

QEP Topic Conversations: School of Business (04.16.09)

- We began the conversation with a couple of guiding questions: How can we enhance the overall learning experience for our students? and, How can we better prepare our students to meet the challenges of a complex world?
- One participant made mention of Union University's (Jackson, TN) approach, which is that each school presents a "sub-plan" to enhance faculty-student relationships; not just supervisory.
- A second participant was concerned about what we lost when IDS was eliminated from the curriculum. Given the fact that many of our incoming students lack the basic skills needed to succeed in a university setting, it was recommended that we think seriously about the possibility of developing and implementing some type of Freshman Experience program.
- Agreeing with what was just said, another participant noted the serious science and math concerns when it comes to competing with other institutions, both nationally and internationally. More to the point, many of our students are simply unprepared – or, at the very least, under-prepared – when it comes to the basic quantitative skills needed to succeed. At the same time, it was noted that our students are extremely eager and motivated; they simply lack the skills they need to succeed both in the classroom and in the "real world." Moreover, this apparent lack of skills will no doubt carry over into graduate courses.
- Given the overall direction of the conversation thus far, one participant spoke of the opportunity to train middle school and high school teachers in the larger Memphis community. This would obviously aid in preparing incoming students, and is clearly tied to CBU's core values of community and service.
- Building on these ideas, a guest who joined the conversation said we might do well to focus on our juniors and seniors, and provide opportunities for graduating seniors in science to teach in the Memphis community; this would obviously be consistent with CBU's Lasallian identity. We might think of giving these students additional academic credit and/or recognition for doing so. This would also be tied, potentially, to industry contacts and partnerships that may develop over the course of time, and could prove important even if our students are not necessarily planning on going into teaching as a career. However, this could be a part of their overall academic program, and may prove to enhance their c.v.'s, not to mention the obvious importance of reaching out into the community.
- Finally, in agreement with the clear advantages of pursuing the sorts of initiatives mentioned above, one participant noted the connections to recruiting, and the number(s) of students who may develop an interest in coming to CBU as a result of said initiatives (e.g., "Bridge Builders"). In sum, we must build on the many strengths of what we're already doing at CBU, and be very intentional about tying it to our mission!

(Participants: D. Ciscel, K. Prien, D. Brandon, B. Pray, S. Lawyer, F. Marion, J. Mahr, R. Smith)