COMMISSION ON OUTREACH AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
Minutes
March 4, 2010
3:30-4:30 p.m.
325 Burruss Hall

Attendance: Ray Ali, Jan Helge Bøhn, John Browder, Andrea Brunais, Jeri Childers, Terry
Clements, S.K. De Datta, John Dooley, François Elvinger, Lori Greiner,
Reed Kennedy (sub for Devi Gnyawali), Gary Long, Joao Macieira, Sharon
Meehan, Fadel Megahed, Lenah Nguyen (via phone), Thomas Olson (sub for
Bob Smith), Max Stephenson, Jane Wemhoener, John Provo (guest), Patrick
Miller (guest), Nancy Franz (guest), Nicole Sanderlin (guest)

Absent: Susan Clark, Billie Jean Elmer, Devi Gnyawali, A.L. (Tom) Hammett, Mike
Roberts, Rick Rudd, Ted Settle, Gerhardt Schurig, Bob Smith

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
    Terry Clements welcomed everyone. Self-introductions were made.

2. **Agenda Approval**
    Terry Clements requested approval of the agenda; motion was made to approve; it
    was seconded and the agenda was approved.

3. **Approval of Minutes, February 11, 2010**
    Terry Clements announced that the February 11, 2010 minutes are currently under
    review to the group to be electronically approved and will be forwarded to University
    Council for approval.

4. **Chairman's Report**
    Terry Clements gave the report on the University Council meeting that occurred on
    March 1, 2010. Discussion included the resolution for winter break closings. The
    second reading will be in late March. There was also approval of the resolution for
    ammunition to be stored at the Police Department. Minutes are posted at the website:
    http://www.governance.vt.edu.

5. **Engagement Academy Team Update**
    Ray Ali, Nancy Franz, Patrick Miller, John Provo and Nicole Sanderlin were in
    attendance to give the group an update on the Engagement Academy Team. The
    Team has worked in the past year on college-based conversations focused on
    Engaged Scholarship.

    Nancy reported on conducting eight focus groups that included faculty, graduates and
    administrators that discussed experiences about engagement; promotion and tenure;
    hiring processes; and day to day activities. There were many different thoughts on
    what engaged scholarship is. A draft of their initial findings is attached. Discussion
    included how staff can be involved in the process. **(see attached)**

A website is being created with a portal for faculty to share their stories. It was noted that Service Learning Center needs to be updated to reflect Student Engagement and Community Partnerships.

6. **Engagement White Paper Discussion**
This item will be carried over to next meeting.

7. **Commission Board Member Comments**
No comments were made due to time.

8. **Reports**

   a. **University Council on International Affairs (UCIA)**
   John Browder sent out his summary electronically (**see attached**).

   b. **Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)**
   Ray Ali sent the following summary:

   Extension has been inundated with the FYs 2011 and 2012 Biennium House Bill 30 Budget Amendment that proposes a reorganization of the system. Information can be found at http://leg1.state.va.us/101/bud/SubCom/HB30Committee.PDF, item 219 #2h. p. 78.

   In summary, the amendment, which was passed by the House 59 to 40 last Thursday, eliminates eight urban offices, eliminates family and consumer science programs, community viability programs, and lawn and garden programs, and consolidates 29 units to 13.

Dates for 2009-2010, 3:30-4:30 p.m.; 325 Burruss Hall
April 8, 2010
May 6, 2010

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Rhodes
Recording Secretary

Mapping the Cultural Context of Engagement at VT: Perspectives from Two Colleges

This project examined what Virginia Tech faculty, graduate students, and administrators perceive as the engagement culture on campus. The project team conducted conversations with faculty, graduate students, and administrators in two colleges and analyzed college strategic plans with the intent of further refining the definition of engaged scholarship, identifying barriers to engagement, enhancing opportunities for engagement, and creating internal and external opportunities for engagement collaboration. Findings from the conversations were shared with key engagement stakeholders on campus and used to create a web site to help accomplish the project's goals.

Project Team

Patrick Miller, CAUS, Team Leader/Principal Investigator; Ray Ali, CALS; Nancy Franz, CALS; William Galloway, CAUS; John Provo, Office of Economic Development; Robert Smith, CNR; Megan Armbruster, Ph.D. student; and Nicole Sanderlin, Ph.D. student.

