

Academic Planning Summit

January 30, 2009

Session # 7

Session Name: How Might We Promote an Education that Transcends the Classroom?

Group's Consensus/Recommendations

1. This is vital to our future and we should be strategic in our deployment of resources in this regard. Need to begin with a careful assessment of focused areas of success, so that we can build from successful models (i.e. Costal Resources Institute).
2. More fluid boundaries with the community, especially in engaging the local community. Real life experiences – show the students what they will be doing in their particular field. Have local partnerships – educational community. Simulation learning. Internships. Develop a mentoring database – use alums. Provide opportunities for the community to use facilities/technology for ongoing learning/practices. Provide meaningful continuing education opportunities (certification programs, seminars). Have people from the community come into the classroom, i.e. – lifelong learning across the age spectrum.
3. Introduce students to the core of their profession/discipline at a much earlier level with practica, internships etc. Place as much emphasis on the transition from college to practice as we do on the transition from high school to college. We need to be more innovative – The student population has changed and the old ways of engaging students aren't working. Meaningful internships with careful quality control regarding content and mentors will promote connections to transcend the classroom. For example, in education, have a lab school – so students can see a connection between academics and practice. Transcend what a classroom is – we wait until the last year of a students' tenure to give him/her opportunities to practice their learning. Make learning more relevant earlier on – so students can see if it's a right "fit".
4. Recognize and support interdisciplinary educational opportunities. Globally use technology to engage academics, business practitioners, and case studies. Try to overcome geographical restraints/concerns – by using video conferencing. Build from strengths. Need to provide faculty development which supports externships to allow faculty to remain current in the practice of their discipline and to nurture non-traditional partnerships to facilitate new models of scholarship and education. This will also help to increase student connections for internships or practica. Recognize and support interdisciplinary educational opportunities and co-curricular opportunities.

5. Reassessment of the gen ed curriculum, re-think or revise. Also, be careful about the messages we send – we say we promote interdisciplinary studies but when students first enter into the university, we immerse them into learning communities with only students from their major.
6. Use student employment as an experience that relates to student learning outcomes. Change our paradigm of what a student at the university is (talking about age, demographics). Recognize variable timelines.

Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges:

1. We need to learn how to work together, how to not have fear, learn how to trust. There is widespread fear that departments not in the “big circles” in the new vision are undervalued. We need to articulate how all departments have a place in preparing the learner of the 21st century, but we cannot be all things to all people
2. Need to improve our technology base to conduct meaningful distance education and to provide faculty development to do so.