Recorder’s Summary

Forum date: 1/30/17
Table number: 3

Key points and ideas that emerged from table discussion (bulleted list of 5-10 points with a couple sentences of description of each):

- **Literacy**
  - Many members mentioned the idea of students leaving their liberal education experience with proficient literacy skills from many disciples, including: data, multiple forms of information, media, numeracy, information processing, second language, research literacy.
  - Members agreed that skill based literacy enabled students to critically engage with the world and act critically based off of their knowledge.
  - How do the Writing Intensive courses facilitate these goals?

- **Communication**
  - Everyone at the table agreed that it would be crucial for students to be able to communicate across disciplines in a work environment. The table also agreed that enabling students to be able to engage in cross generational conversations. This included being able to speak with superiors far older than them and as well as being able to cooperate with younger generations as they age through their field.

- **What are the Liberal Arts?**
  - The group agreed that a Liberal Education should be well rounded. However, members disagreed on what that meant. Some thought that the curriculum required should be more uniform amongst the student body and other believed that it should be less uniform and more customizable while still promoting a well-rounded experience. Many members agreed that the school is missing the mark on the current goals of the Liberal Arts.
  - The table discussed how students view the well-rounded liberal education experience and found that the University needs to encourage curiosity and inquiry through the liberal education curriculum. Through this curiosity and inquiry, the table was hopeful that students would be able to view life through another lens and help bridge the gap between society.
  - Make them **EXCITING** was the solution that many members brought up to help promote the idea of the liberal education experience. This included properly marketing Lib Ed’s and providing a class syllabus to students before they take the course.

- **Themes**
  - Why are students only taking 4/5 of the themes? Are all of them equally important? Should all of them be required? Should some be removed? Many questions were tossed around regarding the theme structure however no clear consensus was reached. Instructors in the CSE shared that too many Lib Ed requirements constricted CSE student’s ability to fully explore the Lib Ed experience because they had too many core courses to take care of.
Table members were concerned with the labeling of courses regarding what qualifies as a “double and triple dipper,” should these dippers exist? Should they be held to a higher standard?

- Quality assurance of Lib Ed’s
  - Beyond the initial approval of an LE, how does the University conduct ongoing assessments of LE’s? Should there be checkups or classroom interventions? There needs to be constant revision and interpretation regarding these courses to ensure that they are continuing to meet their promises.

- Departments are profoundly different
  - Some schools have overly dense major oriented tracks that clutter up LE’s (CSE and CSOM).
  - Two students in the same major might have totally different intentions with how they plan on using their college experience in the real world, how can LE’s support these various intentions?
  - Time blocks are too dense.

Summary of discussion (300 to 500 words):

My table shared many similarities for the goals that they wish to accomplish with the University’s LE curriculum. As mentioned above, many table members were adamant that the University stick with the LE curriculum because they believed that LE’s laid the ground work for a successful member of society. Specifically, members emphasized the importance of literacy in many disciplines. This could include a second language, coding literacy, and data literacy. The concept of literacy was deemed important because it would allow students to think and act critically with the information and world around them. The members at my table believed that communication and engagement should be at the forefront of LE courses. For example, courses should model the grand challenge courses that are being implemented. These courses encourage cross disciplinary communication and collaboration as well as give students a real world call to action that may be more exciting.

The table discussed logistical matters of the LE curriculum as well. Even though the budget was supposed to be infinite, many members claimed that funding some of the ideas being presented would be impossible. Also the table discussed how the LE curriculum effects students based on which major college they are in. Specifically, CSE and CSOM students were mentioned for having a large amount of supplementary courses that all students in that college must take before they are able to move on to their major courses. These supplementary courses along with LE courses can clog up a student’s schedule and prohibit them from fully embracing the LE experience. This course overload also shifts students focus from genuine inquiry in other disciplines to anxiety that they won’t be able to take their required courses and meet LE requirements. Another logistical issue came from the advisors at the table, who spoke to the volume of classes that are given around the lunch hour. There are so many courses offered around this time that students often have to prioritize what they can take during that time period and this can prevent students from having a wide variety of courses to choose from for LE, even though there seems to be many different LE’s available.
Additional context (characterize level of consensus/lack of consensus, tone and tenor of conversation, other notable aspects of the discussion):

The table largely agreed on many of the issues and possibilities. The table had total agreement on the thought that LE is valuable and that the structure in place was great, however it currently doesn’t fulfill what it is designed to.