

Putting Our Vision into Action: The TCU Promise -- Fall 2004 Symposium

"Putting Our Vision into Action: The TCU Promise -- Fall 2004 Symposium," was held Saturday Sept. 11, 2004. Over 200 members of the TCU family, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, deans and trustees, attended the meeting and discussed the TCU Promise and how this promise might impact the future of TCU.

During the symposium, participants were involved in small group discussions and the major points of the discussion were recorded and synthesized into documents with input from cohort groups (faculty, staff, alumni, students, trustees, and deans). The discussions were wide-ranging and fruitful. Because of the magnitude of the ideas, these linked documents are not an exact transcript of the discussions, but an overview of the major ideas presented. In addition, these documents do not represent the university's belief concerning the TCU Promise, but are a part of the ongoing and important discussions that will continue to occur.

FACULTY SYNTHESIS

What does the TCU Promise mean to you?

TCU WILL

regarding Academic Quality:

- * Reduce class size.
- * Maintain a Liberal arts focus for breadth and depth.
- * Communicate to students and parents that academics come first!
- * Challenge faculty to enhance rigor.
- * Create disincentives for poor teaching.
- * Create centers of excellence.
- * Reach out to the community for internships and service learning opportunities.
- * Publicize teaching/research awards to the community.
- * Publicize student awards to the community.

regarding Commitment to Students:

- * Provide appropriate classroom space.
- * Provide money to support undergraduate research.
- * Develop graduate programs that are unique, including both traditional and professional.
- * Raise graduate student stipends.
- * Consider creating an academic boot camp to orient students to expectations.
- * Do all that is possible to ensure students graduate in 4 years.

regarding Recruitment and Retention:

- * Communicate to students and parents that TCU is a value-added university relative to other institutions.
- * Expand community scholars program and other scholarship opportunities.
- * Collect data to determine reasons students leave.

regarding Academic Programs:

- * Develop interdisciplinary programs.
- * Reduce the number of adjunct faculty.
- * Ensure that the promise is the same across all disciplines (e.g., athletics, social distinctions)

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

- * Create more on-campus housing.
- * Slow growth of student population.
- * Provide vibrant student centers that encourage working and collegial interaction.
- * Reduce cost of meals so that students will stay on campus.

regarding Faculty Support:

- * Add more faculty.
- * Define reasonable teaching loads.
- * Remove budgetary barriers to interdisciplinary crossovers and co-teaching.
- * Support the bridging of curricular and co-curricular activities.
- * Provide appropriate classroom, office and research space.
- * Enhance support from Office of Research and Sponsored Projects.

- * Consider "Bridge Funding" when grant money dries up temporarily.
- * Commit to ongoing faculty development, including a Junior Sabbatical for new faculty.
- * Reduce teaching loads for new faculty.
- * Improve retention and recruitment with incentives such as bonuses, labs, day-care, flexible scheduling, maternity leave, etc.
- * Provide incentives for faculty to do advising, and ensure advising is consistent across campus.
- * Develop a true Faculty Center that entices faculty to interact more; include evening hours.
- * Provide technical support to train and help faculty with new equipment.

regarding Assessment, Program Review and Management:

- * Develop effective assessment strategies that address important questions central to the mission of TCU.
- * Conduct reviews that are responsive to the needs of programs as perceived by persons who design and implement these programs.
- * Carefully consider the implications of the development "Centers of Excellence."

regarding Budget Process:

- * Make budget line process transparent.
- * Involve Deans in formulating budgets.
- * Follow multi-year budgeting and planning.
- * Link academic priorities with fund raising focus.
- * Increase technical support budget.

What do you promise to TCU as your part of the TCU Promise?

FACULTY WILL

regarding Academic Quality:

- * Develop student potential rather than guarantee an outcome, as in a contract.
- * Be well versed in our discipline.
- * Serve as role models to students.
- * Develop undergraduate opportunities for experiential learning and undergraduate research.
- * Mentor new faculty within our department.

regarding Commitment to Students:

- * Play a central role in students' intellectual growth and development.
- * Create undergraduate research opportunities.
- * Make ourselves available one-on-one with each of our students.
- * Be good communicators of our knowledge and our passion.
- * Teach students how to learn and how to develop a passion for learning.
- * Teach students how to apply what they learn and how to become life-long learners.
- * Encourage students to take advantage of opportunities on and off campus.
- * Instill a sense of personal responsibility in students with respect to their intellectual development.

STAFF SYNTHESIS

What does the TCU Promise mean to you?

