

Reinvention Center
Excerpts from Meeting of Vice Presidents for Undergraduate Education¹ at Research
Universities
George Washington University
June 10, 2005

Attendees: Wendy Katkin (R.C. director), Milton Adams (U of Virginia), Paul Duff (GWU), Katy Flint (AAAS Fellow, NSF), William Frawley (GWU), Lucia Gilbert (U of Texas at Austin), Donna Hamilton (U of Maryland, College Park), Phil Kraemer (U of Kentucky), Karen Laughlin (Florida State), Diane Lee (U of Maryland, Baltimore County), Robert Megginson (U of Michigan), Jere Morehead (University of Georgia), Lucius Outlaw (Vanderbilt), Jr., Bobbi Owen (UNC-Chapel Hill), Michael Ryan (University of Buffalo), Carol Sigelman (GWU), W. Robert Sullins (U of South Florida), Robert Thompson, Jr. (Duke), Mark Weichold (Texas A&M), June Youatt (Michigan State)

Introduction and Welcome

After welcoming remarks by Carol Sigelman, Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Academic Affairs, at George Washington (GW) University, which was hosting the meeting, Reinvention Center Director Wendy Katkin gave a brief history of the Center's effort to form a national network of Vice Presidents for Undergraduate Education (UVPs) and other senior officials with campus- or college-wide responsibility for undergraduate education. The idea originated with Judi Smith, Dean of Honors and Undergraduate Programs and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at UCLA and a former member of the Reinvention Center Executive Board. Judi had started a similar network of senior officials from universities within the University of California (UC) system several years ago, when the position was first created at the UC institutions and she and her colleagues in this new role were struggling to define and give it shape. Judi felt that they might help and support one another in understanding the parameters of the position and addressing common problems. Although the positions are now well established, the group continues to meet regularly to share experiences, discussing issues of common concern and counsel one another, and a genuine sense of camaraderie has developed among the individual members.

In an effort to assess the level of interest in creating a national network, the Reinvention Center invited senior administrators with this responsibility to a meeting last November that was held on the evening prior to the Center's conference. The 54 individuals who attended seemed to support the idea and recommended that the Reinvention Center continue to explore its feasibility. (A summary of the November meeting is available on the Reinvention Center Web site: http://www.sunysb.edu/Reinventioncenter/Conference_04/proceedings.htm) The Reinvention Center is following up on this recommending by having four meetings in different geographic regions. Its plan is to bring together small groups of incumbents to determine the goals and possible roles of a national network, how often should it meet, and how it should be structured. The DC meeting is the first of the meetings. It will be followed by a second one in New York City on June 17, a third one in San Francisco on October 21, and possibly a fourth one in

¹ This is a generic title for senior officials with primary responsibility for undergraduate education; actual titles varied quite a bit.

Chicago in November. Invitations to the meetings have been extended to UVPs and other senior officials who oversee undergraduate education.

The main goals in establishing the network are to support and strengthen the position of UVP and to enable members to help one another move forward. The Reinvention Center would organize and provide staff support for its activities. The network could serve several functions:

- Provide a forum for members to share information, discuss issues of common concern, and benefit from one another's experiences
- Identify existing resources for data collection (i.e. AAU, HAUDE, COFI) and collect data on topics of common interest where such data doesn't exist
- Sponsor workshops/programs: What kind of workshops/programs would the group like the Reinvention Center to organize?
- Develop, refine, and share assessment mechanisms. Campuses are struggling to define and assess learning outcomes, and to an increasing extent are being driven by the accreditation process.
- Organize multi-campus projects (i.e. current proposal to NEH, math-bio project, NSF interest in network to support STEM education)

Wendy indicated that her goal for the meeting was for the group to make two-three concrete recommendations that address the structure of the network and specific activities the group would like to undertake. She also asked the group to identify activities it would like the Reinvention Center to organize.

Understanding and Strengthening the Position

In order for those present to get a sense of the various ways the UVP position has been conceived and situated at different universities and the breadth of responsibilities incumbents have, the group did a quick review of 38 position descriptions the Reinvention Center had compiled prior to the meeting. When the UC Vice Chancellors had undertaken a similar review at its initial meeting, they were struck by the differences among their position descriptions and the varying levels of responsibility that they had. Wendy proposed the position descriptions be reviewed with three questions in mind:

1. What are the major goals of the job?
2. What are the major responsibilities?
3. What are the barriers to their effective functioning?

