

Ball State

Education of the **Future**

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CONTEXT

Higher education in the U.S. and the world is confronting enormous societal, technological, and demographic shifts.

These include:

- The lessening of global barriers for travel and commerce
- The ubiquity and power of the Internet as a medium for information exchange and social interaction.
- Substantial changes in the ways people communicate with one another and share and assimilate information.
- Decreased financial support for public higher education and demands for increased accountability by those who support us.
- The explosive growth of information in the disciplines.
- The competition from online, for-profit “universities” and two-year institutions.
- The boundary between online and on-campus courses is beginning to blur.

Ball State University is a leader in higher education and we must be active in the evolution (revolution?) that is coming in our profession.

TASK FORCE CHARGE

We ask that the task force:

1. Examine and summarize in more detail the recent major changes in the world and what will likely happen in the near future. Explain how will these changes affect undergraduate education.
2. Enumerate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats specific to Ball State University.
3. Define how an undergraduate education from Ball State University should be delivered in ten years.
4. Suggest a path that will lead us toward that 2020 vision. This will serve as input for our next strategic planning process (2012-2017 strategic plan).

GUIDEPOSTS

Early on in the process, the Task Force began by establishing guideposts to frame discussions and identify key attributes and constraints. Members created working definitions for each guideposts. See below:

ENGAGEMENT

Increases accessibility & interpersonal contact between faculty and students leading to mentoring, and creative and challenging/rigorous learning experiences.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Increases relevance, measurement, and redundancy for successful learning and scholarship.

STUDENT SELECTIVITY

Allows for high admission standards, including GPA, ability, SAT score, class rank, and those with exceptional talents.

SCHOLARSHIP

Fosters scholarship and creative work, including faculty-student mentored engagements.

MARKETABILITY

Communicates rules for interaction - partnership between those who make, “play” and learn (internally & externally). Increase learning, satisfaction, engagement, flexibility and value. Decrease time towards graduation, costs, and credits.

CAMPUS DISRUPTION

Disrupts traditional, organizational, administrative, physical, curricular, extracurricular, and environmental mechanisms.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Benefits learning while minimizing pain and cost (both in amount and duration) to individuals, units, and institution.

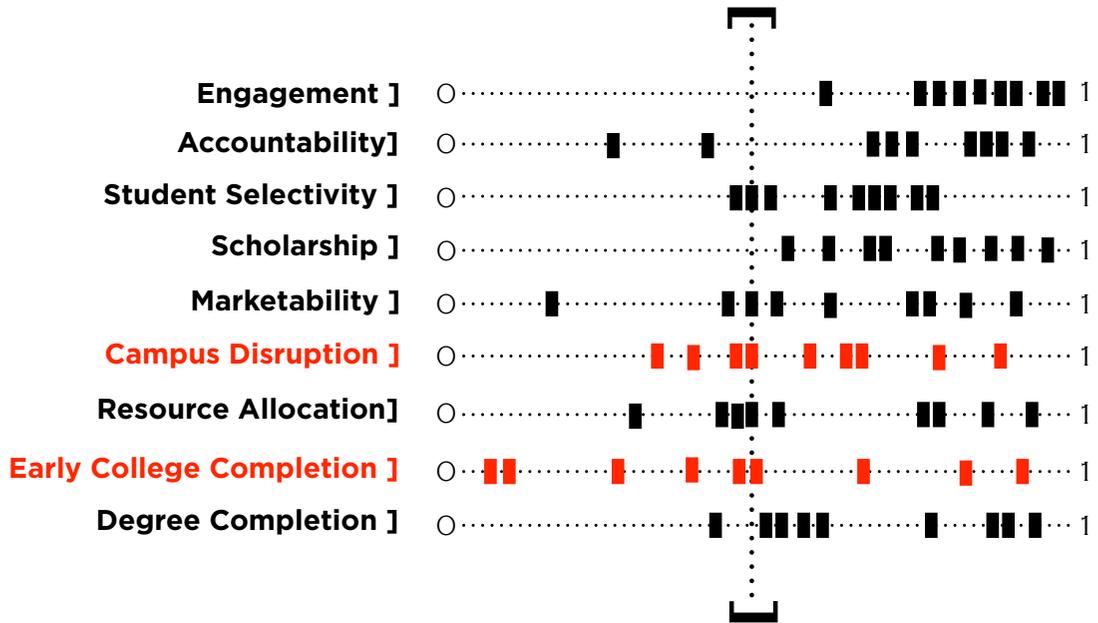
EARLY COLLEGE COMPLETION

Makes courses available for high schoolers to complete for credit. synthesizes college courses to advance early completion without harm to substance and quality.

DEGREE COMPLETION

Increases opportunities for gaining credit. Reduces artificial barriers to degree completion within 3 or 4 year time frame.

Guideposts: Defining attributes and constraints



This scale identifies each member's personal rating on a continuum [low to high value] of importance. The scale is an approximation, however; it does illustrate the task force's general rankings of key attributes and constraints. Note the wide distribution for "Campus Disruption" and "Early College Completion."

