

## H&S Experiential Learning Committee – A History

Developed in response to the 2004 H&S Strategic Plan, [Priority III: Curriculum and Pedagogy](#); to specifically to address Goal #2:

“Encourage and make available experiential learning to all H&S students, including fieldwork, service learning, and student/faculty collaborative research and creative work; support innovative pedagogies, especially those fostering a student-centered learning environment.”

### The Committee, 2006-2010

During the fall of 2006, the dean of H&S charged a small ad hoc faculty committee, composed of an Assistant Dean and five faculty drawn from different disciplines, to consider Curriculum and Pedagogy Goal #2 in depth and to explore the nature of, and possible directions for, experiential learning in the School. This Committee's work grew out of the August 2006 Faculty Forum, at which nearly 200 H&S faculty were invited to brainstorm about Pedagogy Goal #2, exploring two questions: 1) What can/does experiential learning accomplish for our students? and 2) What kinds of experiential learning opportunities do we provide to our students? Five faculty volunteered to participate in the Committee: Karin Breuer (History), Patricia Spencer (Writing), Sharon Stansfield (Computer Science), Don Tindall (Theatre Arts), Leigh Ann Vaughn (Psychology), and Stacia Zabusky (representing the H&S Dean's Office). In subsequent semesters, Janet Hunting (Chemistry) joined the Committee.

After finding that student-centered learning environments were already an established part of the H&S faculty's approach to teaching, the Committee focused its efforts on the first part of this goal—to encourage and make available experiential learning to all H&S students. Over the next four years, the Committee developed a Framework for Experiential Learning in H&S which identified criteria for effective experiential learning opportunities, and also identified four models of experiential learning that characterize courses offered through H&S. As part of this process, the Committee conducted a survey of H&S faculty in the spring of 2007 to collect data on the types of experiential learning courses already being delivered. This [Framework](#) was circulated to H&S faculty for review and discussion, and was revised in light of feedback; this Framework remains the guiding document for developing experiential learning criteria for H&S curriculum.

In addition to developing these curricular models, from 2007 through 2010, the Committee encouraged faculty to develop and enhance courses to incorporate these "high impact practices" through a variety of activities:

- Sponsored Experiential Learning Curriculum Enhancement Grants for faculty course development (2007 and 2008)
- Hosted a series of roundtables and panel discussions with faculty exploring experiential learning course design (2007 and 2008)
- Attended the Council for Undergraduate Research Institute on Mentorship, Collaboration, and Undergraduate Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (three members of the committee - Karin Breuer, Leigh Ann Vaughn, and Stacia Zabusky - attended the institute during the summer of 2008)
- Joined the Community-Based Learning in Higher Education consortium; funded by a grant from the [Teagle Foundation](#), members of the consortium are "dedicated to collaborative assessment for community-based learning in liberal arts colleges." Committee members Patricia Spencer (Writing) and Stacia Zabusky (H&S Dean's office) attended several

meetings of the consortium, where efforts focused on developing an assessment "scorecard" for community-based learning courses; several H&S faculty members pilot tested this scorecard in their classes over four semesters; results of this pilot are pending.

### **H&S Experiential Learning Faculty Working Groups 2010-2011**

During the 2010-2011 academic, Dean Leslie Lewis moved the efforts of the Experiential Learning Committee forward by charging *four faculty working groups* to further explore how best to integrate experiential learning into the H&S curriculum, and how to implement such offerings. Each working group focused on one of the four models that H&S courses in experiential learning are associated with. The charge to the working groups was:

1. To define the criteria and student learning outcomes associated with its model;
2. To survey H&S departments to establish what courses already exist that meet these criteria;
3. To identify the resources and rewards that are necessary to support the needs of faculty offering such opportunities, and students who enroll in such courses.

The working groups, coordinated by a Steering Committee comprised of the coordinators of each group, included faculty from across most departments in H&S:

#### *Cultural Immersion Working Group*

Karin Breuer, history - Coordinator  
Susan Allen-Gil, environmental studies and sciences  
Julia Cozzarelli, modern languages and literatures  
Jason Freitag, history  
Denise Nuttall, anthropology  
Lauren O'Connell, art history  
Bob Sullivan, communication studies and director, Honors Program  
Rachel Wagner, philosophy and religion

#### *Community-based Learning/Civic Engagement Working Group*

Pat Spencer, writing - Coordinator  
Paula Cole, theatre arts  
Cathrene Connery, education  
Brooke Hansen, anthropology  
Judith Pena-Shaff, psychology  
Elan Shapiro, environmental studies and sciences  
Michael Smith, history  
Alicia Swords, sociology

#### *Professional Practice Working Group*

Stacia Zabusky, H&S Dean's office - Coordinator  
Barbara Adams, writing  
Laurie Arliss, communication studies  
Angela Branneman, theater arts  
Bill Kolberg, economics  
Cheryl Kramer, art history and director, Handwerker Gallery  
Teresa Michel, education

Hugh Stephenson, psychology  
Catherine Taylor, writing

*Undergraduate Research Working Group*

Leigh Ann Vaughn, psychology - Coordinator  
David Brown, math  
Darius Conger, economics  
Vince DeTuri, chemistry  
Danette Johnson, communication studies  
Katherine Kittredge, English  
Andy Smith, biology

The working groups concluded their work in January 2011, and submitted a set of recommendations to Dean Lewis. Following these recommendations, the Dean established a permanent faculty Steering Committee for Experiential Learning to make experiential learning a more prominent part of the H&S experience.