

AASCU Academic Affairs Winter Meeting
 Orlando, Florida
 February 10, 2011
 Submitted by Virginia Horvath

Red Balloon Steering Committee

Introductions

George Mehaffy:

Interesting conversation yesterday at UCF about programs and intentional prioritizing to turn around English Composition program. It now is focused on learning outcomes with permanent faculty (not tenure-track) and doing things in a different way, with value on teaching. So change can happen

Summary of some things happening on a national level:

- A lot has been happening, and nothing has been happening. The momentum of ADP gives us hope for this project.
- Review of timeline for RBP, evolution of the project and discussion about it, including AAUP perception that RBP is nefarious attempt to eliminate faculty. GM talked with Gary Rhoades from AAUP about this, who now understands and doesn't oppose the project.
- Next Generation Learning Project elicited 600 proposals and the AASCU project with 20 campuses was among the 50 advanced to the next round.
- Review of other initiatives, including work with publishers, engaging the presidents, thinking about a publication, GM's visits to campuses, conversations with accreditors.

Central Question for today: What should I/we/AASCU be doing?

Campus Updates:

- Winona State: conversations with faculty, concrete info from NGLP, focus on larger group to discuss broader issues among non-competing institutions. Faculty want to know how to get involved. Tough part is answering the question of what's at the center of the wheel, what is driving what we are doing. There are more national opportunities arising and AASCU could be an engaging function.
- CUNY York faculty are saying, "Don't give me anything new, as I'm overworked and you have no money to fund it." So I moved to stealth mode working on these issues without calling it RBP. I had to take space from faculty who no longer had grants. By stealth, it's been an important strategy for doing without letting them know they are doing more. He also used this for funding a student research project. Guerilla warfare by stealth to get people to do things they don't want to do.
- University of North Florida. Provost's Task Force was inspired by RBP, but it's been fueled by FL Board of Governors' attention to "academic efficiencies." Course redesign has been a focus. Colleges are pressing for decentralized scheduling authority, and Mark Workman has agreed, but wants faculty to participate in national meetings.

- Western KY: SACS accreditation aligned nicely with what we've been doing up to this point. People are tired of projects, so we haven't talked about RBP. But leadership programs on campus and gen ed task force are aligned with project and priorities of civic agency and community engagement. Pressures on resources, recruitment, and so on get us back to idea of core purpose. Barbara Burch and the new provost are using the ed leadership programs to connect with these core purposes.
- Jacksonville State (AL): on a very traditional campus, faculty have been encouraged to think in terms of blended courses and other initiatives, including prof development for faculty and staff. Faculty like Gina who step out and embrace what is new are the benefits of prof dev funds and are interested in change, out of box thinking. Ordered books and put resources out to get people to read. Faculty need to be transformed. When RBP came along, it seemed to be an organizing framework for what they've been doing anyway. President had heard about RBP at AACSCU meeting this summer and had administrative buy-in. The campus opening meeting is scripted by 3 people on campus, and RBP was integrated, with fundamental points that are central to JSU, such as learning centered environment, success of non-traditional students, declining budgets. All are trying to get around this organizing theme, central questions. Trying to form grassroots efforts on campus. Discussion-group leaders were identified. They meet and share information, and they move in their own directions. Gena took idea back to her department, which has a lot of adjunct faculty and invited all to come. They spent about an hour complaining, and then about two hours imagining other approaches to courses, including hybrid courses. The department hadn't met regularly, but now they are planning to meet at least once a semester to talk about teaching.
- Keene State College (NH): Ongoing conversations with Commissioner on Higher Ed for NES accrediting body fostering principles of RBP across New England institutions. There is interest throughout New England. GM came to the state-wide meeting and met with all CAOs in the region to talk about collaboration. It's resonated among these CAOs, but it's tense because of the competition among the institutions. One thing they are doing in March is bringing all political science profs from across the state to collaborate about how they might develop a project related to the primaries, possibly through ADP. In June when GM released the document, Mel shared it with people, who weren't eager for another initiative. There is a big interest on campus in OER, so this has been a way of having these discussions, engaging in RBP and ADP of bringing structure. At Keene, 50 faculty (25%) are involved in ADP. Curriculum design is infused with ADP. Faculty are increasingly using an instructional designer. Mel needed to introduce anxiety into the system, talking about Lumina, *Academically Adrift*, all the things that we have talked about but seem remote. Sense that "outlasting" these external realities seems to be ebbing. For some people, this is kind of thrilling, that they are waiting to take a more active role. Immediately positive influence on campus. Expect more explicit.
- Fredonia (NY): book dialogues and use of RBP in strategic planning
- Metropolitan State (Denver): Faculty member was recently invited to participate and sees hybrid courses advertised as blend of F2F and online, but he sees that most courses are already falling into this category. Tom was online this morning engaging students in the course this morning from a distance. It's not a project as much as an invitation to use the resources we have, an opportunity to use things like CMS to learn. Making the transition from tweeting to an online learning is huge for students. As an undergraduate, Tom had to subscribe to NYT as an outside resource. He has not experienced it being imposed or resisted, but sees it as what was done 40 years ago. Vicki Golich, a political scientist by training and cynic by choice, feels more successful leading from behind. She had the benefit of 1992 going to Cal State San Marcos, a new institution, where innovation was the norm and people were using technology in creative

