

Leadership Summit  
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Strategic Planning Focus Group

Bridge: Enriching Student Experiences Outside the Classroom and Providing Paths to Careers

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### Group 1

In one word—what drew you here today?

- Opportunity
- Commitment
- Interesting career development
- Worry (about Reed's over-commitment)
- Community service
- Alternate learning form
- Obsession
- Launch
- Hard (years after Reed)

How many committed to Reed?

A large number, financially or through projects

What are some takeaway points from the white papers?

- Life beyond Reed seems to sit outside of the academic sphere
- Are there ways to engage faculty in this discussion about how to combine academics& careers
- Papers didn't look much at past structural solutions (Paideia)
- Alumni should perhaps be responsible for life beyond Reed more than the college, partly due to resources—Reed focuses on the academics

Request made for the group to focus on core strategy, initiatives

Anecdote about another college that really emphasized life after college, helped with internships – can help with admissions, can begin almost immediately

Academic importance of distribution requirements & exploration they afford

Perspective that internships might not actually be valuable, might not lead to paid jobs

→ Although goal of an internship is as much experience as it is more paid jobs

Something between individual internships & more creative examinations—example: Portland State's capstone project—involvement outside the classroom

Important that internships are not necessarily self-initiated. Must create opportunity for everyone

However: could be too much like a professional degree program

Even just some internships could change the on-campus atmosphere, attitude towards jobs

Given alumni to student ratio, alumni—student involvement can be very personalized

We need very clear communication with alumni & students, and reasons for alums to be attracted to that

Metaphor of a bridge, w/ communication as the on-ramp, experience as the road and the off-ramp possible life after reed, careers, alumni involvement (see drawing)

Better definition of a liberal arts education useful for any career

What's already happening communication-wise? What's useful?

- Switchboard
- Working weekend
- Paideia
- Internships/externships
- Grants
- Relay program
- Maven network

Some students contact alumni about issues within classes—useful connection—how to facilitate more of this type of communication?

This conversation is not necessarily about jobs—more about passions, contributions

Again: articulate the use/purpose of liberal arts—because your major might not be your job

Maybe career services could have CVs on file for students to look at

→ International students receive info, summaries about potential hosts & vice versa—useful way to see possible connections, esp. connections that are not necessarily just careers

→ But: not enough initiative coming from students to sustain alumni efforts in this area

Some but not all alums have profiles on Iris

- Useful: provides a link to LinkedIn, Facebook & the like
- Place to explain your path
- Students *do* use this
- Networks only as good as the data they have
- Reed's new JSTOR access a major initiative to be on Iris & therefore potentially find alums

But: often students decide where they'll live, look for chapter chair, ask for help finding a job. This is ineffective.

Clarify difference between job & career in the context of liberal arts

→ But: difficult to do this in the midst of the thesis, so, important to build this into academics earlier

Sophomore year offers an opportunity: pre-qual, pre-thesis, early connection

Okay to say that jobs after Reed might take a year, different from other schools

Curriculum different from coursework: don't want to impose on faculty by making this part of academics

How does attitude towards jobs, life after Reed vary from department to department

- Bio labs, lab jobs
- Psych—research, particular focus on likely PhD students
- History—not as many career options as bio
- Anthro—very competitive, limited opportunities, no discussion of non-academic jobs (peace corps, for example)

Student-faculty ratio is important—is it utilized enough? Do teachers guide students as far as careers are concerned?

Possible to convey the alumni enthusiasm for bettering the college

→ Perhaps through a more formalized approach?

Look at friends of the children's 9-year plan, training program as an example of preparation for helping students

Also look at the Reed Oral history project

→ But: when project ended, no continuing involvement with participants

This is not a project that ends 5, 10 years after graduation. It continues as people change jobs

## Group 2

What drew you?

- Reedies struggle with transition out of college, more so than students from other schools
- Possible to do more: enrichment while within school & with finding jobs
- “Dazed” (how Reedies feel leaving school)
- Finding a job immediately after the thesis year can be difficult

Working weekend is a good opportunity

Anecdote: in this alum’s experience of hiring Reedies, some were totally qualified, others entirely confused about how to apply, present oneself

Another experience: with graduation, grad school, attitude that a job and particularly a job in academia will be available

- an internship would have been useful
- Career counseling seemed irrelevant to students heading to grad school

Is Reed pre-professional—but just for academic jobs?

We need the creation of a contingency plan, web of opportunities

Discussion about the Reed program—how can we access all the creativity of Reed students?

- Taking theater/lit major to a marketing job, performing arts to the sciences

Transition out of school in early 20s is inherently difficult—how to assist students?

