Strategic Planning Session Minutes

May, 22, 2012

Don Guthmiller, SDSU Extension Crops Business Management Field Specialist at the Watertown Regional Center started off the Strategic Planning Session by first introducing the individuals present from South Dakota State University. Those individuals were: President David Chicoine; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Laurie Nichols; Dean of the College of Agricultural and Biological Sciences Barry Dunn; Chief University Librarian Kristi Tornquist; Alumni Relations Director Megan Winterboer; and Student Association Representative Anthony Sutton.

He also introduced the staff at the Watertown Regional Office, including Paul Johnson, Tracey Renelt, Deb Sundem, Sandra Namken, Audrey Rider, and Warren Rusche. At that point Don turned over the program to President Chicoine.

President Chicoine provided an overview of the current strategic plan and status of South Dakota State University. Some of the highlights included:

- Enrollment Trends, 12,725 in fall 2011, 65% SD residents, 53% women, 4,049 on campus, 2,241 first year full time students, 45% with ACT scores of 24 or higher. Graduate students 1,362 in 2011-2012, 325 PhD students. 46% increase in headcount since 2000.
- 1,409 SD Opportunity Scholars in 2011-2012.
- Research & Discovery – creating new knowledge through principal investigators interacting with students, new knowledge from laboratory experiences, unique to land grant university
- Research expenditures – nearing $70 million annually, expenditures have doubled since FY 2006
- Service & Engagement – sharing new knowledge thru original mission of SDSU Extension, technology & commercialization, partnerships with private sector, partnerships with government & community sectors.
- Building Stronger communities – connection between research & economic development, graduates employed across state
- Collaboration within Board of Regents – collaborating with Vo-techs
- Comprehensive teaching – research – extension
- Four goals – Enhance academic excellence, foster economic growth, expand the reach of the university, establish a financial base for university
- Enhance Academic Excellence, Goals: graduation rate of 60%, retention of 80%, 27 nationally accredited programs, 17 programs in accreditation process, 13 programs certified by SD Board of Education, new and renovated campus residential facilities.
- Foster Economic Growth: Research expenditures nearing $70 million annually, State’s first technology transfer office in 2008, 109 invention disclosures in previous 2 years, and 5 start-up companies developed from faculty discoveries.
- Expand the reach of the University – Division 1 Success in Athletics and Academics combined.
12 Degree programs available on-line
American Indian Education & Cultural Centers, Fall 2010
On the Road Tours
Extension Reorganization in 2011

- Establish a sustainable financial base: “It Starts with STATE” comprehensive campaign
  184.8 million in campaign with a goal of 200 million in comprehensive campaign
  Nearly 1 in 5 alumni give to SDSU Foundation – higher than most peer groups.

Timeline: July 2013 new strategic plan begins. Nine listening sessions held throughout the State of South Dakota.

Listening Session: Comments from Participants

Comment: Yahoo posted an article stating that several of the most useless college degrees involved agriculture. How does SDSU respond to comments like those?

Response: Dr. Dunn stated that the reality is that students in agronomy, dairy science, and animal science (and agriculture majors in general) all have had great success finding positions. The Ag College has seen robust enrollment growth.

President Chicoine also responded that we continue to offer the best education possible.

Comment: A follow-up comment was made that the jobs are there, but it seems that the jobs require experience and we need to focus on how to get students the experience that employers desire before they graduate. The students need help and guidance in reaching their career goals and in marketing themselves to employers.

Response: President Chicoine stated that students are getting help and guidance in reaching career goals and mentoring.

Comment: When comparing the approach that the Technical Institutes in the state take regarding career placement, the perception is that SDSU turns graduates loose after graduation to find their own career path.

Response: SDSU is working on doing more to develop internship possibilities and offering more career placement resources. Some of the colleges in the university have had more success than have others.

Comment: Innovation & Incubator Efforts are very important and that SDSU needs to fully back those efforts.

Response: The Innovation Center allows students to learn. Entrepreneurship studies have been one of the fastest growing majors at SDSU.

Comment: SDSU is being recognized and is well regarded in other areas of the U.S., especially as related to athletics and the Jackrabbit mascot.
**Comment:** Regarding Extension, the Watertown and Codington County area is trying to support and assist in the reorganization process that took effect in 2011. We hope that SDSU continues to support a strong Extension system across the state as we transition to a new format. This individual saw as a significant concern the willingness of the general public to accept the changes brought about by the restructuring process. He finally discussed the importance of the Experiment Stations to the community and to the state and SDSU and the need for them and for their continued funding.

**Response:** Dean Dunn thanked the community for their support of the restructuring process. We have been in this new model for six months while the old model was in place from 1914 to 2011. It is an evolving model that is continuing to grow and has been successful in other places. One additional component that has been added in South Dakota is that Field Specialists are being asked to use more technology to communicate with clientele. Information is no longer a place-bound, person-bound commodity. Extension and SDSU needs to catch up with the agricultural community in technology usage. He also recognized that these changes have been controversial in the eyes of some citizens and stakeholders.