ways. Metro State with 2,400 students has limited resources, little fundraising. Two characteristics: 500 faculty are bifurcated by 10-year gap in hiring, so there are challenges to socialization in the institution. President review recently elicited the recurring clamor of “no new initiatives,” so they have challenges. There are many good things happening on campus, so RBP allows people to have a frame for their work. Building a new Student Success building that will incorporate many of the student success features with kiosks, tutoring, other supports in one place. Math Peer Study Program has been in place for several years, with an extra course for those who need extra attention in math. Developing a one-year stretch English course and focusing on receiving Hispanic Serving Institution status. Center for Faculty Development is reading *DIY U*. Two professional development days for staff: Tracy Fenton came to campus, a 35-year old who started WorldBlu (NGO) when she was 21. She is inspiring in her work related to democracies and democratic principles: transparency, dialogue, accountability. If we succeed at this democratization of our institution, we provide more freedom and responsibility across the institution. AASCU could help us in adapting, not adopting, by listing the ideas somewhere as a resource. The feds have to get it that we have very untraditional paths for students, who may enter in the spring and may take one or two courses in a semester.

George Mehaffy’s comments

- Summary of all the things RBP has become: metaphor, framework, project [and several others that I wasn’t able to catch]
- Creating a DARPA-like network for education
- How can AASCU build the right connectors?
- Comment on hybrid, building repositories, using data analytics to have a sense of what students are learning and dive deeply to individual students. GM is intrigued by idea that once you buy the proposition that 50% of the course is placed online, what is to prevent the tech-mediated part of the course to be developed not by individual faculty but by groups of faculty? What if faculty could now spend time talking with other faculty about learning outcomes and spending more time with students in trouble? You don’t free up time; you shift where and how they are spending their time. Flat World Knowledge is trying to do this, as is the World Science library, MERLOT, open-resources that build on materials and layer onto it. Harry points out that cooperation in curriculum development has always been there; the technology just adds another dimension. GM: At the end of the day, it’s not about technology; it’s about the culture. What increases graduation rate is not a program bolted on to a bad culture, but a campus-wide commitment to the idea that students can succeed and it’s worth the effort of every person.
- Tom: going deep from a data perspective, I learn what students are thinking by reading about what they write, whether hand-written or electronic. I learn from direct interaction with students. I was getting defensive when you were talking about data mining. But that culture of caring about students and helping them learn defines the core of the RBP, ways to bring learning. GM: the data don’t solve the problem, but they might get to what needs to be discussed.
- Epiphany: issue of information literacy and contextual literacy is true for students, but faculty have almost the reverse. What resources are there to allow faculty to get up to speed on technology, and how can faculty now provide the contextual literacy, one on one, that students need. The continuums are reversed. Goal is to develop a culture of contextual literacy.
- Mel: The issue of a “course” is challenged by David Carr’s question, “What is higher education going to look like when the course is no longer the primary mode of instruction?” I put this as a sole question on a PowerPoint presentation, and faculty found some of it thrilling.

