Working Group B: Science as an Undergraduate Destination

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Progress on working group charge:

At this point we are brainstorming thoughts around the questions we were charged with. During our next meeting we will discuss them in more detail and turn our thoughts into action items and recommendations. Our thoughts until now are below:

How can we provide the best overall experience to our undergraduate majors?

• Create senior seminar/project courses for each discipline
• First-year seminar course for entire College or each discipline
• Lower the advisor: student ratio
• Faculty and staff (especially advisors) need to be “high touch”
• Living learning communities and other ways of creating a community
• Focus on the advisor/student relationship - advisors need more than 30 minutes a semester with a student
• Beef up mentor opportunities within existing programs (WISP, Ambassadors, etc.)
• Create a university-wide student/mentor assignment program for research

How could we be even prouder of the experiential learning opportunities we provide to our students?

• Provide incentives for faculty to work with undergrads
• Showcase department partners to show how in demand our students are
• Give students the opportunity to talk about their experiences
• Create a certificate program (more like a minor than LBC) with mentoring as a key part
• Add mentoring as a part of LBC

How can we better ensure an appropriate distribution of undergraduate majors across the College’s seven academic departments?

• Focus on the quality of the majors (and resulting professionals) and not the numbers

How can we do a better job of anticipating student needs and of making sure that we meet them?

• Find out what the students want - surveys, town hall meetings, listening sessions
• Create a strong, accurate way for students with AP/dual credit to evaluate readiness for PU courses (ex: AP credit for calc 1...are they really ready for calc 2?)
• Offer courses/workshops to teach technical communication skills for each discipline (LaTeX, etc.) -- incorporate this into COM 217?

Does the College adequately serve the needs of transfer students in its undergraduate programs?

• Clear up the information - what courses, etc. does the CoS accept/not accept and why
• Learning community for transfer students
• Seminar course for new transfer students
• Create a strong, working relationship with common TR school advisors so students are prepared from the start

How well do online and hybrid courses meet our student’s needs?
• Students want small classes and more one-to-one attention
• Stick to the format - ex: if the course is online, don’t have on campus exams
• Make the expectations clear prior to course registration
• Inform advisors so they can advise each student to the suitability for them

How can we better serve the needs of underrepresented minority, first-generation, and underserved students?
• Peer mentors
• Faculty mentors
• Beef up Academic Boot Camp program, increase attendance
• Create a collective, clear pathway to existing resources on campus
• Provide opportunities to get students calculus ready without relying on 4 year scholarships (21st Century, Purdue Promise)
• CoS specific program (similar to Horizons)

Other Ideas:
• Create a relationship with high school counselors and students to help them through the prep for application and application processes