Keene State College
Strategic Planning
August 24, 2015

Opening Meeting
Breakout Session Notes

Goal 1: Identity/Distinction

Suggested Edits

Specific edits to existing goal and objective text are shown below in *italics.*

1. Goal 1: "Keene State College will provide a distinctive, rigorous, and primarily residential liberal arts education characterized by (1) the intentional integration of learning across the college experience; (2) progressive, engaged, and evidence-based pedagogy; (3) the development of *career* readiness; and (4) the achievement of desired college-wide student learning outcomes."

2. Action 1.1.2: "Through the combined efforts of *the faculty*, the College Senate, and the Provost, and based on *work begun* in 2014-2015, develop and implement a revised Integrated Studies Program (ISP)." [This speaks to a concern that the Provost spent a year meeting with faculty about ISP and developed some recommendations that are not reflected in the strategic plan. See comments below.]

3. Objective 1.2: "Improve the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of undergraduate advising, integrating academic and co-curricular advising,

to enable students to take full advantage of their educational programs and experience in and out of the classroom *with a view toward a successful life after college.*"   [ "We should help students determine their place in society and the world, not just prepare for a career." ]

4.  Action 1.2.3:  "Offer faculty (especially first-year faculty) and designated staff members professional development and assistance to support all forms of advising *and mentorship.*"

5.Objective 1.3:  "Better align and support academic programs *to* help students develop cognitive, practical, and workplace skills that are essential to competitiveness and success in employment and careers locally, regionally, and globally."

6.Objective 1.4:  "Increase support for faculty *and staff* research, scholarship (including the scholarship of teaching and learning), and artistic creation that are aligned with the College's institutional values and enhance the student experience.

7.Objective 1.5:  "Continually strengthen the quality of teaching and learning, and provide faculty development that is integrated with the assessment of student learning *and advances discipline-appropriate and interdisciplinary pedagogical innovation* and high-impact practices."

Suggested Priorities

1.Primary emphasis should be on teaching and learning (within which would come attention to advising, professional development for faculty, FYE,

etc.). That means creation of the integrated academic/co-curricular plan (Objective 1.1) must be the first thing; all else derives from that.

2.Action 1.1.2 should be prioritized, given the weight of ISP among students' total credits and its importance and emphasis in many departments. Must complete work on revision of ISP, including making sure ISP student learning outcomes (SLOs) are aligned with College-wide SLOs.

3.Objective 1.2 ( "Improve the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of undergraduate advising, integrating academic and co-curricular advising, to enable students to take full advantage of their educational programs and experience in and out of the classroom" ) should have high priority in order to address "melt" in the first two or three weeks of classes by making strong connections of advisors with new students.

4.Objective 1.5 ( "Continually strengthen the quality of teaching and learning, and provide faculty development that is integrated with the assessment of student learning and advances discipline-appropriate pedagogical innovation and high-impact practices" ) should also have priority; KSC has "gotten away from integrated faculty development," and faculty development is essential to supporting engaged learning and improving rigor.

Summary of Comments

• Guidelines regarding (1) faculty workloads and (2) replacement of faculty given the forthcoming wave of faculty retirements should be developed.

- Graduate programs are not represented in Goal 1, only in Goal 2, as part of Enrollment Management. Several speakers suggested graduate programs are an academic priority, not just an enrollment question, and should be in Goal 1. Similarly, several speakers objected to having first year experience only in Goal 2; they felt it should not be an enrollment management issue alone, because it is also a cornerstone of the academic program and a key factor in engaging students in intellectual life.

- Art and creative fields are not consistently reflected in Goal 1 or throughout the plan. Artistic creation is mentioned at the end of Objective 1.1, and a consideration to Action 1.1.5 calls for the "need to define creative inquiry, creative activity, and undergraduate research." But arts students participate in performances, presentations, and other activities that faculty define as engaged learning, and artistic creation is an important way in which Keene State contributes to the community.

- One professor emphasized the absence of anything about KSC's role in "addressing critical issues in public life."

- One speaker objected to the absence (in the draft and in policy) of a foreign language requirement.

- Rigor is referred to in the goal but not directly addressed in the objectives and actions; increasing academic rigor and raising expectations for students' performance are important.

- Undergraduate research, advising and mentoring, design and supervision

of engaged learning experiences, and availability to students to support their projects take time and will increase faculty work loads; resources needed could include additional faculty complement, course release time, or the assistance of retired faculty.

- Though some faculty felt that it would be difficult to develop sufficient capacity among community partners to ensure engaged learning experiences for all students in some fields (Activity 1.1.5), most believed that engaged learning for all students is nonetheless an appropriate and meaningful aspiration. It might not be met in the first years of the plan, but many faculty endorsed retaining it in the plan, particularly if engaged learning is grounded in best practices, based on evidence, and improved with assessment.