- Sally: I saw no contradiction between electronic data mining and writing as ways to understand student learning since each is a creative way to understand the culture and the individual learning. The role of faculty is changing: we have people who came into HE with one set of skills and expectations, but the world is changing (not coming anymore), and there are major shifts in governance of HE, collaboration, competition, course as unit of analysis, recruitment, efficiencies, metrics, priorities, course loads. States and governors are not interested in our usual measures and increasingly interested in institutions' value to the state and its workforce. What happens five years after graduation? This will be jolting in some cases, but helping our campuses move in these directions will help us. There's no money. The textbook world is in a revolution, and what is coming out now are sophisticated, well-developed solutions such as MERLOT. Individually developed content is not the agenda.
- Cecilia Orphan: challenging us to think about students. Do students like Blackboard? No, and they were not involved in designing it. The FB application for learning environments is more likely to be used effectively by students.
- Gena: what I can discover from the technology is how long it took a student to get there. So it's a valuable tool to have those analytics.

Continued Campus Reports (after lunch)

- Vilas: trying to change dialogue on campus, idea generation. Identifying high-impact practices and connecting the dots. Banning the phrase "do more with less." We don't want people to do more; we want them to do different things.
- Many of the topics we have embraced at Northridge, but I'm not sure we've called them Red Balloons. It's an organizing construct, framework, philosophy of the future.
- IPFW: RBP kicked off at summer retreat for deans, with recognition that real cultural change begins with faculty. The steering committee is a partnership with senate and academic administrators focuses on reimagining the academic future. The CTL is involved in opening lines of communication on campus. Provost is sending tweets from the conference. He received a message about how faculty are taking the leadership. RBP has encouraged open and collaborative process, aligned with Indiana's priorities and allowing IPFW to take a leadership role. He's tied this with LEAP agenda of AAC&U and moved forward with a state-wide LEAP agenda and used "reimagine" as part of the vernacular in strategic planning in other ways.
- At Fredonia, the cultural challenges are in defensiveness and resentment, as people wait out leaders to leave. There is a very strong departmental orientation, less consideration of the institution. Doing RBP kinds of things is a challenge. Ownership of things is also a challenge, and people are resistant to owning institutional projects. Where there is a shared sense of the institution, there can be progress, but there is no clear shared identity. I've been trying to do adult education—shared articles—but we need to move beyond awareness to actual activity.
- Susan: stepped down from Provost position in July and is not guiding a campus process. SC-M sees leadership as a teaching activity, not different from previous roles. So provost sees her job as giving a big picture in ways that instructors do. Many people are engaged in effective teaching methods—talks, book dialogues, working behind the scenes. We should keep doing this. But what's missing right now is how we then help people get the big picture to connect to what is happening on other campuses as well as legislative mandates, state budgeting procedures, and so on. On my campus, I was blown away by high level of creativity among faculty. So many of the RBP projects are already there. But people still work in isolation and don't know how other campuses are resolving these same issues. Having faculty meet and talk across disciplines would be valuable. Book discussions at Oswego have been exciting (*DIY U*

yesterday). I'd like to broaden the conversation outward about the big picture and help start some kind of discussion of issue among ourselves, intentionally and between meetings. I worry that this project is not innovative enough but we're highlighting things that already in place.

