Introduction and Method

On January 30, 2015, the Keene State College Strategic Planning Council (SPC) hosted an All-Campus Retreat to engage members of the campus community in exploring and discussing the preliminary planning themes that had emerged from meetings, planning discussions, and an earlier SPC retreat held in December 2014.

During the morning session, participants walked among boards on which were mounted brief statements of the preliminary planning themes, talked with each other about the themes, and shared their thoughts and ideas by writing comments on “post-it” notes, which they then attached to the boards for each theme. Participants submitted 427 notes across the eight preliminary themes.¹

Keeling and Associates (K&A), the College’s strategic planning consultants, collected, transcribed, and, when appropriate, organized and grouped the comments from the “post-it” notes. While some comments overlapped themes, we did not change the placements assigned by the participants. We gently edited some notes for clarity, but not for content. We did not delete any posting, but we condensed similarly worded notes to avoid repetition in the listings that follow. The paragraphs that introduce the listings of notes for each theme provide our overview of the most frequent and most emphasized points in each case.

¹ #1 Renewal = 35
 #2 Quality and Rigor = 58
 #3 Enrollment Strategy = 38
 #4 Student Success = 74
 #5 Engaged Learning = 65
 #6 Campus Culture = 60
 #7 Campus Climate/Diversity = 42
 #8 Trust and Confidence= 45
1 — Opportunity for Renewal

In their comments, participants expressed a shared sense of optimism and recognition that the strategic planning process constitutes an opportunity for self-reflection, reinvention, and renewal. Participants saw renewal in various ways, some emphasizing that now is an opportune moment for strengthening Keene’s identity. Some comments exemplified ideas that were shared among several participants, including that the strategic planning process presents a “good opportunity to stress service and service learning”; this should be a continuing process and “renewal’ should happen often”; and student input on “how we need to renew, what values they feel we should have” is key to the process. Participants noted that the planning process was also a good opportunity to express service and service learning.

Comments from Post-it Notes:

• Yes, we need to learn from recent events and make a plan.
• Renewal yes if it means recommitting as campus and taking actions to support.
• New leadership is always an opportunity for new direction and new message.
• So many organizations have used these moments like Pumpkinfest to re-invent themselves — take a good look at what we value and who we are and be able to articulate that who are we?
• Overlap on community issues. Renewal means greater intentional collaboration. Recognition for work done, respect.
• I agree that we have an opportunity at this time, but first we need to have a common vision for what “we aspire to be.” I guess that’s this process.
• Define and strengthen identity, collaboration with community.
• If we make progress/change on the other items, the renewal should follow naturally.
• Opportunity to distinguish ourselves from other institutions in NH!
• Agree we can renew. We need help with time to Teach and Engage.
Most of the comments for the second theme addressed standards for academics, including setting higher expectations for both students and faculty; improving outcomes, primarily in the form of career readiness; improving selectivity; and raising admission standards. One participant captured the concerns of many in strongly stating, “This is the lynchpin for everything else. Academic rigor must be #1 and now it is not.” Another agreed, “Islands of excellence in a sea of mediocrity has not worked. Saying we are a quality school when [we are] not has not worked.” Several comments addressed Keene State’s reputation as a “party school”—based on the actions of what some participants viewed as a minority of students; others emphasized holding students to higher standards of behavior and making them “accountable for actions and performance.”

Importance of advising, orientation programs were part of the session.

Comments from Post-it Notes:

*Academic Standards*

- More students leave KSC because it’s not academically challenging.
- Reputation vs. Reality. KSC is a fine academic school. Students will thrive if they put in the effort.
- Too many of our students back away from academic challenges rather than working hard and meeting high expectations.
- Rigor - students need to learn more of the skills (habit of mind) to be resilient, have grit.
- Students not able to demonstrate UG level writing prior to graduation. Should not be allowed to graduate…that’s rigor.
- Raise the bar. 2 semesters of ITW.²
- Refocus ITW into a first year experience class and make it 2 semesters.
- C-averages in all intro courses.

² Thinking and Writing courses: [http://www.keene.edu/catalog/courses/detail/ITW101/](http://www.keene.edu/catalog/courses/detail/ITW101/)
Faculty

• Reputation/Rigor include faculty recruitment and research.
• Having strong teacher-scholars (both teaching and active researchers) is critical to the quality of the educational environment we provide. We must actively manage this conversation. Are we “only teaching?” Research? Both? How Support?
• Students want instructors who can teach, inspire, help them excel, apply etc.
• How do we support faculty research so as to enhance reputation/rigor?
• Student evals not so closely tied to performance review. Evaluation of faculty.

