

Hey, Jordan,

Thank you for inviting the department heads to offer suggestions for your meeting with Dr. Danahar on **Monday**. I think this is an excellent strategic plan, and I am thrilled that our new interim provost is interested in implementing it quickly and in gathering concrete suggestions for how to do so. I don't think I am alone in expressing my feeling that student life, athletics, and administrative staff support have been the spending priority over the last 7 years, and I truly believe it is time to focus on enhancing our academic resources not least because we have so much potential in an energetic faculty with bright ideas. I feel that the strategic plan does a great job of prioritizing academic resources, and I am committed to doing anything you might need, as a Dean, to help with its implementation. Given my concern, you'll see that most of my ideas relate to the Strategic Plan's subheading on Faculty.

Here are just a few ideas to share, if you feel so inclined, with Dr. Danahar:

- Because he is new, I would recommend a faculty-constituted task force to assist the Provost in his first year with implementing the Strategic Plan, identifying the most pressing academic needs and communicating to him from the perspective of professors who are actively engaged in scholarship and committed to excellence in pedagogy.
- I'm sure he's already noted this, but the SP also includes benchmarks for each of the four categories, each broken down by the fiscal years it covers, so this might provide guidance and a roadmap for determining how to allocate funds over the next year.
- What I list below are all items that I think could be initiated immediately.

FACULTY:

- **SI 1, KP2:** *Increase spending for instruction and academic support to correct significant deficits in these areas and strive to reach our comparison peer averages for instructional and academic support.*

This initiative could be accomplished by prioritizing faculty raises, hiring faculty, and increasing funding for research-oriented travel and for pedagogical enhancement opportunities

- **SI 1, KPI 4:** *Allocate sufficient funds to increase library expenditures for provision of research and information resources to meet or exceed the average of our comparative peer institutions.*

This initiative could be accomplished by speaking with librarians (I would very strongly suggest those who work in direct services and who liaise with academic departments, rather than meeting solely with the Dean or Asst. Dean) about the requests they receive. The librarians who served on the strategic plan task force generated a great deal of research on the resource allocations of our peer institutions. I am certain that they would be very eager to share this information with Dr. Danahar and to develop a plan for meeting this initiative. The librarians have had an overwhelming amount of turnover in the last 2 years, which I think is indicative of a real need for intervention, in addition to a real need for resource allocation and replacement of key staff/faculty.

- **SI 3, KPI 10:** *Offer salaries competitive with those offered by our comparative peer institutions.*

This is just a matter of prioritization.

- **SI 2, KP 7:** *Reduce the full-time undergraduate student to faculty ratio for students taking traditional curricula to the current comparison peer average of 15:1 and ensure that the staffing for distance learning meets or exceeds the peer average for instruction.*

Prioritize hiring tenure-track faculty over adjuncts. We've been very good at holding out against the adjunctification of college education, but most of our departments are still down several T-T lines and so many faculty are teaching overloads (not least because they desperately need the money)

- **SI 4, K11:** *Establish a campus center to train faculty in new pedagogical and instructional techniques and technologies that support both traditional and distance delivery of curricula.*

This seems like something that could be accomplished without a tremendous amount of resources. There are excellent models out there, some of them way out of reach, but so beautiful (like Berkeley: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu>) and others perhaps more slightly more within reach (like Queens College: <http://ctl.qc.cuny.edu>).

We could partner with Elise Hagan and undertake assessments of our learning goals and outcomes as well as design plans on the level of the department and the individual professor to restructure curriculum and course work to better achieve our learning goals. I think this would be tremendously helpful for Liberal Arts as we seek to "sell" our mission to the folks who think that STEM is the only marketable option for majors. (In fact, maybe the Center could start small, just as a Liberal Arts initiative)

RESEARCH:

- **SI 1, KPI 2:** *Provide incentives and training to increase faculty and staff engagement in research and innovation.*

I've had some thoughts about this as I read the NEH applications from COLA. With a few conversations with our Research Office we can do more to help our faculty identify grants and craft proposals. Incentives, of course, could come from merit raises but I find that most faculty don't need incentives so much as coaching/mentoring. (This also falls under **KPI 5:** *Invest in research mentoring, and professional development efforts aimed at increasing research productivity.*)

GOVERNANCE:

- **SI 1:** I think Lucian Dinu had some great energy in this direction yesterday. I can't imagine who has the time to do regular lunches, but the Faculty Senate was designed to meet this important need and it can be re-structured or given a revised mission to fall inline with shared governance. I would suggest that the Provost attend meetings of the Faculty Senate, or regularly sit with the Senate President or a designated senator to discuss faculty issues. The University could create mechanisms for listening to by developing a message board that the Deans, Provost, and President regularly checked into.

Let us know how it goes!

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