Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Subcommittee (FSTLC)
Spring 2014 Final Report

Jim Jensen (SEAS) and Lisa Stephens (Office of CIO) assumed FSTLC leadership last May as co-chairs from the long, committed service of Phil Stevens. A half-day strategic planning session was convened May 20th 2013 to identify and garner consensus on issues of importance to the membership in light of ongoing UB2020 task force efforts.

The co-chairs distilled strategic planning outcomes over the summer (with continued, informal weekly meetings throughout the year - to which all available committee members were invited). A strategic planning summary report for FSTLC consideration was reviewed at the Sept. 10th 2013 meeting, leading to formation of two FSTLC Task Groups:

Effective Teaching and Academic Support Practices Task Group

Members: Mary Gresham, Tiffany Walsh, Barbara Bono, Mara Huber, Krista Hanypsiak, Susan Ott, Arabella Lyon, Judy Tamburlin, Paul Weitig (Jim Jensen).

Focused on peer research of institutional policies and procedures and how faculty, administration and students can best be encouraged to adopt new teaching and learning practices, including consideration of the means to scale, adopt, communicate and fund new practices throughout the University and related support units (e.g., IT, libraries, instructional support and assessment). This group ultimately took on the work of examining Experiential Education.

Infrastructure necessary to support pedagogical innovation and learning productivity
Members: Susan Grinslade, Barbara Rittner, Susan Ott, Don McGuire, Sampson Blair (Lisa Stephens)

Focused on peer and internal research of institutional policies and practices that provide tools and resources necessary to foster pedagogical innovation (including how institutional branding is impacted by technology) and how pedagogical innovation is supported by (and across) different university units (e.g., IT, libraries, instructional support and assessment).

The FSTLC full committee convened again October 21st for an update session and further task group work. Dean Andrew Stott attended the October session, requesting FSTLC assistance in considering Experiential Education as part of General Education, as well as inclusion in the upcoming Middle States site visit materials.

On November 10th, FSTLC Co-Chair Jensen presented an interim report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee outlining FSTLC work in progress, and was advised that some of the committee charges would be reconsidered. We recently welcomed new members as the result of this effort, and "Assessment" was added to our formal charge.

February 27th, the FSTLC met with Dean Stott to review a draft of the Experiential Education draft definitional document. Revisions were talked through, with agreement to forward additional edits to Dean Stott for inclusion in the MSCHE report. (See Attachment one.)

April 17th, the FSTLC again convened to review the "Infrastructure Report" with our new VP and CIO Brice Bible. This was a very productive meeting where Brice complimented the report, and described moving from reports into action. He described solutions implemented at campuses he had previously served, and how IT services must support the academic mission - including provision for experimenting with new tools that serve pedagogy. This may include shared positions to support teaching and learning where people report to the Office of the CIO but are assigned to "live" within specific departments (potentially a seamless transition) in order to improve communication and collaboration campus wide. He also requested nominations to meet with a faculty member who may wish to negotiate release time in order to assist him with implementing operational plans to support faculty and academic mission. (See attachment two.)

This meeting also included updates from Carol Vanzile Tamsen regarding the new Office of Educational Innovation and Assessment (working title), the search for a faculty director, and the evolution of the Realizing UB2020 efforts leading to formation of this new Center. Jim Jensen, former director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Resources met with Carol the following week and requested that she consider an ex-officio position to the FSTLC next year.

The FSTLC asked the Co-Chairs to reach out to Dean John Ho, charged with the search of the new faculty director of the Educational Innovation Center, to request FSTLC representation on the search committee. This was acted upon the following week, with John thanking us for our engagement and to let us know that Scott Weber had not yet convened the committee (and he would follow up at a future date).

The final meeting for the academic year is scheduled for May 8th and will include discussion of FSTLC representation as a three-year term on the Associate Deans Council per a request from Faculty Senate Chair Ezra Zubrow.

We thank the Executive Committee for their work, and the Co-Chairs extend their thanks both to the committee members and all of the administrators who supported our efforts throughout the year.

