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**The Evangelism Initiative**

**The Evangelism Initiative: seeking to deploy 100,000 CCCU students a year; 1,000,000 in 10 years, making Christ known where ever they go.**

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**Dear CCCU Delegate,**

My name is Jerry Root and I teach at Wheaton College. I am also involved with the Evangelism Initiative taking place right now on college campuses like Wheaton. The *Evangelism Initiative* seeks to develop on CCCU college and university campuses a commitment to evangelism. It seeks to encourage a passion in the hearts of students for sharing the Gospel. CCCU schools “deploy” about 100,000 graduates each year or 1,000,000 graduates every 10 years. If students leave our campuses and go out into the world, able and willing, to share the love of Christ with others in an engaging and winsome way we believe their generation can be transformed.

Most of our schools seek to provide a liberal arts education where faith seeks understanding. Outcomes that prove we have been successful in our objectives ought to include worship. How can students discover something of God displayed in the world He has made without coming, informally, to the place of worship? Furthermore, since God displays providential care over His creation, and gives to his creatures the bounty of harvests in their seasons, allowing it to rain on the just and the unjust, this too should motivate students to live a life of service to God and others. Also, a truly faith integrated education ought to produce students who can move naturally from a discussion of any topic to a discussion of the Gospel. This too, should further give evidence that a student has, in fact, learned the integration of faith and learning.

While every CCCU campus shares similar values that unite us in our educational goals, we recognize that each campus is unique. The particular geographic location of each campus, the culture of the campus, the variety of enrollments (some open students outside the faith tradition, and others who have faith a requirement for enrollment) tend to shape how the Evangelism Initiative might look at each school. We would like to encourage each CCCU school to consider what an Evangelism Initiative might look like on your campus. The Initiative has nothing to sell, there is no program that will cost money, and we are not exporting a “look alike” initiative from one campus to all the others. We simply want to encourage each campus to set up a local oversight committee focused on shaping the campus *ethos*, developing and nurturing students who graduate to participate confidently in the global mission of the Church. This is an important outcome of a successful “faith-integrated” Christian Liberal Arts institution.

In this prospectus you will find a few items that can trigger your imagination to dream what the Evangelism Initiative might look like on your campus.

Yours,

Jerry Root Ph.D. Wheaton College

**Leading Change, John Kotter (1996) Applied to the Evangelism Initiative (EI)**

The Eight-Stage Process

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency
2. Create a Guiding Coalition
3. Develop a Vision and Strategy
4. Communication the Change Vision
5. Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action
6. Creating Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change
8. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

Applied to the Evangelism Initiative

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency

The Western Church’s neglect of its responsibility for the mission of the church locally and globally; the secularization of the culture; these necessitate the reawakening the church to its love-obligations to Christ and His mission through the Church to the world. Perhaps that awakening will come from the Christian Colleges and Universities of America.

1. Create a Guiding Coalition

The guiding coalition on local campuses is the Evangelism Initiative (EI) committee; nationally it is a developing network of these coalitions learning from one another and being encouraged by each other.

1. Develop a Vision and Strategy

The vision: see 50,000 CCCU graduates every year, and 1,000,000 in 20 years, deployed into the world to reach others in their spheres of influence for Christ.

1. Communication the Change Vision

Communication through campus contacts, webs of relationships, campus visits and ongoing connection and encouragement, etc.

1. Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action

EI committees managing the observation, assessment and recommendations on each individual campus to flesh out uniquely the EI vision on that campus.

1. Creating Short-Term Wins

Presently we have 15 campuses in various stages of development. We have initiated contact with some 60 CCCU in all. Each year the Evangelism Initiative is represented at various CCCU events and representatives visit more campuses in the process of recruiting all CCCU schools to embrace the Evangelism Initiative.

1. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change.

This is done through networking and communicating as well as through on going campus visits to encourage and resource other campuses through what is being learned as this movement develops. The evidence of effectiveness will be in the transformation of our graduates and their witness to the world.

1. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

D. Elton Trueblood, the Quaker theologian, once observed “A person begins to understand the meaning of life when he can plant a tree under the shade of which he knows he will never sit”. Once an EI committee is established on a campus, just like any other academic committee, it will begin to take on a generational life of its own.

