12/5/16 Department Chair focus group notes – taken by Tammy Peery

1. **How do you see the theme of social justice and innovation being realized in the College's Mission and Vision?**
    - One of the social justice things we do is access – help students from all economic backgrounds and classes, including undocumented students to take class. We've had open discussions about civility, social justice, being a responsible citizen in the last month, both formal and informal.
    - The mission statement talks about making students accountable and part of the community, but the fact that the chairs had to have it passed out to them shows that it's not ingrained in our everyday work at the college – students probably haven't seen it before. We don't do a great job of helping students be accountable for their success and being part of the community.
    - in our departments we interweave the civic responsibility into our curriculum, but I agree that I don't think we get the message out on the mission or vision. It would be nice to have signs around the school – we have lots of bare walls that we could write on (have students do it as an art project?)
    - We need to do better about communicating to the students; there were posters everywhere in the late 90s.
    - The innovation piece is realized in the educational excellence part of our mission and vision – teachers innovating in the classroom.
    - For social justice – lots of programming geared to allowing a level playing field, like ACES, ATP that make connections between mission/vision/values with the programs & initiatives.
2. Detail steps used by your department in the selection and hiring of Part-time Faculty
    - we open a position, search specific candidates who meet requirements, then have interview with discipline coordinator and chair (History, Philosophy, world languages). We work together to make sure discipline expertise is included, then we decide together to whom we want to offer a position. First they must complete the online application, and we double- check their degrees & experience.
    - often times the process includes scrambling to find people at the last minute – that we feel "good enough" about putting them into a classroom
    - how we advertise and recruit has been inconsistent among different disciplines. When we hire full time, HR asks where we want to advertise, but that's not the case with part-time. I get a lot of referrals, and we backtrack the hiring process: calling people then sending them through the website/Taleo process rather than the other way around. This is the same in nutrition and health sciences. Same in chemistry – we get a lot of cold calls that don't necessarily fill in the online application first, so we're vetting them first.
    - Are there any guidelines collegewide? if there are national certifications, like in nursing, there are.
    - the 3 math chairs agreed on what degrees they would consider as satisfying our qualifications. We needed to define and agree on what "related fields" are.

- The union also put out guidelines about who does what (chair responsibility vs. coordinator responsibility) in terms of hiring part time faculty
- Health has collegewide guidelines on who is qualified to teach collegewide. Chairs of counseling are similar – worked on a common job description.
- No collegewide template – done department by department

3. Scheduling – how do we ensure there are enough sections of courses that students need to complete their degree requirements and that those offerings are available to all students? How do we evaluate our scheduling practices? What could we be doing better?
    - For Part time faculty sections in WD&CE, we wait and see if the courses fill – using the "go nogo" forumula created by Dr. Cain . It's in software online (in butterfly report for WD&CE). Decision is made a couple of days ahead. That's been in place for 15 years. Do you evaluate that formula? It's the same formula, but it's based on salaries of faculty, numbers of students, - based on covering costs – shooting to break even. We usually don't run 4 or fewer courses.
    - One of the challenges of advising students – at Germantown there are only a few offerings. It's difficult to build a schedule when they have to go to one campus to take chemistry and physics and the rest at another campus to make a realistic schedule. Definitely true of the sciences at Germantown – it's a challenge. Another chair adds that of the students at the TP/SS focus group, most had to attend all 3 campuses to get the courses that they needed. They noticed big difference between the campuses, both in terms of Gen Ed and higher level STEM courses.
    - we contemplated night classes, but we couldn't get them to run. We did a survey among major students about how and when they wanted to take courses; that's how we built the courses in our schedule. Our waitists for our later professional courses are getting longer. If we can't offer more sections, students will get stuck. If I add more offerings, I meet the student needs, but come up against the seat utilization numbers. I need to increase my offerings for my majors, but we may not be big enough to meet college needs. We use the waitlist, evaluate through advising.
    - if students ask about nursing, they ask why we don't run a nursing program in the evenings and on Saturdays. Our students need to meet competencies, and they don't meet them on weekends and Saturdays because of clinical and rotations – patients are sleeping, so they can't meet the criteria for licensing in evening and weekend courses.
    - other than waitlists, there's no other mechanism for students to inform departments of a need or demand. If we knew, we could respond more appropriately.
    - There are limited options for 200 level courses in the evenings, both in terms of types of courses and ft/pt faculty. There is a problem of access; part time faculty don't hold office hours.
    - Our distance education common course attempt was denied because it was a 200 level class. If DE was more open, we could increase online offerings/alternate schedules for 200 level classes.

