Educational Session

Keep it Watered and Watch it Grow: Managing Mature Partnerships between 2- and 4-year Institutions

Curricular Alignment or Degree Pathways, Partnerships and Collaboration

Like any quality relationship, the partnership between a 2-year and 4-year institution is one that grows, evolves, and changes. Many understand what they want in a partnership, but how do you achieve those goals over time with the challenges and changes in higher education? This session explores the mature stages of partnerships beyond the forming stage. Using Oregon State University as a case study, presenters offer strategies that 4-year institutions can implement to better serve their 2-year partners while seeking to meet institutional goals.

Rick DeBellis, *Associate Director of Degree Partnerships*
Bridget Jones, *Senior Associate Director of Transfer Recruitment*

Oregon State University

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Managing Mature Partnerships between 2- and 4-year Institutions

Oregon State University

Introductions

Rick DeBellis
Associate Director of Degree Partnerships

Bridget Jones
Senior Associate Director of Transfer Admissions

Oregon State University

- Land Grant institution of Oregon

- Degree Partnership Program Partnership with 17 Oregon Community Colleges and Hawaii Community Colleges

- Agreements made across Admissions, Financial Aid, and Registrar's Offices

Session Overview

- Introductions and context

- Review of Types of partnerships (formal and informal)

- Strategies for maintaining and maturing a partnership

- Navigating staff turnover

- Navigating shifting institutional priorities

- When is it time to sunset a partnership?

~Opportunities to assess your own institution throughout the presentation~

Types of Partnerships

- Formal Partnerships
  - MOUs
  - Signed Agreements
  - Articulation Agreements

- Informal Partnerships
  - Degrees created to align (but nothing formalized)
  - 2-year institutions identified as "feeders" to 4-year institutions
  - Historical working relationships (between individuals or offices)

Questions for Consideration

~Pause this presentation to ask/answer the following questions~

- What type of partnerships currently exist at your institution and at what level? (If you don't know, then you should DEFINITELY take some time to find out)

- Who is responsible for partnerships and who is accountable for maintaining the agreements?

- Is your current type of partnership (formal or informal) serving your institution in achieving recruitment goals?

- What offices need to be included in starting these conversations to take your partnership to it's next stages?

Strategies for maintaining and maturing a partnership

- Set a reasonable and regular timeline for revisiting
    - Meet every year/bi-annually with key partner contacts

- Ensure all offices of the original agreement are actively involved and updated. Develop a plan for keeping offices accountable for their involvement.
    - NOTE: It's very important to involve senior leadership in these conversations since office and institutional priorities can and do change.

- Take your time with developing and reviewing contracts and formal agreements

- Write partnership activities and communications into your transfer recruitment plan and ensure your staff are aware of the details of those agreements.

Questions for Consideration

~Pause this presentation to ask/answer the following questions~

- What new offices need to be included in deepening your partnerships? Which should be cycled out?

- Are the senior members of your leadership team in support of these partnerships? To what extent are they involved in conversations?

- Are all members of your recruitment team familiar with the partnerships that exist and are their activities supporting those partnerships?

Navigating Staff Turnover

- #1 killer of institutional initiatives

- Can also be the very thing your institution needs to kick-start initiatives

- Document (to the extreme) the details of your partnerships, next steps and future goals of the partnership

- Leverage the signatures on any formal partnership document

- Track changes in both staff and policies of campus involved

Questions for Consideration

~Pause this presentation to ask/answer the following questions~

- Are the details of your partnership currently documented?

- What gaps currently exist in your current documentation and what is needed to fill those gaps?

- If your entire staff were to leave the office, are enough details included in your partnership documents that new staff could continue the work with ease?

Navigating Shifting Institutional Priorities

- Edit the language of your partnership documents often enough to reflect and align with your institution's strategic plan

- Identify common goals between the two institutions

- Understand and track the numbers

- Leverage your advocates across the two institutions

- Find opportunities to create easy "wins" for your partner institutions

- Negotiate if necessary

- Think creatively

Questions for Consideration

~Pause this presentation to ask/answer the following questions~

- What are current/potential threats to your existing partnerships (funding, staffing resources, etc.) and what is your plan for keeping it going?

- What are the institutional priorities of your partner institutions? If you don't know, take some time to find out.

