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Key Strategic Planning Questions

Strategic Planning Development Team

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Key Strategic Planning Questions

The Strategic Planning support team has been gathering Key Questions from the PSU community. They have been submitted four ways:

1. Through the Board of Trustees' resolution charging the President with undertaking a comprehensive strategic planning process: http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.board/files/7.%20Resolution%20Directing%20the%20President%20Regarding%20Strategic%20Planning%209-11-14.pdf;
2. Through an online form on the Strategic Planning website: http://www.pdx.edu/president/participate-in-planning;
3. Through Kari St. Peters' interviews with key stakeholders; and,
4. Through a request for strategic planning questions that President Wiewel made at a presentation on the topic to the PSU Foundation Board on 10/16/14.

Board of Trustees' Questions:

- How can we ensure the consistent delivery of excellent education while we are striving to influence the city of Portland and the world at large?
- How can we deliver an education that prepares students for the workforce, without narrowing the scope of the education we deliver?
- What specifically do we mean by "excellence in student learning, innovative research, and community engagement"?
- What trade-offs, if any, are needed between the focus on "excellence" and that of providing broad access and opportunity?
- How can we enhance a culture of innovation at PSU when we are subject to the restrictions of state funding?
- How will we know we have become a "leading public urban university"?
- How can we maintain the quality of the education we deliver while ensuring that more students have access to it?
- How can we address reduced public funding, rising tuition and concern about student debt?
- How will the rise of online learning affect PSU?
- How can we create operational efficiencies within the University without diminishing collaboration and communication?
- How can we complement the educational offerings of other Oregon universities, while we are also competing with them?
- Which institutions are our best benchmarks, and how do we compare to them?

Strategic Planning Questions submitted using the online form:

- How will Portland State focus on recruiting - and especially retaining - qualified staff?
- What are we doing well and in what areas do we need to improve? (SWOT analysis).
- What shared values underlie the university's strategic direction?
- Will the university's mission and vision be re-visited in this process?
- Who do we strive to serve?
- What are the assessment and communication plans for the strategic plan?
- Who is missing at the table as representatives of who we serve; i.e. Employers, City of Portland, Portland Public Schools, Portland Community College, etc.?
- What strategies do we have for convincing the state and the state legislature that higher education is worth more investment?
- How will PSU advance its leadership role in supporting K-12 STEM education and the development of a diverse and highly capable STEM workforce?
- Will the Strategic Plan focus on ensuring career development and job readiness of our graduates and aligning student learning with regional economic need without restricting student choice?
- What is the role of adjunct faculty at Portland State University?
- How should the university relate to high schools and community colleges and other sources of incoming students?
- How should the university relate to other state universities?
- How will the university eliminate the silos that presently isolate the departments and schools from one another at PSU?
- What can we do to improve records and information management at PSU in order to improve openness, transparency, and accountability while decreasing costs and liabilities?
- How can PSU more readily gain the national and international recognition that it so richly deserves?
- How can we better promote the great people and scholarship happening here to the global community?
- While it's great to serve the city, how can we better promote the university beyond Portland to better establish an international reputation for scholarship?
- What are the core values and beliefs "we" share? How are the system structures, policies, and processes aligned (or not) with these core values?
- How do we create a learning community that encourages collaboration and shared successes across schools, disciplines, institutions, and with the broader community we serve? And how do we do this without burning out dedicated faculty, staff, and students?

- I think it's critically important that through this strategic planning process, we maintain a visionary, aspirational lens as our guide. How can we promote an "abundance" view, and not our usual deficit perspective?
- Does PSU have a current vision for achieving global excellence through the reputation of its research programs, etc.
- To be excellent and have a good reputation requires a core of integrity. I would like to see PSU's vision for how to continue to build a culture of integrity included in the strategic plan as part of the framework for how PSU continues to mature and pursue excellence.
- With current changes to the high-level staffing in global diversity and equity how does Portland State University propose to continue to make the campus one that is welcoming and tolerant of domestic minorities in particular and all people of color?
- How will PSU attract and retain excellent staff to support and implement the University's goals and mission, given that PSU salaries lag behind those of comparable jobs in industry and at other large academic institutions on the West Coast?
- What is our vision for our students? Graduation? Taking advantage of the wonderful opportunities at PSU? What might we need to change at the beginning of student's experience with PSU to ensure their retention and ability to participate in this vision? An admissions deadline?
- What is the image, branding that represents Portland State. Do we need a new mascot?