Admissions Standards

• It is very difficult to focus and have a shared interest and excitement for academic rigor when the quality of student doesn’t support that goal.
• Raise admittance requirements and attracting more motivated students.
• KSC should focus efforts on fostering the middle high school achievers. We sadly do not get the top 10% and accept the bottom 10%. Makes stab. [stable] academic rigor challenging.
• We need to rethink standards.

Outcomes

• Highlight the good KSC has to offer including the success or our recent grads.
• All responsible to communicate success of students.
• Integrate post-grad explorations and planning starting 1st year. Career readiness courses 1st and second year graduate students who can discuss the skills/competencies.
• Provide more career counseling.

“Party School”

• Not all students are here to party and a certain few can ruin it for the entire campus.
• Reputation as a party school. Is this a widespread perception? By which constituents?
• Bimodal distribution of students. Some work hard and some party.
• Frats and Sororities and party stigma.
Other Comments

• Of course retention is an important measure, but it’s equally important to not sacrifice rigor in order to increase retention. Grade inflation is real, when departments feel pressured to increase their retention rates.
• We need to find ways to support advising students and establishing an atmosphere of meeting a high bar.
• Explore opportunities to expand graduate programs.
• I hear this on a regular basis, but not from a majority—headlines don’t tell the whole story.
• Library budget has remained stagnant or been reduced for at least previous 5 years. This doesn’t show support for academic rigor.
• Friday and Saturday classes.
• Build the idea that we (KSC) partner with students to help them attain success after grad, but they need to start early.
• Requires reallocation of resources.
• Project-based learning.
• Stress sustainable solutions to community issues/challenges.
• Internships.
• Value of a college degree generally is down.
• Investment in Honors program.
• More support for poor writers. Grammatical and spelling support. Early intervention.

3 — Enrollment Strategy

Most of participants’ comments focused on re-evaluating the College’s current undergraduate admissions strategy and expanding its graduate programs. One comment succinctly summed up others made in response to this theme: “Raise the bar on admission rates.” Other notes suggested expanding enrollment for low-income and first-generation students, as well as non-traditional students such as adult learners; some of these ideas were related to financial, academic, and outside-the-classroom support, while others asked whether there are “other populations we can focus on other than the traditional age population.”
Comments from Post-it Notes:

Graduate Program

• Why not develop a healthy graduate program?
• There is a need to meet the needs of this community for graduate programs — need to develop a graduate program strategic plan.
• Lead to a decision how are we going to use our graduate program to enhance the undergraduate program.
• Support of the grad applicants.
• Graduate program support.

Student Support

• Create a program prior to taking classes — summer link — bridge.
• Better advising for new students.
• Do we need to be more proactive in helping students?
• Don’t forget to focus on the majority of students who should stay and succeed and they are not.

Diversity in Recruiting

• If we are going to target an adult population we need to look at delivery and cost in order to compete.
• Any effort in enrollment should reflect access that is sensitive to affordability and region?
• Attract student from wider array of international countries.

Financial

• Can we align cost with the community colleges?
• Delivery and cost to be competitive.
• Too expensive for out-of-state students.
Other Comments

• Academic rigor as a priority.
• How do we end programs that are not thriving and reallocate money to those that are exploding?
• What do we want as an investment.
• Decision to drop the German class was a bad decision — it helped stand us apart.
• There are other things we need to consider other than the # enrolled — strategic plan for maintenance of programs.
• Recruitment — targeting ideal students.
• Students want to know that their degree is worth it — more career support in the 1st year.
• How do we define merit scholarships / define the admission pool strategy?
• We are admitting the same students as we have always admitted — slightly lower SAT scores (which is a trend) but the same GPA.
• We are an undergraduate liberal arts college.
• Support of our identity as a liberal arts.

4 — Student Success

The majority of comments on student success fell into three categories: (1) vastly improving advising, starting early in students’ academic careers and helping students maintain a strong relationship with advisors and mentors throughout their time at Keene State; (2) providing personal and academic support for students through programs and services that are properly equipped to retain the students who are recruited and admitted; and (3) increasing the “career focus” of the Keene experience to better prepare students for success after graduation. One comment suggested the importance of dialogue with students to define “success,” stating: “discussion about what constitutes success and align everything.”
Comments from Post-it Notes:

Advising

• Better advisement system — right from the orientation process.
• Stay connected with students.
• Focus on academic advising for all students.
• The faculty need to step up in advising.
• A comprehensive advising plan for all students — it’s time.
• An advisor needs to stay assigned to a student for their entire career.
• Advising is a key critical function of student engagement.
• We need better approach to advising too many students rely on advising each other with unfortunate consequences.
• Mandatory advising/face time/personal attention.
• Every student must have an advisor from day one.

Student Support

• If we are going to admit lower grades/SAT scores, we need to support them.
• Education surrounding campus processes and policies. Many students are first generation and need more direction.
• Students are at risk — stronger support coming in the door.
• How do we remove the stigma of extra help with classes or topics?
• Consider transition to college and how it connects to student success.
• 1st year experience formal program.
• Create a method to track student’s success and provide interventions when students demonstrate stressors.

Career Focus

• Whole student = Whole citizen. Student employment provides a unique opportunity to inform and teach good work ethics and prepare for the workplace.
• Project the range of employment opportunities available to students and how the college helps students prepare themselves for them.
• A success model needs to include career planning, internships and strategic academic counseling.
• People need to understand what they will do after college. Bring in the outside world to campus.
• General education important but need avenues to have hands on learning i.e. research opportunities etc.

Other Comments

• General education important but need avenues to have hands on learning i.e. research opportunities etc.
• Focus on programs that are applicable to job market of today.
• Don’t scrap ISP [Integrative Studies Program], just simplify it.
• Students are responsible for their success. We can’t make them successful without their help.
• Keeping students in the center of everything we do including campus policies, practices.
• Students need to commit themselves to work hard and demonstrate quality levels of knowledge and achievement.
• Dependent on engaged faculty not only in teaching but in pursuit of their scholarship.
• Implement the ISP… stop talking about it.
• Have we become too big to be able to do a better, more personable job?
• Profs can’t be evaluated by students if grades used to kick them into gear.
• Make student success more than remediation.
• More focus on first-year experience.
• Graduation in 4 years.
• Create a 1st year one credit pass/fail program w/ staff… teach students how to be college students.
• Focus on the whole student and whole institution.
The theme of engaged learning drew more comments than the other themes, but the ideas that were shared varied greatly. Comments focused on the need to examine, revamp, and improve internship programs by building relationships across and outside of campus; support and enhance the integration of engaged learning experiences in the classroom by increasing resources for faculty; and increase opportunities for undergraduate research, while simultaneously supporting faculty research. Several participants stressed the importance of engaged learning and opportunities for service to students’ career preparation.

**Comments from Post-it Notes:**

*Internships and Career Preparation*

- Organize the internship experience.
- The need for partnerships to provide meaningful internships and community service.
- I am amazed at how many businesses in our community don’t realize they can contact KSC and connect students w/ real life experiences.
- Solid vision / process for internships in all majors — faculty involvement.
- Every KSC student should have at least one internship.
- Require internships as a graduation requirement — provide academic support and mentor programs.
- Engaged service learning works well at Keene. Internships are too costly and serve to few students for faculty to manage.
- Continue to strengthen engaged learning experiences. Needed to find jobs in today’s market. Better coordination for internships.
- In it’s [sic] relationships with businesses and other employers, KSC needs to engage across the institution, not by separate disciplines. Interdisciplinary engagements allows us to leverage resources and create more opportunities for students.
- Students go to college to ultimately prepare for a career. Engaged learning is essential and should be stressed starting freshman year. Career prep should be a continuum. Advisors should be asking: Have you spoken to a career advisor?
Faculty research and scholarship needs to exist independently from undergraduate research, even though they function synergistically, undergraduate students need to witness faculty pursuing their own research interests and see their passion at work. Faculty scholarship will model good practices enabling undergrads to be successful.

Student retention and success is strongly linked to engaged learning and high impact practices like undergraduate research. Add support to encourage faculty to participate in these activities.

Faculty research as it relates to engaged learning: active faculty scholars researchers inviting students into their own research endeavors is some of the most powerful learning opportunities. Supporting faculty research is critical to this.

Opportunity to coordinate and improve undergraduate research and creative endeavor initiatives, funding and processes.

Need to make pursuing research opportunities rewarding for the faculty.

We need more funding allotted to student research, particularly in the arts and humanities, but also across the boards. $12K per year in SURF grants could be increased.

Faculty support of engaged learning

- Faculty stuff gives sense of value. How we reward faculty — in conflict with future needs… We’re not really student centered. KSCEA does not represent me, faculty say.
- Teach the way student learn — we need to change with the times.
- Great! Putting students in real-life, outside of the classroom experiences brings the academic path full circle.
- More teacher training opportunities, more resources devoted to helping faculty support students.
- I am very energized by my work with students along with opportunities to further cultivate my pedagogy.

Potential impacts on teaching

- Balance is important. In-class learning is critical. Careful not to let the pendulum swing too far either way.
• Important but remember the need for enhanced in class experience. White boards, no chalk, moveable furniture, room to move.
• Engaged learning experiences are a great way for students to learn. But cannot be an “add on” for faculty or students. Must be supported.
• Engaged learning takes time, like 8 hrs to prep and 2 hour class. (12X4=48+12=60)

Other Comments

• More tenure-track faculty engaged in advising one on one.
• Consider what engaged learning looks like in and out of the classroom.
• Serious students need access to art/science/music buildings for their undergrad research.
• Internships, field trips, flexibility for more spontaneous classroom activities.
• Perhaps offering a number of new concentrations and academic success programs?
• Critical but need to find a better way to use this as a differentiating points lots of schools offer these.
• Highlight successes and award those doing this work.
• How does technology tie into this theme?
• Align and coordinate experiential learning opportunity for students.
• We are a residential college with great facilities — we need to leverage the face to face aspects of all programs so students need and want to come to campus. Experiential learning, lab based programs, etc.
• This is central to both academic rigor and student success.
• Involve students in identifying what engages and motivates them in and out of the classroom. One of the most important themes.
• Overcome resistance to online and hybrid classes.
• Stop pushing students to off-campus jobs because of the 20 hour limit on working on campus.
• Great from the marketing through outcomes can only be good things coming out of engaged learning.
• I did not appreciate being asked to reach out to failing students.
• Shift time and resources effort to half-traditional and half-engaged.
• This is valuable and makes a noticeable difference in students’ perceptions.
• Emphasis on partnership development here — foundational to the community-based work… value and invest in piloting innovative approaches.
• We need to have better liability coverage to keep faculty covered during “engaged
learning experiences.”
• How about requiring community service of every student? Would need more staff to
supervise it, but it might make them more involved in Keene community and help them
feel their time and effort is valued and civic involvement is part of being an adult.
• Make ISP program more flexible to encourage students to build professional
competencies and senior portfolios.
• Make last year program more comprehensive — peer tutors?
• Work has to happen in class too. May require smaller classes, reallocation of resources.
• More monies allocate to student/faculty shared research. Summer grants for more
students.
• Requires investment in support positions and operating.
• If faculty work with us, we could bring many more opportunities for our students.
• Freshmen seminars for campus orientation.
• Don’t overlook value of other methods.
• How about getting back to the identity of high impact practices as a collaboration.
• Stream-line processes and make it easy with more resources. Make criteria for
academics standardized.
• High engaged learning is hard work… three preps… not gonna do it.
• A must for every student and a great way to help students succeed.

6 — Campus Culture

Participants’ comments addressed points about Keene’s campus culture within a few
broad categories. Increasing academic rigor, as well as supporting the scholarship of
faculty, were seen by many as a way to set the tone on campus; as one participant noted,
“Academics can be the tie that binds.” Several others wrote about the formulation and
communication of expectations — through an honor code, core values, or simply
emphasizing the practice of civility. Several participants noted the importance of fostering a
greater sense of community across campus, by increasing collaboration among faculty,
staff, and students, and holding more gatherings to allow for communication that is “more
face-to-face, less via email.” One participant stated the need for a “common goal” and
another suggested Keene must “learn the steps toward achieving a strong campus
culture.”
Comments from Post-it Notes:

Rigor and Research

- Invest in first-year experience so that all instructors of first year courses instill a culture of academic rigor, use engaged learning practices, use applied or problem-based learning methodologies.
- Academics can be the tie that binds, but right now it is almost unimportant.
- Investment in research is key.
- Go back to more MWF classes.
- Includes space for faculty to pursue their own scholarly agenda. Their success enhances student/campus pride, confidence in the institution as a model of “teacher-scholar” success. Our faculty are “teacher-scholars” and the campus culture needs to honor and celebrate faculty holistically.
- Challenge our students academically.
- Friday and Saturday classes.
- We already have a great non-academic culture, let’s start emphasizing the academic culture.