- There is frustration among faculty about having courses scheduled/cancelled at the start of the semester. For Humanities days we tried to bring in a speaker and tried to tie it to a specific class. We lined it up with a women in literature course, then it got cancelled. We wound up having to line it up with 3 sections – forward planning is embarrassing and difficult.
- For 200 level courses in English – they aren't required; if you cancel one, from the College's perspective, a student could take any other 200 level lit course, but the courses aren't the same, - from a scheduling perspective, they're interchangeable, but students don't see them that way; the content is important. It is disruptive for a student. When there is a sequence it might be easier or more straightforward. Humanities courses can be taken in different orders (because of prerequisite levels), so they are harder to predict.
- We spend time developing courses then don't offer them because of seat numbers – no opportunities to grow classes

4. Data driven/informed decisions have been made – give some examples
   - each department has programs to ensure students meet success and retention, licensure exams. Some are in our HIM (Health information management), all graduate through a test so that they leave ready to walk into a job. Curriculum review committee updates where they feel students may be lacking. With WD&CE… [stepped out no notes to complete response] Student success counselor – Debra Johnson
   - World languages started an initiative based on DFW rates; we decreased by 6% - applied for a grant to add more of these initiatives. Specifically, for Spanish 101 -one resource we provide is virtual tutoring in areas of history, economics, languages, and other disciplines. New focus is on French 101 and History 101. Everything is based upon the DFW reports, though we'd like to change it to the ABC report to give it a more positive focus. History and political science follow the same data, meet with individual faculty, esp. adjuncts to try to find out why students got Fs – get information from faculty to see what they think would have helped the students to pass (offer workshops in addition to tutoring)
   - on DFW rates, we need to flesh out the W. Some of those Ws are successes – they might get an internship, maybe they're getting a B rather than an A. It's more difficult for a student to withdraw. But those W's are getting lumped in as failures, but sometimes they're withdrawing for reasons of success. Faculty feel penalized for students withdrawing. If we are going to use those DFW rates, we really need to flesh out the W.
   -
5. What are the challenges faced by your department or discipline as you conduct assessments – Gen Ed and CAR- reflect upon results, and close the loop?
   - Health Sciences/Nursing. We don't have a problem with the assessment piece, but we do have problems when clinical sites ask for criminal background checks, etc, and we see at the beginning of every semester, students have gone through a lot to get there,

but once the background check is done, they can't participate. Students pick the day they take the drug test, and then they fail. (Chemistry is not required for this program). I can't say "yes, this federal record will be a problem" because we are an open access institution. Therefore, students think they can beat the requirement.

- our students are very confused about marijuana legalization and don't understand that government jobs, etc don't want people smoking for 5 years. Our students don't get this.
- ensuring that the assessments are meaningful and are assessing what faculty think they are assessing is a challenge. Regular assessments imposed from Gen Ed courses and program assessments – these are viewed as something added on top of what's regularly done in our program courses. What goes into the DFW grades isn't uniform across sections, yet they're all accounted together and collegewide rates are done. Are we mixing apples and oranges if you don't have a uniform distribution that goes into grade percentages? We see that as a big challenge. More effort needed to ensure that assessments are meaningful and that there's a culture of "this is what we do all the time, not once every 5 years." People don't understand the difference between a grade vs. a score – everything gets thrown all together in the DFW rates. STEM faculty understand what is meaningful data and what's not.
- assessments that we do need to mean something for the discipline and the future of the discipline. Faculty have a "check the boxes" attitude toward it. Data we get doesn't give accurate information about what's going on in the courses. There is frustration about just doing assessment to get it done rather than for it to be meaningful. The first time we did Gen Ed assessment, there was a question about whether students improved as they progressed through the semester. We said we couldn't tell because of where they came in. We don't know how they changed over the time of the course. This wasn't addressed – get it done, write your reflections, and move forward. We don't know if we did better or not because we don' t have that data
- Some part time faculty are given virtually no instruction about assessment at all. They may or may not get an e-mail, and they are approached the last week of classes or after the class ends. It's not a holistic approach – it's catch whomever you can
- we've asked part time faculty to come in and have the conversation to be in the loop, but they can't always come in – an email is not the same as a discussion.
- can we better leverage technology? We record through gotomeeting and listen to the link.
- Entering each student's assessment score by score – is tedious, and faculty dread that. We need to create a culture where part time faculty are integrated from the start in a team effort so that they understand from the beginning, and are part of the creation of the assessment tools as well, as opposed to something that only shows up every few years.

6. To what degree are your units aligned with MC2020 – how do you get what you want to do to the bigger table? Is the "on paper" different from "in practice"

12/5/16 Department Chair focus group notes – taken by Tammy Peery

- Yes, several are also given added things midstream that they're not sure how to align with goals and may interfere with originally stated goals (all are nodding and smiling)
- everything is aligned through dean and chair to make sure it all aligns with MC 2020, but then at the department level, we're more specific about priorities. I need to provide specific activities that align at the department level. I don't go back to my goals throughout the year (don't go to taleo to look). We meet with our dean monthly to assess how things are on track and being followed through. I talk to my full and part time faculty before these meetings to see if anyone has anything to add.
- STEM is similar. There's a program goals big document that we created 2 years ago for the entire unit. It drilled down to the level of what's being done in the programs at the course level. It's a 5year roadmap with clear metrics embedded for retention, graduation, etc. This document lives in the academic affairs office – every unit has the programs. We also have our own at the program level with metrics and strategies we're employing to meet the benchmarks. We've articulated how we assess these. Dr. Rai's office should have that.
- All programs were asked to do this, high enrollment programs got feedback and continued. Smaller programs did not get feedback and may be more out of touch.
- This seems to be a gap in Student Affairs. My chair goals are not aligned that way. Chemistry chair shares this feeling. The taleo goals are easy to lose track of; bigger goals get lost in the wash of day to day things like CAR & Gen Ed certification that get thrown back at us.
- There is a second disconnect between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs priorities. When academic chairs share priorities given from Academic Affairs leadership, it's surprising to counseling faculty. It creates a sense of conflict and disconnect – they want to know where these priorities are coming from. The differences in processes and priorities has made it very difficult to coordinate together
- All programs did what the Engineering Chair described (in bullet 3), but only top enrolled programs have follow through. If you're not part of the top enrolled, it went to a black hole – we haven't been asked to follow up on it; there hasn't been any referral back to that – did anyone read it? At the end of the year, you're asked to look at what you've done to meet the 2020 vision. We make a list of what we've done and back align what we've done, rather than plan that alignment from the start.
- Is this aligned with Academic program review? I align them when I do my evaluation and goals. It's not as well thought out as it should be. They're aligned to my expectations, but not aligned to what the College's expectations are.
- Counseling Chair - I agree; haphazardly, it turns out that my goals and the colleges' are aligned. I don't think there's an intentional process that aligns at the College level.
- we don't participate in the budgeting process. We give feedback along the way, but it's not integrated at all with the goals.
- In WD & CE we need to meet the needs of the program, so we go out and find vendors when we need to.

12/5/16 Department Chair focus group notes – taken by Tammy Peery

- we don’t have active participation in budget decisions. We are informed by e-mail. Everyone in the room agrees – there is an email that says” this is the budget,” and that’s it.