Many of those present did not see their own position or day-to-day responsibilities reflected accurately in the inventory, though there was a consensus that the position lacks "real" authority and incumbents need to rely on the power of persuasion to get things done. Rather therefore than using the position descriptions as a starting point, the group decided to focus primarily on two questions: What are the goals of the position? How can we help one another to move forward? Everyone seemed to agree that it would be of great value for members to learn how colleagues at other universities are solving problems and to learn also about effective strategies that have been employed, programs colleagues have introduced, etc. It would equally useful to get one another's perspectives on challenges they are facing. The network could serve the additional functions of providing a framework or context for members to develop policies, measure the

effectiveness of their own practices as well as the practices of units that report to them, and it could help them to get attention and support on their own campus (for example, “if Universities A and B are doing this and it’s working, shouldn’t we try it?”)

Issues for the Network

The group proceeded to brainstorm particular issues that members might want to address through the network. What follows is a summary of the major issues with which attendees are grappling.

- Data and Policies on Faculty Teaching Load: How do our policies support our goals: What are the consequences of having TA/part-time faculty teaching introductory courses?
 - Data: What are the “real” faculty’s teaching loads? What percentage/how much of their load is devoted to undergraduate teaching? Does the load vary by department? How much of faculty time is devoted to teaching graduate students? Data network members might want to look at: % of time departments spend teaching undergrads, % of classes and undergraduates taught by TAs, % taught by part-time/non-tenured faculty, whether a department has graduate students and how their presence impacts the undergraduate education they offer.
 - Policies: What kind of policies are in place to govern teaching loads? How do the policies support the university’s goals for undergraduates? What are the consequences of a faculty member, a TA, a part-time instructor teaching particular courses? Should universities be setting limits on teaching loads? Should they be examining and deciding which classes are OK to be taught by TAs? The network should try to get the numbers and come to some understanding of what the numbers mean.
 - e.g. UT Austin: sets fraction of teaching that has to be done by tenured or tenure track faculty
 - e.g. At the U of Kentucky, the faculty senate is trying to set such limits
- Changing preparation of students: AP credit and dual-enrolled credit. Areas for the network: 1) Bureaucratic notions of equivalency; assumptions of equivalency need to be examined; and 2) Fundamental paradigm shifts that are taking place in science disciplines. What are the implications for educating students at the university? What are the implications for students who use AP courses taken in high schools in lieu of introductory courses offered at the university?
 - At some universities freshmen with extensive incoming credit skip intro classes that are designed to have additional early enrichment
 - e.g. The U of Virginia is looking at policies on this; the University is trying to require that students take higher classes in areas that they test- or AP-out of, instead of just taking electives
 - Vanderbilt’s College of Arts & Sciences has a new curriculum that limits AP credit in certain ways
 - The Florida legislature requires a common numbering systems across state colleges and universities, as well as a one-to-one mapping between AP credits and particular classes. This requirements limits flexibility
 - UNC Chapel Hill has an articulation agreement that states that students who enter the university with associate degrees have fulfilled their general

- education requirements. This puts them at a real disadvantage. In response, UNC is taking fewer junior transfer students.
- There are problems with consistency of pre-enrollment classes, and often students are not prepared for higher level classes
 - e.g. Texas A&M started collecting data on dual-credit Calculus students
 - e.g. U South Florida finds that dual-credit students do better than AP students
 - High schools are concerned that universities will devalue AP class curriculum if they down-grade AP credit. Here the network can help to formulate definitions of equivalency
 - Management of Assessment: How does assessment feed back into practice? How do you integrate the results? The network can help members figure out how to translate external moments for accountability into authentic ways of improving their institution's own undergraduate education and giving it more value.
 - Most faculty view assessment as an unnecessary, external process, instead of an activity that can be designed to help them. This view is reinforced by the fact that too often assessment activities are implemented in response to external forces. Challenges:
 - How do you make assessment seem worthwhile?
 - How do you make assessment a long-term process?
 - How do you get faculty buy-in?
 - The network can help by 1) identifying campuses at which effective assessment has been sustained and externally adopted, 2) creating more tailored assessment models, and 3) helping to disseminate and translate these models. It can also help establish assessment as a process for making improvements in education.
 - You need a few champions on campus; you can also highlight examples of success
 - On-line Courses and Distance Learning: Issues here relate to quality, access, and management.
 - A number of models exist: Hybrid courses, part on-line, part in the classroom; some distance learning with video uplink
 - It is important to identify goals of distance learning.
 - Sometimes it responds to capacity; it is easier to go online than to start a capital project
 - There is a danger in using on-line courses and distance learning to cut costs on large classes
 - Another danger comes with the elimination of critical face-to-face interactions and the opportunity for students to benefit from the advantages of diversity;
 - If done well, distance learning can be more expensive than traditional classroom instruction.
 - What policies should be/have been set for on-line classes? We don't want the fraction of the curriculum to become too large
 - We need to assess empirically the advantage of a real person in a classroom versus online instruction
 - e.g. Kentucky, which has been experimenting with some distance learning experiments, has found that the advantages depend a lot on the course design.

