

Spring Faculty Conference
May 19, 2008
Summary of SWOT Analysis led by Dr. David Oehler

Summary:

In a SWOT Analysis conducted at the 2008 Spring Faculty Conference by guest speaker David Oehler, Ph.D., Director of Assessment, Information and Analysis, Northwest Missouri State University, the Graceland faculty was asked to consider Graceland's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats *in the context of becoming a true university*. Recurring topics, from most to least frequently mentioned (# of times mentioned in parenthesis), include:

- (31) Insufficient Resources and/or Low Compensation
- + (20) Becoming a university will enhance reputation & draw research faculty & dollars to upgrade programs and compensation.
- (13) 12 Too High Expectations plus 1 Low Morale
- (13) 9 Top-down Decision-making plus 4 Too Heavy Administration
- /+ (11) 8 Landon Too Small plus 3 Graceland Too Small vs 2 small college atmosphere
- (10) Missing Programs (Foreign Language and Physics mentioned in most)
- + (8) Opportunity to market Graceland University internationally
- + (5) National Reputation for Quality (SON, SIFE, Athletics, House System)
- + (5) Safe Environment
- + (5) Renovated Facilities
- (6) 4 Competition plus 2 Vulnerability
- + (4) Regional Expansion Opportunities
- + (4) Schools/Graduate Programs

In the meeting record below this summary, responses made in large group reports after breakout sessions are numbered and followed by written responses submitted by individuals.

+ identified as a strength or opportunity - identified as a threat or weakness

Meeting Record

++ STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES ++

Large Group Summary (reports after first breakout sessions)

- 1) Draw for International Students
- 2) More opportunities for fund-raising
- 3) Safe environment
- 4) Graduate school opportunities
- 5) Carnegie rating and image
- 6) Job opportunities in specialized areas
- 7) Regional expansion
- 8) Small college atmosphere with access to faculty in classrooms
- 9) Fine arts facilities help recruiting
- 10) Science building renovation will help recruiting
- 11) Draw more highly qualified faculty

Additional items, written and submitted by individuals:

“Competitive Advantage”
 Different competitive group
 Improved/Improving facilities
 Perception
 International Student perception of University vs college
 The “University” name attracts more students (especially international students)
 Overseas student appeal
 Draw for international students
 National Quality (SIFE, SON, Athletic Success)
 2 - Safety
 2 - Funding of specialized areas
 Advertising
 2 - Fund Raising
 Schools
 Graduate Schools
 Specialization
 Multiple campuses
 Regional expansion
 More qualified faculty
 Research and teaching
 We can offer small college atmosphere with “University” name (best of both worlds).
 Faculty preparation good and draw for other, well-prepared faculty
 New specializations, faculty prep, faculty draw – research opportunities

- + WEAKNESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES - +**Large Group Summary (reports after first breakout sessions)**

- 1) Funding needed/Possibility of more money
- 2) Lamoni/Regional Expansion (room to grow)
- 3) “University” ill-defined/Use “University” in marketing to international students/donors
- 4) Top-down decisions/Autonomous decision-making
- 5) Missing programs/more specialized programs

Additional items, written and submitted by individuals:

Development of weak programs
 2 - Plan to plug gaps
 International Students
 Not student perception of University

- Funding
 - Resources – human, financial
 - Low pay – Improve financial outcomes
 - Extremely low wage/ Higher wages for employees
- 2 - Resources
 - Not enough resources to take advantage of more research opportunities
 - Not enough resources to pay higher wages, increase specialization, improve facilities
 - Possibility of getting some more money
 - Sustain faculty salaries

Higher salary expected/higher salary paid
 More money needed/more funding possible
 Insufficient resources/money
 Insufficient faculty/more prestigious
 Insufficient programs/upgrade programs
 Faculty salaries

