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### MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY REPORT (2012-2013) UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

March 30, 2012

Top of the Commons, LIU Post

#### Meeting Minutes

#### Present

Robert Altholz, Sylvia Blake, Margaret Boorstein, Jennifer Browne, Kimberly Volpe-Casalino, Claude Cheek, Liz Ciabocchi, Joan Digby, Gabrielle Eskin, Paul Forestell, Heather Gibbs, Sheila Gunther, Bill Gustafson, Gale Haynes, Jeffrey Kane, Lori Knapp, Leon Lachman, Mary M. Lai '42, John Lonie, Chantal Marajh, Kathy Hill-Miller, Kathy Morley, Theresa Mullarkey, Ed Shorin H'99, David J. Steinberg (Chair), David Taft, Diana Thompson (Recorder), Edward Travaglianti, Philip Wong

#### Unable to Attend

Antonia Alafriis '98, George Baroudi, Fran Bonsignore, Jared Cibrowski, James Clarke, David Cohen, John Ehrenberg, Jackie Favaloro, Cris Gleicher, Jermaine Isaac, Bob Jahelka '85, Carol Kennedy, Eric Krasnoff, Denise Larkin, John Lutz, Mabel Martinez, Alister Murray '96, Joel Press '68, Daniel Rodas, Gladys Schrynemakers, Kathryn McCusker-Skelly '10, Ronald Sylvestri '66, Jacqueline Torres, Joram Warmund, Lauren Williams, Anne Winberry

President David Steinberg welcomed attendees and indicated that the work of the University Mission Statement Committee is specific in its scope. The group must reflect on the current mission statement to gauge its relevance, breadth and depth in the context of the preliminary themes and findings emerging from the Working Groups preparing the 2013 Self-Study Report for Middle States. A small subcommittee will be established and charged with refining, revising and and/or expanding the University Mission Statement.

#### Overview

Drafting & Oversight Committee Co-Chairs Lori Knapp and Heather Gibbs summarized the self-study process to date. The University Mission Statement Committee was first convened in November 2010. Since that time, the Working Groups have been engaged in an intensive analysis of available and relevant data. The University's current mission statement, with its student-centered focus on *Access and Excellence*, served as the framework within which the Working Groups conducted their analysis and assessment.

## **Working Group Reports**

Brooklyn Campus Provost Gale Haynes, Co-Chair of Working Group 1A, stated that Brooklyn finds its strength in the community of teachers, students and staff that shares a vision and purpose, always seeking to empower students. LIU Post Provost Paul Forestell described the efforts of the campus-based Working Group as focusing on key questions that attempt to describe the nature of the campus, the essence of its purpose, the student body it serves, and the means by which education is delivered. The draft chapter report attempts to highlight the importance of leading students to a sense of self-accountability and instilling in them a desire and drive to be “masters of their own education after LIU.”

Phil Wong, Professor of Psychology at Brooklyn, stated that at Brooklyn, Working Group 1B has taken a rigorous approach to addressing issues related to student learning outcomes. Integration across the different levels of the campus is occurring in areas such as learning communities, student services, financial aid, and curricular and co-curricular learning. At Brooklyn, a sense of community is very much a part of the student experience. Professor Margaret Boorstein, Chair of Earth and Environmental Science at LIU Post, indicated that teaching self-responsibility to students encourages them to think on their own. The assessment process is built on a platform of collaboration and is strongly evidence-based.

Vice President for Academic Affairs Jeffrey Kane, shared that questions of community also are part of the deliberations of Working Group 2. The many stakeholders of the University exist as one group, and yet conflicts of interest may exist. Is the University fully integrated? How do we organize ourselves as a community when each individual has a set of rights? How do we demonstrate unity of the whole? How do we maintain the integrity of the parts?

Findings from Working Group 3 indicate faculty members, in particular, share concerns about the distribution of resources across the institution. The dissemination of information across units appears to be uneven. Working Group 3 Co-chair Robert Altholz suggested that without appropriate resources, no institution can fulfill its purpose -- “No money, no mission.” As stated in the University’s Strategic Agenda, LIU must strengthen its ability to raise funds and optimize tuition revenue.