**The Evangelism Initiative—A Further Explanation**

Overarching Vision and Goal of the Evangelism Initiative: 100,000 CCCU graduates deployed each year willing and equipped to embrace the privilege of making Christ known in the world where God leads them; that is 1,000,000 deployed in 10 years. Should this goal be reached it will have dramatic effects in our world for Christ and his Kingdom. The work is personal and one on one, or through small groups. It is evangelism done winsomely and through webs of relationships. This also allows for solid follow-up of new believers with the goal of reproducing reproducers.

The Geographical Goal: Create an ethos on any given campus to accomplish part of the overarching goal locally.

The essential means:

1. Create an oversight committee to assess campus attitudes and activities related to evangelism as well as progress towards creating a campus ethos of evangelistic passion and report these activities to the President of the institution. Since every CCCU campus is uniquely situated the work of this committee will be affected by particular environmental and circumstantial conditions. While what other campuses may have done, may be helpful and replicable, it is not necessarily so. We can learn and benefit from the successes of others but some specific things relative to a local Evangelism Initiative (EI) will require an oversight committee to monitor development and success towards the EI vision.
2. Committee should be made up of faculty from each of the divisions (Fine Arts, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Sciences). At Wheaton College promotional credit is given to faculty members who serve on this committee; in other words, service is deemed as important as service on any other faculty governance committee). The committee should also include students (perhaps selected from among leaders of current campus ministries), staff, and administration.
3. The committee meets with the regularity of any other faculty governance committee; usually once per month with subcommittee work when necessary.
4. Survey the campus and assess current attitudes and practices among the campus constituency; those attitudes of students, faculty, staff, and administration. From this survey discern first steps towards buttressing the evangelistic ethos on campus.
5. Assess current ministries on campus and encourage them to monitor and buttress evangelistic training for those ministries.
6. Seek creative ways the evangelistic thread can be woven into the fabric of the entire educational experience on campus. Examples:
7. When it was discovered through a campus survey that the staff at Wheaton College felt untrained and ill-equipped to share the Gospel, a training seminar was developed and a two hour release time was given for all staff to attend one of the several offerings of the training.
8. When student ministry teams were deployed to serve in any kind of missional capacity (from putting in clean water systems for remote, impoverished villages, to building orphanages, and so forth) each team is trained to share the Gospel clearly and winsomely.
9. Efforts were made to be deliberate in bringing in the occasional chapel speaker to remind the campus community of its missional goals in the world.
10. When it was discovered through a campus assessment that the faculty were the most faithful and deliberate about sharing their faith in the community, faculty were encouraged, on occasion, to share with their students about the witnessing experience as a demonstration of a missional, life-style example.
11. The EI is a reminder that the Gospel is not proclaimed because the Church needs to increase its rolls and giving units. The Gospel is proclaimed because people need to know they are loved and forgiven by the God of the universe who seeks to reconcile others that they might have relationship with Him.

What the EI is:

1. It is way for each unique CCCU campus to take seriously the missional directives Christ gave to his disciples and to understand these in the context of the Christian Liberal Arts enterprise.
2. It is a way of reminding our institutions are a means of serving the larger vision of the Church and its work in the world. It buttresses the global and missional work of EI participating colleges and universities.
3. It is a means to evaluate educational outcomes. If Christian Liberal Arts are set apart from liberal arts generally, and marked by their commitment to integrate “faith and learning”, or “faith seeking understanding”, then one (among many) positive way of discerning achievement of “faith and Learning” outcomes is through the EI. If a student in any discipline can describe the essentials of a given discipline and then segue from that description into a winsome presentation of the Gospel then there is evidence that “faith and learning” has been accomplished. For example at Wheaton College there are capstone courses in some disciplines where this is already a requirement: one of several capstone papers requires the student to make such a presentation.
4. It is a means of evaluating the student’s grasp of the Lordship of Christ over all of life. If it is believed that Jesus is Lord over all of creation and over all of life then the success of General Education in a Christian Liberal Arts environment could expect that study in each of the general education courses would increase the breadth of topics by which a graduate would be able to introduce, naturally, the Gospel into any conversation without it seeming contrived or forced. This outcome reveals competency in general education as well as maturity in the student.
5. It is a means of maintaining maturational objectives that have always been a part of the Church’s mission throughout the ages. Jesus said, “Abide in me and bear fruit”. Growth in knowledge of Christ and His world results in fruitful missional service in the world. The Medieval Mystics of the Church, drawing from Isaiah 6 saw that believers would, like Isaiah, define themselves in relationship to God and His purposes in the world. The Scale of Perfection (or, maturity) oscillates in a developing understanding and maturity. The prophet saw the Holiness of God and responded with a sense of his own sin and need. In humility and much self-awareness he entered into what was seen as the “purgative” phase of spiritual development. He continued to define himself in God and saw the grace of God extended to him in forgiveness, love and grace. Here he entered into the “Illuminative” phase of maturation. As he continued to define himself in God, he saw the missional heart of God asking, “Who will go for me”? The prophet enters into the apex of spiritual maturity and offers himself to God for missional service. This final stage of medieval spiritual development is called the “Unitive” phase. This is what now is often referred to as the work of the “Wounded Healer”. When the Liberal Arts enterprise was first begun the goal was to educate and deploy into Christian service those so united to the mission of God in the world. The EI has, as one of its benefits, a focus on this kind of maturation of its graduates.
6. It is a means of keeping the Gospel central in the current days of pluralism and globalization. Often the Gospel has had particular cultural accoutrements added to its message and these have been barriers preventing others from hearing what is central to the Mission of Christ and His Church “that God was in Christ reconciling the *world* to Himself”. The EI engages local campus communities to think through these issues. What does the Gospel say that is necessary, non-contingent, and common to all human experience; and what cultural distractions prevent others from hearing the essential message?

