Discipline Specific Meetings on Best Practices

Faculty members are asked to meet in their convening groups to discuss the various pedagogical approaches and academic standards that seem to be most effective in promoting academic excellence in their specific discipline.

Isn't it exciting to have time to discuss what we work to do: to teach and to do it well?

We would like this to be an inductive process that provides the flexibility for convening groups to share ideas and to discuss matters of most concern to them.

For the purpose of providing structure to the conversation, we would ask that:

1. A member of each convening group serve as recorder and submit a summary of "best practices" to our in-service committee. The information gathered from each convening group will be integrated and shared with all faculty members before September. Summaries may be submitted to Kristin Kenneavy (Kkenneav@ramapo.edu) or Lysandra Perez-Strumolo (Lperezst@ramapo.edu) in hard copy or electronic form.

2. We are also asking that you consider any or all the following questions for structuring your conversations:

What pedagogical or curricular structures most effectively promote student engagement and/or intrinsic motivation?

How can we make courses more meaningful?

How can students better connect what they are learning to their lives?

Imagine what your program would look like in the absence of any limitations; then identify the resources that would be needed in order to achieve best practices.

3. Finally, you may, if you wish, **choose** to use any of the following resources for structuring your conversations as well:

Resource # 1:

Course Level Guidelines developed by our faculty colleagues who serve on ARC. This information is available in the ARC MANUAL at:

http://www.ramapo.edu/fa/files/2013/08/ARC-Manual-2013-2014.pdf

V. Course Level Guidelines

100 Level: Open to all college students; with few exceptions, there are no prerequisites. Target audience is first-year students.

200 Level: General orientation is for major, minor, or program, as well as all-college audience; may have prerequisites**.** Target audience is sophomores.

300 Level: General orientation is for the major, minor, or program; ordinarily has a prerequisite. Courses are more focused, requiring critical analysis and development of issues and themes. Courses for concentration of student's interest. Usually requires a term paper or appropriate project**.** Target audience is juniors to seniors.

400 Level: Courses designed to demonstrate methodology skills and oriented specifically for students with an advanced level of education in a discipline and with senior-level academic skills; must have a prerequisite. Requires a major paper, project or other instrument which demonstrates an advanced academic level and represents a significant percentage of the final grade. Target audience is advanced juniors and seniors.

Resource # 2

Learning Goals and Outcomes as defined by our faculty colleagues who served on the Learning Goals and Outcomes task force (2007). This document is available at: http://www.ramapo.edu/provost/files/2013/04/5-5.pdf

REPORT FROM THE TASK FORCE ON STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES
MISSION PILLARS

Goal: Interdisciplinary Analysis
Students will be able to:
- Evaluate, integrate and apply disparate sorts of knowledge.
- Create and employ innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to identify, comprehend, and address contemporary problems.

Goal: Experiential Learning
Students will be able to:
- Identify how prior content and concepts have been applied to their experiences and how their experiences will enhance future academic study and personal, professional, and civic development.
- Reflect on their experiences individually and collectively by challenging assumptions and hypotheses about their beliefs, outcomes of their decisions, and actions they have taken, and by sharing their insights.
- Understand and articulate the structure, relationships between, and impacts of the multiple communities and organizations with which they interact.

Goal: Intercultural / International Perspective
Students will able to:
- Understand and negotiate the complexity and diversity of cultures in their various contexts (local, national and global).
- Recognize the importance of communicating orally and in writing in more than one language.
- Comprehend the causes and consequences of the disparity in the global distribution of power and resources.

SKILLS
Goal: Critical Inquiry
Students will be able to:
- Think and engage analytically.
- Assess theoretical arguments, data and other evidence.
- Read, analyze and understand written, oral and visual works of art from across the arts and humanities, and from across a range of historical periods and cultures.
- Evaluate scientific evidence and the scientific arguments generated from it.
- Develop competence in quantitative reasoning and in the application of arithmetical, algebraic, geometric and statistical methods in solving problems.
- Recognize that taking risks in academic enquiry fosters creativity and innovation.

- Develop a historical perspective that includes the ability to place events in the context of time and place and acknowledges that historical interpretation is influenced by social, economic, political, and ideological considerations.

Goal: Communication

Students will be able to:
- Present coherent written and oral arguments with correct grammar and syntax.
- Apply computer technology to depict concepts and data visually.
- Access needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically, and incorporate primary and secondary sources into essays, reports and other forms of communication.
- Recognize the economic, legal, social and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

KNOWLEDGE

Goal: In-Depth Knowledge

Students will be able to:
- Demonstrate proficiency and depth of knowledge in their *major* field of study

Goal: Understanding of the World in Which We Live

Students will be able to:
- Understand the basic fundamentals of scientific methods that are used to comprehend and explain natural phenomena, and be aware of the place of science knowledge in contemporary culture and history.
- Study and analyze social phenomena.
- Recognize the properties and importance of a healthy environment, and the benefits of environmentally sustainable practices.

VALUES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Goal: Awareness

Students will be able to:
- Become more aware of their own individual values and ideals, and to think and reflect on the moral and civic dimension of issues, problems and matters of individual and public concern.
- Appreciate the perspectives of others on issues of individual and public concern.

Goal: Engagement

Students will be able to:
- Act and communicate critically about issues, problems and matters of public consequence.
- Use both political and non-political processes to promote community well-being

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Resource # 3 Data from the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) is available at:

http://www.ramapo.edu/ir/survey-research/nsse-fsse/

This document provides student opinion data from a limited sample of students and compares student responses to other samples (COPLAC, Carnegie, and the national NSSE sample). The sample includes 488 student respondents of whom 361 are freshmen.

Resource # 4 Data from the 2009 Graduating Senior Survey available at:

http://www.ramapo.edu/ir/data-reports/

This document provides student opinion data from a limited sample of graduating seniors across majors (note that for some majors, sample size is as low as 3). Respondents are asked to indicate their opinion about the degree to which they were challenged, the extent to which they learned and the degree to which their courses required effort.

REPORT FORM: Please describe the themes around which your conversation was structured and provide a summary of best practices shared by your colleagues