

CCATF General Education Conversations
19 Feb 2024

Topic: Engaging Faculty in GenEd Reform
Location: Allegheny Room
Max participants at any one time: 13
Total people attending: 13

Notes:

How can connections within the university be broadened or strengthened?

Do we have info on how advisors, GenEd admin, AUH/Dean, Faculty peers, students view current program?

GEC/GenEd admin has a lot of that information.

What do you think of faculty engagement in current program?

I teach in Madison Foundations and I have regular connections with GenEd admin. Other faculty in my area don't teach in GenEd and don't have regular connections to GenEd. Do faculty teaching at the upper level look to GenEd to teach specific things that students may not be learning in their GenEd courses?

What counts as "engagement" in this context? Is it answering surveys? Can CCATF go to dept meetings? Collect comments via email? Peer-to-peer conversations? Meetings via Zoom?

Try to understand why GenEd reform might be important to faculty to see how to motivate faculty to participate. Faculty bandwidth is limited.

Will faculty become motivated when we start talking about what courses are to be included in a new program?

Probably.

New faculty might find it important to know what CCATF would want from faculty. Is it important to have people from all departments?

GenEd Council has college reps and reps from all areas. Faculty capacity to run GenEd is limited.

For most faculty, GenEd reform feels like a nebulous task. Some of the past changes have been about such things as name changes, so previous changes haven't really been that important to faculty.

I'm concerned about a "consulting model" to get faculty "input". Are there faculty-driven processes that can be put to use in this reform work? Faculty are less likely to participate in consultative processes. The creation of the CAL mission statement might be a good example.

What is the point of giving your opinion if you think it will not be seen as important? Convincing people that it is a meaningful process is important.

JMU has a long history of ignoring faculty input. Maybe there's not a way to connect with faculty who have been here for a long time.

Need to behave (not talk) your way out of mistrust.

How clearly have we defined the task/problem to be solved?

Why?

What?

Who?

Can we clarify how faculty are needed in the process?

In my college we started with consulting an external advisory board to identify what they think students need to learn. Helped us identify more "soft skills" as the focus.

I disagree: GenEd should not be used to teach skills.

Faculty want to be consulted for their expertise.

How can we bring faculty together in a meaningful process about GenEd reform, a program about which faculty disagree?

See it as a co-authoring process. Disagreement might lead to good outcome.

Maybe we need to re-brand the program for faculty (toward developing well-rounded people or classical liberal education) before we re-brand to students.

Help students see value in non-skills courses.

I think we already have a skills-rich and classical liberal education program. Classroom experience is key to what students get out of the program.

How do we get students to see the value? This has been a perennial question. Maybe there is not an answer.

Are we expecting too much for students to really appreciate what they're getting when they are in college?

Maybe we should shoot for having most faculty think our program provides value.

I wonder if there is a positive correlation between a faculty's experience of their GenEd and their opinion of our JMU program.

I wonder if our students are being taught to value the "major" pathway, and to more-or-less ignore GenEd. GenEd is thus less likely to be seen as central. This may be a generational phenomenon. Students want to get out as soon as possible; move on into profession.

Summer orientation does not really feature GenEd. It used to be featured.

Is there a way to identify low-engagement faculty so we could try to engage them?

What are the takeaways from the GenEd APR? Maybe this would help identify targets.

I've been touring VA universities lately and I've heard the the words "General Education" across Virginia. A General Education curriculum is a hit with parents because it focuses on something in addition to a profession-focused education.

Students should be our best ambassadors for great classroom experiences in GenEd.

If there is another faculty survey, can it come from someone who people know? The closer the relationship, the more likely people will be to engage.

END OF NOTES