A Leadership Guide for Planning, Implementing, and Institutionalizing Interdisciplinary Programs

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1. Start by articulating a common understanding of STEM interdisciplinary learning goals that will drive the cycle of curricular innovation, development, assessment, and improvement.
2. Use assessment to connect interdisciplinary learning goals with program structure, content, and pedagogy, paying attention to students as individual learners who come with diverse backgrounds, experiences, expectations, career aspirations, and goals.
3. Build a critical mass of faculty, from within and with new hires, that assumes leadership responsibility in the iterative process of shaping interdisciplinary curricular and co-curricular approaches and in assessing the impact of those approaches on undergraduate STEM learners.
4. Incorporate interdisciplinary program needs into the processes of campus governance and resource distribution—financial, personnel, equipment, and spaces.
Institutional Alignment

5. Align interdisciplinary learning with the institutional vision, mission, and identity, as well as in strategic planning processes at all levels.

“Another important lesson from this project is that institutions tend to overestimate barriers and that this overestimation can be a deterrent. Change agents tended to believe that there would be incredible campus resistance. The lesson learned from FIL campuses is that while barriers should not be ignored, they should not overwhelm campus leaders.”

– Kezar and Elrod, 2011
“You’ve got to want to connect the dots, Mr. Michaelson.”
Process for Building and Institutionalizing Interdisciplinary Programs

This overall process takes 5-10 years.
You have a outcomes, a programmatic approach and an assessment plan...now how do you implement and move toward institutionalization?

1. Do you have the right people?
   - Do you have faculty and staff with appropriate interdisciplinary expertise?
   - Do you have incentives for encouraging participation?
   - Do you have faculty development programs in place? Partnerships/support of CTL?

2. Do you have enabling structures?
   - Do workload policies support interdisciplinary pedagogy and teaching?
   - Do P&T policies support ID teaching?
   - Do you have the appropriate space for the course/program?
   - Do you have a plan for funding the program?
   - Do you have a strategy for communication with and to the community?

3. Governance?
   - Have departments been included in the conversation?
   - Are ID leaders included on faculty governance committees?
   - Do you have curriculum approval and review procedures that are friendly to ID course/programs?

4. Celebrations and Symbols?
   - Do you have a mechanism to acknowledge faculty work and celebrate achievement of key milestones?

Strategies and Resources
- Hiring Procedures
- Faculty development communities
- Create Center for ID
- Review P&T policies

YES
NO
Process for Building and Institutionalizing Interdisciplinary Programs

This overall process takes 5-10 years.
Reflection

• Think about interdisciplinary programs on your campus—what is your biggest challenge with respect to institutionalization of these types of programs?
Discussion I

• Discuss with colleagues: What are the big challenges to institutionalizing interdisciplinary programs?

• Report out: One big challenge from table discussion
Reframing Leadership for Interdisciplinary Learning

A good frame makes it easier to know what you are up against and, ultimately, what you can do about it.

Bolman and Deal
Four Frames Model

Reframing Organizations
Artistry, Choice, and Leadership
LEE G. BOLMAN
TERRENCE E. DEAL

Reframing Academic Leadership
LEE G. BOLMAN
JOAN V. GALLOS
Structural

Do you have enabling structures for ID learning?
Human Resources

Do you have (and can you keep) the right people to support ID initiatives?
Have you created alignment between ID initiatives and faculty governance?
Do you recognize and celebrate achievement with respect to ID initiatives?
Discussion II – Ad hoc case study

• Randomly selected case study from table
• Briefly explain your challenge
• Work together and view the challenge through the prospective of each of the four frames
Discussion – addressing the challenge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Framing the Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15.2

Choosing a Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>If yes:</th>
<th>If no:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are individual commitment and motivation essential?</td>
<td>Human resource, symbolic</td>
<td>Structural, political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is technical quality of decision important?</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Human resource, political, symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there high level of ambiguity, uncertainty?</td>
<td>Political, symbolic</td>
<td>Structural, human resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are conflict and scarce resource a significant factor?</td>
<td>Political, symbolic</td>
<td>Structural, human resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you working from the bottom up?</td>
<td>Political, symbolic</td>
<td>Structural, human resource</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Closing Reflection

• Individual reflection: Return to your original campus challenges.
  – Which of the four frames do you think reveals new insights to help you address the challenges you face?
Closing

- Sharing...