

Editors/Directors – To read President Bryant’s charge to the task force, please go to <www.pittstate.edu/pres> and click on the task force charge link.

Task force to focus on ‘new, more expansive vision’

Pitt State ponders its future

In order to peer into its future, Pittsburg State University is taking a hard look at the kind of institution it is today.

The Second Century Task Force, a group recently formed by PSU President Tom Bryant, will soon begin work that the president and those involved believe will shape the university’s future.

“In order for this or any institution to boldly address the challenges of this new century,” Bryant wrote in a letter to faculty and staff last week, “it is necessary that it have a clear sense of its own purpose and identity and a shared vision for what it aspires to be in a rapidly changing world. To that end, I am creating a group to answer those important questions

“This group ... will assess the significant progress we have made in recent years. It will examine the vision that has guided our efforts to this point and it will explore the creation of a new, more expansive vision for the future.”

Bryant said that the university’s growth over the past decade, its strong and growing Foundation and loyal support from the community and alumni make this the perfect time for PSU to focus on the future.

Bryant said that new realities, including an increasingly competitive educational marketplace, changing demographics in the university’s service area, a proliferation of online programs and the uncertainty of state funding, must be considered as PSU shapes itself for the future.

Bryant has appointed Dr. Steve Scott, dean of the PSU College of Education, and Ms. Jennifer Schmidt, a member of the faculty in the Department of Political Science, co-chairpersons of the task force and has asked them to prepare a report before the beginning of the fall semester. The task force includes representatives from nearly every corner of campus, including students.

Scott said this week that he expects the task force’s work to be divided into three phases. The first phase, which

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he calls the “paper” phase, will involve gathering and examining a wide array of documents ranging from the university’s facilities plan to strategic planning documents.

The second phase, Scott said, will involve meetings and focus groups with various constituencies both on and off-campus.

The final phase will be the “deliberation” and will conclude with the drafting of the report to the president.

Schmidt said that the president’s commitment to the task force’s work is clear to her and was one reason she agreed to take on the task.

“I wouldn’t be doing this if I wasn’t convinced that our work was important and would be used,” Schmidt said.

Scott agreed, saying that “The president has a very good track record of listening to groups like this.”

Scott and Schmidt said that as the task force’s work moves ahead, they want to solicit input from every corner. Some of the debate, they acknowledge, could be spirited. Both agreed that a lively debate about the university’s future will be a good thing.

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