Minutes of the Mission Statement Sub-Committee Meeting
February 16, 2022 at 4:00 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Sebastian Bawab, Karen Eck, Julie Hao, Jean Kennedy-Sleeman, Sebastian Kuhn, Donna Meeks, September Sanderlin, Tom Socha, Coulson Thomas.

Housekeeping Items
Friday meetings will now be for the Value writing workgroup, and Wednesday meetings will be for the Mission writing workgroup.

Task: Revision of ODU’s Mission Statement
The group reviewed ODU’s current mission statement and statements from other R1 Virginia universities to help decide what to add and/or delete. Our statement should be clear and well written, and it should confirm ODU’s direction, why are we here, how do we make a difference, etc. Per Donna Meeks, we should also review the current BOV Policy 1001: The Mission of the University for historical information and background.

Mission Statement Ideas
Various ideas, phrases, and words were discussed for crafting the new statement. Some considerations:

- Speak less about the University’s location than what is in the current statement, however be mindful of what our unique site brings to the table. Perhaps “Southeastern Virginia” might be most descriptive, and perhaps add something about being “coastal.”
- Expand the statement beyond one sentence, but it should not be too wordy.
- Try not to use too many adjectives – we should get to the heart of our mission without extraneous embellishments. Be creative.
- Add more about our international status and worldwide influence. Perhaps use “global reach” or “cosmopolitan.” Not only do we partner with and teach about worldwide subjects, we also admit students (both grad and undergrad) and hire faculty from a wide swath of countries and cultures. This adds to ODU’s broad/deep perspective.
- Some phrases that were agreeable to most: “THE comprehensive Research University (or Institution) in Southeastern Virginia.” “We engage students in impactful regional and global research.” “ODU provides opportunities for our students who are the future of research.”
- Also add in info about: Graduate Education, Public University, Comprehensive, Diverse & Inclusive and a continued commitment to these ideals, and Doctoral Education.
- Discuss our emphasis on excellence and that our courses and research efforts are of the highest caliber. We are focused on and committed to the success of our students.
- New Art Locations and what that means to ODU and the community could be included.
- ODU has partnerships with: The Community at large, NASA, NATO, the military, maritime & coastal resilience initiatives, Federal labs, J-Lab, Sentara, Norfolk State Un., EVMS, etc. Partnerships and collaborations suggest we are accomplishing and/or working on activities that matter and that enrich the Community (local, regional and international).
- Include a phrase about our continued online presence.
- Add in our Student-Centered philosophy and that ODU adds value to students’ lives. Examples: “Enriching lives as future professionals,” or “Making a difference in the next generation,” or “ODU fosters a dynamic learning environment.”

Next Steps
After today’s discussion individuals in the group should write a draft for submission to Tom Socha and September Sanderlin by next Tuesday. In next week’s meeting the group will select one or two statements, and phrases/ideas from other statements; these statements and phrases will give the group a start. The group will then do some wordsmithing and editing to produce a final product.