Advocating for your department

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PAML Conference, November 5, 2011
The context of higher education today

- Emphasis on higher education as training for employment
- Focus on practical and applied disciplines, impact on economic development
- Faculty viewed as inhabiting an “ivory tower”, disconnected from reality
- Increased scrutiny of faculty productivity by boards of trustees, legislators, donors, public
Our challenge

- As faculty and departments in the humanities, we are faced with the challenge of:
  - Promoting our disciplines and departments
  - Utilizing data to make more effective arguments
  - Increasing visibility of our presence on campus
  - Building collaborations with other academic units across campus
How can we advocate more effectively for our departments?
All departments seek...

- **Adequate financial support** in order to fulfill their teaching, research and outreach responsibilities

- *To be valued by the institution* for
  - contributions to the institution’s mission
  - contributions to the institution’s overall excellence (or rankings)
  - faculty achievements
  - student success
  - impact in the community
Working with the administration

- Your department may work with dean or provost, depending on institutional type
- Department chair is responsible for cultivating positive working relationship with administration
- Department chair manages delicate balance between department/faculty needs and college/university goals
- Collaboration, compromise, partnership more effective than *us vs. them* approach
Understand institutional context

- Understand the big picture:
  - What is your institutional context?
  - What is your institution’s mission and priorities?
  - Who is your institution’s general student audience?
  - What are the sources and levels of institutional funding?

- Deans/provosts deal with many units, all important in distinct ways. Know where your unit fits into the big picture.
Develop a departmental vision

- Given the institutional context, define a realistic departmental vision that MAKES SENSE FOR YOUR INSTITUTION
- Aim to align your departmental vision with the mission of the college and/or institution
- Share your departmental vision and the goals you have developed with the dean/provost
- Avoid referring to your unit as a "service" department and don’t allow others to do so either
Demonstrate effectiveness in departmental responsibilities

- Given your department’s role within the institution, are you doing what you are funded to do?
  - high quality undergraduate teaching?
  - cutting edge research?
  - training of graduate students?
  - outreach to community or K-12 institutions?

- Use data, not just anecdotes, to demonstrate departmental effectiveness
Examples of useful data

- Number of FTE
- Total instructional FTE
- Total SCH
- SCH per FTE
- Number of majors
- Number of graduate students
- Graduate student completion rates
- Student success/placement
- Contributions to general education
- Enrollment in courses
- Start up costs
- Research production
- Grant funding
- Awards
- Leadership roles in national organizations
Partner with administration on resource requests

- Do not hesitate to approach the dean/provost with a request for additional resources: **those who do not ask, do not get!**

- To improve the chances of securing support:
  - Go with a thoughtful, written plan in hand
  - Show how it supports or enhances the institution’s mission
  - Avoid complaining or whining
  - Cost-share to demonstrate your commitment to the plan
  - Address the sustainability of these efforts
Demonstrate value of your discipline to others

- Use data to demonstrate relevance of the humanities in today’s world (www.mla.org, www.adfl.org, www.languagepolicy.org)

- Collaborate with other units on campus, ones you know (sociology, history, art) and ones that are less familiar (e.g., biology, event management, civil engineering, marketing)

- Engage others on campus who can advocate for you

- Collaborate with K-12 community
Build alliances with admissions, alumni, and development offices

- Arrange to meet and educate them about your department, its mission, its successes
- Build and maintain contact with alumni as they can also advocate on behalf of your unit
  - Newsletters
  - Alumni awards
  - Alumni days, campus visits
- Development is a long process. Efforts now may not yield tangible results for some time.
Recognize that change is inevitable

- Rather than fight change, work to shape it!
- Digging in your heels and refusing to engage in discussion is counterproductive
- Keep informed of what is going on nationally in your discipline and at peer institutions
- If the institution’s budget is being cut, be creative and proactive in adapting to smaller budgets, even if it is not what you would prefer in an ideal world
From Foreign Languages and Literatures to World Languages and Cultures at Iowa State: A success story
Addressing our institutional mission

- Department Name Change
  - FROM *Foreign language and literatures*
    - “foreign” deemed problematic
    - increasing curricular emphasis on culture, film, linguistics, language for specific purposes, area studies
  - TO *World languages and cultures*
    - broader scope in “world”
    - more appealing to students, faculty across campus
    - attracts a difference type of faculty -- more interdisciplinary in focus
Addressing needs of ISU student audience

- Are we meeting the needs of ISU’s targeted student audience?
  - 20%+ increase in engineering and agriculture enrollments in past decade
  - Minimal growth in liberal arts enrollments

- Other models to consider? University of Rhode Island International Engineering Program (IEP) http://www.uri.edu/iep/

- Created major in Languages and Cultures for Professions: Second Major Option for Students in Engineering and Business (www.language.iastate.edu/lcp)
Today’s student audience

"only 6.1% of college graduates whose first major is foreign languages go on to attain a doctoral degree; for those students and for others who enjoy literary studies, one path to the major should be through literature. But to attract students from other fields and students with interests beyond literary studies, particularly students returning from a semester or a year abroad, departments should institute courses that address a broad range of curricular needs."

From: “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” 2007 MLA Report
New major: Languages and Cultures for Professions

- Fewer credits than traditional language major
- Focused on professional and global communication
- Technical and professional courses in the target language
- Study abroad/international internship required
- Language and culture training within a professional environment
Sample Program of Study: LCP Spanish Major with Engineering

The secondary major option in Spanish requires 30 credits beyond the 202 level.

LCP core courses (12 cr.)
- Spanish Conversation for Professionals
- Spanish for Business and Professions
- Introduction to Spanish - English Translation
- Internship/Study Abroad

Literature and Culture Courses (12 cr.)
- Spanish Grammar and Composition
- Introduction to Reading Hispanic Texts
- Spain Today or Spanish Civilization
- Latin America Today or Latin American Civilization

Electives (6 cr.)
- Literature survey (3 cr.)
- Seminar on topics in literature or culture (3 cr.)
Enrollment trends

- As of Spring 2011, 118 students from Business, Engineering or GRS have chosen the LCP second major option
  - 41 Business majors
  - 73 Engineering majors
  - 4 GRS majors

Source: Department of World Languages and Cultures
Study Abroad and International Internships

- **Spanish**: summer study abroad in Valencia enrolls 100+ students; created in response to a needs-assessment conducted with collaborators in Engineering, Business, and Biology.

- **German**: Engineering students in German LCP can participate in the summer and semester programs at the Hochschule Mannheim combined with an internship.

- **French**: Study abroad opportunities in Lausanne, Switzerland, or Grenoble, France as well as with the ISEP consortium.

Source: Department of World Languages and Cultures
New programmatic directions

- New course developed with Mechanical Engineering: WLC/ME 484/584 “Technology, Globalization, and Culture”

- Two U.S. Department of Education Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Languages (UISFL) Grants (approximately $80,000/year)
  - Biological Sciences (2010-2012): “Global Pathways for Educating Students in Biodiversity”

Source: Department of World Languages and Cultures
New curricular directions

- Title VI grant provides faculty and curriculum development related to biodiversity in the context of world languages and cultures
  - Modules and case studies on biodiversity, resource development and sustainability piloted in each “Today” course.
- Three new courses developed:
  - WLC 370: Making the World Green: Environment, Sustainability, and culture, Past and Present (fall 2011)
  - WLC 370: Present and Future Challenges in the Middle East: Environment and Sustainability (fall 2011)
  - Spanish 370: Cultures of Agriculture in the Hispanic World (spring 2012)

Source: Department of World Languages and Cultures
Lessons learned

- Embrace change
- Align department with institutional mission and strengths
- Build partnerships with other units on campus, both academic and non-academic, to develop innovative and cross-disciplinary programs and initiatives
- Seek out external funding opportunities
- Develop your departmental vision and your contributions to administration, internal and external audiences
- Develop relationships with those who can advocate on your behalf and support your mission (future alumni!)