

**INTERDISCIPLINARITY INITIATIVES  
SEPTEMBER 2008**

**INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED LAST YEAR OR ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY THAT  
RELATE TO THE STRATEGIC GOAL OF STRENGTHENING INTERDISCIPLINARITY**

1. At the request of the Provost, FAP examined interdisciplinarity at the College and issued a report in spring 2008.
2. In addition to asking department heads for staffing requests, the Provost invited staffing requests from Program Chairs of major and minor programs.
3. Eight new positions were authorized for searches in 2008-2009. All staffing proposals were reviewed by FAP and the Provost with respect to their ability to fulfill goals within the Strategic Plan. All of the eight new positions authorized for searches in 2008-2009 have the potential to reach across disciplinary lines.
  - The newly authorized position of a joint hire in Women's and Gender Studies, will require the College's first tailored contract to support work across departments and programs.
4. In spring 2008, monthly meetings began among faculty chairs of the three Ad Hoc Committees, the chair of CEP, Dean of the College, the Associate Provost, and the Provost to facilitate coordination among these committees, including the multi- and interdisciplinary goals in their charges.
5. CEP is reviewing the Common Course of Study, including the possibility of options that would support multi- or interdisciplinary studies.
6. Funding was obtained from the Mellon foundation to support faculty initiatives in cross-disciplinary teaching and innovative scholarship. The first grants to faculty from this funding were awarded this fall.
7. Fund raising was initiated for new academic space that would support growth in the faculty and other objectives in the strategic plan including support of multi- and interdisciplinary goals.
8. The three Ad Hoc Committees and CEP held an off-campus retreat in May 2008 to facilitate discussions among the committees and to provide concentrated time for each committee to plan their work for 2008-2009. The wrap up session at the end of the day included an extended discussion of the cross-disciplinary aspirations that cut across all of the groups, as well as the challenges in our current structure that need faculty and administrative attention.

9. A Moodle site and a newsletter were initiated to inform the College community of the progress of work related to implementation of the strategic initiatives including those associated with multi- and interdisciplinary initiatives.
10. The Ad Hoc Committee on Life Sciences was accepted to join a select group of thirty campuses that will participate in a three-year project focused on the goal of facilitating interdisciplinary learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This project, which is being led by Project Kaleidoscope and funded through a grant from the W. M. Keck Foundation, seeks to build a curriculum and culture supportive of interdisciplinarity.

**INITIATIVES/DISCUSSIONS PLANNED THAT RELATE TO THE STRATEGIC GOAL OF STRENGTHENING INTERDISCIPLINARITY**

1. Provost Report at October, 2008 Faculty meeting to announce the “Year of Interdisciplinarity” to build on 2007-2008 FAP subcommittee report. The Provost will encourage continued conversations about interdisciplinarity.
  - Dean of the College will ask Teaching and Learning committee to (co)-sponsor programming on cross-disciplinary work – perhaps inviting Dr. Lisa Lattuca author of a major work on interdisciplinarity in the academy
2. Associate Provost for Academic Operations initiating planning efforts for INDS coordination.
3. Administration, in collaboration with FAP, is working on the details of a Faculty Excellence Initiative that includes eight specific commitments to the faculty in an effort to increase transparency and flexibility in faculty allocation of their time.
4. The first College workshop has been scheduled (September 15-16, 2008, Facilitator: Dr. Joann Moody) for faculty search committees and Department Heads to share best practices in faculty (diversity) recruitment and retention.
5. The first nation-wide faculty COACHE survey will be administered to gauge assistant professor satisfaction. This survey provides information that can be used to understand how faculty would like to use their time – in research, teaching, and service.
6. Further discussion of best practices in writing individual contracts to explicitly set expectations and processes for evaluating/rewarding cross-disciplinary hiring.
7. Dean of the College, working with the Registrar, will gather information on self-designed majors in the past 5 years as one way of measuring student interest.

8. Ongoing conversations among the President, Provost, FAP, and relevant committees regarding the vision statement/programming in new space. These discussions will be informed by the Campus Master Plan as well as the curricular work of the Ad Hoc groups, CEP, etc.