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AVision

Learning is cultivating a purposeful, meaningful, and intense platform that connects students, faculty, and staff in order to share, gain, and create knowledge. This platform bridges experiences and events spanning time and place through creating humanly accessible and managed interactivity that leads to persistent learning, making, playing, and sharing. Curriculum, events, immersive learning, shared living space, life+work preparation, learning space, and extracurricular activities are explicitly tied together, credited, and constitute the entirety of the learning experience. The “persistent learning experience platform” [PLEP] compels the University to reorganize and rethink the meanings of a course, major, curriculum, classroom, student activities, semesters, and the unbending notions of what comprises a 4-year academic program. Ball State University learning is grounded upon helping students find an expressive voice, embrace the serendipitous nature of learning, discover lifelong connections and convictions, seek new ways to learn, and build a view that learning is a continuous, life-long endeavor.

Anatomy of Persistent Learning Hub

The “persistent learning hub” is an intentional learning design that integrates face-to-face, eLearning, immersive learning, life+work preparation, and extracurricular activities into an holistic learning enterprise.

Class

*Collaborate on choices of content and process(es)
Model process(es)
Apply process(es) to content (and visa versa)
Coach/Mentor application
Challenge content, process(es), and application(s)
Assess application(s)*

Cloud

*Choose content
Choose process(es)
Deliver content
Assign process(es)
Assess acquisition of content
Assess acquisition of process(es)*

X-Curricular

*Integrate XC with class & cloud (credit)
Create social collective platform (virtual lecture hall)
Bridge to class & cloud engagements*

What if...

A Persistent Learning Experience. . .

Equips participants by providing persistent space; adaptable, self-organizing, interdisciplinary curriculum; directed and sharply focused resources for appropriate personnel and operational support; and a flexible & efficient scheduling environment, infrastructure, and resource allocation structure. Provides assessment mechanisms for students, faculty, and others to measure and evaluate experience, quality of materials, overall process, success, progress, learning outcomes, and satisfaction.

Empowers participants by providing a transparent roadmap for student and faculty engagement, accepting risk at all levels, and adopting an unyielding tolerance for “change”. It empowers by enabling faculty to produce “publishable artifacts” that assess and document an experience-based learning endeavor, enables students to grow knowledge and career/personal relationships, and informs funders, patrons, supporters, and overseers of commitment and achievement.

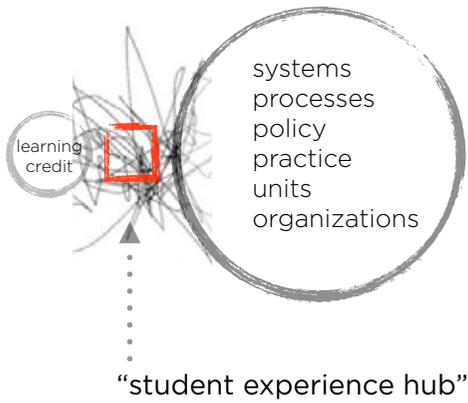
Facilitates success by promoting best learning practices and new learning designs for students and faculty. Emphasizing a mentoring team environment for both, and creating steering structures that includes both students and faculty designing and presiding over an adaptable learning environment.

Authorizes participants by creating a “crediting” structure that impacts significantly university-core students and faculty. It facilitates ownership of the experiences and processes. It creates campus location(s) where students spend time experimenting while enriching learning skills and earning credit toward completion of a program, and faculty spend time experimenting with new learning cultures while earning “credit” toward tenure or promotion.

students participated in several academic clubs, attended lectures, attended performances, went on virtual field trips, visited museums, interviewed professionals and participated in other extracurricular activities for which they received credit

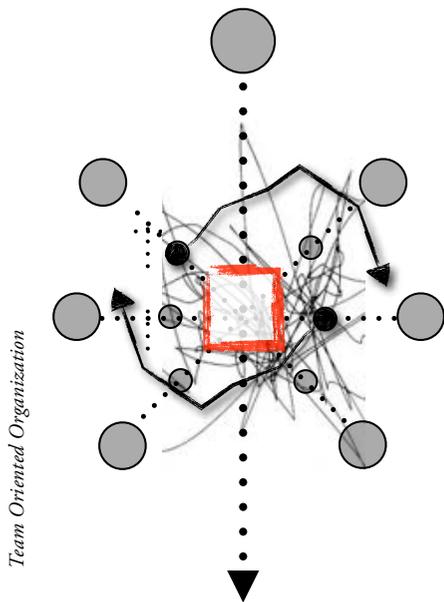
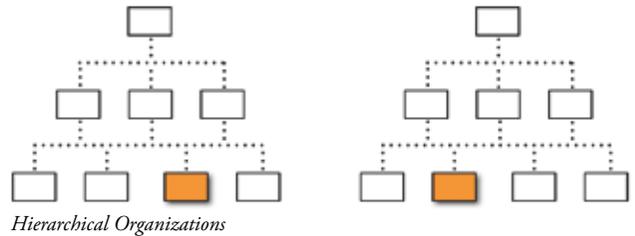
and

faculty interacted with students in their living learning communities



The task force’s fundamental idea is to re-design higher education’s organizational structure to focus and center around the mission of developing “new learning cultures” by pulling learning credit activities out and away from the present organizational barriers that may limit the creation of new learning cultures. And, create a self-organizing organizational mechanism that serves as the creative engine, through which, learning is equipped, empowered, and authorized.