What the EI is not:

1. It is not an export from one campus to another. It is not a Wheaton College export. The particular circumstances of each campus, being unique, will be underserved by such an export. Nevertheless, campuses participating in the EI can benefit from what is being learned on other campuses. There is room for cross pollination.
2. It is not a program that will require additional expense. The purpose of the EI is to evaluate and buttress existing educational programs and unify their missional objectives.
3. It is not an isolation of the evangelistic enterprise of the Church from its other responsibilities. It does not bifurcate and separate the proclamational goals of the Church from other acts of service and justice. It keeps these things in concert. To ask which is most important: proclamation or matters of justice, is like asking which wing of the airplane is most important, the right one or the left one? Through the EI students learn to keep these things in balance. Nevertheless, the EI does assist the student in communicating the message of Christ with the full conviction that injustices are most likely to be resolved when human hearts are being transformed in Christ.

The essential start up feature of the EI is for participating schools to establish an oversight committee on their campus. This begins the work of creating and developing an ethos of evangelism on the specific campus. This is done in the hopes of deploying generations of students to enter, intentionally, into the mission of the Church, utilizing their Christian Liberal Arts backgrounds to make them more effective for Christ and His Kingdom.

**Learning from the Past—What the Evangelism Initiative Committee has done over the past decade to advance the Evangelism Initiative at Wheaton College**