7. How does the new administrative structure and the revised role of chairs promote effectiveness and support the themes of inclusiveness and open communication?
    - What has helped is the alignment of the deans to be collegewide so that each discipline is talking to the same dean. Some areas are still doing different things on each campus, but it's a step in the right direction.
    - there's also a difference between those chairs who are collegewide chairs vs. campus discipline based chairs.
    - some chairs are getting much more feedback and support than others – level of support is dependent upon who your dean is. Dean's aren't working consistently or providing the same level of support.
    - this is also true at the provost level – at this line the communication changes – like a horrible game of telephone. DFW rates were a good example – people heard different things at the different AULT meetings. The same issue happened with the Seat capacity issue – when did you need to start cancelling courses? Some deans said wait and see before cancelling, others cancelled weeks early. This was "nutty."
    - Types of meetings are different - some chairs are getting much more face time than others. Definitely getting different messages from different AULT meetings.
    - The logic of the restructuring works, but the people in place don't have the skills or abilities to communicate that information effectively across the College. They don't have the resources to do it right. The dean job changed, and the training for the deans didn't.
    - for student affairs – the way the deans are structured is different; they oversee specific areas and are not campus-based, so they oversee an area, but not the people on other campuses in that area, so sometimes it creates confusion – people ask, "do I need to do this because it's not really coming from **my** dean." I experience a similar thing as collegewide chair.
    - The information in the bullet above is just for counseling. We could be doing a better job of coordinating the 3 areas of access, engagement, success, etc. I feel like sometimes we're working separately.
    - my chair and deans work well together and are collaborating like we never have in the past – fantastic. Challenge has been the logistics of physical space. Now I share a building with people who used to be in my department but are now under a different dean. This affects supplies (who pays for the toner in this classroom). ½ of my department is now across campus. My dean is at G and I'm at TP, which does impact us and make things more challenging, particularly in terms of building relationships. Some of my faculty members I can see anytime I'm at my office, and others I can only see by appointment because they're so far away.
8. Compliance report: Do you currently collect and save information on student complaints? If so, what data are you capturing? And under what circumstances?

12/5/16 Department Chair focus group notes – taken by Tammy Peery

- I observed that a student was upset, turned on her phone and started videotaping , saying, "say that again". If we look only at written – our students don't write; I don't want to encourage them to submit videos, but we should include videos in formal complaints. (Melissa Gregory notes that we don't currently take video as evidence – they can be altered and are in possession of the complaintant. Better to just stop the conversation)
- I keep a journal of every student encounter (name, m# date time, why they're meeting). That's helpful for me to go back and find things. My predecessor developed a complaint form that students could submit. Most of the time, they come in and want to talk, but don't want to put their name on anything; they want to be anonymous. It does make students think about how serious something is, but makes it very difficult to collect data. I can't tell you how many complaints I get. What I would define as a complaint (someone who comes to complain about something they're unhappy about), I'm able to resolve most of the time. I take notes, and students see that I take them and that they're being taken seriously. I ask what resolution they want – they don't know. I say I'll follow up with the professor and follow up. 99% of the time, the professor then takes it and resolves it themselves.
- Vicki: - do students start with faculty then move to the chair? I don't know, some start there, but others want to talk about the faculty, not to the faculty.
- When I was chair of English we had a similar process – I think Elizabeth has continued to do that now at Rockville. The student was encouraged to talk to the faculty member first. Same type of conversation – what resolution are you expecting, what could be done?
- I don't have a journal, but I encourage students to be more formal before they walk in. They must send an email telling me what they want to talk to me about in advance. I have an email folder of all of those conversations. I don't go back to them, but I don't get rid of them. It helps students think about what they're doing and saying. Grade appeal process is same form and process as English uses, as described in the previous bullet
- most situations are resolved at department level though a conversation with the faculty member. A grade appeal will advance to the dean level, and sometimes students don't want a resolution, they just want people to listen.
- DSS gets a lot of complaints from students about not being accommodated. We must respond – usually documented in the case notes for the student (which are required). If the student feels discriminated against, then we move it forward to the office of compliance. We follow our set procedure.
- we have a collegewide process for grade appeal, but It's not clear.
- The journal (described in bullet 2) is one of concerns – she could do a trend analysis to see who was concerned about what and how many convert to something more formal. Some of us only keep records on the scary ones rather than keeping track of all that we could really learn from.

12/5/16 Department Chair focus group notes – taken by Tammy Peery

- Sometimes after you've met with someone several times, you need to file a BIT report – this is another of tracking.
- Sometimes students come to counselors first because they don't know where else to go. We resolve some, explain the process. Make sure counselors understand the process is important.