

President's Task Force Meeting

October 20, 2005

ATTENDEES:

Tom Burman, Cindy Bernert-Coppola, Justin Bernstine, Jennifer Cardenas, Duncan Carter, Laura Jundt, Kathi Ketcheson, Cassie McVeety, Bill Prows, Ron Roley, Julie Smith, David Santen, Pat Squire, Jean Tuomi, Sandra Van De Bilt, Jennifer Williamson

Other attendees: Kelli Horst, Rowanna Carpenter, Juliette Stoering, Art Chenoweth (Vanguard writer)

Not in attendance:

Cynthia Lou Coleman, Michael Cummings, Mike Driscoll, Cathy Dyck, Walt Fosque, Scott Herrin, Agnes Hoffman, Fritz Mesnbrink, Maureen O'Conner, Robyn Pierce, Tony Rasmussen, Doug Swanson

- Cassie opened with history of task force and IM initiative timeline and summary of survey results.
 - Rowanna: Online survey open for 19 days and received 3538 hits, great job marketing office!
- Discussion of summary of survey results and purpose of survey.
 - Kelli: The purpose of the survey was to identify the heart of what PSU promises to students, staff, faculty, alumni and the community. What is the essence of its brand? Last spring we defined features and benefits, images associated with PSU, brags or facts to support images; then the goal is to put it all into one sentence, and see if a tag line or overall branding appears. On the online survey we tested the themes gathered from last spring's group of 80 people.
 - Rowanna: From the survey-words that describe PSU are urban, community-centered, diverse and engaged. Images that PSU evokes: south park blocks, Portland cityscape and sky-bridge. PSU is set apart by it's appreciation of diversity and central urban setting.
 - Julie: The results are interesting because in a 2002 survey the word "urban" was also used.
 - Cassie: How does the response rate compare to other online surveys?
 - Kathi: You should be happy to just have hits; we can't report comparisons.
 - Kelli: Undergrads are more common to vote and give opinion. I was astounded at the numbers. They give us high confidence that this is the real feeling of the campus.
- Drawing for 2 iPod nanos.
 - Rowanna: Faculty, Staff and Alumni winner is Vincent, extended studies programmer. Student winner is Ken Ray.
- Kelli talked about goals.
 - Kelli: We need to know this data is valid, that is why I am meeting with people today and tomorrow. I will revisit with staff and students to remind them of the initial findings and explain what a brand and message on a page are. I want questions from the Task Force to make sure we are clear and straightforward. We need to be confident moving forward. Findings are extremely consistent and the campus has good sense of self, but hasn't articulated it before. We won't have to do intensive research after this. The combination of location and community connection defines the experience here and it's ringing loud and clear from research. It's how we use and connect the words urban, community, and engaged that grabs

people. The word 'urban' started being used in the early 90's in higher education and it was used a lot, but does it have the same meaning today? We need to clarify the meaning of this strongly used word. The Portland State community feels urban, but what does that mean? I will ask the discussion groups to define it today and tomorrow. The word 'engaged' is a very academic word. It is not in students' vocabulary, but the faculty uses it.

- Duncan: Faculty members do use the word 'engaged.' I am interested in 'urban' and 'engaged.' We are in and connected to the city, which is what the faculty is proud of and the 400 partnerships with businesses prove that. It also relates to internationalization, "Serve the city," the outreach is worldwide. The words urban, engaged and international are synonymous.
- Cassie: It is important to look at the words students didn't pick; active, research, serious, good neighbor, rigorous academic and international.
- Kelli: Words people didn't use like academic and research were not even used with the faculty, which surprised me. Discussion groups said they expect that it is academic. Most schools say they want to be known for academic excellence, but our campus didn't say this. The external discussion group this morning didn't use academic words to describe PSU, but used urban and good neighbor. I look forward to talking with the faculty more about this.
- Tom: I like the word urban, the definition changes from person to person and culture to culture. The NBA's marketing wanted to be more urban, now players are dressing up more. The question is who are you marketing to and how do they define urban.
- Duncan: Together the words urban and engaged are not "ivory tower," if you're engaged in a city you can't be ivory tower, which is maybe why faculty didn't use academic words to describe PSU.
- Jennifer W.: Portland has changed a lot in the last 10 years and urban meant something different then. Today it is a different type of urban which is new for Portland State University.
- Jennifer C.: In the admissions office students are looking for and even seeking out an urban school, but do they say that because we are using the word or do they think of it as hip and diverse with lots of things happening.
- Kelli: Where do the students come from? Most major institutions are regional institutions. 82% of the students come from in state. Look at Oregon's geography, for most students Portland is very urban in their eyes.
- Justin: I lived and went to school back east where it's much more urban than PSU.
- Kelli: No one likes to talk about being regional, but we shouldn't limit our sights but look at where students come from and where they feel that urban experience in the city.
- David: On the survey the people that chose the word 'diverse' were undergrads. People that have seen the world and lived in other places don't see PSU as diverse.
- Kelli: Instead of requiring direct marketing of out of state students we should spend the most time on where the most students are coming from. We are offering a unique place it's not the

same as OSU or U of O we want to get away from comparisons to those schools. We are doing something special here and that is what we are trying to get out of this.

