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*The Clock, Plymouth State University*

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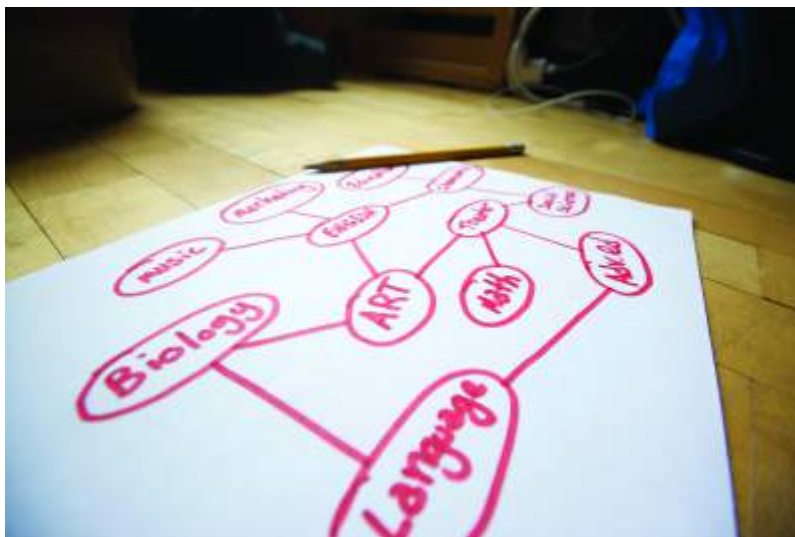
# Plymouth State Implementing Strategic Clusters

By Kelsey Davis; News Editor

On April 21, 2016

## Plymouth State Implementing Strategic Clusters

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CLOCK PHOTO: ALICE REED

In the fall 2016 semester, Plymouth State will begin introducing a new educational system called “Clusters.” Clusters are an educational system that transcends traditional, disciplinary boundaries. The clusters allow students to work closely with students and professors in other majors on projects that impact the community.

There will be seven clusters and each major will be assigned a cluster. Clusters include, Arts and Entertainment, Democracy and Social Change, Exploration and Discovery, Health and Human Enrichment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Justice and Security, and Tourism and Environment and Sustainable Development. Every major will be a part of a specific cluster. For example, the theater major will be a part of the Arts and Entertainment cluster. Each major must be within a specific cluster by the end of the academic year. The clusters are designed to be malleable, so any major that does not fit with a certain cluster can move to one that will better utilize the talents of the students within it.

The goal for the clusters is improvement and enrichment for the students at Plymouth State. Each cluster will work together on projects, both within and outside the classroom, giving the students an opportunity to put what they

are learning in the classroom to the test. By combining forces and utilizing disciplines, the clusters will deal with and involve real world applications and dilemmas, giving PSU students a unique edge when they enter the job market.

Plymouth State University has been working on implementing clusters for many months. A form of the clusters that the university will be implementing already exists within the campus, this is simply formalizing the process and making it more widespread. The formal clusters will take upwards of ten years to fully implement, and it will be five years before changes are seen.

Clusters have been described as the University's best kept secret, but according to Dr. Paul Mroczka, the chair of the Theater department and a member of the Steering Committee for the strategic clusters, "The reason no one knows about the clusters is because there is not a lot finalized."

"There is a general idea of what the university wants the clusters to do, but the plans will be finalized by the end of the academic year," said Mroczka. "By then, each major will be a formal part of a cluster, and there can be inroads to creating plans and potential projects for students to work on. There hasn't been a desire to be secretive, but we did not want to announce anything before it was finalized."

On April 29 from 2-5, there will be a Cluster Connections event held in the Hage Room of the HUB. The goal of the event will be for people to meet those who are in charge of guiding the cluster program. A barbeque will be held after in order to continue discussions.