Empowering Faculty to Build Meaningful Curricula to Enhance Student Success

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The increasing costs of college have led higher education institutions to place greater emphasis on the implementation of curricula changes that facilitate timely degree completion. Institutional barriers to timely degree completion may be found in course registration processes and course availability, program design, and university-wide resources and initiatives. Although students typically rely on faculty for such information, not all faculty are aware of these issues and university initiatives. Curricula changes and university initiatives can also fail from lack of involvement and buy-in from faculty. The purpose of this article is to describe our approach to engaging faculty in reflective and collaborative processes to raise awareness of these issues to impact curriculum design and coherence within and among the undergraduate degrees by creating a faculty learning community. The strategies used to empower faculty to discuss and initiate curricular changes include: (a) clear ownership and leadership of the process by faculty, (b) opportunities for open and minimally structured discussion about student success and university processes, (c) identification and distribution of student success data, (d) targeted cross-disciplinary review of degree plans, and (e) integration of student and advising staff perspectives to maintain focus on understanding the student experience with the programs and system. Preliminary results of our work demonstrate success in generating faculty participation and interest in the conversations, the data, and ways to refine their curricula to improve student success.

Student success, defined as clarity of institutional requirements and timely program completion, is increasingly prioritized in higher education in recognition of the creeping costs of a college degree. These priorities interact directly and indirectly with program design, which has historically been understood as the purview of the faculty and as driven by disciplinary content, faculty interests, and comparisons across the academy. However, a focus on faculty-driven course design interests is sometimes perceived as a barrier to programs that promote timely completion by students. Barriers to degree completion are often magnified in institutions with high numbers of first-generation and non-traditional students and those who have not been fully prepared for postsecondary education. Data from the U.S. Department of Education show that non-traditional students are less likely to obtain a postsecondary degree (including certificates) relative to traditional college students (Choy, 2002). The degree attainment gap among traditional and non-traditional students is especially worrisome because the number of non-traditional students in higher education continues to increase (Radford, Cominole, & Skomsvold, 2015). It is therefore essential that all members of the academy work together to promote student success, particularly in the context of program completion and timely graduation, and especially at institutions that serve first-generation and non-traditional students.

In this article, we describe our approach to creating a faculty learning community (FLC) to engage and empower faculty in reflective and collaborative processes to raise awareness of curricular and institutional issues that could impact students in attaining degrees. Specifically, we sought to raise faculty awareness of how to improve curricular design and coherence within and among degree programs to positively impact students' time-to-completion. We implemented a faculty-driven process that is (a) enriched by data; (b) involves cross-disciplinary/cross-functionality conversation and review of degree plans; and (c) includes the integration of student, faculty, and college advisors' perspectives within the curricular coherence process. Preliminary results of our work have demonstrated success in generating faculty participation and interest in this initiative as well as taking concrete actions that promote curricular coherence. Before we discuss our approach and experience of increasing faculty intentionality of revising their curriculum to promote student success, we first provide a brief description of the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) and the college in which we implemented the initiative.

Institutional Context

UHD is a comprehensive 4-year university offering bachelor's degrees in 44 areas of study and eight master's degrees. It is located in the heart of downtown Houston and serves a diverse student population of over 14,000 students (University of Houston Downtown, 2019). UHD is classified as both a minority-serving institution and Hispanic-serving institution. UHD is a commuter school with no student dormitory and a sizeable portion (32%) of courses offered online. UHD serves many non-traditional students who differ from traditional student populations in several ways. For example, at UHD, undergraduate students tend to be older (M age = 26.7 years) and approximately half are enrolled part time (i.e., fewer than 12 hours per

semester). Because many UHD students are enrolled part time, one consistent challenge for the college is ensuring that students graduate within the 6-year window identified as the target for most state and national data reporting. Most recent data suggest that UHD's 6-year graduation rate of the "first-time-in-college" cohort (admitted Fall 2012) is 20% (University of Houston Downtown, 2019). Within the past few years, student enrollment has increased and is anticipated to continue increasing due in large part to the Texas's new 60×30 plan (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2015), in which one of the primary goals is that at least 60% of Texans between the ages of 25 and 34 will have a certificate or degree by 2030.