On-line courses work well when they use a combination of passive and interactive learning

- Technology can be used effectively in classroom instruction.
- General Education/Core Curriculum: this was the most frequently-mentioned challenge that attendees will be dealing with in the next two years.
- Building a culture of undergraduate research for students and faculty
 - Increase faculty buy-in to Boyer recommendations
 - How can Boyer recommendations dovetail with Greater Expectations findings on general education to stimulate and guide curricular reform?
 - Disciplinary and interdisciplinary examples for integrating research
- Consideration of undergraduate education and research in promotion and tenure
- Application of science of learning literature
- Academic Integrity
- Funding sources for everything
 - In particular, how to deal with unfunded mandates
- Enhancing Diversity
- Using graduation rate as a metric
- Setting writing expectations for English as a Second Language Students
- How to interface with other players on campus, such as the Deans
- Infrastructure, and the security of that infrastructure
- Research universities are increasingly being asked to interface with K-16 education. The UVPs are likely to be the people doing this.

CIC Undergraduate Education Working Group

The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Education Working Group, made up of the senior administrators at CIC institutions (the big ten plus Northwestern and the University of Chicago) who have responsibility for undergraduate education, has been in existence for many years and could serve as a good model for the UVP network the Reinvention Center is establishing. June Youatt, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education at Michigan State, provided an overview of the CIC Group's structure and activities.

The Education Working Group is one of 48 established constituent groups organized, supported and staffed by the CIC; its support includes hosting the meetings and maintaining a web site. The Group meets for one day twice a year, in the Spring and Fall semesters. One meeting is held in Chicago at the CIC headquarters, and the other is held at a member's campus. The campus meetings are sometimes held in conjunction with an event taking place on the campus that supports the Group's role. Last year, for example, the meeting was held at the University of Minnesota the day after a conference there on the first-year experience. The one-day duration of the meetings works well in that people are able to fit it into their busy schedules and much gets accomplished. All the members consider the meetings so valuable that they are always very well attended.

The meetings themselves are quite informal, but also very practical. The meeting itself is convened by a chair, who is "elected," which means who either volunteers or is informally selected by the Group. The agenda likewise is self-generating and developed by the Group

through an informal process: i.e. “What would you like to talk about?” Much of the planning of the agenda takes place via email. Discussions are generally round-table, focusing on the big things happening at each campus and the consequent practical details. Sample topics: What is the big thing happening on your campus? Where are you taking the budget cuts? How do you do the course numbering to allow whatever? While the members all have different portfolios, they have developed commonalities over time. Equally important, they have developed trust and are open and candid in laying out problems and advising one another.

Most of the time at the meetings is spent discussing issues, including policy implications, and to a lesser extent, the nuts and bolts of how to do their jobs. The Group has a listserv that is well-used, often in data gathering and resource sharing. Typically, someone will use the list serv to pose a question: What are you doing about. . . ? or “Who knows about. . . .” or “Have you read. . . .?” Sometimes the questions are very specific; other times they are more general.

Examples of recent issues discussed by the Group.

