

Come Together: Bridging the Divide between Liberal Arts and Professional Programs

2017 CCAS Liberal Arts Committee Panel Presentation

Bridging the Divide between Liberal Arts and Professional Programs

Enabling professional disciplines to view themselves as liberal arts departments

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UNC Asheville:

- North Carolina's public liberal arts university
- Host for COPLAC, the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges

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- Professional programs and LAS programs together
- Team of deans with program areas, not divisions

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Strategies:

1) Reframing liberal education:

Colleges of Arts and Sciences?

A set of disciplines defined by content and method

Or Liberal Arts and Sciences?

Emphasis on transferrable skills: Critical thinking, information literacy, communication, alternative perspectives, etc.

Dept. of Management and Accountancy

Mission Statement (excerpt)

The Department of Management and Accountancy provides undergraduate degree programs of excellence in accounting and management. ***We develop lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and effective communicators who understand that learning is a collaborative, reflective process requiring the integration and synthesis of knowledge from many sources in the liberal arts tradition....***

Dept. of Education

Mission Statement (excerpt)

Our graduates are teachers who have broad perspective, who think critically, reflectively and creatively; who are humane and committed to meeting the learning needs of all students; and who guide students using active inquiry to become effective and productive citizens in the 21st century.

Dept. of Health and Wellness

Mission Statement (excerpt)

Our graduates are trained to think critically, engage in scientific inquiry, communicate effectively, cultivate an understanding of human diversity, and value collaboration and service.

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Strategies:

2) Highlight interdisciplinarity (part of liberal education) in professional programs

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Mgmt/Acct: “Our new curriculum is structured so that students ***can learn across disciplines to apply concepts, theories, constructs, and practices from other social science, natural science, and humanities disciplines*** (not simply the functional areas of traditional business education as seen in most programs of study at peer institutions).” (Rationale for curriculum revision, 2014-15)

Health and Wellness: “***In the liberal arts tradition, the major in Health and Wellness Promotion is an interdisciplinary program*** that prepares students to provide educational, informational, and support services to populations at risk for chronic diseases, particularly preventable diseases related to lifestyle.” (Description of major)

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Strategies:

3) Liberal Arts as a Point of Distinction for Professional Programs

--Differentiation from professional program on other campuses.

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3) Liberal Arts as a Point of Distinction for Professional Programs

Management and Accountancy:

We strive to use our *distinctive setting within a public liberal arts university* to focus on the human element as part of the decision-making processes in organizations (excerpt from mission statement).

"...the study of organizations is a liberal art"

(Rationale for curriculum revision, 2014-15)

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Strategies:

3) Liberal Arts as a Point of Distinction for Professional Programs

Education:

The mission of the Department of Education is to prepare candidates for a North Carolina Standard Professional I Teaching license ***with a liberal arts foundation***. (from the mission statement)

UNC Asheville is unique in that Education is not a major or a minor, but is an area of concentration in addition to the academic major. ***This structure reflects the liberal arts model***, and affords the Unit the wonderful advantage of engaging with all departments across campus in the preparation of professional educators since undergraduate candidates major in an academic area specific to their intended licensure area... (Report to UNC General Administration)

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Strategies:

- 4) Bring faculty from professional programs into delivery of general education

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Strategies:

4) Bring faculty from professional programs into delivery of general education

--Interdisciplinary core programs

--Emphasis areas that transcend disciplines (diversity, sustainability, etc.)

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Strategies:

4) Bring faculty from professional programs into delivery of general education

How:

- Incentivized through position requests
- Clear expectations and review of course schedules
- Faculty review
- Faculty recruitment

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Or rather...

Enabling all of us to view professional disciplines as liberal arts departments