To foster new learning cultures, Ball State’s organizational structures must move from silos. . .



. . . to a flattened, team oriented enterprise that self-assembles like-minded participants to focus on creating “intellectually fluid” [Staley, 2009] models of earning credit. This organizational hub should be governed by a learning community’s values rather than administrative processes [Staley, 2009]. Such an organizational mechanism will be able to address the uncertainty of limited resources and have greater agility to adapt, create, and explore.

What if...

Recommendations

Continue the Process of Institutional Self Discovery:

Ball State University has differentiated itself by preparing students for professional life+work through immersive learning experiences. Nonetheless, the university needs to continue to refine and expand its identity with immersive learning, its commitment to the traditional liberal arts, its obligations to servicing the state, and its role in the education of “middle skills.” For example should immersive learning become a multi-semester requirement? Should students be in a work setting and be paid during their immersive experience? Should there be a required foreign immersive experience? The university must further differentiate Ball State in a crowded student market and distinguish the university by identifying its institutional “convictions” when helping the community, state, and world solve problems. Harnessing the creative, focused energies of the faculty and students is paramount. Faculty and students must work together, both earning “credit”, as they assemble an experience to advance scholarship and student learning respectively. [Boyer Model]

Commit to Hiring Strong Operational Leadership:

Vision needs leaders to creatively and passionately implement ideas, goals, and plans. Operational leaders bring their skills to bear helping an institution live within the vision. They should demonstrate a capacity to carry forth a vision, have the ability to focus on causes and not symptoms when solving problems, and be able to creatively minimize the political risks that surround organizational transformation. The leadership must be able to motivate faculty to see change as the norm at Ball State.

Change the Game: Determine how Ball State University can “unbundle” [fully recognizing the constraints of accreditation] our courses, majors and degrees by re-defining the 4-year learning experience. [The HLC identifies that most undergraduate degrees range from 110 credit hours to 130 credit hours with 120 credit hours as the average, and “exception to the minima must be explained and justified.”] If a program requires additional credit hours beyond the 4-year experience, such as architecture, nursing, or audiology, explore creative ways to classify them outside of the cohort of the 4-year learning experience. Our goal should be

students took more than one class at the same time period because portions of each course were moved to the cloud

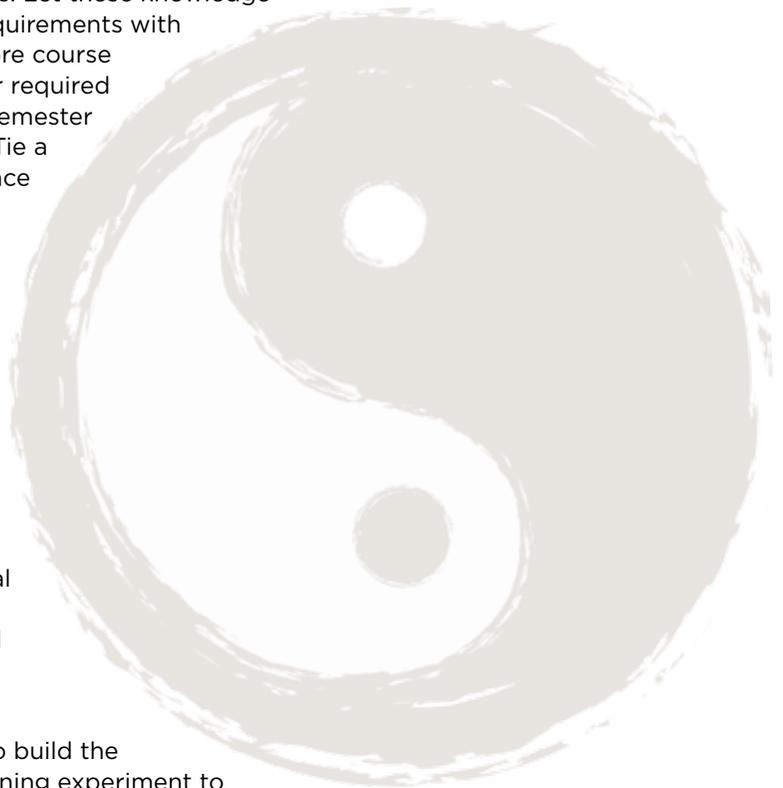
and

faculty had access to consolidated, integrated, expert, state-of-the-art, networked assistance to help leverage technology when moving portions of courses to the cloud

to achieve among the highest 4-year graduation rates in the state. Build new learning experiences that break the barriers of when and how we learn. Use intercessions, breaks, summers to time shift student class experiences and refine loading approaches to alter the game. For example, learning should become “temporally fluid” not necessary tied to semesters [Staley, 2008]. Begin a process that ties together curriculum, immersive learning, campus events, extracurricular activities and instruction for credit by creating integrated, flexible knowledge packages based upon timely global or community themes. Let these knowledge packages combine several core requirements with the potential to “trump” current core course options. Consider a three-semester required immersive experience with a five-semester on-campus academic experience. Tie a multi-semester immersive experience to a professional work preparation track that enhances a student’s workplace “social intelligence”. Develop a robust learning analytics program that identifies those students at risk of not completing a 4-year degree and provide aggressive intervention programs.

