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Cornerstone Commitment to Collaboration

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Cornerstone Commitment to Collaboration

Part of the journal section “Forum: Cornerstone” [Contribution to Cornerstone: An Experiment in Interdisciplinarity and Community]

Debra Young, “Cornerstone Commitment to Collaboration”

I’m a bit of a magpie when it comes to teaching. I love to watch outstanding teachers, collect bits and bobs of their best techniques, and see how I can learn from them. It doesn’t matter if the discipline relates to mine; if it’s shiny, I’m curious about it.

Cornerstone is perfect for a magpie like me. As an interdepartmental program, the instructors are drawn from across campus, bringing the best of their disciplines with them. All are dedicated to collaboration, and time is set aside to ensure collaboration is possible.

Interdepartmental collaboration is one of the most unique aspects of Cornerstone and one of its greatest strengths. Without question, it is the aspect of Cornerstone that has had the greatest impact on my teaching. Now, when I find myself stuck or in need of a new idea, I look outward. I look for connections to other disciplines; I try to look through their lens to find a new way to reach a course objective. I seek out colleagues whose advice I trust or whose acquaintance I wish to make so I can explore an idea from a different point of view. I reach out to others and talk through a challenge because I have learned the value of multiple minds attacking a problem.

Collaboration is a time-consuming process. To build trust, it requires commitment. To explore ideas, it requires engagement. To generate results, it requires consistency. We are all so busy with our own classes, research, and service; it is hard to carve out that sort of time. However, Cornerstone instructors have made the commitment to summer workshops, regular meetings, and online communication. I have learned so much from my fellow instructors and the countless other faculty members who have brought their skills and ideas to specific collaboration sessions, and it has made all the difference in my teaching.

[Go to the narrative [Cornerstone: An Experiment in Interdisciplinarity and Community](#) article.]



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