

Date: April 12, 2016

To: Dr. Pamela Whitten  
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

From: Other Experiential Activities Beyond the Norm Break-out Group: Bill McDonald (lead author), Eddie Watson (facilitator), Linda Bachman, Tim Burg, Melinda Camus, Katie Darby Hein, Elizabeth Osborne-Kibbe, Erin Richman, Teresa Saxton and Rahul Shrivastav.

Re: Recommendations for Achieving Excellence in Other Experiential Activities

Provost Whitten, thank you for your support of the 2016 UGA Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium. We are pleased to provide the following recommendations for your considerations.

As the “Other Experiential Activities Beyond the Norm” break-out group, our charge was to consider student experiential learning opportunities and networks outside of existing academic programs such as service learning, internships, study abroad and undergraduate research opportunities. We paid particular attention to how other academic and administrative functions across the university could promote the integration of knowledge with actions in both formal and informal settings. The following principles provided guidance to our discussions: create new opportunities within curricular and co-curricular functions of the university; maximize student’s abilities to adapt to new ways of integrative learning from across the spectrum of directed and organic learning; empower student reflection and ability to learn from their respective life experiences.

The two recommendations below are designed to provide new models for achieving excellence in other experiential activities.

1. Directed project-based student experiential learning teams. Under the direction of an approved faculty, academic administrator, or office, student teams will identify a real-world or hypothetical problem in keeping with the mission of UGA, and identify a set of tangible deliverables within a mutually agreed upon period of time. Each team will be comprised of students from diverse majors, talents, backgrounds and experiences, to ensure that multiple perspectives and needs are incorporated into team research and outcomes. As an example, one project-based student experiential learning team has agreed on finding a solution to reducing the amount of alcohol consumption on Thursday nights. A team comprised of students from social work, psychology, marketing/communications, criminal justice, business/entrepreneur and management could conduct a pilot study for reducing the amount of alcohol consumption both on and off the campus.

2. Junior/Senior Think Tank Odyssey. Invite faculty and academic staff to create integrative, mini-capstone experiences. As an example, a faculty member and/or academic administrators may create a set of experiences that prepare upperclassmen for transitioning away from the university. Students might develop a professional philosophy, explore issues related to networking in new communities, or learn methods for managing student loan debt. Another example may be a cross-disciplinary group project that allows students to develop a more personalized capstone experience that further connects the student learning experiences across their general education and major learning activities.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have follow-up questions or suggestions.