Arts & Technologies Cluster Meeting Minutes, 04.19.2017

Plymouth State University
Minutes: Arts & Technologies Meeting
April 19, 2017 – Lamson 031

Present:
Matt Kizer, Holly Oliver, Ian Halter, Jason Swift, JoAnn Guilmett, Ann McClellan, Michael Davidson, Alice Pearman, Ava Tyler, Cathie LeBlanc, Trish Lindberg, Scott Coykendall, Zhizhang Shen, Rik Pfenninger, Paul Mroczka, Melissa Furbish

Curriculum

Discussion began with a brief review of the discussion from the faculty cluster forum the day before. The concept of template courses, such as Toolbox courses, Capstones, etc. was revisited. It was expanded that these terms and templates might allow students to engage across disciplines more readily, if concepts and terms were consistent and predictable between them.

Matt Kizer discussed the concept of creating multiple sets of prerequisites for advanced courses, so that students coming from a variety of disciplines could get in, bringing a range of types of backgrounds in from different fields. Scene-painting for Theatre was given as an example, where art students might come in with Studio Art prerequisites, while Theatre students might come in with Stagecraft.

Cathie LeBlanc brought up embedded Gen-Ed courses, especially the INCO. We discussed the possibility of redeveloping the concept of the INCO as a capstone project. Paul Mroczka for theatre discussed this from the perspective of MTD. Some current INCOs might need to drop that designation, while other experiences might pick it up. The concept of the INCO as a research or experiential course was discussed.

Some disciplines have accreditation constraints. INCOs or Capstones in these might need to guarantee a mentor and a curriculum rooted solidly in that discipline. It is still conceivable that such courses could collaborate in a cluster experience. We might need to find ways to “dock” courses from different disciplines. This is one possibility, compared to single INCO courses that draw students from multiple majors.

It was asked: “What mechanism informs students about cross-discipline courses?”

How do students know what is offered?

We might create Special Topics listed as “Cluster Topics.” If these were applicable towards a variety of majors as alternatives to other advanced skills or experiences, then this might get students browsing other disciplines.

Metatags and Metadata for Course Listings

JoAnn Guilmett suggested the use of an algorithm to help students see what is being offered. This expanded into the idea of applying metatags and metadata to courses in the course-listings. We do not know if Banner has the capability to do this, but this would allow a much more integrative experience for students examining course offerings. If this were combined with multiple prerequisite options for courses, students would be able to build more creative and niched paths to their majors.

Later on, this could inspire a Toolbox course on searching meta.
**Moving to Beta Clusters**

Cathie LeBlanc brought up President Birx’s request for Beta Clusters. The idea is to have two Integrated Clusters at Plymouth State push forward and explore how best to function as a Cluster with the many factors inherent in their own disciplines, staffs, and facilities.

Cathie suggested that next year, the department chairs can meet regularly to push this activity forward. Matt Kizer suggested using division heads for such meetings, rather than chairs, with the understanding that for some of our disciplines, this is the same thing. Cathie expressed her opinion that chairs might better, because the final structure we arrive at might be different than that. It was discussed that we might start with chairs, and then diversify later. There was general agreement that whatever we do, it is likely to become a model. The department of Music, Theatre, and Dance is already moving to division heads, and is ready to work that way. We might ask departments to pick their own representation.

Melissa Furbish asked: What are the impacts of business service centers? How do we structure administration support? She spoke about the financial functions at PSU. There was agreement that the business managers and administrative assistants working in departments will need to meet and have similar discussions about how to organize their own structures to the best effect. There was also agreement that as the departmental structures evolve, it is probably that the administrative and office centers are going to be the most stationary points around which the academic changes will be pivoting.

Jason Swift spoke: “We need to define what the role of the leadership is before we structure the clusters.” It was asked: “Should we create a transition team?”

It was asked clearly: “Do we want to actually be a beta cluster?” Everyone present agreed, yes.

The P&T Process was discussed. A transition team might need to discuss this conceptually within a cluster.

We agreed that we should wait until after the next forum to decide if chairs should convene this academic year. The specific plans for the summer and fall are still undecided. We began a timeline on a marker board.

It was agreed that We are the best cluster.

Scott Coykendall suggested that any work done over the summer should remained appraised of what other committees (such as curriculum) are doing.

Cathie LeBlanc suggested that since there is forum on the 28th of April, and another in May, we should go to those with everything discussed here in mind, and then reconvene after for more conversation.

Theatre spoke about conversion to the 4 credit model while considering cluster terminology and ideals. This was extrapolated and compared to other disciplines