Understanding Disciplinary Boundaries within Colleges of Agriculture: Implications for Graduate Student Development

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Overview

- Colloquium course
- “Methods” for final project
- Analyses of presentations
- Implications
- Final comments
- Questions
Purpose of Colloquium

• 10 guest speakers
• Showcase the diversity and richness of projects & programs
  – AEE/AESE
  – College of Ag Sciences (CAS)
  – Penn State
• Allow for student reflection and synthesis of topics
  – Final project
Selection of Speakers

• Purposive Sample
• Selection Criteria: chose 6 out of the 10 based on personal interest in the topics
  – Extension Business Model
  – Agriculture Entrepreneurs
  – Funding of Collaborative Multidisciplinary Research
  – International Programs in CAS
  – Academic Integrity & Ethics
  – Diversity in Higher Ed.
Analyses of Presentations

- 4 themes across the 6 seminars

Four Themes

- Dynamics of CAS and LGS
- Diversity
- Change
- Collaboration
CAS & The Land-Grant

Extension
Smith-Lever Act of 1914

Research
Hatch Act of 1887

Teaching
Morrill Act of 1862, 1890

Land Grant Act of 1994

Adapted from Radhakrishna, 2011
Diversity

• “Diversity = differences”
  – Faculty with split appointments
  – 11 new Extension teams/high-priority areas

• “Extension must assess the needs of the diverse audience.”

• “Multidisciplinary = multiple disciplines”

• “Link PA to other countries with global Ag competence.”

• “Responsible research conduct applicable to ALL disciplines”
Change

- “100-year old companies must re-position themselves for the future.”
- “Butts in seats.” – Role of programmers

- Research: “Strategies to integrate and get funding.”
- “Build global perspectives into degree programs.”
- “US projected to be 54% minority in 2050.”
Collaboration

• “Extension teams = aggregated human resources based on stakeholder needs”

• Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, multi-institutional & team research
  – Solve complex problems, increased funding

• “Develop strategic global partnerships”

• “Increase diversity awareness between department, college, & university levels.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAS &amp; Land-Grant</th>
<th>Understanding, appreciation, experience</th>
<th>Pursuit of position in academia</th>
<th>Research, Extension, Teaching</th>
<th>Ethics, grant-writing workshops</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Awareness, multidisciplinary committee, peer differences</td>
<td>Options, background, positioning</td>
<td>Multidiscipline Research, Extension, International</td>
<td>Global literacy, multidisciplinary meetings / networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Department merger, assistantship</td>
<td>P &amp; T, faculty appointments, departments, funding, time</td>
<td>Revisit the Land-Grant mission &amp; purpose</td>
<td>GSA, integrate with merged departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary research, committee</td>
<td>Research plan, split appointments, industry &amp; gov’t</td>
<td>Integration to solve complex problems, Extension</td>
<td>Research, networking, meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications: Grad Student Development

- Courses – exploration for thesis/dissertation

- Research – multidisciplinary activities

- Career – todays societal problems require a multidisciplinary approach

- Diversity – acquire skills in various disciplines

- Public Good – what impact will your education have?
Additional Implications

• Relevant to every program in CAS and beyond

• This type of reflection, synthesis, and analyses could be incorporated into many courses
  – Career prep, seminars, technology, research methods
Questions??