- First-year students
 - Emerging living/learning programs
 - Academic orientation programs
- Transfer students
- Undergraduate research
- Academic Integrity

Occasionally, the Group undertakes a joint activity; this occurs primarily when one or two members have a real interest in a topic and step forward to take the lead. Recently, for example, led by June, the Group created an online tutorial on academic integrity for first-year students. The tutorial introduces the students to the definitions of academic integrity and cheating and tells them about the consequences. Students are required to complete the twenty-minute tutorial prior to arriving at orientation. The Summer 2005 will be its first test.

Why do people attend the Group’s meetings? Sitting down for 4-5 hours for a sustained conversations with peers who are knowledgeable and whom you trust is very valuable. There is no substitute for working with people who deeply understand issues that you are addressing. The Group is particularly useful for individuals who are new to the position. At any one time, it will include both experienced and new members. The more experienced members in many ways serve as peer mentors to their less experienced colleagues.

For June, the main value of the Group derives from the close relationship among its members. While acknowledging the obvious advantages of less frequent national meetings, she emphasized what for her are the greater advantages of smaller, regional groups. You get to know the members better and the engagement is greater; since the meetings are often relatively close to the members’ home institutions and involve minimal travel time, members are more likely to attend than if they were a great distance away; sometimes there can be regional similarities. Finally, with a smaller group, the meeting becomes a priority and often people feel more compelled to attend.

Structuring the UVP Network

The CIC Group can serve as a good model for the UVP network. There was a consensus that the network should be an organized entity, but, like the CIC Group, be flexible and responsive, with the agenda determined by members. It was also noted that the overall membership should be limited to the senior officials on university campuses who have *primary* responsibility for undergraduate education. Many agreed that having the opportunity to engage in sustained conversation with peers was one of the more attractive aspects of the network. In this spirit, it was also suggested that members be advised not to send substitutes, though members could invite colleagues if a topic on the agenda falls within their purview.

The group seemed to support a bifurcated approach: small, regional meetings, perhaps held twice a year, and period national meetings, (every one-to-two years), probably at a time that coincides with the Reinvention Center's national conference. It was suggested that the national meeting perhaps be scheduled for two days. The smaller meetings could be more topical than the national meetings and, like the CIC Group, responsive to the interests of attendees.

The Reinvention Center would organize and provide staff support for network meetings.

Although a national meeting might be the best forum to decide the structure of the network and to break it down into smaller, possibly regional groups, the next Reinvention Center national conference will not take place until November, 2006. The group therefore decided to meet again in the Fall, 2005. In the meantime, Wendy will circulate summaries of the DC and NY meeting to everyone and the Reinvention Center will set up a list serv for the group. Most of those present agreed that the format should be similar to today's meeting: One or two set presentations and the remaining time for round-table discussion of pertinent topics. The constituency of each region should set the agenda, perhaps by picking several issues from the list already generated (see below).

Finally, there was discussion on how people become a member of a regional group. Should membership be limited to one regional group, thus ensuring a critical mass at a given regional meeting or can individuals affiliate with two or three groups? Should institutional type (e.g. private vs. public) also be considered? It was agreed that the commonalities of being research institutions outweighed any regional or institutional-type differences. There seemed to be consensus that the membership should not be set in stone, but that members should come to the regional meeting that best fit their needs – whether due to travel distance, scheduling, or topic. Alternately, members might affiliate with a regional group, but be welcome to attend other network meetings that are addressing topics of particular interest to them.

The group agreed that that the network did not require a formal structure or by-laws. Rather, the agenda for each meeting could be made up by a planning committee. The network might want to assume a more formal structure at a later time if members want to participate in advocacy activities. Wendy is seeking volunteers to serve as an informal planning committee for this group's the next meeting.

To help guide planning for the next meeting, Wendy asked everyone who was present to list the two major issues they will be addressing next year.

