Planning for Our Students: New Academic Initiatives and How You Can Help

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Outline of presentation

- Welcome
- New Initiatives
  - Engagement
  - Master’s degree innovation
  - Student retention
- Questions and answers
Welcome to OU!

- You’ve found a great place to hang your hat.
- Many people here to support you.
- Beyond your unit and college:
  - Simin Pulat, Vice Provost of Faculty Development
  - Mark Morvant and Center for Teaching Excellence
  - Alicia Knoedler and VPR’s office
President Boren and Provost Harper have a quite a vision for our university.
- Faculty impact
- Student success
- Community impact
- Academic branding

These new initiatives flow from that vision
- Engagement
- Master’s degree innovation
- Student retention
Civic and community engagement

- Much of this going on in various pockets of the university
  - Experiential learning & internship programs
  - Community assistance days (e.g. The Big Event)
  - Faculty research for community orgs & industry

- We’re looking to build a central platform to further support it
  - Vision: OU as a unique laboratory for society
  - Carnegie designated “Engaged University.”
  - Community Engagement Labs
Lost in Translation: Translating Severe Weather Threats

Course Faculty
Keith Gaddie—Political Science
Joy Pendley—Center for Applied Social Research
Darren Purcell—Geography & Environmental Sustainability

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores severe-weather related vulnerabilities in south Oklahoma City’s growing Spanish-speaking communities. Students will perform policy and communication research to: determine the ability of English and Spanish-language mass media to provide warnings and related information; community member and community organization use of severe storm information; and community member and community organization ability to access shelter and promptly respond to severe storm threats.

JUSTIFICATION
The course will access the disciplines of policy science, communications, and human geography. It affords a unique opportunity for students across STEM, journalism, and social science fields to conduct applied research on a major interdisciplinary problem. The Oklahoma City metropolitan area affords a unique laboratory for students to develop an understanding of: severe storm threats; threat preparedness; threat communication; and the capacity of an indigenous, growing minority language community to access crucial services from state and national agencies and the broadcast media. Students will be exposed to a dynamic research and writing environment that is problem oriented, and which utilizes expert oversight and peer review mechanisms common to funded federal research projects.

CLASS UNITS
The community engagement lab will proceed through three units:

(1) Reading/drilling down into the problem and issues. ENGAGEMENT THEME: foundations. Campus experts and guest speakers. Learning what we don't know. In-class small group application activities after hearing from guest speakers.

(2) Fieldwork/role play. immersion in the community. ENGAGEMENT THEME: interaction. Field trips to NWC, Ch 9 and Telemundo, south OKC community groups. Class time will be spent synthesizing what we have learned as participant observers in the community each week.

(3) Tangible projects/deliverables. Each small group will design and deliver an actionable plan for the external community. ENGAGEMENT THEME: projects for clients. Backward & forward mapping. Stay on task, deliver on time.
Severe Weather Warnings in Spanish: Community Engagement Lab

- [http://newsok.com/article/5367020](http://newsok.com/article/5367020)
Experiential learning
If you have external experience, serve as a resource for students & colleagues
Propose a community engagement lab!
Get engaged in Norman!
  ◦ Community groups (Rotary, CCFI, City task forces)
Get engaged at OU beyond your discipline
  ◦ Three types of faculty from HERI survey
  ◦ Interdisciplinary efforts (teaching & research)
  ◦ Helping build new programs & institutions
Master’s Degree
Innovation
Degrees Awarded by Year at OU–Norman by Level, 2002–2013.

Bachelor's (3.6% avg growth)

Doctoral (4.3% avg growth)

Master's Degrees (1% avg growth)
Master’s Degree Innovation: What Can you Do?

- There will be much discussion about master’s degrees in the coming semesters.
  - Jump in with ideas!
  - If you’ve seen master’s programs that work well elsewhere, bring those ideas up.
Student Retention

- Provost Harper has a real passion for this topic, as do I.
- OU fall to fall retention rate is 85%
  - Peers with similar student bodies have 90–92%
- What should we focus on?
Retention: what can you do?

- Don’t fall into the weed-out mindset
- Think of yourself as part of the retention solution
- Teach an introductory class!
- Teach a gateway class for University College
- Show the students who you are—connect!
Thank you.
Good luck at OU!