

Dean & Provost

Building and Leading Successful Learning Communities

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Consider redesign of courses to improve student learning, costs

What if there were a way for you to make required courses more beneficial to students, as well as more cost-effective? By using technology, more institutions are now getting closer to achieving this goal. **Seton Hall University** and the **University of Missouri at St. Louis** provide good models of ways to implement this type of redesign.

Both universities were focused on improving algebra courses. SHU wanted to redesign two developmental algebra courses, while UMSL needed to redesign its basic college algebra course.

MORE ON PAGE 4

- GET REDESIGN ADVICE

The two institutions each participated in the **National Center of Academic Transformation's** Roadmap to Redesign program and followed a model used by the **University of Alabama**. Both also chose **MyMathLab** software to help with course instruction.

For the two universities, the process began during the 2004-2005

(See **REDESIGN** on page 4)

Retain adjuncts by honoring them

Create a weeklong celebration to recognize their work

As funds remain tight, many campuses are relying on adjunct instructors to teach. But it's easy for the part-timers to become disgruntled since they are paid much less than full-time professors and may not have access to all the resources they need.

MORE ON PAGE 8

- REWARD IDEAS
- TIPS FOR HONORING ADJUNCTS

Rather than focusing on the things that you are financially unable to do for them, think about what you can do to show your appreciation for these instructors.

Consider an idea that **Palm Beach (Fla.) Community College** has implemented for about three years — adjunct appreciation week.

"We rely heavily on adjuncts, and we know how difficult it can be for them," said **Magdala Ray**, dean of academic affairs for PBCC's Lake Worth campus. "They aren't able to participate in a lot of the activities on campus, but we want them to get recognition."

(See **ADJUNCT** on page 8)

News Briefing

No more self-segregating in UMass dorms

If your institution has allowed students to choose segregated housing options, you may want to consider what the **University of Massachusetts Amherst** is doing.

In an effort to eliminate separate programs for minorities, self-segregating dormitories will no longer be available starting in fall 2006.

At present, minorities may live in residence halls designated for certain races and ethnicities.

These areas were created to make minorities feel more comfortable on campus. By putting an end to race-based programs such as separate housing and orientations for minorities, the university hopes to encourage students to get to know one another — regardless of their race or ethnicity. ■

Penn gives free ride to low-income students

As tuition costs rise, you may need to evaluate whether your institution can afford to join the growing number that are offering to curb, or eliminate, the cost of attendance for low-income students.

Recently, the **University of Penn-**

sylvania announced that it would pay tuition, room and board for students from families with incomes of up to \$50,000.

Stanford University and **Yale University** have also implemented similar plans to help increase access to students from low-income families. ■

College creates new use for podcasts

More institutions across the country are using iPods as an innovative way to reach students.

Stay abreast of the many uses of this device to maintain a competitive edge.

Fitchburg State College (Mass.) plans to e-mail a number of its acceptance letters. These e-mails will also include a link to an iTunes podcast featuring college President **Robert Antonucci** in each one.

The use of the podcast is meant to demonstrate FSC's commitment to using the latest technology. ■

New faculty get deal on housing

Are you having problems attracting faculty to your institution be-

cause of skyrocketing housing prices?

Many colleges and universities in California are dealing with this issue, as housing prices vastly exceed what most new faculty members can afford.

In response to this problem, institutions such as **Sacramento State University** are purchasing land and building housing so they can then sell it to faculty at a discounted price.

More than 200 people are already on the waiting list for SSU's future neighborhood. ■

Would you like to join our board?

We are currently seeking nominations for a *Dean & Provost* advisory board.

Nominees should subscribe to the newsletter and hold the rank of dean or provost.

The deadline for submitting nominations is June 5, 2006.

If you would like to nominate one of your colleagues or yourself for one of the board openings, or if you have any questions, please contact the editor at asanders@lrp.com.

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Dana Dunn, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Texas at Arlington

Remember to facilitate, not dictate, when leading

As a sociologist turned administrator, **Dana Dunn** clearly understands her role at the **University of Texas at Arlington**. She sees herself and other administrators as facilitators.

"Faculty governance results in most of the ideas that originate from faculty," Dunn said. "Administrators may be called upon to weave these ideas together, select from among them and sometimes explain why they can't be implemented, but the vision starts with the faculty."

Since 2000, Dunn has served as the university's vice president for academic affairs, later adding the title of provost.

Her agenda has been to strengthen the quality of UT Arlington's educational programs and the institution's reputation as a research university. But she's quick to point out that these initiatives didn't originate with her.

"They emerged from the campus community, especially the faculty," she said. "I don't have to work hard for support, as we have a common goal."

Fulfilling this agenda has included the creation of several initiatives to retain faculty that Dunn and other faculty and administrators have developed.

In the past two years, UT Arlington has hired 85 new faculty members to accommodate the university's growth. To support them, Dunn and others created a mentoring program.

Senior faculty volunteer to be mentors, and a faculty committee matches them to mentees based on interests indicated in a short survey. Several workshops are also provided throughout the year for new faculty on topics including teaching tips and tenure issues.

Another priority for Dunn was to provide more finan-

cial support and recognition to faculty conducting research. Monetary awards were set aside to reward quality research, and an additional program was developed to provide funding for needs related to faculty research, she said. Last year, the university also started a magazine to showcase research accomplishments.

When it comes to her deans, Dunn also works to facilitate their needs and concerns. Overall, the deans at the university have a good understanding of the need to think of institutional goals rather than their own agendas, Dunn said.

"They are strong advocates for their units but realize they don't want a strong unit in the midst of a weak university," she said. "So they work to support the whole."

