Planning and Feedback Session

The purpose of this session was to gather feedback from Arts & Humanities leaders from the Bismarck-Mandan community and the state of ND: North Dakota Council on the Arts, North Dakota Humanities Council, State Historical Society of ND, ND Dept of Commerce/Tourism, Dakota West Arts Council, Leach Foundation, Fort Lincoln Foundation, Fort Mandan Foundation, Bismarck Mandan Symphony Orchestra, Missouri Valley Chamber Orchestra, Bismarck-Mandan Civic Chorus, Northern Plains Dance, Bismarck Tribune.

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Group: State & Local Arts & Humanities Leaders
Date: October 19, 2011
Tool: Questionnaire & SWOT
# Attendees: 15

Questionnaire

What are the most vital values that BSC should preserve?

- Providing services to the community
- Local involvement
- Involvement of alumni
- It’s connection to the community
- Willingness to grow with community
- Filling educational needs(gaps) that other institutions are not willing or able to look at
- Community presence. Student focus
- Spirit of inquiry/civic engagement/public intellectual/well rounded citizen/community
- Quality and dedication of instructors
- Good working relationships between instructors & their students
- Personal attention given to needs of each individual student.
- Favorable ratios of students to their instructors
- Local opportunities to grow mid-career as well as young
- Its role as a public institution that grew out of this community. Its history as a former part of the Bismarck Public School system gives it a unique position in ND higher Ed
- Community
- Small town attributes of high teach-student ratio and focus on preparing students for further education in most cases, or final degree in others
- How would you describe the quality of education provided by BSC?
- Excellent
- How well-prepared are BSC students to enter the workforce? Transfer to other colleges?
- Especially in the specialized areas of energy and other vocational, excellent. While no direct perspective on the transfer values, from everything I have heard from others, it is excellent as well.
What does BSC need to change that would enable us to be a great institution?
- Continue to focus on niche areas not served by the other 10 statewide higher ed institutions. Provide more on-site student housing. Help create a more vibrant campus life.

How would you describe the quality of education provided by BSC?
- Good to excellent depending on track
- Good – should strive to be the best 2 year college in US
- Grounded
- Provides students with strong skills
- Good, from what I understand from peers who have gone through BSC programs. They felt fully prepared to enter the workforce or transfer to 4 year.
- Core education steeped in community
- Very good 2-year programs and a solid base for continuing to 4-year degree
- I hear that BSC readies its students for not only immediate job openings but also provides a solid platform for which to spring into any high education four year studies offered anywhere
- Variable – getting better
- I have very little to go on – but it seems to be extraordinary in energy education and it has some fine instructors in history, carpentry and theatre.
- Excellent; meeting the needs of students – wide variety of needs; attuned to needs of students, community, workforce

How well-prepared are BSC students to enter the workforce? Transfer to other colleges?
- Excellent in technical
- Transfer – good depending on where and/or what
- Good
- Students are well-prepared
- They felt fully prepared to enter the workforce or transfer to 4 year. (copy from item #5 above)
- Well-prepared (is job placement the only role of a college education?)
- I hear that BSC readies its students for not only immediate job openings but also provides a solid platform for which to spring into any high education four year studies offered anywhere (copy from item #8 above)
- Pretty good for local & regional 4 year institutions getting better – needs
- Well
- Very well prepared to transfer – students who apply themselves in programs of study at BSC are ready to move into 4-year programs
What does BSC need to change that would enable us to be a great institution?

- Showcase results and leaders
- Network nationally. Technology. Become a culture outlet for students & community
- Connect even deeper with community through events and elementary & secondary schools
- More collaboration with area organizations; internships, partnership, meetings like this so that stronger relationships are built
- Support the role of scholars in community engagement and advertise this on your website
- Bring in visiting scholars/artists of national merit
- Work toward acquiring and retaining the best instructors possible in each field of learning. Probably more to become a four year university.
- More foreign language
- More professional level
- The linkage with other institutions is critical for those not pursuing two-year vocational degrees
- It’s already a great institution- stay focused on inherent mission of community college & serve the population that needs that attention because no other institution around serves that need

What are some emerging issues that you anticipate BSC will have to deal with effectively if it is going to thrive in the future (e.g., role of technology in the classroom, retirements, tenure, demographics, online educations)?