* Started an Evangelism Group (WEG) to survey, oversee, and promote evangelism endeavors related to the campus.
* Sought to cultivate an ethos of evangelistic passion on campus.
* Surveyed existing campus attitudes about evangelism (students, faculty, staff, and administration). Implement programs based on feedback to strengthen weak areas.
* Resurveyed students, faculty and staff after four years to assess changes in attitudes.
* Surveyed alumni to discover attitudes towards evangelism among those who once attended the college. The goal was to learn what was helpful to our alumni regarding their Wheaton experience in being better at Evangelism; what was lacking; what might be done to serve current students better as well as serve our graduates.
* Bring in Chapel Speakers to speak on Evangelism, such as Lorne Cunningham, Donald Miller, Shane Claiborne, Luis Palau, Will Graham, etc.
* Worked with the Chaplains office encouraging the occasional speaker to encourage the evangelism initiative at Wheaton.
* Participated in the selection of a Wheaton College year verse about Evangelism and in encouraging the President (then President Litfin) an the Chaplain to address the topic throughout a year of chapel messages.
* Participated with Clayton Keenon to add Evangelism to the Discipleship Small Group (DSG) curriculum. Lon Allison gave instruction on a training DVD made for that purpose.
* Utilized the resources for training available through a partnership with EvanTell out of Dallas, Texas.
* Host “Evangelism and the Public Square” events on campus focusing on special topics as they relate to Evangelism, including C. S. Lewis’s step-son, Douglas Gresham, as well as Professor Martin Marty speaking about times in Church history when the Church has carried on its evangelistic endeavors well, and when it has not done well. When asked at a dinner prior to his lecture, Marty was asked, “What do you think is the biggest challenge to evangelism in the next 20 years?” Without pause he said, “Indifference!” After the event he sent an e-mail to the campus EI committee concluding with this remark about evangelism, “Let’s keep pushing back the tides of indifference.”
* Hosted Dorm talks on evangelism.
* Working in concert with the Office of Christian Outreach, provide multiple evangelistic training opportunities for nearly all off-campus ministries.
* Developed evangelism mentoring groups.
* Encouraged the college community, in a variety of ways, to engage in personal evangelism.
* Implemented an on-line evangelism outreach (GMO).
* Produce many publications on evangelism.
* Took 15 students to attend the international Evangelism conference Lausanne 2010 at Cape Town, South Africa.
* Took students, and some faculty and staff, to many different evangelistic events. These students were trained and participated as counselors at those events.
* Offered courses in evangelism and increased the number of courses giving instruction in evangelism, discipleship and spiritual formation.
* Offered training in evangelism at local churches (often taking students along).
* Offered training in evangelism at other CCCU schools (often taking students and faculty to participate).
* Offered training in evangelism in international settings.
* Participated in student evangelistic events.
* Brought representatives of various parachurch organizations onto campus for training students (cases in point: EvanTell, YWAM, Campus Crusade for Christ, Young Life, the California Schools Project, By the Hand Ministries, etc).
* Presented at forums discussing evangelism and its vital relationship to a Christian approach to social justice (Nicole Rienstra who lead the Justice Coalition on campus was an active member of EI committee participant).
* Introduced the Evangelism Initiative to many other schools with the goal of widening the mission of the Church through Christian Liberal Arts graduates across the nation.
* Encouraged the development of evangelism as a viable curricular outcome for the integration of faith and learning (note letter below as one representation of this effort).
* Featured occasional evangelism articles in campus publications.
* Encouraged good will towards evangelism across campus.
* Created an evangelism brochure.
* Participated in the Campus wide activities surrounding the Billy Graham “My Hope Campaign” and other events.
* Participated in academic events that viewed evangelism through new lenses (particularly in the arts).
* Addressed some of the questions that appear to be challenges to evangelism

1. What is more important social justice or evangelism?
2. Why keep doing evangelism in a pluralistic culture?
3. Isn’t evangelism only for those who have the gift of evangelism?
4. New questions continue to arise and the EI committee can develop thoughtful reflective answers for these.

* Provided training for campus staff and when the administration granted staff release time to be trained.
* Evangelism was adopted as a thread in the General Education curriculum at the college and it has been introduced as a feature in senior capstone course

**Evangelism Initiative (EI) Committee’s suggestions to General Education Revision Committee at Wheaton College Contributing to the Change in the School’s Curriculum**

Over the past ten years the EI committee has been encouraging the development of a general ethos on campus that values the evangelistic mission of the church. This has all been in the hopes that each student during days at Wheaton will pick up an evangelistic value by intention and contagion eager to go out into the world to make Christ known where ever they serve. Much progress has been made. And there is a measure of the EI work that needs to be redone due to the four year cycle of a campus culture. Some things have to be restated for each new generation of students. Much has been done to beef up extracurricular campus activities so the thread of evangelism is woven throughout the fabric. Each year more is discovered and more energy is exercised to continue in the EI on campus.

We are now on the threshold of evangelism being woven into the curricular core of the college. When this occurs a new threshold will be reached. It is one thing to value the place of evangelism in the realm of student activity across the campus but it is a testimony to the true values of the institution when these things appear in the curriculum. In the hopes of gaining a voice in this matter, a letter was sent to General Education Curriculum Review Committee. EI seeks to remind campus constituencies of the necessity of evangelism being, in some way, represented in the newly developing Gen Ed curriculum. In attending one of the focus groups as the assessment team was on campus this spring, the assessor said in that meeting that the important thing his team was looking for was did the college’s stated values manifest itself in curricular outcomes. The EI committee believes, in this regard, evangelism provides a valuable outcome. The EI underscored how this is so. In order to assist in this discussion and in hopes that Evangelism will be reflected in the curriculum, not merely as a course but a thread woven throughout the fabric of the curriculum, the letter sent to the Gen. Ed. Revision Committee (with a couple of minor revisions) is reproduced below.

