Report

of the

Increased Collaboration Ad Hoc Committee

University of Louisiana Monroe

Fall 2013

I.   Introduction

In the Spring of 2013, the University wrote a new strategic plan which called for a reorganized and revitalized university. The following September, under the direction of Dr. Eric Pani, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, work began in earnest to reconstruct the university. To accomplish goals, several committees were organized including the Increased Collaboration Ad Hoc Committee whose charge was to make recommendations relative to promoting innovation and collaboration on campus. Dr. Sandra Lemoine, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development chaired the committee. Committee members included Juliet Burgess, Chris Gissendanner, Jana Giles, Seth Hall, John-Nelson Pope, Donna Rhorer, Cynthia Robertson, and Dr. Denny Ryman, Dean of the College of Health Sciences.

II.   Background

During the first meetings of the committee, committee members volunteered to work on the following focus areas:

Teaching	Cynthia Robertson, Juliet Burgess
Research	Chris Gissendanner, Jana Giles
Governance	Denny Ryman, Sandi Lemoine, Seth Hall
Culture	John-Nelson Pope, Jana Giles
Service	Donna Rhorer, Chris Gissendanner

III.   Obstacles Currently Hindering Collaboration and Innovation

As a precursor to making recommendation for collaboration, committee members assessed the current elements on campus which hinder such an endeavor.

Dr. Lemoine brought to our discussion the book *Organizing Higher Education for Collaboration: A Guide to Campus Leaders* (Kezar and Lester, 2009). The preface of the book observes that one of the main obstacles to establishing a collaborative culture in higher education is the American culture of individualism.

To this general observation, the committee adds the following large-scale observations, followed by a bulleted summary.

American and Academic Culture: Conflict Management Issues

The hierarchy of academia, stemming from the medieval heritage of the academy, is in conflict with the creative individualism espoused by American culture. However, neither of these models, at least in their extreme forms, is conducive to collaboration.

American culture can be described as conflict-avoidant, or maybe specifically in our case, culture. There may be many reasons for this, not least a tendency to embrace certain cultural conformities, as well as the threat in America of violence, such as gun violence, which is less common in some other parts of the world. Some other world cultures are less conflict averse and more able to negotiate their way through disagreements without resorting to anger. Americans tend to have a very narrow comfort zone with disagreement, and therefore as soon as a major problem arises, rather than work it through we frequently either resort to ad hominem attacks or defenses, or other emotionalism which effectively shuts down discussion, or the other extreme of not participating at all. This creates a passive-aggressive dynamic, which discourages true debate and explorations. As a result, many faculty don't feel comfortable discussing issues of conflict around work in a productive manner.

The tenure system has its strengths and weaknesses with regard to these issues. The strength is that it protects tenured faculty from wanton job loss and promotes freedom to dialogue. The weakness is that it can enable intractability among some senior faculty and the silencing of the untenured or adjunct faculty, whose livelihood depends on not upsetting the hierarchy, regardless of their experience or expertise or creative ideas.

There is a tendency to treat tenure-track or adjunct faculty with the Victorian adage: children should be seen and not heard. Arguably, however, tenure-track faculty have been hired because they are qualified, and have something meaningful to contribute. To disable their ability to contribute to departmental dialogue, as often happens, is also for the university to waste several hundred thousand dollars of potential innovation and fresh ideas over the course of six years because some tenured faculty are easily offended and put their personal emotions and self-interest before the well-being of the department. Some of this is a kind of "I paid my dues, you should too" mentality, but this is a suspect approach to innovation, along with the frequently companion attitude that tenured faculty are now safe to ride roughshod over anyone not lucky enough to have tenure. Some tenured faculty are renowned for being obstructive and even insulting in their emails or other statements to colleagues. While the committee does not advocate the elimination of tenure, we do make some recommendations as to how to address these problems.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative

Academic culture today tends to validate quantitative over qualitative, due to pressure from the larger American culture. In some ways, this may also be understood as a desire for determinacy rather than indeterminacy, established by so-called objective measurements, which can be achieved allegedly without the need to negotiate differences. This division most generally asserts itself across the science versus humanities line.

Many academic disciplines explore or are founded on indeterminate criteria (for example, art or literature). Thus, they are suffering today from lack of funding because American culture

perceives them to be less valuable to our well being than supposedly more determinate fields like business or medicine.

