

## *The IOWA Challenge Faculty Discussions*

Session 1: Jean Florman, Cinda Coggins Mosher, Wilf Nixon, Mary Campbell, Frank Durham
--

### **Key aspects of the discussion:**

Most faculty will agree with the content of the message. Some will feel comfortable increasing challenge and others will have low self-efficacy about their ability to do more

Easiest way to encourage buy-in is to remove perceived barriers, e.g., if I fail more students, will my Dean/DEO back me up? A lot of people fear repercussions on course evaluations. There is research that shows students who are challenged do give good teaching evaluations – this needs to be fed out to challenge the mythology.

Need to disseminate RISE Academic Engagement data to faculty (similar to Binge Brief – did Academic Engagement brief get mailed to all?)

Definitely about changing both faculty and student culture  
Discussed changing teaching evaluations – moving toward peer teaching evaluations (with trained faculty peers). College of Pharmacy will be using this and could be a model.

College of Engineering has to demonstrate that students have reached certain outcomes. Faculty have discussions on this each semester which have allowed them to identify gaps and make improvements. Colleges and departments that have external stakeholders (accrediting agencies) may have more incentive to increase rigor – a major problem is CLAS.

**Key message to faculty:** This is a part of our commitment to student success.  
Need to hear more from Provost Loh and President Mason – if they were using The IOWA Challenge in their language, speeches, etc., people would pay attention.  
Faculty needs support if we are serious about this

### **Specific things we can ask faculty to do:**

- Add this to syllabus and discuss it
- Use ICON to check to see if students have downloaded syllabus by X day – if they haven't email them to let them know you are paying attention to their academics
- Use technology (card scanners) to encourage coming to class
- Faculty are responsive to peer opinion leaders within departments – get early adopters to talk about how they are increasing academic challenge and excellence and others will get on board

- Give faculty ways to talk to students about attendance (“it matters to me that you’re here; when you’re here you change the class by your presence”)
- Make first tests from the lowest attended lectures to get the message across that excelling also means attending and engaging.

**Challenges:**

Right now the IOWA Challenge isn’t true – we don’t push them to excel, we don’t expect a lot of them. There may be a decrease in retention if we raise expectations.

Incentives in our culture appear and disappear. There are a number of faculty who may be skeptical and will wait this out to see if it goes away. Example, writing-intensive courses, incentives were there for awhile but not any longer.

Session 2: Cinda Coggins Mosher, Matt Billett, John Solow

**Key aspects of the discussion:**

The real message is behavioral – if we just say it and don’t do it, it will fail.

Acknowledge that we already have expectations that are communicated behaviorally (come to class if you want, don’t bother me and I won’t bother you, drink 4 nights a week)

Need a university-wide discussion on what is the appropriate level of expectation to have for our students. Get faculty together for conversations about what we are trying to accomplish. What kind of University do we want to be?

**Specific things we could ask faculty to do:**

- Add to their syllabus and talk about it
- Change course evaluations to ask students if they had to stretch, excel, etc. in this course; how demanding was this course? Could use the NSSE question “This instructor challenged me to work harder than I thought I could”
- Get away from recommended curves for grades
- Ask DEO’s to back faculty who increase challenge
- Ask faculty what they are currently doing that demonstrates the various aspects of the Challenge? What opportunities do they provide in their current syllabi that respond to the Challenge?
- Give illustrations that demonstrate how faculty peers are meeting the Challenge (this group echoed the first group that there are peer opinion leaders in each department – if that person says they are increasing rigor, the others are more likely to follow)
- Examples of “Engage”: Finance professor that invites students to Pagliai’s – he’ll buy pizza but they have to discuss finance and it can’t be about the class
- Business professor who builds in a lunch requirement for all students (they meet in groups of 5 with him at least once during the semester over lunch)

Ask any guest speaker in a class to talk about how they gained success in their lives (most will hit the key points of the Challenge, which faculty can then reinforce)

**Challenges:**

There is not a huge reward to being a good teacher; arguably there is a negative reward.  
Need to publicly reward faculty who are doing this  
TA's are a key issue – good course evaluations can help them get a job

Session 3: Liz Pearce, Susie Lagos-Lavenz, Nancy Hauserman, Steve Hitlin
--

**Key aspects of the discussion:**

There are so many initiatives (MFT, Living-Learning Communities, SST) that it would be really helpful to have everything pulled together under the umbrella of The IOWA Challenge. Faculty get weary of multiple “asks” and things feel disparate. If everything were under The IOWA Challenge, there could be communication from Deans/DEOs saying we want all faculty to “Pick One” – pick one way to help address The IOWA Challenge and we could provide multiple options and suggestions for how they might do so.