- What can you identify as easy "wins" for both of you if you were to partner on something easy like an event or publication (to start)?
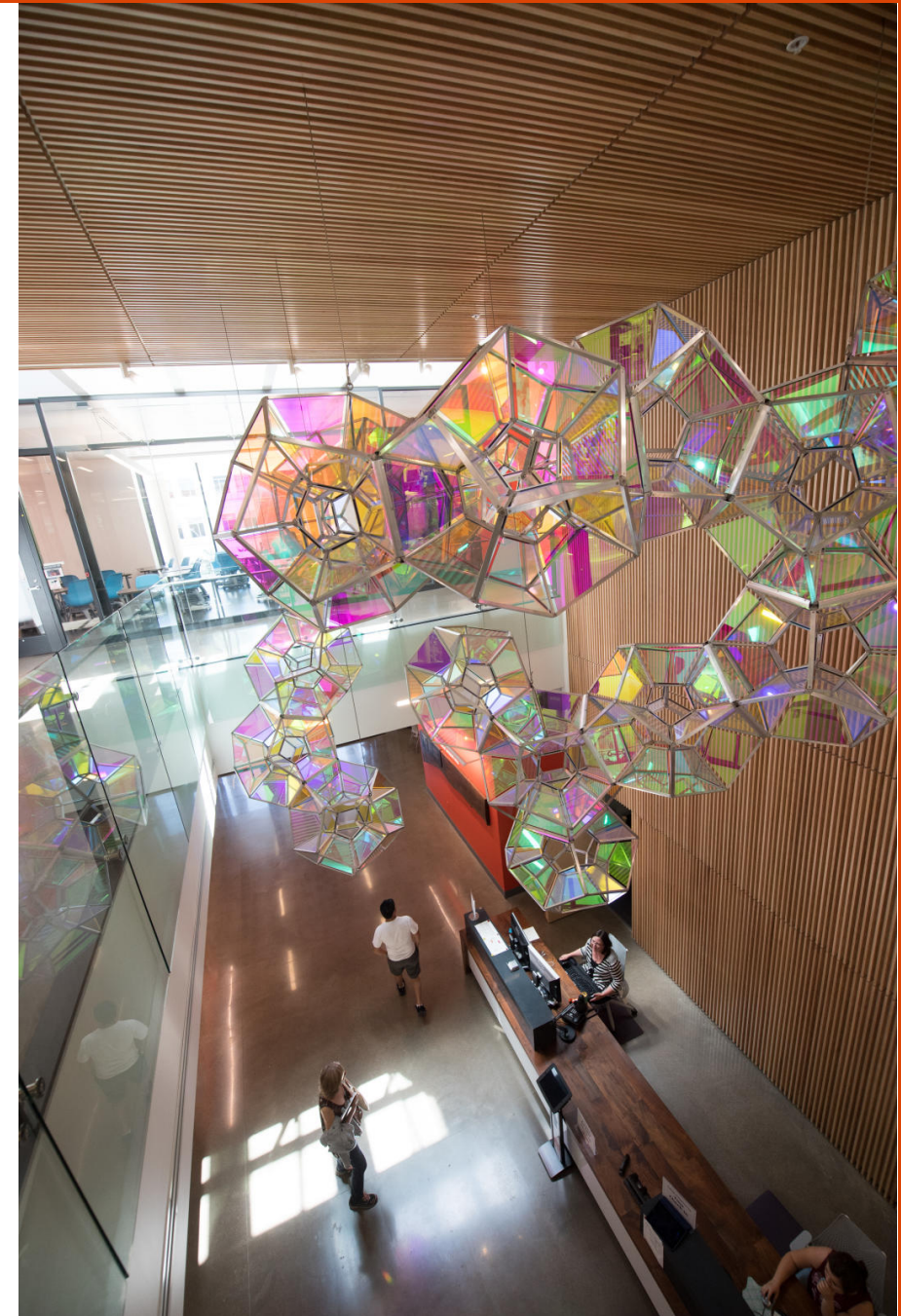
Sun-setting a Partnership

- Insufficient staffing or funds

- Not actually making the transfer process easier for students

- Expiration of contract/agreement

Wrap-up and Additional Considerations

- State/university system mandates

- Securing buy-in on these initiatives may take years

- Unique factors specific to your institution

- Keeping 2/4-year partners engaged is important to keep the existence of the partnership on everyone's radar