Expectations

- A clear, firm, repeated group of behavioral expectations. Not heavy-handed. Engage students in the process of creating a campus environment that fosters pride and a spirit of community, academic and civic engagement.
- Everyone within the campus community needs to set higher expectations and commit to what it takes to achieve.
- Practice civility don’t preach civility.
- Create and identify core values.
- Honor Code?
- I hope we don’t try to fabricate a culture but rather build on participation.
- We need to acknowledge there is a “campus culture” in the western world (Europe too) that students feel they are supposed to act irresponsibly in college. We also need to acknowledge the “drinking culture” that is a subset of that and also part of western culture.
• This is linked with enrollment expectations for students and parents are important, but so is the follow through. Keep multiple conduct offenders on campus who do nothing but party classes away or students who want to be here.

Students

• If students feel a sense of pride to be a member of KSC, they will hold themselves to a higher standard, especially in the local community.
• Develop and expand KSC’s reputation as a “friendly” campus. Become known as the college where “nice” people go by adapting admissions processes to seek these types of empathic students through essays, recommendations, interview, etc.
• Get leaders of student organizations to lead the charge for a campus culture change. Student leaders have more influence than us adults.
• This seems so huge to me. Will need lots of help from students to accomplish this.
• Improving student culture is key to how we perceived “reputation”.
• Proactive peer groups.
• Instead of telling students not to celebrate a Patriots win, organize a celebration.

Gatherings

• We need to have more campus gatherings and if needed require all employees to attend. We are all part of the KSC community and play a role in our campus climate.
• More face-to-face, less via email.
• Involvement of campus community in key events — convocations, commencement. Celebration of tradition and accomplishment.
• Communication is key. There needs to be more opportunities to leave our offices.
• Graduation event — Improvements? Changes? Last chance to demonstrate culture of campus.
• More open forums for discussions and community building. Hold people to high standards Model excellent behavior. Call people on unacceptable behavior.
Collaboration

• You bog your residence directors down with conduct and operations rather than let them become the centerpiece of community development. You cannot create a community with negative authority figures.
• Departments working collaboratively instead of competitively.
• Need culture of civility. Academic freedom does not equal freedom to be disrespectful.
• This institution continues to have divisions of administrative professional academic employees that border on a class system. I have never experienced this at any other higher ed institution.
• Civility, or incivility, is a part of our reputation; we need to fix that.

Other Comments

• Lack of followthrough and support with regard to resolving retaliatory practices permitted at KSC.
• Campus wide mentoring — peer and adult need to build connections with students.
• Simplify decision making and have resource allocation driven by strategy.
• Define sustainability and discover that sustainability is at the heart of the campus culture.
• Holistic approach to facilities and people.
• More sustainability.
• Make advising easier. For example, can we search for courses in a grouping of interest areas that still have seats available?
• Need to develop a KSC identity to build a culture on.
• It is important to recognize that different disciplines and degree programs have different needs. We cannot water down our high credit majors; in some cases, we would be doing our students a disservice, sacrificing academic rigor, reducing the quality and value of their degree, and making students less competitive for grad schools compared to students coming out of peer institutions.
• Increased opportunities for students to engage in project-based learning including internships, service learning etc.
• Culture is the basis for all other themes.
• More art on Campus. Visual murals, sculpture = cultural life.
• Need to strengthen sense of accountability; to students, to other departments and to each other.
• Is it perception or reality that a large percentage of faculty “check out” and are not fully committed to overall student success.
• More civility and accountability sounds like a healthy step for us to take together. How do we achieve this?
• Advising — making sure all first-year students are connected with experienced and tenure track faculty members for advising.
• Better communication, from the top down.
• A holistic approach for sustainability that pervade instructional discourse research and community service.
• Engagement of faculty in whole college community is important. Faculty in living learning community. LLCs have to have academic focus be linked to courses.
• Remain open to examining culture and possibly changing culture.