Top down decision/autonomous units
 Top down management/more programs
 Management/decision flow
 Authority of personnel needed
 More autonomy/more complexity
 Responsibility with no authority – too long to make decisions vs local autonomy
 [Embrace and communicate those reasons] esp. that international students look to “university”
 and donors add prestige to institution.
 We don’t have a history/tradition of university/more autonomous decision are possible leading to
 a different tradition/future (note: also a threat to lose the cohesiveness of faculty)
 3 – Not a comprehensive curriculum
 We lack balance and completeness in the undergrad program (no foreign language/no
 physics)/specialization works in a university setting (i.e. masters programs)
 Decision to be a University was ill-defined & driven by donors, international students & PR/
 Grad school expect foreign language – we don’t offer them
 Lamoni too small/regional expansion

- - WEAKNESSES & THREATS - -

Large Group Summary (reports after first breakout sessions)

- 1) Students might think university work would be harder
- 2) Professors think it would be harder
- 3) Higher expectations
- 4) Applicants expect higher pay
- 5) Students expect more prestige and higher paying jobs
- 6) Changes our competitors
- 7) Gap between the perception of “college”, Lamoni Campus & universities
- 8) Student/teacher intimacy might be lost from college to university
- 9) Expectations for facilities and infrastructures
- 10) Mismatch between the faculty applicant and departmental need
- 11) Research expectations
- 12) Different legal requirements? – expenses - accreditation
- 13) Levels of managers – too many??? (Donor revolt)

Additional items, written and submitted by individuals:

Lack of balance between expectations and limited resources
 2 - Small student body (1 - perception that a university should be 10,000)
 GU/Lamoni too small to offer so much
 4 - Lamoni is too small
 Lamoni community
 Small town/not attractive to students
 6 - Not enough resources (\$, people, facilities, donors)

2- Higher expectations

Do we really have the resources/numbers of faculty and students to live up to the “University” name? (Can we really compete w/larger universities?)

Can we afford to support the administrative infrastructure needed for a university?

Too many administrative levels

Money is limited; attracting diverse faculty is limited.

3 - Compensation

Responsibility but no authority

2 - Top down decision-making

Driven by PR/International/students/donors

The fear of a ‘gap’ between what we are promising and what we can actually deliver is created by the belief that the decision to become a university is only a donor driven ‘top down’ decision.

4 - Some important programs missing like foreign language, physics

Time to change programs is limited; harder work for faculty & staff to keep up

3 - “Donor revolt” because of increased bureaucracy

2 - Perception gap due to Lamoni and University; 1 - University is seen as “harder”

2 - Competition

2 - Vulnerability

Better jobs possible but not realized (disappointment)

Campus life – entertaining but not developmental

No university history or tradition/no clear understanding

Takes too long to make changes in programs

Changing/growing so fast we can’t sustain it

+ - OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS + -

Large Group Summary (reports after first breakout sessions)

- 1) -Threat of new competitors
- 2) +National successes & reputations of existing schools could overcome the competitors
- 3) +Expectations higher for university; research expectations
- 4) -Expectations too high
- 5) Increased quality of education
- 6) Higher pay for faculty
- 7) Higher quality facilities
- 8) Funding

STRENGTHS

Large Group Summary (reports after second breakout sessions)

- 1) Faculty preparation (high % of terminal degrees teaching the classes)
- 2) Belief in liberal arts and sciences
- 3) Good preparation for graduate school
- 4) Athletics – successful programs
- 5) Safety
- 6) SkillPath
- 7) Writing Center
- 8) Perception of University to international students
- 9) Funding of areas (eg: schools)

- 10) Appeal/draw of alumni power
- 11) Fine Arts Facilities
- 12) Student Life (house system)
- 13) New (will be) science facilities
- 14) SON 3-year pass rate
- 15) SIFE reputation

OPPORTUNITIES

Large Group Summary (reports after second breakout sessions)

- 1) Overseas/International students' perception of college/university
- 2) Safe environment
- 3) Specialization
- 4) Balance vocation with liberal arts
- 5) Funding/grants/endowed chairs
- 6) Draw for faculty/research faculty
- 7) Schools have independence, local autonomy
- 8) Selection committees – Graceland's students
- 9) Transformation of students
- 10) Graduate degrees
- 11) Combination of teaching/research
- 12) Upgrade innovative programs
- 13) Regional expansion
- 14) Carnegie classification has increased
- 15) Higher faculty/staff salaries