TCU WILL:

regarding Academic Quality:

- * Ensure the Promise is a core value.
- *Have small classes.
- *Give students the opportunity to succeed and graduate in 4 years -- and to fail.
- *Ensure that students and parents are aware of faculty/student ratios in various areas.
- *Create synergy between graduate and undergraduate programs.
- *Ensure that academic units link to the mission statement.
- *Create centers of excellence.

regarding Commitment to Students:

- *Improve advising, and include co-curricular activities.
- *Respect and listen to students.
- *Ensure there are enough good classrooms.
- *Allow staff to play a larger role.
- *Create loyal alumni.

regarding Recruitment and Retention:

regarding Academic Programs:

- *Improve graduate programs.
- *Increase number of interdisciplinary programs.
- *Provide undergraduate research opportunities.

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

- *Maintain family atmosphere on campus.
- *Create a better gathering place for all.
- *Add more residential accommodations.
- *Encourage mentoring between seniors and freshmen.

regarding Staff/Faculty Support:

- *Reward publicly those who fulfill TCU's Promise through service, scholarship, teaching, mentoring.
- *Reward staff for overload work.
- *Make grants and awards known to the wider community.
- *Help staff with professional career development.
- *Create more opportunities to have a voice and involvement on campus.
- *Provide realistic salaries.

regarding Community Building:

- *Create a Town Hall that includes the wider community.
- *Create an "Office of Community Relations."
- *Start a store front office on Berry as an outreach to the community, not just a PR effort.

*Engage more with the wider community, such as service learning as part of the class curriculum.

*Raise more outside funding rather than tuition.

regarding Assessment, Program Review and Management:

*Gauge what is transformational in students.

*Stop doing things that are not working.

*Make assessment data more available and applicable to what gets done.

*Coordinate with retention efforts.

*Improve teaching evaluations with better SPOT reviews.

regarding Budget Process:

*Create transparent budget process.

*Link resources to success, keeping value-added aspects in mind.

What do you promise to TCU as your part of the TCU Promise?

STAFF WILL:

regarding Academic Quality:

*Strive to be ethical and professional.

*Ensure that all students know and understand the mission statement.

regarding Commitment to Students:

*Treat students as if they were family members.

*Give them a personal, helping hand when needed.

regarding Recruitment and Retention:

regarding Academic Programs:

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

regarding Faculty Support:

*Fulfill the needs of the faculty.

regarding Assessment, Program Review and Management:

STUDENT SYNTHESIS

What does the TCU Promise mean to you?

High tuition means:

1. Small classes to ensure close interaction, i.e.:

- no more than 15 students in upper level courses
- more active vs. passive learning opportunities = more creativity

2. Frequent, close contact between faculty and students; faculty should:

- be accessible
- make goals/outcomes clear, and knowledge relevant
- use creative, innovative learning strategies and activities
- lead students toward internship opportunities
- develop undergraduate research opportunities
- be involved in Freshmen seminars
- participate in Frog Camp and extracurricular programs
- be full time, permanent faculty, and have few or no adjunct professors, unless specialization required
- not use the same test over and over

3. Student involvement opportunities:

- make students aware of organizations, programs and special opportunities available on campus and reward them for participating; TCU should hire a full-time person to coordinate all of these opportunities
- let students communicate with the Board of Trustees

4. Improve communication about academic programs:

- inform students of advantages/disadvantages
- make sure requirements are fully understood

5. E-College issues:

- good idea, but don't let it serve as a wall to separate faculty from students
- faculty should respond with comments -- not post electronically in classroom or online
- no online courses

What do you promise to TCU?

1. To keep standards high, students should:

- Develop an Honor Code to maintain accountability and to enhance TCU's mission statement. This will build TCU's reputation and thus make our degrees more valuable.
- become an advocate for TCU's mission statement
- put forth our best effort in the classroom
- encourage each other to participate more in the opportunities offered by TCU

ALUMNI SYNTHESIS

What does the TCU Promise mean to you?

TCU WILL:

regarding Academic Quality:

- Interrelate arts and sciences during the education process.
- Commit to a "Value added" education; combining the expertise needed for a job with more in-depth knowledge in liberal arts through both curricular and co-curricular programs.
- Improve the internship programs available to students, connecting academic life with community and thereby helping to place classroom learning/experiences in context.

regarding Commitment to Students:

- Provide students with the physical, academic and human resources they need to achieve their educational goals
- Encourage parents to counsel students to take courses in areas that are new to them
- Encourage students to graduate in 4 years "Tenure is not for students" by keeping students moving through the curriculum and focusing on their prime interests

regarding Recruitment and Retention:

- Conduct exit interviews etc., in order to see why 20% of our freshman students are leaving.
- Consider strategies to get students "on the margins" to take advantage of their opportunities.
- Cultivate parents and respond to their perceptions.

regarding Academic Programs:

- Maintain a broad palette of majors
- Provide interesting curricula.
- Commit to educate ethical leaders.
- Consider requiring courses in both ethics and leadership.