UHD is comprised of five colleges: Marilyn Davies College of Business, College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), College of Public Service, College of Sciences & Technology, and University College. The initiative described in this paper is focused in CHSS, which has approximately 2,681 majors in 12 undergraduate degree plans and three graduate programs (University of Houston Downtown, 2019). CHSS also teaches most of the courses in the core curriculum outside of science and math. Among the five colleges, CHSS is second highest in the number of baccalaureate degrees conferred.

Barriers to Student Success at UHD

Faculty are dedicated to student success, which is typically measured by time-to-degree completion and acquisition of degree-specific skills and knowledge. Our experience is that some faculty believe those measures may generate opposing tensions. Thus, we have heard colleagues express concern that prioritizing getting students through the degree plan may result in reducing content coverage of courses and, therefore, the acquisition of knowledge. Such a sentiment is not unique, as concerns with content coverage is a common topic of discussion when new initiatives are introduced as part of curricular revisions (Haas & Keeley, 1998, Martell, 2005).

Related issues that could further produce tension among faculty when considering curricular redesign are enrollment and retention strategies, which are dominant themes at UHD and the academy as a whole. For example, a discussion on possibly adding another required course to a degree plan is typically followed by a discussion on whether or not students will be less likely to choose that degree plan, given that they may perceive it as another obstacle towards completion. The complexity of these institutional challenges and opportunities is often the focus of regular conversations among administrators and possible solutions that require collaboration with faculty. However, those solutions may be conveyed to faculty as part of a well-developed, predetermined agenda to solve a problem that faculty did not even realize existed. This gap between administrative ideas and needs and faculty capacity and interest can result in lack of enthusiasm from faculty, poorly executed responses, and ineffective solutions. The challenges are compounded if those issues are presented as time-sensitive and reactive, especially at institutions with both high teaching and service loads. (The UHD teaching load is seven courses across each academic year.) As such, faculty resistance to curricular changes could also be due in part to the manifestation of legitimate concerns about what appear to be hasty administrative decisions without consideration of the time required to implement.

Engaging and Empowering Faculty in Curricular Coherence at UHD Using Faculty Learning Communities

Many initiatives and innovations in higher education fail in large part due to lack of involvement and buy-in from key constituents (Levine, 1994). Indeed, research suggests that securing faculty buy-in is a key ingredient to increase faculty engagement in student success initiatives such as first-year programs, program assessment, and expansion of online course offerings (e.g., Lederman & McKenzie, 2017; Sujitparapitaya 2014; Tinto, 2012).

However, another reason that initiatives—especially those pertaining to curricular changes—fail is faculty's sense that their control of the curriculum is being challenged (Sandler, 1992) or simply from a lack of sufficient evidence that administrative proposals will benefit students. Overcoming curricular-change resistance therefore requires sustained engagement from faculty that moves from the bottom up and invites faculty to lead and own the process (Gardner, 2017; Sandler, 1992).

CHSS faculty have been rethinking and redesigning curriculum during the past few years. Some have been more effective than others in reducing the number of required hours or maximizing use of current faculty resources. Some redesigns have resulted in new classes being added to the curriculum to better prepare students for use of their degrees after they finish (i.e., enhance their marketable skills). However, some of these changes have created additional, unexpected challenges for students such as availability of courses due to limited staffing or lack of timely course rotations. Furthermore, these changes have largely been discussed only among faculty in a particular discipline even though knowledge of the process, success, and pitfalls of implementing the changes could benefit other disciplines as well.