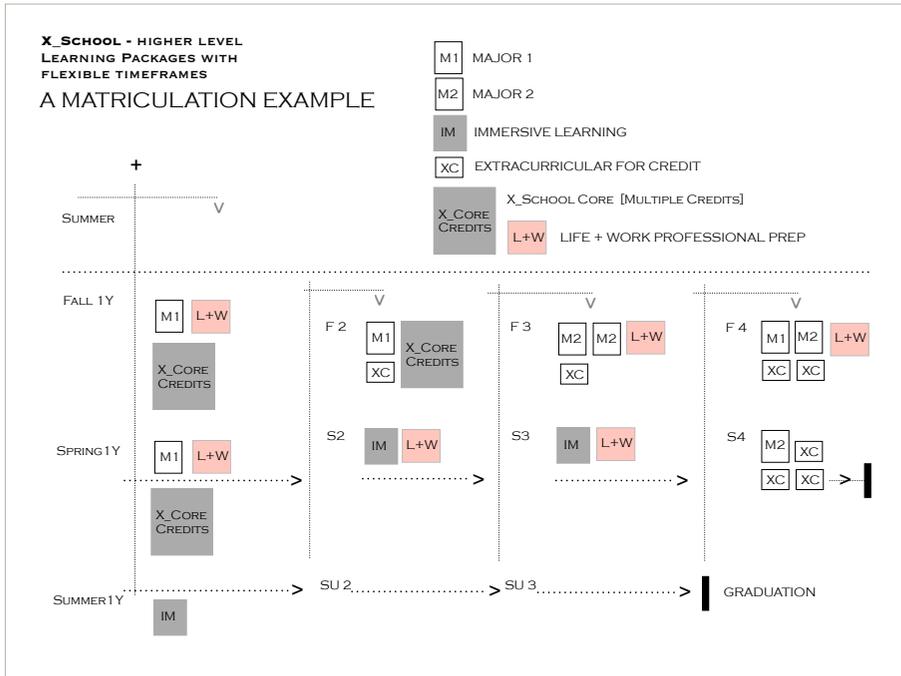
Unbundling requires creating pulling experiences to untether students from location and physical limitations, while simultaneously pushing enterprise systems toward a standardized platform.

Live the Experiment: Don’t wait to build the future. Design a “living” future-learning experiment to inaugurate “changing the game” concepts listed above. Create a X_School that creates, demonstrates, takes risk, fails, and succeeds as we unbundle a university education. These “edge experiences” of the university will attract the most innovative teachers and risk takers. Allow the X_School to live in parallel, but equal with, established institutional structures. Create a mechanism for successfully moving the X_School experiences into the mainstream at Ball State. Let the edge begin to inform the core as new knowledge flows emerge. [Hagel, Seely Brown, Davison, 2010]



What if...

The matriculation example (below) illustrates how the X_School could sequence knowledge packages for X_School core, majors, double majors, extracurricular for credit, professional preparation for credit: Life+Work tracks, and immersive learning. (See “Recommendations, Realizing Recommendations, and What ifs. . .” for examples of knowledge packages.)



*each student's
course included an
experience-based
virtual or face-
to-face learning
opportunity*

and

*faculty were
assisted in
designing
experience-based,
virtual or face-
to-face learning
opportunities
in each of their
courses*

Stay the Course: Maintain selective admission. Currently, open learning and credit trends are pushing institutions to make the admission process more permeable. Ball State must resist this trend. Maintaining the quality and rigor of the educational experience across platforms requires maintaining selective admissions standards across the university. In order to compete in an increasingly competitive environment, Ball State cannot dilute its brand by lowering its admissions standards or providing “lesser” academic options. Selectivity may reduce the size of the institution; however, that could be a positive consequence. A smaller institution is agile and better able to weather economic uncertainty. Selective and smaller enables the alignment of performance metrics and the institution’s ability to communicate those

expectations adroitly throughout the organization. Selective and smaller will allow better prepared students to “time shift” their learning experiences by doubling-up courses to achieve their, and their benefactors’, educational timelines. If state appropriations continue to decline, the notion of a state-supported v.s. a state-assisted institution may have to be addressed, and a selective and smaller institution may be in a better position to face this difficult transformation.

Change the Climate: The time will come when faculty are asked to do more, and the climate of the organization is an important ingredient for faculty to accept this change in expectation and performance. Currently, the “teaching” profession is receiving scrutiny by the public and politicians. The present debate and commentary is pernicious, if not demonizing, of a profession that was once thought of as helpful and unselfish. Surveys and publications [see Cary Nelson’s “Parents Your Children Need Professors with Tenure.”] point to the public questioning the relevance of full-time faculty and the tenure system. The institution must be careful not to join the populist rhetoric. When faculty are asked to do more in a malevolent undercurrent, the opportunity for change can be subverted. An institutional belief system that communicates in tone and substance the selflessness of those who serve education would be a better podium from which to ask for concession and sacrifice.

Become Obsessed with Accountability: There will be no escaping the accountability trend. Funders, supporters, students, parents, and patrons will want to see clear indices that justify the cost. The institution must align its performance metrics to those expectations. Building the cases of accountability will require a clear understanding of the institutional cost of creating and delivering learning experiences. Though costs of creating and delivering learning experiences are less certain and the off-campus, or online, learning experiences may not be as inexpensive to produce as assumed. Understanding and communicating the underlying efforts that go into “designing” an educational experience will be foundational to rationalize what we charge for learning. In addition, funders, supporters, students, parents, and patrons will demand evidence that illustrates timely success to degree, graduation, and professional success. This approach will require a coordinated institutional effort to use technology when capturing classroom learning outcomes such as frequency of reviewing class notes, or how many times the student studies assigned readings. This data will need to be normalized across the institution, or even with other state institutions, to isolate successful learning behaviors, produce well-constructed data relationships, and frame campus-wide decisions.

Get It Started: Begin an aggressive effort to expand learning content for the classroom and in the libraries. Leverage, remix, and repurpose the content from the global network of information and knowledge. Re-align institutional will and resources to focus on quality. An institutional goal for create such content must be identified and communicated.

What if...

Foster a “Steady Breeze of Change”: This notion comes from the work of leading thinker on management and innovative organizations, Gary Hamel. Change is difficult for any organization; the larger it is, and the older it is, the harder it is to change. Hamel believes you must understand the emotional and intellectual investitures in the past and present before one can fully address change. He believes change is best achieved by evolving the new in parallel with old—a “steady breeze of change.” Nonetheless, a culture of change cannot protect the past, rather it must embrace the edges of the experiment. It must be allowed to fail and aspire to bold goals. To Hamel’s thinking, to achieve successful change, those involved must be empowered to “hack” into the problem, having the ability to “naturally” self-assemble as a solution presents itself along the way. Ball State needs to mobilize its most passionate faculty members.

Design Blended Learning Experiences: Current research indicates that combinations of face-to-face learning and online learning have the greatest impact on students, yet most courses are taught in the traditional format of face-to-face lecture followed by multiple choice tests. Newer forms of instruction include more collaboration and interaction, authentic problem-solving, opportunities to generate new knowledge, and guidance by mentors, coaches, and facilitators. Learning is less about consumption and more about production and participation (Bonk, 2009). Students need to become adept at learning how to collaborate with others to find information, synthesize, remix, and effectively communicate to a variety of audiences and stakeholders.

The knowledge bases for most disciplines are widely available on the Internet. A click of the mouse leads one to lectures, and in some cases, entire courses by national and international experts on nearly any topic. A plethora of other types of multimedia, games, simulations, and assessment activities also exist on the Internet. Ball State faculty need to know how to locate, vet, and integrate these resources within the boundaries of their courses. They need to understand where the gaps in the already available knowledge exist and how they can fill those with meaningful learning experiences, some of which could occur most effectively and efficiently in class and some of which could occur

*each student
attended a
conference or
meeting of a
professional
organization,
either virtually or
face-to-face*

and

*faculty took
students with them
to professional
conferences and
received support
travel money for
doing so*

most effectively in the online or virtual realm. The tacit knowledge that comes from experiential learning is essential, but some of the teaching could be didactic. Some might be teacher-directed, and some might be self-directed.

Blended learning at Ball State would be an union of 1) existing knowledge/ experiences available on the Internet, 2) Ball State-produced materials and experiences, 3) faculty-directed learning experiences, 4) self-directed learning experiences, 5) face-to-face learning experiences, 6) asynchronous learning experiences, and 5) experiential learning experiences, which could be face-to-face or through the Internet.

Increase and Reorganize Access to Technology and Teaching-with-Technology Resources: Although the extent of technology resources at Ball State is impressive, the ways in which the resources are presented, organized, and managed do not meet the needs of a persistent learning platform. As production of blended learning courses and online courses accelerates, there will be a need to accelerate, expand, and reorganize access to expertise, tools, and support. Online and blended courses will need to be constantly retooled. Faculty and staff will need opportunities to connect with each other and share successes and struggles. They will need a facilitated structure for learning about new technologies and new learning cultures, and be given a forum for demonstrating learning innovations. Such structures will increase the likelihood for serendipitous encounters that foster new combinations and new ideas for the entire campus community.

Create Social Networks: Learners need to find where their passions lie to foster deep, interest-driven learning [Thomas & Seely Brown, 2011]. By “connecting” with others at Ball State and the world, they can situate themselves in learning communities that precisely and specifically are pursuing the same types of knowledge and trying to solve the same types of problems. They can learn what draws them to others and determine what they have to offer to their peers while collaborating on authentic projects and problems. Shared resources and diverse niches emerge as the communities expand and diverge. Information is interconnected and woven together with new outcomes. Personal motivation leads the learning. Social networks allow students to accelerate their learning by interacting with like-minded others who have talents and knowledge they need to pursue their passions. Social networks serve as spaces where students can give representations of interlinked thoughts and have others give critical feedback. The knowledge created in these communities serves as an example to students that we are greater than the sum of our parts. The learning generated in social networks could be the most meaningful learning in which students participate and can be a lifelong resource for them as they pursue their future careers. Ball State should guide and mentor students when navigating social/professional networks and coach them to develop personal learning networks that last a lifetime.

The University Sandbox

The University Sandbox is a place where new models of higher education emerge through rapid prototyping. It is a mutable environment that is designed to foster innovation and spread it throughout the institution, distinguishing it from fixed-size designs (e.g. honors college) and fixed-structure fellowships (e.g. Virginia Ball Center).

Assumptions about **The University Sandbox**:

- An undergraduate degree provides students a framework in which to be a productive citizen. This requires exposure to a broad range of ideas as well as a demonstrated ability to attain deeper and narrower competency. This establishes a mental model for lifetime learning. Graduate degrees provide the narrow focus that drive students directly into specific careers.
- Many pre-professional programs have restricted themselves from engagement in such higher education reform as described here. The university cannot force any program to change, but such programs should work with their accrediting agencies and stakeholders to allow such participation. To wit, this is not currently for everybody, but the philosophy of the future of education is an optimistic one that sees significant improvement for all programs in the coming decades.
- The Internet facilitates passionate affinity spaces. It is changing lifetime learning in as fundamental a way as the printing press did.
- We have a moral obligation to provide the best education we can, leveraging what has been discovered about human cognition and learning over the past century—much of which is not clearly identifiable in conventional K-16 education.
- Like any unit, it can provide UCC-21 experiences as long as they meet the requirements (cognitive transformations, domain, assessment, qualified faculty, etc.).
- Very few students and faculty have the grit to survive the University Sandbox.

This necessitates:

- beginning with small experiments that are designed to grow the educational philosophy beyond The University Sandbox.
- recruiting top high school students and/or underclassmen into it.
- recruiting high quality young scholars to be future thought leaders. This is necessary but not sufficient to developing a distinctive program.
- retaining current scholars and students who are confined by conventional higher education structures.

Characteristics of The University Sandbox:

- Has affiliate faculty and owns N% of the faculty member's load. For example, a professor may have 50% appointment in Biology and 50% appointment in The University Sandbox. N% of the faculty member's P&T and merit determinations are made by The University Sandbox.
- All faculty load is timeboxed: University Sandbox appointments expire (generally with project and cohort lifespan) but are renewable.

- Needs Pull, the ability to bring unaffiliated faculty into itself on a short-term basis for targeted mentoring. The “pulled” faculty’s home department would need appropriate compensation (e.g. in terms of FTE).
- Offers fellowships to incoming faculty in the form of financial incentives and University Sandbox affiliation.
- The University Sandbox has no courses: it provides credited learning experiences.
- To facilitate integration with current-generation information and student-support systems, students commit to a level of engagement at the beginning of the semester. At the end of the semester, credit is awarded based on fulfillment of the commitment, with midsemester corrective assessments as necessary.
- Student assessments are portfolio-based. Students create representations of their understandings and present them formally and informally to peers and experts.
- Students earn at least half of their BSU credits through the University Sandbox. Other credits are earned through established credited learning experiences.
- Authorized to grant credit for any mentored student learning that exhibits clear goals, adequate preparation and appropriate methods, is presented effectively, and includes reflective critique. (Note: these are the characteristics used in the assessment of scholarship discussed in Glassick et al. sans significant result.)
- Every project is an experiment and every experiment is time-boxed. As such, each must have articulated goals, an assessment plan, and a dissemination plan. The dissemination plan must specifically address how the experiment may grow the ideals of The University Sandbox to the wider university community.
- Has persistent space and resources akin to a college.

Proposed mechanics for the first generation University Sandbox:

A faculty cohort proposes a three-year investigation based on contemporary post-disciplinary stresses or problems. The provost evaluates these and approves one or two. The cohort becomes The University Sandbox, recruiting freshmen into the experience. In three more years, the students graduate and the faculty return to their original appointments.

The Hub

The Hub is the working title for the institutional unit that equips, empowers, facilitates, and authorizes prototypes for the future of education. The Hub does not belong to any college and so is administered through the Provost’s Office.

Characteristics

- Facilitates UEC-approval of alternative UCC experiences (like a college curriculum committee)
- Permits and facilitates nontraditional students to participate in learning experiences. Frame the reward as the experience, not the credit. Funds scholarships for non-degree-seeking students with specific skills or connections (e.g. city government) to reduce participation impediments.
- Permits experiments with schedule-shifting. For example, students might alternate 3-months of campus learning and off-campus internship.

