Structuring Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs: Opportunities and Challenges at Concordia

Vivek Venkatesh
Associate Dean, Academic Programs & Development

Frédérica Martin
Program Analyst

School of Graduate Studies

Agenda

- Curricular and Administrative Viewpoints
- Role of Academic Programs and Development Unit of School of Graduate Studies at Concordia
- Collaborations with Academic Sector
- Interdisciplinary Initiatives at Concordia
- Overcoming Barriers

Curricular and Administrative Viewpoints

Research on Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs

Borrego & Newswander (2010)

- Disciplinary Frameworks/Theoretical Presuppositions
- Quality of Integration
- Communication Across Disciplines
- Critical Awareness

Curricular and Administrative Viewpoints

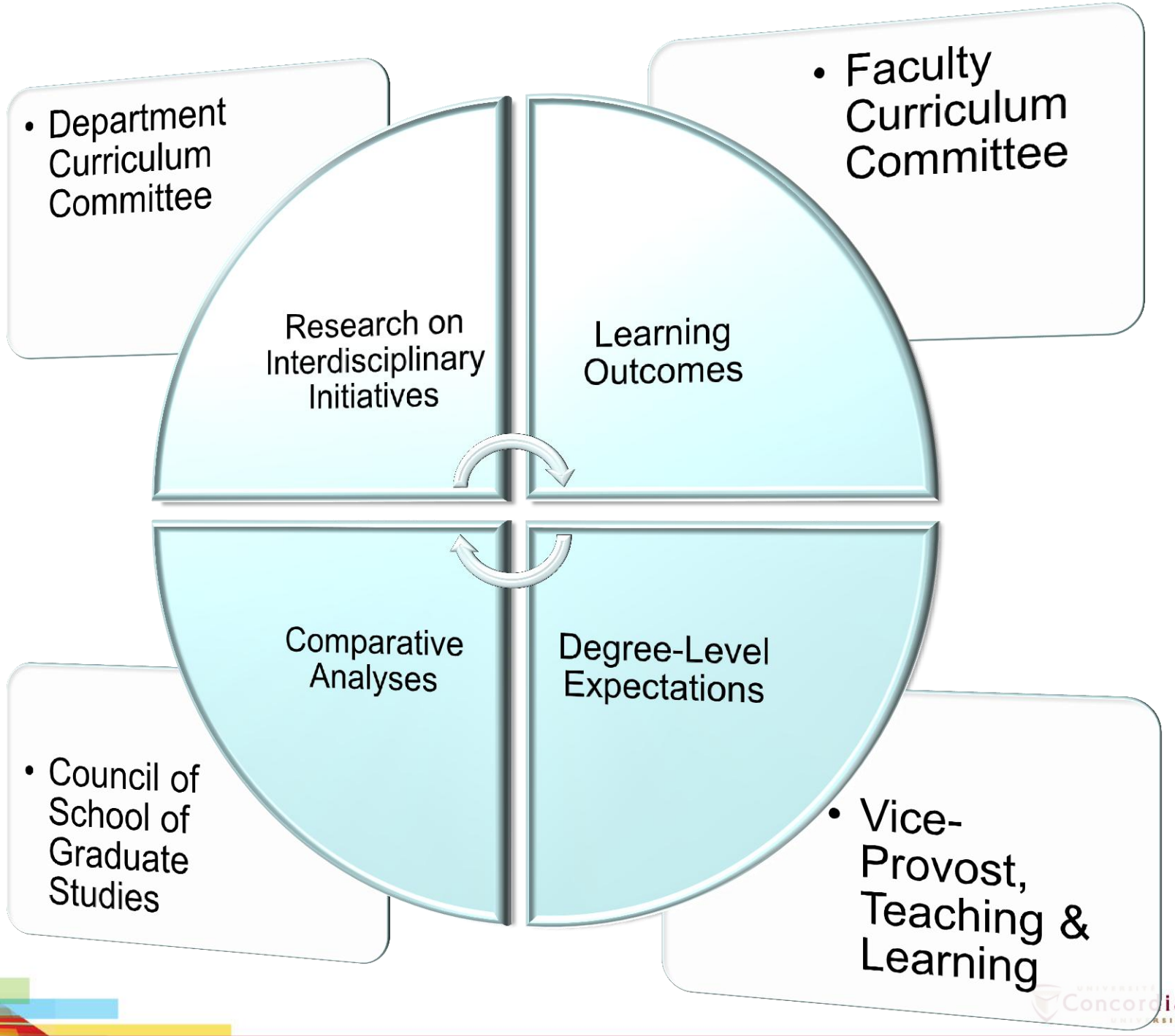
- Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (2013)
- Session on Interdisciplinary Programs
  - Individually designed program of study
  - Multi-disciplinary, direct entry program
  - Collaborative Program
  - Certificate or Diploma offerings

Curricular and Administrative Viewpoints

- Criteria for Program Classification as Interdisciplinary
  - Self-identification
  - History/rationale behind creation
  - Status of discipline within Concordia
  - Program objectives & requirements
  - Admission pre-requisites
  - Administrative mechanisms

Link with Academic Plan

- Foster Concordia's research institutes and centres as locations in which to develop trans-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary initiatives in research and teaching.
- Create a consultation team and develop a diverse array of blueprints to support program creation and innovation.
- Devote a small pool of funds to undergraduate and graduate program experimentation and course offerings, including interdisciplinary innovations.


