

APSCUF -KU

Request for Definitions and Meaning

KU President Update, 2/7/2011

During the fall 2010 semester, APSCUF-KU has asked that President Cevallos articulate a coherent vision for Kutztown University. We have argued that such as vision is all that more pressing given the administration's on-going retrenchment of faculty, elimination of programs, and cutting temporary faculty lines. What started out as a process of retrenchment due to “budgetary concerns” now appears to be a reallocation of resources and reorganization of our university—especially in light of the budget figures that show KU expecting surpluses in the years ahead. President Cevallos has argued in the past that he is constrained by his job description when it comes to certain decisions. For example, the first item on his job description was to achieve AACSB accreditation. We would like to point out that that same item also includes, “identifying other academic areas of excellence and achieving external funding for implementing their development and growth.” In order to identify areas of “academic excellence,” it is critical that the entire university community knows the criteria by which such decisions will be made. In a time that the administration is actively eliminating areas of study and service such a vision is paramount. In the absence of such a vision, *all* faculty and staff are spending an inordinate amount of time and energy waiting for the ax to fall.

In our continual attempt to encourage President Cevallos to articulate a vision, we request that he take a step in that direction by providing some more information regarding his most recent “KU President's Update,” dated 2/7/2011. While we appreciate his restatement of the “vision” readily found on the KU web site, we would like some clarification, definitions, and specifics. Below is a portion of President Cevallos's update with key terms and concepts highlighted. This is followed by a series of questions we would like answered. Here is a copy of the “Update” for reference:

PLANNING, PRIORITIZING & PERFORMANCE FUNDING

With the inauguration of Governor Corbett last month and continued new initiatives under PASSHE Chancellor Cavanaugh, our university is preparing for **change and opportunity**. As we plan for the future, we must keep our vision statement as the guide for our decisions. Our vision, as approved in our Strategic Plan is clear: “Kutztown University aspires to be a regional center of **excellence** providing opportunities for advanced academic, cultural, and public service experiences, within a **caring** community, designed to **promote success** in a global society.”

To achieve this vision, we will continue to **protect the core strengths** of our institution. We also must keep our mission as a **regional comprehensive university** in the forefront. Thus, over the next couple of years, as we move through a very difficult budgetary environment, we will focus on **achieving national excellence** while providing **local access**. A clear example of how this vision has guided us is our pursuit of AACSB accreditation in the College of Business. In the same light, the **complete renovation of Sharadin Arts Building** and **planned renovation of Schaeffer Auditorium** will allow us to further strengthen our nationally recognized programs in the arts.

The Board of Governors recently changed the way it allocates performance funding to the universities. Performance funding is a **significant component** of our state allocation and is determined by various factors achieved by a PASSHE institution in a given year. We have been very successful in receiving funding in recent years, and want to remain successful in the years ahead. **Changes to indicators** will cause us to **plan differently in the near future**. As a result, I have asked the Budget Review Committee of Strategic Planning to convene and advise the administration on the best way to proceed. This committee includes representatives from APSCUF, University Senate, Strategic Planning and management, and therefore is an ideal body to bring the shared governance perspective to the decision. This group will be charged with **helping us** to make a five-year commitment to the performance indicators **we** choose.

Paragraph #1:

- **change and opportunity:** change to what and opportunities for what? How does the administration understand these concepts *specifically*? That is, “change” and “opportunity” are simply placeholders if left undefined and vague. We need to know the vision of change and opportunity that guides the future of our university.
- **excellence:** how are you defining excellence? How do you assess excellence?
- **caring:** what does it mean to have a caring community? How is caring manifested in the process of retrenchment? Does caring have to do solely with verbal expressions of caring, or does it also translate into policies and practices? How do you assess caring?
- **promote success:** what determines “success” in a global society? How does the vision for the future of our university help us plan for that success? In what ways can we understand current and future retrenchments as step towards promoting success?

Paragraph #2:

- **protect the core strengths:** what are “the core strengths?” Where has the administration articulated these core strengths? How is the administration planning on protecting these core strengths? What material resources will be dedicated to protecting these core strengths? How can we see this commitment to “protecting core strengths” playing out in retrenchment? Put another way, in what ways has President Cevallos and the administration's vision for the future of Kutztown helped guide which programs to keep and which to eliminate?
- **regional comprehensive university:** how does the administration define this? What *must* be part of the curriculum and our university for it to meet the definition of a “regional comprehensive university?”
- **achieving national excellence:** similar to paragraph #1, how are you defining “national excellence?” How will you know if you have achieved it? How do you assess your progress?
- **local access:** how do you define local access? How do you assess your success in maintaining local access? How does this translate to specific material resources and program available to students? Which programs are considered essential in supporting access?
- **complete renovation of Srharadin...:** how does this renovation “further strengthen our nationally recognized programs in the arts” in light of the retrenchment of Theatre? Which programs does this renovation assist? How were those programs identified?

Paragraph #3:

- **significant component:** how much exactly? In what specific ways does performance funding affect how the administration plans for the future? To what degree do these funds determine the vision of the future of our university?
- **changes to indicators:** what were these changes? How are they different? To what degree do these changes amount to mandates from the Chancellor's Office or Board of Governors? How do these changes fit into the vision for Kutztown and/or PASSHE?
- **plan differently in the near future:** how? When is “the near future?”
- **helping us:** what constitutes “helping?” What kind of authority will these bodies have to determine the new indicators?
- **we:** who is included in “we”?