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Purdue University North Central

Synergies between Science/Engineering/Liberal Arts/Social Science White Paper Draft

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Premise:

Synergy requires collaboration and interaction among constituents that is beneficial for all concerned. In order to promote synergy on the campus of Purdue North Central, a dynamic interplay must take place among all constituents involved, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the surrounding community. Building synergy at PNC will require initiatives that will:

- Develop and improve communication among all constituents.
- Extend student learning and involvement through service learning.
- Develop courses and programs in interdisciplinary studies.

Goal 1: PNC will improve communication among all members of the university community so that they may get to know one another and be able to collaborate and develop positive relationships with one another.

Strategy: Provide opportunities for members of the university community to become engaged with one another.

Action Items:

- ✓ Establish a permanent Synergies Committee to serve as a clearinghouse of all projects being worked on and implemented to promote synergy.
- ✓ Hold regular meetings within and between the four Colleges to encourage communication and collaboration. It is imperative that communication remain positive, and that information is exchanged openly. Suggested topics include:
 - Interdisciplinary programs/courses
 - Creating interdisciplinary general education courses
 - Service Learning as a component of Interdisciplinary programs/courses
 - Mentoring Systems for junior faculty members as well as Associate Professors
 - Relationships with Admissions, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Physical Plant, Book Store and Library and other PNC departments.

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- Discovery topics: Share the discovery projects being conducted within departments and colleges and investigate the possibility of conducting team-research.
- Teaching topics: Share experience and concerns about retention rate, class content, teaching load and students' performance. Investigate possibilities related to team-teaching within and among the different colleges.
- One issue always present during the process of Promotion and Tenure is the need to recognize the different forms of Discovery that each discipline is expected to produce. The meeting here proposed would be a great opportunity to discuss the issue and to be reciprocally informed.
- ✓ During the Faculty Workshops held at the beginning of each semester, highlight two of the Colleges.
- ✓ Develop strategies and tools that will increase and improve communication between academic and non-academic departments at PNC.
 - Create a directory of all people who work at PNC with pictures, interests, etc.
 - Ensure that all new strategies and initiatives are made known to all constituents.
- ✓ To improve communication with students, provide them with a professional advisor as well as a mentor within their discipline.

Evaluation of Goal #1:

- Annual report of Synergies Committee, College Deans and Department Chairs.
- Increase in number of new interdisciplinary courses and programs developed.
- Survey of constituents to ensure that they are aware of strategies and initiatives being implemented in all departments.

Goal 2: Purdue North Central will develop a mutually beneficial relationship with area P-12 schools and businesses in the region.

Strategy 1: Improve communication between PNC and area P-12 schools so that they are aware of degrees and programs offered at PNC. Students, parents, teachers and administrators will be informed of the variety of careers that can be pursued at PNC as well as programs being offered that may be of interest to them.

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Action items:

- ✓ Establish a staff position whose primary role is to be a liaison between the P-12 schools and PNC. This person would initiate contact with schools, visit them and discuss strategies related to how to improve communication and student services, as well as schedule any events (speakers, poster sessions...) between the schools and PNC.
- ✓ Target schools that will increase diversity on campus.
- ✓ Continue to offer dual credit classes.
- ✓ Host PNC Day/Night at local schools to address issues related to the types of degrees available, careers that can be pursued at PNC, financial aid, etc. Include PNC faculty, students as well as other staff as appropriate in the experience.
- ✓ Have PNC students visit schools to speak to individual junior and senior classes about their experiences at PNC.
- ✓ Invite junior/senior classes to come to PNC to build interest in the campus and all that it has to offer.
- ✓ Ensure that high schools have plenty of PNC information booklets on hand. Not everyone has access to the internet, and many parents are still more comfortable with paper.
- ✓ Provide schools with posters for the advisor's office.

Resources: A budget would be required to staff this position as well as to pay for the expenses of providing materials to the schools, travel, etc.

Strategy 2: Improve communication between the local business community and Purdue North Central by creating an exchange of areas of expertise within the University and the local businesses. This would allow students to realize there are jobs available locally during and after graduation.

Action items:

- ✓ Hold an open house at PNC and invite local businesses. This could be arranged through the Chamber of Commerce offices. Department chairs could give short discussions regarding present interests and future goals.
 - A small committee of business and university personnel will meet quarterly to ensure communications to do not fail.
- ✓ University Placement Service should advise the business community about its internship program.
 - Information regarding the internship program will be placed in each local newspaper.
 - Use the local Chamber's database to make the internship program known.
- ✓ Representatives of the University should actively pursue making presentations to various groups locally. Examples could be Economic Development Councils, Manufacturing Committee, Advertising and

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Public Relations Committee, and others. A list of local groups and societies can also be located through the Chambers of Commerce.