- Changing technology daily how to be relevant
- Engaging the huge number of on-line students
- Technology
- Online education, emerging majors that focus on technology & energy
- Changing demographics in the state (aging population)
- Prepare students for public speaking, having social manners (corporations have classes to teach their young employees about a types of manners that are not being taught by anyone).
- Environmental degradation in surrounding lands
- Population variations
- Salary competition
- Aim for 4 year (university)
- Recruitment of quality staff – conflicts with other institutions in state system. Joint projects with UTTC & U Mary
- Blended learning experience – classroom & technology/distance learning; prepare for the eventual lull in oil industry
How can BSC maintain or manage its growth?

- Market beyond ND boarders to smaller communities who have lost their local community college connections due to cuts in other states
- Empower its administration to develop and create new projects and programs
- Continue to build 2 year programs in a variety of areas that would transfer well to 4 year programs. Only know of art & engineering that push people into 4 year programs but that due to personal relationships there may be more.
- Keep admin costs down and keep college affordable
- Raise standards for student enrollment
- Cautions financial growth
- Stay flexible
- Stay open minded re: new & old programs
- It’s headed in the growth direction with focus on energy. But managing the growth so as not to lose its role as the entry point to higher ed for locals is a challenge
- Stay focused, make sure that you continue to fund/promote programs that serve those in need of community college experience

What should BSC do to attract students?

- More niche offerings to meet the needs within ND
- Have the best placement program possible
- Would be great to expand on your arts programs
- Could you connect with other organizations such as “Northern Plains Dance” to create a dance component?
- Better community relations that show prospective students that Bismarck is a thriving and interesting community.
- Cost/quality of education/opportunities for engagement with the real world and other cultures
- The online class/long distance learning – but, the quality of the education and expectations must remain high.
- Market departments on campus that have employment opportunities, the medical fields as an example. Support internships, workstudy opportunities in state gov offices for exposure to job opps/mentorships.
- Continue to improve quality and variety of classes and activities for its students
- Continue – housing
- Expand online ed
- Expanding programs & areas not currently covered- Carefully-
- Maintain quality faculty
- More dormitories, market what you do best – offering affordable on-campus and online courses and AA degrees
How can BSC better contribute to our community? How can BSC become more visible in the community and the region?

- To provide a service/resource for Industry, Business hosting events, enhanced PR and social media presence - not just for students residents and families.
- Participate in arts & humanities programs locally – bring in talent; workshops
- Would love to see an “arts center”/museum of art. I dream about connecting students in teaching programs to an art center where they receive student-teaching opportunities that involve arts-integration.
- More programs available to the public. We hear a lot about programs lead by Clay J. but rarely anything else. Seek out more leaders and ‘experts’ in the community.
- Use your scholars as ambassadors and support that. Open your events to the community. Work with high school kids & teachers in the region to strengthen educational opportunities.
- The current president is doing a great job for the college. His discussions with Clay Jenkinson are good.
- Publicize in newspapers & TV what is happening at BSC
- Joint projects with other groups, organizations & state (local, regional, international)
- It tries – but things like communiversity are essential to build support. Adult education for its own value, not just vocational value is positive. Creating ??
- The arts & humanities programs, such as Clay Jenkinson & ArtsQuest provide wonderful draws to campus

