

ASP Town Meeting – February 10, 2009
Undergraduate Education Discussion – led by Carol Brewer

Notes from Ray Carlisle

- Connecting teaching and learning: how do we gauge mastery, long-term retention of information? Need to examine how we evaluate and assess student learning
- World-class curriculum—is it better defined by content or process?
- Does General Education curriculum get in the way for some students—too time-intensive, rules out options?
- Missing link for Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS): instructors of grouped classes don't collaborate with each other; collaboration is left to cohorts of students and FIG leader. FIGS still standalone courses, not sufficiently linked. What are barriers to collaboration?
- Meaningful concept to librarians in undergraduate education is information literacy—the ability to analyze and synthesize information to create new information
- What are important literacies? Do all students need all literacies? Six of ten?
- How do students learn to evaluate and verify information they get from the web?
- Should we regulate WHEN students acquire literacies (e.g., students should complete math literacy requirement BEFORE taking classes in which math literacy would be valuable)
- Disagreement over whether foreign language/symbolic system requirement works. 80% of students choose alternative to language for symbolic systems requirement?
- Much discussion about academic advising: need a forum on this topic?
- Online courses: are there consistent standards that insure the same rigor for online courses offered by UM as for traditional lecture courses?
- Extensive conversation about COT's role in UM Academic Strategic Plan—will have separate forum at COT to further discuss
- Is there a need to negotiate uniform definition and standards for Service Learning? How do we regulate, optimize?

Notes from Sarah Cullison

- Connecting teaching and learning
 - student evaluations not useful-can't distinguish b/t students who learned vs. those who are angry
 - need a new way to evaluate what students learned- ie. capstone, more student tracking after graduation
 - ASP committee could look over current assessment efforts
 - better connection b/t classes, don't repeat content for first 2 weeks of every class

- World class education, content vs. process
 - gen ed curriculum and the extent that it gets in the way or not
 - get students to distinguish b/t academic life and extracurricular life (ie. texting in class)
 - group classes together with the same students-this is missing collaboration b/t teachers so that the students can see the connections b/t classes (Provost's program for big picture classes for freshmen)
 - what are the barriers to cross-disciplinary education
 - student life issues (ie, no dorm rooms available)
 - Information literacy
 - ability to think critically; evaluate legitimacy of info on the web, etc...
 - getting literacy to the students in time to use them in their career
 - which students need which literacies-does everyone need/want all of them
 - Advising
 - more students are getting medical withdrawals due to stress/sleep disorders—many due to poor advising
 - problems with faculty advising-catalog unclear to new students
 - catalog ONLY available online for students and faculty
 - catalog doesn't match actual classes offered/dept requirements
 - how is/should ASCRC (or other groups), get info out to the campus community?
 - need better information dissemination/campus-wide communications
 - if catalog is only online, send updates so everyone doesn't have to re-read in entirety every year
 - Distance education
 - don't treat distance students as second-class citizens
 - recognize they may have a different skill set than on-campus students (manipulate PDF's etc...)
 - 2-Year education
 - advising between COT campus and mountain campus
 - COT strategic issue-become more aligned with mountain campus
 - COT still thought of as vo-tech but has evolved into a 2-year comprehensive college
 - 2-year transfer program (feeder for junior year at 4-year colleges), needs improvement
 - need to be more aligned with mtn campus in terms of developmental education (remedial education)
 - Service learning
 - what is it, how much is campus embracing it, what will the standards be
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ASP Town Meeting – March 6, 2009
Undergraduate Education Discussion – led by Carol Brewer