7 — Campus Climate and Diversity

Many comments focused on increasing the diversity of the campus and supporting diverse populations of students—including cultural and ethnic minority students, international students, LGBT students, adult learners, and students with disabilities—as well as faculty and staff. Participants suggested efforts for recruiting greater numbers of international students, including more scholarships and the creation of better infrastructure to support those students and their success once on campus. Some comments reflected a need for greater tolerance for diverse groups and “a climate of support” on campus. One participant noted, “We need to make sure that the support these students need is available and present before we enroll [them]. That the support is truly integrated, not just a front.” A few also noted the need to “mingle students and community” to build diversity both on campus and in town.
Comments from Post-it Notes:

Forms of Diversity

• Initiative for int’l students have to be expanded — follow UNH model or at least review it
  Integrate diversity throughout curriculum. More diversity hiring. Ideally, diversity shouldn’t
  stand alone, but be a part of everything we do.
• Ensure infrastructure in place for international students.
• Need international students and students of diverse social racial backgrounds.
• Put some effort into acknowledging and supporting our biggest diverse group of current
  students: adult learners.
• Students from different cultures, religions or sexual orientations need to be respected by
  all faculty and appreciated for the diversity they bring to KSC. This would certainly help
  with retention.
• More tolerance and understanding for people with disabilities.
• International recruitment is a commitment that the college is afraid to do.
• Students from different cultures, religions, or sexual orientations need to be respected
  by all faculty and appreciated for the diversity they bring to KSC. This would certainly
  help with retention.

Support

• A climate of support. We of difference/diversity will bring qualified students here, and
  create and strengthen communications, and community as a whole.
• Bringing diversity and retaining diversity aren’t the same. You must do both.
• This is a support issue as well.
• Bringing international students may not address where the work needs to be done for
  creating a welcoming and inclusive culture without adding students for “visual diversity”.
• We need to make sure that the support these students need is available and present
  before we enroll. That the support is truly integrated, not just a front.
• Recognize current diversity.
Scholarship, Recruiting, and Programming Practices

- Develop scholarships and programs to bring core groups of diverse students to campus — more will follow.
- More scholarship opportunities for minority students.
- Adapt admission processes to actively seek and select students who, through their high school and personal work, have shown a commitment to increasing diversity in their own worlds and/or shown an understanding of the importance of diversity through essays, extracurricular activities, etc.
- Increase funding for intercultural experiences.
- Make internationalizing a campus, not just a GEO [geographic] initiative.
- Develop strategies to enhance appeal of Keene to bring more international students to campus.

Leaders, Faculty, and Staff

- More support for international faculty and faculty members of diversity backgrounds. e.g., spousal hire.
- Hugely important especially the need to grow the number of employees of color and support them well.
- More faculty and staff people of color and internationals. Be open for mistakes.
- This is an opportunity for the admin leadership team and the campus community to clearly articulate our commitment to diversity. Set goals, communicate success. This is critical to KSC.

Partnership with the City of Keene

- Part of increasing diversity includes components of town … how can we attract differing ethnicities when resources support urge their culture are minimal or nonexistent in town?
- Community event welcoming KSC community onto campus with events which mingle students and community.
- Keene community does not articulate the value of diversity anywhere — we are in this together.
• Difficult. Build diverse community on campus. Students stay and work in community. Creates diverse Keene. Needs to happen-changing demo in the US.

Other Comments

• We need to diversify the student body to help students of color but also to help our majority students.
• Never forget all are equal and all should be treated respectfully.
• Climate and diversity need to be part of everyone’s responsibility.
• Need to address issues of welcome and safety with the Keene Community.
• Making great strides under the leadership of Dr. Morris. We need “buy-in” from the whole campus.
• Inclusivity for all humans. Not even members of diverse populations.
• I feel this is foremost in our desire and appreciate all the efforts to make this more and more in practice.
• I always felt that pointing the “you” finger at myself helped with my perspective.
• More visual art on campus. Visual, murals, sculptures, graffiti walls. Cultural life can circumvent a drinking culture.
• Lousy handicap parking, so far from handicap entrances.
• Embracing a comprehensive definition of sustainability reinforces social / economic justice issues.
• Clearer definition of diversity and ensure practices policing / correcting are aligned.
• Honors Program, first iteration of ISP, renewal of music accreditation.
• There have been positive changes at the college over the past 10 years = alumni center and new faculty hires.

8 — Trust and Confidence

Participants’ comments focused on issues with campus leadership and administration, a need for increased transparency and communication, and a lack of data-driven decision-making. Several comments noted the difficulty created by changing and inconsistent leadership and mentioned tensions between faculty, staff, and the administration; one wrote of the need for new leadership to “ask the opinions of experienced staff and make decisions based on collective critical thinking and knowledge.” A number of participants
wrote of the need for improved communication and, according to one comment, “more visibility and positive messages from key leaders.”

