

Programs and Advancement Task Force

Overview of Proposals

The Programs and Advancement Task Force was charged with proposing ways to operationalize the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Task Force in the area of Programs and Advancement, while paying particular attention to first year experience and experiential learning. The Task Force proposes a suite of four recommendations, two of them devoted to the first year experience, one devoted to experiential learning, and the fourth devoted to increasing past, present and future Arts students 'connections with each other and the Faculty from high school recruitment through to the alumni period.

Pre-university	High school outreach project mostly occurs pre-university, but helps to prepare students for 1 st year.	First year programming project begins in high school, becomes very important in first year, and (in the final degree level learning outcomes expression of the project) runs all the way to fourth year. (And potentially into alumni careers)		Icon project a thread that runs from pre-university to post-university.
1st year	↓			
2nd year ↓ 4th year			Velocity project runs 2 nd -4 th year (but can have effects post-graduation if Arts Velocity alumni decide are able to join VeloCity Garage)	
Graduation			↓	
Alumni		↓	↓	

Proposal#1: High School Outreach

Focus Area: First year experience

Preamble:

Everyone knows the old chestnut about young geese imprinting on the first putative parent they see. As any teacher or parent will attest, young humans behave in a similar way – developing affection and loyalty for the person, institution or idea *because they were exposed to it at a crucial time*. The working group is convinced that grade 11 or 12 is too late for young people to imprint on Waterloo Arts. (Indeed, Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment has plenty of evidence about this.) It therefore proposes that we start students on the on-ramp to their Waterloo Arts first year experience earlier. Given how many Waterloo Arts students originate from the Golden Horseshoe region of Ontario, we have an opportunity to connect with them much earlier – in grades nine and ten, or perhaps even earlier – and, more importantly, to help them feel connected with Waterloo Arts.



The earlier students can feel a sense of belonging with Waterloo Arts, the deeper their relationship with us and the greater the chance that they will study and flourish here. Moreover, if we can connect with these students in the right ways, those connections will help them to flourish academically once enrolled here as students. This proposal therefore seeks to improve high school outreach not only as a recruitment and retention tool (not to mention as an alumni development tool) but also as a student success initiative.

Recommendation #1: Centrally coordinate all high school outreach initiatives currently in place within the faculty.

Consolidate and coordinate existing departmental initiatives (including English awards, German and French speech contests, Latin contest, and SAF's Financial Literacy Competition), build on them, then consolidate with approval of school board, etc.

We have no wish to take high school outreach out of the hands of individual academic units. We propose rather to support and expand those initiatives by offering, at the Faculty level, best practices advice, better communication between units, assistance liaising with schools, and support for event planning and external communications.

Recommendation #2: Get students from Waterloo Region and the Golden Horseshoe onto campus to take part in pre-Arts programs and events.

This needn't involve creating new events. For instance, we could work to extend Arts' capacity to participate in Waterloo Unlimited.

Recommendation #3: Deploy social media and extended learning modalities to help future Waterloo Arts students feel connected with us even from a distance.

For instance, we could use extended learning capacity to generate "mini-MOOCs" geared at younger audiences. What is Arts? What do we mean by "Humanities"? Senior students could create these courses as keystone projects. Link to Ted-X or similar

We should furthermore create a fun, smart, engaging Facebook page just for high school students. Use the page (inter alia) to advertise special on-campus events. Promote with prizes, contests, discounts...

Timelines and main steps:

Short term goals

- Scan Faculty for existing outreach efforts. Meredith and Tran are presently doing this. However, a more thoroughgoing scan may be in order. Meredith and Tran are meeting with undergraduate advisors. It is possible, especially in larger units, that some individual faculty members and groups are doing outreach that the advisors don't know about. Indeed, it's possible that some groups are doing outreach without knowing that they're doing outreach. The scan will, inter alia, help to start a Faculty-wide conversation about what counts as outreach.
- Liaise with Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment to see what, if any, initiatives are already underway university wide, especially in terms of connections with school boards and teachers, and supporting the Ontario high school curriculum.
- Use LinkedIn, etc. to try to develop an inventory of Arts alumni teaching in local high schools. They may be willing to serve as conduits (or champions!) for Waterloo Arts.
- Establish an advisory committee to provide oversight to AUO on outreach initiatives.

Medium term goals

- AUO, supported by one or more co-op students and supported by the advisory committee, begins to develop and test a suite of Arts outreach modalities. Crucially, these modalities must include effectively leveraging social media. Moreover, they should not merely be fun or flashy; they must give younger students a taste of what it is like to be a Waterloo Arts student. For this reason, it is essential that the programming be well connected to Waterloo Arts courses, curricula, and programs. (See Appendix for a list of such modalities suggested by the working group.) Some of these initiatives will be best implemented just in Waterloo Region; others might be practical to implement more broadly.
- Work to support and develop relationships between Waterloo Arts and local teachers, high schools, and school boards.

- Create a central social media portal for Arts youth outreach. Our social media initiatives must actually be engaging and interesting for young people. Ideally, young people themselves will share links, recommend “likes”, etc. to each other *because they find the material interesting*. We probably don’t want teachers and schools themselves promoting the materials. They’ll be taken up much more enthusiastically if word starts with youth “early adopters.”
- Design these initiatives with measurable deliverables in mind so that we can gauge their success over time.

Long term goals

- Assess success of initiatives in producing deliverables; where appropriate, revise, expand or abandon initiatives in light of this data.
- Continue to develop and scale outreach initiatives.
- Where appropriate, extend geographic scope of initiatives piloted in Waterloo Region.
- Consider extending outreach efforts to middle school or earlier.

Recommended champions and resources:

Amy Meredith and Nga Tran will be crucial to this initiative. They will require the ongoing support of at least one co-op student from a relevant discipline, and from an academic advisory board. The board membership should also include representatives from the Arts Communications office, the Student Success Office, the Arts Student Union, and MUR.

We may be able to recruit student volunteers from the ASU and the SSO’s peer mentorship program.

To be successful, the project will require financial or in-kind support, to be determined by Meredith, Tran, and the advisory committee.

Proposal #2: First year programming and outcomes recommendations

Focus area: First year experience

Preamble:

The first year at university is deeply significant on a number of levels for our students. They choose a university based on the impressions and facts they have gathered about the chosen school, via messaging, campus visits, etc. Then, as they transition from high school to university studies, what happens to them when they arrive on campus has a number of further repercussions, backwards and forwards. They may experience disconnects between their impressions of the school and themselves as students, when comparing them to what their lived reality has actually become. Their choice of major at the end of first year may be driven as much or more by outdated impressions of their own interests and capacities as it is by their demonstrated cognitive and intellectual interests and experiences. Finally, the systematic development of the skills all successful university students require – and which faculties of Arts consistently trumpet as being the hallmark outcomes of a liberal arts education – largely occurs in a haphazard fashion, and often in a context in which a student is constrained by the numerous course requirements of the selected major, which may or may not address the student’s cognitive needs at that particular time and which can actively work against exploration of other areas of disciplinary interest.

Our recommendations for the first year focus on two areas: a) reducing the dissonance between messaging and reality and b) improving the students’ integration with the task of succeeding in first year, and making an informed and rational choice of major. While we signal the long-term desirability of broader agreement on faculty-wide learning outcomes and an associated rationalization of the structure of disciplinary majors, our recommendations focus more on concrete, achievable objectives for the Arts Undergraduate Office in the short and medium term.

Recommendation #1: Produce first-year Honours Arts course selection materials modeled on Canada’s Food Guide (or similar approach):

- 100-level courses colour-coded to correspond to main first year learning outcomes; students advised to choose courses from “a variety of food groups” to achieve a balanced schedule.
- Note that “food groups” are NOT primarily organized by the traditional disciplinary lines of humanities, social sciences, languages and cultures, fine and performing arts. Instead groups would align around learning outcomes essential to future success, and would intentionally cut across disciplinary boundaries.
- Integrate “food guide” approach with current course selection operational practices in order to convey information to students about key steps in the course selection process and building their class schedules.

