Task Force Summer Report 2015
Educating for the Future

How often and for how long did your group meet over the summer? Was this adequate for the work you needed to do?
For most of the summer, we worked as six subgroups. Then, we brought the results of that work do a taskforce-wide, daylong retreat on August 21.
We accomplished a lot in terms of research and analysis. This work has put us in a good position for fall to begin exploring curricular models at the undergraduate level and building a template for the review of graduate programs.

How much work were individual task force members responsible for between meetings?
We estimate that nine task force members (those who committed to summer work) spent nearly 400 hours working on our six primary summer tasks. This work included outreach and collaboration, research and analysis.

What did/will the group accomplish this summer?
- Continue outreach with internal and external constituents on “the essence of a UST education.”
  - We have connected (often in multiple ways) with faculty, exempt staff, administrators, current students, new students, advisory boards, alumni and employers. We are currently analyzing results from parents and awaiting results from non-exempt staff.
- Research undergraduate curricula of peer institutions and other universities of interest, synthesize.
  - We completed a comprehensive review of 32 universities (peer aspirational group and others identified as having interesting curricula).
- Research best practices in undergraduate education and pedagogy, synthesize.
  - Emerging themes:
    - The importance of liberal education
    - The importance of a cumulative and integrative approach
    - The importance of content knowledge and skills
    - The importance of high-impact practices
    - The importance of solving significant and unscripted problems
    - The importance of students’ demonstration of their learning
- Initiate communication with deans on graduate program reviews.
  - A number of operational (non-curricular) needs have been identified; these will inform the template we will create for the program (curricular) reviews.
- Distill/synthesize “essence of a UST education” list for distribution and feedback.
  - Results will be shared with community for feedback and discussion in fall
- Following the Faculty Handbook, map out a process to follow for both discussion and feedback and for approval (when we arrive at recommendations).
  - We have been working with the Faculty Affairs and consulting with the executive
committee of the senate. The process will be finalized in early fall.

What are your goals for Fall 2015?
- Introduce distilled “essence” list (learning outcomes) to community for feedback and discussion.
- Identify curricular elements/features that best speak to our essence and best practices. Explore these in the context of St. Thomas.
- Develop template for graduate program review.

What are your goals for Spring 2016?
Because our task is so large, we are developing specific goals at the beginning of each semester. Right now, we hope to propose 2-3 curricular models to the community by the end of Spring 2016.

Are there any resources your group feels you need to continue efficiently with your work?
Beyond more time (task force members have to juggle committee work with their other duties), nothing right now.

Do you plan on any meetings or Brown Bags with the UST community this Fall and/or academic year?
Yes. We plan to introduce the “essence” (learning outcomes) to the community for discussion and feedback.

What other task force(s) do you feel it is important that you collaborate with going forward?
Definitely: Flexible Pathways, Global Connections, Embracing our Differences as One Human Family, Catholic Inspired Community Engagement
Possibly: Enhanced Visibility and Profile, Integrated & Expanded Health and Wellness Programs, and Integrated Planning