President Don Birx hosted a retreat asking a cross-constituency group of faculty and staff to think about Plymouth's future. After some initial discussion about the future needs of higher education and its linkage to PSU, the group discussed a potential vision statement for PSU. Don asked us to think about ways we can operationalize an interdisciplinary approach that ensures we are transitioning ourselves to become a transformed contemporary university in the next five to seven years.

Our goals for the retreat were to see a vision for our future state, understand through a cluster concept how we will frame our future state, and utilize open laboratory constructs to implement this future state.

We drafted the following vision statement:

**DRAFT**
Plymouth State University is a visionary institution where students transform themselves and the community through interdisciplinary, experiential learning and innovative partnerships. Plymouth State and its alumni serve the world as leaders in (to be determined clusters). (Not sure this is the final draft version?)

Don introduced the concepts of Clusters and Open Laboratories. Clusters bring together a stronger interdisciplinary concept toward the ways in which we engage, teach, and enhance our student learning outcomes. Open Laboratories are a way for the campus and external community to immerse themselves in productive ways that interconnect the community, communicate value for our outcomes, and integrate technology to maximize effectiveness.

We drafted the following cluster ideas as a start, but this will require more engagement from the campus:

1. Justice and security
2. Business, performance, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development
3. Creative arts, technology and human enrichment
4. Human and environmental health
5. Leadership, human development and community impact
6. Sciences and societal change

Open laboratories or "Immersion Labs" (a potential Plymouth State name) bring together communities in which students put what they are learning into practice and build workforce skills. Our working draft definition for our open labs is experiential education: students learn through exploring/pursuing their passions in mentored, real experiences with partners and prepare to impact the global community.

We also discussed how this effort links to URSA. In the fall, two evaluating teams will review the URSA reports. As the evaluation occurs, the community will begin the next phase of the URSA
process by reviewing findings and finalizing a vision for PSU’s future. As the vision is defined, we will then identify clusters. As clusters are finalized, the evaluation of the URSA reports will be completed. The analysis will allow the campus to weave programs together, identify strengths, determine places where support is needed to strengthen clusters, and transition/leverage resources appropriately to align with a new vision from programs providing resources to strengthen our core.

Don asked participants to be ambassadors of this future vision of PSU and share these concepts with other community members. We agreed that folks would communicate what we talked about, help people understand how this process links with the URSA process, and provide an inclusive process as we frame and define the clusters and open laboratory constructs.

Brainstorm of action Items

1. Retreat attendees to serves as Ambassadors;
   a. Send notes and talking points to attendees
   b. Continue to include student voice throughout
2. Produce document summary?
3. Sketch timeline that works with URSA timeline
4. As we move forward, need highly organized communication work group (like URSA)
   a. Create repository of information – to be in a centralized location for all this data to be available with all existing partnerships
   b. Inventory current partnerships
   c. Create website
   d. President’s blog?
5. Identify external stakeholders
6. Create workgroups to perpetuate momentum and structure.
7. Consider culture process systems baseline audit – data component: external data to help prioritize
8. Create decision making map for clustering
9. Consider project management tool
10. Branding
11. Clarify relationship between URSA and this process
12. Rethink Faculty day into a Community Day, University Day or some other name to include the whole campus
    a. Reinforce staff attendance- Cabinet members will recommend to supervisors that we work to have as many as possible attend.
13. Communicate re-envisioned faculty day and invite all to attend