

Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration

Session Summary

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

The RPTA Program met for an offsite meeting on June 9, 2008. The meeting was designed to bring faculty and staff members together to further refine and establish the Program's vision, which will serve as a foundation to meet the challenges facing the Program, the College and the University as a whole. Prompted by a recommendation from the capital campaign readiness assessment to develop a stronger vision, an experienced consultant was sought to provide structure and support to achieve these outcomes, as well as continued team success.

The session included a review of the events and discussions that led up to this point, as well as a series of activities designed to build the program's vision from the ground up. Using four components of the vision – Our Purpose, Our Strengths, The Results We Create and The Value We Add – the group worked individually, in pairs and in small groups to accomplish the day's objectives.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

To begin, Jesse invited everyone to say a few words about the passion and motivation that brought them to the field and to their careers at Cal Poly. As people shared their own stories, there were several common themes, including:

- We love what we do and what we do is part of who we are;
- We have a passion for teaching;
- We feel lucky to be at Cal Poly and on the Central Coast; and
- We are all very talented individuals.

INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEETS

To ensure that all team members begin with a shared foundation of understanding, Jesse provided a workbook with seven distinct worksheets. Each worksheet was designed to prompt thinking regarding a critical aspect of the Program. Individuals completed the worksheets independently, and then shared the highlights with a partner. The worksheets included the following core questions:

- What Is our Program's Purpose?
- What Is the Unique role of our Program at Cal Poly?
- What Are the Program's Pressing Challenges and Best Opportunities?
- What Are the Program's Strengths and Weaknesses?
- Does the Purpose of the Program Need to be Revisited?
- What Value Does the Program Deliver?
- How Should the Program Define Results?
- And, What Should We Strengthen or Abandon?

FOUR COMPONENTS OF OUR VISION

Jesse designed a conceptual framework that blends aspects of the Drucker Non-Profit Self-Assessment process and other methods to help shape the concept of the vision. Working in two teams, the small groups each discussed and built consensus on two of the four components that contribute to the vision. The final framework will be completed in September; however, the initial results included the following:

Our Purpose:

- Challenge the students
- Create ambassadors of the field (RPTA)
- Grow, change, and develop students in RPTA to possess: critical thinking; selflessness/service-mindedness; risk taking attitude, failing forward; and an independent, confident, sense of self

Our Strengths:

- Relationship, commitment to students
- High quality students and teachers
- Healthy faculty relationships
- CP and reputation
- We exemplify "learn by doing"
- Location
- Learning laboratories
- RPTA + Rep = CP
- Creativity with limited resources
- Diversity

Our Results:

- High grad rates, retention and placement rates
- Produce/contribute applied research
- Develop passionate leaders engaged in the RPTA profession
- Sustain best faculty, curriculum, students and partnerships

The Value We Add:

- Embrace and personify "learn by doing"
- Provide state of the art learning environment
- Deliver quality education High grad rates
- Service based
- (Leisure time, celebrations, family/balance, fitness, social capital, healthy communications, play, shaping industries)

QUICK DISCUSSIONS

Throughout the session, Jesse facilitated quick content discussions regarding several key themes that emerged in preparation for the event. Brief discussions included the following topics:

- Load/Power=Margin

Based on workloads and commitments, all team members all reported a razor thin positive margin and the need to "acquire more power" through additional personnel

- Who Is Our Customer?

After several rounds of discussion, it was agreed upon that the Program's customers include:

Primary Customer: *Students*

Supporting Customer: *The University, The Industry, Parents*

- What's On The Table?

Some form of fundraising is going to happen and the need to further establish our vision and future direction remains a priority. We need to look at this as "one of many tools" we have to help us create a sustainable model for this program.

The following themes remain to be discussed:

- Competing Commitments
- Skilled Incompetence
- Image Re-Design (internal/external)

OUR AGREEMENTS

There is no formal milestone in this process until the October Advisory Council Meeting. In order to use the next few months to further iterate on the themes of the day, Jesse invited the group to make achievable commitments for the summer break. These tasks include:

<i>Personal Challenge</i>
➤ Personal – I will think about how we can more effectively communicate the value that we add
➤ I will brainstorm the "relevance to life" them and reflect more on PASSION
➤ I will devote more time to this process through researching other visions, continuing to think about these themes and to start talking about them with other
➤ I will think of more catchy slogans
➤ I will reflect on value of R, P, T, A in my own life
➤ I will articulate value of R, P, T, A to and with Rec 101
➤ I will research new and different ways to articulate the value we add
➤ I will enforce value in Rec 210
➤ I'm willing to continue working on sharpening our purpose, strengths, values and results
➤ Live out our purpose by creating a challenging graduate research class
➤ I will continue to build on the value we add by enhancing learn by doing opportunities in classes

NEXT STEPS

Jesse emphasized the importance of giving the vision time to come together. Rather than artificially naming it and planning tasks around it, Jesse shared the perspective that it is more important to internalize it until it is easily articulated and shared with others. In that spirit, the next steps include:

1. Each person will take intentional steps to: live out our purpose; utilize and build upon our strengths; communicate the value we add; and measure our results.
2. Using this meeting summary as a "Draft", each person will add to and refine the various elements that contribute to forming the vision; and
3. Bring Jesse to a future Program meeting in September to check-in, further refine the vision, and establish the goals and expectations for moving forward.