Notes from WRSC Meeting  
Monday, 27 February 2006  
Hensel Hall Conference Room  
3:00 pm – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Barbara Bowley, Ilene Blaisch, Claudia Campos, Paul Decker, Zelda Gilbert, Nick Roberts, David Rosen, Randy Stauffer.  Absent: Satinder Dhiman, Steve Dyer

Barbara Bowley reported on the past meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees (2-16-06) where she had made a presentation about the progress of the identity activity (ID). The Board committee had asked that Woodbury’s mission and vision statements be examined in the context of the 6 principles that community discussion had generated.

While members of the Board committee had differed on the need to change the mission, some being strongly favorable, they had all agreed that an examination of the mission was in order. Several of the Board committee members pointed to the outdated language and concepts in the current statement.

The chair proposed that WRSC undertake a process of examination of the mission with participation of the Board committee members.

Bowley will establish a forum for the community and the Board committee to participate in such a discussion. This will occur after discussion by WRSC, for which purpose a private forum has been established in IQ WEB.

Bowley reported that from what she has observed the 6 principles resonate with the community and that they have become part of conversations campus-wide (the BEAMS proposal being one example). Others testified they had similar experiences.

The committee established two-weeks for discussion before opening the discussion to the full community.

General discussion occurred about the best procedure. Bowley discussed the use of a matrix of the mission, values, and principles in order to map relationships. Transdisciplinarity could be related to professional studies, liberal arts, and lifelong learning for instance.

It was noted that lifelong learning formerly meant continuing education and now it stood for continual self-education. (This is not exactly what I said, but if that is how it came across, this synopsis will do). This made Zelda Gilbert remark that the current Mission Statement’s list of attributes reflects the particular interests of the parties who wrote it, the head of life-long learning being one of them.

Members of WRSC acknowledged that the principles were exciting to discuss.
It was noted that the ID process had taken place because the principles that underlay the community had seemed to lose touch with the specifics of the mission. Ilene Blaisch stated that WRSC was required to act as an active listener. That it, it needed to act on what it had heard from the community. The question arose: Can the 6 principles be distilled with a view to making them something the university can act on? Bowley stated that each unit should be able to align itself to the principles, using its own judgment about what those principles mean, and be able to measure and assess that alignment.

It was generally agreed that a mission statement should “generate a process of self-evolution” so that the principles can be reviewed, reaffirmed or changed.

Nick Roberts asked whether the mission statement should not also have some contextual information. David Rosen responded that commonly there were three statements—a mission statement, a context statement that addressed how the mission would be applied, and principles or values that derived from the mission in its current context.

Gilbert asked that the mission not be generic. Rosen suggested that the idea of “meeting emerging educational needs” was part of the Woodbury tradition and could be used, in so much as this attribute has been frequently noted.

Randy Stauffer insisted that “education” should be broadly applied, saying that a mission statement needed to recognize the whole university as a community of learners.

Bowley suggested that a small group of the committee would initially try to write a mission statement and that the rest would help by commenting on and suggesting edits for that mission statement.

Rosen charged himself with providing an electronic forum for that work.