

Faculty Advisory Committee to the Auraria Board
Meeting Agenda
Monday, December 7, 2020
Zoom
8:00 – 9:00 AM

Attending:

Karey James	CCD Representative
Bret Hann	CCD Representative
Mike Jacobs	MSU Denver Representative (chair)
Zsuzsa Balogh	MSU Denver Representative
Jaedo Park	CU Denver Representative
Timberley Roane	CU Denver Representative
Colleen Walker	CEO, Auraria Higher Education Center
Mary Kate Kenney	Staff, Auraria Higher Education Center

Approval of Minutes: Karey James made the motion to approve the minutes of the November 2nd, 2020 meeting, and Bret Hann seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Items:

- **Barnes and Noble | Tivoli Student Union**

Colleen shared that AHEC is in final discussions this month with Barnes and Noble College. AHEC has had an independently owned and operated bookstore from the beginning but doesn't have the buying power and margins necessary to survive in the business. Barnes and Noble College has been interested in working with AHEC for years and have been extremely thoughtful and collaborative over the last few months. Their partnership is a real win-win for students, faculty and staff, as Barnes and Noble College offers the right prices and merchandise mix. All AHEC employees will have a chance to interview and transition to the B&N team, and the transition should be seamless.

Bret Hann asked how Barnes and Noble College will handle the gear. Colleen shared that all of the branded merchandise will remain. Barnes and Noble College operates approximately 600 stores, and is accustomed to multi-institution operations. They have worked with many systems, including community college and state systems, and are well-versed in balancing their own inventory as well as that of schools'.

Bret Hann also asked that, if the future of bookstores is uncertain, does AHEC care about books? Colleen shared that we do care about books for now, noting that bookstores will be shrinking their footprint quite a bit, and that the industry is changing dramatically. These reasons underscore the importance of a partnership with Barnes and Noble College, an organization so ahead of the curve. Bret noted that bookstores seem to have survived somehow.

Bret asked if AHEC has spoken with Tattered Cover and inquired as to whether they have the capacity to operate a bookstore on campus. Colleen shared that Bill Mummert had spoken with them, but that the college market is different than the independent bookstore market. Recently, Bill and Colleen spoke with Follet and Barnes and Noble College, which are the major campus bookstore vendors in the U.S.

Colleen shared that later this week, AHEC will provide more public communication about this change in order to reach a broader audience. This change will also bring more revenue to the Tivoli.

- **AHEC 3.0 Strategic Planning**

Colleen shared that the strategic planning process was scheduled to begin in May 2020, and was delayed due to COVID-19. The process will hopefully begin in January, but AHEC is still working on the final timeline. Colleen has selected CREDO as a partner and is looking forward to their cooperation in this process. This strategy will help AHEC build a vision and direction for our campus. Colleen described two eras in the Auraria Campus' history: its initial years, and its progress over the last decade, including the concept of the neighborhood. The purpose of the strategic planning process is to envision what the next phase in Auraria's history will be. This process, and the next phase of Auraria's history, will incorporate institution-wide goals and a forward-focused vision for the campus.

AHEC will work with FACAB, as well as hear from the business and neighborhood communities. AHEC wants to make the campus vibrant and resilient for the student population, as well as the population surrounding campus, for the benefit of all of the institutions on the Auraria Campus. Colleen likened the strategic plan to a seed for planting – it is a process that will grow as people continue to work, learn, and connect on the campus. Additionally, the strategic plan will help define how AHEC will get the attention of potential students, inspiring them to apply to AHEC schools and retaining them throughout their educational career. While AHEC as an organization is not directly involved in programming, place and space are important elements to recruitment and retention. In 2026, the campus will celebrate 50 years of history. In this context, what is

AHEC's place and space in the City of Denver? These topics will be discussed at the AEC and ABOD meetings.

Bret Hann noted that because of the pandemic, AHEC is learning that we can deliver education in different ways, and that students have different preferences. The same can be said of downtown businesses, with employees working from home reducing the cost of paying for office space. Brett asked how much physical class space campus will need in the future, noting that in his program, demand for online classes have dramatically increased, while not everyone prefers online learning. The future of campus may involve the repurposing of old spaces and integrating new spaces to make up for potentially smaller classroom space.

Karey James is doing research on millennials and remote work. While not a millennial, she relates to the topic because she has been working remotely and enjoys it. She doesn't need an office with photos on the wall, and can work from any space with her laptop. Karey noted that she doesn't know if there will be other faculty like her, who would rather be remote part time and give up office space. Karey does not want to go back to more constricting, closed-in spaces to do work, but does enjoy coming to campus.

Timberley Roane asked how quickly decisions regarding the strategic plan are being made, as well as for clarification about the timeline of the process. Colleen shared that AHEC will be finalizing the timeline this week, including a leadership retreat, focus groups for each institution, and a community day for AHEC to inspire broad engagement with the community. The entire process is estimated to occur from January until June. Colleen noted that University of Colorado Denver is also beginning their own specific strategic plan at the same time. Timberley wanted to add that Chancellor Marks has pushed back against University of Colorado system-wide transitions to online models, noting that when students are polled, they do not express a desire for online learning. What students are looking for is a space to get away from their families that is dedicated to learning, to get outside of the house and into private, quiet spaces. Students desire having localized discussion with an option to add virtual learning, without a complete transfer to digital spaces. Undergraduate students are more curious about renting a space on campus where they can leave textbooks, have pictures on the wall, and create a personalized space.

