Session # 4

Session Name: <u>How does the University cultivate a mindset for an integrated learning approach that reflects a life long learning philosophy/model?</u>

<u>**Group's Consensus/Recommendations**</u>

1) Reach out more to our alumni, and cultivate relationships through providing opportunities for continuing education. Recognize changes in the field will require more specific training and education. This could be done with certificate programs or alternate terms.
2) Better utilize distance learning. Reach beyond our traditional students, to include an international audience. Bring a bigger world back here if we are truly going to "think big."
3) Help students understand that learning must continue throughout life. Start to focus on senior year experience, and the transition away from education. Capstone courses, portfolios, and understanding how learning is lifelong, and continuing connections with the university from graduation throughout life.
4) Start early creating opportunities, to understand learning is a lifelong process. Use general education coursework to further the skills all students need, especially reading/writing/critical thinking. Create interdisciplinary links between courses, maybe through the learning communities.
5) Demonstrate what we have accomplished in a clear visible way. Utilize the website for better communication within the campus community, engaging alumni and connecting with the wider community.
6) Create a partnership between faculty and the office of student affairs. There are learning activities going on through centers of student life as well as in the classroom.
7) Encourage and expand experiential learning, especially immersion in new cultures and service to the community. Students find a passion through experience.
8) Make use of nontraditional timeframes (i.e. J-term for focused interdisciplinary institutes that might appeal to an audience outside our traditional boundaries)

Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges:

1. Reduce barriers and obstacles to distance learning.
2. Students are not always ready for higher education. A gap year can be beneficial, but many cannot do this for insurance reasons.
3. Faculty development is important. Apart from sabbatical leaves, faculty need time to update courses, and become familiar with new methods and technologies.
4. We need to work harder at the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty.