

Open Focus Groups

The Academic Master Plan Task Force ran several “open focus groups” to get preliminary input from anyone with something to say.

February 23, 2010

When there are important groups doing planning – how do we feed that into AMP in the future in an organized and systematic way, especially when the activities are not part of the formal assessment process. Possibly we can have end-of-year reports that can be viewed centrally.

Undergrad research – suggest answer to provost, campus-wide group for coordination of efforts,

Two or three students doing research every semester takes significant faculty time. Doing this as “overtime” wears on faculty – is it possible to have on-load credit. Also need credit option for students – not there in every department so that students get formal benefit for having done it.

Also compensation concerns for faculty supervising UG research. There are mysterious limitations to individualized instruction budget.

Transporting equipment and students for field work – no appropriate and available vehicle, other than a faculty member’s personal vehicle.

- Biology has 2 vans, Geography has 1 van – but they are available for anyone to sign out. This also impacts service learning projects off-campus. Some rent buses to trips to DC (for example) – but this is expensive for the day and the cost is passed on to students.
- Vehicles for academic purposes are needed. Faculty/departments use personal vehicles to transport students & equipment – are forms signed, what are liability issues?
- Foundation support? Ideas for donors? The limitation makes it difficult to do research. Reservations for vehicles take priority for classes – research is not and it comes later and vans often unavailable.

How do we engage students earlier in undergraduate research? Academic day – how do we let them know early about opportunities & individualizing their education? Steps – how to get them to know that it’s available, to know they want to do this, then how to know what are opportunities. Student role models – talking about their research project on the campus tour & open houses, weekly dept seminars where students give presentations, students need info on the benefits of doing research.

Grants/structurally – many school incentive grant writing by some monies going back to dept, which would help support some of the associated student and equipment needs.

Take advantage of resources available through Marine Science Consortium – stronger ties with NASA, US fish wildlife service, NPS.

- MSC is both public & private and has newly renovated facilities.
- Over next 10 yrs – many opportunities will be available. Now can be open year round. 3 day pre-college programs in summer as recruiting tool. Faculty interested in summer courses there – service learning, not necessarily science (eg environmental politics), research.
- We currently pay an annual fee to be part of the consortium & we can get more use for our money.

- Barriers include transportation, faculty staffing to backfill classes here, creative shared staffing of a single course, multiple formats in one course (here, MSC, online), faculty incentives to go there.
- How to make faculty more aware of the interdisciplinary opportunities and willingness to work together? How to make it work on-load? If living here in Shippensburg, how could you participate and contribute to this off-campus – a few people onsite with campus faculty who rotate through MSC?
- Possible link to experiential learning movement? Videoconferencing facility at MSC & faculty here who could beam there. Encouragement of new programs & allow faculty to engage in new and creative courses for the benefit of students.
- Capitalize on current resources that are not fully used – VC rooms during the day. How to help faculty do new and innovative things for students – use technology and new course mixes, outside the norm. things for the younger student – junior/sophomore level for Gen. Ed., cohorts. Should there be a trip to MSC and tour for faculty? Sean Cornell & Pablo Delis are co-coordinators.

Women's studies – difficult time pulling students from natural sciences. More cross-disciplinary field trips as a way to foster a greater appreciate for the other disciplines and experiences. Special topics courses that draw on the experiences of women in specific fields.

Freshman scheduling – we hold them hostage, students don't know schedule until they arrive, and why can't they choose their own classes. Also, can't get into the classes they want/need from semester to semester. Sets up wrong expectations for 2nd semester – then they have to choose their own classes. Also doesn't forge a student-advisor relationship. Check with working group leaders.

February 24, 2010

Self-formed faculty group – disabilities study minor – did survey, 70 students interested – identified courses in all colleges.

Interdisciplinary programs – barrier is money – coordinator or release time, faculty teaching those courses but not load – overload money or back filling their on-load teaching. Hiring consultant to study. Encouraged to continue from deans & provost. Be creative in managing workload. How to make Initial courses not such a burden on the dept – courses can be used as elective by other students. Use int stud as model, taught as overload. 18-20 course on the books – currently taught – but have pre-reqs for majors. Can these new students fit within existing enrollments in the courses

International studies council. Students interested in following an international component, but limited to structure of some degrees, but not amenable to other degrees. Need to develop new type of minors that will fit within the more restricting degree structures. Hybrid minors – cohort of students, eg international studies in social work. More flexibility for this type of programming. Team teaching – need to have a smoother path to make cross-department teaching and payment.

Disconnect – some of the most creative innovative things faculty due are done overload. Yet these are the things we value the most ... they should be done onload.

Gen. Ed. – certain core of classes. Students who switch majors – take Gen. Eds for one degree, then when transfer they don't apply to the new major. Need for flexibility in the Gen. Ed. course list, that is consistent with the spirit of Gen. Ed. Not a good connection between Gen. Ed. and the profession. Eg – stats before social work research course – but have to teach stats again. Need better connection

between faculty and courses across the departments so that upstream courses know the needs of the downstream courses and depts. Need better integration of Gen. Ed. and major degree courses.

Organizational structure and processes are complex and lengthy.

Not enough time – the things that we really value, need to happen on-load. Redefining the basic job to be aligned with who the department and university are now.

March 1, 2010

Strengths

- Teacher ed – rich history & long strong reputation in teacher ed. Wonderful facilities, but no infrastructure – dir of lab school has changed a lot; child family center under SUF; head start under something else. Competing interests among related programs, rather than reinforcing one another. Need liaisons and
- 3 money entities – state, tuition, student services, suf – don't talk to one another one or work together to share funding for greater good.
- AMP should inform facilities plan on an annual basis.
- Facilities plan – some could be beautiful spaces, but not well maintained for reasonable use for the academic venue. Eg – chapel is used for performances but no backstage dressing rooms. Facilities for campus community are left in disrepair – while public spaces are maintained.

Weaknesses

- Not strong enough presence in the arts – both academic preparation & the community. No major in music/theater. To an outsider facade of the LPAC gives a perception that we have a strong arts program – false that doing more than we are capable & have more facilities than we actually do. Students don't get to use LPAC state of the art facility. Current facilities do not allow for new programs in music & theaters.
- GE – hasn't been kept up as much as at other schools re modernization. Change happens here very slowly. When there is good reason to change, still slow even when change is warranted – organizational factor. Nothing built into it to allow it to easily change and grow.
- How does SU see itself uniquely as part of the passhe system? Is this accurately reflected in the mission statement?
- So many facets of the arts – facility concerns, intellectually stimulating arts on campus, pre-professional arts programs in place. Lots of intro to arts – but no strength in preparing for the arts – no culture of practicing the arts (lacking in goal 3).
- We have an environment of observers & consumers of the arts, but not so much as performers of the arts.
- State certification changes in education requirements. Teacher prep moving to be more clinically based (more field experience) – more & increase in depth and quality & links between SU and placements. Will be more time – relationship building with k-12 schools. Increase in number of hrs of field experience per student & more involvement & work for faculty. Changes are good pedagogically & professional prep – but concerned about load.

- 2014 NCATE visit – 2012 program & faculty reports will need to be in – prior to that data should be collected & analyzed & used. Most have not been doing this because of time – shift in NCATE process from dean’s office to faculty/departments. Resource limitations to do the work.
- Faculty loads in general across campus are too high. Some issues of equity. In teacher ed not optimistic for younger faculty – no time for research, scholarship, etc. need more release time or lower loads. Recruitment & retention of young faculty. 4/4 load is overwhelmingly heavy with all the other expectations, praxis, supervision, etc – equity concerns for teacher ed.

Threats

- Class size increases
- PASSHE emphasis on transfer students. How will we adapt to that demographic. Haven’t had the same experience those who have been here for 2 yrs. More strain on resources to adapt to changing students and their needs. Also shifts the number of students going into GE classes. Tacit assumption that they can come into any program they want, and yet some are full.
- High impact state teacher requirements mandated externally, will require more resources in the face of budget concerns. Increasing demand/work goes beyond # of contact hrs with students.

March 17, 2010

Strengths

- Internship programming and opportunities
- Tech fee allows for maintaining and developing opportunities for students
- Students are “ahead of the curve” with respect to technology when they go into the work place

Opportunities

- Student activities (like TV and radio) that are run like a club can provide experiential learning opportunities on campus. Not just comm./journalism students – there are opportunities for business students (keeping books, advertising), English majors (writing copy), and all are welcome.

Weakness

- Budget issues limit development of new ideas & execution of existing programs

Threat

- Students need to work to pay for school & don’t have enough time for on-campus experiential learning.

March 19, 2010

Strengths

- Facilities Master Plan (FMP) gives a possible context for Academic Planning and that process could even be used as a model for the final AMP document.
- FMP
- We do a good job of nurturing our students – we know them well and often follow them after graduations. This pays off with good foundation for graduate programs.
- The Learning Center and the Library are strengths.

Weakness

- AMP should have been developed before FMP
- Lack of digitization for archives and library special collections keeps them from effectively contributing to the SU academic climate
- We do not teach enough variety in language studies for the needs of 21st century global citizens.
- We do not offer flexibility for non-traditional populations (who work during the day, for example) to schedule classes and get advising in addition to the actual class offerings.
- There are “service” offices in Old Main where “clients” are treated rudely – this negatively impacts on the overall atmosphere.

Opportunities

- The FMP already includes flexible space for growth of programs and a utilization analysis for classrooms. This document and supporting data should be used by AMP.
- Living/Learning and Honors College plans are already under discussions including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Physical Plant.
- Fashion Archive has a lot to offer and could be better utilized if it was under the Library or an academic program
- Civility and a supportive atmosphere for students costs nothing – it just takes a commitment from all university citizens to make it happen. (A staff training video was cited as helping give a refresher on why we are here.)

Threat

- Facilities/physical plant must be considered when new programs are developed.
- Library resources must be considered when new programs are developed.
- Many of our students are very provincial, so we have extra work to do to promote global awareness.
- Growing class sizes
- Underprepared students decrease the level of classes for all students