I. DISCUSSION

1. Update of SWOT analysis

Ray & Melissa

Part I Political, Legal, Financial, Competitive Trends: Threats and Weaknesses

Discussion about the threats and weaknesses of the university:

1. “Greater need for private financial support”
Ray notes that we need to work out budget priorities by late February. He thinks that in the survey results there are some things that are out of our control, like considering as a weakness the geographic location of this university.

Scott noted that some WCU faculty supplement their salary by teaching for University of Phoenix. He also mentioned that we had good technology, good computers, but there’s lack of interaction between students and the use of the updated computers. There’s no frequent interaction between faculty and students.

Ray noted that one of the things that’s going to happen is we just charge less for online course. As we move towards NC Online, resource technology and brand will make a huge difference.

Melissa noted that one obstacle to centralized distance learning programs like that is accreditation. Kyle noted some barriers: private financial support and academic reputation.

Bob said we do have financial support; chair stipends for instance. Melissa noted that in outside financial support we are in the bottom.

2. Increasing competition from public and private institutions for strong students; increase pressure to increase quality and enrollment.

Scott noted that there has to be an increase in salary to retain faculty & staff. Kyle emphasized that staff salaries are largely beyond our control and reiterated that threats come from outside and weaknesses from inside.

Part II Political, Legal, Financial, Competitive Trends: Threats and Weaknesses

Kyle was wondering if there was any confusion in the rating of SWOT items. He was surprised to see the item: “redistribution of federal resources/declining economy may reduce resource for national parks/forests; atmospheric pollution may diminish quality of recreational experience for tourists, adversely affect tourism and state’s economy”.

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Ray considers point 6: “Graduation rates perceived as inadequate are receiving public attention; may affect public funding in the future” to be a significant threat.

Richard noted that we need a presence in Asheville. Scott said that you have to pay for that if you recommend a presence in Asheville. Bob thought a presence in Hendersonville could be much more successful than Asheville.

Scott noted some people used to think that it was easy to graduate from this University which is not true. But the concept is still there. Bob said that ten years ago we had that image. Scott said that now everybody is focused on QUALITY.

Ray thinks that point 2 in that table is the most important one, “Economic growth and changes in structure of the regional economy will continue” and wonders how it impacts the university. Curriculum may need to be updated. Kyle considers that economic growth of the institution is causing a lot of problems: like pressure on housing. As prices for real estate get more expensive, that will affect our ability to recruit faculty and staff. That is going to be a real issue. Bob agreed saying that will contribute to the diminishing pool of applicants to the university.

Scott Higgins and Bob Orr offered to work with Ray to simplify the tables begin working on the model for the changes.

II. NEXT MEETING

Thursday, January 18th, 3-5 pm. Location: HFR 540.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rocio Sharpe