

CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS

Executive Summary

Between January 28 and February 2, 2015, a series of five campus conversations were held and attended by 98 employees, including those who provided input by email. Hosted by President Shipley, VPAA Ames, and VPA Melby, the discussions centered on three key questions:

- Where do we need to invest revenue to fill gaps caused by recent budget reductions?
- What opportunities exist to generate new revenue?
- Which investments are well suited for a philanthropic, major gifts campaign?

In total, more than 75 unique ideas were generated in response to the discussion items and eight themes emerged:

1. Better utilize the summer months and/or add a winter term
2. Invest in facilities
3. Update technology strategies to modernize and free up funds
4. Invest in recruitment and retention programs
5. Restore funding reallocated during lean years
6. Invest in new academic programs
7. Generate revenue from other programming
8. Raise philanthropic funds in support of programs and initiatives

Moving forward, the results of the campus discussions will be shared with the University Strategic Planning Committee and the Budget Advisory Council to inform their deliberations. In addition, the resulting ideas will be incorporated into the planning process currently being undertaken in Advancement in consideration of a new fundraising initiative.

A listing of the approximately 75 ideas contributed by employees during the course of the five-session series begins on the following page. Ideas that were put forth on multiple occasions or in multiple contexts are placed at the top of each list following the theme header. Otherwise, no prioritization is intended or implied by the order of the listing or themes.

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Theme: Better utilize the summer months and/or add a winter term

Most frequently contributed ideas

- Increase traditional Summer III programming.
- Add a winter/January term.
- Offer more undergraduate courses during the Summer III and in the traditional format.
- Develop bridge program between high school and freshman and freshman and sophomore years.

These ideas were also contributed

- Restructure summer salaries for faculty to improve motivation to teach during the summer.
- Consider tuition and financial aid structures in summer; if not an in-state rate, some middle ground to attract out-of-state students.
- Expand continuing education opportunities for teachers through discipline specific offerings (ex: offering in history would include tours of battlefields).
- Expand summer art offerings: summer concerts, summer camps, programs for children.

Theme: Invest in facilities

Most frequently contributed ideas

- Construct a new student center; consider combining with a conference center or repositioning as a student leadership and professional development center.
- Improve entrances to buildings; outfit lobbies and porches with plants, seating, and carpets that welcome and encourage gathering; replace barrier doors with glass doors.

These ideas were also contributed

- Provide HPERS classroom and lab space.
- Increase capacity for science laboratories.
- Build/renovate a new concert hall that would create opportunities to generate revenue.
- Build a parking garage.
- Invest in facilities. Give students something that they can't get anywhere else.
- Do something with the Potomac River.
- Provide a new location (within a new student center) for the student newspaper.

Theme: Update technology strategies to modernize and free up funds

Most frequently contributed ideas

- Provide consistent wireless service throughout the campus.
- Re-evaluate technology strategy to reflect student educational needs. Consider requiring students to own laptops meeting specific criteria and eliminating general-use computer laboratories.

These ideas were also contributed

- Make an agreement with Dell to provide low cost computers for students to purchase.
- Outsource student printing services and get the printers out of the classrooms.
- Fund deferred maintenance especially in terms of technology (ex: Frank Center lighting, Erma Ora Byrd projector; this could also produce cost savings).
- Prioritize the room scheduler to be up and running.
- Upgrade teaching labs and classroom teaching technology, and increase bandwidth.
- Invest in the best available learning management system to support growth in online programming.

Theme: Invest in recruitment and retention programs

Most frequently contributed ideas

- Reconsider financial aid practices:
 - Provide out-of-state waivers for families of faculty or staff;
 - Develop a metro rate requiring residential and enrollment in specific academic programs (ex: Concord University);
 - Offer loans to students that are converted to a grant if a GPA of 3.4 or greater is maintained (ex: Lenoir-Rhyne);
 - Generate scholarships for out-of-state students.
- Invest in student service:
 - Fund recruitment;
 - Create an information center to direct students toward help for any question;
 - Create a one-stop shop for veterans;
 - Add more advisors into our advising center;
 - Prioritize customer service across campus.
- Enhance career services; promote Shepherd as the place that prepares students for jobs:
 - Assess what else is needed to help our students transition into the world of work;
 - Enhance job fairs;
 - Link retirees, maybe through lifelong learning, to help students navigate the federal employment process.

Theme: Restore funding reallocated during lean years

Most frequently contributed ideas

- Fill frozen faculty positions, increase courses taught by full-time faculty; increase role of new lecturer positions.
- Restore and increase funds for faculty development and travel.
- Restore funding for Gateway.

These ideas were also contributed

- Fund graduate assistantships by restoring budgets that have provided gap funding.
- Consider impact of new minimum wage and make adjustments for wage compression.
- Restore departmental budgets to support student scholarship.

Theme: Invest in new academic programs

Most frequently contributed ideas

- Create a theater/music theater major.
- Develop the graduate program:
 - Add majors (science, communication);
 - Create low residency models;
 - Consider a one-year master's in education program (ex: Frostburg).

These ideas were also contributed

- Add a philosophy department.
- Add a faculty line in journalism.
- Develop a Bachelor of Liberal Studies.
- Create a Music therapy degree.
- Create a Commercial music degree.
- Add a faculty line for Strings in music.
- Work with English department to develop a playwright major and/or summer program.

Theme: Generate revenue from other programming

Most frequently contributed ideas

- Encourage faculty and staff innovation:
 - Create a revenue sharing model providing incentives for program development;
 - Ask whether there are areas that have performed poorly in good and bad times and determine response;
 - Consider an appreciation month rotation to all the different levels of staff, faculty, classified and nonclassified employees. Spotlight certain schools/departments.

These ideas were also contributed

- Determine whether benefits from iconic programs, such as the CATF and Civil War Center, are being maximized.
- Aggressively market facilities for rental revenue.
- Enhance the campus tour to address the needs of (international) families by including multiple universities and trips to regional attractions.

Theme: Raise philanthropic funds in support of programs and initiatives

- Find sponsors for promising/proven programs:
 - Gateway program;
 - Model United Nations program;
 - The debate team;
 - Speaker Series (Political Science).
- Re-envision a new student center as a Center for Professional and Civic Leadership.
- Take fuller advantage of the partnership with CATF to fund:
 - Playwright program;
 - Position in theater.
- Create/enhance faculty excellence/research support funds.
- Create funds to support presentation of student research at conferences.