Design Team for the Curriculum Enrichment Component (CEC)

Ramapo College of New Jersey

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

February 23, 2011
REPORT AUTHORS

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(formerly known as Greater Expectation Design Team, now mostly called "The Team")

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Academic Review Committee (ARC)
- American and International Studies (AIS)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Anisfield School of Business (ASB)
- Contemporary Arts (CA)
- Course Enhancement Plan (CEP)
- Course Enrichment Component (CEC)
- General Education Curriculum Committee (GECCo)
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Social Science and Human Service (SSHS)
- Theoretical and Applied Science (TAS)
The Design Team met with Provost Barnett on the date of August 31, 2010, to officially receive the Charge and begin working together on the CEC. We include the Background of the CEC and the Charge we received on that date below to provide history and context of this report:

Design Team Charge by Dr. Beth Barnett, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (copied and pasted from the original document)

**Course Enrichment Component: Assessed and Refreshed**

**Design Team Charge**

**Background**

The Curriculum Enhancement Plan (CEP) was implemented in the fall semester of 2006. According to then-Vice Provost Martha Ecker,

"The new curriculum we envisioned would be consistently more rigorous, reflective of the college's mission pillars, and integrative of liberal studies in all areas including pre-professional and applied programs (Transition to the Curriculum Enhancement Plan: Assessment and Evaluation 2002-2006)."

Through the transition to CEP, most courses became 4 credit courses with 3.6 credits of in-class time and 0.4 credits (5 hours per semester) of outside-class activities (Referred to within this discussion as Course Enrichment Component or CEC). In the MOU between the AFT Local and Ramapo College, examples of course enrichment, outside-class activities were given:

"To facilitate College efforts to significantly enhance teaching and learning without excessive costs to the College, the faculty will incorporate into the syllabus and class instruction extra class activity opportunities, such as participation in convocation, colloquia, seminars and guest speaker programs. Such extra class activity will be incorporated into the curriculum after consultation with the Convening Group and Dean (Memorandum of Agreement between the AFT Local and Ramapo College of New Jersey, November 16, 2005)."

The Academic and Curricular Guidelines Manual revision of March 2006 described the course enrichment component as the "Experiential Learning Component". This reflected the confusion surrounding the purpose of the five hour component and led to further disparity within its implementation across courses. When the Experiential Learning Task Force (2006-7) defined experiential learning as, "a purposeful process of engaged, active learning in which the student constructs knowledge, skills, or values by means of direct experiences in authentic, real-world contexts (Task Force on Experiential Learning Report, March 28, 2007)" there was heated discussion around the inclusion of the CEC within the definition of experiential learning.

In the summer of 2009, several members of Academic Affairs and of Student Affairs attended the AAC&U Greater Expectations Institute. Their resulting action plan called for, "a year-long dialog about our values, student engagement, and high-impact practices centered on the Course Enrichment Component" (Back to Our Values, Forward to 21st Century Learning: Creating High Impact Learning Through Curriculum Enrichment). The action plan provides recommendations, considerations, and a review of barriers to this dialog. Before this plan was instituted, Ramapo College hosted a visit from a Middle States accreditation team. As part of its review, the team looked closely at Ramapo's curriculum including the CEC.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted to reaffirm accreditation for Ramapo College. The College is required to, "submit a monitoring report, due by April 1, 2012, documenting (among other items), "... the implementation of policies and procedures to assure that the experiential learning components of all courses are conducted with rigor appropriate to the programs offered and are
designed, delivered and evaluated to foster a coherent student learning experience (Standard 11)” (Ramapo College Action Letter from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 25 June 2010).

Standard 11 Educational Offerings
The institution’s educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings (Characteristics of Excellence, 2002, p. 31).

The Charge to the Design Team

The following charge, shaped by the disparity in the implementation of CEC and the directive from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, is given to the Design Team by the Provost.

The Design Team for the Course Enrichment Component (CEC) will:

1. Work with the Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment to survey faculty and students on:
   o Activities used to fulfill CEC requirements – examples and how they were received by faculty and students;
   o Implementation practices (i.e. graded/non graded, written/oral/no report, assigned/self-selected CEC, linked/not linked to work in the course, reflective analysis/no reflective analysis); and
   o Issues of concern and recommendations for improvement (including but not limited to how to better engage students in CEC activities, how to facilitate more meaningful learning through CEC, how to purposefully link Academic and Student Affairs through CEC).

2. Recommend policy and implementation procedures that assure that the CEC of all courses are conducted with rigor appropriate to the programs offered and are designed, delivered and evaluated to foster a coherent student learning experience.*

3. Distribute results of the survey and recommendations; hold an open forum for discussion of the survey results and recommendations and policies recommended by the committee.