Project Objectives

To build a connected community of engagement at Virginia Tech that adds value to faculty work that:
- Reveals actual practice at the university
- Further refines the definition of engaged scholarship
- Is inclusive of all types of faculty/staff, diverse colleges, and administrative units
- Identifies barriers
- Enhances opportunities
- Creates internal and external opportunities for collaboration

so that Virginia Tech and the communities it serves are jointly empowered to address social, environmental, and economic issues.

Methodology

Eight focus groups were held with 62 faculty, administrators, and graduate students in CAUS and CNR. The selection of participants was purposeful (experts on engagement) and voluntary. College strategic plans were also analyzed using Holland's engagement matrix. Data analysis is ongoing over four months. This report highlights initial findings from the focus groups and college strategic plan analysis. Future analysis will be conducted refine and expand the findings and recommendations.

Findings

Focus Groups
What is engagement?
Three predominant perspectives on engagement were expressed: 1) one way outreach from the university, often continuing education offerings, 2) student learning through service learning and other forms of applied pedagogy, and 3) human satisfaction through problem solving,

development of reciprocal relationships, trust building, contributing to the common good, and increased reputation and self esteem. Some faculty saw engagement as part of the natural research process.

Why do faculty, administrators, and graduate students conduct engagement work?
The main reason these individuals engaged with communities was for the intrinsic value of the experience. They also believed engagement helped them keep in touch with industry and the professions to be aware of trends, issues, and opportunities for students career development. Finally, they believed engagement improves their teaching and research efforts. One faculty member said, "The community has more to give me than I've had to give them."

What are the challenges to conducting engagement work at VT?
The most voiced challenge in conducting engagement work was faculty recognition at Virginia Tech. All participants felt the promotion and tenure system and upper administrators do not fully value engagement or that engagement "doesn't count." Other commonly voiced challenges to engagement were the time to develop partnerships and other engagement logistics, funding for engagement activities, and the differences between academic and community cultures. One long-time faculty member said, "Everyone who I have seen try [to get promotion with engagement work] has failed." Another said, "The University has a fundamental structure and culture that runs counter to engagement."

What are the opportunities created by engagement work at VT?
The most common benefit of engagement was the enhanced reputation of students, faculty, and the university. Participants also said engagement can lead to better teaching and research, funding for projects, valuable connections with those outside the university, and career development for students. One faculty member said, "They [students] are really excited to work with actual people on actual projects."

Who does engagement work at VT?
Most focus group participants believed engagement is the responsibility of everyone on campus due to the land-grant mission and VT's motto. Campus centers and groups were specifically mentioned that focus on engagement. There was a strong feeling that people who conduct engagement work are those with a passion for it.

Where does VT engage?
Faculty and students engage with a wide variety of audiences in a wide variety of places form local to international. Some faculty feel the campus climate values and supports international engagement work more fully than domestic engagement. One faculty member said, "If Appalachia was another country it would be highly valued."

What criteria determine quality engagement?
Participants most often felt the hallmarks of quality engagement were ongoing reciprocal relationships with community partners, the ability to evaluate and share the impacts of engagement, and serving a need or solving problems. Other criteria for quality engagement included feedback from partners, ownership by the community of the project, co-learning between partners, scholarship, pedagogical impact, personal development, and being meaningful

for all involved. One faculty member summed up the qualities when he said, "Serves a need, solves a problem, addresses real world issues, is targeted, relevant and has duration."

What should VT engagement look like?
Overall, participants want engagement to be more fully supported and valued at VT through the promotion and tenure process, in the words and actions of upper administrators, more funding available to support this work, the provision of release time, sabbatical, and graduate assistants for this work, mentoring and training for faculty, help with the logistics of engagement projects, networking opportunities with other faculty, and changes in the academic culture to more fully match community needs. Other suggestions to enhance engagement were to expand the university's engagement strategic plan focus, work load balance with other missions, and voluntary for faculty. One faculty member said they need, "A system where we're not swimming upstream."

