May 23, 2014

Report on Spring 2014 Strategic Planning Action Team: CILET Committee

We funded 10 projects and I have reports on the progress for 8 (the other two are for faculty either on leave or out of the country):

1. The Colket Center, $2,500 to pilot peer tutorial services supporting oral communication across the curriculum. Funds will be used for wages of peer tutoring staff.

   Contact: Traci Freeman. Tentative Project Start Date: Spring 2014.

During the spring semester, Traci Freeman Director of the Colket Center, in collaboration with Julian Plaza, Speech and Debate Coach, oversaw a pilot program supporting students in their oral communication. In block five, Traci Freeman, Julian Plaza, Sarah Hinkle, Katie Puryear-Strempke, and three talented peer tutors, Tram Ha, Jacob Kirksey, and David Trevithick, met and designed the program for the Oral Communication Center offering drop-in tutoring for students and a menu of classroom presentations for faculty to request. Julian Plaza oversaw tutor training and the group implemented a plan for marketing our services. We began offering drop-in tutorial services to students late in block five through the end of block eight.

From blocks six through block eight, oral communication peer tutors conducted forty sessions, with twenty-six individual students. Most students sought help on oral presentations for classes or co-curricular activities, though a significant number also sought help specifically for their thesis presentations.

Throughout the spring semester, Julian Plaza offered workshops on oral communication to a number of classes, including: HS120: Renaissance Culture; PH203/CP341: Topics in Philosophy and Computer Science: Human & Computer Intelligence; PY202: Research Design; PH 476: Senior Seminar; and Feminist and Gender Studies Senior Theses. These classroom based workshops focused on topics like effective oral presentation and managing communication apprehension.

Through the process of offering oral communication tutorials, we learned that a drop-in service model may not be the best for oral communication tutoring. When tutors were working collaboratively with students in a class or for a program, we saw more student participation. If we were to offer services in the future, we would probably pursue initially a model of tutoring like the one represented in the QRC Learning Assistants program, where faculty request an oral communication tutor to work specifically with students in their classes or with their thesis students.

2. $9,800 to support Senior Capstone Writers with courses taught by Professional Tutor Molly Gross. Funds pay a part-time professional writing tutor for additional hours to cover Molly Gross’ appointments during those hours.

   Contact: Traci Freeman. Tentative Project Start Date: Spring 2014.
This spring, the Colket Center received a CILET grant to off-load Molly Gross from tutoring, so that she could teach our newly designed thesis adjunct workshops. During Block 5, Molly Gross taught the adjunct course, “Drafting and Revising.” Eleven students enrolled in the course: four students from Religion, four students from Art History, two students from Environmental Policy, and one student from IDM (formerly LAS). All students received a grade "S" for the course.

There was also interest in Drafting and Revising in block 6, but only one student (a Sociology major) elected to take the course for credit. All the other interested students decided to meet with Molly individually to work on their thesis papers instead.

**Value of the adjuncts**

Students said these adjuncts helped them clarify the goals of their thesis projects, do more extensive and relevant research, articulate the expectations of writing in their disciplines, organize their time, practice and value the revision process, and better understand the benefits and challenges of writing on the block plan. Students also commented that the adjuncts helped them identify and refine their individual writing processes and gave them confidence in their projects' contributions to their fields. Students said they benefitted from interacting with other students in their majors and from comparing their experiences with students writing outside of their academic disciplines. Students endearingly nicknamed the adjunct "the self-help group for thesis writers" and celebrated the opportunity to collaborate and commiserate with a community of their peers.

3. Using a motivation scale developed by colleagues at James Madison University and other analytic tools, this project seeks to study the Block Plan by moving beyond a “survey stage” to examine students’ perceptions and student achievement. Award: $6,750.

*Contact: Stephen Getty. Tentative Project Start Date: Fall 2014.*

**Interim Project Report – Student Motivation on the Block Plan**

Through Block 8, our project studying student motivation on the Block plan has completed the first phase of the work. This entailed collecting pre- and post-data on student motivation in an Introductory Psychology course (PY100; 4 sections, Blocks 5-8) and an intermediate Psychology methods course (PY202; 2 sections, Blocks 5/6 and 7/8). This sample will provide sufficient data to begin analytical work this summer. A second project objective was recruiting and hiring a student research to participate in the analyses. This junior Psychology major will work with Project Director Steve Getty and a college faculty member in Psychology as she begins the work. A hope is that the research will lead to a capstone or senior project. Third, regarding logistics, the team is evaluating whether software that is currently licensed to Colorado College (NVivo) will be sufficient for the work, or whether project funds (as proposed) will be used to purchase a competitor software license.
While no project funds have been spent to date, the project team will be billing against the grant this summer.

4. A project to develop a formal program to support the further integration of visual and material culture-based learning opportunities at the college. Award: $8,200.
   Contact: Jessica Hunter-Larsen. Tentative Project Start Date: Fall 2014.

The Interdisciplinary Arts Program (IDEA) proposes to develop a formal program to support the further integration of visual and material culture-based learning opportunities at the College. The program will enhance the faculty's ability to integrate creative learning opportunities for students into courses through an intensive workshop, one-on-one work with a consultant, and ongoing support from the IDEA Curator.

