

## **Developing an Undergraduate Major Committee Meeting 1 November 2017**

**Karen Falkenberg** was our guest today and has agreed to assist us with the focus groups exploring a major for our department. She presented an overview of the process she led with the English Department (see discussion guide document provided via email, which Karen developed)

### **Important points Karen made**

Having someone run the focus groups who is not part of the department is a good idea to avoid bias by the facilitator and for the process to be viewed as objective by the participants.

#### Steps in the process

- Ask ourselves, “What are the fundamental aspects we want to get at?”
- Develop questions
- Work with strategic partners to hone the questions (topics)
- Develop discussion guide (Karen developed). Help maintain correct pace to cover all questions completely.
  - Karen uses Appreciative Inquiry approach
  - Asks, “What is successful?” in the mind of the participants
  - Structured yet informal
  - Seeks to **uncover motivations**
- English Department wanted to know about how to improve freshman experience, middle years, senior experience

Karen described purpose of focus group and how they will be run

#### Focus group characteristics

- 1 hour long,
- convenient times.
- More than 4, but no more than 8 people
- Name tents, introductions, warm-up question to start off with a positive statement from each participant
- Record – let participants know it will be recorded, responses are confidential

### **More information and university initiatives to help us in our efforts**

Karen described a couple university initiatives that have taught us a lot about CSU students

- *2006-16 Student Success Initiative 1*
  - Goals to increase enrollment, help students stay here once they come
- *Student Success Initiative 2 – starting now*
  - We are not going to increase retention by limiting enrollment
  - Big dropoff when students choose a major. They don't find a place that feels like home to them
  - Look at SOURCE about SSI, 2 articles. Paul Thayer.

### **Need approximately three big questions.**

What we are interested in...

Student motivations:

- students on campus who could come to us
- Students outside of campus (high school)

Different questions for different groups, but same 3 big buckets

How to entice students to choose this major?

- We need to market it...
- Want them to say, "That looks cool!"
- Could pitch it as a non-human biology major
- Outreach to educate possible majors about our program and all it has to offer.
- Naming and description of courses is important!

### **NEXT STEPS**

Focus groups-

- Who will the focus group participants be (names), dates, etc. ? (Cini will work on this for our next meeting)
  - Franck suggested undergrads who work in department and stay as grad students etc. as an important group
- Incentives:
  - Food
  - we need your help, we care about what you think

Identify **method for recording** the focus groups (Cini will work on this)

Start to working on **course work/program**- Just a rough outline for now

- Freshman, sophomore, junior and senior experiences
- Other core courses
- 27 credits

Maybe time to start working on identifying how we will **market the major**

**Next meeting will be**