Some participants were skeptical about this theme or disagreed with some of its wording. As one comment read: “Disagree with the word trustworthy. Inconsistent, yes…” A small number of participants used this space to express optimism with the strategic planning process; one comment summed these views up well: “If any place can rise above, it is KSC. We can do this, if we do it together.”

Comments from Post-it Notes:

**Transparency and Communication**

- I appreciate data informed decision making but I want the chance to understand the data and give my perspective as a chain and faculty member to contextualize the info.
- Budgetary priorities need to be more transparent.
- We talk about transparency but too much silence about town-gown issues lately i.e., Pumpkinfest.
- I think there is tension between faculty/staff and the administration, making progress challenging. Demonstrated openness transparency, trust, and confidence could be an important step forward and gain buy-in. Perhaps this links to struggle in settling faculty/staff contracts, providing decision making ability to committees, etc.
- More communications about decisions, what consultants are doing, type of projects.
- Transparency is key. Too much information is not carried down to the KSC community and town. Pumpkinfest is perfect example.
- Actions speak louder than words. Need more visibility and positive messages from key leaders on campus to everyone.
- Clearly communicate announcements. What is the thought behind the “Enrollment Team?”

**Leadership**

- Leadership skill varies significantly from department to department. Some inept managers still do not face discipline or consequences for poor performance or treatment of staff and students.
• There cannot be true change deep in organization without trust in the administration.
• Who’s in charge? What and who drives our agenda? Remember our focus on students.
• Trust and confidence is difficult when in my 3 years here there have been 2 presidents, 2 provosts, 2 deans and 3 directors. I have an open mind and belief we can make it work.
• Focus on new leadership — vision and leadership forward, both in word and deed, is necessary.
• Leadership needs to ask the opinions of experienced staff and make decisions based on collective critical thinking and knowledge.

_Data-Driven Decision Making_

• Data and evidence are a piece of the puzzle. Integrity, ethical behavior and civility are required first.
• KSC has a history of not using data to make decisions or drive agendas. This is why we are at this crossroads currently. Time for a systemic change.
• We have the data. Make decisions and move. Don’t be afraid!
• Strongly agree on need for data-driven decisions and lack of trust across campus. This has led to silos we must break down to be successful.
• Define data driven.

_On the phrase “has not had trustworthy and consistent leadership”_

• Disagree with the word trustworthy. Inconsistent, yes, but those that were in interim positions had limited time to do what they believed was best for the community. I trusted them.
• Don’t think that “trustworthy” is accurate.
• Inconsistent leadership and ever-changing protocols and priorities have interrupted forward progress. Don’t characterize the leadership as untrustworthy.
• I don’t see this. Is this a faculty perspective?

_Optimism_

• If any place can rise above, it is KSC. We can do this, if we do it together.
• We are Keene State!
• Need to be optimistic. Of course we can change but it will take hard work and innovative thinking.

Other Comments

• This is a foundational issue, not an area for goal setting.
• Keene is not empowered to solve problems without the citizenry electing legislators who value and support public liberal arts for NH students.
• We need a defined decision making process for physical improvements to buildings i.e., programmatic changes.
• We need a willingness by all to work together once the priority is set regardless if one personally agrees with priorities or not. We are all working for KSC and need to behave respectfully and cooperate.
• We never let go of bad ideas.
• Treat students with respect. Customer service training. Hold accountable.
• Once faculty achieve tenure, they check out, at least 80% of them. Look at today’s attendance.
• More is not an adequate goal. How do you quantify some of these themes? What is measured can drastically change the nature of the effort.
• Trust and respect are crucial to moving forward with any plan cornerstones of success.
• We have to be willing to look hard at these decisions — be willing to address and change.
• Continued outreach to and collaboration with business community and Keene community or larger.
• Sustainability built on participatory decision-making (not top-down default setting).
• Given and Earned — Implicit.
• Renew trust within community.
• Start from a foundation of trust, not fear or resistance or hostility.
• Need trust in this process and need resources to implement changes.
• Prioritize issues and follow through.
• Use student fee money from student assembly reserves to help pay for police overtime bill. Do the right thing now!
• We really have to practice what we preach.