

Foster interdisciplinary interactions by taking one day of instruction per semester to have all students on campus focus on a presentation by a guest speaker on a relevant topic, then discuss in mixed groups.

CURRENT CHALLENGE:

As a comprehensive university, we strive to provide our students with experiences and courses that enable them to grasp various fields of study and make linkages and draw inspiration from a variety of disciplines. Yet few classes or experiences are truly interdisciplinary. Indeed a "silo effect" exists between the colleges of the university and within each college. So how can we ensure that students in all disciplines see the manner in which the other disciplines can inform and enhance their field? How can we ensure they see the relevance of their discipline to the greatest issues we face today? What unifying experiences do we give them? Or will we continue to expect that they will inherently make linkages between their business class and their opera class?

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Take one day (or morning, or afternoon) of instruction per semester and have all students on campus focus on a presentation by a guest speaker (or speakers) on a relevant topic. Students are in mixed groups and then discuss the topics from the perspective of their discipline within the group. Faculty (in teams from differing disciplines) guide the discussion/activity and model how ideas from disparate fields can yield insights. The recent panel discussion on ISIS, moderated by Dr. Fiala would be a great example of a presentation that is relevant, insightful, and applicable to all disciplines. What is the role of music/art in culture and why do fundamentalists often reject all art? What is the business model for ISIS? What is the geopolitical backdrop? What are the psychological means of manipulation? What is their method of PR? Role of Media? Engineering of weapons? Management? All disciplines are relevant.

BENEFITS TO FRESNO STATE:

Student learning would be deeper
Less of a silo effect between colleges or within colleges
Increased faculty interaction
Good PR
Model for other universities (it is BOLD!)
Greater sense of campus community (a central event in which ALL students participate)
Increased understanding of the interaction between disciplines
Models creative problem solving
Makes disciplines relevant
Connect with broader community.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

This could be campus-wide; or within each college.