

CMU 2010 FY08 Annual Report

Project Title: Strengthening CMU's Interdisciplinary Programs

Project Leader: Denise Webster

Project Number: 200817 Date of Report: 7/08/2008

Refer to your *Outcome Evaluation Worksheet* to complete the information below. Insert additional rows if needed. Rows will automatically expand as you type. You are welcome to attach additional documents to supplement – but **not** substitute for - the information provided below.

An assistant coordinator, Ms. Anne Miller, was hired in late December 2007. The promotion/marketing component of the project has been well established and continues to flourish. I anticipate this part of the project will only grow with the return of Anne in the fall.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to fill the coordinator position and it is unlikely (at this point) that a faculty member will step forward into this role. A revised project plan has been developed and five to six programs will be identified by the end of summer. In collaboration with the College dean, faculty leading these programs will be supported with release time to attend to administrative needs of their program such as assessment, curricular matters, program review, and advising.

Outcome/Milestone	Status (Complete, in Progress, or Not started)	Date Measured	What are the next steps to achieving this outcome?
1 Significant and informative assessment activities for five interdisciplinary programs, along with follow-up discussion with interdisciplinary councils.	N/P		Five to six programs will be identified to begin our focused efforts on assessment activity.
2 Programmatic changes resulting from assessment from which includes the development or improvement of a required capstone experience that promotes connections between liberal education, the interdisciplinary	N/P		Five to six programs will be identified and a project plan will be fully implemented during the 08-09 academic year.

	program and facilitates the student's transition from the academic to the professional world.			
3	Increased understanding of university functioning among directors/council chairs as the result of Directors council meeting.	P	a) On-going b) 4/23/08	a) Continue director/council chair meetings in the fall for the purpose of maintaining an open line of communication. b) A Director/Council Chair Survey was conducted in April 2008 and will be repeated in spring 2009. (Survey overview attached at end of report).
4	Increased effectiveness of individual programs as evidenced by increased enrollment by 10%, improved faculty participation within programs and councils, Web presence, assessment efforts and learning outcomes.	P	a) On-going b) 4/23/08	a) Enrollment data has been collected for the past 3 years to serve as a baseline. Data will be captured again at the conclusion of spring 2008 for 2007-2008. b) As described in 3b above, the Director/Council Chair survey was created, distributed and analyzed for baseline data. The survey will be conducted again in spring 2009.
5	Develop strategy for marketing interdisciplinary programs.	C	On-going	a) Anne Miller has developed a coordinated marketing strategy and several aspects of the plan have been implemented, such as a coordinated brochure, a Web site http://www.cmich.edu/interdisciplinary/ , attendance at pre-orientation sessions and orientation sessions. b) The success of the marketing strategy will not be realized for at least a year. Baseline data regarding program director/council chair awareness and enrollment data has been collected. The director/council chair survey will be repeated in spring 2009. c) A survey of faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of this project will not be conducted until spring 2010. A spring 2009 survey may be worth conducting as a formative evaluation of our progress.

What are your plans for sustaining support for your project beyond the CMU 2010 funding period?

I am unable to answer this question at this time. This subject will be a topic of discussion this year with the Interdisciplinary Advisory Committee as well with the directors and the deans.

How can the ISPC assist you with those plans?

- a) We are **requesting to carry forward the unspent funds from 2007-08 year budget**, realizing the total budget expenditure for this project is \$385,644.

- b) Although the Priority I committee had a short discussion earlier in the year regarding the status of the different projects ‘considered’ as a Priority I project, would it be appropriate at this time in the 2010 Plan maturity, that all committee’s follow-up with the projects associated with their priority and provide more focused assistance to those projects?
- c) A ‘focused’ conversation, with other individuals that have received funding, regarding their plans and/or thoughts on ‘sustainability’ post CMU 2010 funding would be valuable.

