



Board Retreat June 30, 2007 Summary

The Chautauqua Leadership Network Board Retreat was held on Saturday, June 30, 2007 at Webb's restaurant in Chautauqua, NY. Debbie A. Thompson, President of Strategy Solutions, Inc., facilitated the meeting. Charyn Hall, SSI's Controller, attended the session as an observer.

In attendance were:

Pene Hutton	Katie Smith	Donna Flinchbaugh
Jean McGowan	Ann Abdella	Andrew Goodell
Jody Briggs	Sue McNamara	David Munsee
Misty Johnson	Juanita Flint	Paul Hedberg
Denise Burbey	Kathy Abers-Kimball	Delana Rupp
Colin Chase		

Welcome and Introductions:

Pene Hutton welcomed the participants by letting everyone know that she appreciated everyone being there and their commitment. She then introduced Debra Thompson, President of Strategy Solutions.

Debbie asked the participants to introduce themselves, including their "day job", and their role on the CLN board. She also asked them to complete the sentence, *"This session will be a success for me today if we (what)?"*. Responses included:

- reach consensus
- (create an) Action plan
- identify 1 or 2 clear goals for future
- identify a clear definition for alumni to continue to participate
- identify strategies to integrate alumni – create connectedness
- have a clear understanding / focus of role
- identify workable goals
- revitalizing the next chapter of CLN – involve alumni - role in community
- identify clearer vision & goals
- increase cohesion of group & community
- identify a rejuvenated approach to role in community
- have clear answers to agenda questions
- know where we will be in 5 years
- evaluate progress & position for more progress
- determine how to reconnect alumni

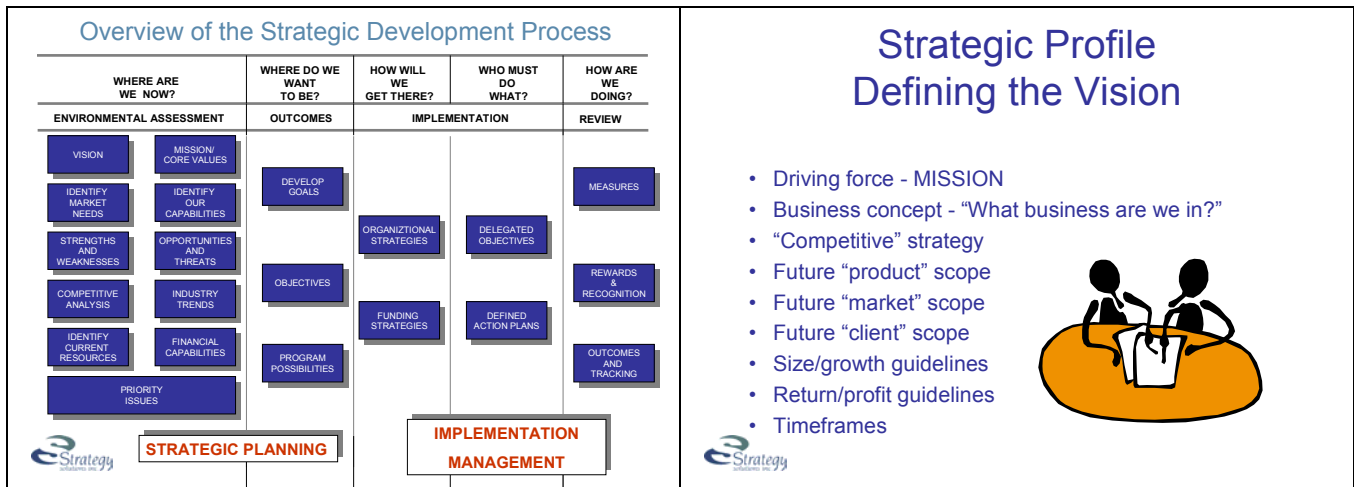


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Strategic Planning Overview

Debbie then provided an overview of the strategic planning/implementation process and the agenda for the day. She indicated that the retreat was designed to provide a snapshot of information related to the question “Where are we now?” She indicated that the “State of the Union” presentation that Katie and Pene will do is designed to provide a snapshot of the current environment facing CLN. The goal of the retreat is to identify “where do we want to be?” (vision for the future) and “how will we get there?” (goals and objectives). Debbie indicated that she will be asking the group to identify an operational definition of their vision for the future of CLN or what is called a “strategic profile”, which outlines the future products and the future markets served. She indicated that the more concrete the vision for the future, the more likely the goals, objectives and action steps will be to get there.

The model she reviewed included the following:



She also asked participants to suspend judgment on the future direction and to recognize that the objectives that will be identified through this process will be “program possibilities.” The participants will be given “assignments” within action planning teams to identify the action steps that will be required in order to achieve the goals and objectives and calculate the human, capital and operating resources required to implement them. She cautioned participants not to ask “what can we afford?” but to move forward with the planning process asking “what do we need?”



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This retreat will be followed up by another ½ day meeting of the board in order to review recommended action steps, prioritize if necessary and to discuss organizational and funding strategies to achieve the vision for the future.

“State of the Union: Where are we now with the Chautauqua Leadership Network?”

Katie Smith presented the “State of the Union” overview. She first reviewed the current CLN Mission and Vision statements:

CLN’s mission: ...to identify and nurture regional leaders and to provide a framework within which can emerge a network of skilled civic trustees who will help our communities meet the challenges of today and be prepared for the opportunities of tomorrow.

CLN’s vision: ...to create a community actively controlling its destiny.

The current CLN strategic plan is a five-year plan and it was created in 2004 to end in 2008.

The current plan goals are:

- Promote our credibility as leaders in a manner that expresses how we bring value to the community in the areas of
 - Business & economic development
 - Government
 - Quality of life
- Expand services to better meet the needs of the community
- Establish a 5 year financial plan that maintains fiscal stability and achieves above objectives.