Morehead, Univ of Georgia

- AP credit and how it impacts General Education
- Giving teeth to promotion and tenure guidelines, and the reward system
- Curricular issues

Weichold, Texas A&M

- Core curriculum: it is currently being re-examined
- Limitations on size of degree programs (from legislature)
- Inquiry-based learning
- Enrollment management e.g. minority recruitment and disciplinary balance

Kraemer, Univ of Kentucky

- General education curriculum reform, incorporating Greater Expectations findings
- Promoting service learning
- Teaching and learning tools, esp. for big classes

Gilbert, UT Austin

- Creating a culture of undergraduate research
- Core curriculum, how to internationalize
- Issues with UT mandate to take only freshmen from the top 10% ; this limits diversity

Ryan, Univ at Buffalo

- Creating a culture of undergraduate research
- Experiential learning
- Enhancing diversity
- Academic Integrity
- Geographic and ethnic diversity; this is an issue at the high end

Hamilton, Univ of Maryland

- Reviewing core curriculum, including undergraduate research
- AP credit and dual-enrollment and its implications for the delivery of education
- Enrollment management, such as on-line courses and transfer student agreements

Laughlin, Florida State Univ

- AP credit
- Creating a culture of undergraduate research from both faculty and student perspectives
- Student learning outcome assessment
- Enhancing diversity at the high end

Adams, Univ of Virginia

- Putting out fires
- Creating a culture of undergraduate research
- Assessment and planning: in the context of SACS accreditation

- Diversity

Meggison, Univ of Michigan

- Building a culture of undergraduate research – with a focus on faculty reward; this is the subject of an upcoming Deans’ retreat
- Enhancing diversity – focus on retention, and need for data on attrition amongst degree programs.
- Internal attrition

Youatt, Michigan State

- Core curriculum and general education – establishing an integrative studies curriculum
- Accreditation: special focus on internalization across undergraduate experiences
- Enhancing diversity – with focus on pre-college prep and recruitment

Owen, UNC Chapel Hill

- Launching a new curriculum; what needs to be put in place? Budget is a big issue
- Finding resources to keep good people running undergraduate research and honors college functions
- Unfunded mandates, such as ESL. The typical practice is to assign the mandate to an existing unit, such as the Writing Center. This creates a diversion of resources and a diversion from the unit’s core activity.

Lee, Univ of Maryland Baltimore County

- Increase retention and success of non-minority undergrads, esp. transfers
- “Authentic” assessment
- Scaling up effective initiatives

Sullins, Univ of South Florida

- Assessment, esp. of re-designed curriculum and undergraduate research
- Working with community colleges
- Florida’s new tracking system, for keeping students on track to graduate
- Academic integrity
- Services formerly in Student Affairs, such as Orientation, are now in Academic Affairs
- Getting students to buy into the research culture

Outlaw, Vanderbilt

- Developing residential colleges; Freshman Commons will open 2008
- Enhancing diversity, esp. in creating a new community that is counter to the way we actually live
- Development of an infrastructure to determine “the fate of ideas”
- Securing systems; this should not be left to the “tech” people

Thompson, Duke

- Creating a culture of undergraduate research
- Creating a culture of evidence

Frawley, GW Univ

- Liberal arts in a global context
- Core competencies (“other stuff beyond writing”)
- Focus on “middle-year” students; a lot can happen between the freshman year and graduation

In summary the main issues appear to be:

- 1) Core curricular competencies
- 2) Undergraduate research
- 3) Changing preparation
- 4) Diversities

Other questions the group would like to address:

1. What are the reasonable expectations we can have for students? For ourselves?
2. How does what we do fit into campus plans and relate to what campus units are doing?
3. How do you “choreograph” everything?

There was also some subsequent discussion of the difficulties in describing the purpose of undergraduate research, and the need for other terms can better describe the process. Some suggestions were: inquiry-based, knowledge production, scholarship, problem-posing and problem-solving, creative achievement, and disciplined inquiry.

Next Steps and Action Items

The group decided to defer decisions on the network’s structure until members have the opportunity to benefit from the results of the other regional meetings. However, to keep the momentum going, the group suggested that it meet again in the Fall, and focus on two topics, possibly the core curriculum and competencies, undergraduate research, or the changing preparation of students. All were in favor of a national meeting in tandem with the next Reinvention Center conference.

Other action items were for the Reinvention Center to set up a listserv or email list of some kind to enable communication among the group members. Wendy will send out an attendees group email list, as well as the notes from the meeting. She will also send Bob’s PowerPoint presentation and the notes from the New York meeting, which is taking place on June 17.

Wendy concluded the meeting by reporting on a proposal the Reinvention Center will be submitting to the NEH to develop a “template” for an interdisciplinary, introductory course on “Moments of Discovery.” If you know of faculty on your campus who might be interested in participating in the project, please let her know. They may be in any discipline, though there is a special need for humanities scholars.