Cultivating Community: Strengthening the Undergraduate Experience at Case Western Reserve University

Final Recommendations

Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE)
Case Western Reserve University

May 31, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CUE MEMBERSHIP

CUE members were selected by the Provost, with input from the school/college Deans. The CUE began its work in January 2016 and concluded its work in May 2018. In the membership list below, dates in parentheses indicate partial terms.

Kimberly Emmons
CUE Chair and Associate Professor of English

Hope Barkoukis
Associate Professor and Interim Chair of Nutrition

Amy Bieda
Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing

Richard Bischoff
Vice President for Enrollment Management

Robin Dubin
Professor and Chair of Economics

Donald Feke
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Professor of Chemical Engineering

David Fleshler (2016)
Vice Provost of International Affairs

Prince Ghosh
Undergraduate, Class of 2019

Daniel Lacks
C. Benson Branch Professor and Chair of Chemical Engineering

Frank Merat
Emeritus Associate Professor, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science

Susan Nickel-Schindewolf (2016)
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

Garretson Oester (2017-2018)
Undergraduate, Class of 2018

Jerrold Scott
Katharine Bakeless Nason Professor and Chair of Theater

Lou Stark (2017-2018)
Vice President for Student Affairs

Lee Thompson
Professor of Psychological Sciences

Blanton Tolbert
Associate Professor of Chemistry

Nishant Uppal (2016-2017)
Undergraduate, Class of 2017

Molly Watkins (2017-2018)
Executive Director of International Affairs

Jeffrey Wolcowitz
Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Adjunct Professor of Economics

Victoria Wright
Associate Vice President for University Planning and Administration

Acknowledgements

The CUE would like to thank all of the individuals – too numerous to identify individually by name – who have generously committed their time, expertise, and creativity to this process. We could not have produced our recommendations without the more than ninety student, staff, and faculty members of our Thinking Groups, who developed proposals and recommendations for enhancing CWRU general education, undergraduate pedagogy, experiential learning, advising and mentoring, and campus culture and environment. In addition, we offer our sincere thanks to the many students, staff, faculty, alumni, trustees, visiting committee members, and friends of CWRU who have listened, critiqued, challenged, and improved our thinking.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2016, the Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE) was charged with "formulating recommendations to strengthen the overall value, reputation, and desirability of CWRU's undergraduate experience." With this report, we offer the CWRU community our final recommendations for enhancing the undergraduate experience, and with it, the overall reputation and health of the university.

CWRU's current undergraduate experience is too often described by our own students as including unproductive stress levels, daunting workloads, and a sense of disconnection from peers, from disciplines outside of their majors, and from the proud history of CWRU. To be sure, this is not the entirety of our undergraduate experience: many of our students achieve exhilarating successes in their creative, scholarly, research, and entrepreneurial endeavors. Nevertheless, too many of our undergraduates do not feel fully connected to or supported by our institution.

Our research points to myriad reasons for this: students' concerns are as individual as they are. In this diversity, however, we see the strongest argument for a more *unified* undergraduate experience: centralization and coordination of key aspects of the undergraduate experience must be aimed at reducing unproductive stress, connecting curricular requirements to the departments where disciplinary expertise resides, providing students with consistently reliable resources and support, and fostering a stronger sense of community and connection to the university. Our final recommendations derive from the general principle that **CWRU must act quickly and decisively to begin functioning as a single university at the undergraduate level. We must cultivate, sustain, and celebrate our diverse, inclusive, and thriving community of students.**

This report details three major recommendations for the university. CWRU should:

1. Create coherence and flexibility in the undergraduate curriculum
2. Cultivate a diverse and thriving campus community with a comprehensive identity that capitalizes on our pragmatic character
3. Align governance, administration, and budget activities with the goals of the undergraduate experience

The Undergraduate Experience at CWRU

At Case Western Reserve University, we believe that our undergraduate experience should develop students' skills and competencies, strengthen their intellectual engagement with the world around them, and prepare them to find and develop careers consonant with their goals and aspirations. It should foster great friendships and encourage students to explore and articulate their personal values, senses of purpose, and strategies for living well. It should ensure that graduates develop the curiosity and confidence to succeed professionally, personally, and as citizens of a world characterized by rapid change and increasing complexity.

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Since the last comprehensive review of the undergraduate experience (2001), CWRU has made significant progress. The university today is a different place than it was two decades ago: our undergraduate student population has grown by nearly fifty percent; our geographic and global diversity has increased significantly; our selectivity and national reputation have risen dramatically; we have built the Village at 115, the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Residence Hall, and the Tinkham Veale University Center. There is much to celebrate.

That said, we cannot be satisfied. Too many of our students report too much unproductive stress and too little connection with the campus community. Our retention, persistence, and 6-year graduation rates, as well as the percentage of students who accept our offers of admission, are all lower than the rates of our peers across higher education.

