

CLA WEB CHARRETTE

January 17, 2013



charrette

char-rette [shuh-ret]

a process inspired by architecture design for bringing a diverse group of people together to think creatively about a design challenge.

What are the opportunities we want to explore in order to develop our future web strategy that advances CLA and its academic mission?

Why now? In our collective and individual experience we may have seen that on the path to communicating the outstanding work being done by CLA and its programs in service to the University's mission, we are at a crossroads for determining the direction that the web can play in our communications strategy.

In our exploration, we understand the need for..

- Aligning with fiscal realities
- Optimizing a “student-centric” focus
- Countering skepticism of the liberal arts and deepening understanding of its relevance

The college organized this day as a participative retreat in order to share and leverage diverse perspectives and expertise and to support collaboration that makes a difference.

What happened? Attendees generated the agenda on-site by suggesting topics for exploration and action, enjoying multiple opportunities to connect with others in meaningful conversations. In the spirit of a design charrette, the session was creative and collaborative, allowing everyone to benefit from the diversity in the room and drawing on the collective experiences, knowledge, and wisdom to move web communications in CLA forward.



Open Space Technology self-organizing and unscripted



The format used for this creative design process is known as Open Space Technology, a method used all across the globe from groups of 5 to 2,000. The ideal conditions for Open Space are when there is a real issue of concern worth talking about; a high level of complexity, such that no single person or small group can solve the issue; a high level of diversity of skills and people required for a successful resolution; the potential for conflict, which implies people genuinely care about the issue; and a high level of urgency, meaning the time for decisions and action was “yesterday”. The role of participants in Open Space:

- Create the agenda on-site by posing topics and questions that are important to them
- Team up with others who care about the same topics
- Make space for every topic anyone cares about
- Benefit from everyone’s experience and knowledge in a creative, respectful and responsible environment
- Express and develop ideas, identify actions and plan for their implementation

The Principles of Open Space:

1. *Whoever comes is the right “people”*
genuine interest and wisdom are present in the room
2. *Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened*
let go of the past and regrets, focus on the best possible effort in the moment
3. *Whenever it starts is the right time*
take things as they come
4. *When it’s over, it’s over*
discussions may be short or long, you decide

The Law of Mobility:

If you are neither learning nor contributing, move on. Some will move around pollinating ideas (bumblebees) and others may take a break or reflect (butterflies).



Topics to Explore

3 rounds, 27 topics

listening strategies ♦ accurate and timely content ♦ what if the sites were built/developed collaboratively? ♦ how do we promote liberal arts & CLA at the same time as we promote individual disciplines? ♦ what could we simplify/standardize to allow more resources for the “exciting”? ♦ new role? departmental content strategist. ♦ what design do we need? ♦ consistency vs diversity (take the vs. out??) ♦ who is our audience? ♦ what else do we need to know to develop a great strategy? ♦ who does the work? CLA roles vs. division roles ♦ what about MOOCS? ♦ what is a college? ♦ how can CLA students help create the web presence? ♦ how can our web pages interact with social media? ♦ what’s working? what’s not? ♦ analytics & more - how do we measure success? ♦ I would be proud of a CLA website that does _____. ♦ what does a student-centric site look like? ♦ who do we compete with and what can we learn from them? ♦ what is CLA’s identity? ♦ what is shared vision ♦ one plan from academics and administration? ♦ integrating new technology ♦ rewarding collaboration



photos by
Xiaolu Wang



“Great experience, LOVED the format. So great to hear what’s going on across the college! Loved the cross collaboration.”

“I really like the mix of structure and fluidity. Thanks for keeping things moving and for recognizing that some people prefer being butterflies or bumblebees!”

Ready for Action next steps

Promote the liberal arts throughout the CLA website (Mary Pattock)

What do we need to know to make a great web? (Kelly O'Brien and Lisa Miller)

Start a web content practitioner peer work group/Convene Best Practices (Terri Sutton and Colleen Ware)

How can non-CLA staff help? (Christina Goodland)

Defining the roles & responsibility of the web team (Natasha Wright)



"Great variety of participants - allowed many great points to emerge in discussion."

"I found lots of other people who want the kind of support I need and want. Well organized and run."

THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!

On behalf of your..

planning team

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