

## Statement on Collaboration

### Endorsed by the Board of Deans and Chancellors, May 2014

#### Problem statement

**The future is collaborative.** The future of research and teaching is increasingly interconnected, interdisciplinary, and collaborative. A supportive climate for collaboration...

- Benefits disciplines and departments by helping to recruit top faculty and students, who are increasingly collaborative.
- Ensures we are poised to find solutions to society's most pressing problems—complex problems that will require collaborative problem-solving across the boundaries of disciplines.

**ABB should not be viewed as a barrier to collaboration; rather, it's our culture that lacks clear principles, priorities, and a communicated commitment.** There is widespread confusion over how ABB applies to interdisciplinary teaching and research. Barriers to collaboration are often assumed to be a budget issue instead of issues of policy and priority. By creating and communicating clear principles, practical guidelines, and strong recommendations, UW leaders at all levels can remove perceived barriers and foster greater levels of collaborative teaching and research. Current barriers identified by the working group include:

- Without clear emphasis on the strategic importance of collaborative programs, there is little incentive for faculty to teach outside their units or for departments to support these classes.
- Few units recognize or celebrate collaborative education. Promotion and tenure criteria do not currently clearly recognize collaborative education initiative contributions.
- Programs with strong leadership support and a strong champion succeed. The opposite is also true.

#### Statement of principles

##### ***Commitment***

- Collaborative efforts are a key component of excellence and foundational to the UW's future. Increasingly, solving society's most pressing issues requires a team-based approach to complex challenges. Research, education, and the workplace are demanding more collaborative and creative approaches, but collaboration rarely happens by accident. To ensure such collaboration takes place requires us to make a strong commitment to collaborative work. This commitment must be clear and unequivocal but must also strike the appropriate balance between collaborative and individual or single-disciplinary efforts to preserve the integrity of disciplines as we support work across disciplines.

##### ***Structures***

- Interdisciplinary efforts must rest on flexible structures supporting multiple models—models that foster collaboration and support incubation of grassroots initiatives. These models must include various and diverse approaches that are responsive to the specific needs of collaborative teams and units.

##### ***Funding Models***

- Funding models must be fair and sustainable. Any joint revenue generated through interdisciplinary initiatives must be shared. And any interdisciplinary program or initiative that involves teaching needs to provide for the sustainability of that teaching.

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#### Recommendations for supporting collaborative educational initiatives

*(See Appendix A for examples of specific solutions)*

##### To Ensure Commitment:

1. **Endorse a stated commitment to collaborative education initiatives and share with chairs and faculty**, preferably as a statement from the Boards of Deans and Chancellors. Consider adding local policy specifics for starting and sustaining collaborations and developing a related communication plan.
2. **Identify priority areas where strategic collaboration is encouraged and include commitment to strategic collaborative initiatives in performance evaluation** of chairs by deans, and of deans by the provost. Communicate the importance of these areas with chairs and faculty.
3. **Enable, encourage, support, and celebrate bottom-up collaborative educational efforts** that originate among faculty working together to support curricular goals (examples can be found in Appendix A).

##### To Improve Structures:

1. **Plan for sustainability.** In programs that include both research and teaching, build in budget mechanisms for teaching from the start. Otherwise budget may focus exclusively on research, making teaching unsustainable.
2. **Create structures to hire, reward, and recognize chairs and faculty** who engage in true collaborative teaching (as opposed to tag-team teaching).
  - Include interdisciplinary faculty in promotion and tenure committees.
  - Include strategic collaboration in hiring decisions, including cluster hiring.
3. **Review collaborative educational initiatives periodically** (e.g., annual reports and five-year reviews) to determine continued strategic value, impact, sustainability, quality, and effective management. Build in criteria and mechanisms for sunsetting collaborations, such as specifying end dates for new initiatives, renewing initiatives only if they are of continued vital importance.

##### To Develop Supportive Funding Models:

1. **Ensure that academic priorities and principles drive budget decisions** around collaboration. Develop the budget to reflect these priorities. (ABB routes funds; it is not meant to drive decision-making.)
2. **Model and promote creative, flexible and fair financial models** to support collaborative education:
  - Share revenue among primary units ( including in-kind, one-time, and ongoing).
  - Allocate funding in the budget of new interdisciplinary initiatives for teaching.
3. **Provide seed funding to launch or pilot collaborative efforts** and/or facilitate bringing teams together at the university, school or college, or department/center level.
4. **Revisit ABB's 80/20** graduate allocation vs. the 60/40 undergraduate allocation.