To bridge the knowledge gap of the best practices of curricular redesign, we created a faculty learning community (FLC) to address this issue (Cox, 2004). FLCs comprise a small group of faculty who can be

from the same or different disciplines and meet periodically to discuss pedagogical issues and bolster their professional development. Through rich interactions with engaged faculty, FLCs have been used effectively to implement a variety of initiatives in higher education such as outcome assessments (Schlitz et al., 2009), online teaching (Horvitz & Beach, 2011), and service learning (Furco & Moely, 2012), which have improved student learning. In addition, participating faculty members also benefit from the experience, as they have reported positive outcomes such as an increased sense of community and conceptualizations of teaching and learning (Richlin & Cox, 2004; Furco & Moely, 2012). The effectiveness of FLCs thus made it an appealing framework by which we could gather faculty buy-in on our project on curricular redesign.

To ensure that all stakeholders were represented, we asked department chairs to invite each degree coordinator—typically a senior (i.e., tenured) faculty and another faculty member in that discipline—to participate in the process. We encouraged selection of newer faculty members as the second representative, as it would quickly increase their knowledge of how curricula issues and student success are intertwined. We told the selected faculty that the workshop was part of a grant about program review (which had already been discussed in the college several times in the past year), but in the e-mail invite, we clearly stated that this is a faculty-driven project. A nominal stipend was provided to each faculty member for their participation in the initiative.

We conducted two workshops with faculty to discuss issues regarding curricular changes. The primary purpose of the first meeting was to obtain buy-in from key constituents (i.e., program faculty) for the program. Our approach was to provide faculty with data on the degree programs in their college, hoping that some of those data would help emphasize the need for curricular changes. The second meeting served to identify concrete plans to enhance curriculum coherence and share best practices among different degree plans on redesign strategies.

Workshop 1: Obtaining Buy-In from Key Constituents

The agenda for our first workshop was as follows: (a) explain our grant project, (b) clarify that we expected no specific actions from any program other than participation in conversation and review, (c) present data about CHSS students and programs that we had gathered, and (d) get input on a survey to send to CHSS majors regarding their degree.

Data collection. In the past few years, the institution has begun to develop strategies to connect institutional priorities such as articulation of transfer hours, community college partnerships, predictable course offering rotations, and timely completion of our faculty-driven curriculum review process. However, unless one serves on a committee that works on these issues, faculty are not kept abreast of these endeavors. In addition, faculty often are not familiar with or do not have access to data on other variables that affect student success, such as registration processes, use of waivers, and university-wide resources and initiatives related to recruitment, enrollment, and retention. In some cases, they may not be current on the larger program structures and issues in their own disciplines like course availability, mode of instruction, and course rotations. One result of this lack of awareness can be perceived tension between institutional priorities related to timely graduation, pass rates, and enrollment strategies (often top-down from administration) and curricular (re)design (bottom-up from faculty). Finding a balance between institutional efficiencies and academic best practice and program rigor requires effective communication of priorities by all parties to best meet the needs of students. As such, we thought it was paramount that we identified and distributed student success data from UHD institutional research and advising staff to support the arguments in favor of curricular changes.

Prior to our first meeting, we gathered data for each of the 12 degree programs via three sources: (a) institutional research division, (b) survey of all CHSS full-time program faculty, and (c) survey of advisors. Coordinating with our associate dean and the institutional research office, we identified key student success variables for consideration. For each degree plan, we obtained the following information: (a) numbers of majors, (b) number of waivers per year, (c) average student credit hours at graduation, and (d) coursework (i.e., required vs. free-elective). For CHSS as a whole, we obtained data on numbers of transfer students vs. first-time-in-college students (FTICs). We also retrieved data on the amount of debt students have accumulated at graduation because the time-to-degree completion is inextricably linked to educational costs. (Of course, student debt, per se, underestimates the cost of a delayed graduation, as it does not consider the amount of lost wages a student would have earned had the student graduated and started working earlier in a position that requires a bachelor's degree.)