4. In consultation with the faculty and GECCo, recommend overarching student learning goals relevant to all CECs.

5. Engage the campus community in a dialog revolving around CEC and its potential role as a high impact learning experience.
   a. how are high-impact practices perceived by student affairs and academic affairs?
   b. how can CEC purposefully link Academic Affairs and Student Affairs?
   c. what CEC resources are available and how can resources be made readily accessible by members of the community (e.g., database/website)?
   d. what best practices exist for faculty involvement in CEC (with the recognition that faculty are not contractually bound to oversee the activities that define CEC)?
   e. what other high-impact learning practices can be tied to the CEC?

The Team was also presented with an aggressive Action-based Timeline:
# TEAM ACTIONS AND TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Purpose/Details</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet with Eric Daffron, Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment</td>
<td>To develop CEC Survey for Faculty and Students and Plan Implementation</td>
<td>By 01 October 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete administration of CEC Survey.</td>
<td>Collect information on current practices and suggestions for improvement of CEC.</td>
<td>By 01 November 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze survey results.</td>
<td>Draw conclusions from results.</td>
<td>By 15 November 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop recommended policies and procedures for the CEC.*</td>
<td>Meet Middle State's request for policies and procedures.</td>
<td>By 13 December 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribute results of the survey, conclusions, and draft policies.</td>
<td>Communicate findings and recommendations.</td>
<td>By 14 December 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold an open forum for discussion of survey results and draft CEC policies.</td>
<td>Consultation with community.</td>
<td>By 19 January 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend student learning goals for CEC.</td>
<td>Meet Middle State's request for evaluation of CECs to foster a coherent student learning experience.</td>
<td>By 11 March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop plan to engage the campus community in a dialog revolving around CEC and high impact activities.</td>
<td>Expand the use of CEC and integrate with other units and activities across campus.</td>
<td>By 30 June 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement plans to engage the campus community in a dialog revolving around CEC and high impact activities.</td>
<td>Expand the use of CEC and integrate with other units and activities across campus</td>
<td>By 15 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit final report with recommendations to the Provost</td>
<td>Expand the use of CEC and integrate with other units and activities across campus</td>
<td>By August 13, 2013</td>
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* In order to meet Middle States' decision, "To request a monitoring report, due by April 1, 2012, documenting the implementation of policies and procedures to assure that the experiential learning components of all courses are conducted with rigor appropriate to the programs offered and are designed, delivered and evaluated to foster a coherent student learning experience (Standard 11)" (Middle States Statement of Accreditation Status, 25 June 2010), recommended policies must be favorably reviewed by ARC, Faculty Assembly, and Provost's Council and approved by the Provost by May 2011 and implemented for Academic Year 2011-2012.

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**SPIRIT OF THE TEAM**
Immediately upon receipt of the Charge and Timeline, the Team went into action. First and foremost, the group focused on the spirit of our team and the need to immediately communicate with the larger community.

Soon after the Team’s work began, we sent a letter to the Ramapo College community (see below). We have included the letter in this report in order to highlight the premise upon which our group operated and the approach with which we chose to tackle this issue.

Dear Ramapo College Community,

We would like to introduce ourselves and announce an initiative that will examine the Course Enrichment Component (CEC) at Ramapo College (commonly referred to as the 5 hour experiential component). For those who are new to our community, the CEC is intended to be a meaningful and authentic experience. Designed by the instructor, this experience occurs outside of the classroom and is intended to develop and enhance the in-class experience while building upon a liberal arts education.

Following recommendations from the Greater Expectations Team, the Office of the Provost has created a “Design Team,” comprised of 23 members of our College community (listed below) who are representative of faculty, staff, administration, and students. The Team is charged with examining the present state of CEC and making recommendations for the future of CEC at Ramapo College.

Members of this team believe that this type of learning helps make a Ramapo College education distinct and allows for a unique level of education to be accessible to all students. The Team also works on the premise that, if done right, the CEC provides an opportunity for true community building and collaboration.

It is in the spirit of community action and engagement that we write to you today. The Team will soon distribute a college wide survey via e-mail so you will have an opportunity to provide your thoughts on the CEC. We will also be inviting members of the community to participate in focus groups. Your feedback and participation are essential and will shape what the Design Team recommends as an action plan for the future of CEC.

We invite you to review the Design Team’s goals and charge (Course Enrichment Component: Assessed and Refreshed) via our website; [http://ww2.ramapo.edu/administration/provosthome/design-team.aspx](http://ww2.ramapo.edu/administration/provosthome/design-team.aspx)

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions and we look forward to working with the community on this innovative project.

