

Cascades Campus World Café INPUT – Feb 23, 2018

Session Summary

The session was attended by approximately 18 participants. Susan Capalbo provided the session kickoff. No committee members were present other than Susan, Gigi and Steve. Participants were a mix of senior administrators, professional staff and faculty – with tenure at the campus ranging from a few months to many years. People were engaged and very pleased that we traveled to hold the session in Bend. We had five questions that were specific to Cascades. Regardless of the question being asked, an overarching theme that came up was Cascades' identity and the relationship between Cascades and the greater OSU variously referred to as Main Campus, Corvallis, OSU. It was far and away the main issue on people's mind both strategically and operationally. It was also notable that the Cascades' team participants at this forum were not of like-mind in regards to what that identity/relationship should be. Read more below.

The session was rated high (4.35 out of 5.0 by ten people) as a mechanism for gathering input, but some rated it provisionally high pending how well the input was responded to – there may be a little skepticism that it would change anything. Even so, the input session was positive in spite of obvious tensions being driven by the identity question. Interestingly, one participant left after realizing it was interactive.

Another observation – when the Cascades Strategic Plan came up, the input reflected a general lack of insight into that plan by the majority of participants in the room; i.e. less was known about the content, status, or process being used than you might expect given that plan is near completion. The implication being that what we heard may or may not be similar to what is in the formal plan coming from Cascades.

Themes and supporting ideas

These points came from the monitor summaries, the group debrief and the key themes were cross checked quickly with items in the suggestion box and other session notes.

Cascade Campus Identity – lots of questions, conflicted or missing answers

- Who are we? What do we stand for?
- It is inescapable that Corvallis (Main) Campus thinks of us as something less (less capable, less important etc. – it is demoralizing).
- What is our relationship to main campus? What does it need to be?
- Why does OSU have an initiative in Newport, a presence in Portland and a campus in Bend? Is this a strategic choice? What does it mean? What are the important distinctions?
- Why is Cascades given less support than Newport/Portland? Does our Campus status/structure ostracize us somehow?
- Why does it seem that we have lots of responsibility to succeed but little decision making influence over our future?
- Are we separate or an extension of OSU? Are we OSU Bend, or OSU Cascades? (*this distinction seems to reflect the question of being an extension versus stand-alone affiliate of OSU*)

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We have unique offerings to leverage

- We are different, we are more innovative, we are embedded in our community and there is lots of opportunity here
- Natural lab setting in central Oregon for research
- Close proximity to local populations that might not otherwise go to college
- We are not all about outdoors – that is a west-side misperception
- We are an extended footprint for OSU, to carry on OSU excellence in a close knit style
- Smaller, more nimble, more responsive (the future is present and urgent for us)
- Thought leader for breaking down barriers for higher education
- Academy excellence + undergrad research + R1 capability with Lib. Arts feel + experiential learning + close relationships with faculty

We are nearing our limits

- We are spread an inch deep and a mile wide – this needs to be remedied somehow
- We need to leverage Main Campus capabilities better so we can use our scarce resources on what is unique and valuable
- We need assistance from legislature, OSU, enrollment strategies ... something
- Burnout is high – we are trying to act like a big university without having the structure
- Can the Foundation focus more on Cascades? What would it take?
- We give everything we have and the expectation remain higher
- We could benefit from higher enrollment, but that takes resources to achieve, resources to deliver on – looks like a viscous cycle we can't get ahead of
- No time to take a breath, to celebrate – we are continuing building the plane while flying
- How do we scale up?