

# Brown School Strategic Planning Sense Making Session Summary 05.29.19

## *Overview*

During the May 29<sup>th</sup> Sense Making Session, participants (n=37) developed the strategic planning model. Seven initial themes emerged from the participants' review of the stakeholder group findings collected during the data collection phase. The group also identified some additional themes that were missing from the planning model that should also be considered for concept papers.

After the Sense Making Session, the core planning team refined the strategic themes and put together the concept paper teams to begin developing the papers over the summer. Concept papers are being developed for the following themes:

- Value, Cost, and Debt associated with a Brown School education
- Community-engaged teaching and scholarship in the St. Louis region
- Global teaching and scholarship
- Technology, data and infrastructure for teaching, research and practice
- Environmental and climate health
- One School
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Transdisciplinary partnerships in teaching and scholarship within the Brown School and across WUSTL

One additional theme (the underlying values of the School) will be addressed during the Vision Conference in the fall. As a group, we will identify and refine our underlying core values that guides us in the way we conduct our work.

## *Planning Model Strategic Themes*

The product from the Sense Making Session was an initial planning model that is comprised of the following themes that emerged during the session:

### **1. Money**

- Financial strengths
- Financial health
- Cost of attendance
- Cost + access
- Economics
  - Cost related to value
  - Prioritization & affordability
- Economics
  - Wealth gap/poverty
  - Tuition – cost benefit analysis
  - Financial health of the school
  - Research funding
  - Education access
- How can we increase affordability & accessibility of Brown School education **and** increase excellence and value?

### **2. Engagement with community**

- Community engagement
  - What is the role/position the Brown School takes in STL?
- Community engagement practice and science

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- St. Louis
- Region
- State
- National
- Global
- Coordinated community engagement with meaningful impact
- Relationships
  - Community
  - Within WU
    - Local
    - Global
    - Intra- university/school
- Invest in effective & coordinated
- Community engagement infrastructure
- Community- centered
  - Global response/ local engagement
  - Community benefits from research
  - Role of students – learning or intervention

### 3. Collaboration within WUSTL and Brown School

- Collaboration/integration
  - Brown
  - WUSTL
  - STL
- Solving real world local problems
- Access to WU
- Brown's role
- Streamline
  - Collaboration - effective & efficient
  - Across WU and Brown School (one school)

### 4. Technology & Infrastructure

- Capacity of staff
- Innovation & pedagogy
  - Online courses
  - Part-time program
  - Diversify certificate programs
  - Curriculum content innovation
  - Skills development
- Technology infrastructure
  - Cost
  - Grants
  - Application
  - Access
- Invest in modern information infrastructure and data science

## 5. Student-Centered

- Student-centered systems (not individual responses)
  - Resources
  - One School
  - Tools to recruit to support students not just usual suspects
- Prioritize student well-being
  - Stress and behavioral health issues are critical to address

## 6. Diversity, Inclusion & Equity

- Impact of power – need strategies
- Equity – outcomes not determined by race
- Define and advance equity
- Diversity, inclusion, equity and access
  - Students
  - Faculty
  - Staff
- Equity
- Prioritize and value equity in all operational aspects of the school, programs, and initiatives

## 7. One School

- Clarifying and communicating our foci
  - Own who we are
- One School -> includes faculty and staff
- Excellence (real and perceived)
  - Leadership
  - Faculty
  - Staff
- Define excellence and value of One School Model
  - How do we operationalize
  - How to communicate

### *Discussion: What's missing from planning model?*

Participants identified some additional ideas that should be considered as the planning model is refined.

- Climate change – how it will impact; cuts across many aspects like curriculum, research
  - Could fall into focus areas or curriculum discussion
  - Has an impact on access
- Student – centered
  - Need to increase standards and quality of educational experience
  - Accelerating pathways to meaningful and well-compensated employment
  - Want to elevate higher the student-centered bucket. Uplift the student well-being piece. What are the support structures we put into place?
- Related to student centered, increasing quality of student experience, accelerating pathway to meaningful and reasonably compensated employment. Instead of reasonably compensated, let's say well compensated
  - Rigor of the curriculum

