Summary of Data

Key Stakeholder Groups

Created for
Flagship 2020 Strategic Plan Update Group
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Center for Leadership & Organizational Change
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Background and Process

The strategic plan update working group requested that information be gathered from a number of key stakeholder groups in order to inform their revision of the UMD strategic plan. Sessions with these groups were held in March and April of 2015. The number of participants in each session ranged from 8 to 34, as shown in the table below.

Unless otherwise noted, these were meetings open only to members of the stakeholder group. Most sessions addressed a limited number of the four discussion topics:

*The university as:*
1) a magnet for educating the most promising next generation;
2) a leader in research, innovation, and creative endeavors;
3) an economic driver for the state of Maryland; and
4) a critically engaged community partner.

Each group chose which of the four topics it wanted to address.

The data were analyzed within each group and across groups. They were then compared with the seven data themes that emerged from the four Community Vision sessions:

**Data themes from Community Vision sessions:**
- Collaborations, partnerships, and relationships
- Vibrant College Park
- Transformed student learning experience
- Exceptional infrastructure, innovatively used
- Funding, finances and money
- The people and the culture
- Rankings, ratings, reputation, and perceptions

See the report, “Summary of Data: Facilitated Discussions at Community Vision Sessions” for an explication of these themes.

Many of the data points from the key stakeholder group discussions tracked to the themes from the Community Vision sessions. *This document provides a summary of the areas where the group discussions veered in new directions.* Unlike the Community Vision data analysis, which was limited to comments from the facilitated discussions, participants’ written responses are included in this analysis.
Summary of Key Stakeholder Group Data Collection

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<th>Key Stakeholder Group</th>
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<td>3, 4</td>
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Student Government Association

Attended by 34 participants. There were enough participants and a sufficient number of facilitators to allow all four topics to be addressed. SGA members chose which one of the four topic discussions in which to participate. Most comments in the facilitated discussion and written responses fit in the existing data structure, with these exceptions:

1. There was more explicit discussion of diversity in this group than in any other key stakeholder group. Participants believe that the university already makes an effort to attract a diverse population, but would like to see an even greater effort to reach out to diverse prospective student populations and to welcome them to a safe and inclusive campus environment. They would like to see a university that not only appears diverse, but that genuinely accepts and celebrates diversity, and addresses the needs of a diverse population.

2. “Green” issues also generated more discussion in this group than in any other. Participants expressed the desire for the university to be carbon neutral and have state-of-the-art green buildings, and commented that this can enhance a school’s prestige. They want the university to be an environmental steward and leader, and seeing UMD as the most sustainable university in the nation was stated as a goal.

Specific suggestions:
1. Stop using pesticides on the grass; we like to lie on it.
2. Switch campus power plant to biofuel.
3. Be more responsible for storm water management.
4. Build a diversity center for all groups.
5. Build a diversity center that is a state-of-the-art green building.

One participant’s comprehensive comment:

“The university can capitalize on the need for socially responsible and valued citizens of this world and commit to educating students on issues such as...
Graduate Student Government Executive Committee

Attended by 8 participants. Participants chose to address topics 2 and 4. Most comments in the facilitated discussion and written responses fit in the existing data structure, with these exceptions:

1. There was discussion of the need to increase staffing levels because many GAs are relegated to doing work more appropriate for staff, particularly administrative work, rather than research or teaching activities directly related to their field.

2. There were comments on the general treatment of graduate students, both in their education and employment contexts; students spoke of “a culture of disrespect” and being treated as “less-than-human.”

3. Increased access to innovation and entrepreneurship resources, currently available primarily if not solely to undergraduates, is desired. There was significant discussion of the desirability of increased entrepreneurial focus such as offering incentives for faculty to start their own businesses (which these graduate students believe is discouraged), and generating research funding from successful start-up/incubator businesses.

Specific suggestions:
1. Large fundraising activities (e.g., new Cole project, Clark Engineering building) should require that some portion of funds generated be dedicated to fellowships and/or financial aid.

2. Increase opportunities for graduate student employment by better leveraging our location near federal labs; labs benefit because graduate student pay is likely to be lower than employee pay, and graduate students benefit from the resulting expanded research opportunities.

Provost Student Advisory Council (ProvSAC)

Attended by 12 participants; four ProvSAC members had participated in other prior key stakeholder group or community vision sessions. Participants chose to address topics 1 and 2. Most comments in facilitated discussion and written responses fit in the existing data structure, with these exceptions:

1. The need for more strategies for creating graduates who are “marketable” was discussed. Suggestions include insuring that students are connected to the “real world” and haven’t been sheltered, and that there be concrete ways of demonstrating the “value added” of the education or degree (i.e., ways to measure pre- and post-college writing and critical thinking skills).
2. There was extensive discussion of the high school recruiting experience, including ensuring that the “best and brightest” are literally being wooed by the university, that their campus visits are centered around truly exciting venues (labs, advanced technology), and that high school students are able to spend quality time on campus participating in substantive activities, not just a campus tour/visit. Some participants wished for more of an experience of “feeling the love” in campus recruitment efforts—both that the university really wanted them and that current students loved the choice they had made.

3. There was pointed discussion about the need to not only recruit students from underrepresented groups, but also to ensure that they “not only come here, but that they have a flawless experience once here.” One student characterized the current climate as having the presence of not only “...‘microaggressions,’ but actual mega-aggressions as well.” Having campus tours visit future students’ “cultural homes” (i.e. Nyumburu) was also suggested.

