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**Action Plan for Developing, Enhancing, and Sustaining Student Centered Initiatives at Westminster College
AAC&U, Campus Leadership for Sustainable Innovation, An Activity of the Greater Expectations Initiative that
Seeks to Improve Student Learning,
Leesburg, Virginia, July 23-28, 2002**

Goal: To develop, enhance, and work towards the sustaining of student centered learning perspectives and strategies in both curricular and co-curricular areas. To inaugurate and establish the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and Center for Leadership Service (CLS) as key venues and resource facilities for initiatives and programs related to student centered learning. N.B. Initiatives related to student centered learning represent an important part of a broad spectrum of programs for both the CTE and CLS. (See mission and informational attachments for two centers: 1) C:\july2002\072602Center for Teaching Excellence2.doc and 2) C:\july2002\072702CLS.doc.)

Project Team: D. Humphrey, D. Jones, R. Seelinger (team leader), T. Stiller, M. Tanner, and W. Zade

Motivation and Rationale: Student centered learning initiatives are consistent with a) mission, vision, and educational goals of the college and b) college’s strategic plan, and c) with the type of student and faculty interaction that has been adopted and/or has been emerging in both curricular and co-curricular contexts.

Mission: *To educate and inspire all Westminster students through a broad, liberal arts education and a high quality developmental experience so that each graduate is a Leader of Character who is committed to the values of Integrity, Fairness, Respect, and Responsibility and prepared to live a life of success, significance, and service.*

Vision statements as part of strategic plan:

- *Westminster will become one of the premier national liberal arts institutions.*
- *Westminster will be known as a campus that cares. Faculty and staff will be dedicated to the success of our students and committed to student welfare and development both in and out of the classroom. ...Classes will be small, dynamic and student centered...the faculty and staff will play a crucial part in providing the atmosphere for growth and development only possible in a small, private college.*
- *Westminster College will be a selective, traditional, residential liberal arts college that attracts and retains high quality students primarily from the mid-west, but also from throughout the nation and overseas. The full time student enrollments will exceed 800 students by 2006 and 1,000 by 2011.*

Survey and Inventory: As an initial and foundational step for presenting key programs, we will survey students and faculty to determine the degree to which both groups think they are involved in student centered learning activities, why, and attitudes towards such activities; inventory of specific activities that faculty and students think constitute student centered learning activities.

Some Student Centered Learning Strategies:

Group work in lab setting	Student research project; projects of discovery
Service learning	Socratic method
Case studies	Graphing calculators
Internships	From AAC&U: “unscripted and contested problems,..
Student journals	Community based research
Writing Across the Curriculum	Portfolio assessment
Conferencing	
Service learning	
Oral presentations	
Problem based learning	

Setting for fostering and sustaining student centered learning initiatives for both faculty and students: 1) Center for Teaching Excellence (and various programs associated with it, e.g., the Faculty Mentoring Program and initiatives developed and sponsored by Focus on Teaching Committee) and 2) Center for Leadership and Service. Both centers are newly established and will be the focal point for key initiatives related to teaching, learning, and service. Located in the same building, the two centers will develop in a complementary and synergistic manner. The Center for Leadership & Service will encourage faculty to use service learning as a student centered learning method. The Center will do this by assisting faculty in the developing the service learning experiences and providing administrative support in the development of these experiences.

As a means of fostering an understanding of effective ways of employing student centered learning we will examine closely 3 recently offered courses (or combination of courses) as case studies: 1) ENG 315, Autobiography, 2) PSY 412, Counseling Theories and Methods and PSY 241, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, and 3) BIO 204, Animal Behavior. Each of these courses (or combination of courses) was innovative in multiple ways.

ENG 315, Literary Modes and Genres: Autobiography

In the autobiography course students explored the nature of the genre of autobiography, worked closely with residents of a retirement community to help them to compose autobiographies, and composed their own autobiography. This course was developed with a grant from Campus Compact and the Kauffman Foundation. The autobiography course incorporated both service learning and student centered learning.

