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The Troubadour, Issue 36 (July 19, 2005)

Cardinal Stritch University

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THE TROUBADOUR

July 19, 2005

Issue 36

Visioning and planning group meets, affirms another plan

The core coordinating group for the University's visioning and planning effort met July 11 to receive a PowerPoint report from the Organizational Systems Subcommittee, to get status reports on plans crafted by the four other subcommittees, and to review a communications plan on the entire, ongoing effort.

Mike Dickmann, a member of the Organizational Systems Subcommittee, gave the PowerPoint presentation outlining that group's suggested action plan and reasons to support it. (*See column on next page*). The plan was affirmed by the core group, with the understanding that its suggestion to add an administrative position to streamline communication among campus entities may have to wait until the budget can absorb such an addition.

In answer to a question about avoiding more hierarchy, Dickmann said the position probably should have no line authority over anyone and serve at the pleasure of the president. This "go-to" person would "administer to, not admonish" people, he said, so as to help solve systemic problems that continuously crop up in an organization the size and complexity of Stritch.

If the position truly cannot be funded until the next fiscal year, things could be done to move people toward being more interdependent and sharing more, Linda Plagman, the subcommittee's co-chair, said. She stressed, however, that the subcommittee felt strongly that if this position were not created, the goals outlined in their proposal probably would not be met.

President Sister Mary Lea Schneider noted that the other subcommittees' proposals include a number of plans "that speak to breaking down silos and can clear some of the clutter." She also said that until the position could be funded, the University should "rethink meetings, agendas and timelines, so that we have productive meetings, make decisions, and hold people to things. We can spend time this year getting these practices under our belt."

Executive Vice President Peter Holbrook, who is overseeing the visioning and planning effort, said that what is needed is to "lay the foundation and work this into the budget realities, so we can have a win/win situation and move forward."

As part of the communications plan on the overall visioning and planning effort, Holbrook said feedback sessions with members of the campus community who gathered on campus Nov. 20, 2004, would start in August or September. They will include a PowerPoint presentation to explain what has happened to date and to provide an overview of the strategic action plans created by each of the subcommittees. An all-University assembly is tentatively scheduled for 1 to 3 p.m. on Sept. 16 at which the vision and plans will be shared with the wider campus community.

The communication plan also includes a number of other vehicles designed to keep the campus community informed, ranging from a visioning and planning pocket planner to online chronicling of documents and activities on StritchNet, the University's internal Web site.

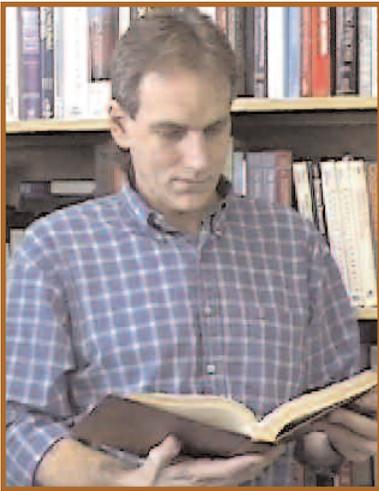
Status reports offered at the meeting from the Franciscan Culture, Learning Community and Relational Culture subcommittees indicated that all of their plans, which previously had been affirmed by the entire group, had been altered to include suggestions from that group. Most were very minor, such as including timelines and specific individuals or groups that are to be responsible for the actions delineated.

The Student Planning subcommittee presented its very detailed final plan to the group, incorporating a number of suggestions from a prior meeting. Holbrook instructed members to send e-mail feedback to the subcommittee. Details will be forthcoming.

Our vision:

*Cardinal Stritch University is
a Franciscan learning community
that acts courageously and
with integrity to foster the
transformation of lives.*

The column below is the second in a series that will focus on the five subcommittees working on enacting the University's vision. Each will focus on the purpose behind the committee and some key action plans.



Organizational Systems Subcommittee

By Peter Jonas and Linda Plagman

This subcommittee's task is to make recommendations regarding the University's organizational systems. In examining these systems, it became apparent to us that what we now have is a hobbled and cobbled collection patched together in the 68 years since Stritch's founding.