- New faculty members noted the absence of forums in which to discuss their teaching and mentoring in a helpful, non-judgmental fashion. As the plan is implemented, members of the faculty need to find "sacred space" in the schedule to meet with one another, some of which could include getting together in informal settings—which might require creating a specific space for such purposes.

- Several participants noted that the College should better assess student strengths and weaknesses upon their arrival at Keene State to better support them in areas where they may lack skills—such as note-taking— to promote persistence and retention.

- Clarity about "workplace readiness" is needed; some speakers thought current language is "too soft," but others were concerned that

"workplace" suggests a specific set of occupations and should be changed to "career," or that current language suggests all career/workplace readiness work occurs in classrooms. Several speakers emphasized that liberal education and career readiness are not opposed, and that liberal education is the best preparation for success in a complex and diverse world; others emphasized career preparation should be a focus throughout ISP. In one group, there was an extended discussion of the relative primacy of liberal arts versus "workplace (or career) readiness"; many faculty members engaged in that discussion, making these points most often: (1) career readiness is not in conflict with liberal arts education; (2) career readiness is consistent with the College-wide learning outcomes, but should not be considered an end in and of itself; (3) students' enrollment in graduate and professional studies programs speaks to the importance of career readiness to them; (4) students who achieve the College-wide learning outcomes will be well prepared for the world of work.

- Specific suggestion of instituting a J-term to provide opportunity for closer faculty/student engagement.

- One speaker noted that the plan makes no reference to making sure students have the technological and infrastructure capacity to fully participate in a Keene education and raised the question of whether the College should provide laptops for students.

## Goal 2: Student Achievement

Suggested Edits

1.Additions to list of potential stakeholders (general): *Operational Staff; students, including transfer students—recruitment, orientation and integration; student clubs, organizations, and SGA; Student Accounts Director; Athletics; faculty; Counseling Center; and, alumni.*

2.Additions to potential stakeholders for Objective 2.3: *Counseling Center, with more emphasis on alcohol & drug use prevention; Academic & Career Advising.*

3.Additions to potential stakeholders for Objective 2.4: *Financial management, academic support, Counseling Center, Coordinator of AOD prevention.*

Suggested Priorities

1.Focus on the overall first year experience, informed by research. Capitalizing on first year programming will boost retention.

Summary of Comments

- "What is the sustainable enrollment number?  Does not seem to be identified anywhere."   "Need to "right-size" ourselves" ; several noted "We might have to shrink."  Others noted there should be ties between Goal 3 and enrollment management—identifying a sustainable number for enrollment and examining revenue from enrollment.

- More and better data are needed to (1) ensure that the College understands the needs of both current and potential students; (2) explain why students decide not to return to, and whey they stay or come to KSC in the first place; and (3) characterize the financial success of current

programs, to provide comparisions or models for other programs.

- There was substantial discussion of several factors affecting enrollment management and retention, including student preparation and support, attracting and retaining first-generation and multicultural students, the role of on-campus housing and residential/commuter support, and admitting/retaining students who must balance work and attending KSC.

- The composition of the "Enrollment Management Committee" (Enrollment Strategy Council) was a concern; one participant noted that there are no members of the faculty on that Committee, as it is currently constituted. Several speakers noted that it needs expansion and reorganization.

- Ideas for advancing this goal included more student mentorship (not just formal advising); increasing the number and diversity of living-learning communities; expansion of elective "course 199"; better use of technology (by expanding Canvas, developing an "app" for smartphones to help students access services across campus, or implementation of an improved student information system through which to track students' progress); more on-campus jobs for students, co-curricular dashboards; making it easier for faculty and staff to engage students in off-campus learning experiences; exploring staff involvement in student advising; increasing the number of Friday classes; and implementing an early alert system to identify at-risk students.

- Several participants noted the need for and opportunity created by a

"Student development" course [aka "University 101" ] — a modular course addressing the nuts and bolts of coming to college, including where to go for various types of assistance; what will it be like living in a residence hall with other people; the first-year experienced.

- Some faculty endorsed efforts to better align graduate programs with the needs and demographics of the region; several suggested that graduate programs should be expanded (specific suggestions: music, the arts, athletic training, and 5-year combined baccalaureate and Master' s in teaching), and could be offered to and better synchronized with the needs of undergraduates seeking a graduate degree after finishing their bachelor' s.

- Accelerated programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels were also mentioned as a possible recruiting tool.

## Goal 3: Institutional Sustainability and Resiliency

Suggested Edits

1. Proposed addition from a participant in one group: "No committees shall be formed, and we shall look at ways that we can disband committees." Alternative: "The College will actively seek to identify and sunset ongoing activities that unnecessarily duplicate efforts and processes."

