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Implementation of the Inclusive Excellence Study's Recommendations for Fostering Community on the Armstrong Campus

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Senate Executive Committee Request Form

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SHORT TITLE

(Please provide a short descriptive title that would be suitable for inclusion in the Senate Agenda.)

Implementation of the inclusive excellence study's recommendations for fostering community on the Armstrong Campus

SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION:

(Please state the nature of your request as concisely as possible.)

How should the university respond to the detailed recommendations in the report "3 Campuses One Heartbeat" by the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership & Social Innovation for addressing the consolidation's ongoing negative impacts on the Armstrong Campus?

RATIONALE(s):

(Please explain why this issue is one of general concern for the Faculty Senate or for the University and not a matter concerning only an individual college or administrative area.)

In the report "3 Campuses One Heartbeat," the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership & Social Innovation noted that the Armstrong Campus was rated markedly lower than the Statesboro and Liberty campus in three major categories: 1) satisfaction with the campus climate, 2) the sense of being valued and belonging, and 3) institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion. The study repeatedly links the Armstrong Campus's low scores directly to the "pain of consolidation." The report includes the following recommendations quoted in the bullets below. Quotations have been edited for clarity and brevity. The same text can be found in the attached Word document.

- Elevate the Strategic Campus Integration Journey ... More than factual communication, we feel that these leaders want to be communicated to with dignity and respect both for how things were and what they are becoming. ... [The institution] must keep communicating, even repeating things it believes people have heard already, so that those people understand that you mean it and so they know in their hearts that you value them as they witness you also listen to them as part of this communication process.
- Restart a working team that prioritizes strategic integration, picking up from the consolidation process, to determine how you can prioritize culture-building.
- Identify the top five communication pain points and gaps and then develop a series of micro-learning tools, videos, flyers and talking points for leaders to clarify and provide support towards ongoing change and cultural integration.
- Have the president, provost and other senior leaders get back into the Armstrong campus in a natural and organic way, beating the pavement as if the integration is happening for the very first time. ...
- Tap a group of Armstrong faculty ... to identify key themes that they feel are being missed in terms of the economic challenges and hardships of students.
- ... Campus leadership must discover avenues to understand what elements of the transition are impeding offices and units from carrying out their jobs effectively after consolidation. Deans could establish a space (for example, on the first Friday of the month) to connect with academic and staff leaders to analyze how the transition towards consolidation is impacting their work. ...
- The need to launch a relentless communication campaign focused on building one Georgia Southern University culture across all three campuses.
- The need to create spaces for leadership to engage in empathetic listening with the Armstrong community to engender a feeling of being heard. ...
- The need to create a training program for administrative and governance leaders on how to foster a stronger and unified approach to consolidation. ...

If you have an attachment, press the button below to attach to form and send.



InclusiveExcellenceArmstrongCommunityDiscussionRequest.docx
136.16 KB

Click here to attach a file

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Approval

Response:

Approved



1/24/2020



SEC Response:

Discussed at the SEC meeting on 1/24/2020. Approved for discussion at the Faculty Meeting on 2/5/2020. Bill Dawers will be asked to lead the discussion on the Faculty Senate floor.

2/5/2020



Senate Response:

Bill Dawers spoke to the points presented in the Discussion Item. A persistent disconnect from the Armstrong and Statesboro campus continues after consolidation. Various members of the faculty senate spoke, expressing their frustration over qualitative types of communication, prioritization and communication gaps. Recommendations include the formation of an ad hoc working group a Armstrong faculty that can identify key themes that are being missed, as well as look at a communication campaign, leadership opportunities and potential training programs. The faculty senate agreed with the formation of the adhoc committee as proposed as asked Bill Dawers to give a summary report of progress by the end of the year. Discussion: Bill Dawers (CAH) referred to the Inclusive Excellence report. He advises that everyone read the full report, not just the executive summary. In this report, Dr. Williams notes that the Statesboro numbers reporting faculty satisfaction are low, but the Armstrong numbers are alarmingly low. Dr. Williams made numerous recommendations in his report. The study found no statistical difference between campuses regarding other aspects (gender, LGBTQ, etc.). The problems for the Armstrong campus are related to the consolidation. There are things that haven't been fully reconciled. Enrollment is down about 20% since consolidation. It feels as if we might be in a downward spiral. This campus isn't as active, engaged, or cohesive as it once was. Bill Dawers then opened up the floor for questions and comments. Questions: Jack Simmons (CAH) asked if there was a single thing that caused the drop off in enrollment. Bill Dawers (CAH) responded that quality communication might be an issue directed towards the

