

Synopsis of: *Development of the Strategic Planning Process: Opportunities, Challenges, and Community Ownership*

9:15 – 10:45 a.m. on Thursday January 21, 2016

OVERVIEW

This section of the Retreat started with an overview of the Strategic Planning process and an emphasis on why the importance of the process cannot be understated. A set of conditions that are necessary for an effective Strategic Plan, as well as where UTRGV currently stands in terms of meeting these conditions, were also discussed. The panel further explored potential challenges and conditions that are sufficient to derail the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The session then moved to a “Pre-Mortem Analysis”, which was an interactive exercise involving all members of the Committee. The analysis considered issues under five main elements that might contribute to the failure of the implementation of the Strategic Plan within its first year: (1) Institutional Culture (including Politics); (2) Institutional Priorities; (3) Resources; (4) Stakeholders; and (5) Communication. Part of the discussion involved ways to address these issues throughout the process.

HIGHLIGHTS

Many of the issues identified illustrated the importance of having clear and consistent channels of *communication*, starting with actively seeking feedback from faculty and other stakeholders, and also providing regular updates on how the feedback was being used. Different forms of communication are important, as are outlining and defining the various roles of the stakeholders in the creation and implementation of the Strategic Plan. The “buy-in” and involvement of *stakeholders* is critical for the Strategic Plan to be successfully implemented. *Resources* represented another key topic of concern, particularly regarding how they fit into institutional priorities, such as in infrastructure, faculty, and staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All of the Strategic Planning Committee members will need to actively engage the stakeholders they represent throughout the entire process, and to understand that the process will not end when the Strategic Plan is written. An effective communication plan should be developed, to solicit feedback, provide updates, and report back on how the feedback is being used in the process. This plan should involve a variety of media, including in-person meetings, email correspondence, announcements, the website, etc. UTRGV should identify new sources of resources as well as more effectively use existing resources to appropriately link them to the goals in the Strategic Plan.