We used to be a small undergraduate college. We're now the second largest independent university in the state. But our organizational systems remain primarily hierarchical, reflecting what we were in the past. The resulting traditional top-down management encourages bureaucratic bottlenecks, duplication of services and institutional silos, all of which create a hobbling effect on growth and service needs.

The Organizational Systems Subcommittee recommends that we move from top-down to a web-like organizational system, centered on our student-focused mission. The four colleges serve that mission; all other organizational systems serve it through and across the colleges. Administration must reflect the student-focused mission by fostering communication, planning and development among the colleges and other organizational systems and allowing appropriate authority and access to information commensurate with different responsibilities.

To achieve these recommendations, we propose revising the operating systems of the University by moving away from the traditional hierarchy and more toward a flat organization. This may be accomplished by increasing communication, empowering employees in the decision-making process, eliminating duplication of systems, and improving the efficiency of current systems. In order to achieve this change, we advocate creating an administrative position that is responsible for facilitating communication

among all organizational systems and creating feedback procedures to assess change and promote ongoing improvement.

The University continues to grow and evolve while faced with increased competition and student desire for cheaper, faster, easier and more innovative educational programming and delivery systems. In the midst of this increasing complexity, our organizational systems continue to work, in many cases, "the way it has always been." The new organizational administrator would cultivate the cross-pollination that is essential to address external and internal concerns and move the University forward.

As business consultant and author Peter Senge says, organizations that excel tap everyone's capacity to learn at all levels of the organization. To achieve that goal, people need to understand how the pieces work and how to work together. The organizational administrator would help that happen.

This subcommittee understands that systemic change will not happen in a short time. But we believe this position is absolutely essential to Stritch getting there. This person would reinforce things that are working well, help to resolve inefficiencies and eliminate gaps and duplication in services.

To avoid creating any further hierarchical structure, and to eliminate any fear of this person's "power," the position probably should be a staff position with access to executive level individuals and decisions but without line authority over anyone. This person's role would be to serve people and facilitate change. The individual is not the key to this proposal, only the means to change to an efficient learning community.

(continued on page 3)

It is not within the subcommittee's purview to determine whether this person should be an outsider or an insider, and there are advantages to both. However, it is important to understand that this subcommittee is proposing concentrating on enhancing the current systems at the University, and this person will help orchestrate the change as suggested by the individuals who work directly with the system. He or she does not have to be the reservoir of all knowledge, rather his or her role would be to promote conversations, sharing and, therefore, help us get our systems aligned and functioning in a manner that reflects our 21st century reality.

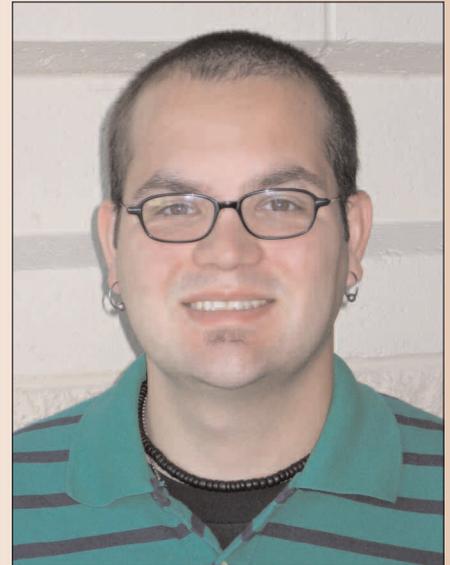
Regarding questions about the cost of creating a new position, we understand the University's budget realities, but we believe the efficiencies that would be produced would more than pay for the position.

Change is not easy and this suggestion may be jarring to some. But we believe it reflects a more natural flow of information sharing, mirrors desires expressed at the Nov. 20, 2004, meeting on campus, and is central to making our vision a reality.

Jonas and Plagman co-chair this subcommittee. Other members are:

- Mike Dickmann*
- Jeanette Mitchell*
- John Mueller*
- Bob Simmons*
- Karen Walrath*
- Janet Zylstra*

WELCOME NEW STRITCH STAFF !



John Hertig
Facilities Coordinator
Facilities Department



Kelly Troyer
Alumni Relations Assistant
Office of Advancement

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If you have feedback or story ideas, please contact Public Relations at prdept@stritch.edu.

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Linda Steiner

Design
Brett Kell

Photography
Kou Vang

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