Questions submitted by PSU Foundation Board:

- Will the SP change the URBAN experience PSU provides students? What will stay the same and what will change?
- Will the mix of teaching vs. research change?
- Will the mix of in state and out of state students change?
- Will the mix of residential vs. commuters student change? If so, how will that affect student life?
- Will the new SP change the value of a PSU degree?
- Will students and employers see a better ROI as a result of the SP?
- What are the new learning tools likely to be and what are the specific requirements ($, expertise) needed to utilize them at PSU?
- Is the SP going to help meet completion goals?
- Does PSU still intend to increase enrollment for 40-40-20 purposes and how is a new SP likely to impact this objective?

- How will PSU engage 2nd lifers/boomers who are retiring and want opportunities for engagement, lifelong learning and giving back?
- How should the relationship between PSU and the state evolve over time?
- What role should philanthropy play in the future of PSU? Is there a tradeoff between state support and philanthropy?
- Is there another institution which represents a 'role model' for PSU? Ideally one which is where we would like to be in 10-20 years?
- Why would/should a student chose to go to PSU in the future, rather than choosing another alternative (MOOC, for profit college, UO, UW etc)?
- How much emphasis should PSU place on career readiness of its graduates?
- Should more resources be focused on STEM and less on humanities?
- How should PSU measure 'success' of its graduates?
- What should PSU strive to accomplish in its relationship with OHSU?
- Should PSU and OHSU combine?
- How does PSU continue to increase its visibility and stature, both in the region and beyond?
- How do we measure our ultimate success and do this with as little comparing as possible?
- How will we determine if the plan was accomplished and to what degree it succeeded?
- Was it realistic and achievable?
- How does our community (students, staff, stakeholders, neighbors, businesses) feel about/react to the plan achievements?
- How has our overall reputation, visibility, perception benefitted from accomplishment of the plan?
- What athletic programs should PSU participate in and why?
- What is the right blend of serving the state and increasing tuition revenue and diversity by increasing out of state and foreign students?
- What is the right composition of tenured and adjunct faculty and why?
- In what areas of academic excellence and research should we excel?
- What is the vision of PSU 5-10 years from now?
- Which 'schools' within PSU are going to be cornerstones for the vision of PSU? Should those schools get additional funding?
- With the opening of the health sciences building should PSU leverage and invest more in science fields and become more of a research institution?
- What role will online courses play in PSU's future?
- Should some programs be reviewed for profitability?
- Should we only focus on programs that are in line with PSU's strategic vision and reduce programs that are not aligned?

- Do we have clear financial goals- both in the near and long term?
- Is there a clear process defined for how the plan is adjusted to meet changing conditions?
- Are there clear yearly (or more timely) metrics to measure progress?
- Will the plan give clear direction to employees and Boards on what we expect success to look like at the end of 5 year/10 years?
- Does the plan offer clear accountability measures to senior leadership on the alignment of tasks?
- How will the University move towards more stable and reliable funding without incurring larger student debt?
- On what pillars of policy will the University support/expand or change its physical plant and footprint?
- What areas of growth and emphasis should be focused on with in the colleges and why?
- How does the University tie its effectiveness to the business and social science needs of the region?
- How does the University foster student success in the areas of excellence we create?
- What progress ensures graduation and support for students of all backgrounds?
- How do we design a budget model that is sustainable and able to adequately support the PSU mission?
- It is almost a daily occurrence to discuss one of the many important or glowing aspects of PSU and discover nobody knows about them. Not even many Trustees or active supporters know this information or much else about PSU. We have a definite PR deficit, so first, could we please address the perception gap (or ignorance) of what PSU is already and how many in our community know this?
- If we intend this strategic plan to be a roadmap to implementing the vision of PSU, have we adequately defined the mission so we can determine how to get there?
- Have trends and future changes to the funding model been evaluated and tested?
- Have we evaluated the impact of the OOI if it passes next month on enrollment, finances, budgets, and physical capacity?
- Have we evaluated the future of athletics, its funding and the ramifications on success or failure as it relates to PSU's place in the future of college-level athletics in our community?
- Does 'serve the city' capture all that our institution serves?
- Can athletics help promote whatever new strategic vision we come up with and what would that look like?
- What was the earliest recorded strategic vision for PSU or the Vanport College and what (if any) can we glean from that?
- Ask our competitors to write what they think our strategic vision is.

