

Experimental Dartmouth Working Group

OVERALL APPROACH: The faculty strategic planning advisory committee (F-SPAC) in coordination with the senior executive strategic planning advisory committee (SE-SPAC) will launch a working group focusing on the nature, subject matter, and reach of the classroom in the twenty-first century. Their goal is to discuss how to deliver an integrated education in the context of: Dartmouth's historic commitment to liberal education; models that extend beyond an academic structure reliant on departments and disciplines, majors and minors; and the demand placed upon colleges and universities to produce graduates who are skilled in integrative thinking, the better to understand today's complex world (and the even more complex world of the future) and to bring a practical and team-oriented approach to addressing this complex world's challenges and problems.

This working group will seek broad input from within and outside Dartmouth. They will examine trends, needs, and opportunities that will be vital to ensuring Dartmouth's leadership and engagement in an increasingly complex and integrated world. Individual schools and departments will be asked by their deans and directors to engage in discussions focusing on departmental, divisional, and school-specific strengths and approaches to complement the more general conversation.

GOALS

- To discuss and develop strategies for implementing collaborative and integrated education efforts within the existing Dartmouth community.
- To develop recommendations for Dartmouth's strategic plan, informed by data-driven assessments and broad engagement with the community.

INITIAL QUESTIONS

- What does an integrated education look like? Why might an integrated education be desirable or necessary at Dartmouth?
- What existing examples of integrated education already exist at Dartmouth? How might they be expanded?
- How does an integrated educational approach work in tandem with traditional discipline-specific approaches to learning?
- What structures, populations, and policies need to be reexamined and adjusted to allow for greater collaborative efforts among faculty, staff, and students who wish to explore an integrated educational model?
- What metrics exist or can be developed to measure the effectiveness of an integrated approach to education?

I. Status Report: Where are we now?

- Identify models of integrated education Dartmouth College has used recently and currently uses. Provide an inventory of their use (e.g., number of students who apply or enroll, number of faculty members who teach or support these efforts). Assess the strengths and shortcomings of our current efforts.
- Obtain a "real-time" snapshot of attitudes — student, staff, faculty, and alumni — toward current efforts at integrated education and subject-specific education.

- Discuss current trends in interdisciplinary education and how they might shape the delivery of an integrated education.

II. Looking Forward: What are the opportunities?

- How can Dartmouth take advantage of its strengths to better deliver an integrated education?
- Which parts of an integrated educational experience should be universal, and which parts should students and faculty explore through self-selection?
- Which sectors of the college are best poised to deliver an integrated educational experience?

III. Environmental Scan

- Look at best practices at other institutions nationally and internationally for:
 - Successful models, including funding models, for experimental, interdisciplinary, and integrated education, including but not limited to: Colorado College’s “block plan”; Georgia Tech’s Center for 21st Century Universities; the “Ways of Inquiry” curriculum at Oxford College (Emory University); the “multidisciplinary programs in the social sciences founded on a model of liberal education” at James Madison College (University of Michigan); Hampshire College’s successes and struggles; and other honors and experimental colleges housed within larger college/university environments
 - Successful structures, systems, and support services for integrated learning
- What lessons can be learned from other institutions, other countries?
- Examine global trends in higher education and their impact on Dartmouth’s strategy
 - increased blurring of lines between departments and disciplines
 - hunger among faculty to collaborate across knowledge boundaries
 - need for students to solve problems that have the potential for multiple input/output vectors

IV. Resources: What do we need to be successful

- What infrastructure will best demonstrate Dartmouth’s commitment to an integrated educational experience? For example:
 - creation of new faculty “accounting” system that allows for greater collaborative flexibility
 - creation of parallel educational tracks for concentrated integrated learning experiences
 - dedicated funding to invite knowledge leaders to partner with students and faculty in short-term integrated education modules (e.g., five-week intensive seminars)

V. Mechanisms and procedures for promoting success

- What will success look like? What procedures and mechanisms will allow Dartmouth to become more widely recognized for integrated educational programs and presence in the next decade?

WORKING GROUP COMPOSITION

- Susan Ackerman, Chair of the Department of Religion; Preston H. Kelsey Professor of Religion, Women's and Gender Studies, Jewish Studies
- Rebecca Biron, Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese; Chair of Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Studies
- Thomas H. Cormen (Co-chair) Professor of Computer Science; Chair of the Department of Computer Science
- Richard L. Kremer, Associate Professor of History
- F. Jon Kull, Associate Professor of Chemistry
- Steven R. Swayne (Co-chair), Professor of Music
- *ex-officio*: Maria Laskaris (SE-SPAC Co-Chair; Dean of Admissions), Martin Wybourne (SE-SPAC Co-Chair, A&S, Vice-Provost), Denise Anthony (F-SPAC Chair (A&S))

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

GENERAL CHARGE TO WORKING GROUPS

- Address topics defined by SE-SPAC and F-SPAC, ensuring attention to Guiding Principles and Guiding Questions
- Coordinate with SE-SPAC and F-SPAC to refine definition of topics
- Identify, gather, and analyze data
- Explore external factors and trends
- Seek input broadly
 - After producing status reports, seek proposals on specific topics
 - Consult various groups as needed
- Establish routines for periodic communication with staff, faculty, and advisory committee(s)
- Prepare draft report and recommendations
- Prepare final report, incorporating advisory committee feedback

SUPPORT FOR WORKING GROUPS

Staffing support will be provided for scheduling meetings, taking notes, circulating information and documents, copying, etc. Small budgets will be provided for meetings, lunches, retreats, travel, etc.

WORKING GROUP REPORT

All working groups will deliver a final report including:

- Executive Summary
- Definition of topic and scope
- Description of working group process
- Presentation of key data/information and analysis
- Options considered, pros and cons
- Recommended actions and timetable
- Relation of the topic and recommendations to the Guiding Principles and Questions
- Description of how progress/success in reaching goals will be measured
- Appendices—data, analyses, or other supporting materials