- Harry: we began working on this seven years ago, studying effectiveness of learning, variety of instructional modes, changes in composition and mathematics, thematic organizations and research strands, public accountability, future of public comprehensive institution conference.
- Larry (Fort Hays): we've been RBP before AASCU put the label on this. Our approach has been to use convocation to introduce the project. Like a capital campaign, it's been silent this year, with ideas being discussed. Library, undergraduate education, etc. RBP as a metaphor for changing the American university. Asked people to bring forward one RBP initiative and will follow up later this year. Bottom line driving this transformation is that technology and open-education resources. The value proposition is also there: what are people paying for, and what do they get? Bok's 8 purposes of HE are guiding them. Trying to tie online students and programs to the rest is a challenge, but it's more possible to bring them into the population, and this is part of our agenda.
- Reimagining student government could be part of this, as they are at UMBC.
- Sandra: I had a great opportunity, starting in August when RBP was launched, she used the newness as a fresh approach to doing things. Book clubs, film showings, and so on are working. Also exploring new relationships with local high schools to see what they could be doing. Mini-grants encouraged faculty to think about learning enhancements in their own classrooms. Joined the AASCU webinar on using analytics. Looked at construction of science building as way of reimagining science learning. Looking at RPT guidelines. Got a grant to do an adult learning project as a consortium, including approaches for military personnel. Prior learning assessment for academic credit is another initiative. Instructional Design office created to develop faculty skills in hybrid and online learning.
- Ed (Cheney): new initiative on campus leveraging Title III funds for HBCUs to focus on retention and starting as a team in moving forward. The opening conference this semester was organized by RBP faculty, and it was the best ever. They gave out red folders and had red balloons inside them. One concrete outcome was that English faculty began to use ETS to back up instruction and look at underperformance in the first two semesters. The math faculty looked at redesign and submitted to NSF. Some software was given as a gift to get people excited. A 3-2-1 evaluation was used (3 things you learned, 2 questions, 1 commitment), as well as questions to develop initiatives.
- Ray: complex campus in terms of shared governance. Strategic planning has occurred since he arrived 5 years ago, leading to a task force on distributed learning, student success, and curricular transformation. They use LEAP not only for general education but as a framework for all programs. They are also working on community college partnerships and engaged learning.

Closing Comments and Reflections

- How do we build faculty support?
- Can we set up a library of usable resources/
- We need to look at intellectual property issues.
- We settled on two main ideas of what AASCU can do for us: 1) better define the goals and purposes of RBP (related to the mission of AASCU institutions); 2) provide infrastructure for collaboration across our institutions
- We can use RBP to build relationships among particular organizations.
- Let's adapt what happens at POD to identify best ideas and multiply ideas.

- Reinforce pride in our AASCU institutional identity.
- We need to reimagine foundation courses and new ways to deliver them.
- We could tap into alumni about what they learned and didn't.
- Recognizing the critical role of faculty in making this happen, AASCU can help us with graduate education.
- We were impressed with our work with the Gates Foundation and collaborative work.
- Since 85% of the jobs for new Ph.Ds are in our institutions, help us get ABDs or PhDs to come in our institutions and work with us—a different model from CASTL, more like AASCU post-docs.
- AASCU could use *7 Revolutions* in bringing faculty together about assembling resources
- We need to prepare leaders well, organizing meetings on transformational change, using models of collaborative pedagogies at our meetings.

Next Steps

- Get notes to Cecelia.
- Think about what you'd like to see in Portland, and send thoughts and suggestions to George.
- What might we do to teach people how to think in different ways and then work on learning outcomes and course redesign? Could first-year courses be the soft landing for such initiatives?
- Guiding questions for the panel at the closing plenary:
 - RBP: what do we want it to be?
 - Adapt, not adopt
 - Identify the end, the purpose of our work
 - Reveal underlying values and core propositions
 - What are the strategies for a metric of self-evaluation?
 - How can we move from a year of reflection to something else?
 - We need to collaborate with one another and with other national associations, not duplicating what others do
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Small-group Discussion

Barbara Burch, Susan Coultrap-McQuinn, Mel Netzhammer, Mark Workman, Ivelaw Griffith, Ginny Horvath, Larry Gould

Urging everyone to look at Lumina Foundation, NSF, NEH. There are many initiatives and projects aimed at STEM disciplines and minority student success and education programs that address achievement gaps. There are funding opps for teaching in the STEM areas.