PSY 412, Counseling Theories and Methods and PSY 241, Industrial/Organizational Psychology

The psychology courses constituted a joint project that examined customer and staff satisfaction with Missouri’s “One-Stop” centers. The project was designed as a student-centered, service learning opportunity that would aid education of students as well as meeting the needs of a state agency and the needs of the U.S. Department of Labor. In essence, this team-taught course incorporated collaborative learning, joint student/faculty research, and service learning. The course was supported by a grant by the Department of Labor.

BIO 204, Animal Behavior

Animal Behavior, a sophomore level course that primarily serves biology majors, uses a variety of student-centered learning techniques. The course is discussion based utilizing both small groups and class wide discussion to understand the material. One of the major goals of the course is to foster understanding and using the scientific method as a tool to answer questions of interest. Collaborative learning is used to facilitate this learning. Students develop the ability to generate appropriate hypotheses and through designing and conducting experiments learn the joys and frustrations of doing science. These experiments become progressively more open-ended allowing students more and more ownership of the process.

From course surveys these courses were successful in reaching key pedagogical goals and objectives and had a high level of satisfaction on the part of various parties—the instructors, the students, and members of the off-campus community that interacted with closely with the students. The first case study will be offered in a setting large enough to accommodate ca. 25-40 participants. The second and third case studies will be offered at the Center for Teaching Excellence with a target group of participants of 12 to 15. Through a careful analysis and discussion of these courses, faculty members and students will gain a better understanding of some forms of student centered learning, service learning, collaborative learning, and community based research (esp. joint student and faculty projects).

The Interfraternity Council (IFC) has proposed that the College allow the fraternities to conduct their pledge programs during the fall semester, rather than waiting until the spring semester. Since approximately 75% of the men on the Westminster campus belong to a fraternity, the impact of this request must be carefully considered. In essence, the activities of the fraternities and their pledgship programs significantly affect all groups of students on the campus including women and independent students. The co-curricular programs of the fraternities have a potentially profound affect on student academic success, retention, student satisfaction, and campus relationships. The IFC proposal to change the timing and nature of pledgship will provide the opportunity for both Centers to contribute to the campus discussions of the proposal. The Centers will help facilitate student centered learning and discussions as the campus attempts to resolve the issue of the relationship between the fraternities, the College and student learning.

The goal is to engage key student leaders and to assist them in the development of specific programs that will aid in academic success and retention for students. Such success is fundamentally important for each student, student group (e.g., fraternity, sorority, independent students), and the college as a whole. Regardless of the final decision on proposal itself, the Centers will help the faculty, staff, and students to work together to develop curricular and co-curricular plans and campus policies which will help the College move closer to achieving the academic, personal student development, and social goals contained within Mission and Visions statements and Educational Goals.

Additional Considerations for Action Plan for Developing, Enhancing, and Sustaining Student Centered Initiatives at Westminster College

I. Assessment Considerations Related to our Initiatives

Initially we will have to assess the campus environment, understanding and attitude toward a learning centered approach to education. This effort will involve

- A survey of what participants identify as student centered learning (SCL) and the extent to which it is currently being done/pursued.
- Posing follow up questions (emerging from survey above) that lead to more study sessions, faculty to faculty learning initiatives at the CTE, and/or faculty and student focus groups.
- An assessment of the use of student centered learning for research and/or discovery.
- A survey of student involvement with learning centered experiences and whether students choose courses because of SCL components; development of student and faculty focus groups to follow up on results of survey.
- Tracking evidence of the SCL use on campus (number of participants and/or courses).
- Survey to determine frequency and nature of faculty discussion on pedagogy.

Both the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and the Center for Leadership and Service (CLS) will need to develop clear statements of their goals and need to align them with the mission and vision of the college. Given the goal statements, each will have to develop assessment plans and techniques to determine if they are achieving their goals. For example, the center directors can gather the following types of feedback.