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- Standards of the education as well as the outcome
- Changing the reputation of social work and public health
- Transdisciplinary across disciplines, school, and WUSTL
  - Related to collaboration theme
- Social justice
  - Aspirational value
  - How have we contributed social justice goals?
  - We are a school of social work and public health. Need to include social justice. This is critical component at all levels. This relates to community engagement.
- Human rights agenda
  - Aligns with equity and social justice
  - Fits into equity bucket – need to highlight the importance of a human rights agenda and address the de-humanization
  - Conversations around human rights is not discussed. This is not just us but also missing nationally. The systems we operate in tend to dehumanize in the work we do in the field.
- Definition of collaboration
  - Both within WUSTL and with the community
  - Need to be more intentional, meaningful, long-term, shared
  - Partnering better with other universities (UMSL, SLU) to concentrate power to have greater impact; better collaboration
  - Collaboration is not encompassing across schools, disciplines
  - Be thoughtful about what collaboration means. Does this mean sitting around a table? What is our intention?
  - We are very WashU-centric. Would love to see us partnering. How we are organizing our collective power with other schools, deans, etc. like UMSL. Some happening with field education.
  - We overuse collaboration so it is watered down. Do we mean sharing of goals, resources?
  - How do we mean collaboration related to research and academics v. what we are doing in the St. Louis community?
  - Should we be splitting community engagement into internal and external?
  - Collaboration that happens across schools, disciplines this is faculty-centric.
- Advancing advocacy and policy
  - Advocacy has been left out of the planning model. What is the Brown School's role in policy and advocacy?
- Ideology and climate of the School
  - Political correctness and intolerance is evident
  - Issues can't be talked about; people/groups feel invisible
  - Facts we can't talk openly about
  - Universities are supposed to be committed to the truth
  - Students need to have the space to interact honestly and openly about tough issues or they won't be ready for the real world
  - Need to determine if we have an ideology and/or climate issues at School and then identify strategies to address it
  - Intolerance of different ideologies. Related to politically correct. Leads to uncomfortable. Opinions and ideas that cannot be shared.

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- If we rob students of the ability to interact honestly, we send them out unprepared. Intentionality around this. Need to acknowledge that this is a domain we need to recognize and discuss.
- This is a foundational initiative related to One School issue and student experience. Related to the point about having honest conversations, room for multiple ideas and perspectives.

### *Additional Observations, Ideas and Suggestions*

- We need to be continually watering the good to keep it from declining.
- We need to recognize that there are things that we are doing well and that we should continue to do as leaders. Not everything in our strategic plan should be areas of improvement or new.
- Power – need to address and think about strategies to address. The themes that emerged will put us on the edge and we need to be ready to address push-back and the power shift that may occur. Need to be on offense; be intentional, and collectively think about it
  - Need tactics and implementation plan
- Need equity-defined outcomes
- Need to recognize the undercurrents that will shape/influence our progress on our strategic plan
  - Identify the tensions and the unavoidable places of compromise that we need to confront
- Need a commitment ceremony at the end of planning process – we are committed to taking this new path
  - This is where we are. Will you be apart of it?
- How were participants feeling about process? Most were at a 3 or higher with some looks of apprehension.
- Could we give some thought to strategy if Brown puts stakes in the ground relate to D,E,I? Power will rearrange in opposition. If we do our work right, it will put a target on us. We will leave ourselves to attack.
- Do not go public until we have done some collective thinking around offense and chess playing. This means war. This needs a different level of intentionality.
- As we journey on, we need tactics
- For a strategic plan to work it has to change what you do at all levels
- Reemphasize that we have to understand the environment we are working in.
- Value in not only understanding external opposition but also our own. Name our own innate intentions.
- Value an explicit attempt to name the unavoidable points of tension.
- Do not miss the word capacity in this, especially when it comes to infrastructure.
- Need to have something at the end to make sure I still agree. Do we need to have a commitment ceremony? This has to be so clearly communicated.

## Morning Synthesizing Sessions Report Outs: Top Two Themes or Ideas

During the morning portion of the Sense Making session, participants worked in small groups to review and synthesize the findings from the different stakeholder groups. There were three synthesizing results rounds where the small groups compared and contrasted the results from three of the stakeholder groups. The survey results were helpful across all three rounds.

The information below presents the small groups' report out of the top two themes or ideas that they identified based on the data from the stakeholder groups. These synthesizing group activities provided the basis for the development of the planning model and identification of the strategic themes in the afternoon portion of the Sense Making Session.

The number in ( ) indicates the number of tables who also had the same theme. The total number of tables was seven.

### 1. Faculty, Staff, Students, Survey

- Raising cost of tuition (7)
- Diversity equity and inclusion (7)
  - For our students – the skills
  - Trust
- Relationship building (4)
  - Internal-through the School and WUSTL and in STL
- One school – need commitment, charge, culture, communication and organization (2)
- Structure of our program (7)
  - Need to expand
  - Missing out on students
  - Could be part-time, certificate, etc
  - Barriers – technology
- The theme - utilizing a more rigorous course development model (3)
  - The value of our education was not identified as a strength – this was a gap
  - How do we communicate the value to our students – the rigor, research
  - Didn't see excellence in our education; training model
  - Our development of education and delivery – needs to be more transformative; need more resources; there are different models that we should explore
  - Just because we have excellent faculty doesn't mean it's translating into our students preparedness
- Community engaged learning and research is a means to have greater impact. How are we preparing our students as change makers? As well as our faculty's engagement (6)
- Student-centric (5)
  - Finances
  - Flexibility in scheduling, technology
  - Mental health
  - Training in diversity
  - Integrating the 3 programs
- Balance between global versus local presence (5)
  - Have strong reputation across the world which has value
  - Locally our reputation may need improvement
  - It's not an either/or
  - Are we clear on our expectations and resources for both?