- ✓ Create opportunity for the business community to share their information with the University.
 - Invite community entities to make a presentations to the faculty/department chairs (i.e., Entrepreneur Center, Economic Development groups, LaPorte County Convention Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, etc.
 - Create a brochure that will be distributed in local communities to inform them of what PNC does and has to offer. This should be updated annually.

Resources: A budget will be needed to fund these initiatives.

Evaluation of Goal #2:

- Annual reports will include information related to interactions with p-12 schools and area businesses.
- Analyze data related to number of students who are admitted to PNC from area schools and their selection of degree programs and stated career goals.
- Analyze data and report on number and variety of new internships.

Goal 3: PNC will develop opportunities for all students to participate in service learning to expand their learning by encouraging experiences that increase their awareness of the surrounding communities and the world.

Strategy 1: All PNC students will have the opportunity to participate in service learning during general education coursework.

Strategy 2: All bachelor degree programs will require service learning as appropriate, so that students learn that their education is for their benefit and for the benefit the community in which they live.

Action items:

- ✓ As general education courses are created, imbed service learning projects that will extend learning across the disciplines and to the local community.
- ✓ Identify current classes within each bachelor degree program which are conducive to service learning.
- ✓ Ensure that faculty, staff and students aware of the benefits of Service learning.
- ✓ Identify faculty who are receptive to using service learning in their classrooms.
- ✓ Utilize successful programs already in place as a foundation to develop programs. There is no need to reinvent the wheel to get the process started.

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- ✓ Advertise PNC's Service Learning programs to the communities we serve.
- ✓ Identify sites within the PNC service area that will allow students to partake of Service Learning programs.
- ✓ Develop a Service Learning Center to track the success of the program.

Resources: Additional S&E will be required.

Evaluation of Goal 3:

- Indicate success/failure of service learning in End of the Year Reports by Department Chairs.
- Faculty members participating in service learning will evaluate the success of the program.
- Students involved in service learning will evaluate the program.
- Community organizations involved will evaluate the program.

Goal 4: Developing synergy on the campus of PNC presumes the value of interdisciplinary studies. Faculty from within and across the four Colleges of PNC will collaborate to develop new courses and programs in interdisciplinary studies.

Strategy 1: Develop degree programs that are interdisciplinary.

Strategy 2: Encourage the creation of courses that are interdisciplinary.

Strategy 3: Encourage the interaction of different disciplines within discipline specific courses.

Action items:

- ✓ Conduct a survey to determine the present state of interdisciplinary activities and to raise consciousness of these activities.
- ✓ Hold workshops within and between of colleges to discuss interdisciplinary initiatives.
- ✓ Encourage on-going communication among the Deans and Department Chairs related to interdisciplinary studies.
- ✓ As new programs are developed investigate what other universities are doing, as well as the needs of the local community so that new programs proposed by PNC are unique and original.
- ✓ Encourage each program to create at least one interdisciplinary course.
- ✓ Hold a week of "open classes" in which faculty will be free to visit each others classes to gain ideas for cooperation.
- ✓ Advocate the interdisciplinary dimension in the on-going development of a General Education Core at PNC.

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- ✓ Create a permanent "Synergies Committee" to provide continuous leadership in this area and to serve as a clearinghouse for interdisciplinary initiatives.
- ✓ Encourage students to take courses out of their specific disciplines by developing more program minors.
- ✓ Provide early opportunities for students to learn about all of the disciplines to help them avoid choosing an unsuitable program too early.
- ✓ Develop strategies and policies for team teaching, guest lecturing, and collaboration of faculty.
- ✓ Find ways to encourage faculty to participate in developing and teaching in interdisciplinary studies through the Promotion and Tenure process.

Resources: Additional S&E will be required for new programs and courses. Additional faculty may also be needed.

Evaluation of Goal 4:

- Analyze and report data obtained from the survey of current practice.
- Review annual reports of Deans and Department Chairs for new or ongoing initiatives in this area.
- Analysis of faculty Annual Reports.
- Number of new courses and programs created.

Synergies Working Group Meeting Dates:

- ❖ January 8, 2008
- ❖ January 25, 2008
- ❖ January 31, 2008
- ❖ February 5, 2008
- ❖ February 12, 2008
- ❖ February 19, 2008

Open Forum

- ❖ January 31, 2008 10:00 -11:00 AM LSF 02