Surviving curricular redesign!

REDEFINING OUR MAJORS CONFERENCE, AUGUST 19 2017

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Three principles

- *Faculty-led*

- *Curricular revision*

- *Student success and achievement*

Why change?

- *Maybe don't change?*

- Student career and life success

- Changes to the field and discipline

- Factors related to the university and college

- Changes within the department

- Improving the construction of the major

FOR DISCUSSION: Other reasons for change?

Who leads?

- The importance of by-laws

- Role of the department chair?

- Formal or loose structure?

- Committees or everyone together?

- Students, staff, lecturers

FOR DISCUSSION: Who are other stakeholders? Who else 'leads'?

Strategies for engagement

- Brown bag or informal meetings

- Accessible reports and evidence/data

- Retreats

- Planning sessions (often in groups)

- Online tools (communities/CMS)

- Diverse perspectives welcome

- Democratic processes employed

FOR DISCUSSION: What are some other strategies for engaging members of your program/department and other stakeholders?

Creating cultures of inclusivity: A survey

- Planning is self-initiated by the department

- Curriculum revision is considered everyone's job

- There is a culture of inclusion in the department

- Ideas are welcome, no matter where they come from

- Those faculty & staff who will be affected are proponents of change

- Faculty share responsibility for identifying where change is needed

- The search for solutions to problems includes faculty

- The search for solutions includes students, alumni, staff, and other stakeholders

- Proposed solutions are based on evidence to which all faculty have access

- There is a serious attempt to make sure faculty understand proposed solutions before they are tried

- Leaders at the College level support change

Our process (lots of variations!)

Gathering evidence

Establishing shared outcomes

Aligning courses with outcomes

Redesigning the curriculum/pathways

Implementation and approval

Assessment and ongoing revision

Thinking through the tasks

- Example: Aligning our courses
    - Explaining to each other what our courses do/Course SLOs
    - Aligning courses to program outcomes
    - Evaluating where course outcomes are met, and at what levels

Troubleshooting the issues that may come up (Alignment example)

- While faculty may have been able to find shared PLOs, once the discussion reaches a deep and real level differences may emerge
  - Consider what kinds and amounts of differences are tenable for the curriculum and whether they can co-exist. Try to explore the differences and identify the elements that are most relevant to the PLOs and vision
- The question of the speed of change often becomes particularly important at this stage, when it begins to become clear that the curriculum is really likely to change
  - Consider developing a timeline with your faculty that helps them understand clearly what will need to happen at different stages of change so that they are prepared for it

Troubleshooting the issues that may come up (Alignment example continued)

- The question of the role of adjunct faculty may be particularly important in this phase, especially if changes are being proposed to courses they tend to teach.
  - Continue your inclusive discussions by including adjunct faculty who are willing to discuss how they think they might work toward meeting the different changes in the courses they teach, find out what support they could use to make their own course curriculum revision workable
- Faculty may have difficulty determining which PLOs apply to their courses, and at what levels. Some faculty may judge their courses to meet all PLOs, even superficially, while others may be concerned if they teach courses that don't seem to match the PLOs.
  - Consider putting together faculty learning communities that focus on the discussion of courses and PLOs

How do decisions get made?

- Appointing committees or ad hoc working groups responsible for bringing each part of the curriculum to the department for a vote

- Form interest groups around each concentration or emphasis in the department, and make sure they have consensus among these groups for each step

- Holding a formal vote in the department

- Waiting until they gain full consensus of every member of the department

FOR DISCUSSION: What strategies does your department/program have for making decisions?

FOR DISCUSSION:

 What else is needed in a survival guide?

How could we make this survival guide more useful?

How should we disseminate or share it?