

Student Centeredness Team Charter

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At the heart of every university, you find students. In the mission statement for most universities, you will find words like “student-centered.” However, many institutions find themselves struggling to answer the question “what does it really mean to be student centered?” To be successful in developing a culture of “student centeredness,” a community must define the term and support it with structures of training and development that touch every member of the community, to ultimately create a culture that connects with the definition. While Belmont has always had a strong and enduring commitment to student success and engagement, conversations about the totality of “Student Centeredness” are not as common.

Project Objectives:

- Consider the ways in which every faculty and staff member contributes to a student-centered campus. How do we interpret our mission?
- Define the distinctive characteristics of a student-centric campus.
- Provide a recommendation to Senior Leadership that includes steps required over the next six months to reinforce student centeredness in our day to day work to help us to develop a distinctive, student-centered campus community.

Student Centeredness Notes: June Summit, August Board Meetings

Student Centeredness (AUGUST)

TABLE 1

Questions

- 1) Do they feel like a valuable asset?
- 2) How do we compete with other options for students' attention?

Student Experience/Game day Experience

- Use of Curb and Beaman—maximizing available space
- Fan Experience—merchandise sales

Community Inclusion

- Relationships
- Identify with the school

Faculty engagement/Staff engagement

- Start times
- Family Experience

Alumni Loyalty—Legacy

Retention—important to how connected students feel/sense of place

Tracking process of involvement from application process through graduation.

- Snapshot of student involvement: How involved have they been throughout Belmont career?

Value—how geared is this to my development?

Connection between first and second year students—future networking—professional connections

More student living on campus, traditional junior and seniors

TABLE 2

Providing necessary financial resources for students to be able to participate in/create new initiatives and opportunities to meet their goals

Ensuring our hands-on opportunities are deeply connected to modern technological trends

*Knowing the industry and keeping up with trends, especially since they're changing rapidly

Creating new institutional communication processes in order to persuade constituents of the relevance of new initiatives

Advocating for students by making meaning of their values/desires to faculty and others

Inviting student perspectives & responding to those

*Emphasizing value of individual interactions with students and the way we demonstrate care

*Helping students become more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated & developing in a more grounded sense of resilience

Freeing students from a pursuit of success that is paralyzing by celebrating student learning (and intrinsic value) more than student achievement

*Providing experiences that help students identify who they are and what their unique strengths are

Recognizing differences among students and tailoring your interactions to those differences

Reminding students to be innovative by, for example, recurring 1:1 meetings with professors

Using upperclassmen and alumni within colleges to mentor (peer coach) new freshmen/transfers as they begin majors

Providing experiences where students shadow other students in hands-on aspects of curriculum

Emphasizing student leadership opportunities as ways to prepare for life after graduation

Analyzing first destination data more to understand how to best talk about internships and grad school etc.

TABLE 3

What does it look like to challenge students appropriately so that they meet their maximum academic potential?

Setting high expectations

Caring and accountability, paying attention to the individual

Role modeling

Academics—active in field, publish

Staff—social behavior

Why are you choosing your major?

What is your passion?

What world problem are you going to solve?

Residence life—proactive

One on one
“culture of caring”

Security—treat every student as if they were your student→positive

Legwork: have as much or more hope for them as they do

No matter your role, you can have an effect on their experience

Using your connections
Help reframe their challenges
Be a champion for Belmont
Promote and exude passion

*Academic rigor: do what it takes to help them succeed; challenge yourself as well

How can we focus on hand-on experiential learning and effective career development to best prepare our students for life after Belmont?

Sharing more real-world experiences
Bridge programs with professionals
Internships→Curb helping programs that don't require internships
Encourage student programs

Braven, San Jose State University and Rutgers University
“after taking the class, they seek out internships at twice the normal rate”
<https://bebraven.org>

TABLE 6

Library: totally student centered. Long range goals of knowledge creation centers—partner with Leu Center?

Study Abroad: out of comfort zone—opportunities, then bring them back to use that challenge

Empowering students to take responsibility for themselves versus backing them up when they need it
Belmont East and West
Growing—becoming an adult, taking a place in the industry/professions

Challenge appropriately—academic rigor in classroom and with life skills—push to cliff but not fall off
Continue the academics with real world experiences: practicums, internships, theory and practice

Access to information very important: what services and support are available?

Each individual faculty and staff member is the beginning—make student-centered the focus—pay attention to specific students—reach out

NEED APPROPRIATE CLASS SIZE: professors know names, photo portfolios

TABLE 7

What does it look like to challenge students appropriately so that they meet their maximum potential?

Academic Rigor

Critical thinking: faculty facilitation

Accountability

Responsibility levels: all levels have responsibility for enrollment and fundraising—40 year relationship, not 4

Dean: Lead→Inspiration

Great advising—caring and compassionate

Co-curricular programming—add value

Faculty: Educate/Prepare

Critical thinking

Don't silo: advise, mentor, create and supervise experiential learning opportunities

Staff: Customer Service

Balance leading students but not giving them everything they want, some of which they do not need

Front line of student experience—critical impression

How can we focus on hands-on experiential learning and effective career development to best prepare our students for life after Belmont?

Long term effects/student career prep

Educate students to succeed in highly competitive markets

Certificates

14 Student Orgs in COBA

Experiential Learning: Pipeline etc

Hands on prep

Outside classroom—going the extra mile

*Encourage students to participate in all opportunities, convos, etc

Graduate level—Sports Admin, 22 graduate assistants

Professional level responsibilities: highly valuable part of education and critical to Athletics department success

Two main areas of focus: Tactical (empowering through opportunities) and Behavioral (engaging through interaction)

Culture of philanthropy and connectedness

Feeling that Belmont is also home → future enrollment and giving

Characteristics of good customer service: patience, knowledge, purposeful interaction

Christian Student Leadership

Differentiation: all students look for something different, understand wants and needs

Parenting—children need spaces to play at along parents' work → engagement in home life

Students want to try out work of spiritual development and be convinced is actual work
(Real World)

- Honors student engagement

Athletics/Curb student marketing group: Real World entertainment

Enactus: Real World

Pipeline: Real World

Room at the Inn: Real World

Maturation process: differentiating opportunities for all student types

Emphasize accountability, civility and professionalism

Expand student leadership development and invite students—make sure all students are aware of opportunities

“It’s all we do!”

Health, Wellness, Security

Recruiting, orientation, advising, classes, student organizations, internships, career development, first destination, alumni relations

TABLE 8

Keeping students at the center of our decisions/actions

What does it look like to challenge students appropriately so that they meet their maximum academic potential?

- Being resilient
- Cross collaboration of teaching resiliency
- Talking to students openly about failure
- Failing forward/utilizing all experiences for good
- Communication of purpose in being in the academic process and what that means
- Having authentic conversations with students
- Flexibility in policies related to students
- Setting parameters with making fluid decisions that impact policy

How can we focus on hands-on experiential learning and effective career development to best prepare our students for life after Belmont?

- Challenging students in self-efficacy/growth mindset
- Balance within curriculum to educate on the discipline and skills necessary for employment (preparation)
- Showing them grace and holding them accountable
- Education of parents in expectations of institutions
- More involved in the decisions and getting experiences that would educate them on university inner workings

TABLE 9

Return on investment → students need to be able to clearly articulate the meaning of their Belmont education

- Measures of success
- Naiveté of students
- Find their calling
- Great job engaging students in space planning
- Tools to keep them safe
 - Working together create a campus culture → suicide prevention/active shooter trainings
 - Giving students resources to identify/report/act → help each other
 - More support for counseling services
- Responsibility to help students develop independence and accountability

What does it look like to challenge students appropriately so that they meet their maximum academic potential?

- Motivating them to go beyond the bare minimum
- Small classroom: student/faculty ratio is key to student centeredness
- Research/co-curricular programming
- Keeping student organizations student-led and faculty supported
- Diversity → increase # of minority students to reflect the greater world

TABLE 10

Question of Rigor: how do we allow students to stretch beyond that they think possible?

- Letting students know that they can ask for help
- There are more than just academic issues going on—how do we address these other issues that affect academics?
- Helping to set boundaries and follow rules of responsibility

- Welcome Week: “Boot Camps” to help students prepare for what they will face as part of their academic programs
- FYS with peer mentor
- Reframing “soft skills” that you get from a liberal education
 - Digital humanities
 - Communication skills—how do we help our students to understand norms?
- One of the great challenges is training all of our students, not just the shining stars

TABLE 11

What does it look like to challenge students appropriately so that they meet their maximum academic potential?

- Being able to meet people where they are (need to have class sizes small enough to do that) and teach their “gaps,” be it in writing, critical thinking, etc.
- Students work a lot of hours for employment—for many of them, not working is not an option
- How do we understand and respect their need for work, but still challenge them to do their best work academically
- To be student centered means helping students understand finances—making good decisions/being financially literate
 - This should be a core part of co-curricular programming on campus
 - Understanding loans, personal financial decisions, budgeting, etc
- To be student centered means we need to help students look for opportunities to be successful in their fields by thinking in out of the box ways

Student Centeredness (BOARD)

Student Centeredness

- Everything we do is for students in a Christ-centered environment
- Filter everything through “How does that serve students?”
- Celebrating STUDENTS!
- Be intentional about students
- Students need to be engaged in conversation BY US!
 - Invited to conversations
 - Having a seat at the table
 - Heard and served
- Events and activities by students, for students focused on community
- Tangible examples of using student input to make decisions (building design, function, space usage)
- Ask, listen, do
- Caring for student needs beyond just the “basics”
- Always paying attention to the commitment to services as the University grows (keeping up with ourselves)

- Thinking beyond where we are to plan for where we will be (some things will be harder to plan for)