Very truly yours,

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SUMMARY OF THE TEAM’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS THUS FAR:
The Design Team met together for the first full meeting on September 3, 2010. Our immediate goals included a full discussion of the charge, forming an action plan in order to meet the demands of the charge, and strategizing ways to include the larger Ramapo Community in this work from the start. To this end, the Design Team developed a website to capture the progress and be transparent with the community via team minutes.

Upon launching the Team, a letter to the Ramapo Community was sent to all students, faculty, professional staff, and administration, informing them of the Team’s purpose and inviting them to be actively engaged in this important process.

The Team began to focus on data collection through designing a written survey to be distributed to the entire community. In addition, the Team divided into sub-teams to further collect data via focus group discussions. The sub-teams were organized by demographic of those who would participate: students, professional staff, faculty, and administration.

The Design Team, as a full body, collaboratively developed the written survey. The survey was open for two weeks in October 2010 and generated 936 respondents. It should be noted, that, while the survey construction was a process including all members of the Team, Dr. Lysandra Perez-Strumolo and Trish Williams transformed the survey into Qualtrics. They exported the survey data from Qualtrics in report form and filtered the report data by role (faculty, staff, student, and administrator) for distribution to the Team for analysis.

Simultaneously, the sub-teams worked together in order to make plans for holding focus groups. Over the course of a few weeks, twelve (12) focus groups were held across campus. It should be noted that all sub-teams but one (due to the student’s schedules) were comprised of members from all areas of campus (meaning, the “student” sub-team was led by faculty, professional staff, administration, and students from the Design Team). The Team decided that this was the best way to approach focus groups, so that all perspectives would be present at each “level” and in each group.

All members of The Team were given the opportunity to be trained in focus group organization, protocol, and analyses. Dr. Emily Abbey, Assistant Professor of Developmental Psychology (SSHS) led a training session, with further support later provided by team members Dr. Ed Petkus, Associate Professor of Marketing (ASB), Dr. Maya Poran, Associate Professor of Developmental Psychology (SSHS), and Dr. Eric Daffron, Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment. All members of the larger Team participated in focus group sessions, acting in various roles, as note-takers, facilitators, and/or engaged in intensive qualitative analyses later.

The rigors of qualitative analyses coupled with our clear intention to maintain the integrity of the data demanded that the initial timeline for completion be extended. In order to fully analyze the data, the Team needed to be flexible with the original due date of this report (December 13, 2010) and worked toward a February 2011 goal. At present, all data has been collected, examined, and analyzed. It is from this data and process of analyses that this report comes before the community.
It is the goal of the Team for this report to give voice to the community members who participated in the written survey and the focus groups. All themes presented, and recommendations made, are based on the data given by the community.

**BASIC INFORMATION:**

This summary is being provided for basic survey information purposes and to give the reader a context for this report. The survey was electronically disseminated in October 2010 and was opened for a period of 4 weeks. During this period, 936 Ramapo Community members participated in the survey. Of these 936 respondents, 705 identified as students, 151 identified as faculty members, 50 identified as staff, and 22 identified as administrators.

Of the 50 staff members who completed the survey, 6 had also taught courses and seven had taken courses at Ramapo since the implementation of CEC. Thirty-nine of the staff member respondents reported being employed on a full-time basis and 7 reported having part-time positions. Fifteen of the 50 staff participants reported that their role involved working or supporting students with CEC.

Faculty members who participated in the survey, 59 were tenured, 38 untenured but tenure-track, and 2 had visiting or temporary appointments. In terms of rank, the sample consisted of 28 full professors, 14 associate professors, 12 assistant professors and 37 adjunct professors. Length of employment at Ramapo varied with the majority in the under ten category: 24 reported more than 20 years of service, 23 reported 11-20 years of service, 34 reported 6-10 years of service, and 66 reported less than five years. School reporting structure of faculty respondents included 28 from AIS, 15 from ASB, 35 from CA, 39 from SSHS, 26 from TAS.

The majority of student respondents (603 of 705) were in the 17 to 24 year old age range, with the remaining students’ ages ranging from 25-59. While ethnic identity of the student sample was representative of the overall student population at the College, the gender of respondents was significantly disproportioned relative to the overall College population, with 488 identifying as female, 146 as male, and 5 as other. The majority of student participants (232 of 705) were in their first year at the college, with 183 sophomores, 131 juniors, 72 seniors, and 15 having been at Ramapo more than 8 semesters. Student majors were varied and seemed to represent all disciplines.

