

BISLA GLCA COLLEGES TOUR

Dagmar Kusá, Mária Dudžáková, Clarissa Tabosa, Lucas Sprouse

PEOPLE WE MET

Hope College

- Deirdre Johnston
- Dave van Wyland – Director of the Office of Possibilities

Kalamazoo College

- Rick Barth – Assistant Provost for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Oberlin

- Steve Volk

Wooster College

- Sarah Sobeck – Associate Dean for Experiential Learning
- Anne Nurse
- Laura DeGroot
- Kara Melrose
- Christa Craven – Dean for Faculty Development
- Jennifer Bowen – Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement

Antioch College

- Richard Kraince – Associate Professor of Cooperative Education

SUMMARY

TEACHING CENTERS

New faculty training—all schools have new faculty training prior to their first semester

- K-Zoo- two weeks prior to the first semester—week-long micro-teaching seminar, with a specific focus—like the first day of teaching, with presentations, feedback...

Faculty support—all schools have some type of ongoing support

- Wellness—faculty have access to the gym and swimming pool and therapy for free (Antioch). Wellness days for the entire community.



- Workshops for faculty – topical, once a semester or more, depending on the school, department, focus...
 - Workshops are voluntary and paid – faculty receive a stipend for attending (e.g. 250\$ for attending, another 250\$ if the main idea was implemented and reported on--Wooster)
 - Boot camps—intensive workshops usually at the end of the semester (in preparation for the following semester)
 - E.g. Hope College—week-long writing boot camps for faculty (time to work as well as support and being able to collaborate and test ideas on colleagues)
 - Wooster—Syllabus redesign bootcamp at the end of the semester (paid participation stipend)
 - Wooster—Experiential learning bootcamps (for faculty and staff)—Faculty come with a project. Start with a learning goal and work backwards. 1000\$ for attending, another 1000\$ for presenting a report after a semester showing how the project was implemented
 - Workshops often implement Universal Design /Backwards Design (Hope College and Wooster)—first setting the goals, then working backwards as to how to get them met
 - Human Creative Design—Hope College has the Office of Possibilities—a center outside the school’s structure and finances that helps carry out innovative projects—for faculty, departments (e.g. gender equality in career advancement), but also administration or Student Council
 - Innovations Foundation Workshop—from design to implementation
 - Stanford IDEO design thinking (sources)
- Faculty research lunches—regular lunches where faculty discuss their own research (Wooster) – voluntary and paid by the school
 - Faculty learning community—by departments. Topical meetings, focused on teaching and problems specific to the college and department (Wooster)
 - Fall Colloquium on Teaching (one day in the Fall, K-ZOO)
 - Useful info for new teachers – online newsletter – what is where, who is for what, etc. (Wooster)

Implementing innovations, projects, programs at the school: For a successful creative design project, you need instigators, champions, and owners—stakeholders, especially from among the leadership who will carry the implementation of a change.



- Peer mentoring
- Wooster: mentoring cohorts: Senior faculty–junior faculty–new faculty group (4–5 new faculty from different departments), meets periodically to discuss teaching. Junior faculty is the main support for the new faculty, senior faculty–knowledge bank.
- Cohorts, again from different departments to ensure cross-curricular benefit and further support outside of the department, discuss practical problems, but also read SoTL articles together, visit each other's classes, etc.

FACULTY–STUDENT COLLABORATION

- Faculty–Student Partnership (class observations)—a student who already took the class is paid to sit in once a week, meets with the faculty to give them feedback on class reactions, clarity, energy, ...
- Students also get training and support from staff on supervision, feedback, pedagogy
 - Once a month joint sessions
 - Best practice example: STEM Zone at Wooster
 - Zone Interns—student partners to faculty
 - Interns–recommended by faculty or approached by staff—who have done well but also those who struggled with their studies
 - training once a month on pedagogy, communication skills, giving feedback
 - Suggestion of sources: Sally Lipsky – A training guide for college tutors and peer educators; Newton and Ender – Students helping students
 - they sit in the class–feedback to faculty + build relationships with students
 - some faculty have weekly meetings with ZIs
 - the expertise of the lecturer is not challenged
- After the semester—student partners are asked to help design the syllabus for the next year (it helps to ask also the disinterested students for their opinion)



Steve Volk recommends: The lead scholar in this field is Alison Cook-Sather at Bryn Mawr. She has written or co-authored literally scores of books and articles on this. Among these, I would recommend as a starting point:

Cook-Sather, A., Bovill, C., & Felten, P. (2014). *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning & Teaching: A Guide for Faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

A more recent book dealing with the diversity, equity, and inclusion aspects of student partnerships is:

de Bie, A., Marquis, E., Cook-Sather, A., & Luqueño, L. P. (2021). *Promoting Equity and Justice through Pedagogical Partnership*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishers.

- Student-faculty summer research—also in several places (Wooster and Hope College).

Summer research is by application—interested faculty propose their research project, students apply to work on those projects with the faculty over the summer.

• Students are paid—full-time position for 8–9 weeks over the summer.

- Research assistants—paid position, approx. 4 hours a week during semester (Wooster)

TEACHING WISDOM FROM STEVE VOLK

What do we want? That students are leaving each class fulfilled.

For that, we have to learn how to set goals, learning outcomes, to be flexible to students' needs.

Universal design

Goals: most teachers don't know what they want students to come away with?

What should they remember 10 years later?

Knowledge? Not so much.

Writing, critical analysis of primary sources, but also dispositions like empathy, ability to cooperate

- scaffold it in—from smaller to bigger tasks
- Backward planning of tasks—moving from goals to assignment—evaluation of if it is met—success for students
- how to help them succeed ⇒ Only THEN comes content



- This can be hugely liberating to many faculty
- Learning
- give up lectures entirely! You can send them ahead of time if you insist
 - During class—discuss with them, give space to questions
 - Learning as partnership
 - Use student class observers (See Faculty-Student Partnership above) to learn what students think, perceive, remember from the class, what moves them

TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTERS

- Needs paid staff—either a coordinator (Rick at K-Zoo) or Dean for professional development (Wooster) who has this as part of their job (teaching only one class per year while a Dean)
- Teaching and Learning Center coordinator—part of the job is for example processing student feedback and discussing it with faculty. Helping teachers address shortcomings and improve.
- Coordinator/Dean invites for joint sessions, workshops, teaching conference (once a year in the Fall- K-Zoo), monthly all faculty sessions (Woo)
- TLC coordinator also serves as a mediator between faculty and students and administration
- Some schools have them separate (e.g. Woo, Hope), some have a joint coordinator (K-Zoo)
- Emphasis is shifting in the past few years from teaching to student-centered learning (K-ZOO)-also in teaching centers
- TLC coordinator also helps teachers improve
 - Mentoring, supervision (throughout 1st year – observations by colleagues)
 - provide materials ahead of time
 - schedule a follow-up!
 - cannot be mandatory –community of good will
 - To the teachers who struggle with a course: What sparks joy for you?
 - Worst teachers are unhappy—help them find courses that don't make them miserable—otherwise everybody loses, teacher and students and school



LEARNING CENTERS

- Research librarians on site—assisting with student research, skills in digital and library research, acquisition of resources
 - Integrated into the Writing and Learning centers
 - In some places, research librarians take part in the first-year seminar
- Training of future Writing Center tutors—one week in the Spring (K-Zoo)
- Kalamazoo Writing Center – “The Learning Support Center encourages students to participate in their own learning, experiment with new habits, and discover the methods that work for you. Students can expect guidance and partnership in developing study skills, notetaking methods, and time management strategies.”
- Wooster—APEX--Advising, planning, and experiential office, which houses all services to students, including international exchange, international internships (large focus)
- APEX holds workshops on career choices, how to choose a major, how to write a resumé, how to be a uni student, etc.
- Faculty interim reports go to APEX - if a student gets a negative report from 2 or more profs- ARC (Advising Resource Center) will reach out to them

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Orientation—like at BISLA, some schools hold part of the orientation in the Spring (June).
- Wooster holds a banquet dinner where parents are also encouraged to attend. Orientation is light, more team-building focused. Much of “orientation” takes place in the first year seminars.
- First year seminars –function in some shape at most schools.
- Most schools have topical first year seminars, led by faculty of different specialization, E.g. Art, Social Sciences, Sciences, Humanities (Antioch)
- Wooster—teaching teams for the first year seminars, with focus on theme and skills—writing, reading, note-taking, etc. Also it serves as a longer orientation in the college life, including adapting to adult life, accommodation, finances, but also orientation in the school curriculum, timeline, duties, etc.



BISLA
Liberal Arts College

- Teaching teams will include for example also academic staff including research librarians, etc.

Community engagement

- strong component at all colleges—all require some type of on-hands experience.
- Antioch requires three co-op courses over the duration of the studies, in which students design and carry out their own engagement projects. These experiences are akin to an internship that engages them with the community in their desired field and often leads to job offers and/or recommendations.
- Antioch also holds a community day—once a quarter there are no classes and the entire community—students, faculty, and all staff come together for barbecue and cultural program