Planning for the Future: Summary of Insights and Next Steps

Plymouth State University

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CAMPUS FORUM: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE | February 24, 2017 | 2:30-4:30pm

• Event Description: This was the first of a series of spring forums to address various aspects of the transition to Integrated Clusters. This session was facilitated by the cluster guides and provided an opportunity for attendees to consider the reasons for clusters and a framework for how they can define and enhance students' experiences with their courses, the curriculum, and their overall PSU experience as it connects to their communities and beyond.

• Cluster Guides: Nancy Puglisi, Barbara McCahan, Kristina Lind, Barbara Lopez-Mayhew, Laura Dykstra, Chris Drever, Mary Ann McGarry, and Brad Allen.

NEXT STEPS

• Schedule additional Campus Forums
  o Topics, objectives and desire outcomes

• Share outcomes, insights, and next steps from this forum in the Transformation Newsletter and on the Integrated Clusters website

DISCUSSION INSIGHTS

• Messaging—Need for consistency in our messaging as to what we’re doing, when we’re doing it, and how it fits into the greater plan. All communication should point back to the integrated clusters website where all information is archived.

• Curriculum—Need to explore and share what’s changing in the curriculum, the rationale behind the change, and when.

• Agility and leadership—Need for direction related to what’s upcoming in the transition, how the community is involved, and how we leverage and document learnings.

• Voices, roles, and feedback—Need to communicate with the larger community and committees, gaining input and feedback (non-academic staff, alumni, students, etc.) and where one fits in the structure

• Common language—Potential to adopt a common language around outcomes, organization, and progress (residential life, student life, academics, etc.).

• Financial change—The financial issues were the spark for change, but not the original motivational. We’re moving forward focused on the president’s vision for the integrated clusters and student experience driving change.

FORUM SUMMARY

Eight cluster guides were joined by approximately 65 faculty and staff members for the first campus forum in Heritage Commons.

We started off with a recap of the cluster guides retreat, where we discussed the background on how we got to “the why”. This is a launching off point. A major takeaway and next step from the retreat was to craft a whitepaper and executive summary on andragogy, educating the young adult rather than the
child. The motivational “why” is to lead with the student experience rather than finance and competitive branding, which all benefit from the integrated cluster model.

We’re breaking down barriers and silos that previously didn’t link disciplines in meaningful ways. At this forum, there was a room full of people eager to learn about what’s happening in clusters and give feedback on ways to improve and grow from where we are now—this is meaningful.

Mary Ann McGarry shared that Patrick Cate came to the guides retreat and he said, “Our desired outcomes are reinforced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics with the jobs and employment as a consistent validation for our direction.” We were searching for the why and recognized that we can have that dialogue constantly and in-depth. This makes us collectively energized, excited, with a renewed direction.

The three C’s are our guiding principles, we aim to help students become capable, connected and contributing. These are the high-level desired outcomes of students, which we lead with during the forum’s exercise.

GROUP THEMES: DESIRED STUDENT OUTCOMES

This Wordle was generated by emphasizing terms that appear most frequently in a set of words or phrases. The larger a word, the more frequently it appeared in the group posters.

#1 – What experiences do we want students to have and what benefit will they gain from those experiences?

- Transformative
- Global

- Discovering what is the college edge
- Sharing project ideas
- Competency
- Learning to make modifications
- Digging deeper
- Become advocates for self
- Digital literacy and digital identity
- Aha! Moments
- Student empowering
- Innovativeness
- Pride in their degree/PSU
- Working in their field
- Adaptability
- To perceive themselves as creators
- Social justice oriented
- Opportunities to rebound from failure with time/space to reflect on the process
- Discipline specific knowledge
- Passionate productivity
- Diversity
- Hands-on learning
- Learning the value of trial and error
- Cultural exchange
- Development of empathy
- Sustained intellectual curiosity
- Interactions with diversity (communities and people)
- Wider world views
- Knowing by experience what they DON’T need to do
- Cognitive dissonance
- Service
- Leadership
- Transferable skills
- Real client experiences
- Safe and controlled failures

#2 – What do we want our Graduate and Undergraduate students to be when they leave PSU?
(Capable: Knowledge and skills, able to reflect on learning)

