Academic Affairs Faculty Forum
February 13, 2020

Notes from table discussions:

Question 1: What have you done (or do you want to do) to increase student success in your classes?

- Making that connection – how it all fits in – even courses that seem outside – how does it still fit? Help see the big picture.
- Free write – journal
- Admit and exit slips
- Instructional designs, communication – strategic
- Identification of available resources
- Reducing stigmas – find resources
- Advising
- Active Learning
- Simplifying syllabi
- Communicate
- Tutor
- Building community/cohort
- Value of learning community
- Living/Learning Community – undecided – cohorts seems to promote success and accountability
- Good plan/degree plan focus
- Personal narrative – office hours
- Active learning classroom and curriculum (smart room)
- Students at board working
- TA, MLA as "helpers" in class
- Using Navigate
- Aggressive about posting deadlines and reminders
- Assume everyone is a first-gen student – talk about acronyms, orientation to "life on campus"
- Empathy
- Grading contracts – students can choose grade
- On-line tools – generate homework assignments to address needs to support learning
- Gateway exams as a checkpoint. Exams can be done over and over. Clear "bar".
- Real explicit directions, expectations. Transparency
- Students participate in getting their grade. Choice.
- Transparency in WHY I do things
- Rubrics
- Want to try:
    - Understand the preparation that students have
    - Learn more about learning
    - More time for field placements, real life experiences
    - Get more active learning spaces to use
    - Positive feedback loops
    - Virtual reality

- Model how to study (e.g., sample notes, clicker review questions of daily homework
- Free tutoring for 100, 200 level (content based)

- Lots of stuff (data, boards, etc.) available digitally in Google Docs, Blackboard in case they missed class, want to review
- (Q/A: TA funding very limited)
- Self-funding of MLAs
- (Students are woefully unprepared when they enter UM)
- Class note-taker
  - Question: How to pay them if we "hire" them
  - Transcriptions of course lectures are <u>not</u> helpful, not the best way to learn – a student misconception
- Integrating students' personal narrative then connecting them to course materials
  - Ice breakers first, then narratives (papers) – deepens engagement
- Engineering student was an ambassador for the ECR class (helpful prof. with no background in elec. Eng.) -> sort of a TA.
- Ask students to help revise the course description – personal connection
- Find tutors for students with difficulty, students in suspension, (in Engineering, Pulp & Paper Foundation will help pay for tutoring)
  - Limited funds for tutors
- Do: personalize the experience
- Want to do: funding for tutors, MLAs

- Interesting classes
- Great lectures
- Current issues
- Project based classes
- Service learning – Hab Humanity
- Deadlines are real in college
- Advisors need to be seen as people
- Multiple drivers – large classes, jump from high school is hard
- "Office Hours" – what does that mean?
- Additional credit – see me before first exam, in office hours
- Ropes course for students and faculty – team building
- Write a culture auto biography – come in and talk about it
  - Human being thing is huge
- 1 week camp for Forestry students – form a cohort; build community
- Navigate works – phone apps
- Transparency
- Need to address 100+ class sizes
- MLAs
- Building social/emotional tools
- Environment without fear
- Different styles and learning methods

- Academic Recovery
  - <2.0 Fall/Spring "Probation" , College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
    - "on contract" – suspended
  - AR Program – attributes "sense" of punishment
    - THEY chose class = success

- - Teacher as facilitator – not tell them what to do
- Content beyond instruction – Breaking down daunting assignments - small pieces
  - Stage
  - Feed back
  - Student sense – overwhelming
- Mentoring/tutoring; Extra-time with faculty who care to help
  - Pre-vet students (Freshman Bio/Chemistry)
- Tutoring from "professional" advisor with other 1-1 tutors provided by university

- First year seminars – how professional advisors in EDHD and elsewhere are building in Active Learning activities, including clicker questions, in-class case studies, and multi-instrumental designs
- Simplify course syllabi, including highlighting mandatory meetings in/out of class with deadlines (how to read the syllabus)
- Timely interventions intentionally built into the syllabus/course
- Practicum placements (field and schools) for students trying to juggle with classes. Work closely with professional advising staff in college to help students succeed
- Key question – "what's going on?"
  - Faculty need help of Professional Advising Staff to answer that question in a way to help students succeed
- Students in cohorts (groups of majors) seem to be having better outcomes.
  - A reliable set of peers seen course over course, semester over semester is helpful.
- Academic support resources need to know about resources for them to be effective/relevant for students. Need to advertise these effectively.
- Seating challenge – make students sit in different seats around class to get to know more people and be more familiar with change. This has been directly associated with reduced absenteeism.
- Personalize
- Explain what you rnean by "office hours"
- Navigate progress reports
- Meeting students beyond classroom time
- Building community
  - Cohorts
  - Living/learning communities
- Transparency
- Size of courses
  - Smaller classes
- Social emotional skills
- Collaborative meeting
- Don't need to be afraid to fail
- Provide multiple activities

- "Get to know the students" sheet in the classroom on the 1st day – letting students know you care
- Discussion with students about their learning styles to getting to know students
- Learning journal – reflection and analytical thinking to make connections to learning material. Gives students buy-in to connections
- MLAs/TAs break out group

- Peer-based mentoring program led by TA's – undergrad and grad
- Workstudy students to get involved in peer mentoring
- Is there a way to identify at risk students early and then shuttle them into groups for support
- Provide variety of activities to allow students with varied learning styles to succeed.
- MLA ↑
  - Astronomy
  - Calc-based physics
  - MAT122 – Estabrooke smart classrooms
    - Problem based
  - Measurable results
- ULA
- Summer prep?/ ↑entry requirements
- Navigate Early Alert

- School of Economics (SOE) formed a tutoring lab to ↓ DFWL

- Phage Genomics – research →recent
  - Social/emotional skills
  - Fundamental collaborative work
  - Fostering belongingness
  - Work they do matters
- Barriers – willingness to make mistakes, fail
  - Intellectual risk-taking
  - Time management
  - What is reasonable
- A model that has pedagogical challenges – hands on
- Content
  - Linked to specific skills – approach to a question that seems impossible – what works, what doesn't
  - Student instinctively generating their own rules
- Feedback and testing on those skills
- Text 5 Elements of Effective thinking – structure reflective writing – weekly assignment
  - Started with Honors
    - Fear – own it
  - Scaling practices
    - Introductory courses
    - Challenge to administering this at scale - ? for TAs
      - Mentoring by fellow students

- School of Economics (SOE) – Tutor lab – Graduate students and Jr/Sr's
  - Collected data and found failure rates declined
  - Started teaching intro course online during winter session
- Art
  - Intro level Art History survey classes – capped at 50
  - Email students when they are not performing well or have attendance issues
  - Since 2008, part of the culture
  - Senior faculty are teaching 100-level classes
  - Able to identify students in peril quickly

- o Question: Is it more effective for tenure-faculty to teach 100-level courses or are there negative side effects. (For example, faculty may not be as enthusiastic, may not recall how difficult the intro material is, need faculty to be engaged in teaching the their 100-level courses)
  - o Cannot have large 100-level classes
- English
  - o 129 small class for Freshmen/Sophomore
  - o Small discussion class – theme in literature
  - o Downside: too expensive
- ERS 102
  - o Grant for a couple of TA's to analyze big curves (?)
  - o Teaching the same techniques using local resources (flexible)
- EHD 101
  - o Go to the field

- What was learned at Student Success
- BIO 100 down to 17% DFWL
  - o Not well prepared for rigor
  - o Financial limitations requiring work
- Changed model to flipped classroom
- More discussion
- Reflection
- Use of MLA
- Concept mapping with MLA
- Large groups being broken down into work groups with MLA
- Challenges:
  - o See MLA as valuable, but not enough resources
  - o Increased class sizes are challenging
  - o Mental health challenges on the rise
- Navigate Progress Reports are working!! Line of students after class that had received an email showing concern
- App works we are now communicating how our students communicate today

- Personal narratives
- Revise course description
- Explain office hours
- Navigate partnerships
- Mentoring and tutoring beyond classroom time
- Building communities – cohorts, LLC, classrooms
- Transparency – why we do things?
- Smaller class size for 100 level classes; MLAs
- Building social & emotional skills – fostering confidence, mentoring, etc.
- Multiple activities/assessments for students to shine since they are all different in their abilities

Question 2: What are the barriers you face in helping your students to be successful in your course?

- Mental health resources – not enough resources
  - Can students in social work or psych students get involved so that it meets needs of graduate or undergraduate students as well?
- First year courses for students to learn study skills, time management skills, etc.
- Team building exercise time
- ↓ faculty time/resources to help students succeed
- Tasks added, but nothing removed
- Push for research success, yet lack of resources
- Fund to teach innovative, research-based courses
- Leadership/guidance on student retention

- Service courses
  - Lack of cohort
- Who's doing the teaching? How supported?
- Referrals to proper resources
- Lack of early alert – Navigate will help
- Professional advising center
- Instructors need help here (referring and advising)
- Advising not really built into P&T criteria
  - "carrots" need to be built into it

- Time and money
- Students are not prepared
  - Summer preparation
- Mismatch between student experience and instructor perception of student's prior experience in high school
- High school culture vs. college culture
  - Proficiency-based assessment
    - →retake exams with criteria

- Level of preparedness
- Students are also coming from different backgrounds – may have families, work full-time
- Students are not coming in with basic understanding of the learning environment
  - We need a systematic way of addressing this problem campuswide
- Students are coming in with more needs (accommodations) but often don't want to admit they need it
- Although they are taught library skills, it does not seem to be sticking
- More students are working
- We need more resources to provide students – a more robust central place of support for academic needs
- Loss of FTE faculty in one department in contrast to the larger classes necessary to accommodate large enrollment. Issue then becomes that courses can't be offered as frequently so when they are, they are now larger
- 50 minute class period is too short

- Scheduling space
- Educational technology
- Not enough active learning spaces
- Contracts begin Sept. 1, no time to provide professional development before they start
- Scheduling classes back to back across campus – it's not possible to get there
- How Infosilem prioritizes space and time
- Number of students in 100 level courses
- Students may have no understanding about what course choices are best for them
- Advising throughout their learning path
- There needs to be a study done on <u>HOW</u> advising happens across colleges
- Possible resentment of teaching loads and number of students taught per class
- Need more faculty to be able to mentor/work with/support students
- Not enough GA's to support classes

- Classroom size
    - Build community
    - Space itself updated
- Jobs/Relationships/Social-Emotional
    - Building schedule around this schedule
- Are accommodations meeting the diverse needs of students?
- Math
    - Online math majors
    - Striking a balance
- How we communicate
- Varying commitment levels toward college
- Summer preparedness
    - Orientation to university expectations
- Connected to varying commitment

- Resource allocation – MLAs, TAs
- Mental health issues – the Counseling Center doesn't have the capacity; outside counselors also booked. Could each college have a counselor? If not a counselor, to at least do triage?
- Students are stressed about financial matters; hold on registration if over $1000
- Some faculty are not as accessible or involved, may discourage students from using disability options
- Faculty don't understand athletes' schedules and don't accommodate them
- Faculty-centered faculty
- Student have to work 20+ hours, often off-campus, too tired to study, lack of time to study
- Barrier at Student Accessibility Services
- Others
    - Poor student preparedness
    - First year student understanding of what college is
    - First-Gen college students face challenges
    - Physical spaces are too small! Can't do a lot of things
    - Insufficient Active Learning Spaces
    - How we reward teaching vs research in P&T

- o How to use Active Learning Space
- o How to use MLAs to best advantage

- Limited resources inhibit MLA use/access
- 100 level courses (and others); too large
- Mental health challenges are substantial and on the rise
- Real barriers here are financial need requiring more working hours, childcare
- Faculty learning circles needed/encouraged
- We desperately need more student success support

- Time
- Class size (numbers in 100-level)
- Student emotional challenges/mental health; ?complexity
- Student demands to "keep alive" – working
- Students engaged with their technology – pulled in too many directions
- Non-traditional students
- How to engage students who are exhausted
    - o Sick children
    - o Food insecurity
- Varied preparation from diverse backgrounds
- Engaging activity, such as vocabulary building prior to reading
- Feedback

- Need to meet students where they are – transition to college, skill-building, time – limitations/management, work/school balance
- TIME – do all the things required
- Teaching not rewarded as research for tenure
- Mental health issues & support (not just a 1st year problem)
    - o We are unqualified to help

- Classroom space and logistics
- Economics of being a students – work/study
- Relationships and extracurricular (overcommitted)
- Accommodations
- Shock of BB from Google classrooms
- Advising: one-to-one interventions
- Faculty burn-out
- Student preparedness declining – address that campus-wide
- Mismatch between student expectations & experiences coming in vs faculty expectations coming in
- More active learning spaces and ensuring only ALC faculty is using it
- Mental health challenges on rise
- Rewarding teaching in promotion and tenure vs how research is rewarded

- Teaching 34 students in 34 seat classroom – no room to move
    - Need space
- Need more active learning classrooms
- Students working – work hours
- Relationships and roommate problems on/off campus – student struggle with these
- Priority of work scheduling vs class schedules
- Stigma of needing accommodations – they don't make use of the accommodation so they can "melt into the crowd"
- Students don't check their email
- Student who don't want to be here – you can't fix that.
- Students aren't prepared – there is a mis-match between highschool experience and what it means to be prepared for college.

QUESTION 3: What can the university do to help foster a culture of mentoring in your class?

- Connections – In class but also between classes. How do General Education courses fit together? How does Gen Ed fit into the big picture? What are the connections?
- Advising Centers can help – take care of the logistics
- Transition from high school to university
- Why are you here?
    - Form connections
    - Faculty form connections
    - Mentoring begins in summer orientation
- Too much to navigate – too many resources can be overwhelming

- Fostering a faculty-student mentoring culture
- McGillicuddy grants to sponsor student research (funding students)
    - Students write proposal and work with faculty (there is not always a mechanism to pay faculty)
    - Cost is for freeing the student, but not the faculty
- In-load class that is an independent study for multiple students – similar to a capstone. The students will identify what they want to study/research
- Student initiated courses
- Perhaps it is a "mentoring class" taught in-load
- Foster student initiative in research projects
- Mentoring from outside university (e.g., Education)
- Need to create opportunities for students to be mentored by people in the field
- Service learning

- In classes of 30 or less, set up one-on-one meetings outside of class time. Meet on a personal level
- Help rooms with graduate students & faculty & MLAs to offer support. For faculty, it is their office hours. TAs hold their office hours there.
- Be pro-active

- Linking Navigate info or course info to the student and the advisor (if a student flunks an exam, they get a notice with info for supports and their advisor gets the info to reach out and offer support). Links to a response system!!
- Mentoring needs a "reward" system. It doesn't seem as if it is valued.
- More instances for faculty & students to mix outside of class
- Welcome Weekend – faculty are not on contract and may not be here
- Teaching – Research – Service: choices for faculty to decide how they would like to devote their time. Studies show it levels out and works for faculty.

- Welcome, honored, nurtured at UMaine
- Culture
    - Services – student centered
    - 22-25 small class
- Learning names
- Picture on MaineStreet (portal options)
    - Class roster
- Class – labs smaller – linkage classroom
- Introduce Active Learning Rooms
    - Number of them, as well
- Why does mentoring have to happen in the classroom?
- Create meaning for each class (make sure students know why this course is important).

- Interacting with students over multiple years helps to foster a productive relationship
- Choosing classrooms with enough space to accommodate MLAs
- As a teacher, how can we figure out who to talk to (faculty mentors) on behalf of a struggling student (Navigate?)
- Navigate training for faculty!!
- Can we require additional face time with students outside of regular class time?
- Provide resources (e.g., FOOD) for student advising sessions to incentivize attendance.
- Shouldn't teachers be more concerned with teaching instead of mentoring?
- New faculty orientation (and refreshers)

- Within units put more emphasis on cohort building & program coordinators = it forms a relationship
- More TAs
- Explain office hours, invite students = some don't understand what office hours are for.
- Give equal credit for fostering undergraduate research as well as graduate.
- Be very available to students
- Schedule office check-ins for those who struggle by week 3
- Give course credit for coming to office hours, emails to professors
- Faculty/staff who learn basic skills to do triage for mental health = University of Minnesota has a done a good job
- Connect first-year students with successful upper-level students
- Others
    - Drop-in help
    - First-year discipline-based courses

- o Small gestures of affirmation can go a long way
- o Spaces outside the classroom
- o In-load teaching assignments = independent projects
- o Ask students why they're in the class – to create meaning for them.

- Centralized support for the educating and training of all teaching assistants
- Maximize opportunities to provide info at events like New Faculty Orientation
- Importance of events like New Faculty Orientation
- Refresher to all faculty in September and January what are resources and workshops available on campus/community
- Important to also recognize the invaluable roles of our staffs
- Increase and expand the MLA
- Assign new students a peer mentor in the major to create a community

- How to do it (mentoring) with so many hours in the day and your other duties
- Where are the students? They have to be here.
  - o Spaces outside the classroom
- Forums that involve students in some way
- Academic mentors in dorms – like RAs
  - o This one is used in other institutions.
- Peer Mentoring
- Mutual mentoring
- Be genuine, be approachable, come early
  - o Answer questions, stay and discuss after
- Cultivate belongingness

- Foster a faculty-student mentoring relationship? Or change the culture of university?
- Peer mentoring – set up formal programs where undergrads are peer mentors (Phage Enrichments Peer Mentoring Program)
- Slight (low time commitment) recognitions/small gestures – send an email to a student struggling
- Peer mentoring in the classroom – upperclass people (students) come to the classroom and share their stories
- People teaching with different courseloads
- Vary the positions within teaching - i.e., a lecturer position to teach courses – and provide time to those people to mentor & meet the needs of the students
- Incentivize advising
- Formal recognition for service work – student service work
- How can we make this work in large lecture classes?

- Community
- First-year experience (NFA 117, WLE 100, EES 117, CLAS ---)
- Peer mentoring/ transfer student support
- Upper-level undergrads with newer students
- Better communication through Navigate?
  - o Mid semester check-in

- Support life-work balance → ↑support for Counseling Center
- Talk to Advising about how to help
- Drop-in help hours (individual mentoring)
- First-year transitions
- Small gestures can change the day and improve student perceptions
- Independent studies? Teaching assignments?
- Creating meaning for each class they are taking/why are they taking the class?
- Possibility of refreshers for faculty orientations
- Recognizing the role of advising
- Summer orientations
- Faculty & Staff trained in mental health awareness
- MLAs
- Incentivizing attendance

- Writing improves writing – letting students write in class is one of the best things you can do for them.
- Being undecided or undeclared does not equal not having a plan. This needs to be stressed.
- If you want students to buy into what you're doing in your class, you need to ask them why they are in your class so they know you care about them.
- Mentoring is contact which means you need to be explicit with your students about the importance of coming to class.

SUGGESTION: Invite students to a Forum and ask them the same questions that were asked today. Overlapping responses could be revealing.