Interdisciplinary Program Director/Council Chair Survey Report

April 23, 2008
Overview

Introduction

'*Strengthening CMU's Interdisciplinary Programs*' was approved for support through the CMU 2010 Vision fund during FY 08. The "Academy in Transition" emphasizes the need for institutions to become more interdisciplinary through course offerings and the variety of programs they offer. CMU has encouraged faculty to create interdisciplinary programs but has fallen short on providing the funding, administrative support & communication mechanism to embrace true 'interdisciplinarity'. This project supports CMU's goal to provide faculty & staff opportunities to develop innovative curricula & pedagogies. (<http://planning.cmich.edu/projects/FY08/FY08Awards.shtml>)

Method

A 22 question survey was administered to all interdisciplinary directors/council chairs using *SurveyMonkey*. Of the 25 invited to participate, 16 responded (64% response rate.) The purpose of the survey was to capture baseline data for monitoring change regarding the marketing efforts, council effectiveness and institutional transformation surrounding 'interdisciplinarity' as a result of the initiatives related to the CMU 2010 project.

Summary of Findings

- Demographic Information
 - Majority do not receive release time or compensation for their role as director/council chairs. (62.5 percent do not receive release time or compensation)
 - The majority of the directors/council chairs have been involved with their interdisciplinary program for more than 6 years.
 - 75% indicate they meet with dean at least once or twice a semester.
 - 95% indicate their council meets at least once a semester.
 - The vast majority of directors/council chairs use the department secretary for clerical and other administrative support.
- Council Effectiveness. Fifteen questions made up this section of the survey. (scale 1-5)
 - Strengths (Mean > 4): Attending meetings, recommending changes to program curriculum.
 - Challenge (Mean < 2.99): Supervising student research/creative endeavors
 - The mean score for each of the remaining 12 questions was between 3-3.99. This would indicate that the majority of the directors/council chairs did not feel strongly one way or the other (agree or disagree) regarding their council's effectiveness regarding these salient responsibilities.
- The vast majority of directors/council chairs agree that students in general probably do not know what 'interdisciplinary' means and are unaware of CMU's portfolio of interdisciplinary programs.
- Achievement of interdisciplinary outcomes.
 - a. "Discover the value of integrating the study of various academic disciplines suited to your life-long learning interests."
 - b. "Learn about creative solutions to some of today's most challenging problems."
 - c. "Become an interdisciplinary thinker who analytically and creatively embraces new ideas."
 - d. "Develop collaboration skills while working with others who have different perspectives than yours."
 - e. "Be prepared for graduate and professional study, and for careers in new and emerging fields."
 - The majority of directors/council chairs agreed or strongly agreed that students in their programs achieve these outcomes.

- The majority of directors/council chairs strongly agreed these are desirable outcomes for student in their program.
- Two common themes were noted in the open-ended responses.
 - Programs have variable needs regarding marketing/promotion and increased enrollment.
 - I have a graduate program and most of the previous questions refer to the undergraduate programs. Most of the questions do not apply to my program.
 - This is a difficult task, given the various aims of interdisciplinary programs.
 - A perception of a lack of an infrastructure to support interdisciplinary programs.
 - The university infrastructure to support Interdisciplinary programs is still not in place. Decisions still need to be made as to promotion and tenure issues, where revenues will go and how they will be utilized, among other things. That really needs to happen before any significant forward movement can take place.
 - We need support from our colleges and departments. What we have now is a small group of faculty who work themselves overtime in order to create something they believe in. We need more believers and some recognition/appreciation/remuneration/release for what we do so that we can do it WELL.
 - The attempt to build awareness of interdisciplinary programs is laudable. The goal of increasing numbers of students in these programs is not. It may be an easy metric to use to claim success--but the goal should be to increase the quality of interdisciplinary programs not quantity. The cry for a strong advocate or director of interdisciplinary programs who would work to address some of the common, systemic problems we are facing seems to have taken a back seat to the concerted efforts of promoting interdisciplinary programs. Adding numbers to an already weak infrastructure is a recipe for an eventual collapse. We need support for existing programs--we need our deans and department chairs to think beyond RCM--we need policies and incentives which encourage support for interdisciplinary programs--rather than a few interdisciplinary leaders who are willing to take it out of their hides to keep the programs going. Just adding numbers without adding support translates into less hide for those of us who are doing the work.