

Synopsis of: *Key Themes for the Strategic Plan*  
1:30 – 2:30 p.m. on Thursday January 21, 2016

## **OVERVIEW**

The focus of this session was to help participants begin to prioritize the many initiatives that could be included in the strategic plan, recognizing that not every item can be included in a final focused plan. Prior to the retreat, participants were asked via email to identify the top priorities that they believed should be included in the plan. This generated a list of approximately 45 partially overlapping priorities. In this session, participants were asked to work in groups to sort those priorities by how important they would be to include in the plan and then to develop them into themes that the plan might focus on. Participants then reviewed the ideas from each group.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

The priorities most consistently sorted as critical to include in the strategic plan included student success initiatives, community engagement, a “culture of excellence”, educational access, expanding the research enterprise, medical school excellence, organizational values and vision, teaching and learning innovation, academic excellence, B3 initiatives, IT Infrastructure, and student retention and graduation. From these priorities, groups generated many inspirational and overlapping themes. Themes that received the most support included:

- We will empower our students with the tools, resources, and support to graduate and become successful contributors to our community.
- We will build a culture of excellence around B3 initiatives and the entrepreneurial mindset to create a unique world-renowned UTRGV brand.
- We will develop targeted student success initiatives that can be measured in the short, medium, and long term.
- We believe the success of our students is central to our mission.
- We will develop a culture of excellence across all those who interact with UTRGV.
- We will create a culture of excellence that embraces diversity through a process of shared governance.
- Our research initiatives will positively impact the Valley, the U.S., and the World.
- We will increase access to higher education, excellent healthcare, and economic opportunities.

Group discussions reflected how participants see the work at UTRGV as having many many priorities, but that those priorities can knit together into a single vision of the institution.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The themes that will be included in the final strategic plan are closely held and valued by members of the UTRGV community. Selecting those themes among the many possibilities for the new institution involved some difficult discussions about priorities even among small groups in this session. Developing and selecting the final themes and goals will require a repeated, iterative process so that our communities know that their priorities have been heard and are reflected in the plan.

Synopsis of: *Discussion of Foundational Work and Promising Recommendations*  
2:45 – 4:00 p.m. on Thursday January 21, 2016

## **OVERVIEW**

The focus of this session was to review important foundational work that has preceded the formal beginning of the strategic planning process and to develop some specific recommendations that could be included in the strategic plan, either from those reports or from participants' personal knowledge. Prior to the retreat, participants were assigned three UTRGV Working Group reports to read (12 reports total were selected for review). Participants involved in the medical school launch were asked to review the principles that went into the design of the medical school. At this session, participants worked in small groups to share what they saw as the key recommendations from this foundational work and discuss what recommendations they thought should be reflected in the strategic plan.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

Groups consistently noted that 1) the working group reports contained some great ideas that we should continue to pursue, and 2) many of the recommendations in the reports have already been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. A long list of specific recommendations that could be included in the strategic plan was generated, many of them from the working group reports or adapted from those reports. Major recommendations that emerged again grouped into some of the significant themes of the previous discussion including student success (new student transition to UTRGV, analytics, experiential learning...), connection to our community (infrastructure to facilitate connection, early engagement of families...), research opportunities (supporting faculty in research, developing infrastructure, aligning to Valley needs...), and other infrastructure needs (IT, transportation, business processes...). One topic that came out more in this discussion than in the previous sessions was the importance, but also the complexity, of the bicultural, biliterate, and bilingual initiative.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations of this session will be categorized and distributed to groups who will work to develop the most related sections of the final strategic plan where they may be considered and included. We need to continue to emphasize the strong foundational work that staff, faculty, and students have contributed to shape UTRGV thus far. That work certainly should be explicitly acknowledged and used as the strategic plan is developed.