To gauge faculty perception of the transparency (i.e., courses required to complete the degree) and coherence (i.e., students' understanding of why a certain course is required or why they are required in a certain sequence) of their degree plans, all tenured and tenure-track faculty teaching a degree plan completed a survey (Appendix A). Recognizing the importance of advisors in guiding students to select courses, majors, and schedules, we also created a survey for our college advising staff (Appendix

Figure 1
Comparison Between Advisor and Faculty Perceptions of the Transparency and Coherence of Their Degree Plans
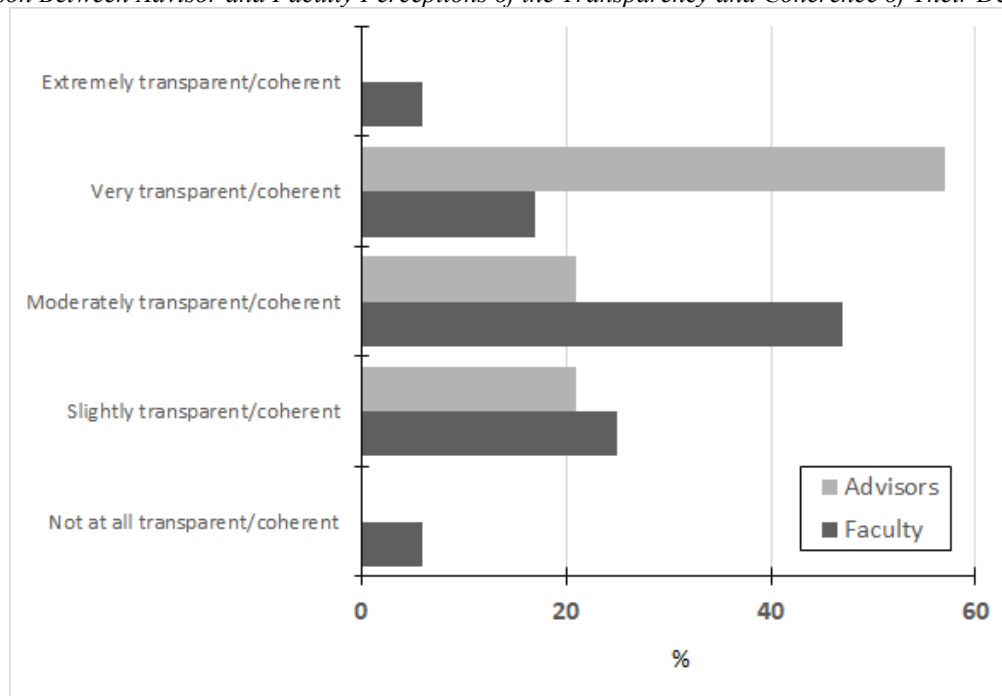
Note. The dark gray bar reflects data from faculty who evaluated their own degree plan. The light gray bar shows data from the collective advisor response.

B). The questions for advisors were largely the same as those directed toward faculty, which allowed us to compare advisors' responses to those of faculty. We also asked advisors to describe issues frequently encountered by students and make recommendations for improvement of programs that we could share with faculty. Realizing that the advising staff is understaffed and overworked, we thought that it would be more efficient for the advisors to meet and discuss the survey questions, and then one advisor from the advising staff complete the survey on behalf of the whole group, rather than each advisor individually completing the same survey. Each advisor received a gift card for their participation. All surveys were administered through Qualtrics and were approved by the University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Student success data. For brevity, we report only the most relevant data to this paper. The full data are available from the authors upon request. Among student success data, faculty found the two data points most striking: (a) the average student debt at UHD is $29,001, which is comparable to that of the state average ($30,516; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2018); and (b) students graduate with an average of 153 credit hours, which is 33 credits more than the requisite 120.

