December 11, 2009 – Strategic Planning Meeting, Sarkey’s Conference Room A

Present: Abbas, Brown, Burke, Hawamdeh, Kim, Kreidler (facilitator), Latrobe, Lester, Martens, Overturf, Snead, Taylor, Van Fleet, White, Zemke,

Discussion began using a grid with the 5 major ideas (classified according to where they fit under identified categories) that emerged from the first strategic planning discussion on November 18, 2009. The 5 ideas are Native American/indigenous people, digital curation, archives, health informatics/health sciences, and the BAIS degree program. Faculty discussed how to develop an actionable plan from these ideas, how to start making decisions about what to do, and how to prioritize.

Faculty discussed if they believed these 5 areas still stand as they are or should they be prioritized. Are 5 too many or should all be included?

Native American/indigenous and health informatics/health science are subject areas. Digital curation and archives are functions. The BAIS is a program unto itself. When health informatics and Native American ideas/issues are discussed, these include communities. Archives may also be a community. Community health segues to Native American – serving communities. The KM and MLIS programs overlap so much so that, to some degree, the two programs are not distinct. Dr. Brown is interested in health informatics/health science. SLIS could develop partnerships with others in Tulsa and OUHSC in OKC. There is great interest in health informatics in Tulsa. It was suggested that SLIS could recruit faculty in health informatics. This could be an area to build.

There are more faculty members with expertise/interest in Native Americans/indigenous peoples; there is a track record in this area. When thinking about health informatics/health science and Native American/indigenous peoples, these are communities to be served. The BAIS is a “program.” Archives and digital curation are functions; areas in which research could be pursued. It might also be said that through digital curation and archives, the communities of Native American/indigenous peoples and health informatics/health sciences could be served.

When discussion possible ranking:

1) Native American/indigenous peoples: important because of who SLIS is and where SLIS is

2) Health informatics/health science will become increasingly important
Is faculty comfortable building on “what SLIS is?” Or are they more comfortable talking about new areas of emphasis, with the recognition that what School is already doing is still important? Would faculty want to focus on the two communities to the exclusion of everything else? What are the faculty’s thoughts on expanding the areas of digital curation and archives to make them cohesive programs? That could be done using Native American/indigenous peoples and health informatics/health sciences as exemplars.

Building capacity in digital curation becomes a powerful tool across the board. Dr. Kreidler talked to some corporate representatives after the SLIS strategic planning meeting in November. He asked them what skills are they looking for. He used the term “digital curation” with them and they liked that phrase. It held some meaning. “Curation” takes people’s minds to museums. People who know how to store, find, retrieve, use information/knowledge. They were glad the School was talking about this. They think they need graduates from computer science. Archives sounds like things we used to have that we put away somewhere. Digital curation sounded new and fresh, and archives sounded old and musty. In looking to build marketing plans and getting corporations interested, digital curation sounds more ‘exciting.’

Faculty were asked to turn their attention to the BAIS program. How does it fit into the conversation about digital curation and archives (functions) and communities to serve (Native American/indigenous peoples and the needs of health science practitioners/people). The BAIS is important to CAS. It is the first online interdisciplinary degree in CAS and attracts students from across areas/disciplines. Several BAIS graduates have entered SLIS graduate degree programs. The BAIS has potential to be a feeder by placing those graduates in the corporations, the corporations may learn that they want more graduates from that degree; this widens the base of how SLIS is perceived. Just having the masters programs helps build the BAIS degree.

Energy is important in Oklahoma. Should serving the energy industry be a part of this conversation? A lot of the functions of digital curation are the same as archiving. Properly educated archivists should be able to work in any business/environment. BAIS graduates have taken positions in different industries, including energy (Chesapeake, Williams, etc.). SLIS conducts a KM symposium in Tulsa and many participants are from the energy industry. How can the program prepare students to work in a broader range of environments; how can students be prepared to do project management, health sciences. Some students have taken positions in organizations where they are providing project management. How well do the companies/corporations/industries understand that SLIS can provide employees with the types of skills to best manage information. Students would need more specialized training for certain industries. SLIS has the potential to be a leader in research, which would assist in building a Ph.D. program.
Faculty directed their attention to setting some priorities for action. Native American/indigenous peoples and health informatics/health sciences are areas to build.

What to do:

Examples of a prioritization grid were given (continuums/axes):

Example: Jobs - resources: Are there lots of jobs for students graduating with “this” or “that” degree emphasis? Plot

Another axis/line: customer demand (high, low) and internal desires (where faculty might want to emphasize an area of research for which there is low demand in terms of jobs for students). There are several ways to design grids to help see where effort should be put.

One way to look at it is “where do we start” to become best/world class in teaching students to, for example, serve Native American/indigenous peoples? Look at building blocks.

Think about where we are today and what will it take to get to new areas of emphasis. What are the considerations in order to get there? What are the factors? Marketing, resources, collaboration, etc.?

How can research, service and teaching be prioritized?

How can SLIS meet the requirements of the CDRP? What and how much research is needed? Building students requires more emphasis on teaching. A Ph.D. degree requires strong research programs. Teaching and research need to be totally integrated. Need to bring in students who can benefit from the research. Need to go hand in hand: research and teaching. Focus on current strengths and weaknesses.

