Creating an Innovation Hub: Chartering and Staffing Implementation Teams

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NEW CAMPUS DYNAMICS
Breakthrough Strategies for Innovation and Change

Overview

The charge of the Innovation Hub (IH) is to create innovations of content and delivery that maximize the impact of the institution's initiatives, programs, activities, and services to advance and enrich the experience of all students at the university.

The Innovation Hub is charged to be a collaborative venture of the university/college (U/C) to transcend the organizational boundaries inherent in a bureaucratic campus, college, divisional and departmental structure. All members of the U/C can be partners in its work as it initially focuses on the highest value opportunities resident in the five student services innovation domains and five academic affairs innovation domains that are at the core of its success for achieving desired results from both sustaining and disruptive innovation initiatives.

Regardless of the institutional level at which the initial Innovation Hub or Hubs are established, they must be staffed, resourced and have designated space for their operations. If new funds are not available, reallocation of existing resources are necessary and even desirable as it facilitates understanding that new approaches in institutional management cannot be held hostage to the present order. It also reinforces the concept that the IH is in itself a disruptive innovation and requires new approaches for helping the institution survive and thrive the external turbulence pressing for change and the internal needs to do different, differently.

Role and Scope of the Innovation Hub

The IH must be data-driven as well as creative in its efforts, which embody concepts that are both an art and a science.

The IH needs to keep its core constituency, as well as relevant others throughout the campus, involved and well-informed about what it is working on and issues surrounding its work. It should see involvement and communications efforts as core functions. The IH must also make continuous documentation of its work and outcomes a core function.

The Innovation Hub should make certain that its members and associates realize that it is advisory to the U/C executive that established it and not the final decision making group. It must also recognize that innovation and implementation are separate tasks and that being excellent in one area does not necessarily imply strength in the other area. Its job is to propose and define possibilities and defend their adoption. The actual change effort to implement the innovation that will transform the work of the U/C area requires a different team structure and a new charter for its success.

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

Innovation Hub Team Members

In addition to permanent staffing, Innovation Hub team members will be appointed on a rotating basis as their talents and interests are needed. They will serve not as a representative of their respective area but as a valued resource for advancing the innovative process. Their assignment to the IH will be seen as an integrated part of their ongoing workload and not as a voluntary committee assignment. Other institutional areas that may be impacted by the innovation also will be involved as unpaid consultants to the Hub as part of the process.

The Hub will also seek involvement from others in the university community and the larger community who might be interested in serving as team members or as advisors/consultants to the innovation process.

Hub team members and advisors initially will be appointed to one of the two work groups: Sustaining Innovations and Disruptive Innovations. Even though these work groups have divergent focal areas, the groups will work together to share their findings and consult with one another.

The Disruptive Innovation Work Group will identify emerging forces, events, trends, and opportunities and apply them to transform the areas of concern. This group will scan the horizon continually to identify potentially disruptive developments and ways to anticipate their impact on the division and the university as a whole. This group will be critical in helping the Division identify longer-term strategic trends before they are having a major impact necessitating reactive solutions. It is not necessarily the job of this work group to create disruptive innovations. However, as noted, the creation of the Innovation Hub will be seen by many as disruptive innovation.

The Sustaining Innovation Work Group will focus on innovations that will improve what is currently in place in the Division. The sustaining innovation process will identify and analyze what the real problems are, their root causes, who will be affected by the sustaining innovation, and what the innovation's end results will be. This work group will identify the processes, programs, and services that can be conducted more effectively and efficiently, which will then allow them to determine what innovations will be useful in attaining the desired objective. It is important to note that once a disruptive innovation is adopted and integrated, it will requires sustaining innovations to assure that its potential unfolds and has the intended institutional impact.

Chartering the Innovation Hub Teams

A Charter is a written document that defines the IH and its teams' mission, scope of operation, objectives, time frame, and consequences. Creating the Charter is critical for successful launching, monitoring and evaluating each IH and its team.