Progress thus far:
I have begun research similar programs at peer institutions. I have conducted phone interviews with Academic Curators and faculty at Oberlin College, Skidmore College, and Kenyon College and with independent educational consultant Carin Jacobs. Data collected from these interviews have been extremely helpful in formulating a vision for Colorado College’s expanding program. I will attend the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries Annual Conference May 17 & 18 to meet more of my peers in the field. I’ve compiled a bibliography to continue the research process through the summer. With guidance from those I’ve interviewed thus far, I have selected two consultants to conduct a objects-based learning workshops with faculty August 11 – 13. I put out a call to faculty with the goal of five faculty participants. Response was robust, and I currently have nine faculty participants, with space for an additional member of the group. Participants will meet as a group and individually with Dr. D. Ryan Lynch (previously an Academic Curator at Skidmore) and me over the course of three days to develop objects-based learning activities for an existing course. I have coordinated with the Crown Center to dovetail the Engaged IDEAs workshop with the Faculty Orientation activities during the same week. We have invited Steven Volk (Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at Oberlin) to give a lunchtime keynote presentation on objects-based learning and experiential strategies at an all-faculty session orientation session on Wednesday, August 13. He will then offer a more specific objects-based learning workshop, open to all, later that afternoon.

5. Supervising three advanced students of Italian, Andrea Righi plans to dedicate four weeks to subtitling a motion picture and producing a short video introduction to a film to be used in the Italian cinema course. Funds of $6,800 are for visiting experts.
   Contact: Andrea Righi. Tentative Project Start Date: Fall 2014. (NO REPORT)
6. A new course in the Education Department that will focus on the needs of Spanish-speaking children. Award: $8,050.
   Contact: Martha Slayden. Tentative Project Start Date: Fall 2014.

This is the current status of **ED250/SWS 200: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the San Luis Valley:**

During my two recent visits to the Valley, I have managed to establish meaningful contacts with several educators, a rancher, a water activist, a local politician, and a Forest Service director. As a result, my students will be able to work at practicum placements in the Saguache County schools, primarily in the Center school district (about 30 miles from the Baca campus) with a demographic of approximately 75% Hispanic. I plan to ask some of my contacts to speak to the class about issues beyond the realm of education. Here on campus, Anusha Kedhar and Manya Whitaker have consulted with me regarding ethnographic and ethnic studies perspectives. I will make another trip to the Valley in late June, at which time I will finalize the placement arrangements with the superintendent of Center schools. Meanwhile, in order to determine readings for the course, I am studying the history, literature and anthropology of the Valley, as well as texts on teaching about diversity. Although the CBL tag was apparently approved by Mike Siddoway, it has not yet been included in the course description by the registrar. Once this hectic school year ends, I hope to remedy that omission. Hopefully in the fall I will be able to drum up more student enrollment for the course.

7. A three-day symposium during Parents’ Weekend 2014 on climate change, the “CC Alumni Climate Change Symposium.” Award: $10,000.
   Contact: Mark Smith. Tentative Project Start Date: Fall 2014. *(NO REPORT)*

8. A dynamic collaboration between three independent courses scheduled for summer and fall of 2014, the “CC Consortium on Procedural Rhetoric and the Digital Liberal Arts.” Award: $4,900.
   Contacts: Scott Krzych, Diane Alters, Jessie Dubreuil. Tentative Project Start Date: Summer 2014.

Since our proposal centered on inviting a guest to speak to two separate summer courses (the Journalism Institute and my Videogame studies course), I was waiting to ensure that both courses would actually go forward. As of last week, my course met the minimum enrollment.

With the courses confirmed, I sent an invitation to Ian Bogost, our preferred visitor, inviting him to campus to meet with students and faculty and to deliver
a public lecture on the topic of procedural rhetoric. I’m waiting for his response. If he agrees to make the trip, we will then coordinate with him to establish a more concrete schedule. Our ideal plan is for him to meet with both the Journalism and the Videogame students in a converged classroom to discuss some of Bogost’s writings and for Bogost to comment on the student’s final projects (which will be in progress at the time of his visit). We will also schedule a separate meeting with interested faculty to meet with him, as well as a public lecture.

If Bogost declines, we will send an immediate invitation to our preferred backup, Patrick Jagoda, who works on similar issues and teaches at the University of Chicago. Since a different speaker would alter the original proposal, we’re happy to request approval for this change from the CILET committee, if you prefer.

9. The Networked and Extended Topics Project to support innovative curricula and enhanced pedagogy inside the First Year Experience program. Award: $9,000. 
   Contact: Jessie Dubreuil. Tentative Project Start Date: Fall 2014.

I’m very happy to report that we had exactly as many proposals as we had hoped to support and were able to fund all of the requests that we received. We had interest from classes across disciplines (from Chemistry and Biochemistry to Race and Ethnic Studies, Philosophy to Film and New Media) and projects including Community Based Research in the San Luis Valley, hosting a guest filmmaker, and bringing an expert in food science to work hands-on with FYE classes. I sent out funding letters describing the 4-day summer workshop to work on syllabi and to plan integrated FYE projects and how the work will continue this fall to assess how the courses went.

10. This proposal focuses on creating “The Tiger Pen,” a place in the new Center devoted to focusing on and solving campus-wide problems. Award: $9,000.

The team met in May to figure out how to establish a vetting procedure for campus challenges. We agreed that two of us would meet with Stephanie Wurtz over the summer as she works to establish a campus calendar.