Faculty Staff Gathering Place Task Force

Executive Summary

I. **The Charge:**
   Establish a gathering place for use by faculty and staff that provides dining and meeting options.

II. **Approach to Task:**
   A. Determine the elements of a faculty/staff gathering place.
      a. Review UNI history of University luncheon and Royal Oak Room costs and program.
      b. Determine what other institutions have for programs, services, and costs.
   B. Determine faculty and staff interest in supporting the concept via survey, focus group, and Web feedback.
   C. Prepare cost estimates to reflect campus vision and format of the club.

III. **Findings & Recommendations:**
   A. **History**
      A review of the history of the University Club luncheons, the Royal Oak Room, and other University clubs indicates that this proposal is not likely to be self-supporting financially
      1. Daily average participation was less than 100 persons.
      2. To meet annual operating expenses, membership dues, University subsidy, external funding sources, or a combination of these will be required.
   B. **Key Survey Results**
      1. A total of 26% reported that a university club should be created even if membership fees (15 %) or University subsidy is required (11%).
      2. A total of 46% reported that a university club should be created only if members do not need to pay a fee to join (21%) or the University does not need to subsidize (25%).
      3. 24% reported that UNI should not pursue a university club.
   C. **Campus Responses**
      (16 persons attended four group sessions and 1 person provided feedback via email to the Web report):
      1. There was general acceptance that a gathering place would connect the University community, facilitate exchange of ideas, and increase communication.
      2. The financial viability of this proposal generated concern. Suggestions to create opportunities within existing facilities for more private dining were given.
D. **Cost Estimates**
   1. A rough estimate based on approximate square footage and food service construction costs to renovate the Continuing Education Services building to a university club is $645,000. This does not include dollars to create outdoor dining/gathering areas.
   2. Annual operational costs not covered by payment for services are estimated to be approximately $210,000 for an academic year only operation.
   3. A member dues rate of approximately $830/year for 255 members would cover the deficit. This could be reduced by revenues from catering, departmental memberships, social events, public access during certain hours, and University subsidy.

E. **Recommendation**
   1. A University gathering place can play a vital role on campus in providing opportunities for faculty and staff to communicate, collaborate, and build collegiality and community.
   2. Providing a great experience will build support, enthusiasm, and patronage.
   3. The Campus Advisory Group should give strong consideration to supporting this concept.

*Members of the Faculty/Staff Gathering Place Task Force*

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