Science and Math Brown Bag

Sept. 8, 2016

Present: Rebecca Achtman, Susanne Biehle, Jeff Hansen, Doug Harms, Rich Martoglio, Selma Poturovic, Pam Propsom, Jackie Roberts, Maria Schwartzman

IUSE grant. Jackie and Pam shared a handout with brief description of the IUSE grant and funding opportunities, and the proposed HHMI Inclusive Excellence grant strategies.

Draft of Curricular Reform Awards application. We shared a draft of the Curricular Reform Awards application, which will be funded by the IUSE grant. (Doug already found an error which Pam corrected). The call for applications will go out soon and applications will be due December 2, 2016.

Paradigm Shifts. If you’re interested in potentially teaching a module in the Paradigm Shifts course, contact Michael Roberts soon. There are teaching grants available for this as well.

HHMI grant proposal. We clarified the proposed HHMI strategies, indicating that we don’t expect any one person to do them all. If you have suggestions/revisions to strategies, feel free to share them with any member of the HHMI team (Dana Dudle, Renee Madison, Pam Propsom, Jackie Roberts, and Gloria Townsend) and do so soon (given that the grant is due in October). The call during this round of HHMI funding is for proposals focusing on institutional change and graduating more diverse, representative STEM majors.

HHMI asks for names of 25 faculty members who will participate and be affected in grant activities, so if you would like to or be willing to be added to the list, let us know.

Focus groups. Pam Propsom and her team of student researchers have been trained in how to conduct focus groups. We plan to run a series of these during this academic year. We want to get student perceptions, especially from students in traditionally underserved groups (i.e., domestic students of color, first-generation students, females in some areas) regarding their experiences in introductory science and math courses so that we can begin making changes to create more inclusive classrooms. We will begin by recruiting students in affinity groups (AAAS, Posse) and then seek additional names from OIR, inviting them to participate.

We had a good discussion regarding important factors in students’ attitudes about science and math—high school experience and expectations they already come in with; how do we set the stage the first day of class (e.g., are faculty signaling high expectations or that we’re trying to “weed out” students?). How do we help students find the resources they need? Recruiting more students of color into the university and into our courses (e.g., CS has a course “try-out visit” so that they can see what Computer Science is like and maybe enroll in it).