**ANALYSES AND PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE INFORMATION**

Following is a presentation of primary themes that emerged in the qualitative data of each methodology: survey and focus groups. These themes were located utilizing the “grounded theory” approach (first explained by Glaser and Strauss\(^1\)). In brief: each focus group session had at least one note-taker present (sometimes two). All written notes of focus group discussions, as well as all written responses to open-ended questions in the survey, were

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\(^1\) Glaser, B., and Strauss, A. (1967); *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.*
examined for topics and themes, and analyzed by group members of each sub-team. The
data was analyzed and cross-referenced by multiple team members until “saturation” (when
all topics or themes were located in each survey question and each focus group session).

While it was the intention for the process to yield those themes unique to each focus group,
and those overarching themes across groups, it is important to note that all topics and
themes were found in all groups. This is quite extraordinary, and gives the Team great
confidence in sharing the themes and in making recommendations. While the vantage on
issues may vary, the themes and issues deemed relevant are shared among all members of the
Ramapo Community.

Primary Themes
Primary themes in this report are overarching concerns from every group who participated
in this endeavor. Since all themes were shared by all groups, this report is being presented
via main themes rather than by distinct groups (such as student, faculty, professional staff,
and administration). Themes were given their “titles” by the words that were repeated in
survey and focus group data. For example, the words “purpose” and “clear” appeared
frequently in the data; therefore, there is a larger theme entitled “Purpose and Clarity of
CEC.” In this particular larger theme, other issues, suggestions, and statements that were
associated in the data with purpose and clarity are included.

Please note that these are themes that emerged, and do not represent every idea or viewpoint
from the surveys or focus groups. If one person made a unique statement, it may not be
represented in a theme. There were many well-articulated ideas, questions, and complaints
throughout the qualitative survey and focus group data. All members of the community are
encouraged to look at the raw data (to be made available on the Team Website) to get a
stronger sense of the various approaches to, and opinions about, these very important issues.

The primary themes found within all groups include:

1. Theme One: Purpose of the CEC
2. Theme Two: The CEC has Great Potential
3. Theme Three: There are Implementation Issues
4. Theme Four: Consistency
5. Theme Five: Accountability is in Question
6. Theme Six: Here are Some Challenges
7. Theme Seven: Improvement Themes and Suggestions

THEME ONE: PURPOSE AND CLARITY OF THE CEC
Two primary elements came to the fore in this theme: 1) The majority of respondents did
have a clear sense of the ideal intended purpose of the CEC, and 2) Most participants also
believed in order to reach the ideal CEC goals that clearer requirements be developed and
shared with the Community.
To begin, participants from all groups (students, faculty, professional staff, and administrators) had a clear sense of the ideal purpose of the CEC. Most mentioned their perception that the CEC provided the opportunity for students to apply what they learned in the classroom to the “outside world” in some way. Furthermore, especially among faculty, there was the belief that the CEC afforded students the opportunity to develop into life-long learners; that participation in the CEC helped students develop the capacity to be self-directed, and internally motivated, independent learners and citizens of the world. (Discussion of the potential of CEC is further elaborated in the next section/theme). It should also be noted that others sense of the purpose of CEC centered on the politically based creation of the CEC, and perception of it as a band aid over a larger problem (also to be discussed in greater detail later in this report).

While most participants understood the ideal purpose of the CEC, most also believed that the purpose of the CEC is not clearly articulated at the all-college program and (sometimes) course levels. Throughout the survey and focus group data, participants (students, staff, administrators, and faculty) articulated the need for the purpose of the CEC to be made clear, and the need for explicit learning goals for the CEC in general. It was believed that many students, faculty, professional staff, and administration do not fully understand the CEC.

In relation to this need for clarity, it was suggested (notably by students) that the CEC be introduced at Orientation and be integrated fully into First Year Seminar. Others stated that it must clearly relate to a liberal arts education, and that the direct relation to Ramapo’s mission and pillars should be highlighted. Clear requirements for what “counts” as CEC was also mentioned. Issues of consistency among faculty were also mentioned. Some respondents suggested that all faculty members should approach CEC consistently and integrate it into their courses.

**THEME TWO: THE CEC HAS GREAT POTENTIAL**

While there were some who stated that the CEC had no value and should be eliminated, the vast majority of survey respondents and focus group participants (from all groups) had positive regard for the CEC and believed it has great potential. In addition, the theme (which appeared in all surveyed groups equally) that the CEC can distinguish Ramapo College from other institutions was found throughout the data.

Of the 705 student respondents, 387 (54.9%) described their understanding of CEC as a means of enhancing student learning, ability to apply knowledge, and/or engagement. Conversely, a large proportion of student respondents (123 of 705 or 17%) express concerns about CEC being ineffective, or simply a facet of Ramapo’s credit-hour system (114 of 705 or 16%).