Other key elements of the current plan include:

- engaging & motivating graduates
- marketing plan
- encourage commitments
- grants

Katie then asked Pene Hutton to provide an overview of the accomplishments to date on the current plan. She indicated that about 80% of the current plan has been implemented. Accomplishments to date include:



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Survey membership	Website improved
New opportunities to network – Speed Net	Networking as skill building session
Marketing tools	Improved PR
Enhanced diversity	Committee budgets
Specific grant requests	Fiscal stability

She also highlighted a number of areas that are not accomplished yet, and continue to be a work in progress. Those areas included:

Formal clearinghouse	Leadership forum
Target marketing	Sponsorship packages
2 nd class	Raise tuition annually

Participants also added additional input on current accomplishments. Comments included:

- developing marketing tools – PR is very good
- could do more with specific grant requests
- fiscal stability – we are ahead of our goal
- leadership forum – we tried to do this– we have some thoughts for next year
- we haven't done target marketing
- 2nd class: we have waiting list
- we did not raise tuition
- CLN is volunteer organization and run by volunteers
- High note of satisfaction with class
- There is some competition – where does CLN fit into this market – are we better or not as good? Should we partner to provide more? Efforts enough or should we do more?
- The current Committee structure functions well – but we have hit the wall – alumni is asking for something – we received a wonderful response from the alumni to our survey.
- All had leadership training – our programs need to be examined

Our Market: Who are our customers?

Internal customers

- Orientation Year class
- Alumni

External customers

- Community Groups
- Not for Profit Boards
- Employers



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- Sponsors
- Other Leadership Organizations

Our Successes:

We have a waiting list for orientation class

Mechanism for diversity

Email connections – graduates informed

Fiscal stability

The SSI survey: 95 respondents indicate:

- Involvement in CLN
- Investment in future

Financial Analysis – Net Worth

David Munsee, Treasurer of CLN provided an overview of the financial situation. The balance sheet shows that CLN is in a fairly strong position – there is a fair amount of cash – the net worth has increased this year by \$5,000. CLN always operates under a balanced budget. Fifteen years ago, CLN operated with very little.

There are two (2) major sources of income

- membership dues & tuition
- fundraising

CLN could be self sustaining; we receive a small grant from the county. Income is activity of membership. We could sustain for a year or two if we had to, based on our current cash reserves.

We have come from wondering how we are going to fund next year to a strong financial position. Much of this has come from Pene's effort in reviving dues collection along with the fundraising efforts including the auction. We also have a scholarship fund to support tuition, and have filled our classes.

Causes to support

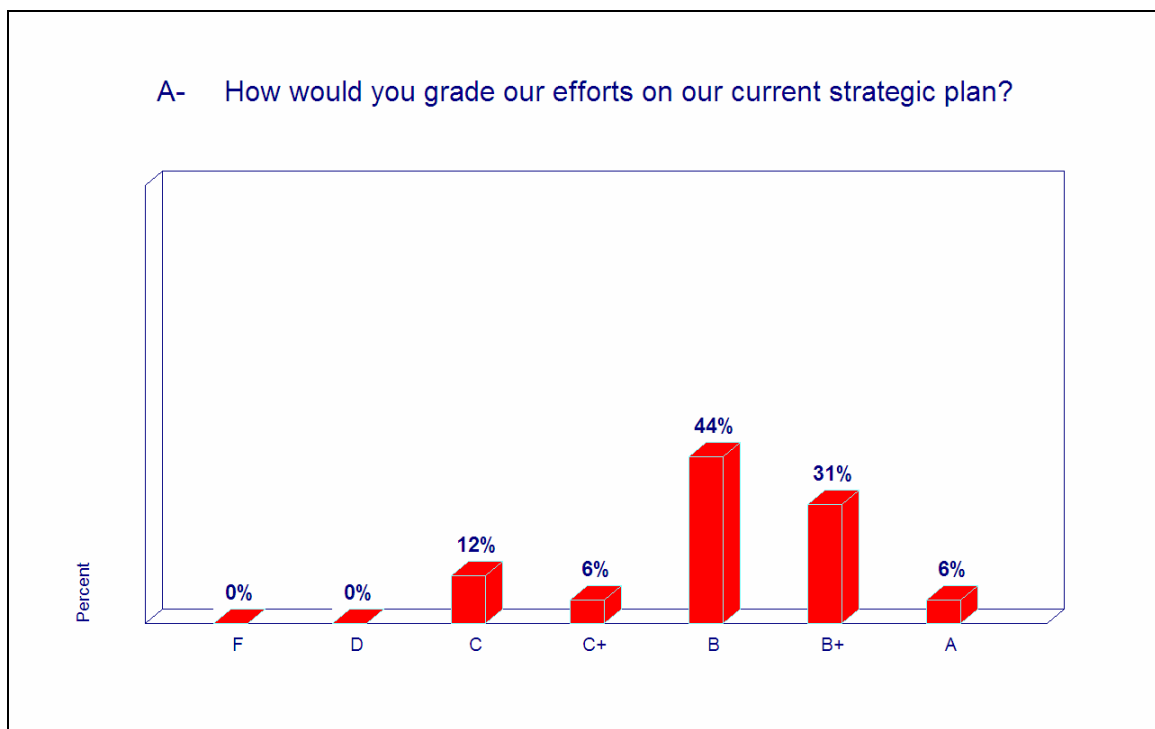
- Fundraising auction
- Scholarship fund
- Fill classes – tuition revenue
- \$8-9K from Sky Jam & kept budget same



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- Have built up budget – also reflects recent auction proceeds in scholarship fund to next year operations - 35% of scholarship fund reinvested

Using the OptionFinder audience response polling technology, Debbie asked the group to give themselves a rating on their strategic plan accomplishments to date. Responses included:



Debbie then asked the group what they felt it would take over the next several years, in order to give themselves an “A” average rating on their strategic planning efforts over the next three years. Responses included:

- Develop a reporting system on plan – communicate plan & efforts
- Alumni participation & community recognition
- Community recognition
- Diversity of members (including business and industry and ethnic)
- Financial stability
- Coordinator to director
- “invest” dollars



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- leadership forum – bring leaders together
- have to develop project & what will make it successful
- if goal is to impact community – we have no way of measuring outcome
- are we looking for CLN impact or individuals to make impact
- impact can be allowing dialogue to occur