S-W-O-T

STRENGTHS

- Larry Skogen is outstanding, a great “face” for the college ******
- Size**
- Student Focused
- Identify needs of workforce *
- Work with other higher ed. institutions ****
- Visible to the community
- Strong alumni
- Technology
- Meets needs of particular students – financial, size, academic needs *
- Tied to community/public ed. *
- Good student/faculty ratio and relationship **
- Opportunities for career – change training ***
- Adds to community nice ****
- Nice campus and setting **
- Value of community colleges is increasing ****
• Identifying niches to provide value
• Progressive
• Think “out of the box”
• The partnerships we have had to the commercial art dept and using students/interns for real life projects
• Moderate size classes, student enrollment & feel.
• Vast variety of student activities available such as music, sports, arts.
• Diversity is improving: ethnicity & age
• The view
• State support
• Its faculty
• Affordable, local educational opportunities for region
• Small, friendly, comfortable for rural school students
• Offer a wide variety of learning opps – graduate degrees as well as two and four year degrees
• Good leadership – great vision for what BSC could be and should be!
• Tech program is wonderful – constantly updated
• Community involvement through foundation
• From my perspective as a community Arts Leader, I value the professionalism and positive, forward thinking attitude of the BSC faculty, staff and students. Every time, without exception, that I have been part of an experience involving BSC, whether it is using space for orchestra rehearsals, attending and/or being part of symposia, or working with faculty, staff or students in a performance, it has been the utmost positive experience. It is hard to describe, but there is a positive energy about BSC and its people that is palpable.
• Judging from the performance level of the music students with whom I’ve worked and heard perform, BSC provides a high level of quality in its education. I think BSC should keep its balance of technology studies and the humanities.
• The BSC students with whom I’ve worked have been more than prepared academically and professionally to enter the work force and/or transfer to other colleges.
• I think to be a great institution, (and this is with total admitted bias that I write this) BSC needs a first rate library and a humanities/performing arts center. I also think to make sure that in music in particular, but in all departments, to constantly strive to have the very best qualified faculty possible.
• Of course, the Energy Center for Excellence is a strength and I think, provides a wonderful model for perhaps the potential of other such centers on campus.
• I also think that BSC does a fantastic job of reaching out into the community, a great job with its marketing and with its continuing education programs.
• Vibrant, growing student population
• Exciting growth in energy and other areas
• Dynamic humanities programming with Dr. Skogen/Clay Jenkinson
• Impressive physical growth in facilities, etc.

WEAKNESSES
• Communicate more about school programs and events to a broader audience. (Not just alumni) ***
• Continuing education – community versity ops for instructors ***
• It’s a “Plan B” to higher education ***
• 2 year degree lacks exposure to broader thinking – all skills based ***
• Lack of communication with other local, state, regional organizations and leaders in the arts.
• Lack of involvement in local arts events and organizations. *
• A narrow focus on arts and humanities + foreign languages – Chinese, French, Hindi, Latin ****
• No state of the art humanities, museums & performing center.
• Short staffed in humanities *
• Image of being “Jr.” college *
• No diversity
• Viewed locally as a “lesser” education
• A place to go if you don’t know what your goals are
• Expand on the arts!
• Size – BSC can be seen as a group that’s hard to break into
• Scholars are isolated – they should be a stronger part of the community – the school should support that.
• CETI is only arts/skilled focused – it could be more like Concordia or Dickinson’s Communiversity and offer actual academic classes.
• 2 year college
• Alumni news to broader audience
• Split alumni support between BSC & 4 year school a student continued to attend
• Look at man camps as an online audience and as a place for communiversity presentations
• Two year degree in most cases
• Image of being a “junior college”.
• 40 below and blizzards most of the winter
• Somewhat provincial
• limited in some areas
• Boom & bust
• Short-staffed, which does not allow diversity of options, etc. within disciplines.
• Being branded as a two-year school, despite opportunity for 4 year degrees
• A lot of schools in the state system – hard to recruit
• 2-year program – students need to transfer (can be a strength as well)
• Limited use of facility by the community (individual groups) (this is my perception – may be be accurate!)
• Structurally BSC would be stronger if you had a world-class humanities/performing arts building such as a Center for Excellence-type facility but for the arts and humanities, complete with the latest technology in music, recording, composing. With state of the art classrooms and rehearsal and performing space

