Deans Focus Group

June 14, 2022

* **What would be your vision for UND’s future, and do you have any big dreams for the institution?**
  + I would like to see the university have a true visible leadership position across the state. I think that we are committed to serving the state, but we have work to do for the state to see us as true leaders in helping set some of the tone of optimism, culture, and future direction of the state. This would require a lot more outreach and changing the way we communicate with some of our constituencies across the state.
  + We need to be an institution that the state rallies around and be seen as more of a ‘beacon’ that people feel enthusiastic and optimistic about when they think of the state. It feels like this would be a way to move ND into the future, which is a challenge for the state (we tend to cling to ‘what was’ instead of ‘what could be’). If we could work to shift this mindset and be more forward/future looking that would be a big dream.
  + We need to connect to the whole state. In the legislature we still see this East/West divide. We have made inroads on this in some respects, but we need to do so much more work. Need to convey that we are an institution that serves the whole state and its people, communities, and interests.
  + Two problems with this: 1. the university has not always done a good job communicating to the state and its constituencies about what we do and how it matters (both in terms of education and also how our research connects to the state). We need to get our internal people better connected as well. We have a real internal communication problem- we need to connect our legislature and key decision makers to our students. Our students are out best advertisers – we need to do better with this
  + We need to have our faculty be the expert voice that is quoted in articles. We are making steps in that direction. I fully support getting our voice out in the state, and also at the national level with large initiatives such as what we are doing with Space. We must tell our story better and engage with those people in a more meaningful way. We need to get faulty and grad students out and telling that story more.
  + I took a group to the legislative session and that went well. We need to do more of these outreach opportunities.
  + Easier to get students than faculty/staff to do these things. I don’t think that we have enough faculty and staff to do some of these things. Getting more faculty and staff would be great- we are stretched very thin and have a hard time keeping up with our current plate of responsibilities.
  + But we need to keep the cost as low as we can for students. We need to remain affordable to our students, so don’t want to forget that.

**As we think about the vision and big dreams- what are the aspirational items or concreate directions to you want to see UND take in future? What do you think we need to do to move UND forward?**

* + One that I am concerned about is chasing labels and categories. The R1 story does not tell everything when we look at the quality of programs. In many cases we have better programs but chasing R1 status can be in conflict with this. I would rather have a quality program that is doing good things. If we get to that R1 status because of our good work that is fine, but do not chase that title just for the designation.
  + I agree with this, but at times certain faculty feel like if we are R2 it is inferior, but we do not have the infrastructure in place to be an R1. There is a disconnect between what we can do and what we say we aspire to. We can work to be the best R2 in the country or reconcile this conversation.
  + We saw there was push back on this from the Task Force for Higher Education last year-there was a big focus on teaching and better instruction.
  + I would hire a director of Workforce Development. Somebody to oversee A2i and to help expand opportunities to undergraduate students. The graduate school can’t do that now, but workforce development is a big way to communicate our value to the state of ND. Commerce just hired a talent recruitment firm. We have a lot of talent here at UND (with our students), and a lot of them move away when they graduate. If we have somebody that is focused on matching up our student talent with what the state needs are this would be a big win for the institution.
  + Grand Challenges- if it stays part of the strategic planning process- Workforce development would be a huge part of the Grand Challenge conversation
  + Some schools have local government, etc. that send in proposals for how they use students in workforce. Government, industry, propose how they can use students for their work, and they pay the salary to help support the work of those students. This is a great way to get our message out. This is not an internship; it is work that they get credit for but is not done in terms of interning. Different model.
  + If you can help students have opportunities to live in small towns prior to graduating this would be helpful to attracting them to these communities.
  + We have a workforce development center in the NCoBPA, and we can expand this to other parts of UND. The city’s goal with these funds is to expand this to all of campus
  + We have many underserved students that want to do more applied research and give back to their communities. At times in the academy applied research is not given the same value as ‘pure’ research. We need to look at this and how it is not given the same value/weight and how this impacts certain students.
  + My big thing is more about size- we can accommodate 40% more students within our existing schedule. I see a lot of this on our campus. We can increase in some of our class size for just a small amount of cost. We have lots of reserve and can support many more students without a lot of cost. I would like to see us grow.
  + Program quality and high-quality teaching-really want to keep this in mind.
  + I would love to see the institution develop a culture assessment, and a better understanding in terms of what our students are learning. A culture of assessment that allows us to truly understand if we are accomplishing what we say we are accomplishing and how we can better what we do. I don’t think that we necessarily have that culture right now on campus. What can we do to change the trajectory to allow us to truly understand this in ways that allow us to see what the next steps should (not just GPA, retention and graduation rates, which are all important- but more directly in terms of our learning outcomes). Think that we have an opportunity to do this much better if we focus and establish principals in how we make decisions, allocate resources, recruit, and retain students. Assessment, collection of data, and decision making that emerges on the data that we collect are all very important and we are not doing this as well as we could be right now.
  + Our peer review team, when they were here, told us the same thing. That we need to do a better job at telling our stories in terms of our data, outcomes, and what our students learn and tracking them down post-graduation to see their successes. We don’t have a good data collection system that works institution-wide. Staff and faculty need to make up their own systems that help with this.
  + One piece we must start collecting is employment outcomes. It is one thing to access learning outcomes but if we don’t know where our students end up we don’t really know if our curriculum and programs are functioning in the way intended. This would help with recruitment and to tell our stories better to the legislature in terms of our value to the state. How are our graduates contributing being retained in the state?
  + I agreed- knowing that we graduated ‘X’ number of students and this percentage stayed here in North Dakota would be so valuable.
  + We need to pull this information together about post-graduation employment.
  + Is this something that Salesforce can help with?
  + I would like UND to be a great place to work. I believe in work-life balance, quality of life issues. It is important to me that people enjoy working at UND. This applies to each position that you are working in at the institution.
    - SBHE- does not allow us to buy lunches for our faculty and staff. We cannot get together and celebrate, and we cannot spend appropriated funds on this.
  + Tracking our graduates. Major role for UNDAAF, they can help with this. They can help with the philanthropic part of this. They are willing to help with this and they have a software that can help with this. They don’t currently have somebody dedicated to this, but perhaps this can be looked into.
  + A big dream for me is UND to be more geared towards social justice and reaching out to the most underserved in the state. We can think differently about how we are a university for everyone and provide something for everyone. We need to think about a broader experience for everyone.
    - Can we provide something in the correction system? I would like to see us have a university in the corrections system and reach out to people that don’t much support.
  + We should be the place to get lifelong learning. UND should be that for education in North Dakota. We should never loose a customer by our own fault. We should never lose a customer because we take away their UND email address.