• Department Curriculum Committee
• Faculty Curriculum Committee
Research on Interdisciplinary Initiatives
Learning Outcomes
Comparative Analyses
Degree-Level Expectations
• Council of School of Graduate Studies
• Vice-Provost, Teaching & Learning

Collaborations with Academic Sector

- Curriculum Innovation Fund
- Innovation is defined as experimentation that leads to an improved learning experience
- The goal is not to impose one definition of innovation, but to create the conditions for innovation to permeate from Departments, Faculties and Research Units

Initiatives

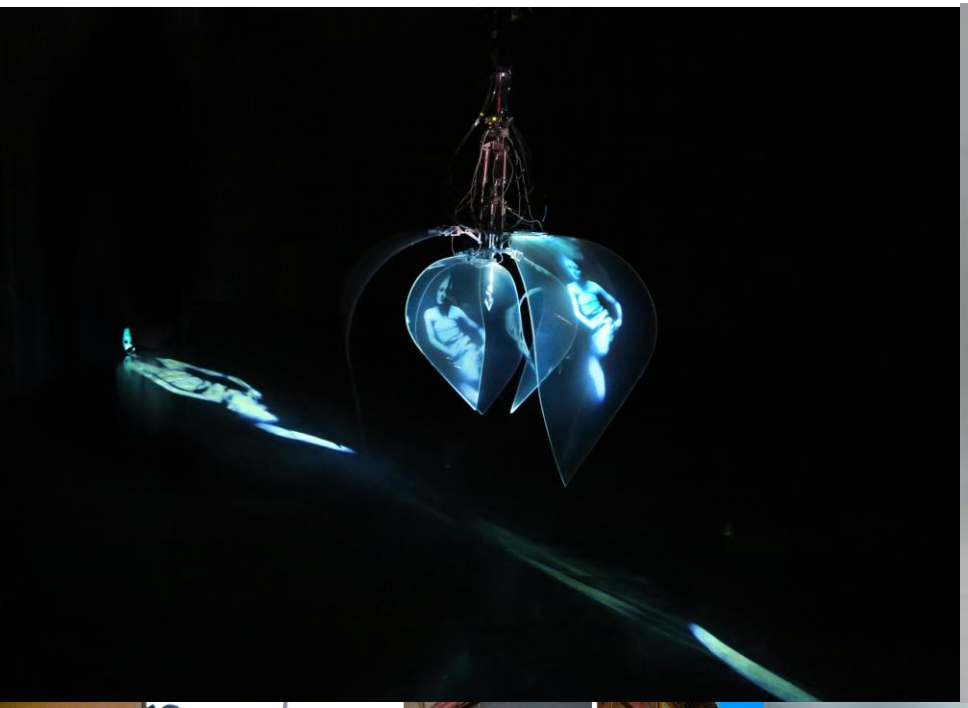
- Humanities Focus Group
  - Digital Humanities
  - Employability
  - Research-Creation
- Needs-based approach to consultation
- Evidence-based approach to curriculum development

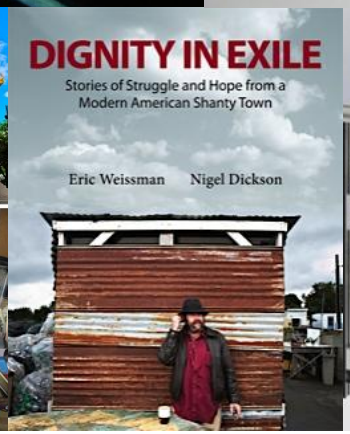
Initiatives

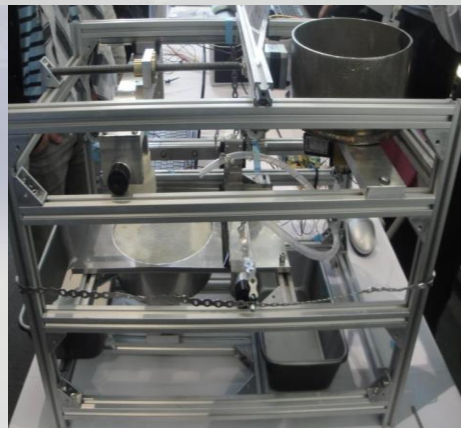
- Executive MBA
- PhD Humanities
- Certificate in University Teaching

- Creation of graduate seminars with curriculum adopted from multiple disciplines
- Curricular emphasis on team-work
- Communication Skills

INDI program







Overcoming Barriers

- Balancing curricular requirements with financial and administrative realities
- Breadth and depth of proposed programs
- Approval process versus quality control
- Development of learning outcomes commensurate with graduate level and nature of interdisciplinary program
- Space

vivek.venkatesh@concordia.ca

frederica.martin@concordia.ca

CONCORDIA.CA