

Florida Gulf Coast University

Comments on the Mission and Vision Statements

For the 2015 strategic plan – November 2014 Public Forum Input

November 2014

Public Forum Responses

During the public forums held during 2009, the attendees wanted to know more about who completed the online survey. A brief introduction to the survey, numbers of respondents and general findings was added to the presentation for the 2014 public forums:

From October 13, 2014 to November 4, 2014, FGCU posted a questionnaire for all constituents on the FGCU homepage. The purpose of this questionnaire was to collect feedback on our current Vision and Mission statements.

637 individuals responded in anonymity. Because responding was optional, the number of responses per item varied, averaging about 225 responses per item.

In 2009 the same questionnaire was posted and collected about half the responses as the 2014 survey. The questionnaires were made congruent for comparison.

In general, the findings in the 2014 survey were similar to the findings in the 2009 survey, varying only slightly within items.

All faculty, staff, students, and the general public were welcome to attend public forums to discuss the FGCU vision and mission statements. An invitation was posted on the FGCU home page along with a link to the results of the online questionnaire. Multiple broad email invitations were also sent from the Provost's Office.

The following is a summary of feedback received from those forums as well as from the online questionnaire.

General Comments

During the first forum one attendee mentioned that it was important to be mindful of the founding mission (1992) and subsequently revised (2002, 2005, 2010) mission statements of FGCU and to avoid mission drift.

Attendees noted that there has been substantial growth in the number of faculty, staff, and students as well as the overall growth in the population of FGCU's five county service area since the most recent review and revision of the vision and mission statements.

A question was raised about the inclusion of students in this process. Facilitators explained the relationship of student government to the Planning and Budget Council (PBC), with representation of students on each subcommittee of the PBC. Additionally, the survey and invitation to the forums was distributed to all members of the campus community.

According to numbers reported in the Board of Trustees Information System Report (August 2014) student headcount has increased by 23.58% from fall 2009 – fall 2013. The same report indicates a 17.71% increase in full-time employees (faculty and staff).

	2009-2010	2013-2014	% Increase
Student Headcount	11,105	14074	23.58%
Employee Headcount	988	1180	17.71%

One attendee commented that the mission statement had broad statements which allow for multiple interpretations of the meaning of words.

Comments were made regarding the length of the mission statement and that the current mission statement seems long. Suggestions were made that it should be succinct and clear this could then be followed with value statements to address all of these discussion items in more detail.

The founding mission statement had a 684 word count and was 9 paragraphs long. The current mission statement has a 128 word count and is 3 paragraphs long.

Acknowledgement that the FGCU UBOT may desire a more succinct mission statement, but a succinct statement becomes more generic and applicable to multiple institutions of higher education. The 2002 revisions intentionally resulted in a value-driven mission statement.

There was discussion about how broadly the mission statement embraced and understood by new employees and students. When and where do they learn about the mission statement? How do they learn that our university goals stem from the mission statement?

One - The mission statement expresses FGCU's 'chief aim;' ... to fulfill the (academic, cultural, social, and career) expectations of [their] constituents.

One attendee felt that the cultural dimension of FGCU is not articulated clearly enough.

Multiple comments were made about the use of the word "constituents." Attendees commented upon the survey open-ended responses and the use of the term "constituents". Discussion took place regarding the use of constituents and its inclusion of all university beneficiaries (to include students, community members, etc...). This term is meant to include those who attend cultural performances, participate as recipients of service learning, enroll in continuing education initiatives, etc....

The goal is to enable anyone at all to self-identify with FGCU whether faculty, student, staff, or public.

Suggestion to use "students and other constituents."

Notation that in place of constituents, there are other inclusive terms for consideration such as stakeholders.

Two - the mission statement says FGCU will achieve this... by infusing the traditional strengths of a public university with innovative and learning-centered spirit.

Attendees commented upon the survey open-ended responses and the use of the concept "learning-centered". A number of respondents expressed a need for clarity and definition.

Discussion that the learning-centered spirit could be more concrete. Historical perspective shared regarding the decision to promote learning-centeredness as opposed to student-centeredness. Learning-centeredness encompasses the entire institution; staff training; SAC workshops; student affairs functions; classroom instruction; etc....

One attendee wasn't sure what the traditional strengths referred to. This was also expressed within the open-ended questionnaire responses the explanation was that FGCU was established at the turn of the century. The inclusion of traditions, as well as, innovation achieves a balance of history and future. Attendees noted that this may not be as relevant moving forward.

Recommended further discussion on the traditional values of access, breadth, affordability, strong liberal arts foundation, and academic integrity and their place within the mission statement.

Support was expressed for "emphasis on innovation and life-long learning."

A suggestion was made about providing of a glossary of terms regarding what these terms refer to.

Three - It describes the effort of the faculty and staff to transform students' lives and the southwest Florida region.

Discussion took place regarding the use of the work "transform." Overall support was expressed for transformation of both students and the region.

Support was also expressed for the change made to the previous version of the mission statement to include staff as well as faculty.

Four - it seeks to achieve this through the actions of “Outstanding faculty who uphold challenging standards and balance research scholarly activities, and service expectations with their central responsibilities of teaching and mentoring.

Discussion about broadening this statement to include staff. One attendee said that Southwest Florida is our classroom and staff interact with students in much the same way. Discussion that this statement intends to recognize the unique role of faculty and the differences in the class teaching interactions that they perform.

These attributes specifically speak to the responsibilities of faculty and directly relate to performance and evaluation.

Five- it goes on to detail specific methods for fulfillment of the university mission. ‘FGCU continuously pursues academic excellence, practices and promotes environmental sustainability, embraces diversity, nurtures... university’s purpose.’

One attendee recommended inclusion of a statement that specifically addresses the cultural component, “supports cultural experiences.” It was requested that the way our cultural values are reflected within this component of the mission statement be reviewed.

Discussion about the open-ended survey responses and the concern about the volume of methods included. FGCU is not monolithic; not singular, but rather can accomplish many singular things at one time.

Consistency of practice with this component of the mission statement is seen as accurate by the attendees.

Six - Florida Gulf Coast University’s vision statement says that it... will achieve national prominence in undergraduate education with expanding recognition for graduate programs.

Although survey comments suggested that achieving national prominence is a lofty goal, a vision statement is meant to provide challenge and aspirations.

Statement that alignment with the Board of Governors’ Strategic Plan as it relates to national prominence is both relevant and necessary.

Closing comments: Our mission statement is “pretty rock-and-roll.”

This email was received from SAC yesterday afternoon.

After much discussion, SAC has put together our recommended changes/additions to the FGCU Vision and Mission.

Vision

We noticed that the Vision is national; however, the mission is regional. We also feel that our vision has changed from growing to retaining. We feel these two should be reflected in the Vision. We suggest the following verbiage:

“Florida Gulf Coast University will achieve regional and national prominence by providing high quality undergraduate and graduate education and demonstrating leadership in sustainability and nurturance of student growth and success.”

Mission

Overall we feel the Mission is good; however, like the Vision, the Mission is a little out dated. We recommend that “Established on the verge of the 21st century” is removed. We also recommend an additional sentence be added to the second paragraph so that it reads:

“Outstanding faculty uphold challenging academic standards and balance research, scholarly activities, and service expectations with their central responsibilities of teaching and mentoring. *A dedicated staff serves the University and provides excellent academic support in operational, managerial, and technical roles, which have significant impact on student learning, persistence and success.* Working together, faculty and staff of the University transform students’ lives and the Southwest Florida region.”

Thank You,

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