

QEP Topic Conversations: Honors Program (04.21.09)

- Highlighted was the importance of complete immersion for students in the academic process, which includes continuing – outside of class – conversations that began in class; envisioned here are ongoing conversations, both between students themselves and between faculty members and students. In addition, more collaborations between the various schools, symposia, more interdisciplinary programs and/or symposia, and also better advertising of such opportunities. Whatever happened to flyers on campus?
- Whatever happened to the new student center? This would be a central place for the entire University community to gather, and would encourage awareness of events on campus (among many other clear advantages to having such a central “meeting place”).
- Mention was made of the extent to which faculty seem to feel un-appreciated, although the students do, in fact, appreciate them and their accessibility/approachability. Also mentioned was the need for new faculty hires to understand who we are as a University in the Lasallian tradition, and to be able to articulate that in principle and in practice.
- One participant made mention of a general dissatisfaction on the part of students with certain offices and departments on campus in which, from their perspective, there seems to be “a sense of lethargy.” The general sentiment is that there is “too much living in the past,” and thus the need to infuse new life – a new spirit, if you will – into some of these offices and departments. Also, returning to the matter of the new student center: What has taken so long to build the center, and what does this mean??
- Discussion turned to the need for all constituencies at CBU to do a better job of “self-promotion.” More specifically, too many at CBU don’t really know who we are and where we are. We’ve become too satisfied with mediocrity and need to aim much higher! This participant believes that distance education is a great idea for a number of reasons, and also emphasized the importance of greater student involvement in national and international competitions. Too, there needs to be greater emphasis on – and more opportunities for – undergraduate research; this would certainly increase publicity and enhance visibility.
- A couple of participants mentioned the fact that the CBU motto is seldom mentioned in their classes, and pointed to the need to incorporate our identity as a Lasallian university into the classroom and curriculum; i.e., need to be much more intentional and explicit about who we are and why we are here. Tied to this is the need for a more intentional service learning component to the curriculum as well as greater emphasis on the value of studying abroad. However, some participants expressed their frustration trying to secure answers to questions related to study abroad opportunities in addition to the paucity of funding available to interested students.

- Internships. Several participants agreed that internships are very hard to find, and that there seems to be precious little support for internships. It was suggested that administrative support is necessary for all sorts of reasons, not the least of which is to make it easier for faculty members to encourage students to pursue internships.
- Independent study opportunities also seem very difficult to secure. Again, mention was made of the unnecessarily difficult process students must slog through when it comes to study abroad courses – this seems to be especially the case when it comes to semester abroad opportunities.
- Discussion returned to the importance of service learning opportunities, and of the need to incorporate them into existing courses; perhaps also designate involvement in service learning on graduation diplomas.
- Finally, two participants mentioned the importance of individual attention on the part of faculty members towards students, and this with a special emphasis on advising; include here the role of advisors in alerting advisees to internship opportunities. There was a clear sense among the participants that students need clearer, more responsible direction from their advisors (though they also recognized the need to take responsibility for their own academic program). This was driven in no small part by one of the participant's having been "victimized" by poor advising . . .

(Participants: R. Brandon, C. Peterson, D. Perry, J. Gebers, C. Fly, C. Mitchell, B. DeSouza, K. Nuckolls, C. Montesi)