But Dunn does face a challenge that is familiar to most provosts — funding. Regularly, she has to decide which campus initiatives and proposals are worthy of funding, even if they are

all worthwhile, Dunn said.

"The only lesson I've learned here is that there are more good ideas than there are funds," she said.

Exposure to all of these ideas, both those that are approved and those that aren't, is one of the aspects of her job that Dunn enjoys most.

As provost, she has a vantage point that allows her the opportunity to learn about a variety of the programs offered at the university, making her passionate about many of them.

"This opportunity to learn more about the breadth of what goes on with everyone on campus is a little bit like being a student again," she said.

For more information, contact Dana Dunn at dunn@uta.edu. ■



Dana Dunn

Word-A-Advice

Follow these tips to freshen your leadership style

Even the most experienced leaders can use a few reminders when it comes to modeling the characteristics of an effective administrator.

Dana Dunn has been vice president of academic affairs at the **University of Texas at Arlington** since 2000, later adding the title of provost.

Here are some of Dunn's tips for being a successful leader:

- **Be a facilitator.** Recognize that you are there as a leader to facilitate others. It's not your own agenda that's important — it's the agenda of the campus community that counts. You are there to do your best to help your institution achieve its goals.
- **Be strategic.** Understand that it's not possible for you to achieve everything. Figure out what programs and initiatives

are most important to your institution and prioritize which need the most attention.

➤ **Be decisive.** This means saying "no" sometimes, but you should also be prepared to explain why. People need to know that you can be relied on for making decisions.

➤ **Be balanced.** Don't let this role consume your life. You have to take time out for yourself to live your life outside of your role as an administrator. ■

Who should be profiled next?

Contact the editor at asanders@lrp.com if you, or someone you know, could provide some great advice.

2 universities offer tips for course redesign success

If a course at your institution is problematic for students as well as your budget, it may be time to consider a redesign. **Seton Hall University** and the **University of Missouri at St. Louis** have recently redesigned some of their algebra courses. Here's what **Wendiann Sethi**, director of developmental mathematics at SHU, and **Shahla Peterman**, a senior lecturer in the department of mathematics and computer science at UMSL, think you need to know:

- **Be willing to accept change.** Peterman said it's OK to be skeptical, but instructors have to be willing to try new things. You don't want someone teaching the course who will be trying to prove the redesign doesn't work.

- **Be flexible.** You must be willing to make changes to the course as you see how things work.

- **Define what you want to achieve.** Before beginning your redesign, define measurable outcomes that you want to accomplish, Sethi said.

- **Pilot the program for at least two semesters.** You should find most of the bugs in the redesign in that time period.

- **Require deadlines for online homework.** At UMSL, students are allowed to access the homework online weekly, before the lecture, but it becomes unavailable at the end of the week, Peterman said. That motivates them to do it in a timely way and come prepared for class. ■

REDESIGN (continued from page 1)

academic year and culminated in fall of 2005 with full implementation of the new courses.

Here is a comparison of each institution's experience with redesigning their courses:

➤ Why did you need to redesign your courses?

SHU: The failure rate in the developmental math program was around 35 to 40 percent per semester, said **Wendiann Sethi**, director of developmental mathematics.

"Our goal was to improve learning for our students and reduce costs, while decreasing the number of adjunct instructors we needed."

UMSL: "More than 40 percent of the students failed to achieve a 'C' or better," said **Shahla Peterman**, a senior lecturer in the department of mathematics and computer science.

Also, there wasn't enough time to cover new material. This class was a requirement for many students, so their success or failure in it had a big impact on retention, she added.

➤ Describe your redesigned course.

SHU: The redesigned course is lab-based, rather than lecture-based. It includes two 75-minute classes in the lab and self-paced instruction through the software.

Sethi opted to use the MyMathLab software because it was offered with the textbooks selected for the course. The software also integrates easily into the university's Blackboard program.

MyMathLab enabled the department to manage all of the course assignments from one location, rather than having to manage each section individually, she added.

A mathematics learning laboratory was created. It includes workstations in a room used as the primary classroom and for tutorials.

UMSL: The format of the course now consists of one lecture and two labs per week, with each lecture and lab lasting 75 minutes each, Peterman said.

She used both the **iLrn** and MyMathLab software during the redesign process but eventually decided to go with the latter.

A math technology learning center was built as part of the initiative to provide a location where students could access course materials or receive individual assistance, Peterman said.

➤ What were your greatest challenges in implementing the redesign?

SHU: Although SHU had space for the math lab, it was difficult to find funding for workstations and furniture. Eventually, Sethi was able to get financial support from her provost's office and the campus technology center.

UMSL: "The instructors, myself included, initially had the feeling that we were not teaching," Peterman said. "But this feeling faded gradually as we worked closely with students in the lab."

Students were reluctant to do the online homework, but over time they warmed up to the new format, Peterman said.

➤ How successful has the redesign been?

SHU: Members of Sethi's team think that the redesign has been successful, based on the students' tests, final exams and grades.

But they were surprised that the pilot of the redesign — completed during spring and summer of 2005 — showed a significant difference in performance, while the results from fall of that year showed no major differences.

However, Roadmap to Redesign officials said that it will probably take a year or two to be able to completely measure the differences.

UMSL: The pass rate for the course has increased to 80 percent from about 50 to 55 percent, Peterman said. Instructors say that lecture time is more productive because students are more likely to have done their homework and are prepared for new material, she added.

For more information, you can contact **Wendiann Sethi** at sethiwen@shu.edu or **Shahla Peterman** at PetermanS@msx.umsil.edu. ■