**Comment:** How will Extension keep moving 4-H forward in light of the multi-county arrangements that are in place?

**Response:** Dean Dunn indicated that there are more FTE’s focused on youth and 4-H than was the case one year ago. However, many of the 4-H/Youth Advisors are new to Extension and that there will be a learning curve while they gain experience. In the old system some counties in the state were in much better, more stable conditions than were others, however, under the new system all counties are receiving services in the area of 4-H and Youth Development.

**Comment:** This comment was directed at the State Legislature regarding funding for activities such as the State Fair. 4-H is a great example of an activity that provides learning opportunities for youth and helps keep those kids away from risky behaviors. In addition, research and Extension efforts add economic value to South Dakota through increased production and improved efficiency. All of these functions require adequate funding if they are to continue and remain competitive.

In addition, finding qualified employees to enter the agricultural field is a concern as well as attracting young people to return to family farms.

**Response:** Dr. Dunn acknowledged the difficulty in competing with private industry to fill positions and attract and retain qualified people on campus.

**Comment:** What kind of efforts is SDSU doing to reach and work with Veterans that are coming back from Iraq or Afghanistan that are seeking to enhance their education?

**Response:** Provost Nichols stated that SDSU has a Veterans Affairs Office and that they working on adding staff to better meet the needs of Veterans. SDSU is also working on transition issues and striving to become a “Military Friendly Campus”.
Comment: What is SDSU doing with Distance Learning – especially in the area of Ag Degrees?

Response: Provost Nichols explained that there are three Distance Learning Centers. Sioux Falls is currently the most developed, followed by Pierre and then Rapid City. Rapid City is an area that SDSU is trying to increase the opportunities for distance learning. The view is that these three centers are ways to access different markets, rather than as competition to the Brookings campus.

There are currently twelve degree programs completely offered online. The online classes have seen the highest rate of enrollment growth and that SDSU anticipates that this will continue. Presently, there are no undergraduate degrees in Agriculture available completely online; however Ag Econ is close to completing that process.

Comment: Articulation Agreements between institutes such as Lake Area Technical Institute and SDSU are important to meet the needs of students in South Dakota.

Comment: One concern among parents, students and community members is that in some cases there have been issues with students having difficulty understanding instructors whose command of the English language is less than ideal. In some cases students have dropped classes because of those communication difficulties. While these instructors may be very competent, communication skills and obstacles could prevent students’ ability to learn.

Response: Provost Nichols acknowledges the concern and that the University does monitor those situations. One of the problems has been the lack of students born in the U.S. that are pursuing advanced degrees, particularly in math and science. In order to fill the required instructor position, some applicants are hired where English is their second language. This situation is not unique to SDSU.

Comment: What is the typical turnover rate for faculty?

Response: Faculty turnover is typically about 6-7% annually. Presently that rate is higher, around 8-9% due to “Baby Boomers” retiring.

Comment: Is there a need for academic help in remedial areas such as math or reading as students enter college? Are we seeing a greater need for remedial help and courses?

Response: At SDSU the demand for remedial courses has leveled off. Currently, about 800 to 900 out of about 2200 incoming freshman need at least one remedial course. College readiness is one of the greatest predictors of success in college and eventual graduation. The highest need for remedial help is in the area of mathematics. South Dakota State University has started a Summer Bridge Program. This is a five week course prior to the start of the fall semester, targeted towards students with the greatest identified needs. The students pay tuition for the classes they take and for their meals; however there is no charge to live in the dorms. Remedial courses are self-support classes so that there are no state monies used to offer these courses.

Comment: Is offering online remedial work a viable option?
**Response:** SDSU has offered online math remedial courses, however the success rate was extremely low.

**Comment:** What are some of the reasons behind the number of students that need remedial help?

**Response:** There are several factors involved. South Dakota has one of the highest percentages of students who enroll in a 4-year institution. SDSU accepts about 95% of applicants. In other states, students at greater risk would have the option to enroll in a community college to help ease the transition from high school; South Dakota has no community college system. High school students are not required to take a math course during their senior year, in some cases they then enter college not fully prepared for college level work.

**Comment:** What can be done to address this problem?

**Response:** The best approach would be to have the students better prepared in high school. The high schools and SDSU know which high schools have a higher percentage of their graduates that require remedial classes. Some states (CA, TX among others) conduct early assessment tests early in the junior year to identify students that may need additional assistance to improve their college readiness and probabilities of success. The SD Board of Regents is pursuing this option with the SD Department of Education.

**Comment:** In some cases we have forgotten to teach kids math, reading, and writing skills. Grade inflation and the need for a greater focus from guidance counselors were discussed. The requirements for graduation may need to be increased, or students may need to be challenged to take more rigorous coursework.

**Comment:** There has been concern from some community members regarding new dormitories allowing alcohol.

**Response:** Residential life facilities that SDSU owns will not allow alcohol. However, SDSU does not control facilities that are privately owned that may be constructed on university land leased to a private entity. One reason for wanting more housing near campus that would be available for upperclassmen is that graduation rates for students who live on or near campus is higher than for students who live farther away.