

CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE ON ADVANCING NEW PEDAGOGIES

Background

Pedagogy is properly the purview of the faculty, particularly at the level of faculties who are responsible for specific program curricula and degrees. Over time, the various faculties (at the school/college and department levels) have set different expectations and pursued different approaches with respect to the ways that their courses and programs are delivered. As we think about the integration of technology into pedagogy, for example, or about the degree to which courses and programs are offered online, the situation is quite different from one department to another and from one school/college to another. Given the granularity of Syracuse and the great diversity of disciplines represented among our units, we can expect that this will always be the case, and there is some real strength in this cross-University differentiation. However, given the dynamic state of higher education, the increasing relevance and demand for online courses and programs, and the increasing diversity of approaches being tried at Syracuse and nationally, it is time for Syracuse University to have a more coherent institutional direction with respect to technology-enhanced and technology-enabled pedagogies. Indeed, the changed and still changing nature and learning styles of college-going students, external pressures that push families (and employers) toward greater 'value', and the availability of new pedagogical models and technology-based teaching tools argue for an initiative at Syracuse University that encourages and supports faculty to enhance their pedagogy more broadly, whether to enhance learning in a particular course or to make courses/programs more widely available.

The faculties of several schools and colleges across the University have begun initiatives over the past few years related to pedagogy, integration of technology into teaching, and online courses and programs. This increasing level of conversation motivated an agenda item on "advancing our pedagogies" at the Chancellor's Administrative Conference in August 2012, and, as a follow-up, a group of deans met in the Fall and developed the concept of this Task Force and identified a set of faculty and staff who would be well positioned to serve. The consensus is that a much deeper and broader discussion among the faculty is necessary to move SU forward in this important arena.

We want to be certain that this effort is not seen as a term-limited "initiative" to improve teaching, but as a period in which we move toward a new level of sensitivity and increased exploration and activity related to advanced pedagogical techniques and new teaching/learning modalities, and in which we develop appropriate structures and mechanisms to support faculty in what truly is a base expectation to optimize student learning. While this is not only about technology, an important part of this initiative is indeed to encourage conversation about and exploration of the productive role that technology can play in teaching and learning at Syracuse, from integration in existing modalities to completely new modalities such as 'flipped classrooms' or use of open, collaborative courseware or broad, multi-institution consortia. This deeper exploration of technology should be balanced by the recognition that there are multiple, tool-independent paths toward highly effective pedagogy.

Charge

The Task Force should develop an understanding of the current SU landscape, identify particularly promising directions, and make recommendations on mechanisms and structures that can best support faculty development, productive experimentation, and the development of enhanced SU strength.

Specific activities/considerations should include:

- Conduct an inventory of what SU faculties and individual faculty members are doing now that is different from traditional, classroom-based, lecture-type instruction, including the availability of assessment data to indicate effectiveness.
- Consider how to use/disseminate the results of the inventory broadly to encourage cross-fertilization and collaboration. Consideration should be given to whether there are there any particular innovations in place at SU that we want to actively encourage for broad(er) SU adoption, or innovations in place elsewhere that we want to adapt and pilot at SU in our own context.
- Develop a recommendation regarding efficient structures and mechanisms that can best support faculty development in this domain, including enhancing faculty conversation about pedagogy and exploring deeper use of technology.
- Consider the ways that units (departments/schools/colleges) might build incentives and reward structures so that faculty see enhancement of their pedagogy, particularly through use of new tools and modalities, as valuable and important, with the intent that we increase the number of faculty engaged in development of new teaching/learning tools and modalities. As much as possible, the “incentives” should not be transactional, but should be aligned with what our routine expectations are for faculty and units.
- Consider the value of piloting a “showcase” or other incentive program that would identify and highlight particularly effective pedagogical innovations or adaptations with encouragement for adoption by others at SU.
- Consider the value and potential structure of a program to bring national experts and new ideas to campus for exposure to SU faculty members and specific programs.
- Consider the potential role of university consortia in providing additional opportunities for our students and as a strategic opportunity for SU to enhance its areas of strength and mitigate areas of weakness or disinvestment. What kinds of consortia might be most beneficial for the University?

The Task Force should provide a written report by **1 June 2013** dealing with these issues and any other key strategic or policy matters that it recommends be considered.

Proposed Task Force Membership

- Co-chairs: Liz Liddy and Lois Agnew
- Steven Diaz and Kathleen Powers Representatives, Senate Committee on Instruction
- Karin Ruhlandt, Chemistry
- Julie Causton-Theoharis, Education
- Denise Heckman, VPA
- Susan Dischiave, iSchool
- Brooks Gump, Falk
- Julie Hasenwinkel, LCS

- Jerry Evensky, Maxwell
- Kofi Okyere, Whitman
- Bill Ward, Newhouse
- Jonathan Massey, Architecture
- Ted Hagelin, Law

Staff to Committee

- Steven Hoover, University Libraries
- Bron Adam, Academic Affairs
- Jenny Gluck, ITS
- Mike Frasciello, University College

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