- Julie: Be the first at something and you'll always be known for it. PSU is known nationally for what we do here and for being urban.
- Kelli: Name your category and own it, don't play catch up to other schools. No one else does it better!
- Kelli asked the Task Force if there were other issues on the survey that needed more discussion.
 - David: Were there too many related words that made it difficult for people to be specific?
 - Kelli: There were still enough specific words that stood out by a large majority.
 - Julie: Is our research relevant to the region?
 - Duncan: Yes they are, but we need more community involvement than research.
 - Kathi: In essence research happens, but the essence is the feeling that is evoked, it can't be described with nouns on a survey that are not associated with an essence.
 - Duncan: Research is an element but not an essence.
- Kelli lead a discussion about the survey results of the images evoked from PSU. External people said there is a lack of specific buildings as icons. An architect said Portland is not known for historic or iconic buildings and the campus reflects the city. The discussion groups also said that Portland is a people friendly city and life happens at street level, they are sad to see sky-bridges that take students off the street away from the activity and campus life.
 - Duncan: I was on the bus the other day and the driver, as he was driving by PSU, said for everyone on the bus to hear "And this is PSU where knowledge serves the city." The sky-bridge means more than just a bridge; it's a symbol of connection with the city.
 - Jennifer C.: I think the sky-bridge is iconic, but students think it is cold.
 - Kelli: The three images mostly identified with PSU were the park blocks, the Portland cityscape, and sky bridges.
- Kelli talked about how the external group thought the streetcar and people on bikes are more iconic. Images of campus life are universal and will be shown, but they said it's not that you see trees, but that they are in the middle of the city with a backdrop of buildings.
 - Kelli: I have heard a lot about how PSU and the city are seamless—there are no boundaries?
 - Cassie: How are we representing ourselves? Do the park blocks evoke a positive feeling?
 - Kathi: The park blocks are a road that flows from PSU into the city and it's unique. The city goes up the blocks and the school goes down and that is where we connect.
 - Cindy: The park blocks are always active, and I miss a lot of it being at the 4th Ave. building.
 - Sandra: At night it's not good to associate the park blocks with the school. I don't have problems with it, but other people think I'm crazy for walking through there at night.
 - Ron: The art museum is trying to man that problem.
 - Sandra: PSU being identified with what happens in other parts of the park blocks, out of our control, is scary.

- Bill: There are lots of parks in Portland. PSU takes for granted the park blocks. We take advantage of bikes and the fact that the park blocks are where the campus lives and it is identified with PSU more so than any other image. It looks more like a traditional campus and there is no need to say the blocks are not owned by PSU.
- Jean: When you think of the word urban you don't think of trees.
- Tom: The park blocks are most comfortable because it feels like a traditional school and is seen as collegiate by the more traditional students. Only down side – I wish there was a way to identify that you are entering the school. People don't know where campus is and isn't.
- Cassie: People at the game last weekend said the campaign banners represent the defining borders of the campus. Our new identity initiative might go up when campaign banners go down to keep those defining sign posts in place.
- Kathi: International campuses are more spread out and less defined; it's an American thing. It might be a good thing that you can't distinguish borders, I'm not saying don't, but why do we feel like we need to do this.
- Bill: Not one building was chosen as #1 identifying image of PSU. We are a young school we don't have a real historic building other than Lincoln Hall.
- Justin: The University district should be clearly identified.
- Jean: Districts needs large mass happenings to gain district status, like the Pearl.
- Pat: In the 1970's the park blocks were intentionally blocked off and made into a quad to have a more traditional campus feels. People off campus love the park blocks and feel Portland State is more distinguishable with them.
- Kelly wrapped up the meeting by asking if there was some kind of additional information needed for everyone to feel comfortable moving forward.
 - Jean: Does the schools color (green) mean sustainability, is it a current buzzword or is it something we own?
 - Kathi: Green is ambiguous.
 - Justin: Some undergrads are not sure why they came to PSU. It needs to be defined.
 - Jennifer C.: Students come because 65 % are transfer students.
 - Bill: Do we ask what our brother and sister schools think of us?
 - Kelli: Do we care? We don't want to say PSU is like OSU or U of O.
 - Justin: Were Oregon's Largest University; it's good to not compare us with others.
 - Kelli: That's not the brand but still great!
 - Cassie: Our motto wasn't tested, but is it valid given our diverse and international agenda?
 - Pat: It is not limiting us only to Portland; it is just what we do...serve the city.
- Next step: The design subgroup committee will look at proposals from design firms for the new PSU look then the task force will go over them. The RFP is being reviewed and is due Oct 26th. Thank you design subgroup volunteers. Should we open the decision-making campus wide or to the community and let them choose the top three proposed designs? Stay tuned and thanks!