TRANSFORMING CORE CURRICULA — AND CAMPUS CULTURES

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INTRODUCTION

Core/Gen Ed & Campus Cultures

SESSION GOALS:
- Space to think about interdependence/share
- Explore particular tools and strategies from each campus
- Apply to own campus curriculum and/or culture change efforts
What are the main curriculum change challenges you are thinking about?
PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES THAT PREPARE ALL STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

• Our two cases share...
  • Changing demographics
  • Confusion surrounding relationships (or lack thereof) between demographics and ability/preparedness
  • Inclusive strategies related to academic/work/life balance and wellness

Although your core/gen ed may be different in emphasis/content, perhaps we share these challenges
THEMES

Core/Gen Ed & Campus Cultures

- Curriculum
- Classroom Practices
- Engaging Faculty
- Using Data
- Addressing Equity
CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION CASES

Engaging Faculty  Using Data  Addressing Equity
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE: THE CORE CURRICULUM

Engaging Faculty  Using Data  Addressing Equity

Some Underlying Reasons Motivating Change:

• Student Experience: Equity and Workload
• Faculty Experience: Agency and Workload
• Addressing Societal Impact and Leadership Aspects of Our Mission
• Governance and Oversight
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE: THE CORE REDESIGN

Engaging Faculty  Using Data  Addressing Equity

Issues under the surface:

• Faculty own curriculum, but everyone is vested
• Core is existential—core *is* culture
• Cross-departmental but need departmental buy-in
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE:

Engaging Faculty

• Separate Surveys for Faculty/Staff, Students, Alumni
  • Used to establish shared vision
  • Articulate skills knowledge and dispositions
  our students would need to achieve that vision

• Role of Qualitative Information
  • Campus is data-literate
  • Triangulate with other institutional data

• External Consultants Validate and Reinforce Progress

Using Data

Addressing Equity
CALTECH: Core Curriculum

- Breadth in basic science, humanities, and social science.
- Interdisciplinary nature of contemporary research; social, political, economic connections.
- Culture of problem solving, collaboration, and communication.
2013: Typical curriculum change process (task force + committees)

- **Reduce** number of required courses
  - More flexibility
  - Time for co-curricular pursuits
- **Reduce** stress/improve student mental health
Subsequent “Culture Change” components:
- Credit unit caps for first year students
- Pass/fail – fine tuning timing and feedback
- More choices – freshman seminars, humanities course topics, department-based second year mathematics choices
How might choices about engaging faculty, using data, and addressing equity play in your curriculum change efforts?
THEMES

Core/Gen Ed & Campus Cultures

Curriculum
Engaging Faculty

Classroom Practices
Using Data

Addressing Equity
How do faculty/instructors at your institution learn about new classroom / pedagogical practices?
THE INCLUSIVE CALTECH CORE (IC²) PROJECT

Engaging Faculty

Using Data

Addressing Equity

~250 first year students

Math, Physics, Chemistry, Other STEM Choices

Computer Science

Freshman Advisors
INCLUSIVE CALTECH CORE CYCLE:

- Engaging Faculty
- Using Data
- Addressing Equity
IC² ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

**Spring-Summer**
- Pre-survey
- Data gathering

**Pre-fall**
- Admissions Data
- Evidence-based, inclusive practices

**Academic Year**
- Ongoing discussions
- Quarterly Feedback & Data

**Faculty Interests**
E.g., how have incoming students changed?

**Retreat**
E.g., academic confidence, belonging, active learning

**Follow-up**
E.g., student cohort changes; in-class practices

E.g., how have incoming students changed?
~50 faculty per year (out of ~350 total) participate:

• Gender/other gaps in confidence (not related to ability)
• Evolution of academic self-concept in early quarters at Caltech
• Knowledge of vs./and use of resources
• Nuanced examples & changes – teaching approaches, goals, student supports
“Confidence gap” in data; Faculty actions and instructional changes…

→ In-class active learning
→ Formative/summative feedback approaches
→ Transparent assignments
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE: WRITING 1

Engaging Faculty

Using Data

Addressing Equity

- Half-course (7 weeks) fall semester of first year
- Team-taught, cross-disciplinary
- Common vocabulary about writing
- Focus on the process of writing and the clear expression of ideas
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE: WRITING 1

- Engaging Faculty
- Using Data
- Addressing Equity

- Dedicated Coordinator
- Ongoing Training
- Frequent Communication
- Real-time Feedback and Problem-solving
As you think about classroom practices in the curriculum you have been considering, how might choices about engaging faculty, using data, and addressing equity support changing classroom practices?
SYNTHESIS – BRIDGING CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE...

Core/Gen Ed & Campus Cultures

Curriculum

Classroom Practices

Engaging Faculty

Using Data

Addressing Equity
Transforming Core Curricula—and Campus Cultures
AAC&U Annual Meeting, January 2019

Session Goals:
Reflect upon the interdependence of curriculum and culture
Explore particular tools and strategies with examples from two institutions
Apply ideas to your own campus curriculum and culture change efforts

Framework:

Reflect and Discuss:
What are the main curriculum change challenges you are thinking about?
How might choices about engaging faculty, using data, and addressing equity play into curriculum change efforts on your campus?

How do faculty/instructors at your institution learn about new classroom or pedagogical practices?

As you think about classroom practices in the curriculum you have been considering, how might choices about engaging faculty, using data, and addressing equity support changing classroom practices?

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**Details about our Core Curricula:**

HMC: [https://www.hmc.edu/academics/common-core-curriculum/](https://www.hmc.edu/academics/common-core-curriculum/)