In fact, however, even within certain disciplines there may be found divisions across the qualitative/quantitative lines. For example, while Psychology tends to be quantitative and about pathology and disease, Counseling tends to integrate elements of both the quantitative and the qualitative, while Marriage and Family Therapy tend to be more qualitative and about social and political systems. Or, for example, while English literary studies have traditionally been founded on a historical framework, requiring an understanding of the transformation of culture as a result of social and political and technological change, on the other hand Creative Writing tends to promote the self-expression of the individual regardless of scope of knowledge. Thus, even within disciplines the difference between quantitative and qualitative can produce fissures.

This binary opposition between determinate and indeterminate fields is a false construct, and should be subjected to scrutiny. However, to do so, we need to dialogue across these boundaries more effectively. Many academics simply are not trained to conduct these dialogues effectively.

Influence of Business Culture

The tendency to promote quantitative fields over qualitative may also stem from the pressure to follow business culture, such as in the administrative structure. For instance, at some universities, department heads are not appointed but elected by their faculty, thus serving to transmit the desires of the faculty up the chain of command, rather than only down from above.

The most innovative businesses are in fact open to employees' feedback because they know it will encourage creative thinking. They can't afford to favor hierarchy over innovation; Google is a famous example. Arguably, a model like Silicon Valley, in which innovation is highly valued, is more similar to academic research than a company that is not based on creativity, such as Wal-Mart. Thus, arguably, if the university must follow business models, and the committee is not suggesting that it should, then at least the university should not make the mistake of thinking that they are all the same or that they are all equally effective at encouraging innovation and collaboration.

Another way in which Silicon Valley firms tend to look forward rather than backwards is in jettisoning older workplace practices. The use of flex time and Results Only Workplace strategies rejects the older model of the 9-5 workplace in recognition of the fact that creativity and innovation cannot be forced into a fixed block of time. Sitting at one's desk on campus is not conducive to everyone's creativity. Requiring ten office hours per week may reassure the administration that the faculty are under their surveillance, but does not necessarily mean we are being creative, productive, innovative. Creativity studies show that sometimes the most creative ideas come when one is not directly thinking about a problem—there are many anecdotes about this in science as well as in the humanities. One can be innovative sitting in one's bathtub, or while dreaming, taking a walk, or mowing one's lawn. For example, art faculty need to be in the studio to make art. They cannot make art in their offices.

Literature faculty cannot write academic research papers without the necessary books and articles, which cannot all be housed in their campus offices, and with constant interruption from emails, students, and meetings. Even being innovative in teaching requires time for contemplation and planning without interruption. All academic research work requires time for concentration. Having faculty under surveillance is merely a form of panoptical discipline, to

reference Michel Foucault. It may provide a reassuring illusion that something is being done for an administrator or a public that doesn't know anything about research, but it will not necessarily lead to greater innovation and collaboration.

Appropriate Use of Time

Another issue, which may relate to the increasing workload demands due to funding cuts, or may have its origin in other university culture issues, is a lack of time for collaboration when we do have meetings. There is little available time in the 4.5-day week when people can meet, and as a result, meetings also tend to be very short and try to resolve large problems in a few hours per semester. This is not feasible, nor necessarily conducive to innovation or collaboration. For example, to revise a curriculum or a graduate comprehensive exam structure with input from the stakeholders, rather than only with a select few managers involved, requires a very structured agenda, with clear boundaries for appropriate conduct, and a willingness to get into the nitty-gritty over an extended period of time. This is often not how meetings are run at ULM.

For innovation and collaboration to take place within and across disciplines or administrative structures, time is needed, to plan, to meet, to dialogue, to evaluate, to revise, and to report.

A. Culture
   1. Difficult to work together; to understand; people retreat into work or individual perspectives
   2. American culture of individuality
   3. Professionalization
   4. Disciplines/departments in silos resistant to change
   5. Inquiry/paradigm differences
   6. Faculty training and socialization
   7. Loose coupling in institution: decentralized processes, poor paperwork flow, redundancy of functions, lack of communication
   8. Resistance to change
   9. Lack of trust

B. Workload
   1. Heavy demands on faculty mean little free time available for new initiatives, meeting, planning, collaborating, or creating
   2. Routine workload does not allow for time for accreditation, site visits, new program development, new courses

C. Resources
   1. In general, time, money, space, and a suitable reward system are the main obstacles to achieving research collaboration within and across disciplines
   2. Limited course rotation due to budget cuts
   3. Lack of opportunity to change
   4. Conflict between accrediting agency requirements and state mandates for 120 credit hour degree

D. Attitude and Morale
  1. Lack of recognition for accomplishments
  2. Climate of uncertainty

IV.   Recommendations for Increasing Collaboration and Innovation

A. Mechanisms
  1. Establish an Innovation Center to develop an integrative approach to teaching methods and curriculum and novel concentrations within disciplines where applicable
      a. Review and evaluate current and past resources or committees that could be reconsidered as a conduit for reaching goals or folded into the new Innovation Center
      b. Consider article "Seven Simple Suggestions to Enhance Faculty Well-Being"
  2. Implement faculty development programs that involve proposals to apply for seed money or mini grants to develop these approaches, including during the summer
  3. Provide course releases to develop these approaches
  4. University can have a review mechanism, possibly by committee, to select projects for seed money grants. Collaborative grants would be a priority.
  5. Faculty research colloquia/presentations to introduce our work to each other.
  6. Within each College, establish a "Dean's Council on Collaboration and Innovation" consisting of representatives from each School whose membership is selective having been chosen by the Dean, or nominated and elected, or nominated and selected by an application process with a small honorarium attached. This council could meet during the course of the year to discuss ideas or initiatives related to innovation and collaboration within the College and would host a social event (with food and drink provided) each semester or each year focused on College collaboration. Faculty could intermingle, make a presentation on a research idea, or present results from an existing collaborative project. A member from each College could serve on the Vice President for Academic Affairs' Council for Collaboration and Innovation. This group could then be tapped as advisors or as a governing board to the ULM Innovation Center (mentioned above).
  7. Newsletters or other mechanisms to learn more about what faculty are doing other than press announcements which do not always cover all faculty activities
  8. Faculty club for social gathering that is a pleasant space. Would need beer/wine or "appropriate adult beverages"
  9. Establish a campus-wide designated time each week to foster meeting time and faculty participation
  10. Annual faculty retreat at the beginning or end of the year
  11. Create an Ombudsman position

B. Teaching Goals
1. Support interdisciplinary course development
    a. For example, the administration could put out a call for proposals for interdisciplinary courses to be developed
    b. Consider implementing Writing Across the Curriculum in some freshman English courses
2. Create interactive learning using existing simulation labs among various disciplines, i.e., nursing and rad tech and pharmacy students or social work and pharmacy and nursing
3. Identify overlapping commonly taught classes/topics and share/team-teach common topics across various majors
    a. For example: Science and History of Science; Science in Literature; Epidemiology and Social Science; Humanities (Communications, Foreign Languages, English) and Pharmacy; Economics and Literature
    b. Encourage development of such courses
4. Identify personnel resources from other agencies for their expertise
5. Teach smarter rather than longer and harder: quality enhancement, increased excitement for teaching, and develop tools of teaching that reflect current type learners
6. Increase knowledge of other disciplines' teaching responsibility identifying uniqueness for specific disciplines' way of assessing learning, i.e., English literature writing assignments versus nursing care plans and case studies
7. Increase knowledge of various majors accreditation standards and requirements
8. Consider publishing about innovative courses, if have assessment rubric and evaluation
9. Provide course releases to develop new courses or collaborate on a new course
10. Create mechanism for advertising courses available to students which provide course descriptions with reading lists; currently students usually have no idea about the specific content of the course before they take them

C. Research Goals
1. Establish rewards for faculty involvement in research across disciplines and within the community:
    a. Course releases for grant-writing and other research activity, including clinical innovations
    b. Establish a value in tenure and promotion
2. Adjust tenure/promotion requirements to incentivize collaboration in the areas of teaching, scholarship, service
3. Establish post tenure review
4. Provide seed money and mini grants for research
5. Return indirect costs to programs, colleges, and PIs according to policy

D. Governance Goals
1. Need Administrator buy-in
   a. Make part of mission
   b. Develop a vision for a collaborative campus
   c. Allocate resources
   d. Provide incentives
   e. Create structural links between units that need to work closely together. Example: Academic Affairs and Student Affairs
   f. Review workload policies
2. Shared Governance
   a. Stakeholders should include
      i. Faculty (tenured, non-tenured, clinical and adjunct)
      ii. Staff
      iii. Faculty and Staff Senates
      iv. Students
      v. Community through advisory groups
   b. Survey for concerns
3. Open budget process
   a. Use Mission Statement and Strategic Plan as guide to allocating resources
   b. Invest in network-building activities
      i. Professional development for faculty/staff
      ii. Encourage and support participation
4. Focused committee structure
5. Open up meetings
E. Culture Goals
1. Focus on internal structure
   a. Social networks (college is a social network)
   b. Recognize bridges
   c. Identify key people in each area who bridge these networks and reward them for doing so
   d. Provide social interaction opportunities
   e. Communication
   f. Centralized volunteer focus – (Volunteer Request Form in Nursing)
   g. Branding
2. Form campus reading groups
3. Sponsor workshops to develop soft skills
   a. Negotiation and conflict management
   b. Diversity among faculty

F. Service Goals
Since faculty are evaluated on university, community, and professional service, all need to be considered for innovation and collaboration.
1. University Service

      a. Committee participation
         i. Encourage participation from every university constituency
            a.) For example, establish better communication among faculty, administrative units and staff.
            b.) Post agenda and minutes
         ii. Reward committee participation

2. Community Service
    a. Set up Industrial, Arts, and Cultural Boards to foster relationships among the university, businesses, and the community
    b. Set up Experiential Learning and Training Opportunities
    c. Expand Community Partnerships including those with local educational systems
    d. Provide experts to the community where requested and needed. (Tasks may include teaching, volunteering, and consulting opportunities.)
    e. Provide health initiatives to the community (Example, Mobile Dental Hygiene Unit)
    f. Encourage increased collaboration between the Colleges/Schools and University offices that interact with the community (recruitment, public relations, alumni association, etc.)
    g. Prepare surveys that allow faculty and staff to select the type of community service they would feel comfortable performing
    h. Use this information to facilitate the ability of the various offices to help increase the exposure of the University to the community, provide service to the community and promote the expertise within the University. As examples, the surveys can ask faculty their willingness:
        i. To be a community expert in their field and accessible to the press
        ii. To give presentations or talks to community groups
        iii. To participate in recruiting activities at high schools
        iv. To explore other types of activities determined by the various offices

G. Other
1. Support collaboration between staff and faculty
2. Create more time and opportunity for faculty development
    a. How to make better faculty websites (for example, Academia.edu)
    b. Improve information sharing and flow
    c. Encourage culture of sharing one's institutional knowledge rather than hoarding it
    d. Provide time/incentives/stipend/honoraria for developing better faculty development workshops that would be highly motivating
    e. University Week presentations are currently uneven, not in-depth
    f. Could provide incentives for faculty development during summer, but would need to ensure quality

3. End of year retreat for faculty (find a sponsor) – off campus if possible
4. Designate a committee meeting time each week across the university to free up meeting times without conflict with classes or office hours

V. Conclusion

The Committee views the reorganization of ULM as a positive force in fostering collaboration in, between, and among all units/constituencies of the university. Driving collaboration is innovation--that generation of ideas which allows us to take what we have, see it through new lenses, and make it new, exciting, and relevant to students, faculty, staff, the administration, and the local and wider communities. If ULM focuses on delivering excellence in all areas improved upon and developed through collaboration and innovation, we can truly say that we are fulfilling the mission of the university because we equip students "to compete, succeed, and contribute in an every-changing global society through a ***transformative education***."

Appendix A

ULM Initiatives and Centers That Could Provide Collaborative Opportunities

- College of Arts, Education and Sciences
  - The Write Place
  - Math resource Center
  - Student Success Center
  - Various Science Labs (specific to classes)
  - Guest Speakers & Speaker Series (English, History, Communication, Music, Art & cross disciplinary as well)
  - Concerts/Musicals/Operas
  - Summer Science Events for Area Students
  - I Teach English Seminars
  - Natural History Museum
  - Region III Science Fair
  - Mock Trial Activities
  - Study Abroad
  - Internships
  - Language Lab
  - Howard Hughes Medical Institute
  - Dance Collaboration with Twin City Ballet and Strauss Theatre
  - Culture Connection
  - Literacy Lab
  - DREAM

- o ULM Child Development Center
- o CEHD International Office
- o Digital Media Lab
- o Video Production Studio
- o eTEACH

- College of Business and Social Sciences
  - o Small Business Development Center
  - o Small Business Risk Management Institute
  - o Northeast Louisiana Business and Community Development Center
  - o Small Business Institute Program
  - o Center for Professional and Organizational Development
  - o Center for Business and Economic Research
  - o Marketing Lab
  - o Business Success Center (student tutoring and support)
  - o CISCO Lab
  - o Social Sciences Research LAB
  - o Criminal Justice Collaboration with law enforcement agencies
  - o Social Work
  - o Forensic Activities

- College of Health Sciences and Pharmacy
  - o Simulation labs in Kitty DeGree Hall
  - o IPE with Rad Tech, OT, SLP, Social Work, Pharmacy, Counseling
  - o Real actors for simulations with theatre students
  - o Service Learning in community through public health course
  - o Health Fairs education involving all areas of health disciplines
  - o Health promotion events involving all areas of health disciplines and involving business majors for budget, advertising, space utilization, etc.
  - o Service Learning in long term care facilities and assisted learning facilities
  - o Students interact to plan care for resources of patients
  - o Students involved as team members in agencies
  - o Mobility, rehab exercises, stress relief
  - o Nursing, OT, and KINES for mobility and rehab exercise
  - o All health disciplines and counseling for stress relief
  - o Nursing with Student Health Services
  - o Immunizations, PPDs, titer blood draws, etc.
  - o Informed Consents
  - o Assist with summer camp physicals
  - o Assist with athletes flu vaccine campaign
  - o Human Performance Lab
  - o Don D. Jackson Archive
  - o Community Counseling Clinic

- o Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic

- University Library
  - o Functions as a center of information for both university and community
  - o Faculty Liaisons
  - o Subject Specialists for research
  - o University Archives
  - o Special Collections
  - o Friends of the Library
  - o Louis: The Louisiana Library Network

- Outside of the Colleges
  - o Office of Career Connections
  - o Math Resource Center (likely will be claimed by the College of A&S)
  - o The Write Place (likely will be claimed by the College of A&S)
  - o Student Success Center (computer lab, study rooms, tutors)
  - o Student Health Center/Counseling Center
  - o Office of Student Life and Leadership (CAB, SGA, Greek Life, etc.)
  - o KXUL and KEDM radio stations
  - o Activity Center/Natatorium
  - o Alumni Center (access to alumni)
  - o Library

Appendix B
Seven Simple Suggestions to Enhance Faculty Well-being
From Dr. Pani to the IC Committee[1]

1. Schedule Community Time.
On university and college calendars give faculty an opportunity to regularly get together to hold face-to-face departmental meetings or do other service work. Schedule days within the yearly calendar expressly for faculty development activities.

2. Create Community Spaces
In the design of new buildings provide comfortable places for faculty, staff, and students to meet. When buildings are renovated, teardown walls to open up new community spaces for departments and other groups of faculty. Improve faculty offices to make them more attractive places to work privately or with small groups of students or colleagues.

3. Develop and Support Departments
Take departments more seriously by training chairs, redesigning their work, paying them more, decentralizing planning and budgeting, and expecting higher quality performance from the faculty they lead.

4. Redefine Faculty Work
At the school-level, eyes wide open, examine the actual day-to-day work of faculty, then based on these data, redefine faculty work and improve ways to assess, recognize and reward it.

5. Decrease Busy Work
At the department level, do a faculty work inventory. Then ask faculty to rebalance the quantity and quality of their work (e.g., decrease quantity by 10% and increase quality by 20%).

6. Give Preemptive Sabbaticals and Leaves
To counter "feeling stuck" establish active reciprocal agreements with other institutions within the United States and abroad for faculty exchanges. Redesign sabbatical and leave programs to make it possible for a higher percentage of faculty to renew themselves more often. Give leaves and sabbaticals before faculty need them.

7. Monitor Faculty Well-Being
Start and fund a standing committee on faculty well-being. The higher-order goal of this committee should be to improve faculty vitality and morale. To accomplish this goal, the committee should a) annually measure faculty well-being at the level of departments and above, b) evaluate programs of faculty development, and c) suggest specific interventions to sustain and improve faculty vitality. Be prepared to start similar committees for administrators and staff.

Suggestions derived from interviews of faculty at teaching-centered colleges (Walker, 2002) and results of national surveys of faculty (Menges et al, 1999).

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[1]   http://wellbeingincollege.org/upload/Seven%20Suggestions%20to%20Enhance%20Faculty%20Well-Being_doc.pdf.