

Values Commitment Steering Team Meeting Minutes

10/14/15

In Attendance: Jesus Alfonzo, Christopher Bell, Giovanni Fernandez, Savannah-Jane Griffin, Colleen Price, and Robert Sitler.

Robert Sitler came to the meeting to share his experience chairing the Values Commitment Steering Team over the past three years. He reviewed the all of the focus areas that the Values Commitment steering team had over the past year. He specifically reviewed the VCST 4/20/15 update below.

V. Last Year's Projects

Values Commitment Steering Team (April 20, 2015 update)

Global Citizenship, Intellectual Development, Personal Growth

All recommendations, cover letters, minutes, university accomplishments, etc. are available on-line. A web search for "Stetson values" goes to the VCST site. The VCST consists of 3 staff members, 3 faculty members plus Leader, all with 2-year terms. The VCST deliberately has no budget, its members are all volunteers and it operates on a consensus basis.

Contact values@stetson.edu with your suggestions.

University holiday on Good Friday (recommendations just sent to Cabinet)

- policy change would show institutional respect for other religions and "inner life"
- expand intent of Religious Observance Policy to include staff and faculty
- employees choose own "Religious Observance & Personal Reflection Day"
- potential effects on donors – both loss & gain
- Good Friday holiday has not been a Stetson tradition (began in mid-1990s)

Diversity & inclusion

- Working Group currently facilitated by Provost Paul
- Director of Diversity & Inclusion has greatly strengthened Stetson in this area
- Stetson's potential as "school of choice" for those seeking high-impact engagement with inclusive/diversity issues
- need more faculty of color as models/mentors – requires extraordinary commitment
- opportunities in Latino world - especially Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil & U.S.

Environmental responsibility

- already long list of accomplishments thanks to Al Allen and others (see website)
- working group co-chaired by Bob Huth and Wendy Anderson just started
- Stetson has potential for being distinctively "green" (location, faculty, school color)
- academic water initiatives require new approaches to landscaping – native plants give us advantage. Need to eliminate water contaminants (fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc.) & greatly reduce water usage. Stetson can be regional model.

Concussion prevention

- CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy) – primarily in football, soccer & lacrosse
- risk of future liability (NFL & NCAA lawsuits)
- Stetson can show national leadership on this issue

Tobacco investments

- Bob Huth improved our policy regarding tobacco – but we still profit from it
- Vanguard's Social Index fund is outperforming our current Vanguard portfolio

Nutrition/wellness

- some improvement with Chartwells over Sodexo
- enhanced options still sorely needed for vegetarians/vegans
- Chartwells appears open to change
- enhanced employee wellness program may save money on insurance

Religion/spirituality

- challenge is to encourage religious/spiritual depth without favoritism
- Asst. Director for Interfaith Initiatives highly effective
- potential for developing contemplative practices (religious & secular)

Academic excellence & cultural credit

- various proposals dispersed in committee processes & administrators

Values fellowships

- first Environmental Fellow already in place as program pilot
- Office of Development now cultivating donations for more fellowships

Misc.

- need for better coordination with College of Law & other campuses – they do not have same set of values, no Values Day, desire to keep Good Friday holiday

VI. Current Planned Projects

- We reviewed the projects we are currently planning to focus on with Bob Sitler as well which include:
 - *Intellectual Development* – Standardizing the Cultural Credit Requirement across Stetson's campuses and colleges (Jesus Alfonzo and Savannah-Jane Griffin)
 - John Pearson needs to be consulted on this project's current status with UCCAP
 - *Global Citizenship* – Enhance our commitment to student learning on a global scale by reinstating a language requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences (Elisabeth Poeter and Felisha McCaster)
 - *Personal Growth* – Continue and complete work on Employee Wellness (Giovanni Fernandez and Colleen Price)

VII. Other Comments

- The online record of activities needs to be updated. We need to contact web@stetson.edu to make edits.
- It was recommended that we use the website to also recognize individuals that are doing positive things in our community around our values.
- Everyone should now have access to the following S Drive folders: Values Commitment Steering Team, Values Day .