

Report of the Task Force on Program Histories: Faculty Day, November 7, 1973

Perhaps the major discovery of the Task Force was the nearly total morass of information of all kinds contained in the Program and Group Contract Histories. Much valuable information is to be found in the Program Histories, and faculty should make efforts to pursue individual questions in them. The body of material forms a variety of sources, however, but offers little hint at the broader picture of how well we are doing what we're doing here at TESC.

Identifying sources is one thing, interpreting the material is another. Again, the Task Force encountered two pressures: a) the mind rejected confusing data; and b) attempts to 'abstract' the histories was generally rejected as not useful. Instead, the Task Force considered the broadest implications of what the body of the material might tell us in sum, which would be useful to pass along to the faculty planning process as a whole. Remember, history is interpreted from experience, and serves the function of attempting to prevent past mistakes from being repeated. The total experience of the programs is rich and varied, consequently, the Task Force centered on problems common to all. The result was a few BASIC questions we feel should always be a part of the planning process. Attention to these details prior to the inauguration of the program may prevent problems as these safeguards seem to have emerged as intrinsic elements of successful programs. The March 8, 1973 memo: "Some Big and Little Wheels Which Probably Don't Need to be Rediscovered" (from the Old Coordinators to the New Ones) is still a thoughtful, useful item for the consideration of ANY embryonic faculty team, or program idea.

QUESTIONS THE TASK FORCE FEELS VITAL:

- 1) How Clear is the Program Theme? Most successful programs have possessed clearly discernible thematic threads. Clear enunciation and constant restatement of the program's theme prevents trouble.
- 2) How interdisciplinary is the program?
- 3) Clear, imaginative use of faculty expertise (both from team members, TESC faculty at large, and visitors) seems to provide useful cement to hold the program together. Therefore, HOW do you intend to use that expertise?
- 4) Do you understand the need for a WRITTEN, CLEAR, AGREED UPON FACULTY COVENANT? You must! (Related to this is the need for a clear statement of what students are expected to do--very nearly as vital as the need for a Faculty Covenant.)
- 5) What kinds of students (basic, advanced, highly motivated, or not motivated, a mixture?) are you aiming at?
- 6) WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO PROVIDE IN THE WAY OF SUPPORT, INSIGHT, UNDERSTANDING, AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR MINORITY STUDENTS? Few if any (two known besides CAM) even admit there were minority students in the program. What will be your commitment to skills development for all students?
- 7) Do you take yourselves too seriously? How about a sense of humor?
- 8) How will you handle faculty needs for 'recharge' time? Relief from the massive pressures Coordinated Studies imposes?
- 9) How much of the program's work requires faculty to work outside their areas of speciality? What is the nature of that outside work? Its intensity? Can faculty be supported through the use of outside expertise to make them more comfortable in unfamiliar territory?
- 10) Are you willing to bust your tails to create a vital, healthy faculty seminar? Are there clear goals for the Faculty Seminar? Do you intend to really emphasize helping faculty learn to be better teachers? How much time will be allotted to business; to the book; to interaction among the team?
- 11) Do you plan any student input into program direction, change, or development? There are a variety of ways, but make it clear to students what their responsibilities are: advisement only, fullblown planning, sink-or swim, etc...

- 12) How will faculty evaluations be handled? Think about doing it at least once each quarter, with a year-end wrap up. Its hard, but can be an effective force in welding a TEAM together.
- 13) How do you plan to deal with the range of abilities among the students? What sort of individualized-tutorial instruction have you planned? What sort of student evaluations are planned?
- 14) How do you plan to utilize lectures and films? Remember, these tools can and will provide important restatements, or reinforcements of the program theme, and go a long way toward providing that minimal structure that makes students feel more comfortable about themselves and their learning. Will lectures and films be clearly tied to themes or will they be "enrichment"?

While these certainly are not the only questions which might be asked, and there are no guarantees that once you have paid close attention to the details inherent in these questions a program will inevitably succeed, the Task Force feels careful attention to these questions which have emerged from our perusal of the histories will provide a more solid base from which successful programs may operate.

Program History Task Force:

Dave Hitchens, Chair
Winnie Ingram
Gil Salcedo
Phil Harding
Lorraine Marshall
George Dimitroff
Betty Kutter

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