

Vitalization Work Group 8  
Meeting Minutes 1/13/17, 2:00pm  
2116 Blair Hall

Members present: Jeff-Stowell (Chair), Nora Small, Britto Nathan, Renee Kidd-Marshall, Kimberly Kuspa, Samantha Boomgarden, Kelly Miller, Amy Rosenstein, and Peter Liu

Dr. Stowell called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.  
Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

Dr. Stowell acknowledged that reports from other work groups, except 8 and 9, had been posted and asked if we as a group believed we should post our working document. At this point it address one of our charges, which was to identify new or modified programming. Our visioning has been somewhat internal based on existing programs and market trends with information given to us by campus members, but not solicited. All agreed we should post what we have and use it as a spring board for discussions on campus.

We reviewed our charge:

Workgroup objectives

- 1.1. New or Modified Programs (undergraduate and graduate majors)
- 1.2. Completion Programs (for adult learners and community college students)
- 1.3. Identifying Signature Programs
- 1.4. Micro Degrees

We reviewed the given timeline and decided we needed to get any new information about what the campus community envisioned related to these objectives in the next few weeks in order to review the data and decide what to include in our report before the deadline for the final report.

Dr. Stowell then turned the discussion to communications he had received and shared with the workgroup on onedrive. These were specific to the objective of identifying micro-degrees.

The first micro-degree was focused on Financial Literacy. Erin Brown from the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships submitted this idea. Erin believes students need better financial preparation and believes it could be accomplished as part of a senior seminar course offering or segmented into the foundation classes. Erin feels that though it is not required, perhaps should be.

Dr. Small stated it is not appropriate for a senior seminar.

Mrs. Miller states not all have to take foundations so some students may not get it as it's not required.

Dr. Small stated it is valuable but it should go into hands of foundations.

Mrs. Miller says it is encouraged but it is up to the instructor to include it in the coursework.

Dr. Liu stated it already exists in the LIFE center in Lumpkin.

Dr. Stowell asked questions about the format noting that more information would be needed.

Dr. Liu stated that to his knowledge it started as a grant and it offers information.

The LIFE center website conformed this and shows that the center provides presentations on 13 topics (based on website information). All that is needed is a request. Still it is not required and there is no current mechanism in place to ensure all students attend the presentations.

Dr. Nathan confirmed that this already exists in foundations classes as a ppt but not required.

The group decided collectively that this should be encouraged as a part of foundations classes.

The second communication and possible micro-degree was Data Analysis. This was presented in a communication from Dr. Burge from Political Science. His plan included:

“My initial vision is a 12-15 credit course sequence consisting of the following:

1. Introduction to Statistical Analysis (3 credits) – This course is likely already offered in a number of departments including the social sciences and the math department. This would give students a foundation in statistics, which is a key component to data analysis.
2. Introduction to Analysis in R (3 credits) – The R statistical software package is a free and open source piece of software that is the most popular software that is utilized in the world of data analysis. This course would teach students how to write code, create reports, and set up a Github account to keep track of their syntax.
3. Introduction to Visualization (3 credits) – One of the most important parts of data analysis is visualizing results. This course would focus on principles of visual design. It would also include tutorials on mapping and creating interactive visualizations in R.
4. Introduction to GIS (3 credits) – EIU already has a GIS course sequence offered in the Geology/Geography department. One of these courses will likely work well for students who are in the data analysis concentration.
5. Capstone Project (3 credits) – This would be an independent study that would result in the student creating a large-scale data analysis project that would cover all aspects of the field. The result would be a written report that would end up on a student’s data analysis portfolio. This portfolio is one of the most important thing an employer considers when looking at the ability of a potential employee.

In addition, there could be several elective courses that could be added to this sequence that would give the student a specialty in marketing analytics, data journalism, profit-loss analysis, and social media scraping.”

All agreed that this had potential and would be a useful skill set that would appeal to students. However, this raised questions about who could take the courses.

Dr. Rosenstein - Believes there is a clear place for Micro-degrees at EIU as numerous professions have to complete continuing education to stay current in their field. Numerous for-profits and professional organizations offer this continuing education. The question is how would it look at EIU and how would it be structured? Would individual departments be responsible for the content and enrollment or would it be offered through continuing ed. Could undergraduates take the sequence as a minor or is it meant to be content beyond what would be offered at an undergraduate level. Would that then mean you would need a BA to enroll? Would we be in danger of overlap with a community college? Would IBHE have this information? Depending on structure, the possibilities could be endless. Then how do we offer – there could be tons of options. There are numerous micro-areas in education that could be targeted included courses on specific types of disabilities, behavior analysis, and assessment.

Dr. Kidd-Marshall agreed and identified several topics that could be covered in nursing. She stated there is a large market. As professional development is required to maintain your license, it would appeal to professionals.

Dr. Nathan described nano-degrees and noted their use in technical programs for individuals who just need a few classes for continuing education. He noted that current offerings may be presented through on-line companies in a variety of formats. He noted that whatever structure is used quality should be maintained.

Dr. Stowell stated this data analysis proposal could be an example and everyone agreed. As a group we agreed the logistics may be important to know before we identify any proposal as a micro-degree program.

Dr. Stowell then turned the group's attention to our need to add to our existing report with thoughts from the campus community. The first question being what data to collect and how to collect it.

There was agreement that we needed input from the campus.

Dr. Rosenstein wanted to make sure the data collected would be used and so asked to consider questions that are open but focused. Purposeful questions are needed so data is not effected by disproportionate representation of anyone one group within the campus community.

Dr. Nathan suggested a survey and perhaps a town hall meeting.

Dr. Stowell asked the group to consider questions that could go on the survey and he could construct the survey. He has experience with the survey tools on campus.

A questionnaire with questions that everyone would hopefully understand in the same way was suggested but the discussion then turned to an open conversation as that would allow for follow-up question..

A town hall with round tables was suggested to give more people an opportunity to talk and then come back together to see common ideas and share could be useful.

A round table, moderated town hall, survey, and an open ended questionnaire were considered. Pros and cons to each were discussed.

The group agreed to a survey with one or more town hall meetings (with round tables if the appropriate rooms could be reserved given time frame).

Dr. Stowell asked if we should consider other data.

Dr. Small asked if the responses from departments to workgroup 7 drafts would be useful.

Discussion ensued related to use of the data. The group agreed there may be reasons why the data was not shared. Initially the group decided it may be useful. The DEN reporter offered that the responses were initially included but were removed before the report was posted. The group decided to wait to see if further information was released.

Dr. Stowell asked workgroup members to please submit 1-2 questions about what people want to see at EIU and give suggestion for how to get data – but survey first.

Meeting concluded at 3:10pm.