

DEANS' MEETING 11/08/08 MEETING SUMMARY

Attendance: Marc Johnson (Provost)
Manos Maragakis (Engineering)
Heather Hardy (Liberal Arts)
Greg Mosier (Business Administration)
Karen Hinton (Cooperative Extension)
Jeff Thompson (Science)
Jerry Ceppos (Journalism)
Bill Sparkman (Education)
Dave Thawley (CABNR)
Steve Zink (Library/IT)
Marsha Read (VPR)

Discussion Topics:

Development
To be added.

UNAE

Marsha Read led the discussion. She gave some background information on the formation and budgetary funding for the UNAE. She noted the provost has asked for advice on whether the academy should be maintained, closed, or redirected. One dean noted that other centers were being required to undergo review and that most were being told they must be self-sustaining. The academy should be asked to "share the pain." Another dean recommended that if it continues, the academy report to a committee of the deans involved/interested in the academy rather than to the provost. Right now, there is no ownership by the colleges. This step would likely lead to better visibility and support for the academy.

One dean questioned whether UNAE accomplishes elevation of the university. He noted that it does help us say that UNR stands for something. A few deans noted that the academy is in direct competition with their programs. One dean said the faculty in his college do not support UNAE because of this. He shared that his department chairs look at the budgetary support given to UNAE and question that.

Another question posed was this: What is the return on the investment into the UNAE? Until now, it has survived on the \$500,000 budget plus Walker River money. Most of that money goes for overhead (stipends, salaries, etc.) One dean noted that back when the academy was started he had the concern that we were not going about it correctly. He feels it should have started with people getting together to work on environmental programs, with a structure coming later. The structure of an academy being created at the outset was only appropriate if the work could not be done any other way. The only reason UNAE remains viable is if it can do something that we cannot do otherwise. This dean has not seen that yet and did not expect that it would happen.

One thing that has happened is the increased visibility with Lake Tahoe research. However, it was felt that this had more to do with Mike Collopy than the Academy. Many felt that this visibility would likely continue with a different mechanism.

It was noted that the sustainability effort is starting from the ground—people getting together to coordinate efforts. They will determine if the project is going to be bigger than all the individual parts. If so, then perhaps a center will need to be created. The problem with UNAE is that a center was created with the idea of seeing if it could have a strong return. There are some examples where the academy has brought faculty together on grants. However, most of the grant activity of UNAE is in the form of pass-through grants—they would have come in anyway.

Deans felt there was a lot of overhead for the center. It was felt that the director spends a lot of time selling the academy internally.

Another dean noted that the academy was formed under the concept of mimicking what our aspirational peers were doing. However, we don't have the infrastructure or money to support these entities. That happens here a lot. Some would say that the academy creates a distraction from what is going on in the colleges. The academy hasn't emphasized our strengths; rather, it has built itself and sells itself. The only thing that can be said is that it does something special and helps us create a mark.

It was felt that the visibility the academy provides is good, but the group wondered if there were other ways to create it. The \$500,000 budget is a lot of money, especially at this institution. All agreed that Mike has done a good a job as anyone could have done. One dean felt that if Mike left, there may not be the leadership there to take his place anyway. Most of the university's strengths are in the colleges or the university itself—not in the theme or in the center. There is a need for a coordinator of environmental programs, but a committee or council of deans could provide that leadership and at the same time create buy in. Currently, there is less buy in because there is an artificial entity and that entity is in competition. A point person for the university's environmental programs is needed, but that someone could be a volunteer. However, the deans recognized that being a volunteer (w/o compensation) for something like this is not the climate here. Perhaps an individual with a stipend could accomplish this. A \$10,000 or \$12,000 stipend is a lot less than \$500,000. There was an agreement that we need to focus like a laser on academic rankings and academic programs. We need to stop doing things and being things that we are not.

One dean questioned what the impact of the academy on our public or students has been. It was felt that some impact had been made in Tahoe but that was about it. The issue of the Interdisciplinary Graduate program that now reports to the academy was mentioned.