##### **Quick Facts: Why ABB is Seldom a Barrier to Collaboration**

- *Few classes are impacted.* Currently, jointly listed courses account for less than 0.5% of credit hours.
- *Classes listed jointly rarely impact department revenue.* ABB applies only at the dean level in nearly all colleges.
- *Ad hoc financial solutions work well.* Local revenue sharing arrangements and financial reconciliations allow more flexibility than a one-size-fits-all financial policy.

*ABB is only a barrier when perceptions and fears about ABB drive decisions instead of strategic considerations that best serve students.*

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Sample Solutions from the UW and at Peer Institutions**

*Please note that there are many examples of successful collaborative educational initiatives resting on strong commitment, structures, and funding models. The list below is meant to provide sample solutions and is by no means exhaustive. If you would like to add other examples to this list, please send them to [mnickle@uw.edu](mailto:mnickle@uw.edu)*

**Examples of Commitment to Supporting Collaboration at the UW—**

- 1. Committed Champions:** College of Arts & Science Dean Bob Stacey made it clear to A&S chairs that supporting the Honors program is important, a strategic priority that provides chairs with clear guidelines for decision-making. Other champions include College of the Environment Dean Lisa Graumlich, who established a Cross Unit Teaching Incentive Fund; former Engineering Dean Matt O'Donnell, who championed the creation of the Molecular Engineering and Sciences Institute and the joint EE and CSE curricula; and Provost Ana Mari Cauce who championed cluster hires in data-driven discovery as part of a provost initiative. There are a number of other champions across campus in various schools and colleges and at all levels.
- 2. Faculty-led, bottom-up collaboration:** The Synthetic Biology core sequence is an example of a faculty-led, bottom-up collaboration. It involves a partnership of Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering, and BioEngineering faculty. Each quarter, faculty from one of the departments teaches a Synthetic Biology course, open to all students and listed in all 4 departments. In this way, each department gets a share of the tuition revenue, and each contributes teaching effort. Each department values the curriculum, as it helps attract top students. (vetted)  
Another example is the creation of the Design-Use-Build cross-disciplinary unit with faculty from Design, HCDE, CSE, and the iSchool. Based on student demand and the rising importance of the area, a faculty member used start-up funds to host a monthly seminar lunch that grew from 7 participants to 70; an annual retreat with 300 students, faculty and industry partners; successful faculty and student recruiting efforts that increased the quality and reputation of all departments involved; and now a fee-based professional master degree that will help fund the group's ongoing collaborative work and provide access to this growing field to more students.
- 3. Inclusion of Collaborative Work in Promotion & Tenure Considerations:** The Law School makes an effort to address collaboration in promotion and tenure considerations, appointing non-Law, interdisciplinary faculty members to promotion and tenure committees to evaluate collaborative work.
- 4. Resources for the Pedagogy of Collaborative Teaching:** Sara Breslow of Environmental Anthropology and Emma Flores from Education developed detailed [recommendations for collaborative course elements](#) based on their experience teaching an IGERTs course.

**Examples of Structures that Support Collaboration at the UW**

- 1. Clear Guidelines for New Programs:** Plans are under way to establish clear process to set up collaborative, interdisciplinary programs in the Graduate School and publish guidelines fall 2013.
- 2. Interdepartmental Steering Committee to Coordinate Collaborative Instruction:** In recognition of the changing nature of healthcare delivery in the US, which is transitioning to a more team-based approach to patient care, the six Health Science schools at the UW have embarked on a major collaborative initiative to implement a common Interprofessional Education (IPE) curriculum that spans all six units. Under the IPE

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paradigm, each school's professional program will contain elements that are taught jointly by faculty from appropriate schools, both in classes and through practical simulations that are designed to better prepare students for practice in a team-based environment. A steering committee with representation from all participating Health Science schools is coordinating this effort, currently in a pilot stage..

3. **Dean-level Negotiations of Equitable Arrangements:** Faculty from the College of the Environment routinely teach introductory Biology courses in the College of Arts & Sciences. These courses are large and attract significant ABB revenue; however, there is no structural way to compensate the College of the Environment for their work. The respective deans' offices negotiated a mutually beneficial arrangement in which Biology pays a portion of the faculty members' salary at the COE rate based on a percent per-credit-formula.
4. **Building Co-teaching into the Program/Budget from the Start:** The Design-Use-Build cross-disciplinary unit built faculty buy-outs for co-teaching into the budget of their new Masters in Human-Computer Interaction + Design program. The additional cost was deemed essential to the curricular aims of the program. Core courses are co-taught from two intellectual perspectives: design (art) and human/computer interaction (engineering and cognitive psychology), advancing student learning as well as providing the program with a competitive edge over peer institutions in recruiting quality faculty and students.