Liz Ciabocchi, Associate Vice President for Instructional Technology and Faculty Development, provided an update on Working Group 4 which has been immersed in matters related to teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Clearly, access and excellence are relevant to technology-enhanced teaching, but defining access can be a difficult task.

## **Discussion and Reflection of Mission and Emerging Themes**

President Steinberg reminded the committee that the University has made a commitment to promoting internationalization, and suggested that any new mission statement might need to incorporate language that references this focus on promoting and embracing global education. Diversity, inclusiveness and the way we make connections with the outside world are salient themes. He added that the words ‘excellence’ and ‘access’ describe, in somewhat passive terms, what the University offers to prospective students, but do not fully describe how the institution

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works to empower all members of the community -- students, faculty, and staff -- to develop personal excellence.

Professor Joan Digby argued strongly in favor of keeping a reference to ‘excellence’ as it sets an appropriate goal for those pursuing higher learning, encouraging students to realize their full potential as learners and citizens of the world. Others, including Vice President Kane suggested that the word ‘excellence’ fails to convey what the University actually does and what it values, asking, “What distinguishes LIU’s excellence from that of other institutions?” If one goal is to empower students through learning, then the University must integrate learning as a meaningful and purposeful activity in students’ lives. Kathy Hill-Miller, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Post argued that it is important to keep a reference to excellence in the mission statement in order to convey the notion of recognizing potential and aspiring towards higher goals. Provost Forestell wondered if the catchphrase “Access and Excellence” encapsulates the intrinsic notion of describing how the University labors to deliver its “product” to students.

LIU Post Chancellor Tess Mullarkey indicated that the existing mission statement has served the institution well as a benchmark against which to evaluate its efficacy. Any change in that focus will likely have an impact on future decision making. Chancellor of LIU Riverhead and LIU Brentwood Ed Shorin further noted that the University provides excellence in education in order for students to reach the uppermost limits of their capabilities and capacities. Vice President Kane stated that if ‘excellence’ is used it should describe something at which the institution excels at. Similarly, ‘access’ should define in clear terms the institution’s true sense of purpose.

Provost Haynes agreed with Dr. Kane, adding that the verbs used in the current mission statement could be stronger and more effective. Provide – is not a word of inclusion; “Access” – what do we do to enable the student to move through the process? The student is not the only group; we must include all of our community members. We must be active and engaging and be participatory, not reacting. Professor John Lonie of Pharmacy added that we have access to lots of things, and asked, “What does the University do for its students that distinguishes it from other colleges in the region?” Professor Sheila Gunther, Chair of the Foreign Language Department at Post, argued in favor of drawing attention to one unique aspect of LIU -- the highly personal attention provided to students. College of Pharmacy Chancellor Leon Lachman voiced his opinion that faculty attention is a critical component in the development of the student’s potential.

Provost Forestell observed that LIU provides integrated education in the classroom, outside the classroom, online and around the world. Dean Hill-Miller further reflected on the difference between transformation and preparation. Is transformation better than empowerment? Is empowerment too political a term? Are students’ lives transformed as a result of their LIU experiences? Perhaps, empowerment is too limited; reflective allows you to look within. Chancellor Mullarkey also suggested revisiting the use of the word ‘provide,’ noting that the mission of LIU is to educate and transform. The mission statement must drive planning activities as well as decision-making.

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Lori Knapp reiterated that as the committee reflects on the emerging self-study, central themes have begun to emerge. It is important for the mission statement to be integrally connected to the University's Strategic Agenda. It must establish the framework for clearly defined and articulated goals. Chief Operating Officer of LIU Hudson, Sylvia Blake, stated that the existing mission statement seems "passive and dated." She suggested seeking ways to preserve the concept of "Access and Excellence" while expressing the ideas in more active terms such as "inspires excellence" or "encourages excellence." Phil Wong observed that words such as 'empower' and 'transform' may fail to convey the notion of the student being the nucleus of the action. Provost Haynes commented that 'transform' suggests that "We don't like who you are."

### **Next Steps**

- A drafting subcommittee will be created to begin the work of rewriting the University's mission statement.
- The University Mission Statement Committee will meet next on May 2, 2012, at LIU Brooklyn, to review the recommended revised mission statement.