For the CTE:

- Do we see increased engagement by faculty in the use of active pedagogical techniques? If so, what types of techniques are being used?
- Has the participation in discussions become more widespread?
- Get feedback from faculty served as to how helpful center programs have been.
- Get feedback from the new faculty and mentors in the mentoring program to assess their satisfaction and needs.
- Get feedback from students involved in the learning process associated with the IFC proposals.

For the CLS:

- Assess the understanding/progress of faculty and students towards understanding the servant-leader model.
- Track involvement of students in community service projects. Have the types of volunteer work changed? Is the number of students involved in community service increased? Have the values of the students changed in response to their involvement?
- Get feedback from faculty about the value of the service they have gotten from the center.
- Facilitate the Drosten Cup competition and have the Greek organizations reflect on their participation in the service activities (this information will be helpful in evaluating the competition and will provide evidence of learning outcomes).
- Establish faculty and student focus groups on mission statement and values identified in mission.

Tentative Timetable for Student Centered Initiatives

Date	Activity	People Involved
July 25-28, 2002	AAC&U Institute: Campus Leadership for Sustainable Innovation; develop Action Plan: <i>Action Plan for Developing, Enhancing, and Sustaining Student Centered Initiatives at Westminster College</i>	Project team: Humphrey, D., Jones, D., Seelinger, R., Stiller, T., Tanner, M., and Zade, W. Coordinator/convener: R. Seelinger
August 13, 2002	Lunch meeting to discuss on-campus follow-up	Project team; Cathryn Pridal, Interim Associate Dean of Faculty; coordinator/convener: R. Seelinger
August 14 or 15, 2002	Meeting with President's Cabinet	Project team and Cabinet; coordinator/convener: R. Seelinger
August/September 2002	Meetings with Focus on Teaching Committee, Council of Chairs, Advisory Committee for the Center for Leadership	Project team et al.

	and Service	
September 2002	Meeting with Curriculum Committee	Project team; coordinator/convener: R. Seelinger or chair of Curriculum Committee
September 2002	Survey/inventory of student centered learning activities.	Survey of both faculty and students; Project team, Assessment Committee, and Focus on Teaching Committee; coordinator/convener: D. Jones
September 2002	First case study presentation	David Humphrey, Director, CLS; Wayne Zade, Director, CTE; Project team; faculty and student presenters, interested faculty and (select) students
September 2002	Meeting with IFC Task Force	David Humphrey, Director, CLS; Wayne Zade, Director, CTE; Project team
September (October) 2002	2 nd and 3 rd case studies	David Humphrey, Director, CLS; Wayne Zade, Director, CTE; Project team; faculty and student presenters, interested faculty and (select) students
September-October-November	Work with students and faculty members on student centered initiatives related to IFC proposal	David Humphrey, Director, CLS; Wayne Zade, Director, CTE; key students involved with and/or affected by proposal
November 2002	Review of and assessment of fall activities; planning of additional activities	Project team, Focus on Teaching Committee, Advisory Committee for the Center for Leadership and Service; coordinator/convener: R. Seelinger
January 2003	Development of proposal for 2003 AAC&U summer institute on results of 2002 Action Plan and future plans; development of presentation for AAC&U institute (if appropriate/possible)	Project team, Focus on Teaching Committee, Advisory Committee for the Center for Leadership and Service; coordinator/convener: R. Seelinger
March 2003	Submit proposal for 2003	

Attachment

Center for Teaching Excellence

(From College webpage: http://www.wcmo.edu/wc_users/homepages/faculty/jonesd/Focus%20on%20Teaching/CTE.html)

Picture of Wayne Zade

Picture of Center

The Center for Teaching Excellence embodies the faculty's commitment to the art of learning to teach better. Our primary goal is to create an atmosphere in which faculty can talk together about teaching and share ideas, questions, challenges, and problems they face in their contact with classes and with individual students. In conjunction with the Focus on Teaching Committee, we hold regular workshops and programs on special topics. We make available to the faculty current information on teaching-related issues, both print and multimedia, and maintain an ongoing collection of materials for faculty to consult. Through the Faculty Mentoring Program, we welcome new faculty and encourage returning faculty on the track toward tenure. We hope to help all faculty develop as good teachers, good scholars, and good academic citizens.

