

Note taking template
Academic Planning Summit
January 16, 2015

Title of Session: Advancing research, engaging students, and supporting the scholarship of teaching and learning

Faculty Facilitator(s): Jay Fogleman and Alison Tovar

Note taker name: Jaime Pierce

Check one:

Morning Breakout 1 Morning breakout 2

Afternoon breakout 1 Afternoon breakout 2

Exploring ways to involve undergraduates in faculty research and outreach projects. How can faculty be encouraged and supported in the engagement of the scholarship of teaching and learning? What future programs or initiatives would advance innovation and scholarship? What is the potential future role for partnering with business and government?

Ideas proposed/Recommendations

Morning Session Review (Common Concepts/Discussions):

- Elite institutions are directing our university— irony here as there is profound differences between their universities and ours
- Interdisciplinary teaching and learning,
- Need for customized learning and customized resources,
- Need for our institution to invest in customized assistance,
- How do you encourage students to find strengths and passions while customizing their education?
- Great amount of pessimism and skepticism about external pressures
 - Integrating older ideas in higher education with “new ideas” such as flipped classrooms
 - Too much of what is being said involves throwing things away and starting from scratch but there is room to foster teacher-centered methods

RESEARCH:

Research in this context refers to the development of new knowledge and innovations within the university

How do we advance research at URI?

- One thing we could improve: increase interdisciplinary knowledge
- Opportunities to foster community conversation where problems can be solved
 - There is not enough of this at URI to bolster research
 - Money could be redirected towards these opportunities
- Developing short videos about research in each discipline would be beneficial for the university (recruitment, etc.)
- Certain disciplines do not have enough money to support research

- However, there are a ton of foundations to support each area, they just need to be identified
- The message of risk-taking needs to be reinforced
- When considering research we must ask: how are we supporting faculty in general?

In what ways can we include our undergraduates in research in and out of the classroom?

- We can include undergraduates in research by simply asking
 - In one example, an instructor simply asked her students to become involved in helping with research and 12 students volunteered their time
- Research is a great way to engage students
 - Students, in some cases, learn better when they are aware of the application research has on their life and education.
- Providing more opportunities for undergraduate research
 - Some disciplines are better at offering these opportunities
 - It would be beneficial to generate some sort of electronic bulletin that advertises different research projects/proposals.
- Rewards system— involving undergraduates in a way that benefits scholarship while also teaching students by way of mentoring
 - Students are proud to claim any experience in research, especially on resumes or applications— makes them a stronger candidate for graduate programs.
- How do we get credit at the university to consider this a valid way of teaching?
- Consider graduate students (they do a profound amount of research)
 - Graduate students can guide and mentor undergraduates.

ENGAGING STUDENTS:

How do you engage your students in learning?

- Generally, the idea of engagement is having a chance to experience and apply learning, focusing attention on studies. This can be done in several ways...
- *Strategies:*
 - Devote time to learning about students and telling students about myself (applies to graduate students as well)
 - The more you do this, the more you can provide applicable examples and scenarios in the classroom that students enjoy responding to.
 - Personalizing the course based upon students self-interests is valuable
 - Clarity is an important part of engaging students
 - If students are unsure, they shut down in many ways
 - Starting with the syllabus and at the beginning of every class meeting, students benefit from clarity of instruction

In what ways can we engage our undergraduates in and out of the classroom?

- Making learning applicable to the real world in every way possible.
 - For example:
 - HDF, PSY, ED— students are working in schools, clinics, hospitals, etc.
 - This requires an investment and effort to provide people to oversee
 - Community and school based experiences would help undergraduates learn
 - In every field, there are opportunities to engage in this “real-world” manner

- There needs to be support for service learning opportunities from the university
 - Rich authentic experiences but investment is needed to do so in order to make it sustainable
- The new general education program is envisioned as going “across 4 years” rather than having seniors take 100-200 level courses to fulfill their general education courses— This makes it more of a valuable investment for students.
- If you give undergrads a chance to work on another campus, for example, they see that as “real world” because it is a different culture/environment

SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (SOTL)

SOTL is generally to study of one’s students to learn about the effects of instructional innovations or practices on their learning, identity, development, etc. How can we encourage and support SOTL? How can we utilize SFSEs to strengthen learning at URI?

- Right now SOTL is attempting to create a website and a small movement is beginning in favor of SOTL— modest support is being offered.
- School of Education has people open to collaboration on this aspect of teaching and learning.

Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges:

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RESEARCH:

Research in this context refers to the development of new knowledge and innovations within the university. How do we advance research at URI? In what ways can we include our undergraduates in research in and out of the classroom?

- Research funding from private sector and foundations— we as faculty need to improve on this
 - Federal funding is restrained so we need to take a different approach

- Undergraduate student research fund— how do we reconstruct this? It exists right now with student awards, etc. but it could use revamping
 - Perhaps, a faculty member who would become the coordinator of undergraduate research
- The support (monetary) and information about available opportunities is necessary
 - If we could put resources together in one place, there'd be more coherency
 - What is the expectation for undergraduates? Should every student have a research or internship opportunity?
- A fundamental problem we have is that we lack a unified communication system
 - There must be another level of professional communication so that we know where and when opportunities are— we must foster collaboration
 - What opportunities can we build for faculty? What platform can be utilized?
 - The summit is a great opportunity, but there needs to be more, similar platforms to provide enlightenment amongst all disciplines
- Undergraduate research— since the focus is on interdisciplinary learning, if there was a location for undergrads to identify different research focuses on campus, it would help students be able to focus and engage in research based on their skills

ENGAGING STUDENTS:

How do you engage your students in learning? In what ways can we engage our undergraduates in and out of the classroom?

- Real-world engagement, experiential learning, opportunities for learning outside of the classroom should be adapted and applied towards courses
- High impact practices require valuable learning objectives and clarification of learning outcomes along with measurement of such
 - Oftentimes, there needs to be a lot of coaching with these practices which comes from faculty and administration, as well as the community
 - A challenge for the instructor is that it is a very different learning environment where you essentially give up control of the classroom— some people are not comfortable with a loosely structured course
- An experiential learning requirement could amount to research and internships
 - This is similar to some capstone projects
- Anything we want to do to change how we deliver learning means we need a fundamental change in our structure
 - These opportunities take up far more time for faculty and is difficult to do with large numbers of students.
- There is a unique value in a campus like ours
 - Deep learning comes from interaction with experts
 - The idea of interpersonal relationships and advising is a strength of our university that should be highlighted in marketing
- Internal management is needed to take the resources we have and deploy them to reach targets
How do we leverage and ensure that we are utilizing our resources the best we can?

SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

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- Are there steps being made to improve this?
- Would every department on campus value SOTL for colleagues in their departments as compared to traditional methods of scholarship?
- We can do more in the area of diversity and how we teach about diversity
 - There's a rich area here and the obstacles are at the local level

Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges: