

## **Joint Meeting of FEC Governance and Strategic Planning with Curricular-related Committees**

11 September 2012

### *Members in Attendance:*

Kristi Erdal, Gail Murphy-Geiss, Mike Siddoway, Re Evitt, Jared Richman, Genny Love, Mark Smith, Sandi Wong, Juan Lindau, Jeff Noblett, George Butte, Miro Kummel, Emily Chan, Tip Ragan, Kathy Giuffre, Inger Bull, Kristina Lybecker, Ivan Gaetz, Michael Grace, Mary Francis Kerr

Two parallel but distinct missions of the meeting: 1) FEC-led discussion about restructuring the governance of CC's curriculum, including the current COI, GEOC, FYE, International Studies, and student support, including writing, health professions, assessment, library, learning commons and 2) Strategic Planning-led discussion about education and curriculum in the strategic planning process.

### **FEC restructuring**

Received data last fall to create model from common suggestions about the governance of our curriculum. People noticed faculty treated curriculum like anything else (diversity board, athletics) so many suggested to elevate its status by creating a significant curriculum committee which would supervise the other curriculum-related committees.

In the past, there has been an imbalance in the workload between GEOC and COI: problem is not only overwork of one committee, but also inefficiency. Communication between these two committees has worked well.

Possible senate model with super-curriculum committee. Members might comprise the chairs of the various curriculum-related committees. That way, there would be better channels of communication, distribution of resources and workload, and stronger collaboration. Many indicated that the structure was perhaps less important than achieving these particular benefits. In discussing curriculum, advisement came up as a related topic. The very different model at Grinnell, with no requirements, but "muscular" advisement seems to work well there. We need to be clear about our own identity and philosophical approaches to education and governance in deciding how best to proceed.

Is there a problem with the curriculum or just the way we organize it? Related topics included discussing: Increasing push for interdisciplinary learning, taking down traditional boundaries, and redefining liberal arts and disciplines. Not wanting to teach courses without required credentials to do so. Currently no feedback between curriculum and FEC; this has fallen under the purview of the Dean. Some emphasized that ultimate sovereignty over the curriculum lies with faculty; committees are to follow instructions and then should bring questions that emerge back to the faculty floor for deliberation.

Advantages / disadvantages of curriculum committee - fewer missed opportunities and less fragmentation. Just being in the same room and hearing others and modifying own ideas or agreeing/disagreeing spurs more thought/change. At the present important curricular decisions happening in smaller committees not in any higher committee.

Without a more focused view on the curriculum, many challenges emerge. For example, how are we going to get new faculty to teach FYE and get them to want to do it?; could be faculty development. Take place within if there were greater collaboration across the committees? No feeling that the faculty

and college own the FYE program, but it should be if we consider it integral. Problem exists with research and publication if FYE becomes required for tenure because of time constraints. FYE as a mentoring relationship / development internally and across divisions: “the art of teaching liberal arts.” This is but one problem that could be solved.

Where does the charge flow with super-committee? Define issues or to listen from bottom up? Problem with horizontal communication is to figure out who talks with whom and how often and about what? Biggest complaint is who decides? People sitting around table in “the chairs know best model” seem to cut out a middle-person. Role for larger committee for looking into national trends? Will centralization not understand specific things happening in classrooms that professors know but still needing the unified voice. Power relates to personnel.

Re-engineering FEC with a curricular focus? Cannot talk about curriculum without allocating resources, so hard to force conversation about curriculum (FYE is an unfunded mandate).

### **Strategic Planning**

Themes: 1) blended learning, 2) opportunities for professors to redefine themselves and their scholarship, 3) supporting opportunities that only block plan offers

What does it really mean to be a residential liberal arts college while considering competing with technological information/online learning? Need to focus on our “brand” of intimate teaching and learning. Considering more blended learning; what are the forms of technology that allow us to create a better product because we can communicate with other classes/institutions/etc. Special blocks allocated for “experiment blocks” that test out things like blended learning?

Technological learning potential for graduates to connect better with alumni. Also, intellectual sense of place/ownership after graduation that connects alumni. Best way includes a community; how is that improved by technologies? Kids coming from high schools have experience with blended courses and they come into CC where professors have chalkboards; need to be open to enrichment. *Really need to articulate what defines CC.*

Need to be structurally equipped to have conversations between technology and curriculum in order to integrate what is available, in our own interest. Need to be more connected in a more holistic vision. What are we trying to produce for the students?

Academic program seems isolated from other parts of college. Initial promise of the block plan is owning the student for 3.5 weeks but that promise has become constricted by student and faculty obligations. Most engaged teaching and learning occurs away from campus (usually abroad). Utilizing the *mindset* of the fieldtrip, how do we maximize the potential of the block. Our brand is most vibrant while away, but that is exhausting for everyone. Revitalize the block plan to return to a vision of deep learning. Professors all teach out of CC every year? Are we taking advantages of idiosyncrasies that block plan promises. *How do we take our mission to another level and do something new? When the block plan emerged, it dovetailed with the philosophical and pedagogical shift to student-centered learning. What are our commitments, priorities, and philosophical stances nowadays? What kind of person do we want to see graduate? (Characteristics, dispositions, bodies of knowledge, skills?) If we were to create the block plan today would it be for the same reasons?*

It is vital for faculty to be able to reinvent themselves, their tools, scholarship and discipline.

Create a community in which students can approach any professor at any time. How should we approach this bonding experience? Exploring the different ways in which professors / students bond. Are there ways to put academic programs into the residencies? Can advisors know who are their students' RAs? Could faculty live temporarily in student spaces if learning penetrated all life at CC.

**GOAL:** maximize the faculty's mentoring role beyond the classroom. Helping students connect the dots curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular.

Recognizing the block plan fosters active learning and is essential for the sense of place. **GOAL:** strengthen the integration of the academic and non-academic spheres for more creative use of our place.