



February 3, 2005

TO: Campus Community

FROM: Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D.
Provost and Senior Vice President for Educational Affairs

SUBJECT: Current Position of the President and the Provost
on the Vision of Excellence and Focusing the Vision for 2010

We have engaged in numerous conversations with various internal groups, consulted the Board of Trustees, and are talking with officers of other major universities about our vision. We are very pleased with the high level of support we have received for the direction spelled out in the Vision of Excellence and Focusing the Vision for 2010. We are thankful for all of the time that so many individuals have put into crafting and discussing these documents, particularly Sean Wilkinson, who has worked tirelessly and endlessly for this effort.

While the direction set by the Vision of Excellence is widely embraced, we have received some concern and questions regarding Focusing the Vision for 2010. We put out the goals as a tentative list. We intentionally did not elaborate on the goals knowing that we would have to engage the divisions in a discussion of what each will do and what we will do overall to realize excellence in the six key areas. We were hoping that by being intentionally vague we would stimulate rich discussion and promote creativity in considering the means to reach our goal of excellence in all that we do. All along we realized that Focusing the Vision for 2010 would require a great deal more work to agree on the specific goals, determine exactly what each required, and decide how progress would be measured and accountability structured.

Base on our initial review of the long list of responses to the documents, we are recommending the following:

- We are committed to the six areas of excellence with the following modifications:
 - We will add a new area – “Strengthening the Distinctive Catholic and Marianist Principles of Higher Education” or something close to this description.
 - We will combine the Leadership Development area with the final point of excellence: Regional Relationships and Service to Society.
 - The title of each area will be put in a statement beginning with an action verb.
 - We should eliminate the word “intercultural” in the title of the fifth point of excellence because it is being criticized as simply a codeword for diversity. We should use the word diversity in the description of this area of excellence.

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- We believe that staff should be more explicitly included in the text. At this point it reads too much like a document for faculty and professional research staff only.
- Athletics should be more prominently featured as a part of the modified sixth point of excellence.
- Environmental awareness and a recommended plan of action should be specified in the document and directly tied to mission.
- The timeline for Focusing the Vision for 2010 should be extended to 2015.
- The critical challenge ahead is to establish the specific goals for Focusing the Vision for 2015, outline the specific strategies we will need to pursue each, identify those who will lead the effort to reach the goal, specify the resources necessary for each goal's fulfillment, determine how to assess our progress, and establish accountability.
- Image building must be an item which we address in Focusing the Vision for 2015, as must alcohol abuse.
- We have received a good deal of encouragement to rewrite the document so that it is less “academic sounding,” and more crisp and direct.