RUTGERS

Campus as Classroom

An Ecosystem for Learning™ Production

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Project Presentation
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Clifton Strengths

- Input (Strategic Thinking)
- Positivity (Relationship Building)
- Ideation (Strategic Thinking)
- WOO (Influencing)
- Intellection (Strategic Thinking)

- No Executing in Top 5

Thoughts about strengths

- People understate the importance and uniqueness of their skills and talents because they come easy to them
  - "It's only easy because you're smart."

- Making connections

Thoughts about strengths

- My current position reinforces/plays to my strengths (totally by accident)
  - Central organizational location
  - Understanding of the global picture
  - Contact with many people
  - Understanding of curriculum, operations, ideas, nitty-gritty details about course creation/administration/registration
  - I “control” something people often really, really need
    - They’re nice to me
    - I can do what are perceived as favors (or, at least, appreciated)
  - I have no choice

Broader context and questions

- Ecosystem for Learning
  - The landscape upon which the student intellectual and developmental experience occurs
    - Content/programming/ideas
      - Courses, research projects, extracurriculars, conversations, and more
    - Spaces
    - Technology
    - Networks
    - Culture
    - This is a reality. But are we leveraging this reality, these interconnections?

Broader context and questions

- Ecosystem for Learning (continued)
  - Ideal characteristics of our ecosystem for learning
    - Fluid boundaries (disciplines, contexts, etc.)
    - Connected
    - Students are active
    - Engaged
    - Students are self-aware of their development and the overarching themes in their academic, other experiences
    - Creative
    - Innovative
    - Collaborative
    - Student-faculty contact
    - Failure is encouraged and seen as a learning experience
    - Spaces that promote/allow the development of disciplinary/substantive awareness
    - Democratic

Broader context and questions

- Making connections at Rutgers (e.g., team science)
  - How to do it?
  - If you build it, they will come – NOT.

The proposal

- Campus as Classroom: An Initiative to Expand the Use of the Physical Campus for Course-Related Activities and Assignments
- My project:
  - More fully inventory and publicize these spaces
    - Searchable database, Interactive map
  - Encourage faculty utilization of these spaces
    - Identify candidates who might be a good fit
    - Grants
    - Centrally (dean's office?) organized joint activities that students from multiple courses can participate in
  - Expand resources for faculty
    - Exemplary lesson plans, activities, and assignments

Benefits and concerns of campus as classroom

- Benefits
  - Additional educational resource/perspective
  - Place-based learning
  - Can span the disciplines: a tangible commonality
  - Time spent outdoors good for student mental health

- Concerns
  - Don’t duplicate existing efforts: Living Labs, Sustainable Raritan River Initiative
  - Difficulty of changing teaching practices
  - Lack of follow-through/momentum in subsequent years (both a conceptualization and execution issue)

Main achievements

- Database prototype completed
  - Matching spaces and courses
  - Building out information on spaces
- $$$ for incentives/funding costs secured
- Prototype can stretch beyond matching courses and spaces
  - “Simply” add more nodes: talks, research agenda, individuals, etc.
- Outreach occurred on a broader front than just campus as classroom
  - E.g., Hackathon on the Ecosystem for Learning, Scarlet Pimpernel project envisions improving spaces, not just cataloguing them
- Enthusiasm and buy-in for sure! (And FWIW.) WOO! (But will I execute?)
- Met more people
  - E.g., Place-based learning expert, a former 4-H person

Let's put my plan to the test

Ongoing

-Talk to faculty, staff and students for their ideas, to enlist them in the project, and as a form of publicity. **[SUCCESS – SEBS, SAS (all), RBS, SCI, SOE, BSPPP, GSE, faculty, staff, students, deans]**

July and August 2018

-Gather information on spaces **[COULD BE WORSE – Scarlet Pimpernel project (Big Idea proposal), existing resources]**

-Gather information on suggested activities and assignments **[NEXT STEPS]**

-Gather syllabi/information on courses being offered/that were recently offered **[STARTED]**

-Work with CIRC on machine learning component, hope to achieve a rough prototype **[REASONABLY GOOD – App prototype built, will start with human input, shift later to ML]**

-Approach other academic units regarding participation in this project **[SUCCESS – Same as above]**

Put my plan to the test…

August and September 2018

-Plan database and map: identify resources and software needed. **[DECENT – Database prototype done, interactive map being reconsidered and could work with Living Labs map]**

September through December

-Populate database, build the basis of the map **[MEH BUT WITH REASON – focused on the app itself, also on how to import course info: possibly import data from Canvass, met with TLT to discuss the Canvass API. Scarlet Pimpernel piece was good. Map tbd.]**

January through March

-Come up with incentive grant ideas and with joint project ideas **[Got $$ commitment from esteemed Dean Lawson of SEBS, specifics to come: Didn't want to be premature.]**

-Refine database, map, and machine learning algorithm – including possible pilot testing **[NEXT STEPS]**

-Come up with feedback mechanism – either a survey or plan interviews – with faculty and students, for when the project is implemented. **[NEXT STEPS]**

Put my plan to the test…

April

-Continue to publicize the project in general **[GOOD – Hackathon in early March]**
-Possibly offer learning grants for Fall 2019, but I could imagine not rushing that and waiting a semester or two. **[NEXT STEPS]**
-Offer opportunities/make invitations for students and faculty from different courses to work together on projects that center on these outdoor spaces. **[SOME GROUNDWORK LAID]**
-Test and refine the machine learning algorithm if it's ready **[NEXT STEPS]**
-Be ready to present the project. I want the database and the map to be largely if not entirely finished (both will always evolve, of course). The incentive grants should be ready to go or close to it, and just awaiting iteration, same with the joint projects. **[NEXT STEPS]**

Thank you to:

- Darrin York, Chemistry, Proteomics, CIRC
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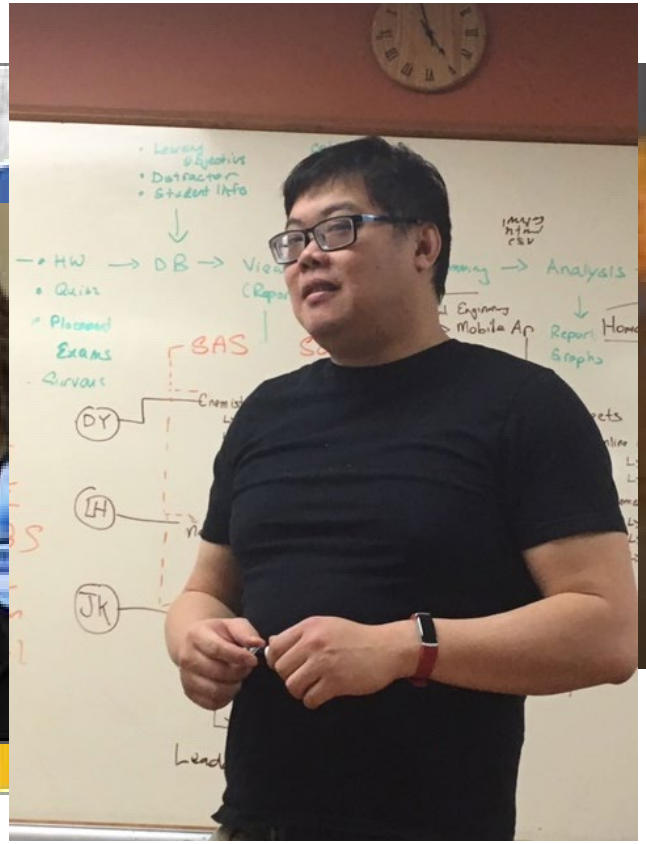

And thanks to…the RLA staff

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and now the app prototype…