At Northern Illinois University, people feel as if they are drinking from a fire hose. AASCU could help sort out the resources for each of these areas. We get new info every week, and the overload keeps people from even looking at it. If we could use AASCU as a way of focusing and even prioritizing, we could find the information that is coming our way. This would be useful for my campus.

Barbara: I agree. You only have so much time, and we only have so many shots.

Eventually, you have to stop planning and start taking action.

AASCU could provide an institutional structure to make this happen. There is a website, but nothing is happening there because no one is organizing what is there. *DIY U* shows that there is a huge institutional structure underneath the open coursework at MIT. The second thing is that the old organization of AAHE involved *faculty* in broad issues, and that organization doesn't exist. AAC&U is more administrative now. Maybe we need to institutes or meetings on specific topics, such as going beyond the academic credits. When we talk about getting faculty together to talk about learning outcomes, we aren't addressing the realities of faculty time and campus cultures.

One issue is infrastructure, and the other is sense-making. For example, should Keene be part of the AAC&U civic engagement project when they are already in ADP? It's important to make sense of initiatives.

It used to be that people in state governing boards didn't talk to one another, but they do now. If there is some way to connect there, it would be helpful to get it inside the flow of consideration among the staffs of our governing board, we could work on connectedness.

State systems vary widely and depends on localization.

We are competing with one another within the state, so we are freer to share best practices with our peers from outside the state. But that's a core issue in this discussion: keeping distinctiveness for institutions, courses, faculty approaches and keeping the energy.

How can we put this in a context that governing boards can understand. We create some of our problems.

In New Hampshire, there has been a focus on technology and how it's used in instruction. An example someone gave about a way he uses technology to teach Mandarin, a board member asked, "Couldn't we have just bought this instead of developing it?"

At the end of the day, talking about the process is one thing. But we need to keep at front and center is what we do that makes any difference. Our curriculum committees tend to focus on turf protection, not

what we are achieving purposefully. We leave ourselves open to criticism from governing boards when they wonder whether we are the answer.

At the same time, we can't neglect the context of the world in which we work. There isn't enough money to do everything we want to do and to engage people in working on new projects. I don't know a single person on my campus (Oswego) who has looked at the use of the MIT materials. How do we figure out what can be used by others? It's like the old days of developing a textbook. People use it in different ways and develop their uses of it in different ways.

CO mentioned the 7 Revolutions Project and its use of this. No one faculty could be an expert on all revolutions, but they've come to rely on one another to develop a robust toolkit. We're not prescriptive at all, and it's working well. It's all up for grabs and tested through a variety of uses and revisions.

That's the AASCU role: develop the platform to use, principles of transformation that are clearly defined for us to use in a variety of ways.

7 Revolutions sounds like a great prototype, but it has to be a much bigger picture. If all are developing these tools, someone has to help sort out of this out.

Barbara: honors program has picked up 7 revolutions as its core and is looking at curriculum in a different way and could affect gen ed outcomes and uses.

AASCU does coordination, national meetings, discussion of topics across institutions. And AASCU could model the tools that will engage faculty as learners using collaborative technologies.

Finding instructional designers that know how to use pedagogy and teach in constructivist ways using technology. University of Kentucky is developing PhD students.

AASCU could leverage Washington connection to work with scholarly societies to develop resource materials for the disciplines from which individual faculty and campuses could work. In AASCU we could identify people who are innovators across disciplines and find ways to get them involved. We need to get sessions at the meetings faculty generally go to and have them do follow up webinars.

Campus Compact set up help systems based on disciplines and resource materials.

The approach of where faculty live is a good one, but it bothers me because so much of what we are doing is interdisciplinary. So reinforcing scholarly isolation is problematic.

One reason we've generated so many courses and majors is that we go back and respond to what individual students and faculty want. But the courses and programs seem so similar after while. Maybe one of the goals should be connecting the dots within the program, not in an isolated way. The theme community, such as 7 Revolutions, gets faculty to talk together.

ADP as a separate meeting has grown tremendously. RBP needs to have a similar way to bring faculty together, not something that provosts bring back from meetings.

