Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between Office of Academic Affairs
And
University Studies

Reference: Continuing Engagement for Social Change: At and Beyond Portland State

I. Purpose

This MOU outlines partnership roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Provost Challenge project: Continuing Engagement for Social Change: At and Beyond Portland State

II. Project Description and Key Project Outcomes

Overview:
We must address the problem of how to meaningfully educate our students in ways that prepare them to address the ecological and social crises that face our world. While we begin this engagement at Portland State we do not programmatically foster continued engagement beyond a given course. The Capstone Program is fertile ground for this initiative to support individuals, who have had powerful civic engagement experiences in the UNST program and elsewhere, to build on these experiences and lay a foundation enabling them to be lifelong change agents at a grassroots, community level after leaving PSU. Four primary components will complement efforts for continued engagement already underway in University Studies: the creation of a digital community space, online workshops, online alumni speakers bureau and interactive resource guide. Through this process preexisting relationships with the project collaborators will be developed to deepen this project as well as locate synergies with related initiatives on campus. This will leave students with a dynamic set of skills that can be applied in the rapidly shifting 21st century economy, improve student success and increase students' ability to make an impact on the pressing ecological and social crises that confront current and future generations.

Key project outcomes (as agreed by Project Lead and Vice Provost):
1. The development of a model and platform for online workshops and the creation of three fully online workshops that support continued engagement in social change
2. The development of an online version of the Resource Guide for Continuing Engagement in Social Change
3. Expanded participation by a dozen faculty in at least three online Communities of Practices, in addition to alumni engagement student participation and student assignment integration

III. Funding

The project team will be funded up to $20,000 to achieve the outcomes established for this project. Vice Provost for Academic Innovation in consultation with Provost and the appropriate dean may increase, reduce or terminate funding for this project.

IV. Funding Agreement Terms

The funding agreements in this document are contingent upon completion of the proposed project as described above. Changes to the agreements, timetables or funding will be based on written agreement between the College/Department
and Office of Academic Affairs designees. OAA will provide an index code that will be used for funding of this project. There will be no transfer of funds.

V. Resolution of Disagreements
In the event of a disagreement that cannot be resolved by the parties, resolution will be through agreement of Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and the Dean of the Department’s College or Director of the Unit.

WITNESS WHEREOF, the representatives have signed this Memorandum of Understanding on the

6th day of September, 2013.

David Osborn, Project Lead, Instructor, UNST

Yves Labissiere, Interim Director, UNST

Sukhwant Jhaj
Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Student Success

Enclosures:
- Copy of reThink PSU: Provost Challenge project proposal
#55 Continuing Engagement for Social Change: At and Beyond Portland State

Last modified: February 20, 2013 – 10:52am

Project Lead

David Osborn
Instructor, Communities of Practice Coordinator
University Studies – Academic Affairs

Primary Collaborators

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Additional Collaborators

Tom Bull, Executive Director, Alumni Association Heather Petzold, Capstone Instructor, University Studies – Academic Affairs

Challenge

Inspiration Challenge

Abstract/Summary

We must address the problem of how to meaningfully educate our students in ways that prepare them to address the ecological and social crises that face our world. While we begin this engagement at Portland State we do not programmatically foster continued engagement beyond a given course. The Capstone Program is fertile ground for this initiative to support individuals, who have had powerful civic engagement experiences in the UNST program and elsewhere, to build on these experiences and lay a foundation enabling them to be lifelong change agents at a grassroots, community level after leaving PSU. Four primary components will complement efforts for continued engagement already underway in University Studies: the creation of a digital community space, online workshops, online alumni speakers bureau and interactive resource guide. Through this process preexisting relationships
with the project collaborators will be developed to deepen this project as well as locate synergies with related initiatives on campus. This will leave students with a dynamic set of skills that can be applied in the rapidly shifting 21st century economy, improve student success and increase students’ ability to make an impact on the pressing ecological and social crises that confront current and future generations.

Introduction

We must address the problem of how to meaningfully educate our students in ways that prepare them to address the ecological and social crises that face our world. It is also critical to transform the undergraduate learning experience so as to address sub-optimal student retention, success and experience. At a fundamental level this initiative will do this by supporting individuals, who have had powerful civic engagement experiences in the UNST program and elsewhere, to build on these experiences and lay a foundation enabling them to be lifelong change agents at a grassroots, community level after leaving PSU. This will leave students with both a dynamic set of skills that can be applied in the rapidly shifting 21st century economy as well as the ability to make an impact on the pressing ecological and social crises that confront current and future generations.

This work has begun in University Studies with the Undergraduate Research, Creative Action and Agency program. Staff have been working to create opportunities to facilitate and support continued engagement. Workshops, mini-courses, resources guides and other tools have been developed. However, digital, online and social media have not been utilized to the extent necessary to fully implement this approach to education. The reThink PSU challenge provides the perfect opportunity to further develop the tools necessary to support the continued engagement that will contribute to student success and graduation by creating a relevant, dynamic educational experiences and a diversity of skill development.

Impact/Significance

The goal of this program is to develop a nationally renowned and innovative program that would mobilize and create synergy between thousands of students enrolled in University Studies including FRINQs, SINQs, Junior Clusters, Capstones as well as community partners and thousands of PSU Capstone alumni in order to address the most pressing ecological and social issues facing our region. The cumulative impact of this holistic approach would transform the undergraduate learning experience by making it more rooted in and relevant to the world into which students graduate. This would have important and positive impacts for retention, student success and student experiences. At a fundamental level the project will do this by supporting individuals, who have had powerful civic engagement experiences in the UNST program and elsewhere, to build on these experiences and lay a foundation enabling them to be lifelong sustainability change agents at a grassroots, community level after leaving PSU. A program of this nature does not exist and this reThink project would contribute to its development as a national exemplar.

Four primary components will be developed as part of this project, which will complement and build on programmatic work that has been already initiated. A digital community space will be created in which students can remain engaged in issues encountered in class. Students, faculty, alumni and community partners would contribute to a blog-like website in a given “community of practice” such as social justice. This information would facilitate engagement as well as provide opportunities for further involvement and skill building for students who have begun work within that community of practice. Connected to this would be the development of online workshops on skills for social change. Workshops offered as part of an existing, free series of social change workshops for students, faculty and alumni would be developed in a dynamic and interactive online form that could be engaged by students unable to attend in person offerings or desiring to revisit material. An online alumni speakers bureau, with short videos highlighting alumni engaged in social change, will be created. This will allow for instructors to invite alumni into their classes to engage undergraduates in discussions about pathways to continued engagement in social change. Lastly, the print version of the Resource Guide for Continuing Engagement that has been developed as part of this program, and which was delivered to Capstone students at the end of fall term, will be developed as a complementary online, multimedia tool. This online version will provide various interactive components and additional resources that will complement and expand on the print version.

Approach and Strategy

Portland State has been lauded for having one of the nation’s top community-based Capstone Programs. This excellence is based on many factors, but our primary point of excellence is our institution wide ability to help students reflect on these community-based experiences at such a large scale (over 250 courses involving over 3,800 students). PSU students consistently report that their Capstone was one of their top three most impactful educational experiences in which they engaged at PSU. Despite these successes there is enormous room for growth particularly in the realm of continuing the engagement, begun in Capstones and through the curriculum, in community-based social change at and beyond the university. This is also a fertile ground to begin to address some of the following questions, which are at the heart of this initiative. How can we structurally support the engagement of students after their courses by creating a nationally renowned alumni community engagement program? How do we engage students and alumni utilizing new forms of technology and social media? How can we utilize these tools to facilitate continued engagement as well as building skills for social change and community problem solving?

This project will build on the Capstone Program, the Undergraduate Research, Creative Action and Agency program in University Studies and a multitude of existing partnerships to develop and launch these additional components. Ten workshops that will be offered in person will be selected to be developed as online workshops. The digital community space, which will launch with a minimal version during the 2012-2013 academic year, will be developed and refined. Faculty will be offered stipends to integrate assignments and curricular engagement with this digital community so as to institutionalize its use in the curriculum. Lastly, the second version of the resource guide will be developed as an
online tool and will include additional resources, interactive components and multimedia to facilitate in supporting students in their continued engagement. Resources include online sources of skills for social change, lists of community groups in the Portland metropolitan area and explorations of how we understand social change and community problem solving. Through this process preexisting relationships with the project collaborators will be developed to deepen this project as well as locate synergies with related initiatives on campus, such as connecting with pre-existing students groups and continued engagement practices already implemented by faculty and departments.

**Milestones**

This project will achieve the following milestones following the approval of the project and the dispersal of funds on April 1st.

- April – Plan development of 2.0 version of website and digital community space incorporating social media and online resource guide, develop alumni speakers bureau
- May – Work with web developers to begin implementation, develop protocol and format for digital workshop creation, recruit speakers bureau participants
- June – Launch version 1.0 of speakers bureau with multimedia
- June- August – Continue web development, continue online workshop development, continue online resource guide development
- August – Select workshops for fall term, identify workshops for online development
- September – Finalize and launch digital community space 2.0 and online resource guide 1.0 and online workshop protocol and format 1.0
- September-December – Engage faculty in program components, create three online workshops, gather feedback, recruit further alumni speakers bureau participants and promote to faculty
- December – Select workshops for fall term, identify workshops for online development
- January 2014 – Engage faculty in utilizing the digital community space and incorporating blog participation into the curriculum, create three online workshops, gather feedback
- February-March – Revision of digital community space, resource guide, alumni speakers bureau and online workshop protocol and format
- April-June – Continue revisions, engage faculty program components, create three online workshops, recruit alumni speakers bureau participants and promote to faculty
- June – Finalize revisions and launch digital community space 3.0, online resource guide 2.0, alumni speakers bureau 2.0 and online workshop protocol and format 2.0
- June-August – Reflection, refinement and implementation necessary for institutionalization of engaged pathways in UNST program

**Benefits**

The proposal has a diversity of important benefits. Students will experience important short term benefits in terms of developing career, professional and civic skills that will be of immediate value to them. Additionally, they will benefit from the practical application of their learning experiences and become connected to Communities of Practice which will, over the long term, jump start student careers and provide for an experience that culminates in alumni who are empowered and activated members of their communities. The following numbers are based on in-person workshop attendance, number of courses anticipated to participate and other data from implementation of the in-person components of existing programmatic work.

**Number of students to be impacts:**

- Impacted at a low level – 8,000 (all students who take one SINQ or transfer into taking clusters each year) – These students will receive information about the UNST program, the online resource guide and the Communities of Practice for continuing engagement and opportunities for professional and civic development and engagement on campus
- Impacted at an intermediate level – 3,000 – These students will utilize the online resource guide, connect with relevant community or student groups and explore the digital community space
- Impacted at a high level – 1,150 (200 fall 2013, 350 winter 2014, 350 spring 2014, 250 summer 2014) – These students will participate in one of the online workshops, participate in the digital community space in their courses and/or be present in a class an alumni from the speakers bureau visits

**Consequences**

Without this project students would miss out on an invaluable opportunity to engage in practical applications of the learning gained at PSU. Without this proposal valuable digital components will not be created which will inhibit accessibility by students and alumni and will prevent the depth that these digital tools can provide. The lack of these opportunities will prevent valuable professional and career development experiences. This will greatly limit the extent to which students graduate as civically engaged, empowered and activated participants in their communities. The combination of these consequences will also result in alumni who are less connected to PSU after graduation, having not had the dynamic experiences and ongoing resources provided by this project. Lastly, the lack of practical engagement will prevent a valuable grounding of educational experiences that occur at PSU in real world situations, which prepare students for success and provide greater clarity on desired pathways post-PSU.

**Needs Assessment**


**Inspiration Challenge Only**
This project provides for resources and a type of engagement that utilizes technology to lead to improved student success and graduation. The digital community spaces create a place where students can ground their academic experiences in real community problem solving, which develops practical career skills in addition to deep civic engagement benefits. It also provides for opportunities to interact with alumni and Communities of Practice that assist students in clarifying their purpose for attending PSU, discovering what they are passionate about and seeing examples of PSU alumni using their degrees in the community. Additionally, the provision of these resources for alumni creates an expectation that PSU will continue to support students in the civic development after their graduation. These contributions will allow this project to impact low grades, transition to PSU and other components laid out in the portfolio of student success initiatives and generally to PSU’s student success efforts.

Media

Post symposium presentation (http://www.slideshare.net/osbornda/post-symposium-presentation) from osbornda (http://www.slideshare.net/osbornda)

Tags

21st Century Student, Graduate, New Models, Online Education, Process Change, Student Success, Undergraduate,

Comments

Cheryl Livneh — January 2, 2013 – 1:31pm

I am not exactly sure how we would link, but the Graduate School of Education has a totally online certificate of completion in Service Learning K-12 and a graduate certificate in Service Learning and Community Based Education in Higher Education. It seems that there are ways we could support one another. We are also in the process of developing an online noncredit series on service learning and community based learning in higher ed for higher education faculty.

Adrienne Devore — January 28, 2013 – 5:43pm

As a student, I firmly believe that the University Studies program educates students in a meaningful way. A way to maintain connected with students and professors after these courses would be amazing. I love the idea of workshops, but the "digital community space" and "online workshops" worry me. I understand that this project would be an online tool, but I can't help but think finding ways to get groups together in person would be much more meaningful. Everything is digital these days, but how connected does that really make us? I think it would be great if there were ways to organize groups based on the four University Studies goals, and then maybe organized by interest or a project in the community that we would like to work on. This would be a great way for alumni to stay connected to one another, help the community, and reach out to current students.

David Osborn — February 4, 2013 – 4:56pm

Thank you for this comment. The online offerings discussed in this proposal will compliment in-person offerings, not replace them. In fact we have a wide variety of workshop that we are currently offerings as well as other opportunities for in-person engagement. Please feel free to email me if you would like the details. Thanks again.
Seanna Kerrigan — February 12, 2013 - 5:33pm

If this proposal was funded, I believe it would position PSU well to develop a national model for alumni engagement. This would be a rare model and would extend far beyond the paucity of existing alumni fellows programs at institutions such as Stanford. I am also confident that if given this initial seed money, the model would be appealing to external funding sources interested in promoting active citizenship!

Mackenzie Eiden — February 13, 2013 - 4:44pm

Utilizing online resources sounds like a great way to develop the work I do in the classroom and help me connect it to my involvement in the community and my field of practice. As a student and a peer mentor I can say that I think the UNST program would benefit from having online community space and workshops, and especially from an online resource guide. This sounds like a really relevant and helpful project!

Cristine Paschild — February 19, 2013 - 4:10pm

I'm excited to see this proposal. Here in the University Archives, we've been brainstorming about how we might help to preserve and make Capstone projects available over the longterm. As the project moves forward, it would be great to talk about possible infrastructures for this available through the Library that might be integrated with your digital communities.

News

Portland State University professor invents zero-gravity coffee cup »

The Oregonian: Merkley proposes federal money to boost Oregon's 'pay it forward' plan for student loans »

Sustainable Business Oregon: New 'combo charger' hits Oregon, foreshadows EV power showdown »

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Events

Tuesday, Aug 13
Annual SEMpdx Rooftop Networking Party »

Wednesday, Aug 14
Free MATLAB & Simulink Seminar »

Wednesday, Aug 14
Sounds of Summer Concert Series in Soma »

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