Review of Pre-Retreat Survey Results (Deb Thompson)

Debbie then reviewed the results from the pre-retreat survey. She asked the group to share their thoughts, comments and reactions about the survey results. Comments included:

- Surprising “networking” was listed so high at 40 and leadership was so low at 8.
- Sees leadership & networking as “hand in hand”
- Is there a need for an Orientation Year service project? – Curriculum committee has taken that out.
- What is community impact vs. community service?
- Should there be community projects?
- Not for the orientation class, perhaps an Alumni project
- How to sell CLN?
- Networking vs. leadership building?
- It is important to push both
- Often it’s “who you know vs. what you know”
- We should have asked who’s paying dues out of pocket vs. having company paid dues on survey

Conclusions From the Survey

Debbie then asked the group to identify their conclusions from the survey and the implications for the strategic plan moving forward. Responses included:

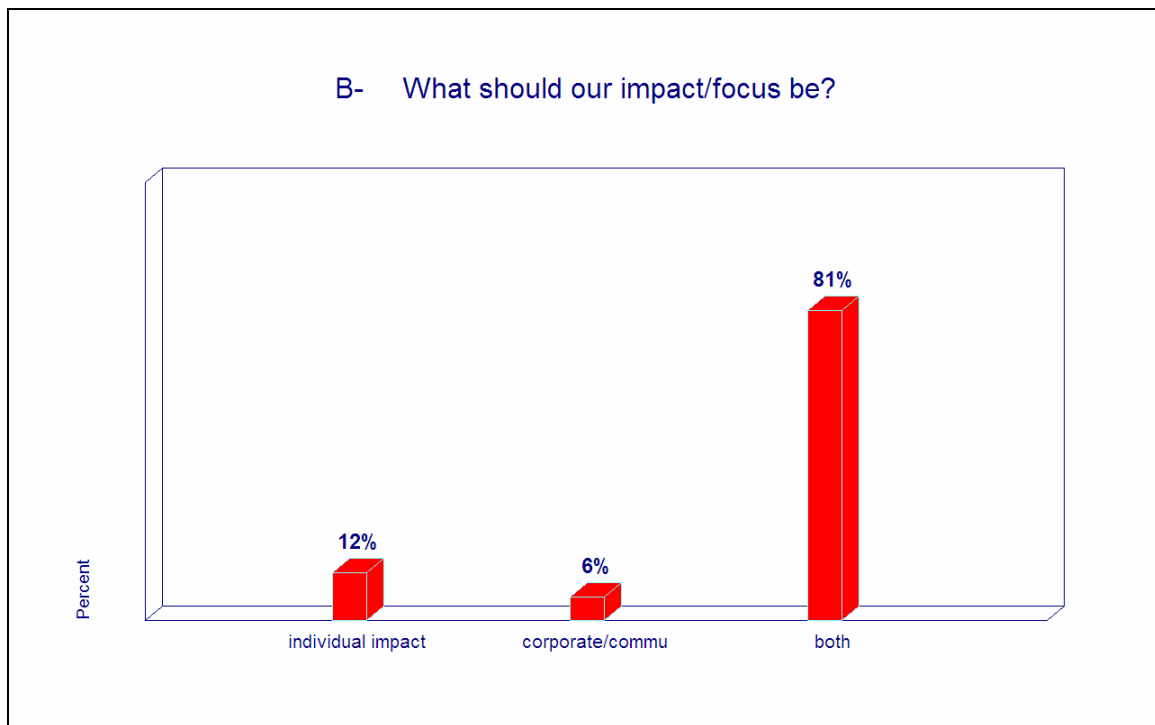
- Alumni involvement – curriculum for alumni – committee
- Exposure
- Diversified education
- Value for what we pay
- Leadership development – skill building
- Embrace networking
- Affirms what we do well
- Need to continue to attract



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The group began discussing the importance of community impact and where future efforts should be placed. Participants acknowledged that CLN's focus has always been on the individual and the intent was that the community would be impacted through individual impact. A number of participants expressed that they felt that beginning to include direct efforts toward community benefit might be an important direction to go in the future.

Debbie asked participants their opinions through an OptionFinder question. The responses were as follows:





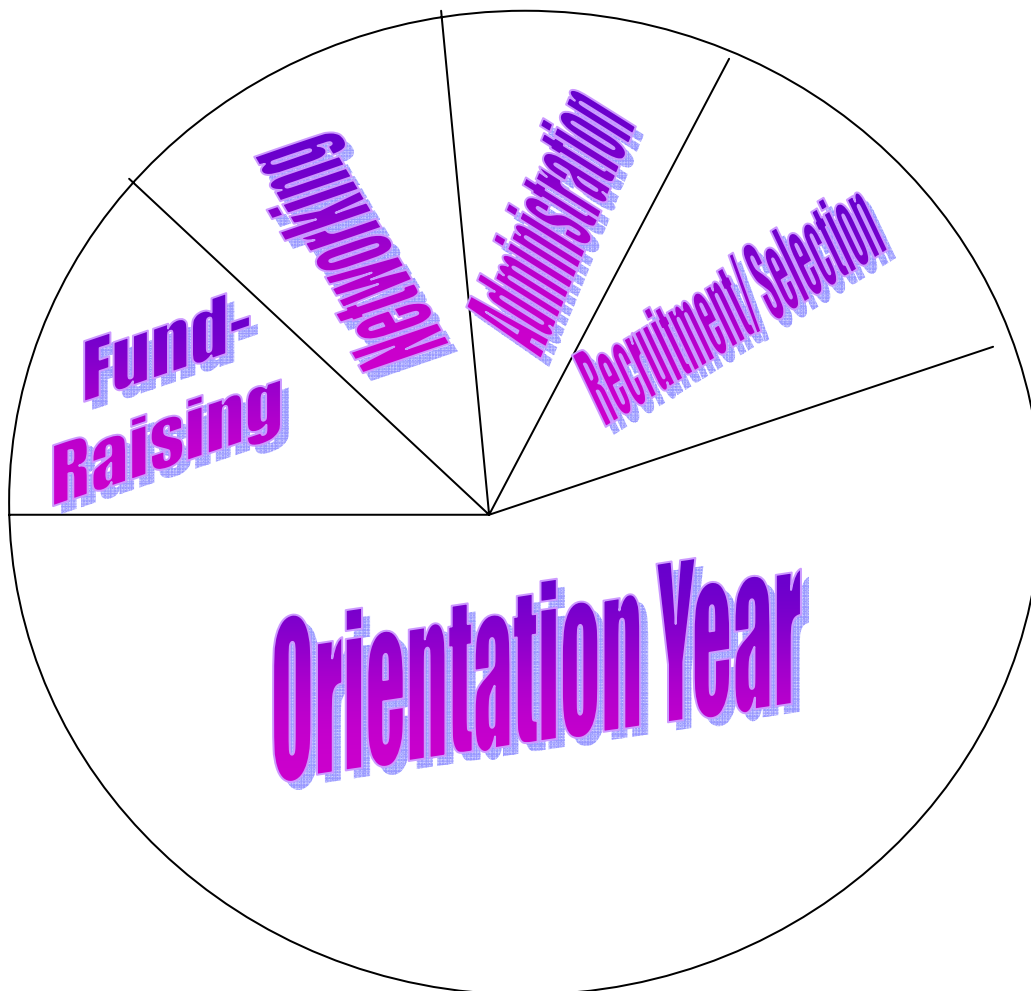
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Strategic Profile (Where are we now vs. where do we want to be?):