If there are roadblocks, need to figure out how to address them. Don't pretend it matters as much as research. But if it matters, then figure out how to have it count. Boost recognition and/or increase expectations – a stipend for doing this; every three years, faculty should teach a discussion section or small course.

Need to make sure the Undergraduate Deans are at the table; the colleges have different cultures – in TCOB, faculty would listen to the undergraduate dean. In CLAS, the reference is generally more at the department level.

**Specific things we can ask faculty to do:**

- Some faculty said they would put in syllabus; others would not – e.g., language of Challenge doesn't fit with TCOB culture
- However, most said they would respond well to being asked how their current course could or already to respond to the Challenge.
- Should be posted in all classrooms, offices, across campus
- If students were making the “ask”, faculty may respond better
- Start with large classes and brainstorm what could be done with the pillars; include strategies in Ken's large class summit
- Highlight those who are already doing it (e.g., Nancy already has a community service/volunteer requirement in her large class – get her to write up the time ramifications of this so it could be shared)
- Ask each Dean/DEO what their faculty are already doing that supports The IOWA Challenge and then highlight these things.

**Key messages to faculty:**

This will make your teaching better and more enjoyable because you will get better (i.e., more engaged) students

% of tuition from undergraduates – give faculty bottom-line information about the role undergraduates have in running the University

New faculty orientation: Be up front about our goals – we want to raise expectations and we need faculty help to do it

**Challenges:**

Decentralization/mixed messages

Lack of uniform communications from Provost on what faculty focus should be (Quote: it's a little like a flower girl throwing out flowers – they are spread all over, which flowers do we pay attention to?)

If this is valued, then a message from the Provost saying – we want faculty to Pick One (way to be engaged) and we will work with your Deans/DEOs to be sure that this is counted and recognized.

UI, as an institution, doesn't meet The IOWA Challenge (do we, as an institution try to excel?)

1. Definition and description of audience(s) for the Iowa Challenge:
  - a. Faculty—Primary (those that work directly with freshmen)
    - First-year seminars
    - Departments that advise freshmen (physics, biochem, pharmacy)
    - Faculty who teach freshmen year courses
    - TAs in freshmen year courses
    - Rhetoric faculty/TAs
    - College transition staff
    - CLAS curriculum committee
    - Faculty teaching large classes and/or general education courses
  - b. Faculty—Secondary
    - All faculty who work with undergraduates
  - c. Deans and Associate Deans of the Colleges that enroll undergraduates
  
2. Communications/Dissemination plan for faculty:
  - a. Importance of the committee to deliver a different message for different audiences
  - b. Add a link to ICON as well as college intranets (where applicable)
  - c. Provide syllabus guides to faculty that help provide a common set of expectations within course guidelines
  - d. Build allies and have conversations with key faculty first, then filter it down through the ranks
  - e. Seek out departments making heavy use of learning portfolios in their courses/student development (art, medicine, pharmacy, education, etc.)
  - f. Possible message displayed to all faculty and staff when logging in to employee self-service website
  - g. When discussing the message to faculty and encouraging further adoption, emphasize the components of the Iowa Challenge that he/she may already utilize in their courses and how The Iowa Challenge is not as much of a cultural shift as one might think.
  - h. Encourage faculty to discuss examples of the 5 pillars of the Iowa Challenge within their courses throughout the semester. Make it real.
  - i. Emphasize the Challenge as a useful concept for faculty to help set expectations with students.
  
3. Plan for Assessing Effectiveness of Implementation
  - a. A function that will ultimately follow from the goals for how the message is delivered to faculty.
  - b. Survey faculty and/or course syllabi over time for consistency in delivery of the message