What are the products of engagement work?
A variety of engagement products were mentioned by participants. The general categories were scholarship, physical artifacts (i.e. plans and designs), successful long term partnerships, student development, faculty development, project development, enhanced reputation, and enhanced teaching and research. One senior faculty member said, "I'm asking better research and scholarly questions due to engagement – more relevant and more powerful."

What are the similarities and differences on perceptions of engagement between groups?
Overall, the CNR focus groups centered more fully on research and engagement while CAUS groups focused more on teaching. CNR faculty described the natural complimentarity of discovery and engagement while CAUS faculty described teaching and engagement as fully integrated. There were no notable differences between faculty and administrators.

Faculty believed engagement improves teaching and research. They were worried about measuring engagement and the mixed messages they get from administration on the value of engagement. For example, they found the recommendation to convert engagement to publications as a sign that administration does not understand what engagement is or the time it takes to conduct it. Finally, faculty believed engagement is critical for transformation of student perceptions and practices.

Students saw engagement as real life application of academic work. They believed faculty need more training in how to engage with communities. They find there is baggage with the term "service" in communities. Students also believed one goal of engagement work was to tell the untold or underrepresented stories about communities. Overall, students were more focused on the engagement experience for students in communities rather than engagement from a teaching, research, or academic perspective.

Other thoughts about engagement?
Focus group participants had several additional suggestions for improving the engagement culture at VT. These included sharing engagement models from other universities, encouraging a bottom up approach to culture change, providing more opportunities for faculty to meet and learn from each other about engagement, provide more incentives for faculty to engage, and realize

that engagement is not always consistent with the university as an economic enterprise. They also suggested that engagement needs to be more clearly defined at VT but the people faculty and students work with really don't care what it is called or how it is defined as long as they get help with their problems.

Analysis of College Strategic Plans

We assessed the level of engaged scholarship in college strategic plans using the Holland Matrix.[1] It was often difficult to find language pertaining to the concept of engaged scholarship in the plans. However, on one college strategic plan ranked consistently high or low for support of engagement. The majority of college mission statements did not reflect engagement but the plans showed strong integration of engagement into external communications and fundraising with stakeholders. According to the plans, institutional leadership and structure supported engagement but all colleges ranked low for promoting engagement through promotion, tenure, and hiring. This was consistent with the findings of the focus group discussions described earlier. There was a variety of degrees to which colleges described the integration of engagement into student involvement and curriculum and all but two colleges described integrating engagement into faculty involvement with community-based research and learning. On the other hand, the strategic plans almost all indicated support for community involvement through partnerships with communities.

Next steps to more fully communicate engagement and engaged scholarship intentions through strategic plans could include using consistent engagement language in all strategic plans across the university, providing the Holland matrix to those who write and monitor strategic planning processes on campus, and addressing the lack of information on the relationship of engagement to promotion, tenure, and hiring on campus. This may necessitate referring to college P&T guidelines when creating strategic plans.

Preliminary Recommendations

What seemed like a relatively straight forward plan to determine what faculty, administrators, and graduate students in two colleges at Virginia Tech believe about engagement instead became a study of a very complex concept. The major theme that surfaced from all groups was that engagement does not count as much at Virginia Tech as it should - that more support is needed to carry out strong engagement. However, in spite of this, everyone we interviewed both personally and professionally highly valued engagement for students, communities, professions, and the university.

We discovered that words count. Faculty, administrators, and students want to know how Virginia Tech defines engagement and why it should be conducted. It is also clear that incentives count. Everyone felt the engagement culture at Virginia Tech could be enhanced by providing a variety of ways to recognize and reward quality engagement. Finally, faculty, students, and administrators believe engagement is more than service learning. They asked for a wide portfolio of engagement topics and activities be valued by the university.

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[1] Holland, B. (1997). Analyzing Institutional Commitment to Service: A Model of Key Organizational Factors. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning.* 4, Fall, pp. 30-41.

We also found the concept of engaged scholarship is very multidimensional. Some people are trying to expand what counts as engaged scholarship. Others are trying to make engaged scholarship fit the traditional revenue generation and research publication lens. Participants in this project felt the traditional scholarship lens does not recognize the intrinsic value of engagement, the time and effort required to conduct engaged work, the value of locally and regionally disseminated knowledge, and the lack of referred publication venues. Many faculty were very puzzled about how to go about measuring engagement.