Debbie started off the discussion of the strategic profile by facilitating discussion regarding a snapshot of the organization where it is now versus where the board would like it to be in 3-5 years. She asked the group to outline the current committees and articulate the “effort” that goes into the current operations. The discussion produced the following result:

Current Budget is \$65,000
Staff: ½ time coordinator
Committees include:

1. Curriculum
2. Recruitment
3. Selection
4. Finance
5. PR/Networking/Events
6. Fundraising (Sky Jam)
7. Marketing/Resource Development





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The discussion included:

- We have not put adequate attention into our newsletter, dues, billing, directory
- Do we want to call it "Current class" or stick with "orientation year"?
- Resource development – (we need to) look for new revenue streams
- We can see that there is no effort for alumni in (the current) pie
- Having "active" members (is important)– need an "operational definition" of "active"
- If you expect to intermingle between classes – food is necessary
- Networking with alumni only – doesn't exist right now
- We could get former classes involved through sponsorship of events
- Community impact – what does that mean for us?
- The quality and value of membership for alumni is meaningless without interaction
- Alumni involvement requires skill building – why else should I be involved?
- Regular meetings
- It is expensive to attend meetings (if we have to pay out of pocket for every one)
- Involvement requires money
- Chautauqua has lots of non profits, little manufacturing and the existing companies and organizations are hit up for EVERYTHING
- Could get events for impact
- We could get speakers (and/or share sponsorship with other organizations)
- We don't want to be political; we could create forums for community input that include Apolitical involvement and elevate these discussions to educate people in the community
- Remember that we represent all of Chautauqua county; not just Jamestown
- Northern Chautauqua county is under represented
- There are very few issues that are truly county-wide
- Physical location – do we need a storefront/office?
- Representation at events – should there be a CLN representative at community events?
- What are the REAL costs of running CLN (if we had to pay staff)?
- Most effective visibility is...?
- CLN is known by: Members through the Orientation class; CLN is known to Nonmembers through Sky Jam
- We are looking for a short phrase, not really a "tag-line", but something that is a definition of the value that CLN provides to the community
- The word commitment should be included
- What is original version of mission?



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Where to we want to be?

The group then turned their attention to discussion of the Vision of the Future of Chautauqua Leadership Network, in order to identify the “profile” of what the organization might look like in the future. The participants identified 3 core elements of the CLN of the future: Active Alumni, Community Impact and Personal (Leadership) Impact. Debbie then encouraged the group to identify the “operational definitions” of what each of those elements might include.

Elements of the Future of CLN:

Active Alumni were defined as:

- Paying
- Participate in CLN events
- Networking among alumni (meaningful dialogue)
- Serving CLN

Community Impact was defined as:

- Community understanding/recognition of CLN – overall brand
- Brand CLN with alumni
- Service
- Projects
- Individual skill building - current class (orientation year)
- Individual skill building – for alumni
- Community Dialogue Forums

Personal Impact was defined as:

- Individual skill building - current class (orientation year)
- Individual skill building – for alumni

CLN in the future might also include:

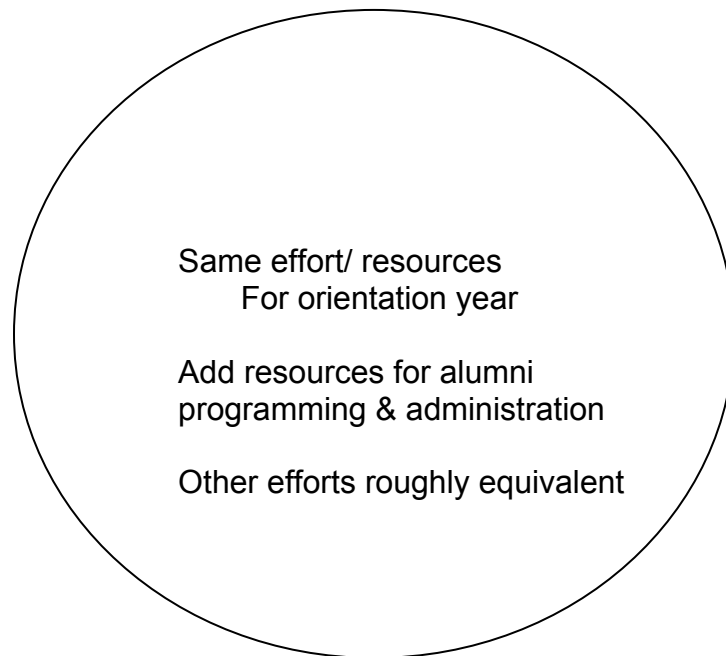
- Rely less on volunteers
- Designate particular classes of alums to particular projects



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CLN Future (Summary)

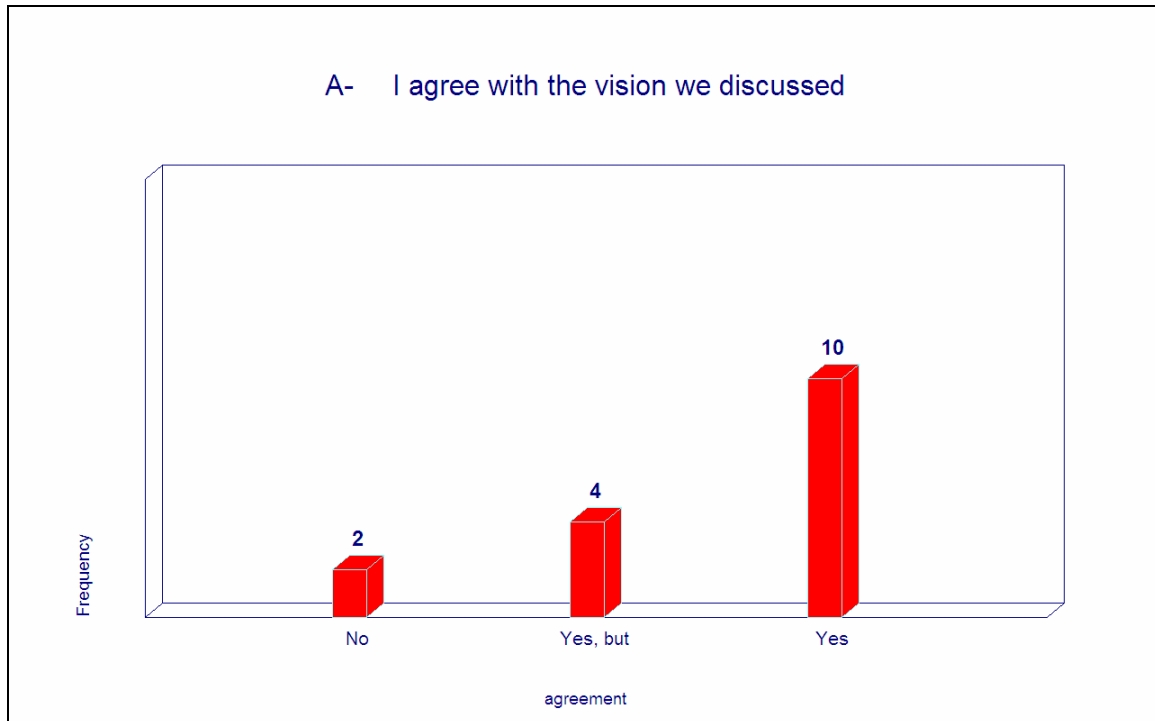
Participants agreed that CLN in the future would be a bigger pie including more resources. The effort put forth for the orientation year would be the same as now, but the organization would need to add resources for alumni programming and increased administration to support the additional activities. It is impossible at this point to forecast what the additional resources will exactly be until after the action planning is completed.



Debbie Thompson then asked the group their agreement with this vision for the future of the organization. Responses included:



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Debbie asked the group to identify concerns related to the vision moving forward. One participant indicated that she was uncomfortable about calling this the vision because the organization already has a vision statement. Debbie clarified that the intent was not to rewrite the vision statement, but to articulate the areas of priority for the future. She then reviewed the current vision and mission statements and asked participants if they felt this direction was congruent with the current vision and mission statements. No other concerns were expressed.

“How will we get there”- Identification of Goals

The participants then began discussing the areas of focus moving forward. Debbie reviewed the current goals to determine if they were still relevant and/or if other goals should be added. After discussion, the group determined 5 major goal areas. They included:

1. Continue alumni skill building & engage CLN alumni (Enhance/create new vehicles for alumni participation)
2. Create vehicles for community impact
3. Expand capacity & ensure financial stability
4. Continue to attract quality recruits (Develop effective community leaders)
5. Branding – position CLN as a high quality leadership resource



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Debbie asked the group during lunch to discuss the individual goals with the person sitting next to them by answering the question “What are we really trying to accomplish in this (goal) area” in order to determine how the goal should be worded.

One participant questioned having a separate goal for community impact and suggested that Debbie was “directing” the discussion of that topic. Debbie reminded the group of the earlier OptionFinder poll regarding the desire of 81% of the participants to have both community as well as individual impact included in the efforts of CLN moving forward. The participants continued to discuss whether there should be a separate goal for alumni curriculum development or if individual development should include focus on the alumni. Some participants felt that it was important to keep it as a separate goal, since it is an area that requires specific focus. Participants also noted that new committees would also need to be created in order to address these new focus areas.

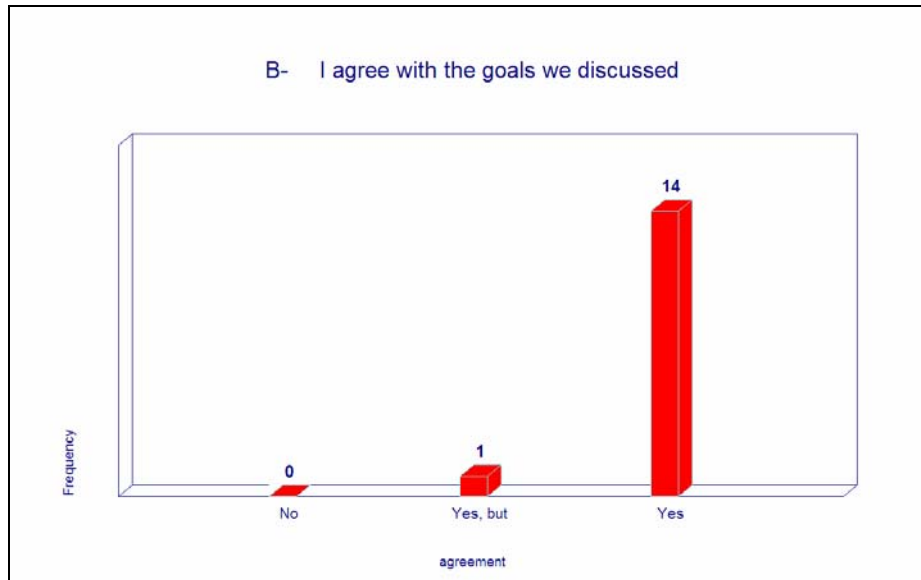
As the participants had not completed their assignments due to the continued group discussion over lunch, Debbie asked participants to begin to identify statements that they felt captured what CLN was trying to accomplish in each of the goal areas. After discussion, the group arrived at the following goal statements:

Goal 1:	Continue to attract and develop effective community leaders
Goal 2:	Continue alumni skill building and engage CLN alumni
Goal 3:	Define the role of CLN in creating Chautauqua County as a sustainable community
Goal 4:	Expand capacity and ensure financial stability
Goal 5:	Position CLN as a high quality leadership resource

Debbie then asked the group their agreement with the goals using the OptionFinder polling system. Responses included:



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The participants then discussed the topic areas/objectives that would related to each of the goals. Several participants began asking about next steps. Some participants indicated that they had to leave early and were interested in knowing next steps. Others expressed an interest in getting others involved in the action planning process and attempting to use the action planning process as a method to engage the various classes of alumni.

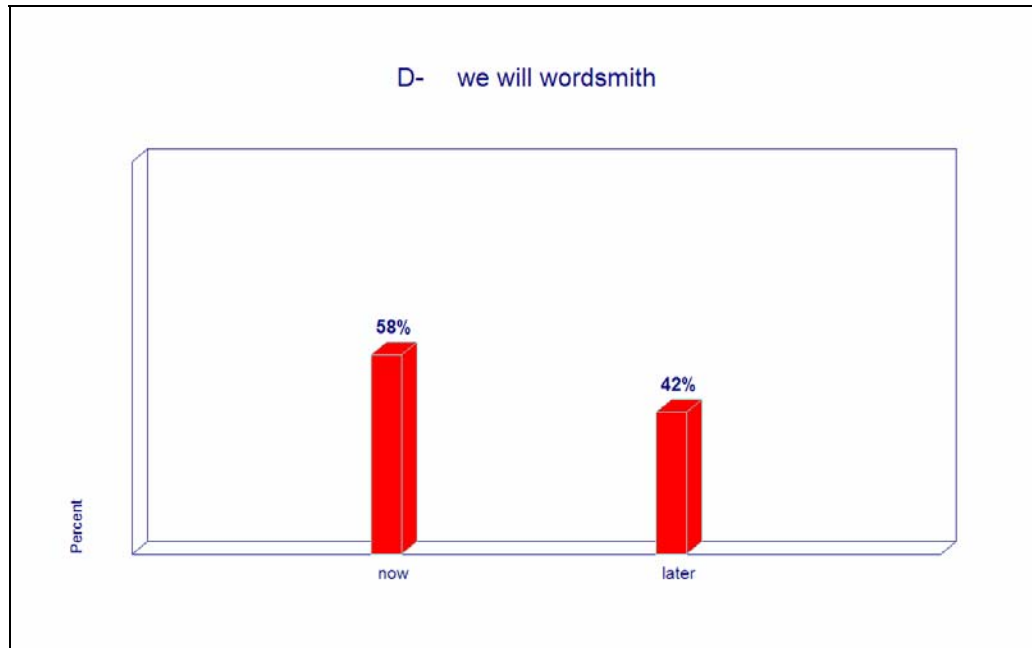
Debbie then facilitated a discussion regarding the next steps, indicating that she felt that it was important to have a participant from the retreat head up each of the committees during the action planning phase, as it would be too difficult to get someone who was not in attendance up to speed on the discussion. The following participants agreed to serve on each of the planning committees:

- Goal 1: Denise (chair), Delana & Sally
- Goal 2: Donna (chair) & Jean
- Goal 3: Colin (chair), Andy & Sue
- Goal 4: David (designated chair due to the Treasurer's position) & Eric & Paul
- Goal 5: Cathy (chair)

Debbie then asked the group if they would like to spend time in the meeting wordsmithing the objectives or to leave it up to the committees to wordsmith them. She asked the group their opinions using the OptionFinder. Results included:



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The group then discussed the objectives related to each of the goals and arrived at the following:

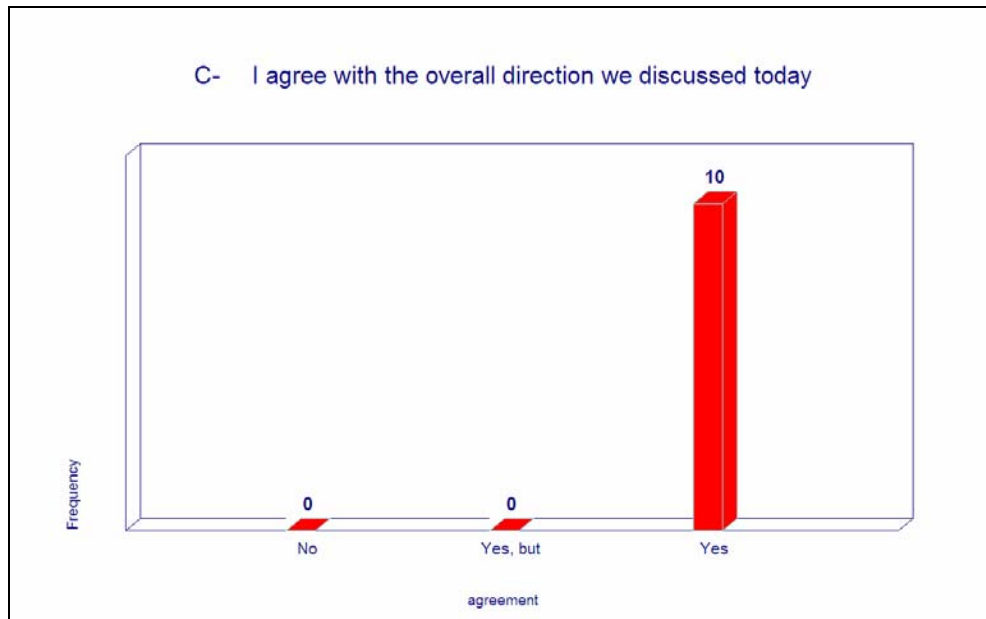
Goal 1:	Continue to attract and develop effective community leaders
	A. Continue to recruit diverse classes of quality candidates
	B. Select balanced classes representing county demographic diversity
	C. Design and implement a curriculum that represents CLN's mission
Goal 2:	Continue alumni skill building and engage CLN alumni
	A. Design and implement curriculum for alumni
	B. Create inter and intra-class networking opportunities
	C. Get more alumni involved in CLN
Goal 3:	Define the role of CLN in creating Chautauqua County as a sustainable community
	A. Investigate and evaluate possible projects for alumni
	B. Investigate and evaluate forums for community dialogue
	C. Investigate and evaluate other opportunities for community impact



