

Outcomes
Rescheduled Spring 2020 Faculty Institute: What's Your Webster?
Tuesday, August 18, 2020

This institute focused on Webster's values, identity, and strengths, giving faculty the opportunity to share and listen to each other's individual stories and perspectives in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of the entire institution.

By doing so, we found common ground regarding Webster's core values and identity, with the hope that this common ground can provide a foundation for discussing changes we would like to see in the future. In addition, by learning how others experience different aspects of our complex institution, some of us may be better prepared to "think outside the boxes" of our own silos and contribute to innovative ideas about Webster's future.

Responses to the Warm-Up Activity: *Share something about Webster that makes you proud or gives you hope.*

See the document "Pride and Hope" for the responses shared in the chat.

**Consolidated Responses from Breakout Groups:
Values and Attributes of Webster that We Want to Keep**

- 1) Priority on relationships and the humanity of faculty, staff, students (mentioned by all 12 groups). More specific comments:
 - "Care and feeding of faculty" (balance/relationships/camaraderie)
 - Relationships between teacher/student, teacher/staff, program/adjunct, faculty/admin, university/community
 - Faculty involvement in advising and recruitment
 - Developing and supporting students to become their most talented, inspiring, creative selves via advocacy, mentoring, and teaching
 - Welcoming place; a place to stay; collegiality
 - Faculty/student relationships linked to liberal arts college environment
 - Collegiality: helping others to be creative, room for new voices, engaging students where they are, overt appreciation for support staff
 - See improvements in programs through collaboration and empathy for community
 - Positive professional culture: autonomy, collegiality, respect, work-life balance
 - Faculty is functional, wonderful, collaborative, supportive
 - Smaller community fosters holistic development of faculty, students & everyone we are in contact with: intimate teaching experience

- Community, caring & support for community members as persons (students, staff, faculty)
 - Balance between teaching, service and research
 - Overall culture: commitment to the institution as a whole, openness, welcome, supporting atmosphere, collaborative community
- 2) Support for academic freedom/autonomy and professional development (mentioned by 9 groups). More specific comments:
- Freedom, broad definition, generous support
 - Institutional support: autonomy, service work
 - Autonomy
 - Opportunities for personal & professional growth
 - Support of academic creativity, freedom, delivery
- 3) Focus on students and teaching (mentioned by 8 groups). More specific comments:
- Student-centered teaching institution
 - Liberal arts college, mentorship, advising, student-suited programs
 - Promise of liberal arts education: faculty/student relationships, interdisciplinarity, small classes
 - Developing and supporting students to become their most talented, inspiring, creative selves via advocacy, mentoring, and teaching
 - Students are core of our identity; we value their voices
 - Teaching focus: evidence by control over curriculum, small classes, shared goal of being student-centered, support systems for students & faculty
 - Strong focus on teaching: supporting students; other vs. self, collegiality
 - Autonomy for student
 - Commitment to teaching excellence
 - Great students: openness, willingness to challenge preconceived notions, success alter Webster
 - Unflinching Commitment to & focus on students
 - Reputation of university: quality education, caliber of teaching
- 4) Commitment to diversity, inclusion, social justice and change (mentioned by 7 groups). More specific comments:
- Shared spirit of social justice and access to education
 - LGBTQ friendly
 - Historically caring
 - Diversity of students served: individuals embraced for who they are, independent thinkers, "Webster" student, traditional & adult learners
 - Access: socioeconomic statuses, commitment to diversity (racial, socioeconomic, metro, military, international)

- 5) Openness to/support for innovation and creativity (mentioned by 7 groups). More specific comments:
- Open to new things, entrepreneurship, innovation
 - Flexibility and support for curriculum design and program delivery
 - A place to have big dreams and a vision, a place for opportunities
 - History of creative & innovative campus structures (opportunity to get back to this)
 - Historically flexible, innovative
 - Innovation: willingness to change
 - Overall culture: solution seeking & problem solving
- 6) International reach & global perspective (mentioned by 4 groups)
- 7) Interdisciplinarity & intellectual engagement (mentioned by 3 groups)
- 8) Sense that we are doing something that matters: working for positive change by passing knowledge on to future generations and developing students to fulfill their potential (mentioned by 3 groups). More specific comments:
- Developing and supporting students to become their most talented, inspiring, creative selves via advocacy, mentoring, and teaching
 - A place to foster and encourage change, to better the community
 - Build/equip students to become effective citizens

One group carefully connected their ideas, so they are also shared here exactly as they were presented:

Academic Freedom
VIA
interdisciplinary collaboration among colleagues
WITH
Flexibility and support in curriculum design and program delivery
THAT
Allows us to continue to recruit, develop, and support all students to be their most talented,
inspiring, creative, selves via advocacy, mentoring, and teaching
WHICH IN TURN
Makes us better teachers and better humans.

Issues Raised in Discussion (Possible Topics for Future Institutes/Meetings)

Preserving These Qualities as We Change

- We should anticipate working to keep alive the most shared and cherished qualities. Determine which are safe and which are threatened.
- Are things we love about Webster necessarily inherent or intrinsic to it? What are the structures that reinforce the values? Structures/incentives/processes/commitments have been put in place to enforce these values, but this can change. Values and their supports can come under assault.

Reflecting/Building on These Qualities as We Change

- How do we translate these qualities into new forms or modalities?
- How do we keep strong focus on teaching and student support in a more remote teaching environment?
- Constructive imagination: how can we grow?
- How sustainable are our values?

Other Questions and Concerns

- Would colleagues at other universities have similar lists? Is this unique to Webster? LA colleges?
- Are limits & challenges coming from moving from what is inherent in our identity?
- Concern about internationalist reputation that has been fostered. We need to be vigilant about what we mean by "global" and "citizenship"
- Staff must be valued/included
- Need future discussions about frustrations, challenges, barriers
- Need future discussions about how to take action