Faculty views are similar. While 126 of 151 faculty participants (83%) describe CEC as potentially useful in enhancing student learning and development, 72 faculty respondents (48%) expressed concern about the potential for CEC to hinder student learning primarily as a result of inconsistent implementation or because students do not understand its value.
Positive responses, perceptions, and the potential of CEC included the following sentiments:

- Experiential learning and enrichment activities can bring the campus together;
- The overall focus at Ramapo on enrichment/experience has the potential to be a truly distinctive and unique experience;
- This can clearly provide opportunities for active learning and enrichment;
- The “forced exposure” for students is positive because they experience and participate/are engaged with that which they would not normally do;
- Student development is enhanced through exposure to many experiences;
- The CEC helps to promote the value of new experiences and perspectives;
- The CEC can enhance independent learning and connection to the real world; it can help students become self determined learners and taking them outside of their comfort zone.
- Finally, it was noted that the CEC itself can, and has, helped bridge Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in a unique partnership; and also benefits the college as a whole by increasing student participation at events.

**THEME THREE: THERE ARE IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

All groups stated that there is a need to make the CEC more intentional and to integrate this experience more fully into courses. The findings from all groups continuously, and expressly, asked for/suggested the creation of a centralized site for information sharing that might include best practices and opportunities for student learning.

Bundling (such as using one large/long event for multiple courses or learning goals) and teach-ins (spending a day at a focused event surrounding a them), while not uniformly desired, were regarded as positive possibilities by most participants from all groups (from survey data: 82% of staff, 67% of faculty, and 62% of students supported the idea of bundling hours; 79% of staff, 56% of faculty, and 69% of students supported the idea of teach-ins). Cross-counting events were discussed as an implementation hazard that negatively influences student learning and detracts from the meaningfulness of the CEC (and one that is occurring presently. From survey data: almost half of the student respondents, 48%, indicated that they had cross-counted CEC experiences). Course integration was a continuous theme by all groups. It was stated that the CEC needs to be explicitly connected to courses.

Several students also raised concerns about the cost (4 students) of CEC as well as the issue of access for students with disabilities (2 students). Although the concerns were raised by a small minority, there seems to be a need for the community to recognize the issue of cost and equal access as important factors to consider.

**THEME FOUR: CONSISTENCY**

It was noted, through the focus group data, that there was much variation among/between courses, with some faculty not engaged with the CEC at all, while others were extremely attentive to the CEC in their courses. In relation to this, the need for more STRUCTURE was noted repeatedly.
Another clear theme, coming from all groups, is the power of faculty participation. It was often noted that faculty had the power to engage students with the CEC and to set the tone for how the CEC was experienced by students as a whole. It was likewise noted that there is not a consistent experience by students in the classroom in regard to faculty presentation of the CEC. The inconsistency of faculty support for the CEC was described as problematic in that such inconsistency can contribute to the devaluation of CEC in our students. Faculty who decided to opt out of CEC, or overtly deride it to students, were perceived as making it difficult for students to understand the value of the work, as well as having negative influence over student perception of whether or not to take the CEC seriously. It was repeatedly stated that the faculty need to understand their role in the CEC really does influence the student’s experience of the CEC. It was also noted that all faculty should have the CEC noted on their syllabi in some fashion.

Importantly, it should be noted that a large majority of faculty are fully committed to the CEC and are doing it well. In fact, 90% of faculty respondents described integrating CEC experiences into their courses and requiring written assignments of summaries for review and/or grading. Many students provided their feedback centering on the many valuable experiences they might not have encountered without the CEC requirement, and the attentiveness to it by the faculty.

**THEME FIVE: ACCOUNTABILITY IS IN QUESTION**

Primary language/words/phrases that emerged throughout the data included: accountability and oversight. There was a strong sense that students need to be accountable for their work, faculty need to be accountable for participation of the CEC, and (most importantly) that the college needs to be accountable for this program. Some students noted that they need oversight and monitoring because, without it, they can easily avoid full participation in the CEC. This sentiment was noted by all groups.

Regarding, oversight or evaluation of CEC activities, 36% of faculty believed that there should be no outside oversight or review process of instructor designed activities. 25% thought it could be reviewed by a convening group committee, 18% by convener, 17% by a convening group member. Only 5% believed that their activities should be reviewed by Deans, and only 5% believed that their activities should be reviewed by a committee in relation to School. The majority of faculty respondents on the survey who agreed that oversight is needed as a way to ensure CEC is implemented consistently noted that the oversight should occur at the convening group level.