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Goal 4:	Expand capacity and ensure financial stability
	A. Identify new funding streams
	B. Evaluate dues structure
	C. Evaluate tuition structure
	D. Increase sponsorship revenue
	E. Increase grant revenue
	F. Evaluate staffing and operational structure
Goal 5:	Position CLN as a high quality leadership resource
	A. Articulate the true value of CLN to the community
	B. Create community awareness of CLN

Debbie then asked the participants to indicate their agreement with the direction of these goals and objectives. Responses included:





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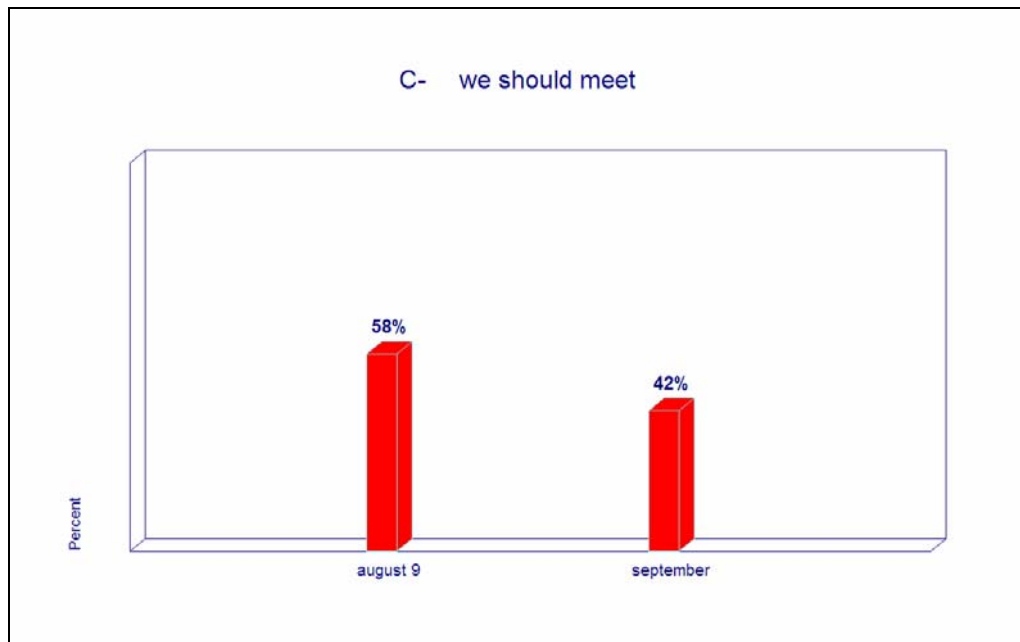
Wrap Up & Next Steps

The group then discussed the action planning assignments and timeline. Debbie noted that the retreat folders included a sheet with instructions for each of the committees. The group agreed on the following process to engage alumni in the process.

- 1) Classes of 93-94-95 will review & input on all 5 goals
- 2) Send results to committees
- 3) Send results to Board for full review

- broadcast email to list goals & solicit input/feedback
- use survey for responses
- solicit input from alumni classes
- solicit input from current class
- send a postcard to alumni as a reminder

Several of the participants expressed concern that it was summer time and it would be difficult with vacations and schedules to pull people together for discussion and action planning. It was suggested that perhaps the deadline be extended to allow more time for discussion. Debbie polled the group to determine their opinions with the OptionFinder. Responses included:



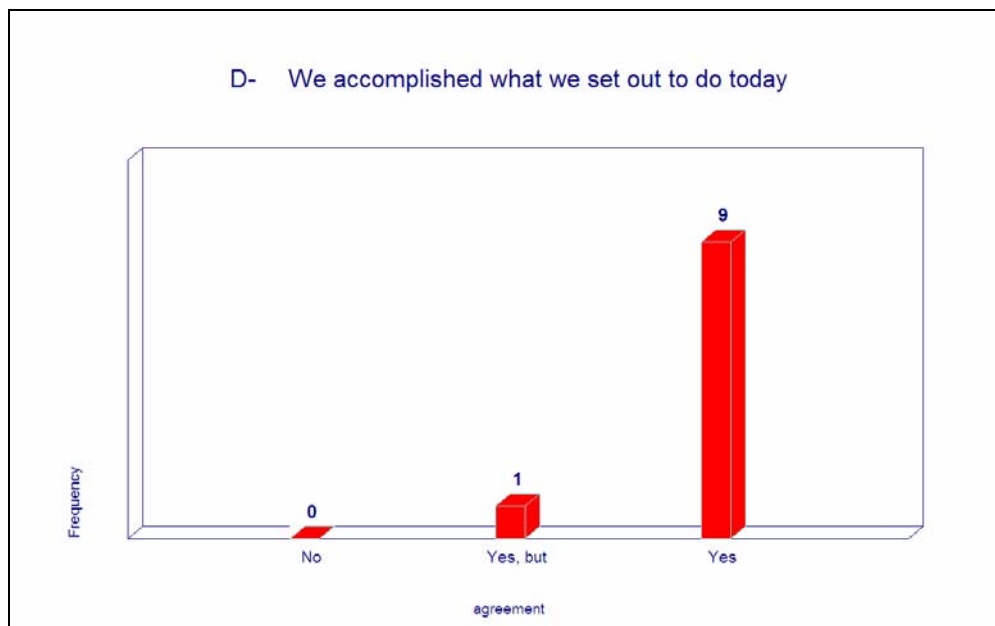


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After additional discussion the group agreed on the following timeline:

Date	Activity	Responsible Party
Monday 7/2	Draft Strategic Plan & Action Planning Template	SSI
Monday 7/2	Convene “classes” to discuss goals & objectives	Denise
	Develop postcard/e-mail to announce	Jean
	Develop survey/online brainstorming tool	Pene/Denise
Week of July 16 th	Live DL meeting	Denise
August 1	Deadline to send input to committee chairs	
August 1-8	Write Action Plans	Committee Chairs
August 9	Attend follow up meeting (and bring copies for everyone of recommended action plans)	Committee Chairs/ Board members

Debbie then asked the group if they achieved what they set out to achieve with the retreat today. Responses included:



Concerns expressed included:

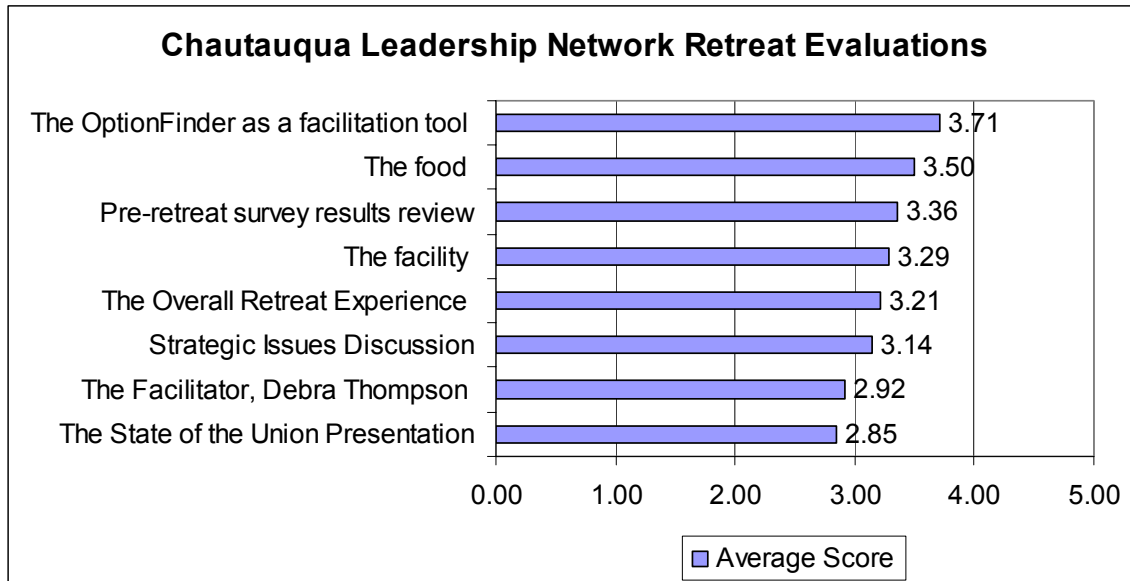
- I am confused on what is happening and when.
- The retreat concluded at 2:15 pm



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Evaluation Scores

5=Excellent; 4=Very Good; 3=Good; 2=Fair; 1=Poor



What did you like best about the session?

- Moved along quickly, results oriented
- We got far enough to keep going
- Agenda - clear
- Exchange of ideas & ability to change focus when new input adds other perspective
- The group discussion as topics came up
- Exchange of ideas, working with other CLNers
- The opportunity for open discussion around critical issues
- Networking
- It moved well but...
- Lunch was great. I liked the OptionFinder
- The exchange of ideas and wealth of knowledge in room
- Listening to CLN alumni & learning about strategic plan & committee structure
- Quickly getting to our points - wrap up.

What did you dislike about the session?

- Debbie seemed to get impatient & irritated with questions at times
- We lost people - people left and we lost people because they wanted to leave



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- Mini sidebar conversations
- A little too much directing by facilitator
- The direction and purpose were not always clear
- Free flowing got disorganized & it was hard to follow all the discussions
- That the discussion was cut short/disrupted at times by facilitator
- June 30th of July 4th weekend.
- The facilitator was a little controlling & squelched some valuable conversation - participants were effectively shut down & withdrew a couple of times
- Waste of a beautiful Saturday morning; was this the best use of my time?
- We worked in large group - no movement; facilitator over talked participants; not enough listening to participants; adding slides to ppt during workshop? This was more of a lecture than retreat.

If you could change anything about the session, what would it be?

- Too cold in here.
- How do you prevent this? (reference to people leaving early)
- More focus
- I would have like the facilitator to be stronger & more in control of the group.
- Schedule this session in fall or spring - not summer, especially the weekend before a major holiday
- More questions to use the OptionFinder on.
- 45 minutes spent in beginning with minimum interaction of group - facilitator multi-tasking (writing on flip, entering sentence into computer, facilitating group discussion) compromises focus - what was role of helper?
- Facilitator - more engaging w/small group work.

Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions.

- The facilitator appeared to lose patience with the group towards the end.
- Very good experience, maybe more emphasis on current plan & the movement of those goals off the table or onto new plan
- Overall a very valuable exercise - keep up the good work
- Technology (survey, voting, etc.) was distracting at times - while the facilitator has a lot of good examples of other ideas - it felt like sometimes she jumped in advocating hers - when it was more facilitated more ideas came from the group. (i.e. forum, etc.) It was a frustrating morning in that the facilitator seemed to move the debate on her choice of words and various points - was almost dismissive - in most cases she usually backed off, listened and incorporated the groups idea.