Perception of transparency and coherence of degree plan by advisors and faculty. Overall, 39% of CHSS full-time faculty completed the survey in its entirety, with faculty representing all but two of the degree plans. It is important to note that the somewhat low response rate by faculty introduces the possibility that our results are, in part, affected by response bias. It is possible that faculty who were more interested in and had more knowledge of their degree plan were more likely to respond. Almost all faculty respondents (97%) indicated that they were at least moderately familiar with their discipline's degree plan, with 56% indicating that they were very or extremely familiar. Additionally, most faculty respondents (42%) indicated that they discussed their degree plan with other faculty in their discipline once a year, with 28% having such a discussion less than once a year. With respect to transparency and coherence of CHSS degree plans, only 23% of faculty rated their degree plan as being either very or extremely transparent/coherent. Similarly, 31% of faculty thought that their degree plan was either slightly or not at all transparent/coherent. However, the collective advisor response to this question stands in contrast to the faculty perceptions. Figure 1 includes a comparison of advisor and faculty perceptions. Data from faculty and advisors revealed discrepancies in the perceived transparency of the degree plans. Advisors thought that 57% of the degree plans were

very or extremely transparent/coherent and only 21% of degree plans could be described as slightly or not at all transparent/coherent. Faculty, on the other hand, appeared to feel that their degree plans were less transparent than advisors. This discrepancy, which is seemingly counterintuitive, could be due to the different expectations faculty and advisors had about degree plans in a couple of ways. It is possible that faculty expect very few questions regarding their degree plan if the requirements are transparent/coherent, but advisors, given their experience, might expect that students will invariably have some questions about requirements, regardless of clarity of the documented program. Another possibility is that faculty might view the question of transparency with respect to a larger audience, in the context of relevance of the degree or usefulness of the degree content, whereas advisors view it from the student process perspective. We did not have an opportunity to follow up on this finding but have added it to our future plans.

The advisors also provided comments on various aspects of the CHSS degree plans. These data formed the basis for our next strategy: giving faculty time to discuss issues and feedback from advisors. We share some of the comments next and later report how these were subsequently taken up by the faculty in program review:

- "Not clear on placement options and purpose of degree outcome not clear. Students do not understand if it's a professional program or academic program." (Spanish faculty)
- "Lack of transparency in course titles such as Psychology 4395 - Special Projects"
- "The Spanish program degree plan could be improved by looking at course availability, new courses, course rotation, student access to faculty, concentration/tracks towards career."

Discussions during workshop. The workshop was held toward the middle of the fall academic semester. We had strong attendance at the workshop, with 17 of 24 program representatives in attendance from 11 of our 12 undergraduate programs. After providing a brief background on the grant, we spent about 20 minutes sharing the aforementioned data gathered for this meeting. The average student debt was particularly surprising to faculty members because UHD's tuition was the fourth lowest among 4-year institutions in the state. Faculty were also surprised to learn that there was a large variance in the number of required courses across different degree plans. For example, Spanish and communication studies majors had to take more than 20 courses in the discipline, whereas history and philosophy majors had fewer than nine required courses. Sharing these data created a lively discussion among faculty on the possibility of streamlining their degree plans.

During the discussions, faculty generated new data questions, additional questions relevant to curricular redesign, and offered suggestions to one another. Faculty also familiarized themselves with colleagues from different disciplines in an environment that was less formal than environments in which they typically see one another (e.g., college assembly). Some of the fruitful questions for discussion that faculty generated included course numbering and student assumptions about differences among lower-level (i.e., 1000- and 2000-level) and upper-level (i.e., 3000- and 4000-level) courses, as well as implications of the course numbering for articulations with partner community colleges. Faculty also asked questions regarding the accuracy of the 153 credit hour average for graduates, whether or not we could get the average number of credit hours within each major, if students with high credit hour counts had gone through advising prior to registration, and how many students were dropping classes; we did not have answers but committed to providing answers in a follow-up document that we sent out a month later, which included a request for a future meeting to take place two months after the initial meeting.

The last agenda item for the meeting was to review a survey intended for our majors regarding their experience with degree plans, registration, advising, and institutional processes. We introduced a draft and once again opened the floor for comments. By the end of the session, we had a well-vetted revision of the survey with enthusiasm for the plan from program faculty. Data from this survey are discussed later in the Integration of Student Perspectives section.