It is strongly recommended that the IH charter focus on the core Innovation Domains for student affairs and/or academic affairs.[1]

Core Student Affairs Innovation Domains

1. Responding to Changing Student Demographics

2. Preparing students for a Changing World

3. Integrating Effective and Adaptive Technologies

4. Creating High-Value (Out of Classroom) Student Experiences

5. Operationalizing Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose

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1. Detailed descriptions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Innovation Domains are located at the end of this document.

Core Academic Affairs Innovation Domains

1. Responding to Emerging Changes and Responsibilities in Faculty Roles
2. Integrating New Curricular Dynamics
3. Responding to Demands of Changing Pedagogy
4. Boundary Spanning Countries and Cultures of Teaching/Learning
5. Designing New Outcomes and Assessment Approaches

The Chartering Process

IH Charters are best drafted for both Hub and team efforts.

The approach that best serves the chartering process results from it being conducted in a team workshop setting where the U/C executive that established the IH presents the overall charge and clarifies expectations for its success. This sets-up the IH staff and team members for success in developing their respective charters. Just as IH staff and team members need to know what the leadership expects of them, it is also important that this be communicated to non-team members who need to know what U/C leadership expects of the IH staff and team. It must be clear to all that the IH staff and its teams have the authority, permission, and blessing of leadership/management to operate, conduct research, consider and implement change needed to achieve the expected IH and team results: the specific Innovation Domains and areas (initiatives, programs, activities, or services) on which innovation will be focused?

IH Leadership Team

The IH leadership Team will provide general oversight and direction for the Innovation Hub and its teams. Its initial task will be to determine the response to the following questions and gain the U/C senior leaders support for this venture.

What will be the expectation and roles of the U/C executive level officers, the executive who establishes the IH and the IH staff and its team members in leading the innovation process?

How will supportive institutional innovative capabilities be defined, organized, measured, and managed?
What resources will be needed, and how will they be financed?

What means will be used to communicate the innovation's intended impact?

What changes will be required in existing structures, policies, and procedures in the U?C or its divisions, colleges, and/or departments?
How will the innovation influence employee interactions and relationships?

What new skills will be required for managers, supervisors, and staff?
What training will be available to help develop them?

How will others who will be affected by the innovation be integrated into the process?
How will achievements be recognized and rewarded?

What strategies will be needed for creating and achieving constructive, win-win solutions for implementation?

What will empower employees to achieve the planned results when they are confronted with people and forces trying to maintain the status quo?

As team chartering follow this pathway, moving ahead vigorously, negotiating IH and team charters will ensure that everyone understands why the project needs to be carried out, knows what the objectives and measures of success are, and knows who is doing what with what resources.

More than this, by negotiating the Charter assertively, all parties can shape the project so that it stands a good chance of success. They can then commit wholeheartedly to the ventures success.

Negotiating Team Charters can also be useful as a way of sorting out a dysfunctional team. Objectives can be confirmed, goals structured and agreed, roles aligned, and resources can be recommitted. Finally, after fair negotiation, people can be asked to commit to the Team Charter, and can be managed appropriately.

IH Staffing

The IH requires a full-time executive leader and full-time Operations Team as support staff for ensuring that the core activities of the IH are carried out effectively, efficiently and on time. The Operations Team will be responsible for: directing, managing and conducting recruiting and training of team leaders and team members; documenting the IH processes and proceedings; assessing and reporting outcomes; and for ensuring accurate and timely communications within the IH and, as appropriate, to the campus.

Each Innovation Domain requires an executive leaders and team members, whose duties include this assignment as part of their workload. The outcomes designated for attainment in these Innovation Domains will help to determine the parameters for staff engagement.

It is recommended that the initial approach most desirable would be to start with creating one or, at the most, two U/C Innovation Hubs on a divisional level: student affairs division and/or academic affairs division. We recommend starting with student affairs and its core domains as the initial IH and also serving as the U/C demonstration model for further development on the institution.

Innovation Domain Team Charter Sections

A. **Team purpose:** This answers the question, why is this Innovation Domain Team being created? The purpose statement should let everyone know what will be different when this team's work is done.