Bret Hann asked if there are personalized work spaces currently available on campus. Timberley Roane said that they do exist in business settings, and Bret noted that it's a similar concept. Timberley shared that this concept is similar to study pods. In the first year center, this concept is being discussed with student organizations – creating dedicated spaces for both organizations and majors to maintain personalized pods. This will allow students to socialize with others following similar academic and social courses. Colleen shared that the library is having great

success developing their own “flex spaces” as well, and are similarly doing a strategic plan, which Timberley confirmed. The library is truly tri-institutional, funded by all three partners and AHEC operations, but it is unclear if they’ve included the partners in their strategic planning. Timberley believes they have a tri-institutional or four-institutional committee, and is happy to reach out to see if she can figure out who is spearheading this effort, as well as to make sure that there is institutional representation. Colleen noted both Timberley and Karey’s comments as the duality we have to consider now. AHEC wants the space to be meaningful, functional and intentional as well, especially as a commuter campus.

Michael Jacobs added that he sees both Karey and Timberley’s points and agrees. At Metropolitan State University Denver, faculty members are concerned about going all online because many still want to teach in-person. Some leadership have shared that it’s not MSU’s plan to go all online, as there are already schools that have been in the online business for over 25 years and are successful and proficient. Michael thinks MSU’s plan is to adopt a hybrid learning model when campus life starts to return to a social living atmosphere. A survey of over 250 students revealed that most want to be back on campus, socializing and going to class - even introverted students. Only two students surveyed have loved the online learning atmosphere. These answers depend on the kind of student as well. Some students have a hard time learning at home due to their family atmosphere or kids. Commuting to campus offers a break from home life, when students can come into class and focus. Michael agrees with Colleen’s comment, and with Bret’s comment, and hopes there are no plans to sell empty space on campus with the hopes of reimagining these space. Colleen confirmed that no spaces will be sold. Empty campus spaces represent valuable real estate in the city, and these spaces could be multilayer environments. Michael noted that campus has had a hard time integrating into the city, having built more of a wall with new campus spaces. Michael loves what Colleen is talking about, and wonders how to better integrate with the city without losing what we need and compromising our mission.

Colleen shared that Nan Ellen, Dean of the School of Architecture, facilitated that discussion in last year’s Board retreat. AHEC has natural competition on campus among partners. Nan said that when she looks at the DDP plan, she sees a plan that has been talked about for a decade with no results. She wonders; how does an organization get out of its own way? Campus businesses have gotten territorial and competitive with each other, but AHEC does not rise to the occasion. Nan challenged us to get out of our own way to push the campus forward for all campus partners. That transcends each individual institution; rising tides lift all boats.

- **Spring 2021 Return to Campus Plan Updates**

Colleen prefaced this item by sharing that she has an 18-year-old daughter who is a freshman at CU Boulder, and that her two closest freshman friends have both withdrawn their acceptance to the school. The freshman experience, on that traditional path, is in jeopardy. The disconnection and loss of community, even at a big institution, is lonely and devastating, and it is taking all of her effort to just get across the finish line.

Bret Hann also has a daughter who is a freshman in Washington State. She is currently in a dorm by herself, and hated it because she didn't know anyone in her dorm. She is moving out to a house, because freshman don't have to stay in a dorm anymore.

Michael Jacobs noted that with MSU, it appears that most classes and organizations will be online, as far as he is aware. Some students like it and some don't, but everyone is getting through, and are excited to have a vaccine shortly and for things to change. MSU has been considering a late start eight-week course to begin in March. Spring enrollment is down 19%.

Bret Hann added that Community College of Denver has just added two late starts for English majors. In fall, students were waiting to see what would happen as COVID developed, and there was a surge of late enrollment. Enrollment is down 27% for the spring semester. Many students tried starting this fall, and are now choosing to wait until next fall. CCD is offering a hybrid learning model for Fall 2021, because getting to campus is a challenge for many students, between parking fees and bus trips.

Michael Jacobs hears that some of the online courses were great, and most seemed to be a disaster for others.

Jaedo Park shared that University of Colorado Denver is still planning for most courses to be online for Spring, citing that there has been low enrollment in classes.

Colleen shared that she is lobbying at the Governor's level for a solution to the RTD pass for students, faculty and staff.

- **Tivoli Re-Imagining | Preliminary Survey Findings (8:40am)**

Jennifer Cordes, Jen Rittler, and Jason Bentley

Jen Rittler has been doing most of the work on the survey, and will share the findings. The outreach methodology for the preliminary survey has included a campus survey, focus groups, and committee meetings. This process of listening and discovering, synthesizing the information, and brainstorming solutions will shape the future of the Tivoli.