Liberal arts education prepares for everything. Would be useful to have examples of what Reed graduates have done, both clear paths & more complicated ones

But: what is wrong with a sink-or-swim philosophy? Reed education should & often does teach flexibility in any situation

But: Reed could have taught how to have an intellectually rigorous conversation outside of the conference setting

How to take the core focus on intellectual rigor & help students use that later in life?

College does have a responsibility—should be asking how to help w/ life after Reed—students today have high expectations but getting careers is more difficult today than it once was

Graduate from the 70s was “clueless” about how to deal with practical aspects of jobs, job applications

Could Reed have a course or even a minor in leadership? Internships, service would serve a similar purpose

→ And what are the pathways to leadership? Because you will most likely not be hired into a leadership position in your 20s

Only reason job was found a month after graduation for this alum was thanks to off-campus jobs & experiences

Maintain Reed-ness while being socially competent can be a challenge

Pre-med and law popular fields, grades can be detractors, cause a change in plans. Law school, though, is based largely on letters of recommendation

Could alumni come to intro classes? Students who enter knowing (or thinking they know) what they want to do could see a variety of options

Could we have a social norms class towards the end of Reed?

Or give a roadmap of options coming out of a major

Pretty even split between who feels they chose the right major and who didn't—but choosing the wrong major is not necessarily a regret/mistake

Would have been helpful to have someone clarify job options. For this man, started as a math major but couldn't see a road—switched majors

Reed education prepares you for whatever you decide to do, despite any mistakes in majors or elsewhere. & it should continue to do so

Would have been helpful to realize if you're not a good fit for a major before junior quals

→ Better advising, or maybe advising more focused on reality—abilities, careers?

Timing problem: 1<sup>st</sup> 3 years, students can be indifferent to perspectives from visiting alumni, advice about careers. Benefit to this stuff, though—work study, analytical discussions about jobs—just an awareness, an exposure to what careers are available

Ensure that Reed culture (counterculture) is not interfering—be aware of the choices you're making

Confusion about jobs, time wasted not actually specific to Reed

→ But maybe the privilege of going here makes Reedies feel especially cheated out of jobs—feeling of elite-ness

→ Even if this is the case, Reed can still equip students to deal with this problem

→ Important not to become less Reed because of this

There is this anti-business attitude—makes finding a job more difficult

What can Reed do to increase alumni involvement?

- College needs to strengthen connections, recognize myriad of what Reedies can do

## Raw Notes:

- Disconnect between Academic and non-academic Reed
  - Developing
  - Responsibility of the college
    - Active alumni
    - College resources scarce
  - Need to keep Reed focused on current campus life
  - L.B.V. opportunity for Alumni to contribute
  - Live after college begins during Junior and Senior year
  - Value of internships?
    - Experiences
    - Intern/externships are valuable because they allow critical examination in the community
      - Interest means there will be problem solving
  - On campus culture is to influence student thought about life after college
  - Students get the perspective/value
  - More communication means there is tangible follow-up
- Draw
  - Opportunity
  - Commitment
  - Career development
  - Worry Reed over communicating
  - Community service
  - Alternative learning form
  - Students launching
  - Years after Reed are hard
  - Background
  - Involvement
- Individual relationships guided
- Paideia
- Internships
- RELAY Program: community projects
- Summer jobs in other departments lack this
- Ph. D.?
- Contribution
- Maven network
- How can alumni connect with current students?
- IRIS as tool
- Alumni Register!
- Expectations
- Awareness
- Collaboration
- Liberal arts education

- Major doesn't dictate future career
  - Invitation, need a better foundation to connect
- Make alumni accessibility known
- Develop diamond
- Friends of the Children
  - Paid staff help
- Draw
  - Concern for Reedies re-entering
  - Reedies confused and dazed
  - To help: enrichment during and after college
  - Working Weekend
  - Some Reedies need help with interviews
  - Belief that a career was at the end
    - Students should be warned of difficulty, must work harder
  - Label possibilities of Reed
    - Open up to students
  - How to help students
    - What have other graduates done?
    - Students won't be so worried, be better equipped to handle the twists and turns
    - Learn political skills to prepare for the working world
      - Reed should have a minor in Leadership
    - Do more to create these opportunities for students
    - Intern/Extern/Mentorships Conversation
    - All departments
      - Opportunities for students
      - Grad school? More options
    - Alumni explain paths to Reedies in the beginning
      - Provide similar avenues for students
      - Conversations between alumni and Reedies/Advice
      - Not having a clear path can be an advantage
    - Helpful to know which majors lead to which careers
      - Alumni can provide this insight
      - Reed education = preparation for any career
      - Frustration at being unaware upon entering the workforce
      - Works tudy is practical involvement in the beginning
      - Expose people to what is available
      - Offer choices and opportunities Life Beyond Reed not all academic
    - Reed anti-business?
      - More difficult to enter the workplace
      - 100% active with Reed