

SLC Meeting Minutes

Date: February 19, 2020

Attendees: Uchenna Baker, Kate Gladhart-Hayes, Zaixin Hong, Alan Krause (Chair), Mike Valentine (minutes), Adrian Villicana

Guest: Chris Kendall, Faculty Senate liaison

Krause convened the meeting at 1:04 pm. Minutes for the 12/4/2019 meeting were reviewed and approved with minor amendments.

Krause reviewed our charge to work with Student Affairs and others on campus regarding the development of Learning Communities (LCs).

Baker reviewed described items of interest to the SLC:

- 1) President Crawford is enthusiastic about the idea of LCs. In addition to the Students of Color LC, can academic programs be identified that might be interested in getting involved in creating themed LCs? Could we be ready to launch new LCs by fall 2021?
- 2) Greek Life is preparing a proposal relating to Fall recruitment of students. The goal of the new program would be to educate students on Greek Life and NOT to recruit first-year students during their first semester. They hope to inform students about Greek life in order to have more members that would move into Greek housing when the appropriate time comes. Greek organizations are having a difficult time filling their houses and are concerned about maintaining exclusive use of the houses.

Several committee members asked clarifying questions on details. The idea behind the Greek Life proposal is to build interest earlier, thus facilitating early assessment of potential occupants of Greek housing. Baker asked if the SLC might look at the proposal when it's ready- possibly by our next meeting.

Kendall asked about the SLCs thoughts on restructuring of the committee, given last year's concerns about the value of the work undertaken by the SLC. The number of available faculty for the SLC is a concern, as the number of committees and other faculty duties on campus is expanding. Might it be possible that SLC members might also serve in other capacities on campus such as ASUPS, Media Committee, and Honor Court?

Krause asked about our ability to do double-duty with these groups and still work effectively with Dr. Baker and Student Affairs on development of LCs and other issues. Baker responded that she anticipated a need for greater faculty involvement, specifically the SLC, in getting LCs up and going. Villicana opined that what is needed is more faculty dedicated for the work of the SLC, not greater numbers of faculty for the committee. Baker stated that she will also draw on other groups on campus for the LC initiative. Hong expressed the importance of a library representative on the SLC. Valentine added that a representative from the graduate programs would also be beneficial.

Krause asked for a review of information regarding LCs at other institutions that SLC members had gathered since our last meeting.

Villicana's report:

Willamette University- Willamette's web page only has information on discussions regarding LCs, but no detailed information.

St. Lawrence University- St. Lawrence has a well-developed program. All first-year students are part of a LC with specific courses linked to each LC. In fall semester, the course approach a questions for multiple perspectives. In spring, linked seminars promote discussions of issues outside the classroom setting. Involved faculty spend time in residence areas- hold office hours, organize events, etc. LCs are faculty-lead, with faculty spending significant out-of-class time (minimum of 4 hours per week) with first year students. Each faculty member decides on their term of involvement, and a range of fields of faculty expertise is encouraged. Courses are team-taught, and explicit connections between course material and residential activities. Development and improvement of writing skills is emphasized. Their web page has a clear statement of goals and philosophy for the program. First year students ONLY.

Baker commented that such programs gets students involved and enthusiastic about academics as they see faculty actually involved in their work, not just in the classroom.

Hong's report:

Reed College- Reed has "Centers", rather than LCs. Their Student Life web page is similar to Puget Sound's. They have a Multi-cultural Resource Center. Perhaps our new Welcome Center could serve the same purpose here. A student lead program of Restorative Practices at Reed attempts to transform the power dynamics at Reed, empowering and giving all students a voice. Students for Educational Equality and Direct Service (SEEDS) advocates for student educational rights.

Baker added that the Reed Residential Life web page also describes several other LC-like entities at Reed. First, residence halls are clustered into neighborhoods. First-year students live in first-year neighborhoods while juniors and seniors live in upper-division neighborhoods. Second, Reed's language houses represent the five modern languages taught at Reed: French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Chinese. Reed also offers an Arabic language community. Each house is staffed with a native speaker and a student house adviser—they work together with their respective language department to cultivate the residence as a center for language and culture for the entire campus.

Valentine Report:

Knox College- FYRE- First Year Residential Experience. Some Knox first-year students connect their academic and residential experiences by having everyone in one common class and living in a suite together. These Living-Learning Communities, or LLCs, give first-year students the chance to quickly build relationships with their classmates through both a shared classroom and residential experience. LLCs are currently in their second year, having expanded to 5 LLCs involving about 80 students. These are for first year students ONLY to "ease the college transition" (direct from Knox web page).

Pacific Lutheran University- PLU has a well-developed system of LCs that began in 2007 and now consist of 13 LCs. They are themed for areas of interest and by stage of student career at PLU. Many are linked to course for first-year students. All students are invited to programs in residence halls, whether living on campus or off. For first year students, the program helps build community through establishing close relationships that often continue

through a student's time at PLU. The innovative part of this program is the continuity through students' entire time at PLU. For older students (20+) or those with 60+ credits, the program aims to "promote an independent living experience to support students as they transition into post-collegiate life" (from PLU web page).

Krause's report:

Occidental College-Very small school with a very limited program.

Elon- Large program where faculty live in living space. Participating faculty can live in the learning space alone or with family (comes with meal plan, space, etc.). Those who typically participate are assistant professors and lecturers. Reflection (among students) was part of the program but there wasn't much evidence online that indicated reflection was a critical portion of the experience.

Emory- Large program with first year programs that link residential activities with one of three courses. All first years are required to participate in a living community. However, the structure of the living community seemed to be less academically rigorous (e.g., students in the living community had similarities, but there was no evidence found that these communities tailored the experience to a certain topic/theme). There are also second year living communities. These living communities, though, are broad classes (about 26 options) taken for credit/no credit.

After all reports were completed, we discussed next steps.

1. Identify 2 potential living/learning communities that could work for a trial run on UPS campus.
 - a. What are the two topics?
 - i. Which departments/programs are involved?
 - ii. Interdisciplinary or cross-departmental involvement would be ideal.
 - b. Consider the logistics
2. Consider how faculty will tie into the community and what incentive there may be for the faculty
 - a. E.g., formal compensation, release unit re: teaching, counts as advising, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.