Jen highlighted that so far, the survey has received over 1,100 responses, resulting in a 90% completion rate. Most responses happened on the first day, which is one key factor for the survey's success thus far. The Tivoli satisfaction rate averaged at 3.7 out of 5.

Student responses by institution – Metro has highest number there for undergraduate students
Faculty responses by instruction – community members were typically alumni

One survey question asked how students and faculty see the Tivoli as central gathering space. On a sliding scale ranging from 1 to 10, most students indicated a 3 – revealing that while we may think of Tivoli as a gathering place, many students do not. Bret Hann asked if this is separated by instruction; Jen shared that they can, and will dive into this for the final report. Jennifer shared that this was somewhat expected, as each neighborhood model has a central space.

Students indicated that the most challenging aspect of visiting the Tivoli was getting lost, followed by being unable to find amenities and services.

Colleen asked about whether members of the focus groups see the Tivoli as one of the factors in potential students selecting to come to Auraria for their education. Jen confirmed that yes, they feel that the Tivoli is important in that decision. Jen gathered the data around transfer rates and is continuing to analyze it, but there is a high transfer rate between the institutions and many see their journey including all three institutions. Many students choose this campus for that reason. Colleen shared that this would be a revelation for executive and student success teams to inform broader long-term strategic thinking. Jennifer shared that Tivoli provides a recruiting opportunity for all institutions.

Anecdotally, Bret Hann added that it's great to have CCD students see MSU and CU Denver students and realize that they too can move on to four-year institution.

Jennifer noted that qualitatively, students are very busy. In terms of food, the idea of a grab-and-go is rising to top. Campus faculty strict about tardiness to class, and campus does not provide many grab-and-go options. Additionally, Jen has also heard great ideas around the needs of commuter students. Such ideas include a space for commuter students to heat up and prepare meals brought from home, as well as commuter lounges and lockers where personal belongings can be temporarily stored. Additional ideas include a spot to do laundry as well as play pool – “Suds and Duds” – and a secure shower concept. Because of homelessness and the homeless population at the Tivoli, students don’t feel as safe as they would like to in their student center. There are existing talks about compartmentalizing the building, making it easier for late night services and police monitoring.

Jason echoed all of that, and added that the main takeaway from the survey and focus groups is that there’s tremendous opportunity for Tivoli to fill many roles that are missing on campus – it’s centrally located, and the food could be more convenient (basement is impediment.) Additionally, partitioning off conferencing for its own hours would allow for a safer, easier to manage building.

Jenn noted that she is fascinated by people who have been at Tivoli for decades with rich knowledge of the building and how it has evolved. She is thinking about how the recommendations will think about the Tivoli, and that there’s so much opportunity to shift perceptions. Concerns about security, safety and wayfinding, and many architectural improvement will need to be addressed in order to change these perceptions. People don’t want to lose the historic charm of the Tivoli, but also don’t want it to feel dark and dingy. Increasing frontage and visibility for the businesses, as well as adding more light, will improve perceptions of the space.

Timberley dropped in a mail and printing service idea into the chat, and asked if there is anything like that on campus. These do not exist on campus, but there are small Amazon drop zones in some residence halls. Timberley added that mailboxes would be helpful as well, serving as a permanent mail location on campus for students who move residence halls. Karey mentioned a car charging station, and that when cars are locked in for 30 minutes or so, people end up going inside to buy something. We’re right off the freeway, and could help with foot traffic. Anne mentioned that several charging stations exist in the garage, and Colleen noted that we don’t do a good job of advertising these amenities. Karey asked about technology and if there’s a double charge for EV charging and parking. Colleen shared that our technology has lagged from what Karey shared, and would have to update that.

Jennifer encouraged FACAB members to send any additional ideas to Colleen or Anne as well as to Jennifer's team. Data from the surveys is still being analyzed, and a concrete plan will be sent out in mid-January. Jen is currently researching rent space and time for an e-sports venue for the Tivoli. There are only two such venues in the state, and something like that in the Tivoli could be a great opportunity. Use of the space could be charged by the hour at \$5/hour, with students being charged less. Some of the darker basement rooms would be conducive to this. Jen is currently looking at how to increase conferencing and A/V opportunities. She is also looking at the addition of group study space. While such spaces exist in the library, they are designated quiet spaces – the space in Tivoli could be used for presentations. The current big investigation is into housing at the Tivoli. These could be artist and music studio spaces, bringing spaces to students in that aren't currently provided in surrounding neighborhoods.

Jason talked about validation by businesses; possibly through parking lots. This could utilize QR codes. Parking services is open to creative ways to make parking more open and convenient.

Michael noted that he sits on another meeting, 20 or 30 faculty across the company, talking about online and in-person opportunities. He noted that students aren't necessarily paying just for an education, but the college experience as a whole, citing that students tend to drop out when campuses move to fully-online learning. Students are the customers, and they don't want to pay to stare at a screen all day. Even the community might want to come back to the Tivoli for that experience again, or to relive something. It is a very interesting challenge to give college experience to students and public.

Jason added that the tower of Tivoli could also be used to make spaces available for students and community. He added that the Tivoli is a diamond in the rough that could be made into an attraction in downtown Denver.

- **Other / Public Comment**