**Models of the New American Research University:**

**Curriculum & Delivery Group Overview**

**Introduction**

The model of the “New American Research University” suggested by this committee and outlined in the attached concept papers, is one of a *learner-centered* research university. Through five key strategies, the University of Delaware will institutionalize structures and practices to create this shift. While the charge of this subgroup was limited to “curriculum and delivery,” the proposed strategies are wider-ranging and promote institutional transformation aligned with the coming challenges facing American higher education. The five strategies include:

1. A new framework for a coherent, integrated plan of general education for all students,

(2) The creation of a new college serving as an innovation-nova, driving curriculum reform throughout the University primarily through the management of general education,

(3)A reevaluation of the role of the 21st Century faculty member to highlight an emphasis on both learning and research in faculty activities,

(4) A plan of curriculum reform driven by thoughtful, purposeful, “designing for learning,” and (5) An approach to strengthen UD’s community connections, outreach, and public engagement.

**Working Definitions**

The committee sought to make clear how we view the areas addressed herein and adopted working definitions for *curriculum* and *delivery*. We define *curriculum* as “the plan for learning—guided by the institution, for individuals and groups, inside or outside the school/classroom.” Viewing curriculum as a plan rather than simply the offered courses allows us to better address delivery. We define *delivery* as a process that encompasses how, where, and when the curriculum is communicated/disseminated/facilitated, and who receives it. In essence, delivery comprises all attempts, including understanding the served populations, to reach the learner(s): students, faculty, staff, or community. Combining the plan for learning with the process of effectively deploying it places UD on a course for continued assessment and strategic thinking.

**Constituent Feedback**

Through a series of meetings with various constituent groups who are connected to curriculum and delivery, we learned some common themes. We heard repeatedly that students should have more flexibility, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary opportunities. Constituents want more University centralization, better technology resources, a balance of research and teaching, and more opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student professional development. We heard that the University could be utilizing more innovative methods for reaching different types of learners: not just the different populations we serve, but people who learn differently within those populations.

**The Learning Centered University**

While colleges and universities largely claim to be places of learning, they are structured in many cases to be places of teaching. Well accepted norms of instruction revolve around highly structured times, classrooms, content, approaches, face-to-face lectures, and disciplinary requirements. There have been periodic innovations in curriculum and delivery, but they are sporadic and individualistic rather than institutional and systematic, and they tend to focus more on how faculty teach (e.g., roaming lecture, power point, or online) or the classroom environment (e.g., smaller class versus larger class) rather than how information receivers learn (e.g., knowledge application, small group interaction, and student-to-student instruction).

By a conscious shift in focus from teaching to learning, the campus expands from the classroom to the co-curricular by designing for learning in daily student life. General education becomes a framework for achieving objectives through a core curriculum. Continuing education and agricultural extension improve outreach by applying researched principles of adult learning to the design of lifelong learning environments. By shifting the focus from teaching, research, and service to learning, scholarship, and engagement, the new American research university redefines the 21st century faculty member. In this new environment, students play a more active role in assessment so faculty can better enable student success.

**Incorporating the Value of Diversity into the Curriculum and Its Delivery**

Through the University experience, students learn of unfamiliar things, ask probing questions, deliver oral and written presentations, and interact with individuals, groups, and subjects, typically under the guidance of faculty. Both professors and students have diverse teaching and learning styles, and it is likely that these differences are correlated with race and ethnicity, gender, age, traditional versus non-traditional student status, and nationality. When effective teaching and learning styles match, the experience facilitates engagement and subsequently a heightened experience. Faculty should have increased opportunities to participate in teaching and learning workshops where they can experiment with new techniques and resources and learn how to work with a variety of teaching and learning styles that are associated with historically underrepresented groups. These would include addressing issues that affect diverse communities, incorporating multi-media which include members of these communities, and encouraging led ‘teaching’ to promote perspective taking and cultural understanding. College (Deans and Associate Deans) and University (Provost and Vice Provosts) leaders should also hold the University community accountable for efforts to diversify faculty and students. Importantly, a more diverse faculty, with more diverse teaching styles and more diverse interests and perspectives, will enhance the quality of teaching for all students.