Minutes of Culminating Experience - October 19, 2016

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1. Update on other task force groups

2. General discussion points as we think about models:
   a. How do we free up space for creativity?
      - How is the core mapping out currently in programs? When are the last core
courses taken in the curriculum? Open up for creativity. What semester and what course?
      - Why should students take this if they are doing some sort of capstone already? It will need to be called a culminating experience (language matters to get student buy in)
      - Manpower- look at TA’s - how will we deliver
   b. If experiential, do we fundamentally want existing experiential components to be used or not? For example, using a clinical vs coming up with a service learning experience. If service learning, need to consider pipeline of sites that will accommodate all of the students. Set up site that we use it the entire year with rotations of students.
   c. What is distinctive to the core about this culminating experience? What’s different?
      i. This is interdisciplinary
      ii. Focus beyond major specific skills and competency
      iii. Includes intentional reflective component that will look back and anticipate future
   d. Based on a,b,c…may not have freed up labor, can existing labor able to manage this?

2. Consideration of a 3 component model

a. Component #1: experiential learning/self-reflection (journal or portfolio) – requires sign-off and monitoring, possibly at the departmental level – flexibility provided regarding what this is and when it occurs as it relates to the rest of the culmination course (it would be at the discretion of the department), as long as it meets core curricular minimal standards and precedes the rest of the “course”.
   Criteria would be provided regarding what we view experiential learning as being and does it have to look similar across campus or up to each college.

b. Component #2: – extension to real world problems; could consist of some combination of required reading, attendance of multidisciplinary symposia (teams of MU faculty and/or community leaders co-presenting), workshops, films, etc… focused on the broader themes as they relate to addressing big-picture societal issues. Attendance of some or all would be required. Thought questions, talking points, etc… could be provided to facilitators guide discussion and reflection in the smaller (component #3) groups courses with the expectation that students will contextualize their own experiences with the thematic pieces. Students
could be assigned to course sections based on themes and required to attend or choose from subsets of symposia.

c. Component #3: group reflection – smaller course sections (10-15 students from mixed disciplines) with student presentations regarding their experiential learning, possibly as it relates to the theme with facilitated interactive discussion. Faculty/TA facilitators with no formal instruction required (meet once per week). Talking points and thought questions could be provided to guide discussion reflection from whoever is managing component 2.

• Faculty/manpower can utilize various faculty or TA’s across campus to manage small groups. Knowledge expertise not necessarily important to group assignments. Consider how reflections are processed in regards to getting students to self-reflect, not come away with skewed views of their experience.

• Components 2 and 3 would always be offered together as a 2-cr piece with flexibility regarding when the course is taken based on program needs. Component 1 could be a separate 1-cr course offered earlier or offered with 2 and 3 as a 3-cr course. It may be that this needs to vary based on the major so that key experiential learning activities can be captured when they do not align with the 2-cr course. Facilitators could come from any unit on campus.

3. Consideration of a course based approach

a. Goals
   i. enable each student to integrate the core experience themselves
   ii. enable the class/group to integrate the core experience

b. Learning objective
   i. Reflect on the core experience; how will it shape future living
   ii. Learn practices of discernment (individual and group-level)
   iii. Develop collaborative skills (working effectively with others, problem-solving, conflict resolution, leadership)

c. Key Elements
   i. Writing intensive
      1. focused on the experience in the class
      2. focused on integrating the core (final reflection on e-portfolio)
      3. future-oriented; how has core experience shaped future
   ii. Community engagement (for each individual or each class?)
   iii. Group collaboration
      1. attention to group dynamics, problem-solving, conflict management, leadership
      2. Focus on a particular topic/theme

d. Course structure
   i. Existing courses
      1. Theology
2. Philosophy
3. Literature

ii. Repurposed (same labor doing different things)
   1. Theology
   2. Philosophy
   3. Literature

iii. New courses – probably not necessary

e. **Pragmatics**
   i. Ways to make different sections consistent
   ii. Common key elements
   iii. Shared readings (some)
   iv. shared themes (though specific foci will differ)
   v. Class size: 20-25
      1. divided into smaller groups for collaborative project
   vi. Grading pass-fail (goal is for each to improve, not to compare to a standard or to each other)

f. **Assessment**
   i. Self-assessment
   ii. Peer assessment
   iii. Instructor assessment