

Higher Education Leadership: Where and Who Are the Interdisciplinary? An Introductory Study

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by
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THE COMPENDIUM OF CONCEPTS to be applied to American Higher Education in the 1990s is already replete with synonyms addressing the major loss of resources, the demand for new accountabilities, and the externally-driven dissatisfaction with the priorities and performance of the academy.

As America's colleges and universities struggle to give meaning to such terms as "downsizing," "growth by substitution," "TQM," "outcome measures," "performance indicators," and "regaining the public trust," there seems to be a special urgency to consider the place of interdisciplinary programs within the academy. This urgency relates not to their intellectual foundation or integrity. Specifically, the concern is the relationship between

these programs and the University's administrative leadership responsible for providing the support and resources required for their sustenance in a period of unprecedented crisis and challenge.

Through the efforts of the Association for Integrative Studies and individual scholars within the last fifteen years, a national literature has emerged to promote, to synthesize, and to support interdisciplinary studies. Its welcomed strengths are in its creativity, its attention to learning empowerment, and its definitions of effective teaching. This literature tends to be addressed to faculty, perhaps more than university administrators, for it provides a rationale for invention and resourcefulness and offers designs of incorporation that permit interdisciplinary programs to become established components in institutional activities.

At the same time, the literature on higher education administration, while much more extensive, has tended not to address the issue of managing interdisciplinarity in the academy. That literature, often of little interest to faculty, has tended to be less inventive and resourceful as it describes and prescribes approaches to be taken in the management of the educational institution. Guidance for equipping institutional leadership to deal with the "in" concepts, such as "downsizing" and "reallocating resources," will continue to be an extensive segment of the literature provided for administrators. This will parallel the increasing recognition that momentous decisions will need to be made by these administrators. In dealing with the national crisis of confidence in higher education, the following quote provides an important summary:

It is that explicit examination of academic purposes that constitutes the critical first step in the process [of regaining higher education's leadership]. Not only must the nation's colleges and universities achieve substantial savings, they must do so in a manner that acknowledges what business they are in — who they seek to serve and why. The questions of purpose and design that have gone unasked for so long must now be addressed. What ought to emerge from this process is a set of initiatives, each with a more focused mission, each able to benefit from the timely introduction of new people, methods, and facilities made available through the divestment of those programs and services that no longer fit. (PEW Institute, *Policy Perspectives*, September 1991.)

What is the fit between interdisciplinary programs and academic administrators today? That question and others connected to the educational

philosophy, academic program preferences, and career experiences of today's institutional leadership are the ones we have sought to consider in our research project.

Our survey study is based upon several conditions. We have sought to examine administrative leadership *only* in state-supported institutions, each of which houses interdisciplinary programs and in some instances maintains an interdisciplinary component in its general education or core offerings. Our study did not include institutions already committed to a specific, all-embracing concept of interdisciplinarity.

Also important is the fact that the respondents were asked to define interdisciplinarity from their own perspectives. Their definitions, as expected, have tended to focus on academic *programs* based upon integrative approaches in utilizing the disciplines to obtain specific learning experiences for students. We assume that this circumstance, while recognizing only one role interdisciplinarity can play in the educational process, represents the situation within the more typical public university or college administrative leadership in the Upper Midwest.

In approaching this study it has been our contention that academic administrators have a preconceived or evolving paradigm of education, which includes concepts of preferred and efficient learning, that influences their expectations of both discipline-based and interdisciplinary curricular models. Our study investigates the relationship that previous experience in interdisciplinary programs, either in teaching or administering or both, has on the administrator's view of education. As such it is a study of the values that administrators give to interdisciplinary programs.

We believe in particular that there is a strong likelihood that an administrator's previous experience may condition the actions that the individual takes in administering and justifying multidisciplinary programs. Commonly-held concepts such as "good teaching," "effective advising" and "rewarding educational experiences" are given functional definitions in the daily actions of these administrators. In an academic system built upon the foundation of specialized fields, focused disciplinary identity, and in fact often on a "we-they" mentality, how does an administrator approach the programs that are often seeking to integrate perspectives rather than maintain the walls of specificity?

While this study is an introductory exploration, the results presented give an assessment of academic leadership as it relates to interdisciplinary programs. We think this is the first systematic survey of institutional leadership on the worth of interdisciplinarity in the academy. It serves as a baseline of the background and experience of deans, vice presidents, and presidents

responsible for setting the academic agenda for the 1990s and for the apportioning of resources. As such, we hope it will be of assistance to interdisciplinary programs as they too seek to respond to the conditions of the 1990s and in particular as they relate to university and college administrators.

Instrument and Survey Data

The survey was sent to 200 administrators in Minnesota including members of the Minnesota State University System Office, North Dakota and South Dakota. The list of administrators included Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans and Assistant and Associate Deans. Approximately 100 surveys were returned (see Table 1).

Information was collected regarding characteristics of the administrators including age, gender, length of time in administration, original academic discipline, experience in teaching and administration of integrative studies programs. Additional questions were asked regarding types of integrative programs and value attributed to those programs. Administrators were asked what advice they would give regarding what works in enhancing integrative programs.

Results

Profile of Administrators. Administrators in Minnesota, North and South Dakota were selected for the study. Of those who responded, 39% were members of the Minnesota University System (not including the University of Minnesota or private colleges), 28% were from North Dakota universities, and 23% were from South Dakota universities. Six percent of the responses came from the Minnesota State University Board Office. Four percent of the respondents did not indicate a system to which they belonged.

The profile of a typical administrator is not unusual. Three out of four administrators who responded to the survey were males either in their 40's (45%) or in their 50's (31%). Somewhat less than half of the persons who responded were Presidents or Vice Presidents (41%) in their respective universities, while the others held positions of Deans and other persons of similar rank (49%). The remaining 10% of the respondents were from the State University Board Office or didn't indicate their rank.

The respondents were relatively new to administration. Forty-five percent had been in administration under 10 years; 65% had been in administration under 15 years; and just over a third, 34%, had been administrators 16 years or more.

TABLE 1.
“Higher Education Leadership: Where and Who are the Disciplinarians?”
Selected Characteristics of Respondents (N=100)

Location of University	Percent
Minnesota	39
North Dakota	28
South Dakota	23
Minnesota State University System Office	6
Missing	4
Former Academic Discipline	
Humanities	25
Social Sciences	15
Natural Sciences and Engineering	17
Education and Nursing	6
Agriculture and Home Economics	5
Business and Economics	14
Applied Fields	12
Missing	6
Current Position	
Presidents and Vice Presidents	41
Deans	49
Other/Missing	10
Tenure in Administration	
5 Years or Less	21
6 to 10 Years	24
11 to 15 Years	19
16 to 20 Years	12
21 to 25 Years	14
26 to 30 Years	4
30 Years or Over	4
Missing	2
Gender of Respondent	
Female	23
Male	74
Missing	3
Age of Respondent	
31 to 40 Years	8
41 to 50 Years	45
51 to 60 Years	31
61 Years and Over	12
Missing	4

When examined by 5 year intervals, the most frequent category, in which nearly a quarter of administrators were found, was the 6 to 10 year category, followed by the 1 to 5 year category which contained 21% of those who responded to the survey.

Administrators were asked to indicate their original academic disciplines. Their answers reflected representation across all the major disciplines. Humanities was the highest represented discipline with 25% of the respondents, and Natural Sciences and Engineering was second with 17%. Other categories included Social Sciences with 15%, Business and Economics with 14%, Applied Fields with 12%, Education and Nursing with 6%, and Agriculture and Home Economics with 5%.

Extent of Integrative Experience. Integrative experience was defined as participation in programs that utilized knowledge across disciplines, or that structured the learning experiences of students to reflect a multidisciplinary approach. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent (none, some, a lot) to which they had taught or administered integrative studies programs (see Table 2).

Based on the survey responses, the following general characteristics emerged from the data. Although it is impossible to know the characteristics of those who didn't answer the survey, we suspect they had little or no experience with integrative studies.

From the 62% of the sample who responded to the integrative studies questions, 34% indicated they had teaching experience in integrative studies, and 28% had administrative experience with integrative studies. However, only small percentages — 5 and 6, respectively, indicated a lot of experience teaching and administering of integrative studies.

It seemed reasonable to construct a composite integrative studies score consisting of both teaching and administrative experience under the hypothesis that policy decisions are made in the light of one's total experience. As shown in Table 2, this variable was given four categories of no experience, a little experience, a mixed category of substantial experience, and a lot of experience. Under this framework, the survey showed that 14% had no experience, 19% had a little experience, 23% had substantial experience, and 6 percent of the respondents indicated a lot of experience with integrative studies. By totaling the latter two categories, we found that nearly half the administrators who responded to this part of the survey had substantial to a lot of experience with integrative studies.

Gender Differences. Differences in integrative experience by gender of the university administrator is largely explained by taking into account that only 23 of the respondents were female. Of these, a larger proportion of female administrators had substantial (46%) to a lot (15%) of integrative experience than did males (35% and 8%, respectively) although, because of their greater numbers in the population, more males guide integrative studies programs in universities than do females.

TABLE 2.
“Higher Education Leadership: Where and Who are the Disciplinarians?”
A Profile of Integrative Programming by Teaching and Administrative
Experience of Presidents, Vice Presidents and Deans (N=100).

Experience with Integrative Programs	Percent
Teaching	
None	26
Some	36
A Lot	5
No Response	33
Administration	
None	32
Some	34
A Lot	6
No Response	28
Composite Integrative Experience*	
No Experience	14
A Little Experience	19
Combined Little and A Lot	23
A Lot of Experience	6
Unknown	38

* Composite Integrative Experience was calculated by combining responses of No Teaching Experience with No Administrative Experience; A Little Experience was calculated by combining No Teaching but Some Administrative or Some Teaching but No Administrative; A Little, Some and A Lot (Mixed) was calculated by combining Some Teaching, Some Administrative, Some Teaching, A Lot of Administrative, and A Lot of Teaching, Some Administrative.

Integrative Experience by Current Position. Respondents were examined according to two categories of current university positions. Presidents and vice presidents were treated as one group, and deans and persons of equivalent rank were treated as a second group. The data show that about the same percentage of presidents, vice presidents and deans reported no or a little integrative studies experience. The percentage of deans with a substantial amount of experience (44%) exceeded the presidents and vice presidents (31%). However, while there were no deans with a lot of experience, 23% of the presidents and vice presidents reported a lot of experience with integrative studies.

Experience by Tenure in Administration. An examination of the data in Table 3 shows that as length of time in administration increases, respondents are less likely to have reported substantial or a lot of experience with integrative studies. In fact, most persons who are involved with integrative studies are found among the group having 5 to 15 years of administrative experience.

Experience by Academic Discipline. Persons with the highest levels of integrative studies experience — substantial and a lot — are found in humanities, social sciences and natural science and engineering disciplines. In this survey, administrators in education and nursing, and in agriculture and home economics were found to have lower levels of integrative studies experience.

What Types of Integrative Studies Activities Exist?

Over 75 different programs were provided by respondents in answer to the question that asked which integrative studies were offered at their universities and how much value did the administrator give that program.

The 75 distinct programs were grouped into ten categories. These included: women's studies, honors, multicultural, international, interdisciplinary, specific subjects, graduate programs, faculty programs, social sciences and other types of programs (see Figure 1).

The most frequently mentioned integrative activities were in the areas of honors, international, specific subjects and interdisciplinary programs. Least often mentioned were integrative activities involving faculty such as Faculty Exchange Programs, with the graduate studies, women's studies, and social science programs receiving intermediate mention.

Table 4 shows the number of integrative studies program listings adjusted by the number of respondents from each of the three participating states. The figures enclosed in parentheses indicate the weighted average number of program listings by category of listing.

We recognize there are methodological weaknesses that may affect the data represented in Table 4. However, there is substantial uniformity of program listings across the state universities, and across categories of programs named. Nine of the ten categories of programs are found in universities located in each of the three states examined. The largest average number of programs was found for the honors category, followed closely by programs in the international category. Next most frequently named, but representing only half as many programs, were those categorized as specific

TABLE 3.
“Higher Education Leadership: Where and Who are the Disciplinarians?”
Integrative Experience by Location of University, Former Academic
Discipline, Current Position, Tenure in Administration, and Gender
Expressed in Percent of Respondents Who Provided Data.

Location of University	Integrative Experience*			
	None	A Little	Mixed	A Lot
Minnesota (N=22)	27	36	32	5
North Dakota (N=19)	11	37	42	11
South Dakota (N=17)	35	6	41	18
Minnesota State University System Office (N=2)	0	50	50	0
Former Academic Discipline				
Humanities (N=16)	25	6	56	13
Social Sciences (N=9)	11	56	11	22
Natural Sciences and Engineering (N=11)	0	36	46	18
Education and Nursing (N=4)	25	75	0	0
Agriculture and Home Economics (N=4)	25	25	50	0
Business and Economics (N=9)	33	33	33	0
Applied Fields (N=8)	38	25	38	0
Current Position (N=58)				
Presidents and Vice Presidents	23	23	31	23
Deans	25	31	44	0
Tenure in Administration (N=62)				
5 Years or Less	9	18	64	9
6 to 10 Years	16	37	37	11
11 to 15 Years	10	20	60	10
16 to 20 Years	50	38	0	13
21 to 25 Years	30	40	20	10
26 to 30 Years	50	50	0	0
31 Years and Over	50	0	50	0
Gender of Respondent (N=62)				
Female	8	31	46	15
Male	27	31	35	8

* Integrative Experience was calculated by combining responses of No Teaching Experience with No Administrative Experience; A Little Experience was calculated by combining No Teaching but Some Administrative or Some Teaching but No Administrative; A Little, Some and A Lot (Mixed) was calculated by combining Some Teaching, Some Administrative, Some Teaching, A Lot of Administrative, and A Lot of Teaching, Some Administrative.

subjects, multicultural, and interdisciplinary programs. Social science, women’s and graduate programs were named somewhat less often, and activities characterized by faculty involvement were least often named as integrative studies programs.

FIGURE 1.
Categories of Integrative Studies Programs

Women's Studies included courses listed as Women's Studies.

Honors included Honor's Programs and Scholars Program.

Multicultural included multicultural, Native American Studies and Ethnic Studies.

International included European Studies, Latin American Studies, International Studies, International Business, Canadian Studies, American Studies, Area Studies, World Civilizations, Year in China and Akita.

Interdisciplinary studies included Multi-Discipline, Interdisciplinary, Team Taught General Education core courses, Integrative Studies, College Integrated Courses, Pilot Integrated Courses, Portsmouth Exchange and Tri-College University.

Specific Subjects included Environmental Studies, Computer Systems, Control Systems, Computer and Business Studies, Writing Paired Classes, Biotechnology Major, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Management Information Systems, Athletics, Foundations Studies, Technology, News Center, Cytotechnology and Medical Technology.

Graduate courses included Masters of Selected Studies, Masters of Natural Science, Masters in Liberal Arts, Masters in Information Media, MBA Program and Material Engineering/Science Ph.D. Program.

Faculty Activity Programs which included adjunct faculty appointments and department initiatives. Examples include Faculty Exchange Programs.

Social Sciences included: Peace Studies, Gerontology, Addiction Counseling, Health Education, Humanities, Public Administration, Social Science, MIS (Business and Science), POM (Business and Science), Human Relations, Health Administration, Communications, Social Implications of Biomedicine, and Legal Assistant Program.

Under the Other Types category, the following were listed: Bachelor of Liberal Studies, Perspectives, Elective Studies, General Education, Core Curriculum, University Studies, Dance Program, Residential College, Student Teaching, Open Studies, Freshman Orientation and Internships.

On the average, 39 Minnesota administrators listed 1.8 or a total of 70 integrative studies activities; in North Dakota, 28 administrators listed an average of 1.7 and a total of 48 integrative studies activities: and in South Dakota, 23 administrators listed an average of 2.7 and a total of 61 integrative studies activities.

TABLE 4.
Number of Average Listings by Ten Categories of Integrative Studies
Mentioned by Administrators in Minnesota, North Dakota and
South Dakota Universities (N=90).

Category of Integrative Studies	State of University							
	Minnesota N=39	North Dakota N=28	South Dakota N=23	Total N=90				
	No.	Ave.*	No.	Ave.*	No.	Ave.*	No.	Ave.*
Honors	24	(.6)	12	(.4)	12	(.5)	48	(.5)
International	22	(.6)	6	(.4)	16	(.7)	44	(.5)
Specific Subject	7	(.2)	6	(.2)	12	(.5)	25	(.3)
Multicultural	9	(.2)	5	(.2)	6	(.3)	20	(.2)
Interdisciplinary	6	(.2)	8	(.3)	5	(.3)	19	(.2)
Social Science	9	(.2)	5	(.2)	2	(.1)	16	(.2)
Women's	7	(.2)	5	(.2)	4	(.2)	16	(.2)
Graduate	6	(.2)	1	(.0)	4	(.2)	11	(.1)
Faculty Activity	2	(.1)	0	(.0)	0	(.0)	2	(.0)
TOTAL	70	(1.8)	48	(1.7)	61	(2.7)	201	(2.2)

* Averages were calculated by dividing the number of listings by the number of respondents from each state.

Discussion

From these listings it is evident that there are a variety of definitions of integrative studies. One category could be a course which is team taught with faculty from multiple disciplines such as English and Philosophy, but in an honors category. A variation of this would be a special course such as "Power, Influence and Values" which is an Honors class required of each Honors student and which is team taught by individuals from a variety of disciplines.

The second category would be a program which requires courses from a variety of disciplines. This would include International Studies which selects courses with an international focus taught across the university.

A third category is a program that allows students off-campus integrative experience such as a term overseas or an exchange program with other universities.

Another category was any integrative area that was listed as faculty activity programs such as Faculty Exchange Programs, department initiatives and graduate programs that are supported across disciplines.

Benefits and Obstacles of Integrative Studies

Benefits to the Students, Faculty and University. Respondents were asked to list the benefits of integrative studies programs to students, faculty and the university. The responses will be discussed in the order listed.

Students. In reviewing the responses, a number of categories of benefits were evident. In the opinion of the administrators, benefits to students included becoming exposed to a variety of ideas and viewpoints and developing intellectual skills. Also important was gaining a broader social perspective. Other benefits were listed with less frequency. They included interacting with people of diverse backgrounds, attending smaller and more focused classes and experiencing more realism in the classroom.

Faculty. The categories mentioned by administrators as benefits of integrative studies to faculty included broadening the academic perspective, sharing ideas and interaction with others, acquiring knowledge outside of the discipline, intellectual excitement, stimulation and growth. Less frequently mentioned were engaging in challenging activities, acquiring additional skills in teaching and research methods and promoting professional development.

University. Over 25% of the administrators listed diversification and improvement of the curriculum as a major benefit that integrative studies brings to the university. Also important was empowerment of students and the attraction of better students. Other categories listed included enhancing the university's reputation and faculty cooperation and refreshing faculty. About 5% stated that there were few to no benefits from such programs.

Obstacles to Students, Faculty and University. *Students.* Administrators listed several obstacles to students that existed in integrative studies. Over 20% identified poorly-defined goals and objectives. Other obstacles included current university or major field requirements prohibiting any added programs and responsibilities. Less-mentioned categories were problems with faculty, limitations in course selection, resource limitations, and departmental barriers.

Faculty. The categories listed as obstacles to faculty regarding integrative studies included time commitment, planning, preparation time difficulties; lack of training, specialization or depth of subject matter; and scheduling, coordination, logistical, and departmental problems. Other categories included interdepartmental squabbling, arguments over turf or domains, lack of rewards, and limited resources.

University. The administrators listed several obstacles that the university presented in relation to interdisciplinary programs. Of top concern was limited resources with the next concern being lack of rewards and interdepartmental problems. Following these concerns were scheduling and coordination problems, time commitment issues and lack of training in subject matter.

Discussion. Generally speaking, the benefits mentioned strongly reference the capacity of integrative studies to empower students and faculty by broadening the perspectives and sharing and interaction with other people. This was also the theme in benefits to the university expressed in the context of diversifying and improving the curriculum while attracting better students.

In the open-ended comments regarding benefits gained by the university by offering integrative studies courses, some additional observations were noted. There were comments that indicated that the administrators could find “few if any” benefits. They stated that they were “uncertain” or even felt that “there were no obvious benefits.” While these comments were few in number, it is important to note that the benefits were sometimes difficult to identify.

While there was a common theme related to benefits to students, faculty and the university, there were also common themes in the area of obstacles. It appears that the obstacles are more in the mechanics or the “how to make it work” category. Obstacles included perceptions of poorly-defined goals and objectives, time commitment and planning and lack of preparation. Others felt that the current curricular demands were such that anything different was difficult to incorporate. Here, the view is that the multidisciplinary approach is probably an “add on” instead of an integration into the ongoing curriculum across the institution.

Advice for Administration of Integrative Studies Programs

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked what their advice would be to facilitate successful integrative studies in the university. Three particular categories emerged. Suggestions included those related to faculty, how to make programs work, and how to gain successful programs.

In the category dealing with suggestions for faculty, several important observations were identified. They included identifying the right faculty who are respected among their colleagues. They need to be successful integrators

who can initiate a new perspective in learning. In addition, there is the need to be able to pair compatible faculty to work on the interdisciplinary approach.

In the section on “how to make interdisciplinary programs work” the administrators offered the following suggestions.

“The people involved in the course must meet frequently prior to teaching the course to clearly define the goals and objectives.”

Administrators must be totally supportive. They need to provide the opportunities and rewards to encourage successful adventures. In-service training of faculty on the teaching and benefits of interdisciplinarity is of value as well. It is important to focus on the holistic development of students.

“Encourage, reward, recognize, participants. Show interest, attend activities, and listen.”

Additional advice included developing informal committees around specific program/grant opportunities which create an important starting place. It was suggested that Honors and international programs are the best starting points because students are highly motivated. In addition, good coordination is critical to allow the flexibility required for successful programs. Administrators felt it was critical to keep admissions standards high.

In the section “hints for success,” the strongest advice was to find a good program director.

“I think that to facilitate integrative studies you need to make them a part of more majors or required in general education; make them more popular and useful to students.”

“The main task is choosing the ‘right’ faculty to act out the fire in their own bellies, inspire other similarly inclined faculty and support them. This can be done by ‘running interference’ with established and bureaucratic preventors.”

Some believe that working in interdisciplinary areas is like trying to push a rock up the hill! On the other hand, the consensus is that this experience is incredibly rich. There is true synergy that is created between faculty, student and subject matter. It is where life actually exists.

Recommendations

From the profiles extracted from the data of this study as well as from the many written comments provided by the participants, it seems relevant that we frame several recommendations for the consideration of the leadership of interdisciplinary programs on today's campuses. Of major importance in these recommendations is the attention given to the abilities of migrative programs to convey their worth to institutional administrators who are in need of pertinent assessment of educational value at a time of great stress for the academy.

A. Recommendations for Interdisciplinary Programs:

1. *Clarification of Program Goals.* Encourage clarification of programs goals to include not just “how” interdisciplinarity is to be achieved but “why.” Express these goals in institutionally relevant terms that can help to explain purpose, relationships, and intended results. Include these goals or the essence of the programs in frequently used publications and reports by the University.
2. *Proactive Assessment Strategies.* Encourage program adoption of proactive assessment strategies to document value and to influence the institution's environment for measuring educational (teaching and learning) effectiveness. Faculty within interdisciplinary programs are generally better positioned than administrators to lead in the development of outcomes assessment strategies that relate their students' performance to that of their institution. Indeed, with increased pressure for institutional reporting on effectiveness, interdisciplinary programs may well find it to their advantage to assume greater responsibility in constructing institutional strategies for documenting academic performance and value.
3. *Longitudinal Approach to Collecting Baseline Data.* Institute a greater longitudinal approach in collecting evidence of a program's importance. The respondents in the survey placed heavy emphasis on the benefits of interdisciplinary programs for faculty; however, they reported hesitations in seeing comparable benefits for students. This would warrant increased emphasis on documenting a program's long-term value to its student participants. We are not aware of many systematic surveys of alumni that report to the institution the values ascribed to interdisciplinary programs.

We are curious as to whether or not graduates of interdisciplinary programs show any career advantages, higher sense of self worth, greater leadership involvement, or broadened understanding of intellectual and educational phenomena than graduates not in these programs. Here, alumni may provide the responses as well as the statistics on placement, career performance and educational satisfaction that can be included in the concept of a program's worth. An added benefit of this strengthened association between alumni and the program is the ability of graduates to express to University administrators in their terms (as do other graduates!) the benefits of the program and their interest in its well being.

B. Recommendations for the Association of Integrative Studies:

1. *Interaction in Programs by Administrators.* Include in the annual conference program greater opportunity for university administrators — Presidents, Academic Vice President, and Deans — to interact with the issues, concerns and perspectives of interdisciplinarity in the academy. This could be achieved in roundtable discussions as well as in formal sessions. It would be important to include their leadership in assessment and their influence in contributing to the University's agenda in the 1990s.
2. *National Association Publications.* Prepare, perhaps in consultation with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and/or other associations serving university and college administrators, publication(s) to enhance the understanding of university administrators about integrative studies programs.

With recommendations 1 and 2, there seems to be the need for the AIS to respond to the implicit assumption that interdisciplinarity in today's university culture is a luxury — a concept that can be afforded in good times when institutional image is being enhanced but not reflective of a mainstream commitment when resources are reduced. How does a program based on interdisciplinary structures provide evidence of exemplary (or even extensive activity) in the traditional fields of research, teaching and service? Administrators, as noted in our survey, need to know.

3. *Improvement of Students' Preparation.* Assess the terminology and language identified with higher education in the 1990s and deter-

mine, for both the benefit of the members of AIS and for the larger readership of the literature on higher educational administration, how the critical issues of empowerment of students through integrative studies can be articulated.

4. *Institutional Investments and Dividends*. Specifically, as with most faculty, AIS members may not be fully aware of how costs are accounted and values reported in today's higher education enterprise. Rapidly changing funding formulas, the concept of "cost centers" and the use of accounting-based aberrations such as "growth by substitution" warrant the need for the faculty leadership of programs to be conversant with the economic and fiscally-based constructs that are being used in higher education today. Likewise there is the need for these faculty to be able to respond in this language, in this setting, for they must be able to answer the key question, "Do institutional investments in these interdisciplinary programs realize dividends that are proportionally greater than instructional investments elsewhere?"

Additional recommendations seem appropriate as part of the initial assessment of this survey. Search committees, for example, might profit from more cogent understandings of interdisciplinarity and a more insistent request for a candidate's philosophy of education in good times and bad. Interdisciplinary program directors might do more to showcase their successes with members of the professional and corporate communities that also influence an institution's concept of performance.

With a more contemporary and clarified understanding of the value of interdisciplinarity in today's educational climate, there is an opportunity for interdisciplinary programs to greatly help universities in their basic task of regaining public trust for higher education. These programs, along with the clear support and leadership of senior college administrators, can be in a position to help shape the preferred educational experience for students and the preferred outcomes for higher education.

In closing, interdisciplinary programs must be more understandable to administrators. In using the language of the 1990s, interdisciplinarians need to articulate the value they bring to the university, students and faculty. Accountability is the key phrase of the 1990s. Programs will need to be able to clearly define their contributions to the academy if they expect to continue to receive a share of the shrinking resources and actually to guarantee interdisciplinary survival. In addition, alumni should be tapped to indicate their

perceived dividends from participating in interdisciplinary programs. Finally, if universities place a high value on integrative programs then they need to be aware of the fact that administrators do not automatically have experience or comfort in administering these programs.

A key response from one of the respondents summarizes the advice given: “The main task is choosing the ‘right’ faculty to act out the fire in their own bellies, inspire other similarly inclined faculty and support them. This can be done by ‘running interference’ with established and bureaucratic preventors.”

Next steps for our own work include further analysis of the fit between interdisciplinary programs and the leadership of academic administrators. More work needs to be done in reviewing the effect of the educational philosophy and the academic career experience of administrators on the views and values they place on interdisciplinary programs in the academy. Specifically, the next phase in this study includes a survey of faculty and students in relation to the perspectives and expectations that they bring to interdisciplinary programs. An analysis of the congruence between administrator-faculty-student perceptions of the value and benefits of interdisciplinary programs would be an important contribution as well.

We believe that there is a critical role for interdisciplinary programs as we move towards the twenty-first century. The need for college graduates who can utilize their leadership and perspectives in flexible, problem-solving environments will only increase. Addressing the problems of a global society in the 1990s and beyond requires the very best approaches to education and leadership. Interdisciplinarity has the promise of providing the critical role in this arena.

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