lower enrollment. Our external messaging missed some beats. Things like the lack of sports, administrative disarray, the lessening of attention to military affairs, all contributed to the decline. Carol Jamison (CAH) asked about rebranding and making clear to students and the community that many of the unique aspects of the Armstrong campus are still in place. Bill Dawers (CAH) agreed that branding in the community is an issue for us. The community is very unclear about what the consolidation has meant for us and for the community. Trish Holt (COE) added that the community doesn't understand and is confused about the effects of consolidation on the Armstrong campus. There are rumors about the state's vision for this campus. Clarifying rumors would help. Carol Jamison (CAH) talked about this issue as a community issue that extends beyond currently enrolled students. Chris Cartright (CAH) asked what faculty can or should be doing in the community to change the narrative. Could we write letters to the editor that report on faculty and campus happenings? The consolidation is perceived as diminishing our offerings rather than increasing the possibilities. Bill Dawers (CAH) noted that with the loss of certain majors and the implementation of a schedule that doesn't work for students, there is a sense that Armstrong doesn't offer what we did before. That sentiment is out there. Only 31% of faculty feel as if they belong, according to Dr. Williams' study. How can we expect those people to establish new narratives? Faculty need a better understanding of where things are going. Did the new Health Profession building lead to more nursing slots? This is one of many details that faculty should be informed about. The things we used to do are difficult as faculty may no longer feel empowered to do those things. Lack of internal communication hinders our external communication. Scot Lingrell (Enrollment Management) said that this conversation is worthwhile, and the campus needs to heal. There is a lot of activity going on that could be communicated more broadly. What began as a campus morale issue moved to include an enrollment issue. When you have enrollment concerns, it leads to other issues, and the opposite is also true. Dr. Lingrell's office has put together a one-year tactical plan for enrollment for all three campuses. By the end of March, they should have a draft of a Strategic Enrollment Plan that will question and help us identify what about us is important and will attract students. The Strategic Enrollment Plan is putting together a group from each campus so that he can get a sense of what makes each campus special. Strategies have to be approached differently from each campus. The variety of opportunities is exciting to him as an enrollment manager. We haven't done the best job communicating these opportunities, he explained. For instance, adult students need weekend and evening programs, sometimes short term. Some of our campuses are better at delivering this kind of scheduling than others. We hit the nail on the head as far as the significance of the vibrancy of the campus, he stated. It is critical to this campus. John Lester (Communications and Marketing) agreed. He stated that GSU is spending more money on advertising Armstrong in Atlanta compared to the other GSU campuses. Strategic Marketing Communications is essential. Each campus must be marketed differently. He hears the faculty and is working on branding for each individual campus. His office is also working on improved internal communications. Bill Dawers (CAH) said that these initiatives sound like the right way to go. Part of the problem is that we are now two years removed from the consolidation. The question is, how do we make up some of that ground? Helen Bland (JPHCPH) asked Dr. Lingrell about the Strategic Enrollment groups on this campus. How can faculty who want to be part of that committee join? He explained that the deans nominated people to be on the committee. He assumed that they would be representative. She then mentioned faculty focus groups on branding. Meetings will be held on WebEx for those who want to participate. Jack Simmons (CAH) said that he is pleased to hear about the marketing campaigns, but the central concern that Bill Dawers raises about a sense of belonging can't be resolved through branding and marketing. Carl Reiber (Provost) then remarked that he appreciates the discussion. Context is critical, he explained. We have had administrative turnover that has affected the situation. How we make up ground is key. Consolidation was challenging for everyone. There were issues with different cultures on different campuses, such as scheduling issues. Each campus is unique and has a unique history. What was formerly working needs to be put back into place. We need to empower faculty. If they feel stifled, they need to come up a level to get their message across. The faculty need to feel as if they own their programs. New programs are being added to encourage enrollment. He can't announce all of these until they are approved and finalized. He acknowledged that communication has been a problem. John Lester is new to his position, but sees the moving parts. He will help us make up for lost ground. We are working on internal communication to better facilitate information. Bill Dawers (CAH) stated that he is heartened to hear about these initiatives. However, what was working at Armstrong isn't working now. We need a working group to identify issues (as explained in Dr. Williams' report). Could we have a group that outlines these issues? Helen Bland (JPHCPH) added that she likes this

group that outlines those issues? Helen Bland (JPHCPH) added that she likes this recommendation. Melissa Gayan (CAH) asked about recruitment. She hears a lot about the billboards but wonders about the human presence that we have locally. Scot Lingrell responded that we have a very robust recruitment initiative. It has recently become more personalized because it is targeted to high schools or social media. He is pleased with our recruitment efforts, but we need to differentiate a bit better what is special about each campus. The discussion of this item then concluded for this meeting, but Helen Bland stated it will be an ongoing discussion.



President's Response:
