Motivations and Perceptions of Faculty Involved in Engaged Scholarship at a Research Intensive University

Suzanne Weinstein, Chas Brua, Chang Liu, Adam Christensen, & Khanjan Mehta, Penn State University

Introduction

Research has shown that engaged scholarship activities enhance students' academic, personal and social growth. The key element to providing these experiences that so richly enhance student learning is faculty. The success of a university-wide engaged scholarship initiative depends on faculty involvement.

To increase faculty involvement, universities will need to know what motivates faculty to provide engaged scholarship experiences, how faculty and their students benefit, what strategies for designing and delivering engaged scholarship experiences have been successful, and what supports are needed.

Method

- Interviews with 20 faculty members from many disciplines using many types of ES
- Preliminary theme identification is shown here from 6 faculty (3M,3F)
  - Engineering, Theatre, Ag. Sciences, and Health and Human Development
  - Study abroad (3) and undergrad research (3)

WHAT they need to do it

- A community of ES faculty
  - Bounce ideas off each other
  - Some go-to people who could advise us

- Time & money
  - We need student travel money
  - The university isn’t set up to reward ES
  - ES might not be on the P&T radar

- P&T rewards
  - Somebody who knows what questions to ask
  - A standard set of items we could pick from

- Assessment support
  - There are far easier ways to get published

HOW they make ES a success

- Strong prep
  - Develop well-structured projects
  - Talk to client to set expectations

- Role play, exercises, talks by people from other cultures

- Pair undergraduates with grad students

- Use peer learning

- Have client and peers do grading

- Empower students

- It’s not me telling them; it’s relying on their experience

- Students work directly with clients

- I’m surrounded by bright, young people

- I enjoy working with students (in ES contexts)

- I’ve met so many people I would not have otherwise met.

- ES helps solve real problems

- It’s critical for students to have practical, real-world experience

- Students learn by doing

- Students feel prepared to make a difference

WHY faculty do engaged scholarship

- Experiential learning
  - Students learn from mistakes

- Collaborations
  - University is in the business of impacting the future

- Make a difference

- Empower students
  - Allow students to have a voice

- Strong prep
  - Have client and peers do grading

- Reduce burden on faculty
  - It’s not me telling them; it’s relying on their experience

- Time & money
  - We need student travel money

- ES takes more time than a lecture

- P&T rewards
  - Somebody who knows what questions to ask

- Assessment support
  - A standard set of items we could pick from

Implications and Continued Research

- Preliminary findings consistent with literature on ES motivation and desired supports.
- Data reveals widespread desire for assessment support.
- Desire for community/connection with other ES faculty was strong.
- Next steps: Explore more responses across additional domains of ES.

Works cited


Assessment Conf HIPs afternoon session.pdf