2. Some participants observed that Objective 3.6 (Risk management) felt "separate" from the other objectives and could be a stand-alone goal.

Suggested Priorities

1.Objective 3.1 ( "Develop strategic plans for all divisions and appropriate functional areas throughout the institution that are derived from and aligned with the College's overall strategic plan" ): "The creation of plans should come first."

2.Objective 3.4 ( "Diversify sources of revenue…" ): This objective should be the first priority, "to stabilize what we have and expand from there." The Budget Advisory Committee (Action 3.4.1) should be formed in the first year.

3.Objective 3.5 ( "Develop Keene State's human, technological, and physical resources…" ): should come second.

Summary of Comments

- One participant commented that the goal "beautifully reflects a balance of shared governance, input, and efficiency."

- Need to identify "functional areas" (Objective 3.1). Does this include committees? Offices? What if it's only one person? Some participants suggested creating an organization chart that reflects the definition of "functional areas." Similarly, some participants asked for a definition of "shared governance" (Objective 3.3) within the context of the USNH.

- "There's a lot of spirit at the college, and we're ready to move. It will take a long time to do it well, but no time to do some of it immediately, including a commitment to communicate better" [reference to Activity

3.7.1]. Others noted the importance of "communicating emerging processes to the community simply and with transparency."

- As in other goal discussion groups, participants noted the need for basing action on evidence and assessment (including returning on investment and cost/benefit analyses) to ensure best use of resources, including faculty workload.

- Some participants cautioned that entrepreneurship should be supported by the goal, and not displaced or restrained by it.

- A few speakers noted a need for improving resources to support employees in transition, to include retraining and/or staff development, "as ways to mitigate fear of positions being eliminated as we go about this."

- Other Ideas to advance the goal included implementing a survey instrument to elicit input on College priorities; reviewing past processes to avoid recreating them; specifically outlining decision-making processes to be used in implementing the activities associated with the goal; developing a graphic to depict the planning and decision-making processes and their timing (Objectives 3.1-3.2); standardizing annual reports; and expanding philanthropic gifts [addressed in Objective 3.4], including expressing gratitude to donors.

## Goal 4: Community and Culture

Suggested Edits

1. Additions to list of potential stakeholders for Objective 4.1: *Title IX Coordinator; the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE); faculty; Director of Sustainability.*

2. Additions to the list of potential stakeholders for Objective 4.3: *Keene Police Department; Campus Safety; ROCKS; community members of color; cultural institutions, including Thorne, Redfern, and the Colonial Theater.*

3. Additions to the list of potential stakeholders for Objective 4.4: *Community programs, Monadnock Violence Prevention; YMCA; yoga studios; Campus Safety; high schools; the United Way; City of Keene; hospital & urgent care clinics.*

4. Objective 4.4: Expand the reference to "wellness" to refer to include physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

5. Additions to the list of potential stakeholders for Activity 4.4.1: *Athletic training program; parents.*

6. Additions to the list of potential stakeholders for Objective 4.5: *City of Keene; Purchasing Department; Academic Department[s].*

7. Additions to the list of potential stakeholders for Objective 4.6: *Faculty; Advancement Officer; student workers; alumni, KSC academic departments; Greek life.*

Suggested Priorities

1.Consider switching the order of 4.1 ( "Create and support a diverse
community of learners..." ) and 4.2 ( "Provide curricular and co-curricular
experiences that foster commitments to civic responsibility...) to address
4.2 first.

Summary of Comments

- As in other groups, data-driven decision-making was highlighted.

- At least one participant felt that Objectives 4.1 and 4.2 should be included
in every curriculum; but one also questioned whether student
participation should be made a graduation requirement (Objective 4.2).

- Participants noted the need to (1) consider "human sustainability" as
well as other forms or dimensions of sustainability, and (2) communicate
clearly that everyone across campus has an impact on and responsibilities
associated with both human and environmental sustainability

- Financial support is needed for faculty to expand connections of
community and culture.

- With reference to Objective 4.4 ( "Develop a campus-wide plan to address
student wellness, including health promotion, health risk reduction,
alcohol and other drug use, sexual respect, and personal safety..." ), KSC
"needs a strong statement on sexual violence, sexual health, and sexual
respect."

- Some participants noted the "highly questionable Sodexo business practices that may not align with our values."

- Ideas for activities and programs to advance the goal included the implementation of a "green bikes on campus" program; more collaboration with alumni and parents, as well as off-campus community members; easing access for students to get to community events; highlighting the importance of giving to others; creating an "inventory of community" containing different groups by race, ethnicity, and age; ensuring that citizens of Keene are aware that they are welcome on the KSC campus; developing "alternative student spaces" where students can congregate safely; creating a centralized events calendar.