OPPORTUNITIES
• Blend/distance + classroom experiences internships ****
• Grow into 4-year + institution *****
• Tri-College concept with U-Mary, UTEC Communiversity ***************
• Expand on-line & maintain quality **
• Energy/Technology industry *
• ID other niches – infor tech, nursing, health care, communications ***
• Internships – community work place experiences *******
• Speaking skills for businesses ****
• Etiquette ****
• Business communications
• Written and oral communications skills
• Performing Arts Center – affordable
• Humanities Center (include foreign language) Native American population – Chinese, French, Hindi, +++++
• Summer workshops for teachers (cont. ed.) *
• International opportunities for students & teachers
• Partner with other groups for a state capital worthy arts center *
• Workshop space
• To be the cultural hub of North Dakota!!
• Retain residents to think of a BSC education as premium/credible etc.
• Workshops that include local residents for growth
• Help the community to develop & implement economic development
• Help Bismarck become a culture hub of ND
• How about a program in arts-integration where teachers can participate in continuing e – They could be certified “arts-integration” specialists?!
• Be a leader and a voice in issues that build the community as a whole
• Cultural tourism
• Join with other institutions for joint & mutual expansions
• Tri-college
• Partnerships with 4 year institutions (many already in place)
• Technology jobs in the future – BSC is strong in this training area
• Oil field technology – chance for BSC to work more closely in the field?
• Strong business community – internships? Credit for job shadowing?
• Opportunity for community partnerships – could build audience participation for BSC programs
• Aquatic center on campus!
• I think that BSC already does a fantastic job of contributing to our community, particularly through continuing education curriculum, performances, symposia, and the BSC Conversation series. BSC also does a great job of using media and technology to reach out into the community. As a professional musician, I am so impressed with what the performing arts department there, in music and theatre, is able to do. I do not know of any 2 year schools with that strong of a music department, and I know many 4 years schools with weaker music departments.
• I would say just keep focusing on these strengths and use your great marketing teams to get the word out all over the state. I would like to see the Bismarck-Mandan Symphony do some sort of specific collaboration with the Fine Arts department at BSC.
• Keep finding creative ways to spread the word about this positive energy, professionalism, and quality education and experience one receives at BSC.

THREATS

• Environmental degradation ****
• For profit universities – financial aid/tuition
• Difficult to recruit faculty – salary ****
• Cautious financial growth – Boom & bust – moderation in growth – avoid trend
• Focus on online need balance vs traditional “Blended Learning” ****
• Lack of creative thinking – strategic thinking ***
• Employer driven curriculum doesn’t address needs of the workers ****
• Tuition costs ****
• Bis/Man centric *******
• “Inwardly” focused – lack of ties to outside art & humanity groups/organizations – staying the “same”
• Economy
• Lack of growth in the community
• Staying like everyone else in education
• Young people don’t want to stay here.
• Aging population/lack of federal funds for education/jog centered education eroding a strong liberal arts education/lack of cultural opportunities in Bismarck for students to enjoy.
• Cost of education
• Movement toward more online education opportunities
• Boom & bust cycles
• Economic “depression”
• Environmental problems in pop influx – natural & human made
• Staff retirements – baby boomers are leaving – who will replace them?
• Limited funding – strong competition for state $’s
• Limited space for students/classrooms
• Difficulty with city transportation/public transportation

KEY STRATEGIC THOUGHTS

• International studies
• Focus on English Communication
• Teach native/traditional languages
• Student teaching/internships/mentoring – community
• Understand relevance of humanities in daily life/current affairs
• Center for the Humanities in North Dakota (arts, humanities, languages) – can work together – cultural hub – facilities & partnerships with community
• Without competing for resources – strong arm of cultural development