BEAMS Summer Academy Application Questions

- Institution: Woodbury University
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- Proposed team: Registration is waived for the first 4 team members and the team leader. Institutions will be responsible for registration costs for any additional team members. (include the person’s name, title, email address and phone number)

Dr. Douglas Cremer, Director of the Institute of Transdisciplinarity Studies, douglas.cremer@woodbury.edu, 818.252.5146
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The student leader will be named at a later date, after student government elections.

Team work at the Summer Academy:

- How will you use the 2007 Academy to continue refining, expanding, or building upon your BEAMS work? Please note, your response will be considered your team’s project description for purposes of the Summer Academy notebook. Please limit your response to 200 words and make sure your description has been edited for printing.

In 2005 Woodbury University, whose population’s majority come from low-income minority students began to make student affairs a full partner in the academic process. This year, because of BEAMS, the two units are linked in a project involving three separate Focused Learning Communities, composed of students, faculty, and staff. Together these groups are considering how Woodbury’s students learn inside and outside of the classroom. From this we will begin a cooperative process of building a general education curriculum that spans the classroom, campus, and home communities.

- Representatives from two other national projects will be convening at this year’s Summer Academy—the National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN) and Model Replication Institutions (MRI). NATN brings together 2- and 4-year institutions committed to developing articulation agreements to ease transfer among participating institutions; MRI builds on the work of the Models of Excellence program by helping campuses to develop successful STEM programs for students of color. How does your work relate to theirs? What kind of
networking opportunities at the Summer Academy would be productive? Are there particular ways either of these projects might be useful to your own work?

According to the latest HACU research, Woodbury University has the largest percentage of Hispanic students of any private college or university. Our Title V grant has provided us an opportunity to develop a successful transfer system with a local community college. We would have models to share with colleagues at other institutions.

In part, we already know that the new model of learning will involve transdisciplinary approaches that bring together various disciplines collaboratively. The lead for this has been a very successful SENCER project focused on community-based problems, such as water supply and traffic. Transdisciplinarity, with its grounding in multiple disciplines working to solve real-world problems, allows us to make the lives of our students and their futures central. Given Woodbury’s investment in creating a vital STEM experience for its students and given the community-based grounding for our general education and, finally, given the high number of transfer students we have, the possibility for networking seems very exciting.

- Given your history with BEAMS and other good work in which your campus is engaged, we hope your team will be an active participant in this year’s program. If your team is interested in leading a roundtable, please include a proposed title and description below. We will contact you once we have made final decisions about the roundtable offerings.

Roundtable Topic

We have two:
“Integrating Academic and Student Affairs: Bridging Classroom and Community, Cognition and Character.”
The roundtable discussion will focus on the strategies that were needed to bring together what were at times two opposing sides to address student issues on campuses. We have found a common ground to build an integrated intentional academic community.

Or
“Transdisciplinarity as the New General Education: When Multiple Disciplines Work Together to Solve Complex Social Problems.”
What is transdisciplinarity and why is important to explore and embrace on campuses? We are exploring going beyond interdisciplinary studies and moving to a different way to approach teaching and learning across academic programs.

- Workshop needs: Pick the five topics you are most interested in learning about during your time at the Summer Academy.
  - Accreditation
  - Student learning outcomes
  - Performance measures
  - Scholarship of teaching and learning
  - Communities of practice
Contributing to BEAMS Dissemination and Planning Efforts

- A primary purpose for your participation in the Academy is to highlight successful BEAMS institutions. Please tell us what you’ve accomplished to date, in what ways your BEAMS efforts can serve as an example to others, and how your work might be shared fruitfully through project dissemination efforts.

By participating in the BEAMS project, we found out what we did best from our NSSE scores. Our institution scored with the top 10% of performing institutions in the area of “Supportive Student Environment.” Our institution would be willing to share the process that it took us to get there. The Title V grant also allowed us to develop from a very flat system of academic support to one that is now an integral part of the teaching and learning process on campus.

- As part of our synthesis and dissemination work, we will be tapping BEAMS campuses to write practice briefs on issues important to the success of your BEAMS work. Would your campus be interested in participating? What might your team contribute?

Our BEAMS team would be interested in drafting a Practice Brief regarding our adapting faculty learning communities as a way to create institutional change on campuses. Our model is unique in that we not only involved faculty, but students and staff to discuss the issue of student success on out campus. The communities were charged to explore the question, “what do we need to do as an institution to develop successful students.” Part of the exploration was to research articles that will inform their recommendations. As with faculty learning communities, this process was created to take place over a semester. It is a model that can be easily replicated.

- We will consider how to build on BEAMS work in the future to craft strategies for supporting students that attend multiple institutions during their academic career (student swirl). Would your campus be interested in participating in such work? Mentoring other campuses? How might you contribute?

As almost half of our students fit this picture of student swirl, we would be happy to participate in developing such strategies. Our work in integrating academic and student affairs, using learning communities across the campus and adopting a transdisciplinary perspective all offer opportunities we would like to explore in their connection to the issues of students attending multiple institutions.

- To which of the following possible learning community themes does your BEAMS work most relate? Please remember each theme will be addressed in terms of student transfer and mobility.

Either theme:
- Creating connections: Developing meaningful co-curricular options for students of color,
or
- Going to the source: Faculty development programs to support engaging teaching and learning practices for students of color