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

- Provide a safe environment, especially with respect to women.
- Provide a richer residential experience for those students who want it.

regarding Staff/Faculty Support:

regarding Community Building:

- Increase ethnic diversity via community, putting students in situations where they will experience diversity.
- Inspire students with more diverse faculty "Faculty look more like each other than students".
- Get students more involved in charity and philanthropy.
- Strongly consider requiring community volunteerism/service and involvement.

regarding Assessment, Program Review and Management:

regarding Budget Process:

What do you promise to TCU as your part of the TCU Promise?

ALUMNI WILL:

regarding Academic Quality:

regarding Commitment to Students:

- Advise students that they should leave the school a better place than when they arrived.
- Advise students that they should be willing to be open to new ways of experiencing life and get to know/discuss with those who are not "like you".
- Advise potential students that they should ask the question "Why are you going to college?" and explore this before committing to a school. Parents should engage this conversation.

regarding Recruitment and Retention:

regarding Academic Programs:

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

- Encourage students to engage in campus life.
- Encourage students to "give back"

regarding Faculty Support:

regarding Assessment, Program Review and Management:

TRUSTEES SYNTHESIS

What does the TCU Promise mean to you?

TCU WILL:

regarding Academic Quality:

- Have high expectations of students.
- Promise that we will challenge you, and will support you, to have a life changing experience.
- Commit to helping students to meet their own promise
- Develop quality across all parts of the campus.
- Treat each student as an individual with potential.
- Create a "resource-rich" environment.
- Foster a flexible curriculum within the liberal arts ethos that allows students to explore their potential and, if desirable, change majors.
- Continue to support and develop "unusual opportunities (eg., Ranch Management).
- Enhance the promise of an International Experience for students.

regarding Commitment to Students:

- Create an atmosphere in which students can develop and learn and which will be characterized by; high quality; a low student faculty ratio; a valuing of each student as an individual.
- Maintain an "open door" policy at all levels (faculty, staff and administration), buttressed by appropriate support.

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

- TCU will continue to be a "friendly place".
- Recognize that the Fort Worth metroplex is a major focus of interest for many students.

What do you promise to TCU as your part of the TCU Promise?

TRUSTEES WILL:

regarding Academic Quality:

- Develop strategies that allow the University to have high standards without becoming "exclusive."
- Maintain a financially sound policies with regard to resources.
- Through VIA, collaborate in the making of sound decisions.
- Define an SAT niche that we can target (1200-1400) but do not limit our effort to this niche. Set a realistic level that does not try for the really high SAT students but focuses on those who have good academic performance, show leadership potential, etc. (acknowledging that there is competition for this band.)
- Slowly increase the SAT scores of the incoming class; attract the upper scores by giving some tuition benefits to these students.
- Look for other areas of student potential as well - to help fill the needs of the university, e.g., the music student.

regarding Commitment to Students:

- Discuss the issue of size of the student body. Given the resources available to us, we cannot increase the number of undergraduates unless they are in targeted areas. Do we meet the TCU promise if we continue to grow?
- Be a part of the on-going discussion about how to raise the academic quality of students.
- Help to deliver the promise.
- As a priority, help to create a personally safe environment.

regarding Recruitment and Retention:

- Learn more about the whole problem of retention. The board can put it as a high priority but will need to wait on data. Retention is a high indicator of student satisfaction. It may be the main indicator of whether we are delivering the promise.
- Some trustees want to think about 'rifle' rather than 'shotgun' approach to recruiting.

regarding Academic Programs:

- With an understanding that ratio of undergraduate to graduate students at TCU is not the same as some other universities, consider the balance between undergraduate and graduate education, asking pertinent questions, including,
 1. Do we need to support the marginal PhD? Which are of quality?
 2. What do PhD programs give TCU?
 3. What is the role of the 'professional' PhD?
 4. What is the role of the masters programs?
 5. How would the "look" of TCU change without PhD programs?
 6. What impact does the PhD program have on the recruiting of quality faculty and students?
 7. What are the real costs of graduate programs? Can we develop an appropriate economic model?
 8. Can TCU design programs that will be low cost but academically quality (interdisciplinary, etc)?
 9. How can we strengthen the graduate programs? Maybe a goal should be that the % of budget that goes directly to academic programs increases.

