

Building a Community, Mines as a University
Input collected at the faculty conference on August 24, 2015

Description of the breakout session: This brainstorming session, sponsored by the Faculty Senate, aims to identify actions and initiatives we can undertake as a community to enrich the intellectual culture of CSM. Because of its core strengths, the Colorado School of Mines has an applied and industrial focus. But this does not need to preclude Mines from having a genuine academic character, from becoming a university in the sense of a community of teachers and scholars. What does it mean for Mines to be a truly academic institution? How can we promote a free, active, and open exchange of ideas -- scientific, societal, and organizational? What can we do to socialize students to the importance of collegial debate and informed dialogue? How can we create a vibrant intellectual atmosphere for our many new faculty? How can we work together to “advance academic culture and structure that fosters creativity, intellectual curiosity and student success” and “build a campus that values employees and students of the institution through a positive, supportive and inclusive environment,” as detailed in the strategic plan?

Three Questions

1. How are we doing as an academic community? (Rate from 1-10)
2. What can the institution do to create a more academic community?
3. What are you able and willing to do to help create a more academic community?

Suggestions during the discussion time

1. Acceptance letter from CSM actually depicts us as a “trade” school, it mentions how much money students can make in the different “trades.” The acceptance letter should welcome students to CSM and congratulate them.
2. It would be nice to have small face-to-face breakout sessions during the semester to discuss topics of relevance to the faculty. Social Media also would be nice, something on-line if you cannot make the face-to-face session.

How are we doing as an academic community?

Ranking 7

We can better engage with local community (high schools, local groups). This allows all to become available with teachers/scholars.

Ranking 3

Poor communication across departments/colleges. Unwillingness to adapt to college system, and institutional changes.

Ranking 6

Need more interdisciplinary collaborations/discussions regarding undergraduate coursework.

Ranking 3

There is a lot of distrust, and sexism remains a serious issue.

Ranking 5

Not much creativity expressed here. This does not mean there's no creativity. It means there are not many venues or outlets to express it at this institution.

Ranking 6

Good=faculty and faculty hires

Bad=favoritism between departments (dollars and resources)

Competitive vs. synergistic

Ranking 8

Willing to rethink and "re-imagine" the stature for the betterment of students, dynamic and growth.

Ranking 8

We retain students

Ranking 7

We educate qualified engineers

Ranking 7

Mines is doing well in general

Ranking 7

Communication and engagement - Improve itself in the community and use more social media, create a positive environment.

Rating 5

We have capacity to have a vibrant intellectual life, but many feel closed, fearful, and cautious. Monetary aspect of public topics; perspective or vice drowns out all others, who feel like outsiders.

Ranking 5

Within people that can have a mutual research interest (?)

Ranking 3

Campus wide – broadening ourselves or considering well-chosen challenges for the campus

Ranking 8

In the last 10 years the campus has become more inclusive and our students are more active on campus. I believe the mandatory freshman dorm experience has helped with this.

No ranking

Provide more opportunities for academic discussions and connection.
Decrease/streamline administrative effort so faculty has time for academic community endeavors.

Ranking 5

Good – plenty of opportunity for attending lectures/seminars, etc.
Bad – probably too many of the lectures/seminars – dilution effect.

Ranking 6

Positive – Resident Life – TLC's, CSM 101, ENGAGE, reading groups, pedagogy seminars, buy your senator a beer etc.

Negative – not enough interdepartmental social activities, not enough time (i.e., resources to “buy out” or emphasis on in P&T evaluations) to engage in such things often.

Ranking 4

Break down departmental silos

Ranking 3

We are very siloed – each department is its own island. Research separate, I feel very isolated.

Ranking 5

We successfully deliver training but do not encourage creative thought. We do not give faculty the time to be true intellectuals as opposed to just delivering education, research and teaching.

Ranking 4

Need more support for faculty on multiple levels. Good at interdisciplinary proposals, less good at Id “work” or research.

We do not talk much about things that are important to us.

Time Pressure

What can the institution do to create a more academic community?

Reward more, campus-wide interaction, not just department activities

More regular communications/meetings between department heads, deans, etc., build a more clear website to reflect Mines as it is now, not what it was 10 years ago.

More campus-wide lectures involving non-industry speakers

Could foster better engagement between departments/colleges/administration

Community building to share ideas and accomplishments, flexibility in postings, including videos/links

Training – especially for leaders (on subconscious bias and micro-aggressions)

Undergraduate Council – observe and provide feedback to other professors

More meaningful interactions between research faculty and 1st/2nd year undergrads; excite and engage our students in rich intellectual discussions starting in their 1st year; “Freshman seminar” and “research forums” within departments.

Event/lunch to meet/talk with faculty/staff from other departments/colleges, identity for Mines should be more inclusive, not just limited to Mining!

Less bureaucracy, need time to think, less competition, more collaboration

Reduce favoritism; behave as if this is a university vs. super difficult trade school = Value more than starting salaries of graduates.

Provide more inviting SPACES for informal gatherings for creative expression. This could include outdoor or indoor spaces. Maybe move places where students have access to musical instruments or art supplies.

