

Minutes: Reinvention Center Western Regional Network Meeting

“Incorporating the ‘Real World’ into the Undergraduate Curriculum in the Research University”

February 29, 2008

10:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

A meeting of the Western Regional Network sponsored by the Reinvention Center took place on February 29, 2008 at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). It was attended by 35 faculty and senior administrators from 19 public and private universities and one research foundation. This meeting focused on the intentional integration of real-world problem solving into the undergraduate curriculum and the contributions of these research-based learning experiences to overall student engagement and outcomes.

Introductions and Welcoming Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Director Wendy Katkin was unable to attend due to illness. Associate Director Margaret Marshall filled in with introductory remarks.

Margaret stressed the importance of this year as the Reinvention Center changes headquarters to the University of Miami and becomes a membership-based organization. A discount membership rate is still available and member institutions are given a discount on national conference registration. So far, there are 61 members (31 are AAU members).

Patricia Iannuzzi, Dean of the UNLV Libraries, welcomed everyone to UNLV. She discussed the AAC&U Greater Expectations LEAP program, which stresses the importance of a liberal education across the disciplines and how to apply the foundational skills of a liberal education beyond the traditional. Workforce stakeholders say that basic liberal arts skills are those lacking in their employees. Patty Iannuzzi then introduced UNLV Executive Vice President and Provost Neal Smatresk, who welcomed everyone and spoke about UNLV as a place that believes it can change. He further set the stage for the day's theme by using Las Vegas as an example of a place that is part of a global enterprise and UNLV as an institution that can apply scholarship within the local environment and transport the learning to other places.

After all those present introduced themselves, Patty Iannuzzi went over the agenda for the day. The discussion was organized around several inter-related topics, jumpstarted by one or two *Reports from the Front* to initiate conversation on each topic.

Topic One: Real World as Research-Based Learning: Connecting Theory and Practice

UC Berkeley: Victoria Robinson, Coordinator of American Cultures and Megan Vorhees, Director of Cal Corps Public Services Center, discussed their partnership, the Research Directive Project. Students in an American Culture course could map community-based problems or buy into an additional unit on campus as an internship with a community partner. Community partners became active teachers. Structural challenges: multidisciplinary cohort of students; faculty support faculty in doing this type of work (needed to lead reflection sessions, track data, write reports, etc.); community partners (co-educators) and graduate students leading the course need more training.

Further questions for this type of partnership are:

1. How would this look for a larger faculty-student cohort?
2. Do we require centralization to make this happen?
3. How to create faculty buy-in?
4. How have models become visible/seen as exemplary?
5. How to penetrate non-professional schools?
6. How can an institution's own geography lead the initiatives?
7. How has the student body led?
8. How do we figure out language to talk about what we do?

Additional issues that emerged in discussion included:

- How were the partners involved? Relationships and trust have to be developed. Focus on professional development and networking opportunities for partners. Let them know they're seen as co-educators vs. getting something out of it.
- Activity is seen as peripheral to research portfolio of the faculty. Getting into shattering the myth of divide between research and service.
- How to bring this activity back to the curriculum (through a wiki—communication, posting videos, etc).
- Infrastructure piece is very critical—service learning (living-learning) community moves into a research/coursework opportunity.
- Scalability is an issue
- Big-picture, sustainable programs are hard to do if activity is not centralized.
- What does it take to make it happen in terms of financing?

Common threads in this discussion were student engagement; connection (intentional integration) between service learning and research; faculty ownership; and community partners as co-educators

Topic Two: Models and Strategies for Real-World Experience

UT Austin: Jeanette Herman, Program Coordinator of Bridging Disciplines, described the program—a 19-credit combination of coursework, research, and internships with the goals of self-reflection, disciplinary and inter-disciplinary awareness, and promotion of transfer of skills and knowledge to real-world situations. Currently, this program is at about 500 students with the goal of 1000 and offers experiences in areas where UT does not have a major but does have a faculty research concentration and/or student interest. The program draws on resources already available in colleges and schools. It utilizes faculty mentors and is very individualized, based on students' personal goals. More information is available on the Bridging Disciplines web site at <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/bdp/>. Benefits: intensive advising support and connection with faculty. Challenges: would like to be much bigger; advising requirement is heavy; question of centralization of these types of experiences on campus.