2010/11

- 1. Use the Sloan-C scorecard for online programs as a framework to survey campus and establish a baseline for future evaluations of Ball State's online curricula. Gather perceptions of the future of the Independent Learning Program.**
- 2. Commission another market research study to examine perceptions of Ball State among selected key demographics. Include and focus on online programs in this round of the study and perceptions of the institution's selectivity in admissions.**
- 3. Commission a Blue Ribbon Task Force to examine internal campus perceptions of key Ball State initiatives—immersive learning, innovation, key convictions, online course delivery, commitment to traditional liberal arts, obligations to servicing the community, state, or global and the faculty's role in knowledge generation when advancing learning. Bring Boyer's model of scholarship into the study to understand faculty perceptions and roles in generating new knowledge, integrating knowledge, applying knowledge, advancing learning. Lastly, try to examine perceptions around Ball State's role in preparing students intellectually and emotionally for life+work.**
- 4. Create an operational leader that becomes the "Chief eLearning Officer" for Ball State University with influence and authority to marshal campus resources when realizing the campus educational mission. The "Chief eLearning Officer" must develop and communicate campus vision around blended/hybrid learning and asynchronous learning activities no matter the locations.**
- 5. If not already underway, gather data and information on the "extended education" environment. Such an assessment should review on-campus and off-campus eLearning efforts and what is required to approach learning from a comprehensive strategy.**
- 6. Conduct a comprehensive review of leadership job descriptions, roles, and responsibilities within the workflow of the learning mission. Focus on those positions that impact the delivery of asynchronous learning, eLearning, and blended learning. Identify key operational leadership qualities required to move the educational mission of the institution forward.**
- 7. Establish a commission to examine post-tenure review processes.**
- 8. Aggressively support University Senate's efforts to establish 120 credits for a 4-year learning experience.**
- 9. Design the "change-agent" X_School (Hub concept) by assembling a team of faculty, senior students, advising staff, and selected administrators to:**
 - assign leadership champion to effort [share Task Force brainstorming to jump start].
 - accept the principle of "freedom to invent and fail."
 - select the domains/disciplines to compose an X_School Core Experience.
 - design the integration of core course material, extracurricular, and activities for consolidated credit.
 - develop a multi-semester immersive learning experience tied to the core experience.
 - develop initial knowledge packages to be used in X_School core experience [see "Welcome to Wired University," Wired Magazine, October 2010 for examples].
 - determine the maximum allowable credits to trump current core credits —10, 15, 20 credits? [see What Ifs...for examples of X_School Core experience].
 - design loading and assigned time policies for faculty credit.
 - design faculty P&T credit processes to assure involvement [new model-Boyer Principles].
 - design 2nd semester admissions "round up" for student entry to X_School.
 - propose and assess several prototype concepts.
 - design learning outcomes rubric for X_School experience.
 - plan and implement the re-alignment of human, facility, and technology resources.
 - design the student loading mechanisms for substitutions —"trumping" of core credits.
 - design the on-going assessment process to monitor X_School successes and failures.

Classroom Experience Design Principles

1. Determine what is being “made” by the student/faculty partnership - learning is about practicing to “express” and expressing to learn.
 2. Work backwards to plan the preparation and discovery experiences.
 3. Determine the “expression” for each preparation and discovery experience. Each preparation should be practice for the final “made” and how it is to be expressed.
10. Create a commission to study selective admissions and appropriate strategic sizes for future student and faculty populations.
 11. **Expand LMS tools for asynchronous and synchronous learning outcomes assessment, collaboration and mobile capabilities, off-hours support expansion, and on campus mobile network.**
 12. Create “On the Ball” (OtB). OtB is a working title for an internal professional network for Ball State University. Currently, it is difficult for faculty to know about each others’ interests, e.g. to pursue interdisciplinary projects or scholarship. It is also difficult for students to discover faculty or even majors that coincide with their interests and for faculty to find talented students for projects.

Core features

- Every faculty member and student can indicate their interests.
- Search for interests with constraints (e.g. by major, by year, by department).
- Provide mechanics for faculty and students to earn public “achievements” or “badges”, e.g. by running immersive learning experiences, VBC seminars, ITAS participation, getting grants, Tech4U presentations, etc. Note that these would not be presented as primarily-textual vita but as profile pages, more like Steam or Facebook.
- Integrate with internal campus Web resources such as search through bsu.edu.
- Allow any user to propose project ideas and view open proposals.
- Invent as little as possible by leveraging frameworks such as Drupal.

Potential features

- Integrate with other open social networks such as Facebook or Google Profiles, which would support university branding and marketing.
- Alumni also have access through lifetime account

2011/12

- 1. Report results of market study and internal campus perceptions.**
- 2. Release the results of the Sloan-C scorecard to Ball State community and develop a plan to address shortcomings identified from survey.**
- 3. Complete an institution-wide plan that communicates a clear campus vision around blended/hybrid learning and asynchronous learning activities. If not already underway gather data and information on the “extended education” environment. Such an assessment should review on-campus and off-campus eLearning efforts and what is required to approach learning from a comprehensive strategy.**
- 4. As a result of the leadership job description review, complete job re-designs for leadership positions affecting the delivery of asynchronous learning, eLearning, and blended learning.**
- 5. Establish a commission to examine “the currency” and incentives for creating new learning cultures. Determine appropriate currencies [FTE, Credit hours, graduation rates, or more innovative currencies] and align those currencies with outcomes and goals.**
- 6. Commission a study of prerequisites, hidden prerequisites, and course sequencing and their impact upon graduation rates and seek recommendations that will increase graduation rates.**
- 7. Establish the X_School [Hub] to prototype Ball State’s new learning culture experiment.**
 - admit first class.
 - seek Senate [UEC] waiver to create an experimental credit environment [5-Year Timeframe.]
 - implement X_School design created in 10-11AY 2nd semester of 11-12AY.
 - put organizational leadership in place
 - put infrastructure in place.

