

Engaged Learning/Course Redesign Subgroup Meeting
November 30, 2010, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Provost's Conference Room, 250 Strong Hall

Subgroup Members Present:

Devon Cantwell, Sarah Crawford-Parker, Ann Cudd, Jennifer Church-Duran, Andrea Greenhoot, Susan Gronbeck-Tedesco, Rick Hale, Chris Haufler, Joe Heppert, Fred Rodriguez, Sara Rosen, and Mike Vitevitch.

Subgroup Members Absent:

John Augusto and Mary Banwart

Agenda:

1. EEE workgroup updates—Chris Haufler and Ann Cudd (10 minutes)
 - a. Subgroup reorganization—Andrea Greenhoot will convene subgroup.
 - b. Graduate student representative—Milton Wendland received a fellowship. We are looking for a graduate student to replace Milton on the committee.
 - c. Graduate Education synergy group—Contact Chris Haufler if interested in participating.
2. Review of committee charges—Andrea Greenhoot (20 minutes)
 - Quality advising and mentoring will draw on advising resources and best practices across campus, empowering students to make informed decisions about their learning opportunities.
 - Experiences will connect students to KU intellectually and emotionally.
 - Innovative curricula and instructional technology, experiential learning (e.g., research, study abroad, and service learning), and redesigned courses will enrich the educational experience for students and faculty.
 - Renewed University General Education requirements will be based on goals that enable success and lifelong learning.
3. Reporting on engaged learning activities at KU and other AAU institutions—Greenhoot (45 minutes)
4. Review data on why students leave KU and 2010 NSSE results—Crawford-Parker (10 minutes)

Discussion Questions:

What action items will we recommend to engage students intellectually, to improve retention and time to graduation, and to meet the following characteristics of the workgroup charge?

- Experiences will connect students to KU intellectually and emotionally.
- Innovative curricula and instructional technology, experiential learning (e.g., research, study abroad, and service learning), and redesigned courses will enrich the education experience for students and faculty.

How will we assess and measure the success of our recommended action items?

What engaged learning activities are in place at other AAU institutions? How many AAU institutions have first-year seminars, centers for undergraduate research/experiential learning, learning communities, capstone courses, and innovative course redesign programs? What can we learn from the reasons why students decide to leave KU?

Discussion Outcomes:

The subgroup discussed engaged learning opportunities (GAP, REP, Service Learning, Leadership Studies minor, etc.) available at KU and course redesign projects facilitated by CTE and funded by the Spencer and Teagle Foundations. These course redesigns focus on enhancing critical thinking and writing skills and utilize resources from the KU Libraries and the Writing Center. What can we learn from courses that have already been redesigned?

The group shared examples of engaged learning from AAU institutions. Considerable discussion focused on first-year seminars and summer programs for incoming freshmen designed to introduce students to the academic life of the university and connect them to campus resources. The student member of the subgroup, Devon Cantwell, expressed support for these types of programs. She saw the value of first-year programs as providing students with academic standards and getting students on the same page, as well as helping students who don't know what they want to do—offering direction or a path to a major.

Questions from the subgroup about first-year seminars and freshman summer programs included whether faculty participation in these programs factored into teaching loads. How does this teaching impact departmental teaching responsibilities? What resources are required to sustain first-year seminars? One committee member reported that Penn State requires a freshman-year experience for all students, but that various activities fulfill this requirement (multidisciplinary seminars, learning communities, etc.). Such a system would appeal to diverse student interests and present fewer resource challenges, but how would student participation be tracked and outcomes assessed?

Discussion of experiential learning focused primarily, although not exclusively, on undergraduate research. Research should be integrated early on and across disciplines. Mike Vitevitch shared information from the AAC&U conference “Creativity, Inquiry, and Discovery: Undergraduate Research In and Across the Disciplines” (Nov. 11-13, 2010). The student member of the committee recommended that research methods courses be required early in the major. She noted that many students put off methods courses and fail to develop an interest in research early on in their academic career.

Next Steps:

- Post AAU research on Blackboard
- Andrea Greenhoot will circulate focus questions based on AAU research
- Review NSSE data—distributed in meeting
- Next meeting December 10, 2010, 1:30-3:00, Regionalist Room, Kansas Union