Other questions:

- Assessment data—what happens to students after? Difficult to make comparisons between those who have and haven't participated.
- What motivates the students?—how do they view the value of the certificate? Currently not recognized on transcripts.

University of Utah: John Francis, Senior Associate Vice President, gave an overview of the Undergraduate Research Designation, which created criteria for a designation on student transcripts (two semesters of research with a faculty mentor, research symposium participation, and publication in journal). Goal for each student is to have one unique experience; in some fields there is a natural proclivity toward research, but this has proven more difficult in other fields. Students are paid, and with the current funding, they will have about 200 students participating. More information is available at the website for the Undergraduate Research Scholar Designation at <http://www.ursd.utah.edu/>.

Discussion points that emerged included:

- How to disseminate information successfully: since mandatory advising reports to his office, it is easy to get the word out through advisors. U of Utah has been commended in its accreditation report for having a great relationship between student and academic affairs (lots of joint reports)
- How to get the humanities and creative arts involved? Does the one-size-fits-all model fail students in these disciplines?
- How scalable is a program like this one?
- What is the role of the Reinvention Center in changing culture in terms of infusing research into the disciplines? Social Sciences may not have appropriate methods training/ first-year writing courses as being inquiry-based; go over several methodologies and ethics, but then connection with next course is weak

What other types of infrastructures foster meaningful conversations?

- Joint reporting
- Office of Research and “Creative Works”—if the department is legitimate to be at the university then the final product should be legitimate enough to be supported
- More scaffolding in certain disciplines for students to be able to publish
- Student-run journals
- It’s important to have the conversation about what undergraduate research is and looks like in your discipline—librarians have a large stake in research (Patty Iannuzzi referred to an inventory that she presented at the 2006 conference—Margaret offered to mail out conference proceedings)
- Silos are outmoded—students see that—how do we fund and encourage students to think more broadly?
- Look at the questions being asked to bridge the disciplines—not so much the methods
- Vocabulary limits our conversation—“research,” “scholarly work,” and “creative activity”
- Is the developmental model good or does it limit curricular flexibility

Lunchtime Conversation: Reinvention Center Activities, Margaret Marshall

Regional meetings are not limited to people living in the region. Upcoming meetings include the Midwest Regional Meeting at Case Western on April 1, where the topics will be international opportunities for student research, student life/student living connections, and general education reforms.

The Spring UVP Network meeting will take place on June 13 at the University of Maryland College Park.

There has been a decision to create another network for assessment specialists—Bob Thompson at Duke will be chairing.

For the November national conference, there will be plenary discussions with a keynote and then breakout sessions. Sessions will have a presenter and then will be discussion-oriented. A draft schedule has been disseminated; speakers must still be identified for sessions in bold. Contact Wendy Katkin or Margaret Marshall if you are interested.

Current Reinvention focus includes general education, interdisciplinary partnerships, assessment, and diversity. Oral communication and writing are still at the top of concerns, as well as supporting faculty in innovations and the effective use of technology.

The Center's resources and activities include the website, national conference and proceedings, co-sponsorships on research projects related to the mission including dissemination (e.g. database of undergraduate research opportunities).

Question posed: What else should The Reinvention Center be doing in support of your efforts or to make use of our collective resources? Ideas included:

- Looking into the role of research universities in reaching into K-12 education—add to the agenda at a regional meeting perhaps. Facilitating conversation between K-12 and faculty (secondary and undergraduate)
- Discussions of achievement level expectations of faculty—providing links to resources, bibliographies
- Reinvention “Fellows”—administrators could travel to another site and spend time
- Help people publish their innovations
- Sharing undergraduate research opportunities
- Exploring technology-imbedded learning
- Collecting success stories re: large-scale faculty buy-in for change in teaching (Reminder of “Spotlights” essays on website with model programs)
- Providing an interactive forum to have a discussion about the Spotlights
- Discussion list?
- Accountability and Assessment—accreditation focused on research universities and what is “model” to accrediting agencies
- Seamless move from undergraduate into graduate degrees; how graduate students learn to teach

Topic Three: Leveraging Strengths of Research Universities: Potential Learning Spaces

BYU: John Hawkins, Professor of Anthropology described the BYU Field School, where the goal is to involve students in a full round of research including preparatory coursework, 13 weeks in Guatemala, and post-field coursework and presentation and publishing. Emerging issues are administrative support and reward of research with undergraduates, end of “teaching vs. research tension.”