- How do we become more attractive to students, parents and friends?
- How do we become a leading university attractive to employers?
- What will be sky indicators (leading/lagging) for excellence, innovation and engagement and how often will these indicators be shared with the greater community.
- What is the time frame for developing the strategic plan and will it be shared with the community.
- How does PSU want to be thought of by students, alumni, the community and potential students in 5 years? In 10 years?
- What identity does PSU have today? Is it the one we want?
- How do we move forward w/ learning technology in a way that increases access but maintains the benefits of face to face?
- How do we deal with space issues?
- How do we make sure we stay relevant in teaching, research and community engagement?
- How do we strengthen post university success ratios?
- How do we work better with community partners to strengthen a) what we can do for them b) increase demand for our graduates?
- How can we partner better w/ other academic institutions to create more efficiency?
- How do we promote the kind of interdisciplinary thinking and skills so necessary in today's world?
- How can we better utilize the thought leadership at PSU, on boards, in community, w/ PSU Foundation?
- Follow Einstein: Everything that can be counted doesn't necessarily count so how can we measure meaningfully?
- How do we make sure the organization (and its parts) is ready for a strategic plan?
- You can't do it all at once how do we prioritize and sequence the plan?
- Can we create an internal administration dashboard and another for the board at a higher level that tracks the SP?
- Teach we teach participants the lexicon of strategic planning?
- How do we manage expectations for the plan?
- How can each department, school, college, and PSU group contribute?
- How to engage all PSU stakeholders in the strategic plan?
- How can PSU inform and promote the strategic plan at all stakeholders?
- How flexible is the plan to be?
- How often and by whom will the plan be evaluated w/ set and specific criteria to be measured?
- What can we do to become a leading public urban university be raising the level of our teachers/professors?

- What can we do to improve the quality of the applicants for admissions?
- How can we speed up the SP process so that we create the plan sooner rather than later?
- Given the rapid changes in higher education, how do we stay agile and forward thinking so we can stay ahead of what the future presents us?
- How do we become a leading urban U?
- Should PSU aim to become the U of Washington?

Questions gleaned from Kari St. Peters' interviews

- If we pose questions to APPC one of them should be, "How often do we execute this prioritization process?"
- What will an education mean in the future? How can we (as an institution that is deeply motivated by a concern for the experience of our students) work together with our students and members of the community to decide what that means?
- How do we come up with creative ways for our students to emerge from PSU as informed and dedicated professionals?
- What most will shape life in the metro area in the next decade and how does that impact PSU?
- Can PSU generate the kind of knowledge and working relationships that will ensure that the people who live work and play here (in the Portland metro area) can lead a meaningful and equitable life?
- Is this the correct vision?
- How do we make sure that whatever vision we land on is implemented well and that we have folks engaged as part of the process?
- How do you own being the leading urban university?
- How do we capture the totality of the student experience? Many of the best student experiences happen outside the classroom… how do we account for this to understand where we added value and how we fell short?
- How do we prioritize and make decisions based on real and measurable impacts?
- How do we continue to provide access for students with a dyer budget?
- How do we do this work in a sustainable way?
- What is the role and impact of marketing on the strategic planning process?

Questions submitted by Faculty at the President's Faculty Breakfasts

October 30th, 2014, 8-9:30am
Location: Simon Benson House

- In what specific ways are we unique?

- Globalization = what is to be gained by putting more focus on our international students?
- How do we address the challenges of retention and research being shared priorities?
- How do we lean on our uniqueness to leapfrog some of our challenges?
- We are not a traditional university and need to evaluate ourselves on different matrices.
- What are our budget priorities?
- What is it we don't want to do?
- Topic team = what if we had a futures think tank? A group that is focused on how we bring ourselves into the modern age.
- What do we want? Which audience are we serving?
- How does one achieve a teaching and research profile when we are teaching so much?

November 13th, 2014, 8-9:30am
Location: Simon Benson House

- How do we define research?
- How do we define excellence? How do we define excellence in research?
- What kind of students are we trying to attract?
  - How do our services align with this demographic?
- How do we work smarter?
- How do we bring people into PSU and keep them engaged?
- We need a better sense of clarity and realistic support to achieve our goals. In other words, what are our priorities?
- How do we engage in broader conversations across departments to meet our goals?
- How do we focus our resources around our vision?
- How do we know we have excellent faculty and staff?
- How do we determine the quality of our programs and their importance? This isn't as simple as looking at numbers.
- How do we retain, support and nurture our faculty and staff?
- What is the role of faculty who are not in research?
- What is the role and composition of our faculty?
- A strong university is a diverse university.
- How do we define value? Some external conversation has to be different than the internal conversation.
- What do we do here?
- What does it mean to be a PSU student?
- We need to stay grounded in the reality of our situation.