B. **Authority and boundaries:** Thinking through the scope helps to define the powers of the team and what boundaries are being set. It ensures the organizational objectives; policies and procedures (OOs) are not hijacked by personal preferences (PPs).

C. **Membership and roles:** Team leader and members can be listed individual or by selection criteria. The IH hub professional that will be linked to the team also needs to be included in this process.

D. **Deliverables:** This provides an opportunity to begin with the end in mind. This is where the IH leader can work with Division's Vice President and Senior Team to establish goals for the teams to achieve. The goals need to be clearly defined. By defining the end result, the magnitude of the change becomes evident

E. **Resources:** The supporting resources almost always include people, space, and financial resources that will be used to support the work of the team.

F. **Reporting:** This defines how the team will work with the Operations Team for communicating its progress to the Vice President and IH leader, the Senior Team, the student development division and the campus at large. The reporting should include how team activities are going, results attained as well as hurdles being faced, The IH leader and the Operating Team will establish frequency of reporting and content.

G. **Duration and time commitment:** The amount of time the team will be working together needs to be documented. Another aspect to be considered is the estimated amount of time that will be dedicated weekly/monthly.

H. **Team operations:** This section outlines how the team will operate on a day-to-day basis. This can be detailed or as minimal as the situation warrants. It may be comprehensive and detailed for a long-duration team, or limited to a few bullet points in a team that is expected to have a short life.

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

Core Student Affairs Innovation Domains

1. **Responding to Changing Student Demographics Team**
   There is an increasingly wider spectrum of students on campus as the millennial generation graduates and the digital generation arrives. There are also differences in the other generations of students who enroll as graduate and professional students as well as those who are hybrid and e-learners. Differences also occur in the various student segments such as traditional undergraduate students who enroll straight from high school to college, resident and commuter students, transfer and adult student, international students, veterans, male and females, full time and part time, sexual orientation, students with disabilities, economic status, and first in family to attend college. Extrapolation or generalization from anecdotal and personal experiences is not a substitute for research on our student body especially given the increasing diversity and differences they represent.

   In attempting to understand our students and their expectations we recognize that we it on an enormous warehouse of data about our students' backgrounds and performance collected from a myriad of sources but not integrated and analyzed for decision-making and programming. Additional valuable ways of collecting information for decision-making include academic research and studies, market research, faculty and staff insights, student interviews, and student assessment of the services they use and their university experiences.

   Innovation in this area is critical for making decisions about our current students. We must be more innovative in evaluating the initiatives, programs, activities, and services we provide in order to assess their effectiveness and efficiency, understand needs for modifications or elimination, and determine new efforts.

2. **Preparing Students for a Changing World Team**
   Educating Students about the Changing World and How to Prepare For It.
   This domain focuses on designing co-curricular experiences that build students' skills and competencies to lead productive, successful lives. The division is well-equipped to provide opportunities to learn critical skills such as ethical development, character formation, critical thinking, judgment, and leadership. Most institutions have access to world-recognized leaders and talent that can be tapped to offer a myriad of perspectives about what their students should be learning, pathways for professional development, and growth areas to anticipate. In that regard, think of the campus as the center of an even larger campus – the geographical area in which it is located. Doing so will open the door to many opportunities for enriching the student experience. Embracing this concept in new and exciting ways can lead to providing significant innovation for students and for the university.

   Very important in this domain is preparing student for the changing world of work. This domain also focuses on designing co-curricular experiences that build students' skills and competencies including attention to ethical development, character formation, critical thinking, judgment, and leadership. We have recommended that the initial focus in this area be on the changing world of work and its implication for initiatives both in and out of the classroom.

3. **Integrating Effective and Adaptive Technologies Team**
   This domain focuses on increasing the effectiveness of service delivery through the use of current and emerging technologies. We need to understand how our students use technology now and create an infrastructure to allow continual improvement as technologies and our students change. There are innovative opportunities for role reversal if students are engaged to teach divisional staff how to tap into the emerging technologies that the students intuitively embrace and use. Access to technology is only a few clicks away and can provide resources to engage as the division creates innovations in this area.