Future expertise --------------------------- current expertise

Building blocks in terms of what to do first:
New value added --------------------- fundamental building block

Quiet-------------------------------Visible (to external constituency-the university-enhance reputation, students, potential employers) perception, marketing)

High resource needs ---------------- Low resource needs (this one would recognize strong areas of resource and areas needed strengthening)

Modular (stand alone) ----------------- Integrated (collaborative)

Tangential to mission ---------------- critical to mission

Strong infrastructure ----------------- Weak infrastructure

Opportunities for collaboration:

Fewer jobs ----------------- Many jobs (addresses practicality of students needing jobs)

No impact on accreditation ---------------- Supports accreditation (high impact)

Several scales on how to judge how to move ahead:

Look at the scales before creating axis (quadrant placement). Look at Native American/indigenous peoples and health informatics/health sciences in terms of how faculty feel about those on the various scales?

Looking at the different axes, some have to do with practicality, some with theory (mission framework).
Health informatics/health sciences: lower expertise, but higher job demand and this is kind of opposite for the Native American/indigenous peoples community. It is hoped that SLIS is producing graduates with the ability to work with diverse communities.

Practicality: An emphasis on Native Americans/indigenous peoples could be the SLIS’ niche in the world.

An additional scale: perception versus reality. This is important because SLIS might be preparing people for jobs that they can take, but does the outside world perceive them as potentially successful.

What about the competition? If there are lots of other programs with this emphasis, should SLIS try to “play” there? How unique is the skill set? Does SLIS want to narrow “health informatics/health sciences” into something where the School can really go?

Do we look at creating practitioners vs. creating academics/researchers? Does this divide the faculty?

Twice the teaching/research/service focus (integrated whole) has come up. Different schools have different emphases. SLIS faculty are charged with all with more or less emphasis on one or another with different faculty.

The impact on the curriculum: It is pervasive. If new programs have to be built, there is a higher need for new resources.

Faculty turned their attention to digital curation and archives. A lot of time was spent discussing these topics in the November session. These kept emerging as areas that the future requires to be robust.

Faculty were asked if they wanted to spend time today talking about digital curation and archives, or do they want to declare them as fundamental building blocks (on the building block axis)? Are they fundamental blocks? Should Native American/indigenous peoples be moved into the group with digital curation and archives?

Faculty went to the questions of “what are digital curation and archives?” Digital curation and archives could be areas of emphasis WITHIN a focus on Native American/indigenous peoples or health informatics/health sciences and SLIS could also use those foci within other areas. Native American/indigenous peoples and health informatics/health sciences are examplars, but students could be trained with expertise in digital curation and archives to serve other communities. Other schools have emphases on health informatics, but none have really built service to Native American/indigenous communities.
The School already provides excellent preparation for librarianship; serving libraries.

Developing programs to serve Native American/indigenous communities is the area faculty seems to always come back to and it meets several of the “positives” shown on the axes. It is visible to external/internal constituencies, there is low competition in this area, current expertise exists in the School (not an enormous amount, but there is strong interest), job demand (hard to gauge; would there be as many as in health informatics/health sciences?). If no one is producing in the Native American/indigenous peoples area, then OU SLIS could corner the market

Prioritizing:

Look at resources (those you have and those you have to acquire). Faculty just looked at brainstormed ideas that were within Native American/indigenous peoples (3, 4, 17, 22, 24, 29, 38). The grid helps with future planning and allows for different plans depending on availability of resources, campus cooperation, collaboration (high or low). It allows for an ability to plan for differing scenarios (economic crisis, leadership changes, which makes a straight line go up and down and all over the map.

Make a list of what SLIS needs to do:

What are the absolute building blocks for developing Native American/indigenous people programs? What would absolutely have to be done if this is the first area of emphasis? Which items need to be higher on the priority scale? Are they marketing, research, curriculum, etc.?

One response is:

Fundamental building blocks:

1) inventory of resources (people, knowledge, networks, established relationships); cultural heritage
2) archives (building this track within the curriculum)
3) identify stakeholders
4) strengthening digital curation curriculum
5) program planning guide? A good exercise to go through – looking at areas of emphasis and developing program guides for those areas
6) cultural resources

7) existing faculty up to base level

8) branding/marketing (contact with industries, HR, personnel to tell them about graduates the program produces); branding/marketing extends into the student population (teach them how to use the language)

9) talk to customers early (those who might hire people who will study/have expertise in the identified emphases)

What might faculty need to do to get up to speed? Inventory what faculty don’t know. Inventory within the school and inventory within the university (outside the school). What resources are within and without.

Need a portal to view outside resources. Need a willingness among faculty.

What are the markets? What is in place or what needs to be revisited? There is more than one way to approach the job market: e.g., degree (single and dual), certification, minors, continuing education, etc.

Dr. Kreidler could meet with faculty again as needed. The faculty has identified and given more meaning to the five areas. Program planning guides? Faculty want to build a reputation based on Native American/indigenous peoples because it would be rare/unique.

Faculty need to analyze any new program proposal within the context of strategic planning, so the things that serve to support the priorities are what SLIS should do? Should faculty focus like a laser on one or two areas and more broadly/dilute? Dr. Kreidler favors focusing like a laser, but those ‘other factors’ identified earlier could get in the way.

Faculty have identified all of “this.” External factors may intervene or prod them to go in a new direction.