STRATEGICALLY REDESIGNING LARGE ENROLLMENT COURSES

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INTRODUCTION:
A continuing issue that impacts effective teaching and learning throughout the institutions within UNC is the necessity of offering large enrollment courses to meet an increasing demand for student "seats", especially in introductory courses. However, this strategy has the potential to adversely affect a number of learning- and teaching-related factors, including:

1. <u>student performance</u> (D/F rates & retention, inconsistent learning experiences across multiple sections, student diversity in preparation, learning styles, etc.);

2. <u>course management</u> (finding sufficient classroom space, testing, attendance and other record-keeping,); and

3. <u>labor</u> (total costs, difficulty in recruiting qualified adjuncts or part-time instructors, and faculty/graduate assistant "drain" in providing Gen Ed courses);

4. <u>morale</u> (increasing teaching loads affect instructors, reduction in time for scholarly pursuits, and decreasing student access to personal instructor contact).

At this point in the development of UNC System, we need to find effective ways to redesign these large enrollment courses in ways that enhance learning in pedagogically sound, cost- and labor-effective ways, through the strategic deployment of information technology. Of paramount importance in our consideration of this strategic issue is our need to insure that, while we seek to reduce costs, we preserve academic excellence and enhance student learning while doing so.

The purpose of this proposal is to garner support for a collaborative, UNC-wide pilot initiative to investigate the potential for using nationally recognized (e.g., the Pew methodology) and/or system-developed methodologies to plan, implement and assess strategically-driven course redesign. Based on this pilot, we can decide how we can apply what we have learned about the process to redesign other courses on a systematic basis.

THE PEW METHODOLOGY ON LARGE ENROLLMENT COURSE REDESIGN AS A STARTING POINT:
The proposed redesign process would involve the direct application of the methodology employed by the Center for Academic Transformation at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for the Pew Grant Program in Course

Redesign (http://www.center.rpi.edu/InfoAppl.html). This methodology was selected as a starting point on the basis of its proven success and because of the following characteristics:

- Based on experiences of 30 Course redesigns at 30 universities and colleges
- Focuses on using IT to strategically address course-specific issues that impact learning
- Tested on wide range of academic course areas, including math, science, social science, humanities
- Tested using a variety of pedagogical strategies, including writing, collaborative learning, learner-centered environments
- Includes planning for learning, planning for cost, planning for assessment as necessary parts of the project
- Has consistently allowed colleges and universities to address course issues
- Is transformational for teaching and learning
- Carefully considers institutional readiness
- Carefully considers course readiness
- Can provide savings that can be reinvested in redesigning other courses, without compromising academic goals
- Requires use of existing materials so emphasis is on redesign

EXAMPLES HERE

HOW THE PEW METHODOLOGY WORKS:
The Pew methodology is based on the development and interaction of three types of planning. The initial emphasis is focusing on ways to enhance student- centered, active learning based on strategies identified as learning enhancement. The second emphasis is to consider how information technology can be used to reduce costs in a variety of ways within that new learning environment so that the course redesign is sustainable. The third emphasis is on assessing how well the course redesign changes the issues that were identified as being associated with the traditional course design. Briefly, the following steps are included in the methodology:
1. Define costs of traditional design
2. Identify key issues that redesign should address
3. Sketch out redesign, taking into account as many issues as possible
4. Define costs of redesign
5. Develop course redesign
6. Do test of redesign on test class
7. Implement redesign for whole course
8. Assess outcomes

PROPOSED STEPS, including a tentative timeline:
1) Inform Chief Academic Officers of the benefits/issues associated with a collaborative support structure for redesigning large enrollment

courses based on the Pew methodology. Request a formal statement of support by CAOs for proceeding with the project and, if forthcoming, identify what support CAOs think is an appropriate level their institutions can provide for the initial stages of such a project. Support may include directing travel money to support staff/faculty members to attend planning workshops and other collaborative meetings, reassignment of duties for staff /faculty to work on the project, stipends to support faculty work in the summer, agreeing to host a workshop, providing matching money with the UNC TLT Collaborative to bring in Pew-methodology experienced consultants from the Center for Academic Transformation at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, for example.
   (November 2003)

2) Identify and convene support teams from interested campuses to review **institutional readiness** and to inform them of course readiness criteria to act as their home support for faculty teams.
- Campus Support Teams are a group of 4-5 people, should include representatives of Teaching and Learning Centers, Instructional Technology groups, as well as specialized Academic Support units if present (Assessment centers, Institutional Research). Faculty who would agree to act as support people may also be included to fill out teams.
- Each campus should have a designated leader for its support team to serve as the "point person" for that campus. Most likely that person is one with background in teaching and learning and project management. The Directors of many already established Teaching Centers fit these criteria. The key responsibility of each support team is to prepare an Institutional Readiness statement based on the Pew Methodology, determine your institution's readiness to engage in large-scale redesign as well as to identify areas that may need attention on your campus.
- This collection of support teams would potentially supplement support for campuses who may lack expertise in specific areas of redesign.

(December 2003-January 2004)

3) Send out a call for course readiness proposals from faculty teams (2-3 faculty teaching the same course) at interested campuses, with support teams assisting faculty in the development of proposals. Review course readiness proposals, look for common disciplines and other characteristics which might offer inter-institutional collaborative opportunities for faculty and support teams.
   (February – April 2004)

4) Bring selected faculty/support teams together for intensive 2 day workshop to assist in the development of course redesign proposals. Workshop should include overview of cost analysis of existing design, development of a learning plan, preservation of academic and pedagogical

effectiveness, development of an assessment plan, as well as directions for costing the redesign. Use UNC teaching and learning resource people with directions from team who did project management of Pew project. Incipient plans are refined during this period.
    (May – June 2004)

5) Review learning, costing and assessment proposals with help from Center for Academic Transformation at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (they were the project managers for the Pew Grant Program in Course Redesign) and support teams from each of the campuses. Investigate possibilities for combining redesign proposals from multiple campuses.
    (June - July 2004)

6) Meet with Chief Academic Officers of participating campuses to inform them of the strengths/issues associated with their respective campus projects, potential costs involved in the specific redesign projects and possible strategies for moving the project forward on their campus.
    (August 2004)

7)Brief CAOs--September

PROPOSED OUTCOMES OF PHASE 1:

1) Institutional Readiness Profile for course redesign for interested campuses.

2) Corps of support people with specific training and experience in course redesign strategies, including learning plans, cost/business plans, assessment plans_ all of which have broader application to other course development planning

3) Set of redesign proposals for interested campuses to consider for implementation.