4. **Creating High-Value (Out-of-Classroom) Student Experiences Team**
   This domain focuses on creating a campus experience that integrates the persistence analytics of approachability, accessibility, affordability, associability, applicability, attainability, and quality. We need to understand the reasons students choose our university and then why they remain to graduate or leave to go elsewhere. As we understand these dynamics and realities, the division can play a strong partnership role in addressing gaps and providing clear supportive pathways for helping students achieve their goals in a timely fashion and bonding with the university.

5. **Operationalizing Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose Team**
   This domain focuses on operationalizing the promise inherent in our mission and vision statements to provide a purposeful, directional, and transformational education experience for all students. Students should be able to understand their gifts and talents, learn how to direct them in service of the common good, and graduate with an understanding that continuing their search for meaning and purpose will be enriched as they engage in the important work of repairing the world.

Core Academic Affairs Innovation Domains

The five domains indicated below represent the core academic areas that institutions need to address for innovation and change. The implications addressed relate specifically to the objective of educating students attending academic institutions during the next 8-10 years.

1. **Responding to Emerging Changes and Responsibilities in Faculty Roles**
   How faculty activities related to teaching are divided up and then coordinated is the topic with which this domain is concerned.. While in the past, the key faculty roles and responsibilities included three areas: research, teaching and service. Most faculty who received their PhD were trained in their disciplines and to conduct research but relatively little attention was given to developing their abilities to effectively deliver course content to students. Increasingly, schools are adopting a more diverse hiring process and dividing up the roles and responsibilities which had been allocated collectively to a single tenure-track faculty member across several individuals: tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, full-time lecturers, part-time or adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistants.

   Presently, many classes are taught by non-tenure track faculty who have practical experience that helps to provide meaningful examples for students. However, the definition of course content is often set forth by tenured faculty who are responsible for the development of curriculum content. Still other non-tenure track faculty are managing centers of excellence and labs as well as developing internship or practicum opportunities for students. Some tenure track faculty now focus the large majority of their time to research and have very little responsibility placed on them in the area of teaching.

   Furthermore, as schools develop distance learning programs, there are additional roles in support of the technology that has taken on an ever-increasing role in the delivery of educational content, be it in the classroom or online. These are only a few of the changes that require different roles and skills for faculty, the key insight is that much more is being asked of faculty and the most frequent response is to develop specialists for different roles. Then, the efforts of these individuals that have become more specialized must now be coordinated.

2. **Integrating New Curricular Dynamics**
   This domain focuses on how to respond to these very complex, competing forces in the development of coherent, well designed curricula both within classes but also across majors and colleges within academic institutions and across institutions as well. Whereas in the past (and even today) faculty had freedom in developing course content which fell under the purview of "academic freedom", today there exist greater external pressures from students (the customers), the government (financiers), and employers regarding which material should be taught. This challenges the notion of "academic freedom" and also is made more difficult by the diversity of (and at time conflicting) interests of those exerting influence.

   Students' greater diversity challenges faculty to develop curricula that respond to the needs of each and every student in the class—be it in the classroom or online—and older students or those who must work during college often have conflicting obligations that necessitate building greater flexibility into the curricula. Technology now supports course content that heretofore was unimaginable. However, faculty must develop expertise in the technology to better incorporate it into the curricula.

   Many students are obtaining their education piecemeal from several institutions. This introduces challenges as to how to better compare classes previously taken at another college to those provided at "our" university. The result is greater requests for comparability on the part of the students. The government which is footing the bill or subsidizing education through low-rate loans, currently is also exerting pressure on schools to graduate students as quickly as possible. This further drives standardization of curricula across schools so that students may fully take advantage of prior coursework, thereby completing their studies quicker. The result is that faculty need to not only coordinate in the development of courses within the university but also potentially across universities. As each university is also competing for students, most schools are trying to find the right balance between developing comparable course material and distinctive course content that sets the school apart.