The lively conversation at our first workshop was a powerful reminder that faculty, when given the time and opportunity, willingly engage issues and data that can lead to improvements for their students and the educational process. We believe this was due in large part to the lack of boundaries for the meeting and therefore faculty felt comfortable freely expressing their opinions. Our perception of success was reinforced by data from a follow-up survey we conducted after the second workshop, which we describe later in the section Impact of FLC on Curricular Redesign: Faculty Experiences and Implementation.

Workshop 2: Identifying Action Plans and Sharing Best Practices on Curricular Redesign

Whereas the main objective of the first workshop was to familiarize faculty with the purpose of the grant to implement curricular redesign, we envisioned the second workshop to serve as a hands-on opportunity for faculty to evaluate their own and other program degree plans and take concrete actions toward curricular redesign. The agenda consisted of two major components: (a) a whole group discussion among

attendees and (b) small cross-disciplinary group discussions in which faculty reviewed the degree plan from another program and gave feedback. The latter activity was inspired by two of our team members who have spent several years on the University Curriculum Committee and, in doing so, recognized the many variations in degree plan structures and use of labels. The exposure to those options broadened their understanding of curriculum development; thus, we decided to introduce targeted cross-disciplinary review of CHSS degree plans as a technique to deepen faculty understanding of curriculum-related issues.

We held the workshop before the beginning of the spring semester, approximately nine weeks after the first workshop. Our rationale for having the second workshop somewhat close in time to the first workshop was to capitalize on the momentum and spirit of faculty engaging in curricular redesign from the first workshop. A secondary reason was that we felt that, had we conducted the workshop after the semester began, faculty would be preoccupied with semester start-up activities and unavailable until the middle of the semester. We invited the same program representatives who participated in the first workshop during the previous fall semester. Given the pre-semester meeting time, attendance at this workshop was a bit lower with 14 of 24 faculty and 9 of 12 programs represented.

Cross-disciplinary review of degree plans. Our team generated two lists of questions regarding curriculum design; one set to discuss as an entire group and the other to be discussed in subgroups (see Appendices C and D, respectively). The lists were sent to workshop participants prior to the meeting to elicit input. The questions were broad and applied to the majority (if not all) of the degrees, such as if (a) courses listed as preparatory requirements actually were preparatory, (b) more or fewer prerequisites should be required, and (c) required courses were offered often enough to meet student demands. After an extended discussion of these questions, we created subgroups that included members from different disciplines and a UHD Teagle member to help facilitate discussion.

The subgroup discussions mimicked the whole group discussion except that participants focused more on the nuances of their degree plans (e.g., reviewing requirements for upper-level and lower-level electives, discussing if courses that were part of the same section of the degree plan shared commonalities, deciding whether or not course titles were transparent). Similar to the first workshop, faculty at the second workshop engaged actively and directly with curricula issues. Overall, the experience was positive, as evidenced in responses to the post-workshop questionnaire we disseminated to faculty three months later.

Impact of FLC on Curricular Redesign: Faculty Experiences and Implementation

We administered a Qualtrics survey to faculty to provide feedback about the two workshops, to report any changes they made to their degree plans or were planning to make, and whether or not they shared information from the two workshops with other faculty in their discipline (Appendix E). In addition, we also asked about their willingness to participate in future workshops. Eighteen of 24 faculty representatives attended at least one of the two meetings, and 16 of them completed the second survey. Overall, the results suggest that these two workshops had positive impacts for each discipline. Specifically, 87% of respondents indicated that they shared information they learned from the workshops with other faculty in their discipline. Equally important, the majority (69%) of faculty respondents indicated that they would participate in another workshop discussing curricular issues, with another 25% indicating that they would consider attending another workshop. Comments regarding the two workshops were likewise positive. For example, one faculty member noted:

> It was useful to work through my program's degree plan with colleagues from other departments and to review degree plans from other areas. Both helped me see our plan's current strengths and weaknesses. The experience also informed conversations with colleagues in my area around updating our degree plan.

Thus, taken together, these data suggest that faculty from different disciplines benefited from cross-disciplinary review and discussion about degree plans.