Six-Year Graduation Rates (2009 entering class)	
University of Chicago	92%
MIT	92%
Duke University	95%
Johns Hopkins University	94%
Northwestern University	93%
Vanderbilt University	92%
Washington University in St. Louis	93%
Emory University	89%
Carnegie Mellon University	88%
University of Rochester	88%
Case Western Reserve University	**81%**
Peer Institution Average	92%

Source: CWRU Institutional Research

We have been making progress in the areas of retention and graduation. Our six-year graduation rate has risen slightly since the 2009 entering class: of first-year students who entered in fall 2010, 82.1% graduated in six years or fewer; for those who entered in 2011, 82.6% did; and for those who entered in fall 2012, the *five-year* graduation rate has risen to 83.4%.

In addition, the "predicted rate" of graduation used by *US News* in its college rankings has been recalculated. As of 2017, the proportion of undergraduate degrees awarded in STEM disciplines is also included as a variable. This change was made to improve the accuracy of the predicted rate, as institutions with relatively large STEM enrollments are more likely to have negative scores on this measure. CWRU's projected rate went from 87% in the 2016 rankings to 85% in the 2017 rankings, largely as a result of this change.

Thus, the gap between national predictions and CWRU's performance on six-year graduation rate is closing. Nevertheless, our six-year graduation and our year-to-year

student persistence rates still underperform when compared to the average rates of our peer and aspirational-peer institutions.

Our analysis of prospective students' decision-making processes reveals that CWRU holds only limited appeal for too large a portion of our applicant pool. Similarly, far too few of our graduating seniors are very satisfied with their overall experience at CWRU.

Seniors' overall satisfaction with CWRU undergraduate education											
	2001	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2010**	**2013**	**2016**	**NSSE 2017***
Generally	62%	66%	63%	62%	59%	61%	62%	53%	-	63%	54%
Very	20%	17%	24%	26%	28%	25%	23%	29%	-	13%	29%
Total	**80%**	**83%**	**87%**	**87%**	**87%**	**86%**	**85%**	**82%**	**81%**	**76%**	**83%**

Seniors who would encourage a high school senior to attend CWRU											
	2001	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2010**	**2013**	**2016**	**NSSE 2017***
Probably	31%	29%	38%	41%	37%	34%	34%	33%	-	26%	55%
Definitely	20%	18%	22%	20%	26%	24%	25%	30%	-	37%	26%
Total	**51%**	**47%**	**60%**	**61%**	**63%**	**58%**	**59%**	**63%**	**68%**	**63%**	**81%**

Source: CWRU Senior Survey, administered in paper form at commencement rehearsal through 2007; revised in 2013; replaced by CWRU Student Experience Survey in 2016. *NSSE results from 2017 are in response to similar (but not identical) phrasings of both the questions and the response choices.

These data illuminate a significant challenge for our institution: too many of our students will represent CWRU without enthusiasm (or potentially negatively) to their peers, friends, colleagues, and siblings. We must find ways to change this. We cannot afford to have our best cheerleaders feeling unenthusiastic about and disengaged from the university.

Our undergraduates need to know that we see them holistically and as an integral part of our community. We must reduce the barriers to their successes, strengthen our support for their post-college aspirations, and explain and promote the ways that CWRU is a uniquely powerful launching pad for their futures. Focusing on our undergraduate experience will involve major changes to administrative structures, curricula, and models for student engagement and support. These major commitments will, however, result in higher student satisfaction, improved retention rates, higher alumni allegiance, and greater demand from prospective students. This, in turn, will have tangible and intangible benefits for all of the CWRU Schools and the College, including more revenue (from alumni giving, lowered tuition discount rates, and higher student retention), more school spirit to support recruiting and promotion of CWRU programs, and an increased reputation for the university as a whole.

SUMMARY OF THE CUE'S WORK

The CUE met regularly from January 2016 through May 2018, during which time we:

- worked closely with a group of institutional strategy consultants, Art & Science Group, LLC (Jan-Dec 2016);
- developed a set of goals for the undergraduate experience (summer-fall 2016);
- convened five Thinking Groups and reviewed their reports (spring-summer 2017);
- drafted a set of Preliminary Recommendations (summer-fall 2017); and,
- reviewed feedback and formal written responses from each undergraduate program school and Undergraduate Student Government (fall 2017-spring 2018).

Throughout the CUE's work, we solicited and received valuable insights from the campus community through feedback sessions, online surveys, and individual and departmental correspondence and meetings.

As we began our work in spring 2016, we conducted a broad campus and community survey to collect ideas about the undergraduate experience at CWRU.[1] In October 2016, the CUE issued its first progress report. We then convened five open-forum discussions about the undergraduate experience at CWRU and specifically about our draft "Framework for the Undergraduate Experience," which was included in the first progress report. The CUE revised this Framework based on campus feedback, renamed it "Goals for the Undergraduate Experience," and subsequently revised it again, producing the current version, dated February 22, 2017. The CUE issued a second progress report in March 2017, describing the membership and activities of its five Thinking Groups (totaling more than ninety faculty, student, and staff members). In May 2017, the CUE convened a "Thinking Group Summit" to exchange ideas and synthesize themes across the Thinking Groups. We also issued a third progress report and compiled the Thinking Group recommendations.

