

Strategic Directions 2020

Campus Conversations – SJU Board of Trustees

September 26, 2014

Michael Hemesath and Jon McGee described the Strategic Planning process thus far, which began on campus with the Community Forum discussion to “imagine the best CSB and SJU experience” and articulate what can be done better. There have been campus conversations about enrollment, finance, and the CSB/SJU experience. There were opportunities to surface questions and consider how CSB and SJU might address challenges. In addition, the faculty had a lengthy conversation about the common curriculum, what students need to know and learn, some of which are very difficult to measure (e.g., a sense of inquiry, engagement in the community, openness to diverse viewpoints).

President Hemesath asked Trustees to consider the following questions:

It is 2020. What distinguishes CSB from our competitors?

Summary:

- The process has been weighted towards campus conversations; Trustees would like to see more external weigh-in.
- The process should articulate what distinguishes SJU from its competitors and document outcomes such as careers, average salaries, jobs, and graduate schools.
- Customers who use the product (alums) talk about what SJU is and love it – community, residential, Benedictine – the difficulty is explaining and marketing the concepts. Benedictine values are a pathway to community
- A Trustee who attended a recent conference urged that faculty seek out technology that enriches learning. Hemesath noted that CSB/SJU faculty have already begun this, however further strengthening the holistic process will continue to be explored.
- A Trustee asked if there is a baseline measurement of writing, speaking, thinking, and problem solving, so there can be an end measurement showing the change.
- Creating the shortest pathway for students to get to know a faculty member, an advisor, and staff connections, people to whom they can go will help students the most, and help them as graduates to get better at making connections.
- In a society where people are looking for meaning, capturing and describing how SJU handles questions of spirituality, religion and doctrine could be helpful.
- It is difficult to articulate what SJU and CSB is – so consider how to define the product instead (e.g., “CSB/SJU “develops new world leaders”).
- Corporations don’t often fire people for low IQ, but do fire people for low EQ (emotional quotient); SJU students/alums are often good solid individuals who will work hard and emphasize values and community.
- The SJU and CSB community – professors, mentors, opportunities, study abroad, alternative break – teaches students to be well rounded; the network of alumni supporters extends the circle beyond Collegeville.

- Would like to see enrollment at 1,875 with the same or better standards, and lower discount rates.
- Suggestion: “Preparing students to make a difference in the world “based on Benedictine heritage and values, and an education with all of the basics.”
- SJU should be known for creating leaders who make a difference in the world, nurturing skills and values that corporations are looking for (critical thinking, collaboration). This can be a point of distinction.
- The experience of students is also a point of distinction – the place, values, courses, relationships with faculty, staff, faculty residents.
- Geography in conjunction with spiritual environment will attract some students.
- The SJU program is male centric; SJU students can mature with other young men.
- Would like to see financial strength, administrative excellence and market growth in the strategic plan, articulating how the organization functions to create a healthy structure.
- Would like to see one to three thematic goals that fit into the plan structure.
- The context of community and the in-depth focus on student development serves as an invisible structure that sustains what happens to the student.
- On top of the community and the culture, we layer on a culturally diverse experience.
- Families feel we “take care of their kids like they are family”; SJU provides a safe, secure, warm feeling on campus.
- Keep discounting and ensure SJU is price competitive.
- Need to articulate SJU’s value proposition.