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# Integrated Cluster Working Definitions [July 2016]

Plymouth State University

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## **Introduction**

This is the most updated version of our working definitions (as of July 26, 2016) based on conversations and additional feedback following the July 13 guides training meeting. The deadline for feedback was Friday, July 22. Various wording and clarity suggestions were merged into one document. The most substantial suggestions, comments and questions together with the actions taken in response are listed at the end of the document. Both a short and a long version of the definitions are included to use as appropriate.

## **Integrated Cluster –**

An organizational unit comprised of Plymouth State University faculty, staff and students who come together with the intention to engage in collaborative, interdisciplinary work that transcends or takes advantage of individual disciplines and aligns with the specific Cluster focus.

An organizational unit comprised of Plymouth State University faculty, staff and students who come together with the intention to engage in collaborative, interdisciplinary work that transcends or takes advantage of individual disciplines and aligns with the specific Cluster focus. Additional Cluster participants are Partners and other external stakeholders (for example, alumni, governmental agencies, businesses, other academic institutions, etc.), as well as internal stakeholders such as PSU Centers and student organizations. Academic programs are affiliated with specific Integrated Clusters, but individual faculty members and students can choose to be active participants in multiple Clusters. Each Cluster has an individual identity, as defined in its Mission Statement. Cluster participation can occur through Projects, Activities, curriculum and other teaching and pedagogical activities, and through service.

## **Open Lab –**

Physical or virtual space that supports Integrated Clusters by enabling engagement and collaborations between PSU faculty, staff, students and external Partners and stakeholders.

Physical or virtual space that supports Integrated Clusters by enabling engagement and collaborations between PSU faculty, staff, students and external Partners and stakeholders in order to identify, discuss, and address real-world issues and problems. Open Labs do not belong to a specific Cluster, nor do they necessitate a physical space on campus. Several collaborative spaces have been developed across campus.

## **Cluster Project –**

A well-defined activity or group of activities that together have clear scope, duration, resource commitment, objectives and measurable high impact outcomes.

A well-defined activity or group of activities that together have clear scope, duration, resource commitment, objectives and measurable high impact outcomes. Cluster Projects are endorsed by one or more Integrated Clusters; they are interdisciplinary in nature, and they involve a team of different types of participants (appropriate combinations of students, faculty, staff, external partners) collaboratively leveraging service, scholarship and research activities. Projects provide students with experiential, high impact learning activities and real-world experience beyond their classes. Projects might address specific needs of the University, the local or regional community,

external Partners, or other stakeholders, and support and reflect the mission of the endorsing Clusters.

**Cluster Activities –**

Teaching, service, outreach, or scholarly activities that support an Integrated Cluster.

Teaching, service, outreach, or scholarly activities that support an Integrated Cluster. Cluster Activities occur outside the context of a specific Cluster Project but can be involved in supporting such projects. Cluster Activities do not have a clearly defined timeframe and can be ongoing, but must have a clear relationship with the Cluster or Clusters within which they occur.

**Cluster Partners –**

External, non-PSU, stakeholders with interests, values, needs and/or resources that align with PSU and the Integrated Cluster with which they have a relationship.

External, non-PSU, stakeholders whose interests, values, needs and/or resources that align with PSU and the Integrated Cluster with which they have a relationship. Partners can serve in advisory roles or can be contributors to Projects or other Activities (service, curricular, etc.). Partners are active participants; they contribute to the Cluster (with information, expertise, funding, etc.) and in turn receive value from the relationship (experiences, problem solutions, increased knowledge, understanding, etc.). This distinguishes Partners from other potential external stakeholders with whom there might only be one-way informational relationships.

Guides feedback and actions taken:

- Call them “creative clusters” instead of strategic clusters
- Change “strategic” to “integrated”
  - o Resolved: the name is already slated to be changed to “integrated clusters”
- Get the definitions down to one simple sentence (and have explanatory descriptions as extra, but separate language to clarify further
- Have two definitions, one short (digestible) one and one complete definition
  - o Action: short version added
- Remove the word “interdisciplinary” from the Open Labs definition. Allow the collaborations between faculty, students and partners without restricting them
  - o Action: word taken out (the definition seems to still work without this word)
- Can we call physical places Collaborative Spaces instead of confusing the terminology of spaces and open labs.
  - o Action: collaborative spaces terminology added (not as official terminology in capital letters but as descriptive terminology)
- How does a Cluster Activity differ from a Cluster Project? (Can you provide an example?)

- Answer: Projects are well defined with scope, goals and an ending time or product, while activities can be anything that happens in support of a cluster or a project and can be an ongoing activity.
- Is it necessary to have external partners? Can't cluster projects be those in which multiple disciplines come together to tackle an issue and share perspectives?
  - Answer: It is not necessary but it is desirable to have outside partners, especially for big Cluster Projects. Different scopes of cluster projects and activities can have different types of participants as appropriate.
  - Action: Language changed to “appropriate combinations of students, faculty, staff, external partners”
- Add “businesses” to the examples of external stakeholders
  - Action - Added