

Opportunities and Challenges

Planning Steering Committee

Discussion Draft 11/12/08

Since late September, the Planning Steering Committee reviewed prior studies, collected ideas from faculty, students, staff, alumni, parents and advisory boards (see separate summary of completed and planned meetings), and met seven times to discuss the vision and the grand challenges and opportunities facing W&M in the next five to ten years. The process of obtaining, reviewing, and summarizing ideas from those various sources continues.

In preparation for the Board of Visitors meetings on November 20 and 21, the PSC has prepared an initial draft list of potential challenges for further discussion. The PSC will continue to edit the challenges, add new ones that may emerge, assemble data and arguments about why the challenges are compelling at this time, and review summaries of collected information. Following the Board meetings, the PSC intends to reduce the list to 6-8 grand challenges.

In short, the PSC proposes these preliminary draft challenges to help focus continuing discussion and analysis. The draft challenges are numbered for reference, but the numbers do not indicate any priority. The list notes the BOV committees whose responsibilities most closely align with the enumerated challenge. If the committee's name is underlined, specific time has been allocated on the committee's agenda to discuss the challenge.

1. Insure the integrity of liberal arts education at W&M. Become an international leader in the development, implementation and dissemination of innovative models for the liberal arts university in the 21st Century.
2. Develop a research model that promotes and supports growth, innovation, and excellence in discipline-based and interdisciplinary research, on its own merits and with students at all levels, as an integral aspect of W&M's commitment to liberal arts education.
3. Transform W&M from a national university that welcomes international experiences to an international university that views global competence and engagement in the worldwide creation and dissemination of knowledge as central elements of its mission.
4. Maintain our current size and favorable student-faculty ratio to sustain high levels of faculty student collaboration and to sustain and enhance the intellectual community that derives from authentic interpersonal connections and relationships in and outside of the classroom and an appropriate balance of academic and co-curricular activities.

5. Position our professional programs to be nationally competitive and essential to the College's reputation and prestige while functioning as full participants in the intellectual life of the College.
6. Assure that W&M is the university of choice for the best pre- and post-baccalaureate students in the Commonwealth who are interested in the unique environment of a research university grounded in the liberal arts.
7. Be a national leader in utilizing the knowledge and intellectual capacity of the university to inform civic engagement, institutional outreach, and economic development.
8. Be a community committed to cultural pluralism, intellectual freedom and diversity.
9. Enlarge our sense of community and institutional pride to ensure that students experience the joy of belonging to a place of great accomplishment, learning, and personal development and leave as alumni with both gratitude and continuing commitment to W&M.
10. Assure that the in- and out-of-class environment is purposely designed to fully engage students, to support the academic enterprise, and to maximize student learning and personal development.
11. Establish a financial model for the College that utilizes, integrates and maximizes multiple revenue sources and prioritizes expenditures in a manner that financially sustains the academic enterprise, student experience, and necessary institutional infrastructure and support functions. Establish a culture of giving beginning in a student's freshman year through his/her lifetime.
12. Adopt and adequately resource best practices in managing and operating institutional support functions including workforce development and investment in the staff, equipment, and information systems that increase efficiency and manage risk while supporting the College's academic and research missions.
13. Construct, operate and maintain a physical plant that provides adequate infrastructure for the College's academic, research, student life, and public service missions while optimizing sustainability, resource conservation, efficiency, aesthetics and accessibility.
14. Implement communications, marketing and branding initiatives that provide clear, focused, consistent messages and unite the various College constituencies in support of strategic priorities.