With these themes in mind, we suggest the following recommendations to enhance the engagement culture at Virginia Tech.

Commission on Outreach and International Affairs
- Integrate the engagement and engaged scholarship into new faculty orientation
- Develop criteria and a review mechanism for external review of faculty engagement activities, similar to refereed review of articles that can be used in the university promotion and tenure process
- Educate the university community on the value of engagement across all missions of the university
- Expand on Outreach NOW to include more opportunities for faculty, students, and administrators across campus to build cross campus engagement networks
- Continue to develop a white paper that defines the purpose, intent, and scope of engagement and engaged scholarship at Virginia Tech

Outreach Council
- Provide seed grants to cover costs of engagement project start up
- Develop a variety of measurable indicators for measuring successful engagement at Virginia Tech
- More fully align university and college outreach/engagement strategic plans

Virginia Tech Upper Administration
- Encourage colleges to address engagement across all missions (outreach, discovery and learning) in their strategic plans
- Change current university position on the role of engagement in the promotion and tenure process from one where engagement is allowed to one where engagement is encouraged
- Encourage colleges and departments to specifically address the role of engagement (on par with discovery) in their promotion and tenure guidelines, particularly in those colleges where engagement is central to their mission and faculty activity
- While acknowledging the value of publication, resist the temptation to see engaged scholarship as a process of turning engagement into refereed publications
- Change the use of the term "outreach" to the term "engagement" to better reflect the nature of the work being done
- Provide faculty with opportunities to become familiar with engagement best practices
- Include a segment on engagement and engaged scholarship in the Provost's fall "P&T Information Session"

- More often openly articulate and demonstrate the value of engagement and engaged scholarship in Virginia Tech's success
- Fund engagement incentives such as endowed faculty positions, engagement assistantships, and engagement sabbaticals
- Provide staff to create and maintain an online faculty/student/community engagement tool box

Service Learning Center
- Expand the title of the center to "Engagement and Service Learning Center"
- Expand the center's functions to include providing engagement project logistical support for faculty
- Provide more opportunities for faculty to meet each other and discuss engagement, engaged scholarship, and best practices
- Help explicate and measure indicators of quality engagement at Virginia Tech

Department Heads
- Create and articulate specific strategic plans for advancing engagement
- Provide new faculty with an engagement mentor
- More fully recognize and reward quality engagement and engaged scholarship through performance reviews, department awards, department marketing and communications and other efforts
- Provide incentives to enhance engagement such as endowed faculty positions, engagement assistantships, engagement sabbaticals, and engagement scholarships

P&T Chairs
- Create a process for garnering feedback from engagement partners in the faculty tenure and promotion review process
- Acknowledge and value community-based research, teaching, and engagement
- Review and update department promotion and tenure policies related to engagement to expand what counts as engaged scholarship
- While acknowledging the value of publication, resist the temptation to see engaged scholarship as a process of turning engagement into refereed publications

Faculty
- Participate in professional development to improve engagement work
- Work with campus centers on logistics for engagement projects
- Push P&T to be more inclusive of engagement and engaged scholarship best practices
- Participate in workshops and efforts to measure the impact of engagement
- Participate in many venues to share engagement and engaged scholarship with others

Students
- Participate in opportunities to learn about engagement and engaged scholarship
- Take leadership to recruit students and faculty into engagement work
- Participate in many venues to share engagement and engaged scholarship with others

2010 CLAHS Engagement Academy Team
- Determine how P&T can more fully value engagement and engaged scholarship at Virginia Tech
- Continue populating the faculty/student/community engagement tool box web site

Conclusion

The 2009 Engagement Academy Team believes engagement is alive and well at Virginia Tech. However, more needs to be done to demonstrate that engagement and engaged scholarship is highly valued in Tech's daily culture. Attention to enhancing faculty incentives, a clearer definition of and purpose for engagement and engaged scholarship across campus, and articulation of an expanded portfolio of engagement topics and activities by the university could greatly enhance the engagement context at Virginia Tech.