Specific suggestions:

1. Create some type of “portfolio program” so students can highlight strengths that go beyond good grades when they go on the job market.
2. With our location, the lack of an international relations program was noted as a glaring omission from our curriculum.
3. “Put our money where our mouth is” by investing in a fund to support student entrepreneurial efforts, perhaps having successful ventures pay back into it.

Leadership Forum: Department Chairs

Attended by 25 participants. Due to the length of time the group had committed for this purpose, there was sufficient time to allow all who attended to participate in discussions of all four topics. Most comments in facilitated discussions and written responses fit in the existing data structure, with these exceptions:

1. Decrease our reputation as a sports school and increase our reputation as an academic institution.

2. Increase number of tenure and tenure-track faculty. Departments are contracting due to the lack of funds and tenure-track faculty is declining in the aggregate, and there is concern that these are issues must be addressed if the university is to remain excellent.

3. Some participants suggest a reassertion of the traditional land grant identity and/or an embrace of a 21st century land grant identity. Suggestions for increasing involvement include engaging more with state government and addressing need across all 23 counties in the state.
4. Increase shared governance and have a transparent budget, including a mechanism for choosing targeted investment on priorities. Be willing to look at “sacred cows,” e.g., Golf Course.

5. There was some discussion of becoming a national or international leader in the interdisciplinary connection between STEM fields and arts disciplines, with some implication that this would improve the standing of arts and humanities disciplines. There was a specific suggestion that the university create a facility that housed an art museum and research labs/studios for digital fabrication, robotics, projection, and time-based media.

One participant’s comment: “[A strength is our] excellent, accomplished, committed human resources – faculty, staff and students – whose quality (in scholarship and teaching) exceeds the reputation of the University as a whole.”

**Senate Executive Committee**

Attended by 13 participants. Participants chose to address topics 1 and 2. Most comments in facilitated discussion and written responses fit in the existing data structure, with these exceptions:

1. There were more comments made in this session about internal university processes and resources than in all other key stakeholder and community vision sessions combined. Participants noted the “excessive redundancies” in internal processes and commented on the need to streamline and make them less bureaucratic.

2. There were comments about the current shortage of highly qualified staff on campus, as well as the lack of appropriate incentive or award systems for faculty and staff.

3. It was also noted that increased communication and more transparency between leadership and the rest of campus would decrease staff discontent or consternation. Communication about the current budget situation was cited as an example of non-transparent communication that was unnecessarily raising staff anxiety.

**Specific suggestions:**

1. Conduct an investigation of the overall ratio of administrators to faculty to staff to students and improve it (the direction that would constitute “improvement” was not indicated).
2. Create a recognition/reward program for faculty and staff that operates independent of state allocation (e.g., merit or COLA funding).
Flagship 2020 Council

Attended by 12 participants; three attending council members had participated in other key stakeholder group or community vision sessions. Most comments in facilitated discussions and written responses fit the existing data structure, with the exception of:

1. There was a discussion of faculty self-image/self-esteem, and of the importance of faculty improving their current view and future views of self. This was linked to an expressed need to continue to invest in recognizing our accomplishments (light pole banners specifically mentioned).
2. A desire to make more strategic investments, rather than spread resources around, was expressed. There was a specific suggestion that units be consolidated to reduce administrative costs.
3. Several comments on the ability to bring together outstanding individuals to organize research initiatives on campus on “big questions.”

Specific suggestions:
1. Appoint a commission to examine “selective excellence” and/or “selective investment” strategies.
2. More attention to blended/online learning (with statement that we are already behind the curve on this).
3. Expand “big data analytics” and research in the area of data analysis for meaningful strategy.
4. Transform College Park into a tech powerhouse, taking advantage of government presence.
5. Focus the university on the academic mission, outsourcing non-academic enterprises.

University of Maryland Extension Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Attended by 8 participants. Participants chose to address topics 2 and 4. This committee differs from other key stakeholder groups in that it is neither a formal, elected body (e.g., student government or faculty senate groups) nor is it a position-specific group (e.g., department chairs). It was included in the key stakeholder data gathering because there was concern that the Community Vision sessions were less accessible to Extension faculty and staff located across the state, and thus their unique perspectives may have been under-represented. The UME Strategic Plan Steering Committee had originally been selected to be reflective and inclusive of the breadth and diversity within Extension, and was thus viewed as a providing a balanced perspective. Most comments from the facilitated discussion and in the written responses fit in the existing data structure, with these exceptions:

1. The focus on collaborations, partnerships and relationships was not limited to the surrounding area, but instead emphasized the state-wide connections that Extension creates and strengthens.
2. Additionally, forming relationships and connections was not viewed as “aspirational,” but rather as an existing strength of Extension upon which the University could build further.
3. There was some discussion of providing support for and rewarding bigger risk-taking.

Specific Suggestions
1. Develop a culture and mechanisms for risk-taking and learning from “failures.”
2. Use UME as the facilitator/convener for new interdisciplinary groups, programs, or processes involving the greater UMD community and the local community.

College Park City Council

Attended by 7 participants. Participants chose to address topics 3 and 4. All comments in facilitated discussions and written responses fit the existing data structure. Participants reinforced sentiments that attention to development of the city of College Park has far-reaching benefits for the city, the campus, the county, and the state.

Summary

This report and its companion piece, “Summary of Data: Facilitated Discussions at Community Vision Sessions,” provide valuable qualitative data about the dreams and desires of various campus stakeholders as they relate to the update of the university’s current strategic plan.