Rapid Strategic Planning Workshop
Group #4

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During the rapid strategic planning retreat our group discussed several themes and directions to inform the future plans of the College.

Although general categories of our discussion are provided these were superimposed after discussion so many of the themes cut across these categories.

College relations with outside entities

Being proactive in work with accreditation agencies and other entities (specifically discussed were PDE and NCATE) to better inform our practice of preparing professionals. The discussion included our tendency as a College to react to directives from such entities but to not 'be ahead' of upcoming changes and expectations.

The need for the College to be more connected to schools and school districts— the need to develop better relationships with schools to inform our research and preparation of school professionals

Schools in the context of communities

One theme we shared with the group was: *Working more systematically within communities to address educational issues.* This also included a discussion of how we can equip educators to respond more effectively to community problems and the challenges learners face outside the classroom (e.g., poverty).

One emphasis here was the goal of addressing the needs of all learners. We discussed specific cases of learners in communities and our need to conduct research with, and prepare professionals to address the needs of, all learners, particularly those who are most invisible or marginalized. For example, these groups might include those with special needs (e.g., learning disabilities), those who are homeless, second language and immigrant learners, those with social/emotional needs, poor or working-class students, and non-traditional (adult) college students, as well as 'average' learners lost due to the attention directed to those with more obvious needs.

The need to include an emphasis in the college on the 'whole' person-including preparing professionals who are adept at addressing learning and social and emotional needs, and the needs for emerging citizen. The science of the learner was a term mentioned within this context

The need for those in the college to reach out to communities and to better understand communities as a system in which schools operate.

Science is Critical to understanding

Scientists in neural science and biology and chemistry areas can help us to do research that can lead to better understanding of the phenomena we examine in several areas of the College.

We also considered how a better understanding of other areas of science can help Education be more proactive to change in the schools versus reactive to others that influence decision making in schools

Collaboration

To move forward as a college we must look within and outside our faculty to better understand problems of importance. Our group did not generally discuss collaboration as a goal but as a vehicle to move the College. *Working more systematically with other PSU scholars to address education and community issues* was one theme we shared with the group.

Collaboration with scientists in neural, biological, human development, applied linguistics, etc., to inform research and practice and opportunities and offerings for our students was discussed and tied to our discussion of science.

Collaboration with entities such as extension was also discussed related to our theme of communities—land grant mission roots—we mentioned here.

One theme we shared here was: *Collaborative research and development of a scientific community focusing on learners.*

We also discussed that focusing on the science of the learner in this case was seen as having important differences from the more common foci of teaching models, techniques, or the broader education concept.

Technology-within the context of human interaction and Promoting critical literacies

Our discussion of technology was generally regarding the need for a better understanding of human interaction and technology and how technology may influence individuals within a society—and may influence changes in societies themselves. In particular, we also considered how educators can foster people's ability to analyze critically the human and social consequences of technology, the influence of the media, and so on.

We also addressed technology as we discussed the necessary literacies that emerging professionals need and that children in our society will need in the future.

One emphasis here was on the need for the College to promote critical analytic skills with direction toward technology, the media, politics, etc.