



Interdisciplinary Academic Thinking Team Charter

Senior Leader Contact: Jason Rogers

Timeline: September 1 – November 30, 2016

Facilitators: Bonnie Smith Whitehouse, Professor of English; Scott Weston, Associate Dean, College of Pharmacy

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David Gal-Chis, Presidential Scholar

The most exciting opportunities in most disciplines often happen at the edge of the traditional discipline, or at the intersection of several disciplines. Most of the ways that our culture and community change over time aren't because of a single idea in a single discipline, but rather through the interdisciplinary opportunities that come from people of various backgrounds collaborating. Recognizing that success will often come from the ability to engage with ideas in new ways through novel conversations, we invite this working group to help the University think more holistically about interdisciplinary academic programs as part of the future for Belmont.

Project Objectives:

- Research and explore current interdisciplinary academic thinking across campus.
- Identify the essential elements of, and possible barriers to, effective interdisciplinary academic thinking. What non-traditional, cross-disciplinary collaborations that address changing world needs might we explore? Are there niche markets we should explore?
- Provide a recommendation to Senior Leadership that includes steps required over the next six months to develop academic programs that cross disciplinary lines and find innovative intersections that address changing world needs and to focus on possible niche programs that fit with Belmont's differentiation strategy.

Interdisciplinary/Cross-functional Collaborations Notes: August Summit

TABLE 12

Look at Health Sciences/Pharmacy and the way we place the two together physically. Gabriel Seals mentioned they have specifically heard from parents that one of their deciding factors for choosing Belmont was the location of Health Services next door to Pharmacy.

Nursing and Pharmacy both work to expose students to interdisciplinary learning experiences.

We need to do a better job showing the collaborations we already have at work particularly through General Education. How can we leverage current experiences?

How do we make collaboration visible?

GPS Office creates a place for students to go as they begin to think through what they are supposed to do. Security also works with various areas and groups on campus for training and education to help students be fully informed of the many opportunities they have for safety and collaboration with other resources.

One aspect is more fully understanding what we already do, but the other is exploring new ways we might create new opportunities in markets.

What other niche-markets could we enter? Could we look for ways to impact immigrant and refugee communities particularly through current relationships with Siloam Foundation and others.

Gabriel suggested we look for ways to connect with staff and others who are immigrants or have language issues looking for ways to develop mentoring relationships and other experiences.

Maybe a focus on learning to become a good “digital citizen” so they can understand how that would affect their career and their ability to reach into immigrant communities and those who have need and how it ties to our focus on service.

Four hallmarks of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. We need to teach “listening” better.

What are some niche-areas? More than just adult degree programs . . . Mentoring? Day care on campus? Training opportunities? Second career programs? Tennessee Promise students?

Thomas asked a great question, “What are we doing that in creating an opportunity for a specific group of students also improves opportunities for all students?”

Lou from security talked for a bit about what Security has been doing to help be more student-centered: teaching students to change a tire if they have a flat, officers identifying areas of interest they have to help engage students, and putting students and their education at the center of what they do through their collaboration with Student Affairs.

TABLE 6

Nontraditional cross-disciplinary collaboration

- Collaborators give up some control
- Everyone *owns* the project, yet no one individual owns it
- Interaction between/among disciplines that impacts student’s degree program:
nursing/science, AET/physics

- Faculty not only collaborate but *understand* and can explain to students—being aware of connection
- Faculty need to be interdisciplinary—learn about the connections—meet regularly—then encourage and provide opportunities for students to meet and understand

Blurring the lines

- Learn about support outside the discipline
- More freshman education on what is available
- Faith-based initiatives—nonprofits
- New Programs need to understand how they connect with existing—music therapy/nursing
- Shared agency—there is a lot expected of each program as far as reporting progress but some things need to be shared for the good of all the students—even if it doesn't fit into a Tk20 category

TABLE 9

- Working across campus to educate the whole student
 - More holistic, not just GPA
 - Blurring the lines→we all want students to graduate as informed, engaged citizens
- challenges to get involved outside of our work
- Communication about events need to be more plain
 - Faculty seminar series→providing an opportunity for us to listen to one another
 - Linked cohort classes→make link more intentional→supporting learning communities
 - Student cultural, experiential learning
 - Students need to know about internship opportunities
 - Faculty advisors can help promote internships
 - Faculty—access to searchable database
 - Faculty work directly with OCPD
 - Use first destination survey data to tell our story