September 3, 2015

AN INVITATION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING LISTENING SESSIONS

To All Members of the Fort Lewis Community,

After hard work and management on the part of the entire community, many of the strategic action items outlined in our current “Strategic Plan Goals for Fort Lewis College 2012-2016” are either currently operational or on the drawing board for implementation this year. Since there is no rest for the weary (or peace for the wicked), our reward for being so diligent is to begin the next planning cycle for 2017-2021, and you are all invited to celebrate the successful progress of the 2012-16 plan and to launch the next effort.

I feel that we should begin with listening sessions that encourage open discussions, and then move to the development of our new Strategic Plan. Thus, a process and possible directions should naturally evolve from these early discussions that we have together as a community. Toward this end, I have asked Ann Duffield, Founding Principal of Ann Duffield & Colleagues, to help us put together a series of “listening sessions” in September and November.

These listening sessions will be convened by me and facilitated by Ann Duffield who was one of the senior members of the University of Pennsylvania’s Institute for Research on Higher Education (IRHE). From 1986 to 2000, IRHE ran a national program—The Pew Higher Education Roundtable and the Knight Collaborative—which convened strategic discussions about the changing tides in American higher education. Ann was a lead facilitator of these conversations on many college and university campuses during this period of time and has continued to convene similar roundtables as part of her own practice during the past decade. As part of her protocol for roundtables, she applies the following guidelines:

- Everyone in the room is a peer regardless of their formal title or rank in the College.
- This is a collective conversation, i.e. owned by the whole group with no quotes attributed to any individual in the group.
- There are no speeches allowed.
- Every idea is a good one.
The results of these sessions will be reported back to the community via our website, the Spring Welcome, and a Board of Trustees’ meeting. A Process Committee will recommend a planning process, design principles, a communications plan, and the research questions that will guide the collection of data and information concerning how best to generate innovative ideas. The plan for 2017-2021 will be completed and presented to the Board of Trustees in December 2016 and launched in January 2017.

Please sign up to attend one of the following listening sessions, which will be scheduled several times per day and limited to no more than 30 participants per one-hour session:

- Wednesday, September 16
- Thursday, September 17
- Friday, September 18
- Tuesday, November 10
- Wednesday, November 11
- Thursday, November 12
- Friday, November 13

To register for one of these listening sessions, please go to:

https://www.fortlewis.edu/spregistration

To view the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 website, please visit:


I’m excited about getting together with you to talk about how we can make Fort Lewis College a preeminent public institution not only in the State of Colorado but in the nation.

Please join me,

President Dene Thomas