Recommendation #2: Create mandatory first-year Honours Arts Orientation 2 x 0.25 “milestone” courses to support student meta cognition, student solidarity, and reflection on first year study and second year possibilities:

- Students earn 0.5 credit for completing both terms.

- Cross-faculty groups established at orientation are organized in cohorts that combine students from a variety of disciplinary areas. First meeting occurs during Orientation with further meetings to be determined by final design of courses.
- Courses build on established success of (1) ARBUS 100 as vehicle for conveying information about majors, introducing students to LEARN, and (2) AFM 100 as a vehicle for introducing students to degree-level learning outcomes, study skills, and meta-cognition.
- Courses include lecture and break-out components with:
 - Group work to reflect on course successes and challenges
 - Identified outcomes related to faculty-wide outcomes
 - E-portfolio as key component; used as vehicle to consolidate cross-faculty desired learning outcomes for all first year students

Recommendation #3: Agree on faculty-wide first year and degree level outcomes:

- Academic integrity
- Preliminary research skills for second year
- Writing: summarizing, précis, citation – fundamental practices

****NOTE: Recommendations 1 and 2 are intended for Honours Arts (pre-major) students, not for students in direct-entry programs, such as Accounting and Financial Management. However, Recommendation #3 is intended for Faculty-wide implementation.****

Timelines and main steps:

Short-term

- Consultation with AUO engagement and advising staff re:
 - Operational and informational course selection practices and LEARN platform project
 - ARBUS 100 and lessons learned, towards developing/expanding course content and LEARN platform project (in tandem with above)
- Begin consultation with undergraduate officers and others to devise “food groups” categories and approach
- Consultation with AUO recruitment staff to produce draft “Canada’s Food Guide” to first year courses
- Devise communication strategy for across faculty, to build success for recommendations; in place by September, 2013
- Course number/rationale for milestone courses ready for first Fall 2013 UGAG meeting

Medium-term

- Starting in September, 2013 -- use a variety of channels to solicit faculty (and perhaps staff, student, alumni) participation in team to design and implement new first-year Arts Orientation Course, and to undertake Faculty-wide consultation re: Arts degree-level learning outcomes
- Later in Fall 2013 -- Begin consultation on Arts degree-level learning outcomes
- Create pilot Arts Orientation Course for September 2014 first run (if possible to achieve approval by then).

Longer-term

- “Canada’s Food Guide” material and Arts Orientation Course evolve as data comes in about pilot and in tandem with broader conversation about Arts degree-level learning outcomes.
- Ultimate goal: The “Canada’s Food Guide” material and the new course are both extremely well aligned (philosophically and in terms of messaging) with newly established Arts degree level outcomes. This leads to further, more effective messaging about what you get from a Waterloo Arts degree and, for first-year students, “how to get there from here.” This messaging helps both to recruit students and to promote student success
- Renewed Arts learning outcome conversation supports parallel initiatives at the program level. Result: rationalization of academic plans, clarification of gateway concepts in each major

Champions:

- “Food groups”:
 - Identification: Judi Jewinski, Arts Teaching Fellows, Arts UG advisors, Bill Chesney
 - Communication: Amy Meredith
 - Operations: Stephanie Bromley, Julie Mulvey
- Milestone courses:
 - Curriculum: Bill Chesney, Arts Teaching Fellows, Eric Breugst
 - Implementation: RO, UG advisors
- Arts learning outcomes and curricular evolution: Bill Chesney, Arts Teaching Fellows, Arts UG Advisors

Proposal #3: Arts Velocity

Focus Area: Experiential Learning

Preamble:

In its discussions, the working group heard considerable enthusiasm about VeloCity's approach to experiential learning, an approach very much in keeping with the Waterloo brand. However, Arts students are finding it difficult to connect with VeloCity, which is perceived to have a bias toward the STEM disciplines. While it may be appropriate down the road to develop an independent Arts version of VeloCity, the working group recommends that we start by better deploying existing VeloCity resources.

