A “Who’s Who” of the Strategic Planning Group

BY NANCY HEWISON

PILLAR: Infrastructure

In August, the Planning and Operations Council (POC) in consultation with strategic planning consultant, Paul Meyer, determined the basic membership of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) of the Libraries, Press, and Copyright Office. POC also advised the Libraries Administration on additional viewpoints for possible inclusion.

Under Paul’s guidance the SPG will identify the conditions that will affect our organization in the next five years (2011-1016) by defining assumptions about our future environment and critical uncertainties inherent in that future. SPG will review the accomplishment of our present strategic plan and develop strategic goals and objectives for the next five years.

A broad spectrum of perspectives is vitally important in forming a group with such responsibilities. The SPG membership meets this goal by drawing together POC members; the dean and other Dean’s Council members; representatives from the administrative/professional staff, the clerical/service staff, and the faculty; and individuals in positions with particular responsibilities. The resulting 37-member group includes nearly one-quarter of the approximately 160 employees of the Libraries, Press and Copyright Office.

Planning and Operations Council (all POC members)
Bracke, Paul
Brandt, Scott
Doan, Tomalee
Hewison, Nancy
Kantner, Pat
Killion, Vicki
McNeil, Beth
Oakley, Heather
Purvis, Lisa
Van Epps, Amy
Ward, Sue
Weiner, Sharon

Dean’s Council (DC members not already included as POC members)
Ferullo, Donna
Mullins, Jim
Schumaker, Judy
Watkinson, Charles

Libraries Administrative/Professional Staff Advisory Committee (two LAPSAC representatives)
Gill, Amanda
Winks, Amy

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Strategic Planning Focus Group Meetings
Monday, September 27, 2010
1:00 p.m. - 4 p.m.
HIKS B848
Or
Tuesday, September 28, 2010
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
HIKS B848
Register with Linda Foster

Purdue’s Bellwether of Diversity: The Life and Legacy of Dr. Cornell Bell
Archives & Special Collections
September 23 - December 29, 2010
HSSE 4th floor

Distinguished Lecture Series featuring T.C. Boyle
Rescheduled
March 29, 2011
Fowler Hall
Stewart Center

The Golden Age: Indiana Literature (1880-1920)
September 17 - October 15, 2010
Hicks Undergraduate Library

Celebrate 50 Years with Purdue University Press
Wednesday, September 29, 2010
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
STEW370
Paul D. Meyer Returns to the Libraries for Strategic Planning Process

PILLAR: Infrastructure

Paul Meyer is no stranger to the Purdue Libraries. Paul successfully guided the Libraries through its 2006 - 2011 strategic planning process and is returning to campus to help us to develop our 2011 - 2016 plan.

See how Paul plans to help us understand the process and how important it is for each of us to participate in the focus group meetings and lend your support to colleagues as they attend several planning meetings over the next several months.

Q. What are some of the things that come to mind when you think about your past experiences with Purdue Libraries?
A. Last strategic planning process was five years ago –

- The emphasis on innovation and creativity
- The importance of connecting the libraries strategic plan to the university’s areas of focus – learning, discovery and engagement
- Articulating the unique benefits of the libraries to three important stakeholder groups – undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty
- Assisting with creating a new brand identity for the libraries
- Watching two students communicate to each other in the Student Union through only their laptops
- Being introduced to Irish oatmeal

Q. What types of organizations have you worked with?
A. I have worked with over 200 organizations in practically every career and industry you could

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Q. What types of organizations have you worked with?
A. I have worked with over 200 organizations in practically every career and industry you could
think of (test me and see if it’s true!!) and many library-related organization. I had the privilege of a long engagement with Yale University Library through a recommendation provided by Jim.

Q. Why should we do a strategic plan?
A. Strategic planning assists entities in creating focus on specific areas and/or activities within a given time horizon in order to strategically build an organization to reach an articulated envisioned future. It is potentially more than just "process improvement."

Q. How can we justify doing a strategic plan when we are working within tight financial constraints?
A. When organizations are experiencing financial challenges is the most important time to do strategic planning because the plan can assist in creating greater clarity and focus on how to use finite resources. Strategic planning does not have to be about "adding more to the already filled plate," but assisting entities in using finite resources for activities that are strategic and responsive to changing environmental conditions.

Q. Why is it important for each staff member to participate in the process?
A. In order to gather as much insight as possible on environmental conditions and ideas for future positioning. Staff have the unique opportunity to influence the outcomes of the plan.

BY NANCY HEWISON

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Maybe you’ve already signed up for one of these sessions that our consultant Paul Meyer will lead for the entire staff of the Libraries, Press, and Copyright Office (approximately 100 of us have done so already!) or perhaps you’re still figuring out which session will be better for you time-wise. Either way, you may be wondering whether there’s something you could be doing to get ready.

Before responding to that question, here’s some background information. What we’ll be doing together in the session is sometimes called an “environmental scan.” If you were with the Libraries in 2005, you may remember doing this with Paul as we prepared our current strategic plan. We’ll be talking about changes that we see occurring in the larger environment which affect the Libraries, Press and Copyright Office — changes in higher education, science and technology, U.S. demographics, library user preferences and other areas. We’re all aware of some of these changes through our work, our life outside of work and what we know about what’s going on in the world.

So I’ll answer the question, “Do I need to do something to prepare for the focus group meeting?” by saying that no preparation is necessary or expected. Just bring a willingness to explore ideas and to share your thoughts in one of the small group discussions and/or when Paul is asking the whole group to consider something.

If, however, you’d like something to get your thoughts going on changes and trends that are affecting libraries, here are two short “good reads.”

http://www.neal-schuman.com/academic/Murray-Rust2010.pdf

The author of this essay (she’s Dean and Director of Libraries, Georgia Institute of Technology Library and Information Center) states the challenge as she sees it: academic research libraries are increasingly invisible. In less than three pages, she outlines how we got to where we are today, how it is that the trends we’re now experiencing can be “both marvelous and terrifying” and why the danger of invisibility is also an opportunity.

This came out of a project which began as an environmental scan to generate discussion at an ACRL conference, and then turned into a guide to strategic thinking. The environmental issues are still in there and worth a look — check out the bulleted lists of trends regarding “recent fiscal developments affecting higher education,” “notable aspects of current and incoming student populations” and “technology developments that have strategic importance for libraries.”