- Global citizenship
- Self-esteem
- Employable
- Be able to connect the dots
- Resilient
- Grit
- Self-aware
- Experts in their field
- Confident in their skills to see the connections
- Be able to identify and communicate what they have learned
- Empathetic
- Communicating efficiency written, spoken and visually
- Looking at issues from multiple perspectives and draw meaningful conclusions
- Puts words to skills/experience to understanding
- Experiment first, then learn
- Theory and application
- Articulate thoughts
- Actualize self-motivation
- Open-mindedness
- Critical thinking skills
- Mastery of the topic/subject (especially for graduate students)

#3 – What do we want our students to be when they leave PSU? (Connected: engagement and disposition)

- Knowledge on how to apply what they’ve learned
- Visionaries
- Respect - level of training
- Willingness to improve/grow
- Proud, compassionate, confident
- Critical thinkers
- Marketable
- Good collaborators
- Creative
- Know their own strengths and how to play them
- Know how to seek new knowledge/skills
- Communicators (written, oral, visual)
- Articulate personal and professional goals
- Contributors to society
- Empowering
- Team work mindset
- Global thinkers
- Develop significant relationships across the PSU community
- Ambassadors for PSU
- Deep understanding and application
- Life-long learners
- Intellectual curiosity
- Revisiting goals
- Making own opportunities
- Entrepreneurs
- Theory into practical application
- Knowledge on how to synthesize/applied skills to real world problems in a collaborative manner

- Debt free
- Excitement about their field
- Sense of voice/developed voice
- Worldly
- Confident and brave
Personify “Ut Prosim”
Self-awareness, re: skills
How to handle themselves in post-grad environment
Respect for their own abilities
Value of skills to the outside world
Able to initiate engagement, assess needs, and initiate problem solving
Intrinsic motivation
Be good advisors and advisees
Good understanding of what is next (all the options)
Recognize what they have learned
Operates from a frame of respect for all
Bi-directional
Manage frustration
Safe spaces
Clarify our culture
Bleed-sweat-bond
See themselves as mentors/source of information
Feel better outside of their comfort zone
Use Res-life as a portal
Know their voice
Grads should be prepared for civic engagement
Think “big”
Engagement in professional organizations
Shared language around competencies with 4 dimensions (knowledge, value, ability, and behavior)
Project-based learning
Self-aware
Change agent
Tactful
Understanding of real world applications
Empathy
Creative thinkers
Open-minded
Philanthropic
Able to make connections across/between fields
Work life balance
Purposeful learners
Media literate
Leadership competency
Self-motivating
Technically skilled and able to apply
Responsible citizens
Able to accept self and others for who they are
Engagement across all constituencies students, faculty, staff, alumni)
Community involvement
Socially skilled
Well rounded
Discovery
Flexible and adaptable
Be conscious and engage in service opportunities

#4 – What do we want our students to be when they leave PSU? (Contribution to a larger community and application)

Communication skills
Informed
Life-long learners
HAPPY
Discover their passion
More than just a student
Contributing citizens
Thoughtful
Caring
Capable and resilient
Answers to big questions and problems
Compassionate
Creative entrepreneurs
Making money doing what they love
Trend setters
Appreciative of what PSU offered them
HEARD (followed, advocates, fearless to speak up
Willing advocates of a just cause
Able to hit the ground running on graduation
Proactive capacity
Cultural norms
Keep trying (make mistakes)
Legacy
Adaptability
Concerned
Civic engagement and responsibility (with PSU, community, and global community)

Have perspective
Ethical
Confidence to use competence
Awareness of world outside of self
World-centric (environment, sustainability)
Culture (society)
Systems thinkers
Value whole perspectives (to see in whole parts)
See things in multiple contexts
Life-long learners
Active participation working on applied problems
Greater awareness of opportunities
Civics volunteerism
Opinion/perspective
Economic/entrepreneurial
Sense of place
Service minded
“Ut Prosim”
Ownership
Actualization
Reducing degrees of separation
Value of sustainable environment
Employable
Have desirable skills
Recognition of values of being part of a community
Greater curiosity to seek additional perspectives
Awareness of new problems to be solved
Sense of agency
Know how to find reliable information (more than facts; patterns and connections
Deeper learning and retention of learning
DEBRIEF DISCUSSIONS
Next steps individuals, departments, clusters may take for discussion:

- Alumni engagement/programming (cluster tailgating, etc.)
- Address the school’s motto about service and formalize our recognition of responsibility to community service
- Asking current students about their awareness of the integrated cluster shift/transition
- Advisory boards, using them to provide better experiences for students
- Projects, bringing them together for a student to demonstrate that they get more than they assumed from this activity—grit, resiliency, feel more confident in their field of study
- Questions that emerged:
  - All of the great information, where are we going to be able to see finished products?
  - How do we capture alumni thoughts (or engagement) in what we’re doing?

TOPICS FOR FUTURE FORUM DISCUSSIONS
What do you want to see happen that’s not happening? We’re brainstorming topics for forums, so that they’re relevant.

- MESSAGING—Consistency in our messaging as to what we’re doing, when we’re doing it, and how it fits into the great plan. All communication should point back to the integrated clusters website where all information is archived.
  - Seeking concrete suggestions for ideas, themes for classes related to the integrated cluster transformation that enable faculty and staff to respond to current students. We do a great deal of brainstorming, but we don’t consolidate it into one main idea for the transformation and talk about how we make that work.
  - This is also critically important from an external perspective, those interacting in the business community or for university recruitment. The why needs to be more consistent, so that outsiders aren’t hearing a variety of disconnected whys (financial, rebrand, innovative, etc.) despite it being a combination of these reasons.
- CURRICULUM—Clarity around what’s changing in the curriculum, the rationale behind the change, and when it’s rolled out.
  - Seeking a clarified response to the issue of disciplines.
  - What changes are coming for Gen Ed and major curriculum? 120-credit degree may look different, is the major changed by clusters?
  - Micro-credentialing, what will that look like within the curriculum?
- AGILITY & LEADERSHIP—Clear direction on what’s upcoming in the transition, how the community is involved, and how we take learnings to the next step.
  - How do we institutionalize the agility necessary to do some of the things we’re talking about? How do we manage faculty workloads?
  - We need more conversations of how clusters impact the overall degree experience and student experience.
  - Concern that we’ve met in a similar capacity to this forum for over 2 years, decision-making about the process is not being guided or pushed forward by the faculty members that have already put in so much input. This is making it tough to understand the objective for each forum, what was accomplished and what the next steps are.
What’s the time commitment for guides? Faculty commitment on what’s going on? What’s the objective to each meeting? What’s the outcome of each meeting? What’s the next step? What are the action items? These questions are critical to moving forward and demonstrating progress.

- **VOICES, ROLES & FEEDBACK—Communication with the larger community and committees, gaining input and feedback.**
  - At this forum, we’ve discussed a common set of outcomes for students. We have been talking about the process and ideas about how to make that work. We’re missing inclusion of more faculty ideas in the development of that process.
  - We’re moving towards this structure, curriculum committees to make changes, proposals for micro-credentials, integrated course clusters.
  - Staff – Non-credit generating departments are uncertain of what they’re role in the integrated clusters is? They have great ideas, but they don’t know more about the clusters in the non-faculty and non-academic world.
  - All roles in the University are important. PAT has a role every time a student has a question. Education doesn’t only happen in the classroom.
  - Everyone on campus is a teacher (despite not being in a classroom)

- **COMMON LANGUAGE—Potential to adopt a common language around outcomes, organization, and progress (residential life, student life, etc.).**
  - Common language across departments around outcomes, engagement, and activity (residence life, etc.). We’re essentially envisioning what our culture will be post-change.
  - Look at this change as creative opportunity
  - We can look at this as a much more meaningful way, we’re changing higher education.

- **FINANCIAL CHANGE—The financial issues were the spark for change, but not the motivational why. We’re moving forward focused on the integrated clusters and student experience driving change.**
  - Our external audience in higher education is watching PSU—it’s not just about financial failure, it’s about innovation in education. The President wanted to transition to clusters from day one, if we take the financial piece out, we still have the vision of what the President wants and what it should be like.
  - Financial difficulty was simply the spark of change and innovation, it told us now is the time. The campus needs to be unified and to be told that our mission is driven by integrated clusters.