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- Our research and community work has impact and brings value (5)
  - Value of our education
  - Also career services and field placement expands the value– expand their opportunities while they are at Brown School.
  - Practicum relationships have impact and where they are being placed.
- Leveraging our assets – 3-2 programs, online etc.
  - A lot of discussion about our expense of tuition. Need to leverage current assets to broaden revenue base to lower the cost of education
  - Challenge is that we are already pretty strained with what we are supporting
    - Our current offerings, finances and our aspirations – are these moving in the right direction
  - Access to education does build revenue – focusing on skill building may be more affordable and may not strain us as much
- Investment in technology and data
  - How does technology apply to each of the emerging themes? Same with marketing and branding? And integration of the program.

## 2. Alumni, National Council, Planning Task Force, Survey

- Need to tell the story better – messaging and branding (6)
  - Faculty, alumni, staff and students are doing at the local, national and global levels
  - Our story needs to include that we are both clinical and macro social work
- When I got here I was blown away about how bad...outdated systems and processes (1)
  - Technology
  - Processes
  - Finances
  - Could we get expertise to help make this a strength?
- Foundational issues – excellence – in delivery, research, programs. Etc – how do we build excellence in everything we do (4)
  - How do we be the best? What does that mean in terms of the trends we want to address? How do we maintain our reputation to our professions? And stay anchored in our professions but also be forward thinking in these emerging?
  - Ensuring there is equitable process to recruitment in diverse student bodies. Intentional look at how we recruit
- How devaluing of higher education was theme. How do we build the value (4)
  - Build career services, etc
- Leadership – WUSTL in the community; how we are training our students to be leaders; leadership in the different disciplines (4)
- Developmental on expansion and focusing on relationships to advance the them (2)
  - Develop new model on how to expand the school
- Ability to create one school (3)
  - Integrating faculty and also between faculty-staff
  - Lower barriers to this
- Need to stop telling students that they are going to live in poverty. The message needs to change. (3)
- STL Better Together – some of us we are already apart of; need to get in the game; need to be a part of the conversation and the School is in the position to elevate the conversation (5)
  - How do we take advantage of being a place to have hard conversations; how do we engage with the community better? (6)

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- What do we have? We are the primary entity to do things like understand evidence, theory. Operationalizing our commitment to STL is to be ready to do these sorts of things (3)
- Dispatching our resources to respond to the region's needs
  - Positioned in a city that gets national attention once in awhile. How we respond to those needs is something we can do better/more strategically/equitable
  - We can harness our knowledge to anticipate where trends are heading/ project what may occur and be ready (1)
- Diversity and inclusion (7)
  - Defining what diversity means in US and outside of US
  - Diversity and inclusion aren't the same thing. Retaining faculty and staff – we need to focus more on inclusion and cultural competency.
- Leadership development for faculty – who will be our next leaders of the school; targeting out faculty recruitment to match demand of the programs, skills needed (1)
- Political climate in terms of policy, aging population, MO low rankings; health (5)
  - Importance of relationship building

### 3. Community Collaborator, Practicum Partners, WUSTL Leaders, Survey

- Community – importance in investing in our community (7)
  - Changing the processes to make it easier to do research in the community
  - Giving faculty credit for their work in the community
  - Better aligning our approach with Brown School – set ourselves as model for WUSTL
- Use our talents to solve real world problems; putting it into practice
- Increasing access of WUSTL education to our community
- Field education – how do we balance between intervention and learning opportunities. For community partners - they may not benefit from practicum
  - No capacity in the field to meet the accreditation requirements
- With community engagement – develop strategic plans that are longer term and strategic partnerships; know what our goals are
- Increase our engagement across the university
- The nature of the partnerships, how do we spread ourselves across the non-profits or do we focus our attention and resources – what should that look like? (5)
  - Better coordinate CE with other schools like Sam Fox, Law
- Impact and equity (6)
  - How do we invest in CE that is productive and effective? Yields solutions and is grounded in equity?
  - How do we leverage capacity of community members to help build systems of social mobility?
  - WUSTL research aspirations – our impact needs to be more focused; develop more sustainable approaches with community partners; need a defined research agenda
- Difficulty attracting students, faculty and staff to STL.
- What is the role of Brown to take on specific social and PH issues in the community?
- Making WUSTL more accessible to our community. The idea that employees who don't have children are able to donate their tuition benefits to kids locally.
- Moving towards applied solutions in our community
- Poverty showed up in these last set of one-pagers. It hadn't shown up in the previous one-pagers. Not a central plan forward for our school in terms of how we can address poverty. (6)
- Need to lower barriers for collaboration across schools/units
- High expectations on Brown School to meet and be all things in all way. Need to level set our expectations (6)

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- Policy and policy impact – comes across this one-pagers
  - As we emphasize the macro experience need to keep clinical in the messaging

### *Overall Observations from Synthesizing Rounds*

- What are the conditions/drivers in play here that shape what we do?
- What forces are supportive and which ones are detracting?
- Formally specify the unavoidable conflicts in the open so we can address head on
- Need to get better on the equity standpoint; not there yet; can get better