

Strategic Directions 2020

Campus Conversations – Enrollment

September 8-9, 2014
Three Sessions

Jon McGee and Cal Ryan-Mosley opened the session with a brief presentation on our enrollment profile, demand, and prospects. Also shared Tenth Day results including retention.

SD 2020 will have to address to basic questions: What is our enrollment goal? Who can we afford? What is the characteristics of the student body?

Questions that Jon and Cal asked the attendees to answer: Are those data clear? Have we missed anything? Does anything about what we have presented strike you as particularly compelling as we plan for our future?

Session #1, September 8, Quad 170, SJU
22 people attended

- The group discussed the 52:48 female-to-male enrollment target. We could enroll 1,000 new students each year with some ease if we didn't have to worry about the ratio. However, our current practice and reality, not to mention the budget, does not allow this. Perhaps the Trustees need to look into this further.
- When disseminating information on retention – do we look at individuals' issues or systemic issues? We look at both. Along with look at the reasons why an individual is leaving, we also look at trends (campus climate, for example). We should examine retention trends over time and not just one year at a time.
- Among our biggest issues is the need to address campus climate.
- Because someone left for academic reasons does not always mean that that is the main reason for departure. It may be only a symptom of a greater problem.
- We need to be prepared to deal with the changing demographics and changing characteristics of our students. We cannot keep doing things the same way we always have.
- How do we change what it means to be a "typical" Bennie or Johnnie? How do we celebrate our differences? If we don't change how we do things (or the campus climate here at CSB/SJU), we will continue to perpetuate people not feeling like a "typical" Johnnie and Bennie.
- We need to train faculty on how to teach/educate the new classes that will be enrolling. We can't continue to do things the same way we always have and expect different results.
- Faculty member asked how we plan to align the new Common Curriculum with Strategic Directions 2020. We need to be integrating this information now – not after the fact.
- How do we serve our students and prepare staff and faculty to help them?
- Two worlds are quickly forming at CSB/SJU as to what it means to be a Johnnie and a Bennie. Perhaps it has to do more with socio-economic than differences in color.

- We need to be careful that SOC doesn't become synonymous with low income. They are two different and independent characteristics. The more they become synonymous, the less likely people will come here.
- The fact that we are so tuition dependent complicates all of this. Question was asked if IA doing anything to increase our endowment

Session #2, September 9, Gorecki 204A, CSB

30 people attended

- Why did CSB exceed its enrollment goal while SJU did not? A discussion took place about how men and women had differences going to a private college. More women tend to do it, then men. There also is a decreasing population of high school graduates in central Minnesota.
- Why CSB and SJU are not moving completely together on enrollment? Could we work to become coordinate, including our budgets?
- As we become more racially and ethnically diverse, what are we doing to change the way we are teaching? Examples, English as a second language should be continuing longer into a student's time here and the common curriculum needs to be changing as our students do.
- Do we know of any other schools with high retention rates of students of color? Do CSB and SJU survey international students in an exit interview. If so, what are we asking?
- A question was raised about how CSB/SJU determine enrollment priorities. A discussion took place about how admissions has concentrated on seeking more students from outside the state. Athletics recruits a significant number of students as well. We also seek recruitment support from faculty and staff.
- With the increasing diversity of our students, some wondered if faculty and staff are changing in diversity too. Faculty and some administration are recruited nationally, but most other staff are drawn from the local region, which is predominantly Caucasian.
- How do issues like the support required to retain international and American students of color relate to our campus conversations around fiscal priorities -- conversations that are so disparate and area-specific through this strategic planning process but that are clearly related? Will there be a committee or group, or some process that connects issues raised across the three topic-area, SD 2020 visioning sessions?
- How will we consider academic requirements (e.g., the experiential learning requirement and other major areas that require internships) in the context of the needs of our changing student body? For example, more students who are engaged in service-learning and academic internships may not have access to a car. Since CSB/SJU students don't have access to public transportation to get them into the local community, how can we support them, particularly since we require some students to have these experiences? Can we invest financial resources to either bring the Metro Bus to St. Joe (which could also diversify our staff) or could we examine other internal options (like the underfunded service-learning mini-bus that could also then service internship sites)?

Session #3, September 9, Gorecki 204A, CSB

11 people attended

- Income from net tuition supports between 75% and 85% of our annual operating budgets. Does that include the excess revenue from auxiliary enterprise? No.
- As our student body becomes more racially, ethnically and culturally diverse, what are we doing here to make them more welcome?
- Where kind of professional development exists for faculty and staff to address the needs and expectations of a changing student body?
- In reference to the dorm life culture, are we doing enough with our physical infrastructure at SJU?
- How do we forecast on retention? Jon explained that we use a three year rolling average.
- What are we doing with physical infrastructure or deferred maintenance that could be affecting retention?

Other comments received after the public sessions:

- How do issues like the support required to retain international and American students of color (our admission target) relate to our campus conversations around fiscal priorities -- conversations that are so disparate and area-specific through this strategic planning process but that are clearly related? Will there be a committee or group, or some process, that connects issues raised across the three topic-area, SD 2020 visioning sessions?
- How will we consider academic requirements (e.g., the experiential learning requirement and other major areas that require internships) in the context of the needs of our changing student body? For example, more and more students are engaged in service-learning and academic internships who don't have access to a car. Since CSB/SJU students don't have access to public transportation to get them into the local community., how can we support those without their own means of transportation (who now have a graduation requirement to do so)? Can we invest financial resources to either bring the Metro Bus to St. Joe (which could also diversify our staff) or do we provide more support for internal options (like the underfunded service-learning mini-bus that could also then service internship sites)?
- After reading the white paper, the predominate question given the conversation regarding enrollment, demand, and prospects for me is "how can we raise additional endowment funds specifically for tuition remission/scholarship support for the first generation, or even second generation students whose parents cannot afford our tuition?" This seems important on several fronts - for the students, and to ease our dependency on tuition revenue.
- I'd like folks to know that, despite the financial aid challenges and lower ACT scores reported for diverse students, their presence here is very important. I have noticed the upswing in numbers for our domestically diverse students and my classes are benefitting enormously. In particular, I have had many more Hmong and Hispanic students in the last two years, and that has changed (for the better) class discussions. Over the years I've seen how a critical mass matters in changing a class dynamic, and I appreciate the hard work of admissions to make it possible for my students of color to not feel alone in class and, thus, more comfortable in contributing to our conversations.

I also appreciate the resources being devoted to students with disabilities and learning disabilities and am also benefitting from more of those students in my classes. In particular, most of my students with learning

disabilities (really, they're learning differences) are extraordinarily bright and add substantially to the quality of class discussion, presentations, etc. These students also likely have lower ACT scores, but that has little bearing on their learning potential.