



## Academic Excellence Committee

Meeting Minutes from November 5, 2015

**Attendees:** Jason Belter (co-Chair), Claudia Gumbiner Hungs (co-Chair), Mari Bergerson, Ryan Dowhower, Dianne Krizan, Roxane Lehman, K. Christian McGuire, Ellad Tadmor, Eric Williams

### I. School / Life Balance Update

- Overall feedback on Parent Ed night presentation as well on changes to homework practices this year has been positive.
  - The changes to SoL have been seen as effective
    - 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> homework/study skills modification feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
    - One open area is providing respite for 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as there is no current school day study period. A consideration for addressing this challenge might be something similar to the 'STOP' program in Minnetonka, where once a week, at varied times, students are given an opportunity to catch up on work.
  - SoR workloads are determined by individual schedules (CIS, AP, Honors courses, etc. result in significantly higher workloads than traditional path courses).
  - One thought in terms of managing school/life balance is to begin academic guidance in middle school – to help students consider future plans, purpose, interests which will also guide course and extracurricular choices / workload.
    - Starting earlier guidance also aligns with Nova's World's Best Workforce efforts.
    - In concert with this guidance we also might consider what we need to do to make the SoL even more attractive and how to better communicate the Nova 'package' – that one has not truly experienced a Classical education without going through all three stages of the trivium.

### II. Share Final 2015-16 Goals

- *Develop benchmarks for assessing the success of changes made to improve school/ life balance*
- *Develop benchmarks for implementation of ASPIRE testing, and initial draft academic dashboard framework and goals*
- *Support and drive efforts to ensure that Nova maintains an integrated shared language / concept around virtues including academic (appropriate to level in trivium), extracurricular, community and social*

### III. Draft Definitions for Completion of Each

- *Develop benchmarks for assessing the success of changes made to improve school/ life balance*
  - Monitor/evaluate current community-wide, school-wide, and classroom level paradigms, policies, procedures, and practices
    - Once aspect of this might be sharing results based on a menu of workload modification options.
    - We might also consider some 'action research' by class.
    - To support these efforts, we might look at how to provide tips for parents.

- One area for ongoing evaluation is teacher coordination through the work calendar – that work plans are shared two weeks ahead.
- Define measurable benchmarks for homework procedures and practice
  - While in the '14-'15 Student Handbook, target times were provided for the SoR. In the '15-'16 Handbook, no details have been provided given the great variance in class level choices (for those on a traditional path, there is a best practices target of 2 ½ hours a day). We might look at providing a matrix that clarifies homework loads based on course selection.
- Develop metrics for measuring progress toward reaching benchmarks and a regular schedule for measuring
- Define a method/mechanism for students/parents to share feedback about homework on a given assignment or given day/week
  - We might consider offering an anonymous approach for providing feedback.
  - We need to manage the balance between spending too much time on a given problem/assignment and developing fortitude (perseverance) in working through challenges.
- *Develop benchmarks for implementation of ASPIRE testing, and initial draft academic dashboard framework and goals*
  - Define AEC's role in determining training opportunities for teachers, staff, parents and students
    - Mari Bergerson will provide regular updates on training plans / rollout (updates to begin?). Training plans include developing an understanding of MCA versus Aspire test concept coverage and meaning/usage of results as a part of Data Driven Instruction (DDI).
    - The first test Aspire test is planned for Fall 2016 (the norming will be for Spring).
  - Define AEC's role in recommending/overseeing systematic processes for using and reporting data
    - There were suggestions that we develop hypotheses / predictions and that we develop an understanding of teacher and parent expectations from Aspire testing.
- *Support and drive efforts to ensure that Nova maintains an integrated shared language / concept around virtues including academic (appropriate to level in trivium), extracurricular, community and social*
  - To be developed in December meeting.
  - We need to ensure efforts support Nova's stated Mission.

#### IV. Next Steps

- Mari and Roxane will work together to select slides from the larger School Life / Balance presentation deck to share with the community – target release date is before next AEC meeting.
- Claudia to develop draft goal step spreadsheet to allow tracking of progress.

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, December 3 at 5:45 PM in the Exhibition Hall