*Dr. Hawkins' presentation will be posted to the website

UNLV: Dr. Joe Aldridge, Fine Arts and Dr. Dan Cook, Engineering presented their partnership with the collaborative Entertainment Engineering program. They have worked with students in the

entertainment industry on the Las Vegas strip (major partner has been Cirque du Soleil) to solve real-world problems. While there is only one spot reserved for a UNLV student in the Cirque internship program, there is community support for scaling up and identifying problems and issues for students to work on. The partnership began over 10 years ago with Fine Arts because there was a need in the industry. The challenge is having access to one-of-a-kind technology as a lab for students.

Discussion areas included:

- Scaffolding—how much preparation is needed for students to succeed in these environments?
- How are programs responsive to the community, and how does it benefit?
- Every university probably has a context of uniqueness that they can take advantage of—what is your “Strip”?
- Has the administration recognized and supported these programs and partnerships? Is there institutional support for rewarding people for stepping outside of disciplinary silos?
- General education courses such as stats and advanced English become highly relevant when tied in to something real-world
- Maybe the issue is not that any one project gets scaled, but more the notion that there are a number of projects for students to choose from
- Issue of how to assess undergraduate research

Summing Up and Looking Ahead

Major themes throughout the day included:

- The importance of learning to be learners—not just acquisition of information or skills; the shift is influencing the design of general education
- Collaboration makes us stronger
- Finding a common language—how to talk, think, create meaning
- Taking advantage of our local contacts and local context and interests

Participants

Margaret Marshall, Associate Director, The Reinvention Center

Baylor University

Wallace Daniel, Professor of History

Brigham Young University

John Hawkins, Professor of Anthropology

Colorado State University

Alan Lamborn, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

Mike Palmquist, Institute Director, Professor of English, University Distinguished Teaching Scholar

Georgetown University

Allen Gill, Director, Center for Leadership Institutional Affiliation

Research Corporation

Kathleen Parson, Program Officer

Stanford University

Jackie Schmidt-Posner, Interim Managing Director, HAAS Center for Public Service

Brian Thomas, Associate Director, Undergraduate Advising & Research

University of California – Davis

Patricia Turner, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

University of California – Irvine

Sharon Salinger, Dean Division of Undergraduate Education

Rudi Berkelhamer, Associate Dean, Division of Undergraduate Education.

University of California – Riverside

David Fairris, Vice Provost

Gary Scott, Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

University of California – Berkeley

Elizabeth Dupuis, Associate University Librarian for Educational Initiatives

Victoria Robinson, Lecturer, Ethnic Studies

Cynthia Schrager, Special Assistant to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Megan Voorhees, Director, Cal Corps Public Service Center

University of Colorado

Alphonse Keasley, Director of Minority Arts & Sciences Program and Assistant Professor

University of Nevada - Las Vegas

Patricia Iannuzzi, Dean of University Libraries

Neal Smatresk, Executive Vice President and Provost

Daniel Cook, Engineering Coordinator

David James, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs

Chris Hudgins, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Leora Baron, Director, Teaching & Learning Center

Joe Aldrige, Coordinator, Entertainment Engineering and Design

University of New Mexico

Viola Florez, Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

University of Southern California

Gene Bickers, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs

University of Texas – Arlington

Greg Hale, Assistant Dean of Science & Director

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Jeanette Herman, Senior Program Coordinator, Bridging Disciplines Programs

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John Francis, Senior Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

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Paul LePore, Assistant Dean for Educational Programs

Jill McKinstry, Director, Odegaard Undergraduate Library

Kathleen Collins, Coordinator of Reference Services/Instruction Librarian

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