**Transforming Education Executive Committee Progress Report**

January 2018

The three goals and 9 strategies comprising the Transforming Education theme continue to be advanced through the ongoing efforts and activities of its *Working Groups*. These efforts are guided by the overarching Vision Statement embodied by the ***One Penn State 2025*** concept that “builds on our strong tradition of working as one university to provide a world-class education and drives us to be more integrated and flexible.”

Over the past months, the ***Task Force on the Framework for the Future of Online Education and World Campus*** has sought input from across the University and prepared a white paper expanding on this concept. The document, recently submitted to the Provost, identifies five guiding principles and accompanying examples of what would need to be done to achieve the vision. Next steps were discussed at the most recent Transforming Education Executive Committee meeting, held January 16th, including further vetting of the aspirational proposal.

Each of the Working Groups have been invited periodically to meet with the Steering Committee to provide an update on its activities and receive feedback. In addition, over the last week, the chair of the Steering Committee met with the leads of each working group to review progress for inclusion in this update, as follows.

***Learning Analytics Task Force****:* The committee is moving forward on two initiatives, one investigating the effects and benefits of faculty interventions on several of the most frequently taken courses (namely, the large-scale ECON 104 class taught residentially, and STAT 100 and 200 offered online), and a second that will study the effectiveness of different intervention strategies used in conjunction with the University’s new student academic warning and suspension policy. Projected activities include the adoption and implementation of an enterprise-wide system to allow for more efficient data acquisition, analysis, and use in promoting research and student success.

***Student Engagement Network (SEN) Advisory Group****:* The new SEN, now in its second year, is focusing its efforts in five areas. These include seed funding for student-initiated engagement experiences (161 students were funded through the first RFP), a soft opening of the Engagement Space in the HUB and first EXPO held in October (attracting 250 students, hiring of 10 student interns to serve as ambassadors for the initiative, funding of 2 faculty scholars and 5 faculty fellows to function as a Faculty Academy (with 40 students engaged in faculty-led projects), and collaboration with the joint Student Affairs/Undergraduate Education Development Board to promote opportunities for external funding. Projected activities include continued development of the Engagement Space digital portal and expanded collaborations with initiative sin the campuses and colleges as well as the EdTech Network.

***Enhanced Education Pathways (EEP) Committee****:* The focus of this initiative has been on developing and implementing programs and corresponding Open Doors scholarships to support student access and affordability. These include an initiative involving outreach to prospective students (RaiseMe), to bridge programs to assist entering students in getting a strong start (PaSSS and LEAP Plus), to interventions to help at risk students complete their degrees when they encounter challenges late in their studies (Complete Penn State). Projected activities will be devoted to developing a consolidated, holistic approach to Student Success through robust integration of academic advising, student aid, financial literacy, learning resource, and other student services.

***Open Educational Resources (OER) Working Group****:* Several initiatives are underway to reduce textbook and course material costs for students. These include the E-book licensing for World Campus courses, participation in the Open Textbook Network (including training of 57 faculty); selection of the Libraries Textbook and Resources Fund as the 2018 Class Gift, providing students access to 12,000 course materials throughout the Commonwealth; and collaboration among the University Libraries, Teaching and Leaning with Technology, and the Office of General Education to promote adoption of lower cost materials for the new inter-domain courses currently under development. Projected student savings over the next several years are expected to range from $850,000 for AY 2017-18 to $3,760,000 in AY 2019-20.

***Transforming Teaching and Learning in General Education****:* Key initiatives for this office include functioning as a hub for general education and project space for 16 faculty scholars, such as current work on crafting a GenEd Wikispace; research on the scholarship of teaching and learning in general education, particularly as it supports the Penn State 2025 vision; and annual seed grant funding for development of new courses to meet the integrative studies requirement. Projected activities include development of a planning tool for students to assist them in making effective and deliberate choices to meet gen ed requirements in conjunction with their majors, and making provision for recognizing faculty involvement in general education for both annual reviews and promotion and tenure evaluations.

***Learning Spaces Leadership Committee****:* Experimental spaces in Willard, Althouse 101 and Ag Sciences 110 continue to be utilized for research-based experimentation in how classroom design enables student engagement and pedagogical flexibility. A comprehensive lifecycle funding plan and a transparent and systematic process for requesting learning space upgrades, renovation and modifications are being developed. Projected activities include defining three models for active learning classrooms that can be applied to classrooms of different sizes (40, 70-80, 300 and >500 seats).

***Learning Design Resources Working Group****:* The goals of the Working Group include evaluating the availability of learning design resources to faculty across the university, examining learning design as a profession, and advancing learning design leadership, access and advocacy. Activities to date include conducting an internal audit of professional development opportunities for members of the learning design community, benchmarking the opportunities at peer institutions, and surveying the career advancement framework available to learning design community members at peer institutions.

***Faculty Development Resources Working Group****:* The charge for the Working Group includes inventorying the current university instructional resources for face-to-face, online and hybrid teaching formats, identifying gaps in the existing resources, and making recommendations for improving teaching and promoting teaching innovation at Penn State. The first two of these have been addressed, resulting in a published inventory and a conclusion that, while no significant gaps in resource availability exist, there is some unevenness and lack of awareness regarding the available services and variability across colleges, campuses and disciplines in terms of encouragement to engage in teaching development. A pilot survey has provided information on the “entry points” and “pathways” faulty use to seek and access resources and improve their teaching. Continued effort to ensure “friction free” faculty access to instructional improvement and innovation resources is planned.

***Research of Educational Transformation****:* Working group leaders have identified and adapted a contemporary model for institutional change (Elrod and Kezar, 2016) as a basis for using research to guide systemic change efforts across Penn State. This learning-focused model foregrounds organizational learning in a bottom-to-top collaborative approach and has been applied to development a specific proposal on “Using Research-based Pedagogies to Enhance Cognitive and Affective Outcomes of General Education. The effort initially devoted to developing the well-defined scope and approach for the working group has recently been transitioned to new leadership and has set the stage for strong progress going forward.

In related activities, the Transforming Education Steering Committee has been active in promoting responses to the calls for proposals for the first and second Strategic Planning Seed Grant funding cycles. Nineteen proposals were submitted for the first round, of which four were advanced by the Oversight Committee and two were ultimately selected for funding. These included a proposals to expand sustainable food systems via student farms at the Commonwealth Campuses and enhancement of sales industry support for employment opportunities through the Lehigh Valley Launchbox. For the second round, interested proposers were invited to submit concept papers and either present their ideas for feedback at a Steering Committee meeting or receive the collective written feedback from Committee members. 22 submissions were provided with input from the Committee through these mechanisms to help sharpen their final proposals, and feedback was also sought from the Transforming Education leadership by several groups seeking grants via the Digital Innovation theme.