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

- Develop a more residential campus, perhaps by lowering the total number of students.
- Develop more "Berry Street" type projects, noting that we have chosen to not invest in housing in order to keep the current debt structure.

regarding Budget Process:

- The trustees must look at the available resources to be able to allocate money.
- Recognize that the current budget process works well.
- Recognize that the VIA process will develop a more immediately goals-oriented process.

DEANS SYNTHESIS

What does the TCU Promise mean to you?

THE DEANS AT TCU WILL, regarding Academic Quality:

- Promise to provide to students with a good, quality education. This is a two-way promise, which assumes that students are prepared to come to this institution and make an investment.
- Hire, sustain and develop faculty who are dedicated to teaching and research and who are also dedicated to students. That is what we are all about and is the essence of the TCU promise. The institution as a whole is dedicated to this.
- Consider lowering enrollment. A serious problem is that recruitment is too tightly aligned to the size of the student body. We have a high number of transfer students this year. Our understanding is that this was not going to happen. We agree that we should recommend reducing both the incoming freshman class size and the number of transfer students as well. Can we provide the additional resources to support the increased enrollment?

regarding Commitment to Students:

- Create opportunities for students to experience personal growth.
- Make available to the students the best faculty we can find.
- Provide for students correctly sized classes with knowledgeable and caring faculty.
- "Ensure that TCU provides students with the education necessary to successfully compete for a job upon graduation."

regarding Recruitment and Retention:

regarding Academic Programs:

- Consider developing programs that interface with Athletics, e.g., sports, sports broadcasting, maybe creating a center to work with Athletics and Academics.
- Strive to obtain general internal funding for interdisciplinary programs. Some interdisciplinary programs have been starved for internal funds e.g., the Math/Science Institute that is funded by the Sid Richardson Foundation. The Foundation has mentioned that TCU is not funding any part of this program. General funding needed for resources for interdisciplinary programs. Until we can adequately fund the proven programs, we need to be careful expanding. Interdisciplinary programs do require use of more resources, putting in more time to provide the students with a better experience.

regarding Residential/Campus Life:

- Attempt to recruit better, more diverse students - not just students of color or just from the metroplex. We recognize that this is a balancing act and that we are giving up some things to make this work. Someone needs to be looking at this, e.g., a couple of Deans, Carol Campbell, Ray Brown, and Housing Rep.

regarding Faculty Support:

- Promise to faculty: reasonable workloads, a supportive infrastructure, a robust library and capable students.
- Make the teacher scholar model work.

- Enhance the size and effectiveness of the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects.
- Ensure that faculty have decent offices and furniture.
- In considering equitable teaching loads, carefully weigh the amount to which departments that have graduate programs reduce their teaching loads.

regarding Assessment, Program Review and Management:

- Recommend that we are very cautious in promoting "Centers of Excellence" until we can adequately fund programs across the board. Establish criteria by which "Centers of Excellence" can be defined. Carefully consider the implications of the development "Centers of Excellence."
- Consider closing programs that cannot be adequately funded.
- Establish meaningful Program Reviews (with outside involvement) that have positive outcomes.
- Develop effective assessment strategies that address important questions central to the mission of TCU. Conduct reviews that are responsive to the needs of programs as perceived by persons who design and implement these programs.

regarding Budget Process:

- Encourage the University to invest in academics as a paramount necessity.
- Adequately fund all programs so that they have an opportunity to achieve success.
- Assure accountability within programs
- Conduct open (transparent) budget processes wherever possible

What do you promise to TCU as your part of the TCU Promise?

DEANS WILL, regarding Academic Quality:

- Inform the Chancellor and cabinet on issues of fairness and equity with respect to finances, facilities and other resources. Deans are resource managers who will never have all the resources they could use. Thus they have to use them in the most efficient and effective manner they can.
- Carefully consider the hiring of more "Professors of Professional Practice". In some areas e.g., CSE, Nursing, the model works well. However we must not lose sight that what has made us successful is a commitment to the teacher-scholar model.
- Push to hire more faculty. The 16 new faculty hired in 2003/4 were not nearly enough to catch us up to where we need to be. The Deans who started in 2000 were impressed with the TCU promise at that time. In the 4 years since, growth has been so remarkable that the promise has not been so easy to keep.
- Enter into a sustained, open and informed debate about the value and future of graduate education at TCU. Consider the relationship between the needs and benefits of undergraduate and graduate programs. Are they symbiotic or not?
- Recognize that we are in the top 100 of 5,000 or so universities and that this is an enviable position, particularly when our limited overall commitment to graduate programs is taken into consideration.

regarding Commitment to Students