[Possible Topics for Focus on Teaching Discussions or Workshops](#)

- Schedule of mentoring workshops
- Schedule of focus on teaching discussions

Possible Topics for Focus on Teaching Discussions

- Assignments: number, complexity, types. Also what assignments are appropriate for 100, 200, 300, and 400 level courses?
- Academic honesty: plagiarism and cheating
- How do we incorporate the four college mission statement values (fairness, integrity, respect and responsibility) into the curriculum?
- What should students be learning in a liberal arts college?

- How to use technology in teaching
- How to teach critical thinking skills
- Student motivation (or lack thereof)
- Problem-based learning (can include use of case studies)
- Student problems (mental health issues etc.)
- Lectures: How to do good ones
- What is a good test?

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Attachment

The Center for Leadership & Service

Download the [July 2002 Update](#) (PDF)

Leadership and character development programs on most campuses target only the highest achieving students. Significant changes can only be expected if these programs involve all students, as well as faculty, staff, trustees, and the surrounding community. Leadership has historically been associated with Westminster College. The college's commitment to developing leaders of character is not just a promotional and is not reserved only for those students who already are exhibiting leadership and service qualities. We are committed to developing leaders of character. Westminster believes that the Servant-Leader model of leadership and character development, integrated throughout its curriculum and extracurricular activities, will have a positive impact on changing the lives of our students and improving the community.

The Center for Leadership & Service is located in an attractive redbrick home located at 327 W. Seventh Street, on the Westminster campus. This location is just across the street from the Alumni Center and in a location where students, faculty, and staff will have easy access to the Center and its resources. The Center for Teaching Excellence is located in the upper level of the building. The Center for Teaching Excellence is a program designed to promote teaching and professional development opportunities for the Westminster faculty.

The Center for Leadership & Service is directed by Dr. David Humphrey. Dr. Humphrey has been at Westminster College since 1980 serving as Director of Financial Aid, Associate Dean of Admissions, Dean of Student Life, and now as Director of The Leadership Center.

"I believe that the College experience is a tremendous time of personal growth which shapes the rest of the young person's life. The Center can help students develop their skills, personal philosophy of life, and leadership skills in order that they can truly live a life of significance and service".
-- David Humphrey

The Center for Leadership & Service is an innovative concept that:

- aims at having a significant effect on the total campus culture;
- focuses on leadership and character development strategies for all college constituencies: students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni and members of the community;
- integrates academic, extracurricular and community initiatives in a seamless fashion; promotes character development through local community service initiatives, but also encompasses a world view of leadership; represents "action learning" at its best by providing intensive skill and personal development experiences in ways that capture students' interests, curiosities, and energies;
- integrates the school's guiding principles of Integrity, Fairness, Respect & Responsibility into all of the center's components and will provide the basis for campus policies, resource allocations, and decision-making; embraces a "Servant-Leader" model that provides a context and direction for all of its programs.

The four primary components of the Center for Leadership & Service include:

- **The Leadership Development Program** aimed primarily at the leadership and character development of college students but with complementary programs targeting public service leaders.
- **A Servant-Leader Program** that embraces a college-community partnership with the Fulton and Callaway County community. This program, through both academic and extracurricular methods, involves students in programs and opportunities in the community that address unmet human needs, including literacy, neighborhood development, recreation, and housing. [CIVICUS](#) is a Servant-Leader Program, which connects Westminster's faculty, staff and student volunteers with community agencies.
- **The Leadership Studies Curriculum** that integrates character and leadership development goals directly into the curriculum.

The Awards Program for Servant Leadership will recognize and celebrate the distinguished efforts and careers of special individuals who reflect the values of servant-leadership. Award winners will come from international, national, state, local, and campus levels. A special high school servant-leader awards program will recognize outstanding high school juniors for their community service activities. C:\july2002\072502Actionplanstudctrlnrg.doc

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