In October 2017, the CUE released its preliminary recommendations in a report entitled, "Enhancing the Undergraduate Experience." We then convened eleven open forum discussions, some of which were targeted at specific groups (i.e., faculty, students, and staff/administration), and solicited feedback via email and an anonymous online survey. In response to our preliminary recommendations, the Faculty Senate charged its Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE) with initiating a formal feedback process. FSCUE requested written feedback from the Undergraduate Student Government, each of the Undergraduate Program Schools and the College, and the Chairs of Physical Education and of Nutrition and Biochemistry (in the School of Medicine). FSCUE also invited comments from each of the Professional Schools. Finally, the Student Life sub-committee of FSCUE conducted a series of focus group sessions with undergraduates who were not affiliated

[1] This initial feedback and other documents described in this section are available (with CWRU Network-ID) online: http://casfaculty.case.edu/kimberly-emmons/cue/

with student leadership/government organizations. All of this information was the subject of discussions by CUE and FSCUE throughout the spring 2018 semester.

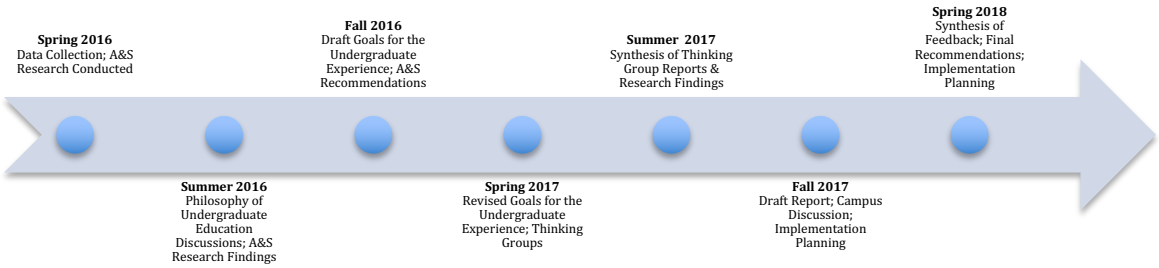

Figure 1: CUE Timeline and Summary of Activities

Now, at the end of these many months, we are pleased to present this final report to the CWRU campus community. As Figure 1 suggests, the conclusion of the work of the CUE (i.e., this final report) is only the next milestone in an ongoing process of enhancing the undergraduate experience at CWRU.

Institutional change does not depend upon committee reports, and we do not believe that any single report is adequate to the task of transforming our undergraduate experience. It is fortunate, then, that over the course of the years the CUE has been working, the campus community has continued to innovate, reflect, and design for a more vibrant future. Conversations started in CUE focus groups and feedback sessions have led to, or at least influenced, a range of new initiatives and activities. For example, this past April, the Student Presidents' Roundtable (an undergraduate student organization) sponsored the inaugural "Legacy Week," a series of pop-up activities and events celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the federation of Case Institute of Technology and Western Reserve University.[2] In addition, the Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE) has been working intensively with the CUE over this past spring semester to collect and review feedback on and then to plan responses to the CUE's preliminary recommendations.

Perhaps most visibly, President Snyder announced in early March 2018 that CWRU would pursue a more comprehensive approach to promoting undergraduate students' successes. The Student Success Initiative (SSI) has, over the past three months, rapidly been taking shape and is set to serve students as they plan for and arrive (back) on campus in fall 2018. This initiative arose in parallel with the CUE's work, responding to many of the challenges we identified and drawing on the feedback we received on our preliminary recommendations. **The Student Success Initiative represents a first step in addressing the CUE's recommendation that CWRU restructure its administrative functions in support of a more coherent undergraduate experience.** As a first step, the SSI will need the collaboration of faculty, staff, and students to achieve its ambitious promise: a campus culture of exploration, discovery, and success.

[2] See: http://experience.case.edu/org/studentexecutivecouncil/legacy_week

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS & FEEDBACK

In early October 2017, the CUE released its preliminary recommendations in a report entitled "Enhancing the Undergraduate Experience: Preliminary Recommendations for the CWRU Community." Table 1 summarizes the major and additional recommendations contained in that report, and it directs readers to page numbers and/or appendices within that report for more information.

Table 1: Summary of CUE Preliminary Recommendations (Oct. 2017)
Full Report Available: http://case.edu/provost/cue

Major Recommendations	Summary
University-Wide General Education	• A single set of general education requirements that applies to all undergraduates.
Explore Curriculum	• First-year guided exploration activities, culminating in an individualized Undergraduate Experience Plan.
CWRU Traditions	• Establish CWRU Day + Capstone Day as opportunities to reflect on and celebrate our undergraduate experience as a unified community.
Advising Team	• Academic Advisor + Undergraduate Experience Coordinator collaborate to support students throughout their undergraduate experience.
Curricular Review	• Departments/programs/schools review & revise curriculum to increase flexibility, to design exploration activities, and to integrate post-college planning.
Campus Community	• Study factors related to campus community, student connection, and institutional identity.
Additional Recommendations	**Summary**
Budgetary/Administrative Structure	• Create unambiguous reporting structure so that one individual (or small group) has authority over entire undergraduate experience (academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular) • Review budgeting structures to support UGER & common undergraduate experience
Campus Geography & Communication	• Central location for undergraduate services • Common University Calendar • University App • Physical Plant Improvements (especially humanities & social sciences buildings)
Institutional Identity	• Counter perceptions that CWRU is primarily a STEM university
Curricular Pathways	• Create clusters of courses to guide students through UGER requirements, focusing on common themes (or research, etc.)
Innovation Spaces	• Making & Doing spaces across the disciplines
Undergraduate Engagement Funds	• Guaranteed undergraduate funds to support unpaid internships, experiences (including study abroad) and/or research
Pedagogical Development	• Increased resources for UCITE & [U]Tech's Teaching + Learning • Pedagogy Summit • Winter Intersession

It is a challenge to summarize the wide range of feedback we received on our preliminary recommendations, but a number of themes emerged, including:

- Much of the feedback from the undergraduate Schools, the College, and undergraduates focused on a need for *more* involvement and consultation on new initiatives. Clear and consistent communication is something that has been a weakness of the university; to achieve our goal of a more cohesive undergraduate experience, this needs to change.

- In general, CWRU is supportive of a university-wide general education requirement, although there is lively debate and disagreement about the precise structure and content of such a requirement. The comments on the CUE's curricular proposals (a University-Wide General Education Requirement, the Explore Curriculum, and a robust curricular review) suggest that these issues will require significant additional consultation and rational governance processes.

- In general, CWRU is supportive of increasing students' flexibility and choice in their academic experiences and of creating "space" (both temporal and geographic) for reflection and community-building, though here, too, there is debate about how best to achieve this goal. In 2019, we will face the added complication of the distance between the main campus and the new Health Education Campus, which has the potential to isolate nursing (and potentially other pre-health) students.

- All of the undergraduate Schools and the College are concerned about the number of tenure-track faculty available to meet the demands of an enhanced undergraduate curricular experience. Several schools called explicitly for increases in their tenure-track faculty and cautioned against unchecked growth in the administrative functions of the university. Indeed, in the time between PCUEL (2000) and CUE (2017), the total undergraduate student population increased by 49.97%, while the tenured/tenure-track faculty across the four undergraduate program schools increased by only 2.21%.[3]

- There was consistent alarm at the perceived costs associated with the CUE's preliminary recommendation to develop a "Team-Based" approach to undergraduate advising. Faculty were most concerned about the number of new staff required to meet the demands of the proposed system and about the potential for de-emphasizing the role of faculty advising and mentoring.

- Several schools remarked on the challenge of the "culture change" recommended by the CUE. They argued that significant, consistent, and ongoing structural resources and oversight would be necessary to achieve the goals outlined.

[3] In the same time period, CWRU's first-year enrollment went from 738 (AY 00-01) to 1,309 (AY17-18), a growth of 77.37%. (Source: Institutional Research)

Over the course of spring 2018, FSCUE invited the Chair of the CUE to attend the portions of its twice-monthly meetings that focused on the CUE's preliminary recommendations. Over the course of the semester, FSCUE drafted and then approved three resolutions in support of principles underlying some of the CUE's recommendations.

On April 3, 2018, FSCUE approved the following resolutions:

- **University-Wide General Education Requirement:** We support the principle of a common general education curriculum with the goal that all CWRU students should graduate with a breadth of knowledge and the background to effectively participate in society.

- **Undergraduate Exploration of Majors, Careers, CWRU and the Region:** We support the principle that CWRU students should, during their first year on campus, be given the opportunity to explore a variety of majors and potential careers, and learn more about resources and opportunities available from CWRU and through other regional institutions.

- **Students' Interest in Multiple Subjects:** We support the principle that all CWRU students should have sufficient room in their schedules (*i.e., beyond the requirements of the first/primary major*) to pursue other interests or a single interest in the depth typically associated with a minor.

These resolutions were, in turn, presented to the executive committees (or equivalent faculty bodies) of the undergraduate program schools, the departments of Physical Education, Nutrition, and Biochemistry, and to the Undergraduate Student Government. These bodies were asked to provide feedback by Commencement. As of the writing of this report, all of the responses to the resolutions have been positive, though many groups included clarifications and caveats with their endorsements.

These resolutions affirm the value of the underlying goals of the CUE's preliminary recommendations, and they represent the first step toward implementation of concrete reforms. As the CUE concludes its work, we are encouraged to see the CWRU faculty governance structures take over the processes of curricular reform and implementation.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The CUE began its work with an institutional strategy study, conducted by Art & Science Group, LLC, which set out to understand how CWRU is positioned in the decision-making processes of prospective students and to identify strategies that would strengthen the undergraduate experience for the future.[4] The study recommended that CWRU:

- Create a more **palpable focus** on the undergraduate experience
- Reinforce the feeling among students that they are **highly valued** by the institution and **will enjoy** their college experience
- Define an institutional identity that is more **comprehensive** than STEM-intensive and that capitalizes on the **pragmatic** character of our campus
- Design **post-college planning**, **experiential learning,** and **leadership** opportunities that are **seamlessly integrated** into the undergraduate academic and social experience

The CUE's final recommendations align with these strategies and with the guiding principles of preparation (i.e., providing a continuum of mentoring from programs that invite students into the university through opportunities that help them move on); unity (i.e., increasing coherence and cohesion in the undergraduate experience); and wellness (i.e., fostering balance in and attention to all aspects of students' lives).

Our recommendations arise from the urgent need for CWRU to take steps to function as a single university at the undergraduate level, cultivating, sustaining, and celebrating its diverse, inclusive, and thriving community of students.

[4] Art & Science Group, LLC conducted a similar study prior to the formation of the President's Commission on Undergraduate Education and Life (1999-2001). The most recent study took place January-August 2016.

Recommendation 1: Curriculum

Create Coherence and Flexibility in the Undergraduate Curriculum

1.1 Design & adopt a university-wide general education requirement

A single, university-wide general education requirement (GER) is consistent with our "single door" admissions policy, which grants students admission to the university and not to a specific School or the College; it strengthens our common academic vocabulary; and it ensures that all CWRU graduates have the breadth of knowledge and diversity of experience necessary to thrive beyond the university.

To decrease stress and increase flexibility in the undergraduate experience, **we further recommend that the university work toward an overall cap on required undergraduate credit hours of 120.**[5] These required credit hours should include the university-wide general education requirement, all major requirements, and allow for some flexibility for students to pursue additional areas of interest.

We recommend a comprehensive GER framework that includes:

- Student-driven and guided exploration of the resources and opportunities afforded by the university and its surrounding institutions and communities
    - these activities should include individualized planning, supported by faculty mentors/advisors, as well as by "navigators" from the SSI
    - these activities should be a required part of the first-year experience
- A limited set of required courses that emphasize core skills (e.g., communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking), intellectual diversity (e.g., engagement with the three broad disciplinary categories: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics; Humanities, Performing and Visual Arts; Social Sciences), and opportunities for experiential learning and independent research (e.g., capstone projects).
- Curricular space and flexibility that allows students to make choices and explore multiple interests
- Campus-wide celebrations of students' capstone achievements, to be held each semester and on weekdays when undergraduate classes do not meet
- Attention to holistic health and wellness, including students' personal discovery of purpose and understanding of how to live well

[5] We recognize that this cap is lower than the required course loads for some of our professional programs and that such programs must answer to external accrediting bodies as well as to the CWRU undergraduate experience. In such cases, we recommend that programs justify their additional requirements with reference to curricula at peer institutions and to guidelines from professional/accrediting bodies.

General oversight, periodic review, and resolution of inter-school concerns about the GER should rest with the Faculty Senate, through its Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE). Routine governance and day-to-day administration of the component parts of the GER must be led by faculty from the departments/programs that contain appropriate disciplinary expertise. Such a faculty governance committee (or set of committees) must be given significant representation and authority within the Faculty Senate's oversight procedures.

In addition, any new GER implementation must include careful and ethical transition planning for the faculty members without the protections of tenure who are currently providing general education instruction (e.g., in SAGES). Such planning should both support such faculty members' transitions into academic positions elsewhere, and also define future CWRU positions necessary for sustaining the new GER.

1.2 Conduct faculty-led, robust curricular reviews, aimed at ensuring disciplinary excellence, reducing unnecessary stress, and increasing flexibility for students

While individual departments do regularly conduct significant curricular and programmatic reviews with an eye toward disciplinary excellence, we recommend additional attention to the larger curricular ecosystem at CWRU, for example: studying the frequency and timing of course offerings across departments/programs; identifying multiple pathways for students to complete requirements and explore other interests; and providing information about special/unique course offerings as early as is feasible.

Such reviews must be supported appropriately with compensation for departments and faculty (e.g., for summer work), additional administrative/staff time, CWRU and peer-institution data, and pedagogical consultations (e.g., from UCITE, the Office of Faculty Development, and the [U]Tech Teaching + Learning Technologies group), as appropriate.

We recommend that such reviews:

- Focus on enhancing the first-year experience by reducing the number of large lecture-format courses and increasing experiential learning opportunities for first-year students, where feasible and appropriate
- Work to reduce students' perceptions of being required to do "busy work" (e.g., by clarifying the purpose and value of assignments)
- Create structures to reduce conflicts among major assignment due dates and tests, especially across large-enrollment courses within and outside the department/program
- Integrate post-college planning into the co-curricular activities of programs and departments

Recommendation 2: Community & Campus Identity

Cultivate a Diverse and Thriving Campus Community with a Comprehensive Identity that Capitalizes on our Pragmatic Character[6]

2.1 Foster a diverse, inclusive, and thriving community of undergraduate students

- Counter negative perceptions of non-STEM fields and students who pursue them (e.g., by providing opportunities and incentives for interdisciplinary collaboration and team-building)
- Build on and increase CWRU's *comprehensive* academic strengths by designing co-curricular activities that support our pragmatic character (e.g., post-college planning and integrated study-abroad, leadership, and internship opportunities)
- Recruit and retain faculty, students, staff, and university administrators who represent the inclusive aspirations of CWRU, including people of all racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, national and international backgrounds, as well as those who represent a diversity of thought, pedagogy, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, political affiliation, and disability[7]
- Value diverse points of view and ensure that multiple perspectives are engaged on advisory boards and within governance structures
- Celebrate the diversity of accomplishments across the entire university community (e.g., balance representations of academic and programmatic excellence)
- Collaborate with student groups to review and strengthen the AY social calendar, focusing on connecting smaller interest group activities with campus-wide events
- Expand on the Orientation experience to "re-recruit" students to the university (i.e., design opportunities beyond the first weeks of the academic year that encourage students to be proud of their choice to attend CWRU)
- Encourage connections among students, staff, and faculty outside of their traditional institutional relationships (e.g., dining hall visits, attendance at campus-wide events, community collaborations)

[6] The dedication plaque in the quad-level entrance to the Sears Library building reads, in part: "This building…is dedicated to the concept…that the humane tradition is an essential background for the scientist and engineer." We believe that the humane tradition is essential not just for scientists and engineers, but for all students at CWRU. We also believe that the spirit of pragmatism – rooted in curiosity and a love of tinkering, questioning, making, and problem-solving – is fundamental not just in professional disciplines, but across the university.

[7] See the University's Diversity Statement: https://case.edu/diversity/about

2.2 Communicate clearly and effectively about the undergraduate experience

- Renovate and update buildings across campus, especially in the humanities and social sciences, to ensure that the campus physical plant reflects and broadcasts our comprehensive strengths across the disciplines.[8]
- Foster connections that bridge "academic" and "social" aspects of the undergraduate experience (e.g., make sure all parts of the university are involved in and aware of the schedules of events such as Homecoming and Legacy Week)
- Capitalize on engagement tools (such as the new "Campus Groups" platform) to coordinate university calendars and to facilitate the efficient delivery of accurate and usable information about campus activities
- Consistently articulate the goals for the undergraduate experience at CWRU to prospective and current students, families, faculty, administrators, and staff

[8] The Lawlor Group, in 2017, performed an informal audit to assess CWRU's challenges for recruiting undergraduates in the CAS. This report argued that "the diminished state of the buildings housing the humanities and social sciences" is a significant impediment to recruiting students with interests in these disciplines, and constitutes a "brand disconnect" for **all** prospective students.

Recommendation 3: Governance, Administration, and Budget

Align Governance, Administration, and Budget Activities with the Goals of the Undergraduate Experience

3.1 Create clear and unambiguous governance structures that support a unified experience and ensure accountability for undergraduate initiatives

- Identify specific outcomes and assessment strategies for key undergraduate initiatives; commit to changing course/modifying activities if outcomes are not being met as expected
- Create robust advisory groups and governance structures for all major initiatives, including General Education and the Student Success Initiative
- Report each semester to appropriate governance structures (e.g. Faculty Senate, Undergraduate Student Government, Staff Advisory Council) on key undergraduate experience activities and progress

3.2 Align administrative structures and budgets with the goal of a stronger and more coherent undergraduate experience

- Align administrative structures to support a unified undergraduate experience
- Construct budgets that reward collaborative and collegial programming in support of the undergraduate experience
- Decrease the culture of competition for resources across undergraduate academic programs/schools
- Make accounting choices that align with educational goals (for example, discount cost of attendance, not solely tuition, so as to distribute the budgetary impact of financial incentives for student matriculation)
- Incorporate portions of Auxiliary Services revenue that are attributable to undergraduates (e.g., undergraduate student dining and housing) into the operating budgets that support undergraduate education (i.e., budgets for the undergraduate schools/college and for undergraduate-focused initiatives such as the SSI)

RESOURCES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ONGOING INITIATIVES

Resources

In its initial charge to the CUE, the Provost's office anticipated "that major investments in the undergraduate programs (up to a few million dollars annually) will be available to enhance or transform the academic offerings and student-life experiences that contribute to the learning of CWRU's undergraduate students." As we conclude this final report, we call on the university to fulfill this promise without diminishing the research, graduate and professional, and community missions of the university.

Financial and administrative support will be necessary to achieve the vision of a coherent and more unified undergraduate experience at Case Western Reserve University. As concrete proposals are developed, we recommend that each proposal be accompanied by a realistic cost analysis and that all initiatives include accountability measures and annual reporting requirements, designed to ensure that anticipated benefits materialize and that problems are addressed as efficiently as possible.

Responsibilities

University Administration & the Provost's Office

- Make implementation of CUE recommendations a university priority; communicate this clearly and consistently, including by creating a process for sharing information about the status of CUE-relate proposals and implementation timelines (e.g., an internal website)
- Ensure appropriate resource support for the undergraduate experience, including authorizing the hiring of additional tenure-track faculty in departments with significant general education responsibilities
- Appoint leaders to drive implementation of CUE recommendations, including an appropriate mix of faculty who served on the CUE and formulated these recommendations, as well as other faculty members who have a vested interest in the long-term success of the undergraduate experience
- Require ongoing tracking, monitoring, and reporting of CUE-related implementation processes, with visibility at President's Council/Cabinet and Board of Trustees (via their Academic Affairs and Student Life Committee)
- Develop a plan with the school/college Deans that provides an ethical transition for faculty members without the protections of tenure who may be affected by changes to the general education curriculum

Faculty Members and the Faculty Senate

- Serve on implementation committees related to CUE recommendations
- Provide feedback on proposals as they emerge through the implementation and governance processes
- Hold the university accountable for meeting its goals and for reporting on the progress of key initiatives, including the GER and the Student Success Initiative
- Charge the new "Budget Priorities" sub-committee of the Faculty Senate Finance Committee with providing support and guidance on CUE-related implementation
- Continue to review curricula, pedagogical methods, and individual course activities to ensure they meet the highest disciplinary standards; consult with UCITE, [U]Tech, and the Office of Faculty Development, as appropriate
- Integrate academic, experiential, post-college planning, and leadership activities into programs, courses, and advising/mentoring activities, as appropriate
- Stay connected to and informed about the undergraduate experience

Undergraduate Students

- Participate on implementation committees and provide feedback when initiatives are discussed
- Hold the university accountable for meeting its goals and for reporting on the progress of key initiatives, including the GER and the Student Success Initiative
- Complete all course evaluations and participate in advisor feedback processes
- Seek out academic, experiential, post-college planning, and leadership activities that support your overall goals and aspirations
- Practice self-care and take advantage of wellness activities offered on campus

CWRU Community

- Ensure that undergraduates feel valued on campus; remember what it was like *not to know* something about CWRU and then make an effort to help others benefit from your experience
- Respect CWRU's diversity of experiences, circumstances, perspectives, and academic disciplines
- Enjoy and share the environment that surrounds us, not just in our adjoining University Circle and Cleveland communities, but also across the globe in our connected research, scholarly, and creative networks

What's Next: Ongoing Initiatives

Student Success Initiative

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) is being launched with the support of President Snyder's $500,000 academic leadership award and an additional approximately $500,000 from the Board of Trustee's strategic investment fund.[9] Interim Associate Provost for Student Success Tom Matthews will lead this effort, which will integrate key student services, including student advancement, educational support, post-college planning, experiential learning, and first-year and family programming. Michael Mason, who has worked with first-year students through the Office of Undergraduate Studies since 2011, will be the Director of Student Advancement, leading the team of "navigators" who will assist students throughout their time at CWRU.

As this initiative develops, it will be crucial that other CUE recommendations be implemented in ways that will work with and shape the operations of the SSI. Faculty mentoring and advising, for example, will remain central to the student experience, so we must foster productive collaborations between the "navigators" in the SSI and individual faculty mentors/advisors. Similarly, as the SSI identifies challenges and roadblocks to student success, responses must be discussed within a representative advisory group and implemented with support from a strong governance structure that includes appropriate faculty representation. All of these processes will require frequent and detailed communication among the SSI, the undergraduate faculty, the office of Undergraduate Studies, the administration, and the campus community.

Undergraduate Schools and the College

As the CUE has been working, all of the undergraduate Schools and the College – as well as the departments of Physical Education, Nutrition, and Biochemistry – have continued to engage with the undergraduate experience at CWRU. Several schools have updated their definitions of "breadth" within their school-specific general education curricula; other initiatives have looked at experiential opportunities, post-college planning and networking, and increasing flexibility for students.[10] These local changes are significant. They need to be considered in conversations about implementing the CUE's final recommendations.

CUE Transition Planning

The Provost has authorized a small group of faculty members to work over summer 2018 to develop draft proposals on topics related to our major recommendations. These drafts will incorporate the detailed feedback we received on our preliminary recommendations. This group will be focusing primarily on the general education requirement, including

[9] See: http://thedaily.case.edu/president-trustees-direct-1-million-support-new-student-success-initiative/

[10] A summary of these school-based activities is available online: http://casfaculty.case.edu/kimberly-emmons/cue/

opportunities for student-initiated and guided exploration; on the academic calendar and student workload; and on developing strategies that will enable the SSI to collaborate effectively with faculty academic advisors and mentors. Draft materials will be prepared with guidance from and in consultation with the leadership of the undergraduate Schools and the College, the current and immediate past chairs FSCUE, as well as other faculty members. The purpose of this work is to facilitate the transition from the CUE into regular academic governance processes by developing draft materials that reflect our final recommendations and that incorporate the feedback we have received.

In fall 2018, FSCUE is scheduled to continue its work in responding to the CUE's recommendations. Members of the CUE will likewise continue to provide support and information as the university makes plans that will include appropriate voting and implementation processes related to our final recommendations.

Members of the CWRU community are invited to share their responses to this final report, or to offer specific suggestions for how we move toward implementation of these recommendations, via email to pcue@case.edu. We appreciate the continued engagement of the entire CWRU community and look forward with enthusiasm toward our collective future.

APPENDIX: MEMBERSHIP OF THE CUE THINKING GROUPS (2017)

The Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE) formed Thinking Groups to perform focused studies and provide recommendations in areas perceived to be critical to advancing CWRU's undergraduate experience. Members for each group were selected by the Provost with input from the Deans. These groups began work in January 2017 and reported their recommendations to the CUE in May 2017. The CUE used these reports to develop the major recommendations contained in this report.

The **Campus Culture & Environment Thinking Group** was charged with identifying strengths and making recommendations to address weaknesses and exploit opportunities in the current campus culture and community environment. This group considered questions of inclusion and diversity, campus climate, student workload and time commitments, wellness, and school spirit.

Membership:

Hope Barkoukis, Co-Chair
Tim Beal, Co-Chair
Amy Backus
Colleen Barker-Williamson
Jeff Capadona
Janice Gerda
Brian Gray
Caroline Gray
Teona Griggs
Christopher Jones
Kathryn Lavelle
Edwin Mayes
Amanda McCarthy
Jennifer McCarthy
Beth McGee
Megan Miller
Garretson Oester
John Protasiewicz
Mohan Sankaran
David Schiraldi
Ashley Schuett
Lilly Tesfai

The Pedagogy Thinking Group was charged with identifying best practices for delivering undergraduate education, focusing in particular on innovative educational practices that are congruent with the University's goals and aspirations.

Membership:

Irena Kenneley, Co-Chair
Blanton Tolbert, Co-Chair
Timothy Black
Evren Cavusoglu
Chris Flint
Tracey Messer
Chris Mihos
Karen Potter
Kurt Rhoads
Sree Sreenath

The **Experiential Learning Thinking Group** was charged with assessing the current status and making proposals for the future of experiential learning activities at CWRU, as those activities support the University's goals and aspirations. This group will consider the wide variety of experiential learning activities our students pursue (for example: research & creative activity, service learning, community engagement, international experiences, co-ops, internships & practicum experiences).

Membership:

Jennifer Johnson, Co-Chair
Jerrold Scott, Co-Chair
Rebbeca Benard
Malcolm Cooke
Nancy Dilulio
Robert Greene
Divya Manocharan
Timothy Nicholas
Sheila Pedigo
Drew Poppleton
Andrew Rollins
Catherine Scallen
Peter Shulman
Molly Watkins
Gary Wnek
Elizabeth Zimmerman

The **Undergraduate Advising & Mentoring Thinking Group** was charged with using available assessment data about the current status of advising/mentoring on campus and making proposals for the future of undergraduate advising at CWRU, as it should be configured to meet the University's goals and aspirations. This includes examining the structures and practices of academic advising, career and post-college planning, and other forms of mentoring/advising of undergraduate students (with consideration of the numbers of students in particular programs).

Membership:

Kathleen Horvath, Co-Chair
Frank Merat, Co-Chair
Marc Bouchet
Donna Davis Reddix
Debbie Fatica
Don Feke
Roger French
Alberto Gonzalez
Brian Gran
Jim Hurley
Michael Mason
Tom Matthews
William Oldham
Maryjo Prince-Paul
Roger Quinn
John Ruhl
Robert Spadoni

The **GER Thinking Group** was charged with assessing how well the current undergraduate curriculum meets the University's goals and aspirations. This group focused primarily on the current General Education Requirements (GERs) of the University and those portions of the disciplinary curricula that are meant to provide breadth within the undergraduate experience.

Membership:

Marc Buchner, Co-Chair
Lee Thompson, Co-Chair
Hari Baskaran
Karen Beckwith
Jennifer Carter
Evanne Juratovac
Peter Knox
David Rothenberg
Beverly Saylor
Tiffany Welch

In addition to these Thinking Groups, the CUE established a Google Discussion List, the **CUE Undergraduate Advisory Group**, to increase student involvement with the activities of the CUE. Email invitations to join the Google Discussion List were sent to all students who expressed interest in joining one or more CUE Thinking Groups, and to those students who had been recommended to the CUE by their peers, CWRU faculty and staff. In spring 2017, this list had thirty-six members.