In addition, 22% of faculty had various suggestions ranging from bundling, to occasional review processes, to collaborative idea sharing or working with guidelines, or elimination of the CEC completely. Most “other” responses indicated strong belief that such work should not be reviewed by anyone other than faculty, or the faculty member her/himself.

Importantly, faculty highlighted the dilemmas of accountability and assessment and issues centered on the question: How does the community assess this program without oversight that is punitive or infringing on academic freedom?
THEME SIX: HERE ARE SOME CHALLENGES

Main challenges offered via closed- and open-ended questions included the following: Needs for Funding assistance (for students, and for programs), issues regarding transportation (again for individuals and programmatic needs), the difficulty in finding events that are acceptable in a timely fashion, the need for centralized site to see what others are doing and get ideas, and accessibility issues for students with disabilities, students with low income, commuters, and so on. Other issues raised included problems with standardization (raised primarily by students), student procrastination (finding oneself struggling for relevant opportunities at the last minute), and compliance issues (some students just don’t do it and that’s not fair). Finally, challenges were noted in relation to perception of the CEC (again, the community needing to be clear on the CEC) and how CEC was brought into Ramapo’s curriculum.

Another issue which emerged from some data (mostly from faculty, but mentioned in all groups) is displeasure of how the CEC was "sold" to faculty, and has lead to confusion, misperception, and sometimes resentment, of the CEC. When the 4 credit system was instituted, with faculty being in the classroom for class times of less than 4 credit hours, a decision was made that students would engage in 5 hours of activity outside the classroom (per class). This new approach was shared with faculty as "unmonitored" time; in other words, faculty did not have to be present for this type of student learning since it occurred outside of class time. In addition, it was further explained that CEC "should" be unmonitored, meaning "not graded" or attended to during class time. The manner in which faculty members learned about the CEC was inconsistent and often informal (37% learned through informal conversations with colleagues or peers; 22% via written materials; 22% note “other” as a source; 21% learned via convening group meetings; 18% from conveners; 16% were unable to recall; 14% from Deans; 12% explained at orientation for new faculty; 10% from the website). It seems this presentation was made so faculty did not feel slighted or under the impression that they worked more for less pay; in other words, no extra demands were being made upon them. This has also raised the question for faculty who ask, "How am I supposed to integrate this if it is supposed to be unmonitored and un-graded?"

Importantly, while it is true that the curricular structure of the college now expects that students engage in outside activity to warrant the 4 credit hours of education, there is no rule or agreement that their work has to be disconnected from graded work in the classroom. It is not mandated that it should be graded or integrated, but it is likewise not mandated that it should not. In relation to this issue, there is concern about how to effectively hold students accountable when faculty members are not compensated for assessment and oversight of student CEC activities.

This misperception is a great obstacle and needs to be tackled. Only by clearly understanding the history coupled with the present agreement will more faculty members know how to integrate CEC into their classes effectively and positively. Furthermore, the faculty needs to be empowered by the CEC and/or empowered to make changes if necessary in order to meet their own high pedagogical standards.

Importantly: While The Team values and appreciates the labor issues regarding CEC, our body can not address this issue or have power to make any changes in this area of the CEC. If the larger community does wish to change contractual obligations and the credit
system, we strongly urge discussion with the Faculty Assembly, the Union, and other bodies as the Community sees fit.

THEME SEVEN: IMPROVEMENT THEMES AND SUGGESTIONS
As noted earlier, the majority of respondents had positive regard for the CEC and had critical and thoughtful suggestions for the improvement of its implementation and relevance. While some participants strongly stated that they did not like the CEC at all and would choose to eliminate it, the majority believed that the CEC had great potential and offered suggestions, such as: assessment of the program, working toward community-wide integration, information sharing, and opportunities for collaboration. Some specific suggestions (in addition to those mentioned throughout the above portion of the document) also included: adding on more time to class, aggregating hours at the convening group level rather than by course, disconnecting the 5 hours from each class and having students register for an “Enrichment Course.” Bundling seemed to be a strong option, as well the development of a co-curricular transcript system and/or student portfolios.

It was noted that a major issue for improvement was training and stronger support for adjunct instructors and newer faculty. And last but certainly not least: to re-examine the history of the CEC and deal with labor issues.
RECOMMENDATIONS and PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW:

Based on the above findings, and only utilizing the data from the community, the Design Team offers the following recommendations and proposals for the improvement of the CEC at Ramapo College of New Jersey. All recommendations and proposals noted below need to be reviewed by the community, and all decisions on further process and implementation need to go through all appropriate faculty committees and staff offices.

