

# *Operation Refresh*

## Campus Community Conversations

### Financial Vitality Sessions

August 24 & August 26

Facilitator: Reyes Gonzalez

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Total participants: 29 + 26 = 55

#### Feedback on Briefing

Questions / comments

- Recognized need to prioritize & invest (for instance in addressing deferred maintenance) where it will move us forward the most now – “Strategically make sure our financial resources go to meet our mission.”
- What is our ideal enrollment (revenue covers costs)? If we exceed that, how do we proceed?
- Favorable comments having the data and graphs along with explanations and time to ask questions – example was “yes we have record enrollments but we’re also paying off debt.”

Additional data recommended

- How have new buildings at Wisconsin Lutheran affected enrollment, etc?
- Comparative stats on those colleges that scored higher on CHE financial ranking than MMC
- Data on MMC charitable contributions to other organizations & public service such as gratis facilities use, etc.

#### Hurdles

*IT and infrastructure – There has to be a time to “just spend it.” At what point do you say we just have to have this. At what point do we take that step to have a college our community is proud of?*

*Interesting “clash” between students who want a great facility and many others who want to take classes online / remotely and don’t care about the campus facilities. We need to think strategically about where we put money in those two groups.*

#### Creative thinking

Could we somehow capitalize on problem in Milwaukee with perception of Catholic Church but leveraging the SSND legacy & mission? *Wealthy and disillusioned Catholics are seeking a place to donate.*

*We need to change our own internal narrative – we need to stop talking about being poor, which doesn’t translate well in public.*

Alternative funding / revenue streams – *We have Pepsi products in vending machines; what about seeking grant/gift? Are there companies / funders who would help with “going green” process and thus help with renovations and/or new buildings?*

*Set up early alert system for students with financial difficulties*

Improved career placement would result in alumnae with stronger capacity to support MMC philanthropically

Establish a protocol for assessing financial viability of all programs to break the “boom or bust” cycle with financing no longer provided to some programs. *It’s okay for programs to die.”*

*Establish “unleash the talent” incentives for merit and good work – rewarding people who bring in new resources.*

*Develop a “culture of plenty” – If you have an attitude of scarcity you get scarcity, but if you have an open hand, you get an open hand. If we are more generous with our students, they will be generous in return.*

*Have a conversation about the land and possibly selling – not advocating it be sold but recommending a discussion.*

#### Major Themes (as identified by facilitator during conversations)

##### Goals

- Competitive salaries, low turnover
- More financial aid funded through partnerships
- Develop a methodology for measuring the success of programs and functions
- Increase revenue and further our mission
  - Increase retention
  - Improve residence hall

##### Maximization of Resources

- Savings initiatives, e.g. combined purchasing programs
- Increased partnerships and relationships
- More diligence in conserving energy
- Build reserves
  - a. For scholarships
  - b. For students at risk
- For new buildings

##### Increased Revenue – think strategically in maximizing the development & use of resources

- Increased community visibility and outreach through expanded CEPA program and other such means
- Cultivate relationships with women donors and create a culture of giving among graduates
- Reward successful programs
- Expanded use of land and facilities
- Maximize the use of facilities for generating revenue

- Develop a business model to attract all sectors of the pool of potential students
- Maximize the use of partners
- Build human capacity by paying appropriate wages and establishing career development plans
- Implement sustainable “green” programs

Top Themes (as identified by # of references recorded on flip charts / observer notes)