In addition to subjective, self-reported data about the positive experience of the workshops, more telling were the responses and evidence indicating faculty acted on data and input from colleagues provided during the workshops. Disciplines changed the title of their courses to make them more coherent and descriptive. For example, the psychology degree plan required a course titled Special Projects that was not well understood by students and was discussed during the workshop. The psychology faculty subsequently submitted a request to change the title of the course to Research Experience in Psychology. The English faculty revised many of their course titles to eliminate uninformative content (e.g., "studies in" openings) to better highlight the unique content of the course.

In addition to making courses more transparent and cohesive, efforts were also made to streamline degree plans by reducing the number of required courses students had to take. Both the communication studies and Spanish faculty completely revised their degree plans to reduce the number of required courses by

Table 1
Percentage of Students Who Indicated if They Had Their Coursework Mapped for Graduation and Ease of
Registering for Classes and Finding the Class Schedule

	Coursework mapped for graduation	Registration and class schedule easy to find
Strongly agree	36	39
Agree	43	48
Neither agree nor disagree	14	8
Disagree	6	5
Strongly disagree	2	1

almost half and identified a rotation of courses to ensure availability. The Spanish faculty noted that increasing the electives options will encourage students to get another major or minor that would make their Spanish degree more marketable.

Integration of Student Perspectives

Interactions with students provide faculty with cursory insight into some of their students' experiences and knowledge of their curriculum. However, this insight could be skewed by sampling bias, as not all students who encounter obstacles will seek faculty help. Thus, most faculty often do not know how most of their students view or understand the larger program or university experience. Therefore, in hopes of attaining a more representative sample of students' experiences, we developed a survey (Appendix E) for majors in the college to elicit their perspectives. To increase program faculty involvement, we shared our draft survey with the representatives from each program in the FLC at the data workshop (Workshop #1), as described earlier. The faculty were interested in contributing to the survey and the information it could provide. Some offered suggestions for clarification of questions as well as new content such as how often students check their university-provided e-mail address, as that is the most common method faculty use to contact students.

Data collection process. The survey was administered using Qualtrics over the course of approximately four months. The link to the survey was disseminated using two methods: (a) an e-mail from one of our team members and (b) a text message. Students were told that participation in the survey made them eligible to receive one of 15 Amazon gift cards for $25.00 that were part of a raffle. The survey was sent out to 2,079 students via e-mail and 871 students via text message. (The number of students receiving the survey via text message was lower due to the limited number of valid phone numbers on file.) Students who received the survey via text message were a subset of those who received them by e-mail; thus, all students received the survey through at least one medium.

Of the students who received the survey, 163 (8%) completed almost all of the survey. Given the low response rate, these results could reflect response bias and should be interpreted with some caution; thus, we avoid presenting inferential statistics.[1] With the respondents' permission, the University's Institutional Effectiveness office provided us with students' basic academic information, namely the number of credits they had earned as of the end of the semester in which they completed the survey.

Characteristics of respondents. The mean age of respondents was 27 (SD = 8.7 years). Eighty-three percent identified as female and the remaining identifying as male. The respondents were largely upper-level students, with 25% classified as juniors and 52% as seniors based on the number of total credit hours they earned at the end of the semester in which they took the survey. Fourteen percent were sophomores and 9% were freshmen. Slightly more than half (56%) were transfer students.

Perception of degree plan. The vast majority of students indicated that they either agreed (49%) or strongly agreed (38%) that their degree requirements were easy to understand. On the other hand, 9% said they were undecided and 4% disagreed that their degree requirements were easy to understand. As shown in Table 1, the majority of students had their courses required for graduation mapped and felt that the registration procedure and class schedule were easy to find. Seventy-five percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed that having a course rotation would be useful (22% were undecided and 4% disagreed). Our data also show that students relied heavily on course descriptions, as evidenced by 64% of respondents indicating that they always consulted them during course registrations and another 30% saying they sometimes consulted them.

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[1] In retrospect, we believe that the response rate could have been higher had we solicited the assistance of program coordinators to disseminate (or foreshadow the receipt of) the survey to their majors who would be more familiar with their program coordinator than one of the Teagle team members. This approach was complicated by some of the set-up for tracking in the Qualtrics survey.