Host more faculty gatherings with small group breakouts.

Celebrate diversity – ideas, perspectives, and backgrounds

Create forums for meaningful conversations

Teach our students and selves to question – the value of a question

Create culture of risk taking
Day or place with students/faculty taking a stand on issues that matter

Pay equity/gender balance

Give more credit to the thought process (not just the success measured in \$ or #)
Faculty lounge where we meet, eat, drink, and discuss
Workshops and institutional conferences (including publications of common technical interests)

We need to create more opportunities to interact:
Family/friendly (Montessori, etc.)
Organized activities (Inter-departmental socials?)
Shared experience groups (asst. profs, assoc. profs)
Advanced mentoring

Small – work as people and structures to create greater attention to a few events
Large – Identify subjects/speakers that generate large campus interest
Very Small – work to increase new conversations – we all need to be flexible

Provide more opportunities to gather faculty and students by topic/interests

Faculty meeting place (club)

Treat faculty and staff with respect and appreciation

Better campus facilities (food, community meeting spaces)

Foster collaboration and alignment from freshmen – seniors and across disciplines

Faculty Club: places for faculty to hang out, have coffee/tea/lunch/dinner etc.
Everyone (just about) sits in their office and eats lunch while they work
Poor social atmosphere for faculty

Campus too siloed
Departments compete against each other for resources, prestige, and personnel
Supportive faculty departments are dismissed as unimportant (like the Library)
instead of being essential perils of world-class university

Consider how to broaden our education and scholarship within the broad Earth,
Energy and Environment missions to encourage interdisciplinary as well as non-
science and engineering activities

Hire more support staff to free professors time to work on academics/community

Service – outreach opportunities and programs

More interaction between different departments on campus

Most of our students are very involved in the community, but we miss the same (more reclusive) students repeatedly; to improve our image in our larger community, I would suggest a campus-wide community service day where students may for example help in a Denver Shelter, clean up a park, volunteer at a retirement home. Good for all!

I think that our institutional size allows for community members to get to know each other well across discipline and supporting departments. Fairly good communication of academic events and opportunities, (though not enough time to participate).

Institution can show that they value such activities by:

Giving resources to them and emphasizing such activities and your participation in them in P&T decisions

Administration vs. Academic Faculty seems to be a huge issue

Faculty happy hour with a big question!

Engage community around Mines, Golden, Denver, etc.

What are you able and willing to do to help create a more academic community?

I can and have facilitate guest lectures from alums in industry and research faculty, and freshmen courses; also important to incorporate into CSM101 or other “freshman seminars” programs; invite freshman to “research forums” designed for them (we have done this in Chem!)

Collaborate with other departments to plan a presentation or learning opportunity for faculty, staff and students

Willing to help people plan and implement community activities; volunteer, promote, etc.

Collaborate on innovative research

Join or lead a writing group

I would evaluate entrance essays – more work (way to be more than a trade school)

Help with setting up interactions between faculty

Committee for establishing a faculty lounge area – space in Welcome Center?

Informal meetings (coffee shop or wine bar)
Information to share/mentor, etc.

I would help to organized faculty gatherings, social or with an agenda or objective
We, as faculty, staff, etc. rarely get together to socialize or work on issues!

Encourage communications between faculty
Encourage faculty to engage with Mines online, on social media, etc.
Build a sense of CERSE, CECS, and CASE as a whole (and how they all equal Mines)

Tailor our teaching curriculum to students

If/when the opportunity arises – I will participate in conversations, lunches, presentations, and retreats, Q&A etc.

Increase individual/collaboration activity; facilitate more interaction

I would LOVE to participate in groups like the active learning committee or research related groups like Tzahi is starting on Membranes, etc. I am a faculty friend; I'd be happy to run groups of interest on retention, student interests, connections etc.

Engage Administration and faculty in ways that increase relationship building outside of what is currently happening

Help with mentoring and professor development
Socials and discourse participation

I would be willing to help advise a group of student leaders to help students become more involved in CSM and the larger metro community, but there should be more incentive for faculty and administrators

Each of us can spend more time outside of our departments – learn what is going on elsewhere on campus. But how do you incentivize this?

Willing to help facilitate ways that the faculty can be more socially engaged: talk, arts, sports, science, life, kids, philosophy

Participate! Also willing to help organize/lead efforts if appropriate

Provide a venue in the Library for Friday afternoon talks

I'd work with cross-university group to look at these issues

Open up and share my ideas
Contribute to technical/scientific group discussions
Initiate and take responsibility of new approaches

Complain less; show up for meetings and events that relate to research and education

Veterans Outreach/Solid Recruitment/Literacy and writing programs, elective increase

Positively support other in community through words and actions

Be more courageous in bringing big questions to the community
Organize discussions on sensitive/important topics
Push Ask Big Questions on campus

Willing to help connect inter-disciplinary groups and willing to participate

I'm flexible about this but we have to create a culture that values such activities so that we can afford to engage and not be at risk for failure to complete expected duties, "it takes time"

New to university, so open to opportunities to assist