Recommendation 1
The creation of a centralized site is recommended for the purpose of sharing information, experiences, and best practices working with the CEC.

Recommendation 2
More supportive training and development is recommended for faculty. This includes an emphasis on faculty participation with CEC and their influence on the tenor by which students embrace CEC.

Recommendation 3
Participation in the CEC should be legitimized and rewarded for faculty and staff; recognized and valued as work toward student academic success, and contributions to college and service to the community.

Recommendation 4
Faculty should develop a consistent method for ensuring that CEC is consistently and effectively implemented in all undergraduate 4-credit courses.

Recommendation 5
It is recommended that faculty develop procedures for ensuring effectiveness of CEC potentially through the establishment of a faculty body charged with the tasks of implementing assessment methods and collaborating with other bodies on campus toward consistency of the CEC at all levels deemed appropriate.

Recommendation 6
New students should be introduced to CEC in their early stages of connection to the campus and a way of introducing engagement as a part of the student culture at Ramapo College. Student engagement in the CEC will be incorporated at every level possible.

Recommendation 7
Collaboration at all levels should be worked toward, supported, and rewarded by the Provost’s Council, Board of Trustees, the President’s Cabinet, Academic Review Committee, Student Affairs, Faculty Assembly, and Convening Groups.

Recommendation 8
Work toward fuller models of CEC and how enrichment/experiential activities are counted for students.
**Recommendation 1.**
The creation of a centralized site is recommended for the purpose of sharing information, experiences, and best practices working with the CEC.

**Rationale:** The data from all groups clearly indicates the strong desire for, and need of, a centralized site for informational purposes and guidelines. Due to the overwhelming community demand for such a site, the following is recommended:

**Proposal:** A website will be developed by July 1, 2011 that serves as a centralized area for gathering information.

**Proposal:** The website will include: on and off campus events/activities for the CEC, best practices, a student/staff/faculty/administration response area, and real time additions.

**Proposal:** A team of professional staff, faculty, and students, will be created, (by nominations and/or vote), to implement, update, and revise the website (with faculty, staff, and student feedback).

**Proposal:** A calendar will be made, as far in advance as possible, that also allows for additions as events come to pass.

**Recommendation 2.**
More supportive training and development is recommended for faculty. This includes an emphasis on faculty participation with CEC and their influence on the tenor by which students embrace CEC.

**Rationale:** In the same spirit as the above, to meet the needs of faculty and provide support for their CEC related work, the Team recommends providing guidelines and training support for faculty (open to all instructors: f/t, p/t, adjunct instructors, etc.)

**Proposal:** All new faculty members will receive training, as designed and coordinated by their convening groups, concerning the CEC. This will require more enhanced orientation procedures for all f/t, p/t, and adjunct instructors.

**Proposal:** All adjunct faculty members will receive training, as designed and coordinated by the convening groups they work with, as it related to the CEC. Particular attention needs to be paid to supporting adjuncts with suggestions tailored to their unique needs or challenges.

**Proposal:** Once per semester, a development workshop will be conducted for faculty to confer and collaborate with professionals from Student Affairs.

**Proposal:** There will be a manual developed by July 31, 2011 that details general guidelines and support documents as to how to integrate the CEC into courses. This manual is proposed as one that assists faculty in their development (not as a means to hold people accountable to a certain standard or model of CEC).
Recommendation 3.
Participation in the CEC should be legitimized and rewarded for faculty and staff; recognized and valued as work toward student academic success, and contributions to college and service to the community.

Rationale: Data indicate that the activities related to the CEC are perceived as unclear, not overtly recognized, nor fully integrated into day-to-day activities and operations of the college. Data also indicate the need for matters of curriculum and pedagogy to be clearly and fully recognized as in the purview of the faculty. Since this is now part of the work that faculty engage in for their courses, and that professional staff will be attending to in new and unique ways, it needs to be overtly valued, rewarded, and legitimized at all levels.

Proposal: Faculty time and work on CEC matters will be taken into consideration in relation to Flex time, reappointment and tenure letters, and other areas of faculty development.

Proposal: Professional staff working on CEC matters will have their work taken into consideration in relation to reviews, reappointments, and other matters of staff development.

Proposal: Faculty time and work on CEC matters will be valued as part of their pedagogical contributions to the college.

Recommendation 4.
Faculty should develop a consistent method for ensuring that CEC is consistently and effectively implemented in all undergraduate 4-credit courses.

Rationale: The data indicated that while the majority of faculty respondents participated in the CEC, not all did. This inconsistency among faculty was perceived and experienced as problematic by other students, faculty, staff, and administration. Faculty respondents (70%) reported experiencing NO oversight regarding their CEC activities. Of those who discussed the need for oversight, 37% argued against oversight stating that it would limit academic freedoms and/or create unnecessary work for faculty who are assigned to provide oversight. Moreover, in discussing how oversight might be implemented, a majority of respondents indicated that oversight should fall at some level to the convening group. In order to improve the experience and implementation of the CEC, and in order to align the work at Ramapo in relation to the Union Agreement, the following is recommended:

Proposal: Faculty will define what the learning goals are for the enrichment/experiential learning component in each course.

Proposal: Faculty will develop a consistent method for ensuring that CEC is consistently and effectively addressed in syllabi.

Proposal: Faculty will incorporate onto their syllabi what the CEC will be for that course and expectations of the student.
Proposal: Convening Groups will decide how and when they will review syllabi and offer feedback as it relates to the CEC.

Recommendation 5.
It is recommended that faculty develop procedures for ensuring effectiveness of CEC potentially through the establishment of a faculty body charged with the tasks of implementing assessment methods and collaborating with other bodies on campus toward consistency of the CEC at all levels deemed appropriate.

Rationale: The data indicate a clear awareness that the effectiveness of the CEC needs to be evaluated at many levels (individual course, program, and college-wide).

Proposal: In association with ARC and other campus bodies, an assessment team will be nominated by faculty, and fully appointed by July 31, 2011 by the Provost.

Proposal: The assessment team will work through Fall 2011 and assess the effectiveness of the CEC post Design Team recommended policies in place.

Proposal: The assessment team will work with the community to design and implement assessment techniques at all levels deemed appropriate.

Proposal: A follow up survey will be distributed to the community in order to measure the attitudes and perceptions of the CEC.

Recommendation 6.
New students should be introduced to CEC in their early stages of connection to the campus and a way of introducing engagement as a part of the student culture at Ramapo College. Student engagement in the CEC will be incorporated at every level possible.

Rationale: It is clear that students need continuous reinforcement of the CEC and need a strong and clear introduction to the CEC.

Proposal: There will be an introduction to CEC during First-Year Student Orientation and Transfer Student Orientation.

Proposal: CEC will be integrated more consistently into First-Year Seminars.

Proposal: The development of a Peer Mentoring program (or incorporated into present peer work on campus); and students will be involved with the future planning of CEC.

Proposal: The community will maintain a process surrounding CEC that is collaborative by convening groups inviting student into future planning meetings.
Recommendation 7.
Collaboration at all levels should be worked toward, supported, and rewarded by the Provost’s Council, Board of Trustees, the President’s Cabinet, Academic Review Committee, Student Affairs, Faculty Assembly and Convening Groups.

Rationale: Data indicated that there was lack of clear communications across bodies on campus, and a need for better partnerships.

Proposal: There will be a partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to help maintain communication; therefore, a liaison will be nominated from each division for the sharing of information, events, activities, opportunities for engagement, etc.

Proposal: Time, space, and funding issues will continue to be addressed and made available for CEC related activities.

Recommendation 8.
Work toward fuller models of CEC and how enrichment/experiential activities are counted for students.

Rationale: The previous policies are proposed in relation to the current design of the CEC and with the understanding that CEC hours are related to individual courses. The data from all community members indicated strong interest in other forms of CEC configuration, specifically the consideration of alternative forms of enrichment/experiential hour completion. From the data, bundling hours, teach-ins, the development of a co-curricular transcript system, and portfolios, are the most favored by the community at large.

Proposal: Bundling hours, teach-ins, co-curricular transcripts, and portfolios need to be discussed by the community at open forums.

Proposal: Faculty and Staff collaborate to examine practical implementation possibilities for these options.

CONCLUSION
This report is being made public to the entire Ramapo Community for their examination. All key recommendations and procedures must be brought forth to the larger community, and all major decisions need to be made in relation to their feedback. The Team suggests some primary groups that need to explicitly be a part of the decision making process and further steps with the CEC. These groups include, but are not limited to: Faculty Assembly, ARC, Student Affairs, ARC, any interested student group, Provost’s Council, AFT, Unit Councils, etc. We are very pleased with the work we have done at this point, and offer our sincere thanks to everyone in the community who has taken the time to work with us. Presently The Team will move forward with a focus on the development of Learning Goals for the CEC and bringing information to the community for further feedback and follow through on the above recommendations.
Final note from the Co-Chairs of The Team (Melissa Van Der Wall and Dr. Maya Poran): A very special thanks for all of the work that the members of The Team have done thus far. Team members have been exceptionally attentive and diligent, always working hard with the needs of the community at the forefront. We are lucky to have such fine professionals and students working so hard on Ramapo’s behalf.