Foundations - Nov. 7

Members present: Deirdre Dempsey, Bob Masson, John Jones, Sarah Wadsworth, Jenn Fishman, Theresa Tobin, Tom Krettek, Lars Olson, Sarah Feldner

1. Talked about all task force feedback:
   a. One person found 4th course confusing
   b. Issue of large lecture vs smaller sections
   c. More than one comment that the 4th course sounded exciting

2. Need to rethink how we reference 4th Course
   a. Integrating was deemed not appropriate as it implies for many that all disciplinary perspectives will integrate or rather fit together suggesting something that is not possible
   b. Better to call it a “Multi-disciplinary foundations:
      i. Idea is multiple disciplines that focus on foundational questions

3. Focused discussion on a 4th course that includes the 3 faculty each with 3 stand alone sections (eliminating large lecture and discussions sections)
   a. Aim for sections to be 33 students
   b. Provides faculty in early stages
   c. Want to think about how to have the classes connected in meaningful way for students (i.e., how do we make this something different than 3 separate courses)
      i. Possibility of a “home room” like instructor that the students would come back to original faculty member
      ii. Discussed idea of occasional shared meeting of all the classes
      iii. Would develop parameters that emphasize need to help students understand the differences between how each discipline addresses problems (that they can be the same or radically different etc)
      iv. Could pull pieces together with writing assignments in each unit and a final assignment that asks students to reflect on the different modules and how they might connect/differ/interact, etc.
         1. Focus on how each discipline asks questions, investigates problem and draws conclusions
   d. Likely would need instructors to meet together to coordinate the effort
   e. Call to look at others on campus who are doing this to learn how it is successfully coordinated
      i. Jamie Shafer, John Karchek and Tony Peressini (seminars)
   f. Suggested that this seminar could draw lessons from innovation:
      i. Problem driven solution seeking –
      ii. All courses regardless of disciplines identify problems and offer solutions and explore how things come together from different perspectives
4. Other points of discussion
   a. Did discuss the purpose of the discuss sections -- as a moment to help students
      understand how to see the differences and significance
      i. Prevailing thought was that faculty could provide this type of experience
   b. While many merits to having faculty teach classes, there have been challenges in
      ensuring faculty will follow through - based on experiences with the Honors
      experience
      i. Committee felt clear guidelines and expectations would address this
   c. Discussed idea of a writing focus in 4th course that was mentioned in the
      listening session
      i. Size of class (33) makes this challenging
      ii. Most felt this was not something that should be integrated in this course
      and suggested it could be asked of the discovery tier
      iii. Was noted that this plan includes less writing instruction and that need to
      think if additional requirement is needed elsewhere in majors or in a
      second course in core; just writing assignments is not enough -- need to
      have writing instruction

5. Group made tentative decision to refine previous approach and move forward with
   a. Theo, rhet and phil course (revised for learning outcomes)
      i. Courses would each hit same questions as an organizing feature
      ii. Noted that rhetoric might be sufficiently different that different plans may
      be needed to allow it to address skills
   b. 4th course
      i. 3 instructors each with 33 students rotating
      ii. Address approaches of each discipline
      iii. Assignments to help tie pieces together
      iv. Focus on coordination of courses

6. Next steps
   a. Develop basic structure of the 3 courses (Sarah will send the questions
      previously identified)
   b. Work out how departments/faculty would be selected into the 4th course
   c. Develop details for expectations/structure of the 4th course