Notes from Immersion Program Conversation  
July 15 2015 - Planning Retreat

Initial Discussion:
- We launched with an exploratory conversation about what is an open lab.
- We talked about this being conceptual; focus on the word immersion, rather than on lab
- Refer to the profile of the open lab concept.
- Would have partnerships with real-world experiences and others.
- Students need to have the opportunity to envision & create what their immersion should look like.
- Students need to be able to craft a vision of what they need; they need to shape and craft their experience. It is their own choice...their own journey
- How to prepare them for immersion...they need to have a foundational experience
- We need to step students through a developmental process that prepares them...meet them where they are...help them get to the next level of development; meet them where they are
- Supporting students through a process of self-discovery
- Construct of helping people prepare for success
- Prepare for professional success with soft skills; foundational skill development needs to be a focus
- What is going to support students being able to engage in a sense of place; an experience that students have...
- How do we create a sense of place to this concept? How do we bring together a project environment that requires diverse disciplines to achieve the project outcomes. We need people to have priorities shifted and capacity created by prioritizing.
- Use First Year Seminar to introduce more of an interdisciplinary model; life's big questions kind of approach.
- Do we need a cultural shift to have students engage more in the support and operation of the university.
- Are we talking about a philosophy that brings the interdis & tool sets together to bring this to fruition? It creates an opportunity for inroads; an open system so that it transcends disciplines.
- We need to prepare students to seek this out and immerse themselves.
- We need to take our basic elements to build compounds.
- People need to be able to get their hands around....and we need to frame it in a way that people can see themselves.
- We need to leverage an e-porfolio model (it's a tool), a reflective process.
- This is journey that students need to take...that we all need to take. Places that you stop along the way.
- Move them through Blooms Taxonomy of learning.
- How do we prepare them to make new connections; to build social skills;
• Where do the graduate students fit into all of this?
• We can use this to keep them engaged and helping the next generation coming up; it requires time, good will.
• We need to expand orientation to present these concepts; to set the stage for students.
• We need to build off of first-class; build more of a community
• We need to remember that this is a cross-institutional initiative; more than just academic interdisciplinary.
• We need to have projects that are as reflective of 'real life' as they can be. We could focus more on building & contributing to PSU. They could help build this.
• We are all in this together with students; this more than just 'doing' this for students.

Wednesday afternoon:
What is Open Lab?
• Blurring the boundaries between the university and industry.
• Integrating in and out of class environment. Reinforcing each other.
• Put into practice what they’re learning in the classroom. Work/study, internships, other ways they can earn their college expenses.
• Teaching moves into mentoring and collaborating with entities and the problems they have.
• Practical experience. Not just theoretical.
• Leadership and team building experiences.
• Incorporating this into every classroom. Every course. What does that mean for “credits?”
• Faculty are expected to engage in the marketplace

Common course on what “interdisciplinary” means. Required component of service learning and academic research.

Thursday morning...
Student experience should include ...
What we need to have is ...
What

Integrative learning and research environment.
Reduce barriers between doing and learning.
Research?
Build the culture of everyone seeing their role as teacher and applied researcher.

What is needed is clearer expectations about our work. What is the accountability for departments to accomplish the goal. Annual faculty work plans. How does your work contribute to the vision? Engaged
scholarship. If you want to be a different kind of scholar that advances the mission, you can’t be penalized for it.

Stick with how faculty/staff engage the students is our task. How to communicate this immersive learning/open lab and what it means to PSU.


People. Place. Product. Can this be our framework?

The journey. Debbie as an example of that. Created her own. Ava and dining program. Journey implies movement. Projects and partners. We have made attempts at this. Courses that attempt to do this are under-enrolled. People are already tired and overburdened.

What is the outcome we’re seeking with Open Lab? Taking skills and content we’re teaching and applying it in the real world. Solve real problems. Take it out into the world. Get students, faculty, staff engaged. A place that enables cross-disciplinary work will distinguish us from others.

Bates model of purposeful work. Explore. Experience. Engage. A place that provides tools, expertise, to enable students to explore, experience and engage. + opportunities with marketplace

PSU Pursue. Partnerships. Practice. Purpose. Experiential learning. Learning is happening everywhere. We’re all educating. Learn by doing. This is already happening in many programs. Teacher education. Athletic training. More easily in direct line jobs.

Experiential education where students learn through explore/pursue their passions through mentored, real experiences with partners preparing to impact the global community.

Curricular integration?
Cross-disciplinary is missing.
Mentors and expertise is available.
Physical space.
Marketplace demand.
Ability for problem solving.
People are making inroads in community to bring in problems and puzzles.
Presence and openness so students are thinking outside their discipline.
Encountering educators at every place in their PSU experience.
Three phases of their education/experience/journey. Open lab is dabbling in your interests/passion.
Our culture dictates that students don’t do much for which they are not learning credits. “You have to make me.”
Offer a one credit experience each term. This could culminate in a capstone.

We have struggled to move out of our paradigm.
Operationalizing this philosophy.
Flipping what we can’t do to “how can we do this?”
Could students work on summer projects without additional fees?
Half credits. Full credits. How to make this a part of what a PSU education is.

Let’s figure out what and then how to make it happen.

Student business would do an excellent outcome where they’re applying everything they’ve learned.

Rate Your Mate. Contract. Evaluating each other on how well they fulfilled the contract.

Student activities tracks and building the components that we’re missing when the academic clusters.
Shared student organization space will encourage collaboration. How can more people know about what’s going on?

Action steps? We need a culture shift and build new programs. There are many programs and possibilities that many people don’t know about. We don’t have a comprehensive list in place. All the partnerships, internships, summer jobs, service experiences.

There is so much going into URSA right now. Request goes out every year for report to Trustees/ for the President’s Honor Roll/ for Carnegie report. But there is little response. Much of it comes from Provost Report and press releases. We aren’t adequately capturing student experience.
Annual reporting process is needed. We need one central reporting office/person. Too many requests from too many disparate offices.
What in your area fits in this framework? This definition of what we’re looking for.

There’s a lack of communication but not a lack of organization. We’re much more complex as an organization but we have not figured out how to communicate more effectively internally.