UCIA Meeting
February 25, 2010
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

<u>**summary**</u>

1. Guests present:
   - Steven Capaldo, legal counsel
   - Rohsaan Settle, student conduct

2. Education Abroad updates
   General updates:
   - Sponsored workshop on international experience resume building (Feb. 23) and Education Abroad expo (Feb. 24) to include information on internships and service learning; events well attended
   - Held area studies session on Asia (Feb. 2) and will hold on Europe on Mar. 2
   - Overall enrollments are stable; drops in interest noted after students return from winter break and summer program enrollment is dependent on placement of internships
   Alcohol policy:
   - Changes made to terminology referring to 'regional centers abroad' and 'Hokie Handbook;' updated 'Tips for Hosting a Safe and Successful Event'
   - Steven Capaldo addressed faculty concerns regarding responsibility for student/underage drinking; student conduct will handle behavioral issues and laws of the country in which the incidents/activities occur will take precedence over Commonwealth regulations. Faculty still has duty to manage and monitor events. Discussion ensued as to sanctions for disruptive behavior; referrals can be handled via telephone/videoconference and consequences (warnings, suspensions) would be determined based on prior incidents.
   - Questions raised: Should a student with a prior alcohol or behavior violation stateside be permitted to attend a study abroad trip? How are thresholds of behavior defined in contexts of international settings? There should be follow-up on these issues.
   - Group consensus was that the policy as amended permits students under the age of 21 to drink at university-sponsored events while protecting faculty from vulnerability to litigation; motion was made by Cynthia Bonner, seconded by Richard Shryock and approved
   Health policy:
   - Need to make faculty aware of options and commonalities for health insurance; it can be purchased for a few dollars per day
   - Should students be required to have a doctor's note testifying to their physical and emotional preparedness for education abroad activities? Legal counsel does not seem to think implementation of this would be an issue; it would not be used to accept or deny students' participation but merely to raise faculty awareness of potential issues and ways that all students can be accommodated.
   - Although International Student Identification Cards offer insurance and are available at Cranwell, physicals are not required for admission/attendance at Virginia Tech; there are also cultural and religious considerations
   - Physicians may be aware of conditions but not in the context of international travel.

- This strategy has been approved by legal counsel as meeting students' needs; it offers faculty the opportunity to discreetly adapt programs based on participants' requirements
- Mental health issues are not so easily identified
- A document with these options has been prepared and is in the process of being reviewed by legal counsel before being brought back to the UCIA for further discussion

3. Emergency Preparedness for International Activities
- Crisis in Haiti has raised concerns as to how personnel can be evacuated in times of crisis
- Organizations such as Global Rescue can be contracted for on-call evacuation services; this is a requirement in place for international donor-funded projects involving faculty and staff
- Difficult to track and monitor all international travel; during AIEA conference it was mentioned that 95% of colleges/universities do not have this rescue system in place. This should be investigated further; if VT is already paying for this service because of USAID projects, can the coverage be extended to a wider range of participants/travelers

4. Update on international activities
- Jeanna Stewart reported on international programs in College of Engineering, including program for freshmen designed to serve as an introduction to study abroad opportunities that also provides networking, internships, and student referrals
- College has initiated a zero-credit designation for service learning projects; also has an international programs faculty committee and an alumni board consisting of former VT students currently living or having lived abroad for networking opportunities
- Has a RA working in the Education Abroad office to help increase visibility for College of Engineering
- Zero-credit program discussed further among council members; CLAHS has considered this idea as well as a positive means of collecting information on international projects such as students involvement in other areas such as church mission trips.

5. Haiti/Caribbean working group
- John Dooley announced creation of this group in response to interest by faculty, staff and students after the January earthquake. Group is being led by Patrick Guilbaud and Bryan Cloyd and will operate in context of the broader Caribbean faculty initiatives. Please refer interested parties to Betty Watts (bettyw@vt.edu).

6. Informational items
- Dr. Browder asked Reed Kennedy of Pamplin to provide next month's update on college international activities

7. Next meeting: Thursday, March 25 (2:00 – 3:30 p.m.)