – we are more residential than schools in cities; this helps greater community; Students get to plant roots for 4 years; students are around on weekends
 - Outdoors (lakes & woods)
 - Open to different religions (no mandatory mass), but plenty of opportunities
 - Nuns and Monks
 - Service trips with a connection to the foundation of Benedictine Values
 - Emphasis on Benedictine
 - Faculty is respectful to each other
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- Rural environment – land area – beauty – outdoor experience
 - Safety of rural setting (for some students)
 - Centering of the Benedictine Tradition in a chaotic world
 - CSB intentional res life curriculum is excellent
 - Study abroad focus
 - FYS builds community
 - Overall, people feel a sense of safety (physically, finding your voice, emotionally) here

- Strong student allies & supporters in the faculty and staff -- + whose voices are being silenced by our 'radical' inclusion?
- Who is teaching our courses & how are they taught?
- Catholicism/Benedictine values aren't "shoved down our throats"

3. To reach the goals identified in the discussions at your table, what key strategies must be included in Strategic Directions 2020?

- Re-evaluate gen ed program and change it if needed: It should reinforce values of community, diversity; break down disciplinary silos; Benedictine values should be infused throughout curriculum, i.e., more interdisciplinary; remove incentives to remain single discipline
 - Faculty work closer with student development; increase communication
→Example: set a theme for an academic year in which faculty and student development can address and coordinate; each year, focus on one Benedictine value
 - Student body reflects gen. population (diverse view of world)
 - Let go 50-50 gender split (enroll a full class that works financially)
 - Redefine image of a Bennie or Johnny – no longer think of our institutions as predominantly white
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- We need buy-in from all community members to model
 - 2% = Sustainability needs to –Environment, Economic, Social Justice – Multiple messaging
 - Get the buy in for the Culture Change to get the sustainability model
 - Transition to new model; need students from local communities; need population
 - Recognize we need to use our resources more effectively (Arboretum, natural area, natural environ)
 - Community focused to get buy in for sustainability model
 - Proactive: we need to move with the times and need to readjust the model from within – tap those that are willing to model the change, which then attracts the change

Other points:

How are we fulfilling our Catholic, Benedictine mission? Should we consider hiring a mission officer?

Results of NSSE: where is there consistency from FY – SR? Lots of great things here, but where are the gaps? Where are we doing a great job and where to we need to do more to help students move beyond what they want and where they are to fulfill potential?