Submitted on behalf of the Faculty Senate Teaching & Learning Committee
Jim Jensen, Lisa Stephens Co-Chairs

Judith Tamburlin, Phil Stevens, Arabella Lyon, Barbara Bono, Cynthia Tysick, Stu Chen, Don McGuire, Mary Gresham, Krista Hanypsiak, Kathleen Kielar, Mara Huber, Maureen Boyd, Susan Grinslade, Peter Biehl, Peter Nickerson, Paul Wietig, Barbara Rittner, Ram Sridhar, Susan Ott, Sampson Blair, and Tiffany Walsh

Proposed Experiential Learning Definition

Interest in experiential learning is growing across the higher education sector, with 100% of AAU institutions offering such opportunities for students. The academic literature is rich with studies documenting the ways in which experiential learning opportunities deepen student engagement with their studies, aid with persistence to degree, provide valuable life-experience and workforce readiness, and assist with a number of institutional priorities, such as enrolment and retention.

UB already offers a great many experiential learning opportunities, either as part of a required curriculum or as electives. Because ***Realizing UB2020*** calls for mandatory experiential learning for all students, now is the time to develop a common understanding of what experiential learning means and how it is defined within UB. Because experiential learning is part of most, if not all, graduate programs, the focus in this proposal is the undergraduate student experience.

To place UB's experiential learning efforts on a consistent footing, and to fulfil ***Realizing UB2020***'s ambition for required participation in experiential learning, it is necessary to first reach consensus and adopt an institutional definition of what we mean by experiential learning. In developing the draft definition of UB experiential learning the following guidelines were used:

- The definition should be consistent with national best practices and embrace the full variety and richness of the many activities already on campus.
- Experiential learning should be owned by the faculty and understood as an academic endeavour with substantive educational content.
- Experiential learning should not be thought of as a single entity, but rather a range of opportunities available in multiple places such as core education, the major, student life, etc.
- Experiential learning opportunities should be validated through existing curricular approval processes, assessed, and tracked in university student systems.

To this end, the University at Buffalo defines experiential learning as opportunities for applied learning – both for credit and not for credit – that take place beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. For experiences to qualify as experiential learning on the academic transcript, all such opportunities must conform demonstrably to each of the following five principles:

1. ***Intentional***. The experience is undertaken with intent and purpose, and planned in advance with explicit goals and intended learning outcomes. While the experience may evolve as it develops - focused, intentional planning will help to ensure that the experience is educationally productive and assessable.

2. *Mentored.* The experience is supervised with faculty involvement in all phases of the process.

3. *Engaged.* The experience requires active, engaged learning from the student. The student is expected to take an active role in formulation, implementation, and assessment of the experiential learning component.

4. *Reflective.* Experiential learning requires a vehicle for meaningful reflection on the process, skills, understanding, and insights it gives rise to. This should require the submission of some form of formal assignment(s) such as the maintenance of a journal or portfolio, the completion of response papers, discussions with a faculty supervisor, or others as appropriate.

5. *Assessed.* The students' work must be assessed, both during and upon completion of the experience.

This definition is consistent with many models currently in use. The primary sources for the proposed draft were taken from the National Society for Experiential Education's 'Eight Principles for all Experiential Education Activities''; the [Office of Experiential Learning at Brandeis](); a [report into Experiential Learning]() by Cornell University's School of Agriculture and Life Sciences; and the [Office of the Provost at the University of Cincinnati]().

Common Forms of Experiential Learning
Experiential learning is best thought of as a suite of discrete but complementary pedagogies. Common types include, but are not limited to:

- **Clinical Rotations:** Practical apprenticeship in health-related professions.
- **Collaborative Assignments**: Problem-solving activities designed to provide groups of students with supervised experiences.
- **Co-ops:** Students alternate periods of full-time classroom study with periods of paid or unpaid, supervised, and progressively responsible training related to their major.
- **Field Work:** From archaeological digs to sociological observation, field work requires students to undertake a significant portion of their coursework on site, wherever that may be.
- **Internships**: Practical, supervised experience within the workplace intended to support academic and career goals.
- **Performance:** The conception, production, and execution of creative works for an audience.
- **Practicum:** Supervised clinical, field, or lab work intended to make the connection between theory and practice.
- **Service and Community-Based Learning**: Structured experiences within the community where specific learning objectives balance volunteer service with substantive intellectual preparation and reflection.

