

MU Strategic Advantages Survey

A Summary of Survey Responses from Staff

Total number of responses = 12

On Tuesday, April 25, 2006, Human Resource Services, on behalf of the Provost, distributed an e-mail across MU to colleagues regarding the campus initiative on MU strategic advantages. Assistant Vice Chancellor Karen Touzeau had conducted presentations to several organizations, including the staff advisory council and human resource development committee (HRDC) and the MU fiscal officers. This population of roughly under 100 was used as a representative of all levels of staff throughout MU. Each of these groups included employees, supervisors, and directors of units involved with staff activities. After visiting each of these organizations, an e-mail was sent to the members of all these groups. Examples of strategic advantages, as well as some specific questions for each of the respondents to address were included in the e-mail.

The questions were as follows:

1. What makes MU unique? What will make MU unique in the future?
2. What are you most proud of at MU?
3. What do you see as the greatest potential for building partnerships and collaborations at MU?
4. What suggestions do you have for taking greater advantage of our unique resources at MU?
5. What is unique about MU in terms of physical layout, geography, research, service, and teaching?

The e-mail asked respondents to reply via e-mail to muprovost@missouri.edu. Their responses, therefore, were combined with other faculty and administrators who received an e-mail from the provost on this same topic. I have sorted through the responses to pull out those 12 responses from staff.

1. The responses from staff appear to be in three general areas. The first area consisted of an identification of unique partnerships that are existing between MU and other internal or external organizations. Some examples of those:

- The relationship in the area of life sciences with the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis and Stowers Institute for Medical Research in Kansas City, MO.
- The relationship between the Thompson Center for Autism and Neural Development Disorders and the University.
- UM's partnership with Apple, Adobe, and other corporations.
- Respect and opportunity provided by the literary arts program and, more specifically, the periodical *The Missouri Review*.

- The potential for having impact in every county in the state through the extensive network of MU Extension programs.
- The potential to bring multi-disciplinary resources to bear on important societal issues that include every key discipline and field.
- Interdisciplinary impact through community revitalization, through leadership and entrepreneurial education, providing autism research and applied practice, and through the life sciences research and applied practice.
- Consider adding India to the global partners list because India is one of the top countries of origin for our international students and they have particularly good English speaking skills and would be an area further collaboration.
- The greatest potential for building partnerships are in the areas of life sciences, agriculture, medicine, human environmental sciences, journalism and engineering.

2. The second area of emphasis in staff responses referenced specific program excellence.

- The School of Health Professions was noted to be one of the most innovative and high quality academic programs in the nation.
- The School of Journalism was repeatedly referenced as a program of national and international prominence.
- The Campus Writing Program Initiative infusing the campus with writing intensive courses was noted as an important resource for students, faculty, and staff.
- The dietetic program was mentioned as an outstanding program at MU.

Excellent academic programs that needed to be supported and enhanced included:

- The College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (CAFNR)
- School of Medicine
- College of Environmental Health and Sciences
- School of Journalism
- School of Engineering

Another Academic program identified as an area of excellence was the division of applied social sciences and the College of Agriculture and Food and Natural Resources. Specifically, the initiative that is called collective entrepreneurship.

3. The third and final area where staff identified particular advantages and prominence at MU involved with various notable historical events or places that make MU stand out from other institutions in the state or the nation.

- Sanborn Field, the country's second oldest soils and crops experimental field has led to improvements in agricultural practices and techniques. The existence of the field and its accomplishments should be publicized and communicated in both the agriculture and general communities.

- The University is home to Buck's Ice Cream Shop. While it provides ice cream for many of our students, behind the storefront is an integrated research, teaching and service laboratory.
- The University of Missouri is a licensed botanical garden, and this designation should be communicated to those interested in the botanical sciences.
- The Conley house was noted as one of the oldest homes in the state, and there are several other historically significant buildings on the campus.
- The MU power plant uses innovative technology to generate energy out of discarded rubber products and produces energy in a very efficient manner that has resulted in awards for their innovation and creativity.
- In 1989, a traveling display traveled across the state to communicate to citizens those areas that are unique to MU. It noted that MU was a place for the state FFA meetings; it included activities including students and other visitors to campus, and the hospital; and various music, sports, and academic competitions held in our facilities. The suggestion is that we should build on that earlier initiative as we try to highlight MU's strategic advantages across the state.
- We need to highlight those inventions and discoveries that originated at MU. For example, aureomycin was produced as a result of research from our Sanborn field. Our contribution to ambulatory peritoneal dialysis gives us international recognition.
- One of our MU physicians was knighted by the Queen of England for his remarkable research in the area of cystic fibrosis.
- Research conducted by Dr. Randy Prather, medicines being developed in nuclear radiopharmaceuticals at the MU reactor, and others are important accomplishments that support a tradition of academic excellence at MU.

These are the three general areas that staff responses address. There were also some concerns that the e-mail to staff did not go to all staff employees, while the e-mail to faculty went to all faculty members. Therefore, some people believe that not all staff were given ample opportunity to respond to the strategic advantage initiative. This is an item the committee can address when it re-convenes at some point in the near future. Perhaps the invitation to the public forums could be extended to all faculty, staff, and students.