Notes from Sarah Cullison

- COT
 - enrollment is increasing but funding is not
 - many credits from COT don't transfer to the Mtn. campus
 - Griz e-recruiting doesn't have an option for associates degrees
 - students feel like there is a total disconnect between COT and Mtn campus
 - schedule problems, classes in the same field are scheduled back to back at COT and Mtn campus: students have to leave one class 15 min early to make it to next class on time
- Decline in undergrad teaching labs
 - have added undergrads but turned lab space into research areas for profs and grads or into faculty offices
- Undergrad culture
 - when administration visits depts. they seem more focused on research and grad students than on how faculty teaching loads, any problems with teaching or what resources are needed for teaching
 - loss of center for teaching excellence (not gone, no faculty volunteered to run it)
- 1st year experience
 - provost is working on big picture/big idea programs
 - students need early access to faculty/advising in areas they may want to study to help them pick a major early
 - have freshman 14 program by some professors-
 - i.e. chem class covering 14 topics for 14 weeks of semester
 - students seem to really enjoy classes, ~85% of students in one of these classes signed up for the next class in the series the following semester
 - allows faculty members to really interact with small groups of freshmen
- class size: with 250 people in freshmen and sophomore classes it's hard for students to really identify with faculty members
 - institutional challenges to teaching small classes: honors college, within depts., team teaching, etc....
- students as peer advisors (undergrads' view)
 - this is a way for students to get involved in campus and feel a part of the community
 - problem with 1st year experience is that students are underprepared for UM classes coming out of high school-these students need smaller classes the first few years

-students who already have AP credits are often not asked to be involved in 1st year retention programs; while these are strong academic students they can still flounder in the college environment

-students begin to feel like they are only recruited for the amt of money they bring in

- plan seems too ambitious for the current economic situation
- use faculty AND students for student retention
 - can affect class size through changes other than class size reductions-students mentoring students leverages resources better
 - explain to faculty the benefits of retention programs rather than simply telling them they have to participate
- UM should partner more with community to provide resources rather than just asking the state for handouts or increasing tuition
- New faculty
 - need better orientation for teaching, technology, social meetings rather than only for retirement, health insurance, etc....
- Study Abroad
 - we should encourage more students to study abroad and encourage winter and summer trips in addition to semester long programs
- Financial aid
 - entire campus (faculty/staff/students) could use better training on the financial aid process
 - eligibility, repayment responsibilities etc...

Notes from Jim Hirstein

1. A student from the College of Technology raised several issues, beginning with the charge that the University acts toward COT as an absentee landlord. The COT campus has not improved. COT enrollment is increasing but funding is not adequate. It is not clear which courses will transfer from COT to the Mountain Campus if a student continues on to a bachelor's degree. Career Services does not recognize the Associates Degree.
2. Another faculty member: There are historical reasons for the relationship between COT and the Mountain Campus. Neither partner is completely happy with the relationship. There are reasons for the restrictions. It is messy, but there are legitimate questions. We cannot solve it all here.
3. Another faculty member: The schedule should be better coordinated between the COT and Mountain Campuses. Students should not be forced to leave classes early on one campus to get to their next class on the other campus.

4. Work to reverse the decline in teaching lab space. Space is often converted to faculty offices and research labs at the expense of teaching space. UM students are spending more and more dollars for less and less.
5. Has ASP looked into culture? We are drifting away from the culture of undergraduate teaching. We need to promote excellence in undergraduate teaching. For example, what has happened to the Center for Teaching Excellence?
6. Remember the importance of the First Year Experience. It is important to look at shaping the mind. Students should have advising and contact with faculty early in their college experience.
7. One good example is the “Freshman 14.” Faculty can teach courses that interest students. Faculty can present something of interest to a small group of students. This is being done as a second semester freshman follow-up to the FIGs.
8. There is certainly a concern with the huge numbers of students in freshman classes.
9. There should be more small classes available to first year students. There are so many more obstacles than incentives (to offering smaller classes).
10. If more students took foreign language in the first years, their experience would be more like what we envision here.
11. An undergraduate student: I was reluctant to come to UM. I changed majors four times, but I will now be going to graduate school. Becoming a peer advisor has taught me so much. One problem is that students are not prepared when they come to college. Large classes really hurt these students.
12. Our plan is too ambitious. I would like to see more realism – with financial constraints, for example. If our plan is too idealistic, people will not take it seriously.
13. Students need more time to facilitate relationships with each other, too.
14. One problem is the attitude that we can get anybody to teach entry-level classes. We could do much more if faculty were more involved with freshmen.