- **Study Abroad**: Travel and cultural experiences that combine academic learning and extra-academic experiences designed to enhance personal growth and increase awareness of global diversity and difference.
- **Teaching**: Students serve in supervised teaching assistant roles as UTAs/GAs, or lead classes in peer-mentored groups and seminars.
- **Undergraduate Research**: Mentored scholarly or creative activity that leads to the production of new knowledge.

Experiential Learning at UB

UB already offers a significant number of undergraduate experiential learning opportunities, although tracking these courses and related activities may sometimes prove difficult. Regularly scheduled experiential learning opportunities include: Departmental Capstone Course (494), Undergraduate Supervised Teaching (495), Internships (496), Departmental Honors Thesis or Project (497), Undergraduate Research (498), Independent Study (499), Study Abroad, Freshman Honors Colloquium (Honors 102), and clinical rotations or other internships in various departments.

A brief survey of undergraduate students enrolled in recognized experiential learning classes in the academic years 2009/10 through 2012/13 is reported in Table 1. With remarkably small year-to-year variations, it is clear that many of our undergraduate students are already participating in the many current experiential learning opportunities offered by our academic and academic service units. What is unclear from this quick snapshot is what is actually being gained from these experiences and how they compare to one another with regard to the goals of experiential learning. A more systematic definition of experiential learning and appropriate tracking and assessment of those experiences would therefore help UB to better define the pedagogical advantages of these opportunities as well as provide students with a more expansive credential to support future endeavours.

Table 1. Undergraduate Enrolment in Recognized Experiential Learning Courses

Course	Students Enrolled by Academic Year*			
	2009-10	**2010-11**	**2011-12**	**2012-13**
494 (Capstone)	327	343	321	379
495 (Supervised Teaching)				
496 (Internship)	1136	1152	1219	1191
498 (Research)	791	755	855	888
499 (Independent Study)	958	942	955	813
Total	3212	3192	3350	3271

*Note: fall and spring enrolments only

Next Steps

This document reflects input from the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (FSTLC). The Office of Academic Affairs requests that the Faculty Senate consider the proposed UB definition of experiential learning and adopt or modify it appropriately in time for inclusion in the 2014-2015 Undergraduate Catalog. Regarding implementation, the FSTLC recommends that an undergraduate course number be reserved for experiential learning.

FSTLC Preliminary Task Group Reports

The Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Subcommittee identified several issues during a strategic planning session held May 20, 2013. Action from that meeting was consensus to investigate a number of these issues through the formation of two task groups:

- ***Effective Teaching and Academic Support Practices*** with a narrowed focus primarily on Experiential Education; and,
- ***Infrastructure Necessary to Support Pedagogical Innovation and Learning Productivity*** to explore how peer institutions support technology classrooms, online education, and use of emerging technologies in support of teaching and learning.

A series of informal meetings took place throughout the semester grounded in review of peer websites and support materials. The "Infrastructure group" focused on these resources coupled with some conference proceeding materials with the intent of reaching out via conference call to selected institutions the following semester. The "Effective Teaching" group reviewed documents from SUNY task groups and other institutions regarding experiential education, competency based outcomes and internships, as well as a framework document provided by UB administration.

Experiential Learning Focus

Experiential Education is being increasingly adopted into undergraduate curriculum among AAU institutions. The SUNY Provost's Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology is also currently engaged in an exploration of these issues. The FSTLC task group focused discussion on issues raised in a preliminary working document provided by Andrew Stott, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Director of the Honor College.

As this current report document was being prepared for draft, Dean Stott requested that the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Subcommittee consider a narrower framework document that has been circulated under separate cover. It is anticipated that this framework will be preliminarily responded to and discussed at greater depth during our first meeting of the spring semester (scheduled: Feb. 27, 2014) and efforts to explore experiential learning and issues will continue to an area of focus for this body.