How can we deliberately link ADP and RBP? Maybe we don't need a separate initiative but a way to feed two birds at once. Some people are not connected to ADP and think we should focus on something else, but they could be embedded.

It's bigger than AASCU. These issues are coming up at all of our conferences, and we need a meeting of the minds about this.

There is a danger in trying to find the common denominator so specifically (citizenship, sustainability). RBP was thinking about thinking, with a goal of engaging as many people as possible. Faculty from very different disciplines get excited about teaching, and they talk across disciplines. All the other good things will follow from this.

Another issue besides the content of what we're about in HE is much more about the issues of cost, impact of cost, access, technology, education for successful lives. These are not addressed by themes.

The key word in RBP is "reimagining" and maybe this should sunset after this year. But we need to be very careful about what we do so that we define our roles in the future. There are a lot of people who can do what we do more efficiently, more cheaply. We have to be able to talk about it and be committed to it. Every day we talk about the marketplace and see people who are willing to pay for the credential more than the learning. What about us is essential that we can demonstrate? It's rare to find an institution without a mission statement that embodies this. It's not about trying to have everyone do the same thing but trying to reimagine and reaffirm the centrality of who we are.

Some of the things we profess to do best may be done just fine by others. They may not really learn to be global citizens on our campus. But what excited me about RBP was the original idea of the social direction accomplished independently. They can do much of the learning without us. And I'm not sure we've put students first and really looked at their learning. There are thousands of places they can connect to while they are pretending to listen to us in the classroom that get them connected. What did finally excite people was when they looked at testimonies from students about what they are actually learning and how they connect to one another. I look at underperformance data and bring in the hard reality that people not be doing as great a job as they think. Obviously we have to do something different. Maybe we need to draw on a sense of professional commitment.

B.O. Smith said when you are developing curriculum, there are essentials, negotiable, and desirables. I find myself thinking about our *essential* commitment, recognizing that it will be done through disciplines, varying costs, and understandings of how students learn. All of those things are clues to how we resource. What is it about our type of institution, as AASCU institutions, that make this distinct? Answering this is our core question.

It's still thinking about thinking. The moral core is still that. The world is changing how we think about thinking, and RBP comes back to this value proposition. The RBP is keeping the core within a culture of tremendous change. AASCU institutions are at the center of American HE because of their affordability, focus on learning. We are not community colleges, research institutions. We are the workhorses of American HE and we could be defining this more clearly.

Tremendous inferiority complex of AASCU institutions: elites are not having this conversation, so stating the mission boldly for AASCU. It connects to Stewards of Place.

Faculty roles, graduate training: what role can AASCU have with this? Perhaps a meeting like the former AAHE Faculty Roles and Rewards meetings about new models for collaboration, faculty identity, connection, and reward systems.

Open textbooks and collaborative resources are at the center, because these go against the structures that we ourselves build. Texts are about a third of their costs. Students are aware of the cost of texts and resisting it. How can we foster collaboration to put together course materials that aren't so rigid as course in a box but open to all students.

That attacks the culture issue. We're not likely to change grad programs, but a Faculty Roles & Rewards in the Revolution could be valuable on a regular basis.

Building off the categories of change could provide a basis for strong conferences and meetings. It's about packaging. It has to be marketed to faculty, and provosts have to commit to funding faculty.

Larry extended faculty contract for a week to engage new faculty in making choices about the use of technology.

If provosts are instructional leaders, our conferences need to focus on how we do things that lead to transformation. On our campuses, there are people who know how to cause transformation. We can learn strategies for organizing campuses, working with deans, allocating resources.

Direct response from AASCU: core of shared experiences such as the Harvard leadership institutes. AASCU could develop this common core of experience that would assist in successful planning, leadership development. This can be sold to presidents and systems. It could be a blended experience.

There is always a core group that becomes engaged, but how do you take that energy to become sustainable, systemic change? Leadership for Change Institute might be developed.

With regard to students, we do need to ask students what they need, but professional-client relationship needs to be continued.