#### Examples of Funding Models at the UW

1. **Mechanisms at the school or college level to launch collaborative efforts:** The College of Environment provides central funding for joint teaching efforts through a Cross Unit Teaching Incentive Fund. The one-time funding, capped at \$35k per project, aims to expand interdisciplinary, cross-unit offerings in creative directions that are attractive to students and thus sustainable under the rules of ABB. The college provides detailed criteria in an RFP. Funds have been awarded for:
  - a TA so a course can be expanded to serve another unit that requires it
  - a part-time student services person to promote a minor or certificate that will return enrollment and/or major funds through ABB
  - a skills or in-practice short course for grad students that will create interest in moving a degree or certificate program forward
  - summer program for gifted high school students linked to an existing or to-be-developed major
2. **Mechanisms at the department/center level to launch collaborative efforts:** The Simpson Center for the Humanities provides modest "collaboration" grants—one course release each for up to four faculty—to jumpstart faculty collaborations. (Buyout is pegged at the cost of a graduate student to teach a course; faculty may elect to take summer salary at that scale instead). The collaborations may involve submitting a large-scale grant proposal to national agencies, planning a major international conference, co-editing a substantial publication, and/or developing courses. Faculty may apply to the Simpson Center for follow-up funding. For example:
  - In 2011-12 two faculty members received a collaboration grant for the study of feminist art in Asia; they submitted a conference proposal to the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and planned two new courses. When their ACLS proposal for an international conference was funded, it was supplemented by further funding and administrative support from the Simpson Center in 2012-2013.
3. **Creative Unit-to-Unit Cost and Revenue Sharing Agreements:** Sociology, Statistics, and the Center for Statistics in Social Sciences joint list courses under an agreement for cost and revenue sharing. For example, the Sociology graduate methods course is open to students from the other two units, which compensate Sociology by funding a Sociology TA every few years.

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4. **Cluster Hires:** A provost-initiative to support data-driven discovery is providing up to 50% funding for 4-5 new faculty hires, with the remainder of funding supplied by the faculty's home departments. These faculty have a teaching and outreach obligation to the eScience Institute—the campus-wide “home” for this Initiative—proportional to the fraction of salary provided under the Initiative. The model is similar to that employed by the University Initiatives Fund to create units such as the Astrobiology program, the Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences, and the Center for Nanotechnology. Another example is the cluster hiring of four faculty in Freshwater Sciences by the UW Seattle Colleges of the Environment and Engineering together with UW Tacoma's Environmental Science.

#### Examples of Funding Models at Peer Institutions as a Target for Advancement Efforts

1. **Incentives and Seed Funding (University of Michigan):** The MCubed program at the University of Michigan creates an incentive structure for collaborative work. A two-year \$15m pilot provides incentive and seed funding for faculty-led collaboration. Any three faculty can submit a proposal for anything (teaching, research, service). When three researchers decide to “cube,” they register the project and receive \$60,000 to hire one graduate student, undergraduate student, or postdoctoral researcher. Cubes can join other cubes with similar focus. For example, if 30 faculty members coalesced around one idea, they could open a new large-scale research center with 10 funded positions quickly. Funding comes from a \$5m central commitment and 2-to-1 match by the schools, colleges, or investigators. Thirty-three cubes have been created as of May 2013. Learn more: <http://www.ur.umich.edu/update/archives/120509/mcubed>
2. **Cluster Hires (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign & University of Michigan):** The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign plans to hire 500 new faculty over the next five to seven years, many in clusters with an eye to diversity and interdisciplinarity. The cluster hires will take place in the six areas identified by their Visioning Excellence at Illinois, a 2y2d-inspired initiative that resulted in focus groups prioritizing six areas for future investment based on society's most pressing issues and the distinctive role Illinois might play in addressing them. Learn more: <http://apicciano.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2013/04/25/university-of-illinois-urbana-champaign-to-add-500-new-full-time-professors/#sthash.zsK1FZ61.dpuf>

The University of Michigan's Interdisciplinary Faculty Initiative created 100 new tenure-track positions for faculty with interdisciplinary research or teaching interests. From 2008-2011, UM created new positions in 25 interdisciplinary clusters in topics ranging from human health, environmental sustainability, the alleviation of poverty, digital environments in the humanities, to learning from massive datasets. Learn more: <http://president.umich.edu/init/init1.php>