

## **Constituent Review of WSU Strategic Plan**

*November 14, 2007*

### **Executive Summary**

182 WSU faculty, staff and students responded to five open-ended questions in an online survey. The survey was a complement to a series of town hall meetings also presented as an invitation to the WSU community to consider the existing strategic plan and to engage in plans to refresh it.

- Staff were more likely to respond to the survey (65%) compared with faculty (27%) and students (7%).
- 71% of respondents were from Pullman.
- 75% of respondents report that the WSU strategic plan has been valuable for promoting institutional direction, purpose and focus.
- 86% favored updating the plan.
- 88% favored a single strategic plan for all campus locations.
- Many noted the need to implement and measure aspects of the plan more effectively in the future, and several noted that the current plan represented a WSU “values” document or “goals” statement rather than a formal strategic plan.
- Many commented extensively on the importance of engaging the entire WSU community, referencing regents, statewide stakeholders, graduate and undergraduate students.
- Issues of Trust and Respect were noted directly in a few instances, but it might be inferred that the issues is present in the many comments that voiced concern that their unit was under appreciated.

## Introduction

### Methods

In fall 2007, WSU faculty, staff, and students were invited to take a survey to respond to plans to refresh the WSU Strategic Plan. The survey had five open-ended questions. The Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) analyzed the results. CTLT coded the qualitative data. Coders did not see respondent names, roles or campuses. This report summarizes results and implications.

### Respondents

A total of 182 respondents included 109 self-identified staff, 50 faculty, and 13 students. Ten respondents placed themselves in the “Other” category, but 8 of these were actually staff.

#### *Role*

Staff:	118 (65%)
Faculty:	50 (27%)
Students:	13 (7%)
Other:	2 (1%)

#### *Campus Affiliation or Location*

Pullman:	130	(71%)
Spokane:	25	(13.7%)
Vancouver:	10	(5.5%)
Tri-Cities:	7	(3.8%)
WSU West:	0	(0%)
County Extension:	5	(2.7%)
Research office, learning ctr:	3	(1.6%)
Other:	2	(1.0%)

#### *Academic and Administrative Units*

Other Administrative Unit	21	11.5%
College of Liberal Arts	21	11.5%
Business Affairs	19	10.4%
CAHNRS	16	8.8%
Libraries	12	6.6%
Student Affairs	11	6.0%
University Relations	11	6.0%
College of Sciences	9	4.9%
Extension	9	4.9%
College of Pharmacy	7	3.8%
Other Academic Unit	7	3.8%
College of Education	5	2.7%
CEA	5	2.7%
College of Vet Med	5	2.7%
Information Technology	3	1.6%
Equity & Diversity	3	1.6%
WSU Foundation	3	1.6%
International Programs	3	1.6%
Office of Research	3	1.6%

College of Business	2	1.1%
Enrollment Services	1	0.5%
College of Nursing	0	0%
Athletics	0	0%

## Limitations

- There is a sample bias.
  - 65% of respondents were staff, including administrators, though the entire university community was invited to respond.
  - Half (91) of the respondents chose to include their name before seeing the questions, so responses may be associated with implications of intentional visibility.
  - Although 72% of respondents (132) reported that the Strategic Plan has been of value to WSU and their units, several noted that a “somewhat” choice should be offered, and included in their responses both positive and negative points.

## Results

***Q# 1: In your opinion, has the Strategic Plan been valuable to WSU and your unit? Please explain.***

- Yes 75.4%
  - No 24.6%
    - (However, some asked for a “Somewhat” choice, so many may have mixed feelings).
1. The vast majority of respondents (41.1%) felt that the plan gives the institution a sense of direction, purpose and focus. 35.1% felt that this direction has been positive, 4.9% felt that it has been negative, and 1.1% were neutral. (43 staff, 22 faculty, 4 undergraduates, and 6 “other”).
  2. The next most common response (16.8%) was that the plan has affected the university at the unit level, with 13.0% feeling that this has been positive, and 3.8% feeling that this has been negative. (18 staff, 10 faculty, and 2 others).
  3. The next most common response (15.1%) was that the plan works well when evaluated for effectiveness in a periodic review. 11.3% felt that the current evaluation process is effective, and 3.8% felt that this process needs work. (15 staff, 9 faculty, 2 students and 2 “other”).
  4. 13.5% of respondents have seen changes from the plan at the institutional level, with 10.8% seeing the changes as positive, and 2.7% seeing them as negative. (16 staff, 6 faculty, and 1 undergraduate).
  5. 10.8% of respondents felt that although the plan itself is valuable, implementation is just as important. Respondents felt that a plan is only useful when it has measurable goals that can be assessed within units and in the institution. 8.1% felt that this implementation needs work. (10 staff, 5 faculty, 2 students, and 2 “other”).
  6. 8.1% felt that awareness of the plan was important, with 7.0% noting that they either had not know about the plan or that others did not know about the plan. (8 staff, 4 faculty, and 2 undergraduates).

7. Trust and respect was brought up by 4.3% of respondents. 2.7% felt that it needed more detail in the plan or more application in units and in the institution. 1.6% felt that it was being practiced. (5 staff, 2 faculty, 1 undergraduate).
8. 1.6% of respondents commented on clarity of the plan, with 0.5% feeling that it was clear, and 1.1% feeling that it needed more clarity. (All 3 were staff)
9. Additional comments were general nods to the plan or off-topic comments.

***Q# 2: In your opinion, should the plan be updated? Why or why not?***

- Yes 85.6%
- No 14.4%

1. The majority of those who answered yes (24%) felt that the plan should be updated because periodic review and evaluation ensure quality. They also felt that this review helps WSU keep up with change, whether in the institution, the students, our region, or the world at large. (31 staff, 10 faculty, 3 “other”).
2. The next most common response (14.2%) was that a new administration and changing times require an updated plan. Their general sentiment seemed to be “new president, new plan.” (15 staff, 7 faculty, 4 other).
3. 8.2% felt that the plan should include measurable goals. They felt that the current plan includes vague goals, some of which are actually values that cannot be assessed. Focusing on creating measurable goals, assessment plans, and accountability will improve the plan. (10 staff, 5 faculty).
4. 4.9% felt that the plan should be updated to include more focus on diversity and globalization in the educational and institutional environment. (5 staff, 2 faculty and 2 students).
5. Nearly the same amount (4.4%) felt that the plan needs implementation and accountability, so that it is not just lip service. (These responses were split between faculty and staff).
6. 4.4% felt that the plan is vague and needs more detail (4 staff, 3 faculty, and 1 other).
7. 1.6% felt that the plan needs to focus or expand on Trust and Respect. (2 staff and 1 faculty member).
8. 1 faculty member supported more focus on graduate education, and 1 staff member supported more focus on technology.

***Q# 3: Should the university have a single strategic plan for all campuses and locations? Why or why not?***

- Yes 88%
- No 12%

1. The majority of respondents (45.4%) felt that the university should have one plan, with shared goals or mission, but different implementation and strategies. (48 staff, 26 faculty, 6 “other,” and 3 students).
2. Many respondents (30.6%) felt that the university should have one plan for all campuses, with the same goals, implementation, and strategies (34 staff, 18 faculty, and 4 others). 1 staff member and 2 students (1.6%) also noted this issue, but in the negative.
3. The rest of the respondents (20.2%) felt that the university should have different plans, goals and strategies in different locations, in order to respond to unique potentials and be responsive to regional needs and markets (21 staff, 8 faculty, 5 students, 1 professional, and 2 “other”). 4 staff and 2 faculty (3.3%) also noted this issue, but in the negative.

***Q# 4: If the plan is to be updated, what key changes would you suggest?***

1. The most common suggestion (11.5%) was to include measurable goals, so that progress can be assessed and so that units and the institution can be held accountable. (10 staff, 8 faculty, 1 graduate student, and 2 “other”).
2. The next most common suggestion (6.6%) was to increase the focus on diversity. (8 staff, 3 faculty, and 1 undergraduate).
3. 6.0% felt that focusing on economic development would be beneficial (7 staff, and 3 faculty).
4. 5.5% felt that focusing on trust and respect, or including more detail on the issue, would improve the plan. (5 staff).
5. The same amount felt that a globalization focus was necessary. (7 staff, 2 faculty and 1 “other”).
6. 4.9% felt that the plan should focus on graduate education. The same amount felt that periodic review of the plan is important for quality assurance. (5 faculty, and 3 staff).
7. 4.4% felt that the plan should focus more on research, with the same amount suggesting a focus on extension and outreach. (5 faculty, and 2 staff).
8. Other reasons for updating the plan, all at below 4% of respondents, included being responsive to student needs, attention to graduate education, technology, implementation and accountability for the plan, staff needs, the arts, partnerships, distance education, and innovation.

***Q# 5: Do you have any other comments?***

1. The most frequent comment (13.1%) related to implementation. Many felt that we need “less talk, more action” with the plan. (12 staff, 10 faculty, and 2 “other”).
2. The next most common issue was community engagement (9.8%). Eighteen respondents felt that it was important often noting the importance of “bottom up” or the dangers of “top down,” with 3 feeling that it is not currently addressed well by the plan and 3 feeling that it is. (9 staff, 7 faculty, and 2 “other”).
3. Trust and respect was also important to respondents: 9.3% felt that it should be practiced more at WSU and detailed more in the plan. (11 staff and 6 faculty).

4. 7.1% were thankful for the opportunity to comment on the plan. (11 staff and 1 faculty member).
5. Other less common comments related to engaging students, the generality of the “we’re the best” goal, funding, public outreach, the WSU website, regents, graduate education, and other issues.