

Town Hall notes 12/7/2017

Submitted Questions

Question 1 - Anne

When presenting information about the current state of CECE, we often hear how great CECE is performing even when there is evidence that says certain programs are struggling. What is the reasoning behind presenting the positive without addressing the very specific concerns of program performance?

Question 2 - Anne

How does CE communicate regarding departments and programs that are not performing as well? Though there is value in focusing on the positive, when and how do we address the negative? Are we allowing room for gossip by not being transparent about issues across verticals?

ANSWER TO 1 and 2:

1. Having some programs doing well and others not, is not uncommon because of our diverse portfolio.
2. When programs are experiencing financial or other challenges, we try to be solutions-based.
3. We begin by meeting with the program asap to review where we are.
4. We then pull in resources to help determine the best course of action – whether that is to increase enrollments, decrease costs, focus more on marketing, change staffing, etc.
5. Rather than widely discussing that a program in CE is struggling, we do everything we can to change the course in the particular program, so a lot of work is done behind the scenes.
6. In the leadership meetings, we have begun to focus our conversations on investments and spending.
7. We all know that right now we are in an investment stage and so we have and are investing in a new building and new systems.
8. At the same time we have to look at the performance of each area of our business and our spending.
9. To continue our progress, the leadership team has identified many areas in which we can decrease spending – a small, but good example is the holiday party. We're still having a party, it is going to be great and we will have catered food, but we looked at ways in which we could still have a lot of fun while spending less than we had budgeted.

Question 3 - Anne

To what extent is Anne involved in determining whether we should continue offering a course or program? What factors are considered when making that decision?

Answer

We have an amazing leadership and management team. I trust them to always be reviewing their business and determining what programs or courses make sense to keep and which they should jettison.

With that said, at the leadership level we have been having discussions that we cannot continue to add more and more programs without cutting others. We've implemented the New Program/Project Development process (or "Pitch" process) where staff come in and pitch their idea, whether a program, new system, marketing, change in ops, etc. to the leadership team and we ask questions to help ensure we're thinking through all the aspects of adding something new to our portfolio.

As I mentioned earlier, we have agreed that we need to have discussions about where to invest and where to cut. Due to limited bandwidth across programs and services, we will start looking harder at the balance of adding and cutting different initiatives.

Question 4 - Lynn

Are we able to sustain current staff with all the cost over-runs on prepping the building.

Answer

To first address the topic of “cost overruns”, the building purchase price was more than we hoped but due to the real estate market at the time, unavoidable no matter where/what we purchased. But since the building purchase, we have been intentional to ensure that we are under-budget on everything else related to the building. We are under budget on the remodel and on furnishing it. While not “over-budget” on the project, it is extremely expensive. All in, we will have spent over \$10 Million on the move out of the Annex. That does change how much reserve we have at this time and going into the future but we also feel strongly it put us in a strong place for financial sustainability in the future (owning a building is a much lower ongoing cost than leasing and improved professional space should help program revenue).

As for the question about sustaining current staff while we invest of \$10 million in a building, we are currently working on cutting other non-personnel expenses. Working with managers throughout CECE, IT staff, Katina on facilities/supplies and marketing staff, as well as furniture for the new space, we are prioritizing needs. Cutting staff is a last resort. A few months ago, we made difficult decisions concerning staff and we will in the future if need be. But cutting staff is the last resort.

If it sounds like I am not answering the question, it is because the answer is dependent on how well our programs do this spring. We continue to assess as we get enrollment and financial information.

Question 5 - Jodi

After the incident around Halloween and the abundance of new employees, I think it would be wise to remind everyone of the DESC's panic buttons and the "purple folder" plan, if anything were to happen in the Annex.

Answer

1. Good idea. A while back some people in CE determined we needed a way to alert someone if we were in trouble while a perpetrator or threatening person was present. It was decided that the person feeling threatened would ask a passer-by if “they could get the Purple folder.” This alerted the CE colleague to call Security asap.
2. Also, many of you may not be aware that DESC has panic buttons that can be pressed to immediately alert the police.
3. Regarding Emergencies like Halloween:

We did briefly discuss the Halloween incident and what we could improve. Katina brought up that during onboarding she suggests to new employees to talk to their supervisor to have them add their contact info to the supervisor's emergency contact list and determine an alternative work location. Each unit should review their plan and update it.

Also, as a reminder, CECE has an Emergency Response Committee that meets twice a year to discuss safety issues and procedures to help make our building a safe environment for you every day and especially in the event of an emergency. Katina is the contact for that committee.