There are presently three VeloCity programs: the original VeloCity Residence, the VeloCity Garage and VeloCity campus. While the focus of VeloCity was originally tech, that focus has evolved. VeloCity director Mike Kirkup describes the core value of VeloCity initiatives as scalability. That is, a project is a plausible VeloCity project if it is potentially extremely scalable. Since technology often plays an important role in scaling projects, it continues to be important in many VeloCity projects; however, it is important as a means to the end of scaling the project, and not as an end in itself. VeloCity is also focused on entrepreneurship. However, its conception of entrepreneurship is very broad, broad enough for instance to include the kinds of social innovation projects that are close to the hearts of many Arts students.

The majority of VeloCity Residence participants are from Engineering and Mathematics. The largest contingent of Arts participants in that program are from Accounting and Financial Management. Admission to the residence is highly competitive. Moreover, since the residence size is limited, admission will only get more competitive as demand continues to outstrip supply. The VeloCity Garage, located at the Communitel Hub in downtown Kitchener, provides support for well-articulated start-ups that already have all team members in place. At least one team member must be a Waterloo student or alumnus/a. Again, admission is highly competitive. Kirkup does not at present see opportunities to increase Arts students' involvement in either VeloCity Residence or the VeloCity Garage.

The third program, VeloCity Campus, offers students free weekly workshops on different aspects of entrepreneurship. They are held on campus every Wednesday night for three hours. This is a completely voluntary, non-credential program. Students may pick and choose which workshops they wish to attend, and may attend the same one more than once should they wish a refresher or a deeper learning experience. There is no charge to participate. This is the least intensive of the VeloCity programs. However, participating in VeloCity campus helps students to better prepare pitches for the two more intensive VeloCity programs, as well as connecting them to the VeloCity brand, and allowing them to network with other entrepreneurially-minded colleagues from different disciplines. Kirkup is willing to expand this program as much as necessary to accommodate any additional Arts students we can direct to it.

Recommendation: We propose to create an Arts VeloCity program (Tentatively: A/V or The A/V Club) to help more Arts students and alumni connect with existing VeloCity opportunities.

Arts VeloCity will be overseen by an advisory board charged with developing ancillary programs to achieve this, but also with evaluating (1) the success of these programs, and (2) whether or not to consider an independent Arts spin-off version of VeloCity.

Timelines and main steps:

Short term goals

- Establish an Arts VeloCity advisory board.
- Board coordinates with VeloCity to develop programs supporting greater Arts student involvement in VeloCity Campus. These programs to increase emphasis on social innovation.

Medium term goals

- Arts VeloCity pilot programming and marketing rolled out (September 2014?)
- Advisory Board members themselves take part in some VeloCity Campus programming.

Long term goals

- Arts VeloCity seeks either to build better pathways for Arts students/alumni into VeloCity Residence and VeloCity Garage or to develop independent Arts spin-off of one or both of these programs.

Proposed advisory board membership:

- Geoff Malleck (already has name recognition with VeloCity)
- Someone from SAF and from Arts and Business (again, VeloCity already used to working with these programs)
- Wendy Philpott or delegate
- Someone from Arts Alumni office
- At least one faculty member from an Arts program focused more on social innovation than financial entrepreneurship (PACS? WS? SDS? RS?)
- Student rep

Proposal #4: Create icons/symbols/artifacts to help students identify with their Arts experience and learning

Focus area: First year experience (and beyond)

Preamble:

An icon captures the essence of the thing it represents. It can be an image or object, like Mathematics' pink tie or the CN Tower, or it can be an activity, like the Iron Ring Ceremony or the trumpet flourish before the play at the Stratford Festival. Icons immediately connect the viewer, participant or listener not only with the object of iconic representation but also with people who are similarly moved by the icon. We recommend that the Faculty of Arts undertake to use one or more icons to improve student and alumni identification with Arts.

