

College Council Notes December 1, 2017

Welcome: Christina Erickson welcomed everyone to College Council at 8:31a.m. and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

October 27, 2017 Meeting Notes: Christina asked for any changes to the October 27, 2017 College Council meeting notes. There were no changes to the notes and the October 27, 2017 College Council notes were approved.

Opening Comments: To start the meeting, President Laackman referenced the November Town Hall meeting when Christina Erickson asked a question about morale and collapsing positions. The President felt his response did not encourage additional questions and shut down discussion. The President assured the College Council that he does want to hear from us, and that that is the very purpose of College Council. The President shared that even if we have controversial issues or do not agree with the President, that he does want to hear all views and perspectives. The President considers this group as representing the College and he would like us to be open and honest with him. The President welcomes diversity of opinion and different perspectives and voices, both positive and constructive, that can help make the College better.

Three-Year Review: When the President started his presidency at Champlain he used a process from the book, *You're In Charge, Now What?: The 8 Point Plan*, by Thomas Neff and James Citrin. The authors are executive recruiters who placed hundreds of Presidents and Chief Executives. In addition, they assessed factors contributing to success. They found that part of a successful transition is to understand the culture of an organization. In order to do that, President Laackman asked approximately 100 people (students, staff, faculty, Board of Trustees, Alumni, neighbors, etc.) the following questions:

- What do you love about Champlain?
- What would you like to change about Champlain?
- What do you hope Don does?
- What are you concerned Don might do?

As it has been three years and there have been changes at Champlain, the President suggested and Christina and Christa agreed, this would be a good topic for College Council.

The Council was asked to gather in three groups of students, staff and faculty. Once in those groups, discuss the above questions and make notes. Below are the notes from the small group conversations:

What do you love about Champlain?

- The People
- The Possibilities
- Autonomy

- Outreach-Community service day
- Unity of mission
- Delivering the student experience
- Learning community-people of learners-colleagues-institution-wide
- Integrity – folks do what they say they will do
- Respect/partnerships with the community
- Scale/size of the institution
- Can get stuff done-community
- Professors
- Community / Location
- Campus aesthetics
- Career-oriented curriculum
- Focus in international programs
- Sports (non-varsity focus, rugby, ski, etc.)
- Study Abroad
- Student Organizations, clubs
- Student centered, academic institution; faculty like teaching students
- The ability to push students to their full potential
- Pragmatic teaching
- Relevant to your future
- Academic freedom – experiment – content, delivery methods / trust
- Colleagues, faculty – value the student-centered focus – share this interest
- Nimble, radically pragmatic – this is a love/hate relationship
- Dynamic state of curriculum change- pace is tough and exciting and is engaging.

What would you like to change?

- More physical space and resources (e.g. computer labs)
 - Tech related majors has a space and resource shortage – lap space, computer resources – need more – time and space to work on projects during the day because all the spaces are taken up with classes, sometimes, into the evening hours. Implications for students with ADHD and power. Metz Barn Studio – top floor for graphic design – is space on the first floor for more computers. Beyond graphic design the space is underutilized, so will add PC's, but need more space – zero sum game.
- More recognition of the work done/appreciation of work
- More ability to rest/have time to reflect/evaluate/slow down a little – add more resources
- The pace, depending on the situations – resolution can take too long, and other things are too fast-seemingly small projects. Pace is too fast, no lull, bottlenecks. It is important to be in a state of flow, but not constantly.
- There is no down time
- Transparency/low staff/lean

- Short staffed/lean staff in comparison to other institutions our size.
- Innovative – not as selective and strategic – everything is a priority – folks get stretched thin
- Shared responsibility to communicate/learn what is happening
- Spend more time and money on sustainability
- Prioritization – be more effective around what to do and not do to make the best use of resources.
- Pace of the academic year for all – no time to pause, breathe and reflect during the academic year, or time to pause to look forward. Castleton has a one week break every five weeks. (look at their academic calendar). Full week October break – students can stay or go, with faculty around for part to have some non-class interaction. Two days off in October is not enough time, and Thanksgiving break is so close to the end of the semester.
- Let’s talk about Sodexo: Food has gotten worse; we are better than some; problems around the meal systems – all in or no meal plan without much in between; if you live on campus, you have to have a plan, which is not sustainable for vegetarian, vegan – buy it and do not use it and buy groceries anyway.
 - Sodexo is making changes, but we need more changes
 - Dietary restrictions-pork-no gloves at the sandwich area
- Credit system (transfer credits, housing)
- Mental health care
- Transportation
- Accessibility
- Financial communication

What do you hope Don does?

- Retention Improvement
- Culture/diversity conversations
- Conflict Free Campus
- Enrollment Size
- Appreciate the statements the President puts out, like hate speech, etc.
- Continue open dialogues with students
- Recognizing international community
- Start raising more money so we can do what we need to do, with help from Deans
- Get us more resources
- Continue to let parts of the College do their jobs
- Less consolidation when staff leave – continues the “leaning”
- Like to be more cohesive – programs compete, and for our scale we should be able to fix this
 - In the past there were Partner driver meetings – if the initiative has a financial implication – had to meet and discuss with Finance

- We should be encouraged to go to Town Hall. Manager's Roundtable – we get 1/3rd of managers at roundtable, and this an area where things could and should happen – stronger encouragement of involvement
- Balance / Shore up a strong foundation and continue as an institution of higher education
- Support student affairs and the human touch
- Do not want to lose the fun-lost two fun leaders and do not want to lose the fun. Community strength – fun, innovative – democratizing a sense of fun
- Things are feeling uncertain – some folks are better with this than others – exhausted, overwhelmed and concerned about what is coming next, in the context of a troubled world - verbal hug
- Capitalize on our strengths – nimble, creativity, innovation, heart – innovation
- Value the open dialogue, email communication-sense of how the President and others felt about broader matters.
- Nimble, innovative, student-centered are all great. There is an optimal state of flow/ transcendental/in the flow, however, being in this state all the time is not sustainable.
- More financial, lab, physical resources – continue to do – provide more financial resources-running lean and fast is not sustainable

What are you concerned Don might do?

- Make decisions based on money only and ignore the needs of the employees of the College
- Make more red tape-getting things done more difficult-impact nimble
- More consolidation
- Lose the wild and crazy ideas
- Lose focus on student affairs and lose the human touch value
- Shore up the foundation – sustainable, so putting into place activities – not want to lose the innovation, fun, creative idea generating – part of our DNA
- Increase uncertainty
- Lack of perpetuity raises and financial decisions – make those decisions with personal and personnel investments in mind – do that again – another year with no increases – possible source of morale
- Changes in enrollments, out growing infrastructure
 - Retention – steady and when there are changes – changes who we are as a college – lose our uniqueness – impacts the student experience
- Impact on Title IX, political impacts
- Change in culture, loss of unique spirit

Reflections on this exercise: The President shared that he appreciated all the conversations and the specific areas, for example, Sodexo.

The President shared that he will bring this information to the Cabinet to digest. This President shared that this conversation was very valuable to him and he clarified expectations. The value of College Council is in these conversations and the frameworks that come out of the dialogue. While action items may come from these discussions, he cautioned us to be clear that the College Council does not set the President's agenda, although we do inform his thinking.

Adjourn and Next Meeting: The College Council meeting was adjourned at 9:34a.m. The next meeting of the College Council is January 26, 2018, 8:30a.m., in the Morgan Room, Aiken Hall.

All the best with the end of the semester responsibilities and have a great break!