<div align="center">

Note taking template

Academic Planning Summit

January 16, 2015

</div>

Title of Session: <u>Liberal learning for the future: its relevancy to society</u>

Faculty Facilitator(s): <u>Laura Beauvais</u>

Note taker name: <u>Sarah Maitland</u>

Check one:

___X____ Morning Breakout 1   _____Morning breakout 2

_____Afternoon breakout   _____Afternoon breakout 2

<u>Ideas proposed/Recommendations</u>

Engage a larger URI community by asking them to think about big themes

Institute real partnerships with the community

Create more collaboration within the university so departments aren't as isolated

Institute administrative changes to make sure that the scholarship of teaching and engagement count toward tenure and advancement.

Departmental colleagues, deans, and the Provost all need to convey the value of civic engagement activities.

Provide training to faculty to help them learn how to design a civic engagement project

Provide opportunities for faculty to coordinate curriculum (align curriculum among upper and lower level courses) and civic engagement and experiential learning projects (Unclassroom is an opportunity)

Instead of setting students into time slots, find spaces for new models that include civic engagement and experiential learning. This might require re-considering how we schedule classes and the concept of the "academic year."

Communicate the relevance of liberal arts education to the students. Show the importance of liberal arts education in policy making and resource allocation. If we don't we're only paying lip service.

Weave the importance of liberal education in admissions presentations.

Change the way we think about and talk about general education. Instead of seeing gen ed courses as separated from the overall curriculum we need to start thinking about them as a core curriculum. With the new program, we can begin to integrate the gen ed program with the majors better.

We also need to think about service learning altogether, what is it supposed to accomplish, what is it supposed to mean, how is it supposed to be accomplished? We need to make sure we're not talking at opposite purposes.

Overlay service learning on a strong knowledge based foundation

Prepare students for upper level classes by thinking about the ways general education classes contribute important knowledge and skills

Institute a required freshman experience course (Providence College used to do a 6 credit western civilization class that pulled together all of the disciplines)

Provide opportunities for faculty to learn from each other and share what they are doing in service and experiential learning (summits or showcases); community of practice of faculty who do service learning.

We have to remember that even many members of the faculty may not value the liberal arts education. We need to change the culture so that liberal arts is valued. We need to change not just the students but also us. We need to change competitive structures and build collaborative structures.

We need to find ways to educate our external stakeholders regarding the goals and value of a liberal education.

Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges:

The Honors colloquium helps develop a more educated citizenry

We're not engaged enough in our community to facilitate outreach

There's a disconnect between student preparedness reports and student preparedness in action. How do we make sense of this gap? Perhaps students are prepared only for testing well?

Our purpose is not only to produce workers, it's to produce leaders.

Yale created an integrated course called The Life Worth Living, and the course asks what it means to be a flourishing human being. It focuses on values and ethics. Are we providing enough avenues and vehicles for people to relate to and think about the meaning of life?

How do we get students invested in these big ideas? How do we help students have more ideas when they finish a course than when they begin a course? More conversation will help us to figure this out. The answers aren't readily apparent.

None of these changes are possible without high quality teachers. You have to have tenure track educators (full time educators?) if you want to make these changes. Per course faculty cannot be completely committed to the university, they have to cobble together a living wage at several institutions.

Note taking template
Academic Planning Summit
January 16, 2015
Title of Session: <u>Liberal learning for the future: its relevancy to society</u>
Faculty Facilitator(s): <u>Laura Beauvais</u>

Note taker name: <u>Sarah Maitland</u>
Check one:
_____ Morning Breakout 1   ___X____ Morning breakout 2
_____Afternoon breakout   _____Afternoon breakout 2

<u>Ideas proposed/Recommendations</u>

Make the connection between liberal arts and STEM

We need to share different worldviews with our students and with each other as faculty

Need to engage/educate the public regarding the importance of liberal education

Remember and remind our students that science is composed of culture and values—way to connect to liberal education

Better leverage recent studies that show that employers want liberal arts education

Change the way we think about and articulate generate education. Perhaps we call these required courses essentials, core, or foundationals, so that our students can think about gen eds as something more than what they get out of the way during their first year

Advisors should help students design their first year curriculum to be more representative of what the student is most interested in learning.

Ask students to engage in more significant reflection in orientation about what they want to learn—carry through URI 101 and advising? Students must take on some responsibility for their learning and its value.

Use the first semesters they're here to help bridge the gap between what they were expected to do and what they're now expected to do.

Ask students the minute they get here to engage in deep thinking. The grand challenge courses are intended to help do this.

All our courses should be "grand challenge" courses. We need to think of them in this way.

Provide opportunities for faculty to expand their understanding of the work their peers are doing in the university

<u>Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges:</u>
Is there a difference between human freedom and academic freedom? Do they impact or influence each other?

Has the university lost its emphasis on and support of freedom of speech?

The external forces that weigh in academia, the cost, the drive toward a job (technical training) is moving us away from a liberal arts education that focuses on experience, growth, and understanding. This is a training in/of commodity production

Is education still considered a common good that should be paid for commonly because it benefits society to have educated citizens?

We also have internal pressures--how many hours do we allocate to the "common good" of liberal arts education?

Can we reach common agreement about the importance of liberal arts inside of the university community? Setting the culture starts with faculty. Need to develop a culture of knowledge seeking.

Is four years not enough to educate students about culture? Can we somehow increase our impact during that time?

We need to think about the ways that liberal arts skills are woven throughout liberals arts and their majors, there needs to be some synergy, a way to work in concert, not just interdisciplinary teaching but also unified thinking.

Liberal arts education is defined as liberation, giving someone the knowledge that will free them. Perhaps we need to engage in discussions regarding the definition of liberal education and what it means here at URI.

The culture of testing in high school makes it difficult to prepare for college because our expectations are radically different.

We need to take into account the technological revolution when we think about the structure of the university, which was predominantly shaped by the industrial revolution. Now we are in a different technological revolution—how does this change the structure of the university and our work?

We need to think about content, who's teaching, what are they teaching? If you're only taking one art course what is the purpose of that course? Is it the same intro as someone takes as a major? Can we develop new courses in the gen ed program that are tailored to a broader audience rather than serve as an introduction to a discipline?

The departmental model is competitive instead of collaborative

When we look at the new student we need to really think about the myths, a lot of what we hear is not true or at least universally true (e.g., digital natives vs. digital literacy—there is a lot they don't know about technology, digital issues, etc.).