Infrastructure to support Pedagogical Innovation and Learning Productivity

The following themes and identified needs for the infrastructure group could be summarized as:

- **Technology/Innovation needs**: innovative and flexible learning spaces (including informal spaces to meet with groups of students outside of class), replacement of outdated departmental technology, and support to academic units in order to support different course capture models and production of online courses;
- **Pedagogical Innovation** to assist with **academic integrity** (identity verification for online environments and plagiarism detection), training and ongoing support and instruction in "**flipped classroom**" approaches, use of **gaming**, and emerging teaching (**active**

learning) methods that foster student engagement and support for and methodologies to **research** innovative outcomes across disciplines;

- **Branding:** faculty and departmental access to materials for branding UB online course content;
- **Development of team based support** to be able to meet and quickly respond to faculty actively developing and implementing online course content;

As a placeholder, there were four other areas of interest from the strategic planning session that were considered but not directly explored by the infrastructure group.

- **Balancing Teaching, Learning and Research Needs:** how to foster and reward good teaching, how to balance research needs with teaching, how to receive constructive, non-threatening feedback in order to improve teaching skills;
- **Assessment:** reconsider the current course evaluation system(s), and explore alternate methods of assessment across different disciplines;
- **Barriers:** increased focus on enrollment (and not enough capacity for qualified students in majors), need for more collaboration, class sizes.
- **Student preparedness:** incoming readiness (developmental education) basic writing skills. Difficult to prepare students for graduate work.

The scope of work began with peers and aspirants identified from UB MSCHE functions, expanded to include other areas of interest based on participant curricular or project knowledge.

The group was anxious to learn more about policies and practices that foster departmental and/or project-based innovation – including how innovations are scaled, adopted, communicated and supported institutionally (including appropriate departmental credit for cross-listed or collaborative efforts); and how different aspects of pedagogical innovation are supported by (and across) university units (e.g., IT, libraries, instructional support and assessment).
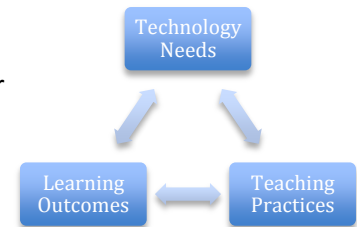
This task group also benefited from members serving on Realizing UB2020 committees (General Education, Assessment and Pedagogical Innovation) who communicated context and occasional updates to this task group effort.

In addition to peer online resources, the group considered information from national organizations such as the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, (annual ranking of content anchors and instructional/emerging technology related issues) and the New Media Consortium Horizon Report(s). The 2013 ELI infographic (embedded below) reflects a significant, national trend and shift in focus toward assessment related activities. Four topical areas were previously unranked, with assessment of student learning occupying the top priority.

The infrastructure group created an Excel file to track key descriptions and observations of the website content review for each of 20 institutions examined, and found a pattern began to emerge through a series of referrals and literature references:

- **Penn State** is one of the acknowledged leaders of faculty support of teaching, learning and technology – specifically for online learning and investigation/adoption of emerging technologies
- **University of Minnesota** – Twin Cities (as well as North Carolina State University and the University of Iowa) are leaders in Active Learning Classroom (ALC) research, design and student engagement strategies
- **Virginia Tech** is a leader in e-Portfolio applications.
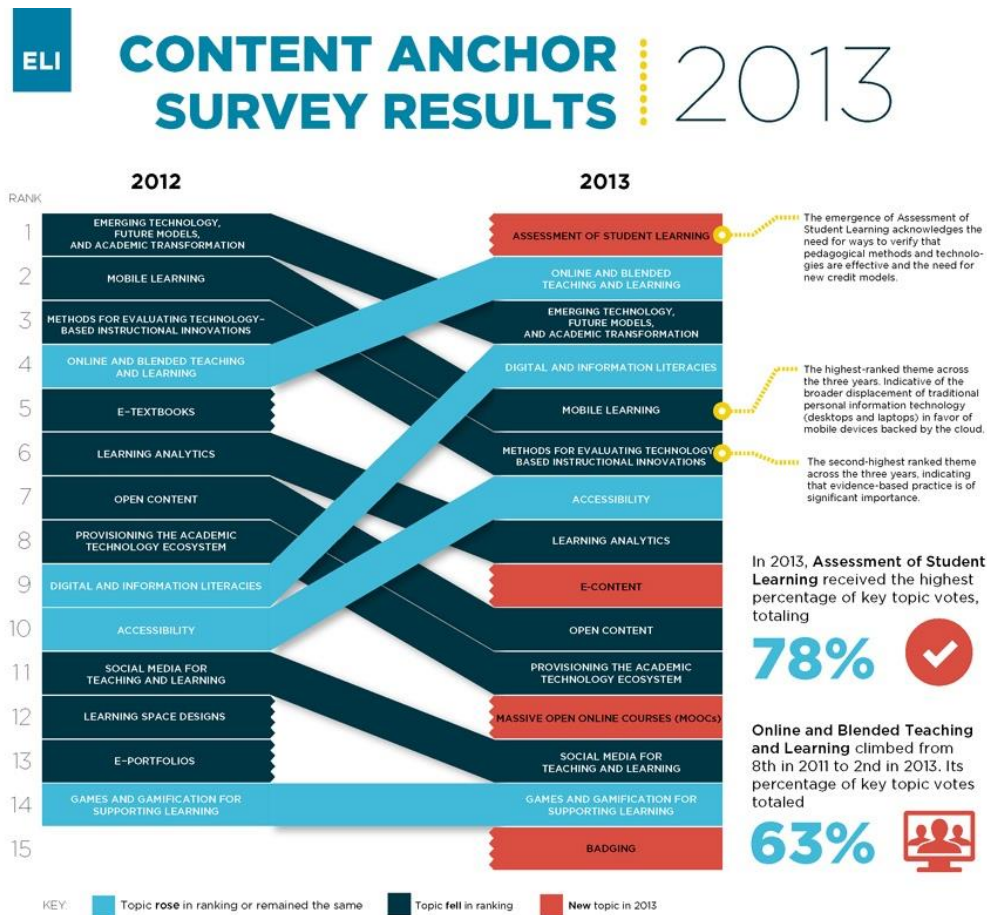
The Penn State Teaching, Learning & Technology site, from which many other campuses have modeled best practices, contained a faculty survey that can be contrasted with a 2007 UB faculty benchmark survey.   The UB faculty survey (n=248) was compared with a 2009 Penn State faculty survey (n=57) to consider whether faculty for support of "teaching with technology" expressed any major contrasting differences.

The Penn State survey spanned multiple campuses, but there was striking agreement on some measures. For example, both faculty groups reported a preference for first relying on colleagues for advice (42%), but at Penn State, 72% relied on TLT workshops for primary information, whereas this option was rarely chosen by UB faculty (third choice) – which might be interpreted as a significant gap in centralized resources available to UB faculty.

A review of all of the peer websites illustrates some common themes:
1. Availability of consultation between faculty and instructional designers for course design (or suitable professional staff for emerging/technology assistance needs)
2. Opportunity to attend a wide variety of workshops that are topically inclusive of:
    a. Course design (or re-design),
    b. Integration of different technology tools that or may not be commonly used,
    c. Information about assessment of those efforts, and
    d. Access to exemplars (a repository and/or blog of current applications and support).

Support approaches vary among institutions. For example, Penn State uses a "hot team" approach which leverages professional staff and student assistant knowledge, and it was noteworthy that Instructional Designers often occupied roles where their consultations limited to assessment of what the instructor wished to accomplish, then facilitated interdisciplinary connections with the proper instructional student or professional staff personnel.

UNC has an overwhelming and extensive set of connected resources of institutions of higher learning across the state, ranging from community colleges to universities. This may be similar to the model that SUNY is attempting to create with the Open SUNY+ programs. Students can cross-enroll throughout the state (but inter-connected through fiber/broadband). UNC faculty have access to three different centers for Technology, Professional Development and Assessment. Even if Open SUNY is seeking to provide services similar to this model, UB may not want to delay some type of centralized services effort in light Realizing UB2020 and an emphasis on teaching and learning excellence.

Self help modules for "just in time" information is a prominent feature at a number of these sites, providing the opportunity to explore tools and teaching options prior to attending an in person workshop. One of the bigger surprises was how the "interdisciplinary" approach at Penn State extended into topical areas that at UB are considered to be part of the IT domain (e.g. security information/awareness) or University Communication (e.g. website development and content management). The task group participants are anxious to examine how these cultures are bridged at other Universities in order to best leverage staff expertise across a wide area of talent. This could include topics such as how academic integrity is considered and built into use of any new tools or processes (particularly for high stakes testing – which Penn State and others have developed a model).

Future exploration, likely to be framed as part of conference call interviews may include how several of these campuses:

- Differentiate and organize instructional technology and information technology.

- Address issues of governance – how to get the entire campuses' collective consciousness "wrapped around" who is responsible for various support services (both in terms of budget and service)

- How innovations are migrated from proof-of-concept, then piloted across multiple faculty and finally incubated and supported as a production level. This must include governance information for what departments are responsible to develop in specialized

curricular areas vs. innovations that are supported centrally, then adapted and shared across the campus. What mechanisms foster and support this type of communication, and who pays for it?

- How do other campuses work through limiting factors (e.g. staff resources)? How do our peers tap into existing talent through formal/information networks, to foster cross discipline ideas?

- How are innovations fed back into meaningful accreditation activities? How is data captured to illustrate return on investment quantified? ROI need to be measured all in dollars or efficiencies, and may include ways to consider opportunity cost or communication of "lessons learned" to protect valuable and scarce resources?

When investigating online resources, specific information was sought:
1) What kind of technologies are used to support pedagogy and assessment?
2) Is there any kind of budget information apparent? (Central support? Attached to what unit?)
3) How is online learning being supported?
4) What other ancillary tools/technologies/policies support pedagogy?
5) What is the governance/advisory structure, and how does that impact central university vs. departmental support?
6) What type of faculty and staff professional development is available?
7) How are resources shared and supported? Who gets credit? (E.g., course cross listing - policies that enable core courses to be taught across more than one curriculum and/or shared tuition?)

Task Group Membership included:
Dr. Susan Grinslade, Undergraduate Department Chair and Clinical Professor in the School of Nursing, Dr. Barbara Rittner, Associate Dean and Professor, School of Social Work,
Dr. Donald McGuire, Undergraduate Programs Director, College of Arts and Sciences,
Dr. Susan Ott, Principal Education Specialist, Ronald E. McNair Program,
Dr. Sampson Blair, Associate Professor, School of Sociology and
Dr. Lisa Stephens, Senior Strategist for SUNY Academic Innovation and FSTLC sub committee Co-Chair

Partial list of Resources:

D. Christopher Brooks (2011) Space matters: The impact of formal learning environments on student learning
British Journal of Education Technology
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2010.01098.x/full

Whiteside, Brooks & Walker (2010) Making the Case for Space: Three Years of Empirical Research on Learning Environments
http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/making-case-space-three-years-empirical-research-learning-environments

Brook & Oliver (2003) Online Learning Communities: Investigating a design framework
http://ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet19/brook.html Australian Journal of Educational Technology 2003, 19(2), 139-160

Scott-Webber, L., Strickland, A., Kapitula, L. *Built Environments Impact Behavior: Results of an Active Learning Post Occupancy Evaluation* (Planning for Higher Education Journal V42N1 October-December 2013)
http://www.steelcase.com/en/products/category/educational/case-studies/documents/phev42n1_article_built-environments.pdf

Internal UB Reports:
- Teaching Learning and Task Group Final Report (January 2009)
  http://www.buffalo.edu/content/dam/www/ubit/Scoreboard%20Assets/Reports/TLTTaskForce.pdf
- Collaborative Learning Spaces (2008)
- http://www.buffalo.edu/content/dam/www/ubit/Scoreboard%20Assets/Reports/CollabAndLearningSpaces.pdf
- Future Needs of Public Computing (2007)
  http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/services/scoreboard/reports/future-needs-of-public-computing.html