While Arts has Porcellino as some kind of symbol, the attributes associated with him are not well understood, and his position as a unifying symbol is both contested and inconsistently applied. Arts also has numerous experiential learning initiatives at the department level that could offer pointers for how shared activities could be established, promoted, and evolved to strengthen students' sense of belonging to their studies, the Arts faculty, and the university. Working towards identifying and manifesting an icon could help to draw these diverse experiences and symbols together into a cohesive whole, a thread that runs through a student's entire experience – from recruitment to graduation and beyond.

Here is an example of the sort of iconic status to which we aspire: Google's April 1 prank involved replacing its normal map function with pirate-style treasure maps featuring primarily world-class cities (NYC, London, Rome, etc.) with icons indicating where "treasure" was to be found. Waterloo was the only small city to be included. Its treasure icon? The pink tie!

Recommendation #1: Artifacts that resonate with Arts students should be researched, developed, and implemented as rallying points for both marketing and social bonding purposes:

- Academic research and scans (interviews and surveys with students, faculty, staff) to answer the following questions:
 - What are the values within university life that an artifact/symbol/icon should convey in order for it to promote social bonding? Examples of potential values include intellectual rigour, openness to new ideas, and finding balance between work and play, among many others.
 - What are some other attributes of icons, besides the values they represent (i.e., their meanings), that would make them more readily embraced and spontaneously transmitted by peers? (For example, can tackiness be articulated and assessed?)
- Explore existing icons within uW for their history, potency, and potential as models for developing Arts symbols and artifacts:
 - Engineering's Iron Ring ceremony and associated activities:
 - Interesting nest of correlated symbols and activities, with both positive (the ceremony) and negative (pranks gone bad) connotations and expressions
 - Math's Pink Tie

- Pharmacy's lab coat investiture
- FASS annual show
- Porcellino re-affirmed, re-developed, and re-shaped (or discarded):
 - Weigh pros and cons carefully:
 - Pros: historic connection to Arts
 - Cons: differing cultural connotations associated with pigs could signal indifference to cultural diversity
 - How widely recognized is Porcellino, and what does he connote (i.e., what does he mean) to existing students in Arts?
 - What does Porcellino signal to students upon first exposure?
 - What strategies can be used to elevate Porcellino to iconic status?
- What are some other icons that could serve to signal significant shared values in Arts at UW?

Recommendation #2: Iconic activities – both within and beyond the classroom – that bond students and the faculty with a common purpose and shared value system should be actively promoted and enhanced:

- Scan current blogging and outreach activities
- Scan and survey related volunteer, social engagement, or experiential learning activities that lend themselves to identity-creation and that could be scaled up or applied to other settings and audiences
- Identify and select appropriate initiatives, and implement at appropriate points in time cycle of recruitment and/or student academic year:
 - Induction ceremony
 - Matriculation ceremony
 - Others

Process:

- Study:
 - Establish research team for recommendation #1 study project:
 - Determine scope and scale for research to be undertaken, including sources of information and questions to be answered
 - Results to be compiled and shared by September 2013
 - Conduct scan of current blogging, outreach activities for recruitment and engagement purposes
 - Assess findings of experiential learning task force for relevant initiatives to explore for further development as social bonding tools
- Plan:
 - Establish working group for icon project
 - Develop survey tool to be distributed to students, university staff, and officials
 - Compile results and make determination by January 2014
- Implement:
 - Develop recruitment and communication materials to promote icon, to be used for incoming September 2014 class

- Test
- Tweak

Champions:

- Study (icons): John Michela, Sarah Skyvington, others (is there an Arts researcher working in this area who could assist?)
- Study (blogging and outreach): Amy Meredith, Stephanie Bromley, Wendy Philpott, Bill Chesney
- Plan (Porcellino): Bill Chesney, Amy Meredith, John Michela