General Notes from the Town Hall

Finances:

- In the past we've had a cushion. Right now that entire cushion is being used for the 540 building. Because of that, we may be discussing finances more than we did in the past.
- Question: Is looking at staff a critical issue right now?
- Lynn: It's like when you buy a house, you can't go to Hawaii and do other things that year. Our enrollments are also changing. So we need to look at where staff is needed. I would not say there is major stress around this at all. Right now, the remodel is taken care of, and most of the furniture and equipment. We are considering what can be contributed to shared costs, and managers are looking at their program. This is about sustaining the ongoing expenses. We used to have a reserve, but we don't have that anymore. It's about making sure what's going in is matching what's going out.
- Question: If people can know more what is going on down below, they may be more interested in contributing. Giving enough info can energize people.
- Lynn: We worry about how the message is worded, sometimes it's taken too long by the time it reaches everyone. We need to work on that. We don't want to stress people unnecessarily. The fact that we had over \$10 million in a bank account is very unheard of around campus. It feels like we're sinking a little, but we're actually back to where everyone else has been. When we had the huge reserve, we talked about finances less, so that may be why it seems like it's more of a concern now.
- Annie: Worked for a startup for a while. She was never told where the finances are. But she was often asked if she could go without a paycheck. But we try to keep staff informed.
- Question: How important is 1000 Funding?
- Answer: 2/3 of our funding is revenue generated from the programs. 1/3 is State Funds. State Funds cover a lot of the infrastructure, such as DESC, HR, IT team, the Sites, etc. We have to get permission to use State Funds in a way that wasn't originally intended.

- Lynn: We've had questions about the true cost of things. The chart that's available to all is not the true cost of business. We now have a chart that is "shared costs". This includes credit cards fees, which is over \$100,000 a year. We don't have that in the activities budget, so they don't see it. Shared costs also includes employee morale, IT, etc. When people look at a program, people need to realize that that is just the cost for that program, but does not include shared costs. When we talk about the overhead as the shared cost, that is about the state funds, such as copiers, paper, etc. We do want people to start recognizing the amount that is covered by the University. There is a lot of state money that is not generated by us and we don't get to say what it is used for. We have no reason to believe that the state funds are going away or decreasing. If the University ever has an issue with us, our state funds are called into question, but that is the case with everyone. When looking at charts be aware that that is not all the costs. No program could ever do this on their own because we are using different strengths.

Questions on Korrin's ELI restructure presentation:

- Randall wants to make people aware of the fact that even though our numbers are down, it doesn't have anything to do with the work staff are doing. It has to do with global economies, etc. He thinks that the quality of what we are doing is better than it's ever been. Any staff can come visit a class to see.
 - o Through Korrin's research all similar programs are dealing with similar things.
 - o We have had a Saudi Cultural Mission relationship in the past that worked really well, however the Saudi Cultural Mission is longer giving out those scholarships.
 - o Korrin has had meetings with all the ELI teams and they have excellent plans and have been putting in quality work. There are a lot of factors that affect us that we can't control, but we are looking at what we can control.
- Looking at new places to get enrollments
 - o We have been looking at fairs. As it turns out, you need to establish a 3 year relationship before a fair becomes worthwhile.
 - o We are working on putting things in multiple baskets. Versus in the past when 68% of our students were on the Saudi scholarship.
 - o We have been looking more at the model of having partnerships with international universities. The Outreach Team is the in the process of looking at 2-3 other universities. We are focusing on how we can get out there and get students to come.

Purple Folder and Emergency Feedback and Questions:

- Purple Folder—we should have a regular reminder of this. Maybe every Town Hall?
- If you dial 911, police will be there quickly.
- People may want to be aware of the way they setup their space in case of an emergency. Perhaps let coworkers know if you are going to have a confronting conversation.
- Sign up for the campus alert system

- Alert buttons at DESC—when you press it the police are there very quickly, perhaps within 3 minutes
- Campus Security can do some trainings on security
- Secondary work sites and emergency contacts.
 - o We still have one. In the shared drive under emergency contacts list.
 - o Recommendation to put your emergency contact list on Outlook
 - o Each department should figure out what works best for them, but we need to be able to reach everyone. So ensure that your direct supervisor has your info
 - o If you have access to PeopleSoft, you have access to your staff's personal emergency information.
 - o Our new building will be a lot more secure
 - It will be more like the Sites, someone will open and lock the doors

New staff welcomes:

- Jill Meyer who will be working with PE
- Elizabeth Aste, business systems analyst
- Beth Wisch, e-learning
- Rori Dorous, program manager in ProEd
- Leland, ProEd