These results can reinforce effective current processes or plans, such as those pertaining to registration and scheduling. Analysis of these data can also elicit suggestions for where to direct faculty and administrator attention. For example, CHSS has long discussed making rotations available to students but we have not done so systematically. Indeed, having a course rotation schedule could reduce the number of waivers students require, as our survey showed that 26% of students have requested at least one waiver. Also, with many students relying on course descriptions when considering registering for prospective courses, these data suggest that faculty should be mindful of whether or not their course descriptions are both accurate and transparent to students.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Our work so far supports the idea that successful and meaningful curricular review and (re)design requires a faculty-driven approach that is supported by strong communication with upper administration and faculty and includes the dissemination of relevant data. Gathering data from faculty, students, and advisors along with structured opportunities for discussion and collaboration should be viewed as the necessary catalysts to drive curricular change. An agenda that successfully addresses curriculum redesign must fundamentally be a faculty-driven process, allowing sufficient time for careful review of current trends and resources. However, if part of the goal is to address institutional needs, administrators can provide valuable insight into big-picture issues such as:

- regional demographics and employment trends;
- development of new programs at local institutions;
- government or university system initiatives for new programs, program review, and etc.;
- program enrollment patterns;
- institutional enrollment goals (and source of those targets if known—e.g., transfers from certain universities, freshmen, etc.); and
- demographics and characteristics of incoming students that includes both their academic and non-academic experiences. Indeed, research suggest that the experiences of first-generation college students (Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996), non-traditional college students (Johnson, Taasoobshirazi, Clark, Howell, & Breen, 2016), and underrepresented ethnic minorities in higher education (Enger, Howerton, & Cobbs, 1994) differ from their traditional college student and nonethnic minority counterparts and have been documented to hinder academic success.

Thus, engaging in curricular redesign requires a comprehensive approach. For example, if the number of majors in a program has been dropping for several years, there may be explanations beyond the curriculum itself such as similar programs being introduced at local institutions, changes in feeder program requirements, or failure to offer required courses at peak times. Many of these factors fall outside the scope of common faculty knowledge (or require access to data systems that faculty do not use); however, if given such information, faculty could review curriculum to mitigate or minimize the impact. Such information should be the focus of conversations between administration and faculty, allowing it to be a regular part of all decision-making rather than leveraging data during crisis moments to galvanize hasty action. Administrators can say to faculty, "What can you do to help us with these issues in terms of your curriculum?"

Creating an environment in which faculty from a variety of disciplines are comfortable speaking freely empowers them to create meaningful changes. Our paper describes such a situation—based on the FLC framework, we put together a team of faculty to serve as liaisons between their program faculty and representatives from other disciplines in the service of curriculum. Paramount to our plan was presenting relevant data, creating an environment that fostered faculty willingness to engage in university-wide concerns in curricular redesign, and to encourage our administration to partner with faculty more directly and provide data regularly.

Future Directions

As part of our future work, we plan to run the student survey again to generate more data and discuss the student data more thoroughly with faculty. (We have submitted a preliminary report of the data to faculty who are participating in this initiative.) We will also hold student focus groups to identify key issues that students face as they move through degree plans as well as to understand the impact of degree plan changes made two years ago. We will fulfill another component of our plan through marketability sessions where we can have explicit conversations with students about the marketable skills gained from specific courses and degree plans. In the last few years, we have seen increasing attention to providing evidence of the value and relevance of university degrees for the workplace as well as to the cost and efficiency of the educational experience for the student and institution (Bair, 2019; Torrecilha, 2019).

Finally, an important part or our final work is to generate a document including best practices for curricular redesign to disseminate the lessons learned from this project to other colleges at UHD. We plan

to have key faculty provide input and then present the document to the University Curriculum Committee. The University Curriculum Committee can then endorse and disseminate some of the practices as successful strategies for curricular redesign across our institution.

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