

Curriculum and Pedagogy Group 3

Facilitated by Laura Cooper

Our team's theme became "Fluidity", with an overall unison in desiring to have a system that allows for fluidity for the student, the curriculum, the space, and the faculty.

That said, there are identifiable voices and opinions, which this format doesn't make clear. We will have to think about how best to balance these voices as we go forward. I recommend finding ways to more fully represent the diversity of student experience, especially as we all agree that a student-centered interactive teaching experience is desired.

I would like to highlight a conversation that was particularly important, and that was felt to hold much promise as a radical, yet achievable and beneficial change.

1. DON'T require students to declare a Major until well into their time at Art Center (say, 4th semester.) This change in curricular structure would better serve the needs of the current younger median age of the student body.
2. ALLOW a NON-MAJOR course of study—in other words, allow students to navigate their own path among the disciplines. There are plenty of appropriate multi-disciplinary faculty who can act as advisors for these students, guiding towards a rigorous multi-disciplinary experience rather than an un-focused smorgasboard.

Additionally, I am compelled to report that the conversation about how we teach to non-native English speakers, and how that currently is affecting education at Art Center was passionate and gripping. There was an over-all sense of unfairness for everyone right now: student, faculty, and staff alike. There is a sense of urgency that the problem of English comprehension be dealt with respectfully and in depth so that the standard of education be raised and so that all students are clear about the aural, oral, and written English requirements in an Art Center education. Students who are accepted at Art Center must have an adequate support system on campus to address these requirements. Those who are already part of that support system, teaching ESL and working in the writing lab) have their fingers in the dike. We need more.

The following is a transcription of our work pages, with some editing and shuffling (for the purposes of clarity and to avoid repetition only, not editorially.) Some are posed as questions, some as statements, reflecting the author in each case.

1. Innovation

How do we engage the new generation of students given new modes of communication and technology?

Combine deep attention and hyper-attention

Have student centered information modes via technology.

Student generated content and interactivity

Breaking down territories:

How can we promote technology as a philosophy rather than just tools and programs; injecting criticality into the way technology is used?

More integration across disciplines on campus, in curriculum and in architecture.

Integrate Grad and Undergrad in curriculum and architecture.

Multi-modal learning in each class.

Integrate seminar and studio, combining theory and practice in both directions

2. Academic Excellence and Assessment

Entry:

Raise admissions standards by raising affordability

More interaction and information flow between Admissions Representatives and Faculty.

Reassess the language criteria for admission/raise student language levels.

Have several levels of entry at Art Center, allowing more international students to enter in at advanced standing (current difficulties in transfer credits)

An 18 year old entry should be the exception and not the rule.

Compare ourselves to International MBA campuses.

Have students enter as undeclared, choosing their major after the first 4 semesters

Curriculum:

Have a trans-disciplinary major (completely open, with faculty guidance from the many interdisciplinary faculty that we have)

Re-define levels of curriculum, and don't restrict content from making at the early levels.

Open up the curricular paths: currently too many required classes and not enough electives hinder fluidity between departments and restrict existing cross-disciplinary opportunities.

Raise level of criticality of the student body. Use critical and creative thinking in every class

Study the various methods of critique and evaluation, verbal and written, in all classes, as an integral component of the curriculum.

Consider a foundation and/or HDS class entirely devoted to critique, giving intellectual tools that would then be applicable in all courses (and in all careers.)

Create self-directed, flexible students who are able to continually learn, and continually able to apply knowledge and criticality to their work and their cultural experience.

Recruit and retain the best faculty.

Rationalize curricular sequencing to facilitate teaching effectiveness

ESL—How do we deal with the hugely varying levels of English-speaking ability in the classroom, and how much of this gap could be eliminated by addressing admissions standards? How much should we adjust our expectations based on a lack of language comprehension?

2 terms not 3 (and redefine terms—with room for intensive projects and educational travel, either between semesters or as a third semester which is devoted to more intensive experiences of varying duration)

3. Access and Affordability

How do we deal with economic anxiety?

Can we create different modes of access to quality education for different populations, including those that can't afford AC and those who can't work it into their working lives? (Note: perhaps this is a conversation that Admissions and AC at Night can continue together.)

Find a way to create affordable studios and living spaces for students, on and off campus.

Lower tuition.

Teach students to be flexible, life-long learners who can adapt to the changes in the marketplace.

Transfer credits and stop teaching courses which are already taught at the community colleges, leave the classes to community colleges and open up more upper division electives. (student perspective.)

4. Human Centered Education and Citizenship

Connecting to the world at large:

Ethics, social responsibility and world citizenship taught as subject and content. Consider a stand-alone class on ethics as a requirement.

Not just sustainability, teach design that elevates the human condition.

Use the city as the classroom. Learning from the world directly. Have the curriculum enter the world.

Ascertain whether new modes of digital research and teaching can allow more class time for site visits/field trips and meetings off campus

How can we better utilize a time/semester structure to allow for exploration off campus (including out of the country?)

Community:

How can curriculum get more intimate?

What is the right size of the department for the student, and for the field they are entering?

We need to become a smaller more supportive, closer community. How can we best utilize our space to accomplish this, and technology?

How can we better understand the students place in their lifecycle, and utilize that connection in our teaching?

Does the physical space on campus promote exploratory and cross-disciplinary works so that our on-campus communities understand and are aware of each other?

Create a fair employment and compensation structure for faculty that enables teachers to better plan for the year's curriculum. Make faculty part of the planning process.

Provide office hours and office space for faculty.

Find more dedicated studio space for students and faculty.

5. Diversity and Inclusion

How do we foster/develop a global/diverse student population?

How does this impact the level of conversation if there are varying levels of English comprehension?

Is there another model to create a classroom/community that supports diverse/global student population?

How do we get more women students and faculty in Product and Industrial Design?

How do we get more scholarships?

We need to become an entirely international campus (refer to international committee)

We need mandatory international exchanges and experiences as part of the curriculum (refer to time and flexibility!)

6. Professionalism and Research

Students trained as entrepreneurs, able to self-direct their careers through ever-changing marketplaces.

Self-direction taught as a skill (crucial to creativity and leadership)

Creative process over product:

More class room focus on creativity and process, rather than focusing on end products.

How do we define creativity? Should we?

How do you educate for change? Identify what doesn't change, and learn to teach versatility.

How can we attract great passion in students and professionals?

How can we better support faculty in academic and professional activities?

How can we better utilize the wide range of faculty experiences and subjects?

Elephants in the room:

Despite the large amounts of money spent on them, Sinclair Pavilion and South Campus are not functioning for their stated purposes.

South Campus further fragments and isolates an already fragmented community.