   Finally, all three groups (students, government, and employers) exerting external pressure on the design of curricula are pressing faculty to better prepare students to both be employable and to "hit the ground running" when they assume employment immediately after college. This has placed a premium on practical experience derived from internships, knowledge from practitioners as guest lecturers, development of specific (often vocational) skills, and content knowledge coming out of school. Additionally, programs are infusing international subjects into the curricula as the world is now more global and seeking to better integrate material across disciplines. For many institutions, this focus of attention on immediate returns to the education rather than the longer term objective of developing general skills that will allow the student to confront as yet unknown future job tasks throughout her life is of great concern. Again the challenge here is to balance both short and longer term factors influencing the design of course curricula.

3. **Responding to Demands of Changing Pedagogy**
   Equally important to course curricula—content—is pedagogy—the approach to effectively making the material understandable, engaging, and relevant to students. Given the aforementioned student diversity, this is especially challenging. It relies on understanding where students are in their learning process, their styles of learning, the media that best delivers content, examples and anecdotes that help students to recognize why what is being studied matters and a means of providing useful feedback so that students might improve. New technology is an important component of pedagogy today: learning how to incorporate online learning opportunities into classroom experiences and knowing how to balance videos with case discussion and simulations that occur in the classroom experience to optimize in-class learning.

   The fact that students can get more useful feedback with online progress assessment has facilitated the notion of the "flipped classroom". In short, technology is a vital factor changing pedagogy in the classroom today. Finally, there is a whole new area of pedagogy to develop related to cloud enabled networks and the opportunities for integration of social (current and emerging) networks into instructional and technical processes. As a parallel innovation disruption, there is also is the need to consider innovations related to the changing boundaries of knowledge and their impact on how the current organizational structures and pedagogical processes need to be realigned.

4. **Boundary Spanning Countries and Cultures of Teaching/Learning**
   Whereas in the past, campuses were the setting where learning took place, today on-campus classrooms are but one venue for educating students. Now, there are hybrid classes that blend learning at home and in the classroom. There are classes that are taught entirely online where students may be down the street or around the world. There are also many colleges and universities that collaborate with universities abroad in exchange programs. And some colleges have even established satellite campuses abroad. This domain centers on the changes required by faculty to manage the fact that where students attend college is highly varied and requires consideration and changes to support "non-classroom" learning.

   A major component of geography is the technical aspect of being able to get the educational materials to the student when and where they are needed. This requires greater technical skills by universities in managing the IT infrastructure. However, it also means exploring all of the other forms of current media—twitter, Facebook, google, LinkedIn, etc.—that might be incorporated into the process of facilitating learning at a distance as well as on the campus. Also, it requires certain material that students must have to access classes such as computers and internet access.

   A second component of geography is to ensure that faculty and students know how to exploit the technology that is being used. This often requires a distinct training for faculty from that given to students, further complicating the process of managing distance.

   When the geography involves coordination with foreign universities or overseas campuses, cultural differences enter into the picture but equally important are differences in the preparation accorded students in different settings and the required changes in what materials might be used to communicate information. In developing countries, or wherever poverty and lack of opportunity is prevalent, even if we are able to leap frog into the 21st century with technology, that if someone didn't have a laptop and the course used technology on a laptop the student would need to be supported through the process of learning to use the laptop even before beginning the class itself.

5. **Designing New Outcomes and Assessment Approaches**
   Changing assessment needs, has received perhaps the most attention by universities across the US. Most faculty members are now intimately aware of accreditation efforts that focus on assessing whether a school has maintained adequate performance to remain accredited. In this context, the key is to define the metrics by which the school's performance of its educational objectives will be evaluated. While it starts with the overall objectives and metrics for the school, it also involves translating those metrics throughout the organization. For instance, faculty are frequently given evaluations by students and those dimensions evaluated should align with the overall school objectives and metrics. Likewise, the newly defined roles and responsibilities of faculty need to drive the metrics by which evaluation will occur. Perhaps the most underappreciated aspect that has occurred within this dimension is a tendency to measure tangible short-term outcomes that are more easily measured. While understandable, this jeopardizes the ability of universities to continue to support general skill development which will prepare students to better confront currently unanticipated challenges throughout their lives.

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS