Delgado announced that this is the last meeting of the University Planning Group. It is hoped that between June 1 and June 15, a handout of all the Dashboard items will be completed and distributed to the UPG. Discussion:

- Let’s go with the simpler, cheaper version.
- Where is it being distributed? Send it out as a PDF.
- Try to use photos more directly tied to the goals.
- Does anyone want to participate in creation of the final update in June? No.

**Agenda Items**

1. Curricular Learning Communities

**Power Point presentation (Delgado)**

**Curricular Learning Communities:**

A Model for Building Successful Transitions for Inquiry and Interdisciplinarity

Learning communities is a concept that encompasses a broad range of curricular and co-curricular programming.

The National Learning Communities Project website defined the curricular model as follows: “Curricular learning communities are classes that are linked or clustered during an academic term, often around an interdisciplinary theme, and enroll a common cohort of students. A variety of approaches are used to build these learning communities, with all intended to restructure the students’ time, credit, and learning experiences to build community among students, between students and their teachers, and among faculty members and disciplines.”

- **Value of Learning Communities**
  - Kuh, High Impact Educational Practices
    - Learning communities encourage deep learning among both males and females, first generation, White, Latino, and African American student
populations as self-reported through National Survey of Student Engagement data.

- Brownell & Swaner, Five High Impact Practices
  - The research shows that regardless the type of LC [learning community], positive outcomes appear to result. Whether highly structured programs with a range of support services attached or just two courses connected by a common theme, residentially based or not, students benefit from LC participation.

- Types of Learning Communities Among UW Institutions
  - UW Eau Claire – Residential learning community + 1 or more common course or common content area (e.g., foreign language)
  - UW Madison – Residential learning communities
  - UW Milwaukee – Residential learning community + students take 1 class together
  - UW Parkside – Residential learning community + students take 1 class together
  - UW Whitewater – Residential learning community + students take 2 or more courses together, clustered around themes

- Learning Communities at UWRF
  - Student Affairs – New Student and Family Programs + Residence Hall – have collaborated with faculty and academic departments to develop Living Learning Communities for several years.
  - Current communities:
    - Connections
    - Falcon Scholars in France
    - uMatter
    - Taking Care of Business (Business majors)
    - TEACH (Elementary and Secondary Education majors)
    - WISEM (Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math majors)

- Context for Expanding Curricular Learning Communities
  - Living the Promise – Goal I: Create a Culture of Learning
  - George Kuh, Spring 2010 – report on high impact practices and those that make a difference.
  - Shifting demographics – entering students have more risk factors.
  - Cabinet examines the data, connects data to undergraduate research, scholarship and creative activity (RSCA).
  - Initiative targeted after Summer 2010 retreat; develop thematic curricular learning communities with added emphasis on interdisciplinarity and develop student skills and orientation toward inquiry (and critical thinking): building blocks for RSCA.
  - Initiative discussed at Faculty Senate in Fall of 2010.
Building Curricular Learning Communities
- Initiative delegated to Sarah Egerstrom and Michael Miller, to coordinate with Faculty Fellows (Paige Miller, Holly Dolliver, Todd Wilkinson, Erich Hofacker, & Earl Blodgett)
- Fall 2010 - fact finding, attending conferences, developing model.
- Fall 2010/Spring 2011 – develop curricular model; come to consensus on pilot roll out—original target highest risk factor students/pre-majors.
- Spring 2011 Faculty Fellows begins to disband as victim of budget cuts.
- Late Spring 2011 – development halted, prior to bring curricular/program model through governance, to be restarted in 2011-2012.

UW-River Falls Curricular Learning Community Model
- Develop a 1 credit hour transition course
  - First Year Seminar
  - University Success Seminar
  Offers university credits, connects to other courses (as a support structure) in learning community, provides cohort connections to students and to university services, affords opportunity for frequent writing, critical inquiry, information literacy, collaboration.
- Integrated/Linked General Education Courses
  - Two (or more) gen ed courses from different programs, thematically linked to each other and to attached 1 credit hour transition course.
    - Each course meets appropriate and designated gen ed/university requirements .
    - Faculty connect teaching to meet outcomes for the learning community (especially around disciplinary and interdisciplinary models for inquiry).

Similarly Structure Communities
- UW Whitewater – [http://www.uww.edu/learning-community/course-list-fall-2012](http://www.uww.edu/learning-community/course-list-fall-2012)
- Temple University – [http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/opportunities/avad_opp/academic_opportunities.shtm#lc](http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/opportunities/avad_opp/academic_opportunities.shtm#lc)

Target Population
- UW River Falls will target high risk students.
  - Undeclared/pre-majors
  - Students of color
  - Commuter students
  - Lower spectrum academic achievement/student profile
- Pilot program (first 2-3 years of implementation): 250-300 students.
Each learning community = 25 students

Questions/Discussion:

- How will students be selected? They will be given choices of courses which will be clustered in a time sequence.
- Will there be a generic syllabus for UNIV 101? The course will offer a topic which supports two other courses.
- Would some instructor(s) be teaching all courses? No, but there would be some effort to blend (a mix of interdisciplinarity and inquiry). All three instructors would have to work together.
- Work load could be a difficulty. With 250-200 pre-majors, the target staff would be to people who will be working on development (UNIV 101 will not be taught by faculty members). Every 1st year student will be required to take UNIV 101 as a university requirement.
- Faculty development is needed to get faculty to come together.
- Challenge: LC is an umbrella term—what’s actually going on? It’s difficult to get a sense of the value of the program. We will work with high risk students first to test the hypothesis; the program is designed for retention.
- We are building a learning community at UWRF with at-risk students (students of color and commuter students).
- A unique aspect of this program is that it does not require a residence life experience.
- It is better to roll out the program slowly—do due diligence—test.
- It is logistically impossible to roll out to all freshmen immediately.
- We may find the right audience to be different from the original target.
- There is pretty strong evidence that academic failure is predicated on other reasons than academic preparation.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Julia M. Persico