8. Have a campus wide discussion and forum on selectivity and size, building upon the earlier study on selectivity and size.
9. **Commission a study to establish a comprehensive track for all majors for professional life+work preparation each semester and each year of their matriculation. Create early in each academic program to improve life+work abilities for credit. Also examine the expansion to multi-semester immersive learning experiences.**
10. Solicit proposals and fund a small team to design and prototype "On the Ball." The team's deliverable is a functional specification delivered in Summer 2012. Appropriate IT administrators then determine the unit to be responsible for further development. Seek external funding for this as a scholarly endeavor as appropriate.
11. **Solicit proposals for interdisciplinary teams of faculty to propose a 2-3 year experience in The Sandbox. Proposals are due end of Fall and one or two are selected for 2012-2013 implementation. The teams then have Spring 2012 to recruit current freshmen and sophomores into the experience.**
12. Examine the relevance of the writing competency test. The required WISER+ "W" designation is now required of all students and meets the intended ends of the writing competency test in a more targeted and formative manner, with emphasis on writing in the discipline.
13. **Create a task force to centralize communication with outside partners, specifically addressing the overlapping needs of immersive learning projects, the Computer Science capstone, BBC, and the Digital Corps. Currently, there is no oversight to determine which unit best serves community partners' needs.**
14. Require all student organizations and athletic teams to identify learning outcomes and assessment plans. Only those with core learning missions are maintained by the university.
15. **Review the role of the Digital Corps with respect to faculty-mentored and credited learning experiences. Currently the Corps offers paid experiences to some of the best students on campus for amateur production experiences, which competes directly against recruitment of the same talented students for faculty-mentored credited experiences.**

2012/13

- 1. Implement recommendations on selectivity and size study and forum recommendation.**
2. Share with campus community the study on “currency” and incentives for creating new learning cultures. Develop a plan to include the study’s recommendations in funding units and rewarding faculty and staff.
- 3. Have a campus forum based around the commission on post-tenure review processes.**
4. Share the commission’s study on creating a comprehensive track for professional life+work preparation and multi-semester immersive learning experiences.

2013/14

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- 1. Implement recommendations on selectivity and size study and forum recommendation.**
 - 2. Share the Blue Ribbon Task Force on internal campus perceptions, values, and convictions and develop a plan to bring these beliefs into the mainstream of campus planning.**
 - 3. Release the study of prerequisites, hidden prerequisites, and course sequencing and identify new policies that enhance a student's ability to attain a degree in 4-years.**

2014/15

- 1. Graduate first X_School participants.**
- 2. Based on X_School experiments and results for commissions and task forces, write a new vision for Ball State Learning Experiences.**

What if students...

could take some of their core courses online during the summers, including the summer before their freshman year. They might also take a course during the January Term

And, there was a studio environment in each college where students could have face-to-face access to other students and faculty who were attempting to design solutions for important problems.

And, in each course students added to their social/professional networks so that by the end of their four years at Ball State that had elaborate social networks that allowed them to harness the “power of pull.”

And, students had Ball State alumni mentors who gave them opportunities for authentic looks into their future careers and important connections to the community.

And, students mastered the writing that was prevalent in their chosen field by sharing their writing on wikis, blogs, journals, and microblogs and receiving feedback from other students, mentors, and faculty.

And, students, propose personal learning paths using the myriad of resources and courses offered on the Internet to meet Ball State course objectives.

And, students had access to meta-tagged data for each course that let them know if the course was reading intensive, technology intensive, primarily online, experience-based, or lecture-based.

What if faculty...

had an institutional mechanism for fostering the scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

felt safe and empowered to experiment with new teaching techniques and were rewarded for doing so in both the P&T and merit pay process.

accepted personal learning paths with demonstrations of met course objectives from students in lieu of some traditional course assignments.

were convinced of the value of increasing the relevance of their courses.

designed “knowledge packages” for accelerated movement through core course content.

contributed to a database that described innovative projects to help recruit students for collaborative projects.

moved through the promotion and tenure process with a feeling of support.

held their weekly office hours in a studio environment in which they interacted informally with students.

received load credit for leading extracurricular clubs

And, all new faculty were required, with support, to design courses in blended learning formats.

X_School

Experience Working Prototype. . .

Three professors got together and integrated 3 courses around the theme - "Decision-making In An Overcrowded Information World."

And, this partnership provided students a Tier 2 option that satisfied up to 9 credits of the undergraduate core.

And, students in this themed experience determined their level of participation and credit by topic, interest, experience, or need.

And, the "knowledge package" integrated statistics, concepts of probability, concepts on the science of search engines, the importance of primary sources as evidence, and an overview of research methods.

And, these professors used as textbooks sources:

- The Art of Probability for Scientists and Engineers, by Richard Hamming
- Expert Political Judgement, by Philip Tetlock.
- How to Cheat Your Friends at Poker, by Penn Jillette and Mickey Lynn.
- Understanding Research: A Consumer's Guide, by Vicki L. Plano Clark and John W. Creswell.
- Google's PageRank and Beyond: The Science of Search Engines, by Amy N. Langville and Carl D. Meyer.
- American History: A Survey, with Primary Source Investigator, by Alan Brinkley.

And, these professors mentored and guided learning experiences that collected people, skills, and talents "greater than the sum of its parts."

And, students from the Media Matters special interest club earned 1 credit through participation by designing a campus event that focused on concepts in the knowledge package.

And, students living in residence halls earned 2 credits by attending the "bAlumTV" virtual lecture hall and expanding the personal network adding new alum lectures to "bAlumTV" on the topic of information decision making and judgement.

And. . .