To: The General Education Revision Committee (GERC)

From: Jerry Root, Associate Professor of Evangelism and Leadership

I am grateful to you for all of your work on behalf of the college. I recognize your task is great especially in light of the fact that the world in which we live and seek to understand is complex and we are “pea brains” that is, we know so little. Think of the Bodleian Library at Oxford University with its 130 miles of shelf space of books or, the Widener Library at Harvard with its nineteen million volumes; who has read them all? We make judgments so often, but we know so little. How do you select and focus student learning as you seek to set a trajectory of study for the rest of their lives? The task is daunting and I for one appreciate your efforts and energy to this end and I pray for you.

I am also aware that Wheaton values and Mission also shape your deliberations, as it should. As I write, I am thinking particularly about “the integration of faith and learning” or “faith seeking understanding”. What outcomes are you hoping students come to cherish at the end of their course of study. How do you know students are moving in the right direction and have learned the art of such integration as they conclude their time at Wheaton? I would like to encourage you to consider four possible outcomes which could be reflected in capstone papers at the end of the course of study and thus part of the general education requirement.

First, it seems to me that students grasping a faith integrated course of study would learn to worship God in every discipline. Calvin said that “God dawns the garment of creation.” Since we believe that God has revealed Himself in the world He has made all study should come to a place of discovering something of the character and nature of God. A capstone course requirement of a paper allowing students to discuss their discipline and explain how they came to love and worship God through their study would reveal a level of faith integration.

Second, no one can truly encounter God without it affecting his or her character. Another capstone project might be a paper describing how the student is learning to adjust the scoliosis of soul to the plumb line of God’s self-revelation as manifest in the student’s discoveries.

Third, since God made the world, and creation implies intention, it seems fitting that the students would discover something of their calling for service. To see in God’s creativity something given to all for the common good as manifest in any particular discipline; perhaps students could write another final paper setting forth how their own sense of call before God and man has been shaped by their academic pursuits of integration of faith and learning. This sense of service is further encouraged by the evidence of “common grace” given by God to all. He allows it “to rain on the just and the unjust” and “to give harvests in their seasons” these also reveal his loving-kindness and service to all creation. Those who have been affected by such grace should go forth eager to model to others the graces they have received.

Finally, Wheaton College has a tradition and a mission that is aligned with God’s work in the world through His church. Therefore, I think it would be a fitting outcome of faith and learning if students could write a final capstone paper that shows they understand how to segue naturally and unobtrusively from a discussion of their discipline to a presentation of the Gospel. This should be done winsomely and thoughtfully. If they cannot do this, one wonders if true integration has occurred during the students stay at Wheaton.

To recap, I am suggesting that the Gen Ed Revision Committee consider these outcomes (or something like them) if we are to take the integration of faith and learning seriously. I am also appealing to you that in your work you weave a thread that relates to the evangelistic enterprise of the Church through the fabric of the curriculum, particularly as it reflects Wheaton College’s mission and tradition. As of yet, we have no curricular commitment that reflects this portion of our mission statement. It might be assumed that until it is in the curriculum as an outcome it is not truly a value. My prayers are with you.

**Suggestions for a Faculty Development Day Centered On the Topic of Evangelism and the Christian Liberal Arts**

1) Is there a place for a discussion around the topic of Evangelism at a faculty forum at Wheaton College?

2) If there was a faculty development day about evangelism what do you think it would look like?

3) Is there enough in this discussion for a whole day of faculty development? If not, could it be twined with some other area of investigation (perhaps: outcomes for faith integration of any given discipline: worship, service, evangelism, etc).

4) What role does evangelism play in the future of the *Church*? If Evangelism is significant for the future of the *Church*, then how might that effect the role of the Christian Academy in service to the mission of the church.

5) Can Evangelism function as a possible outcome revealing whether or not we have truly integrated faith in the understanding of any given academic discipline, i.e., can a student (or faculty member) segue from a discussion of the discipline into a natural discussion of the Gospel?

Possible Questions for Discussion:

* 1. Could evangelism be seen as a possible outcome for Christian Liberal Arts in any given discipline? (Certainly competency in the subject matter is to be desired; but one might believe if integration of faith in the learning process has occurred it could be evidenced by: worship, service, and mission). When it comes to mission the question could be asked, “Can a student segue naturally from a discussion of a particular academic discipline to the Gospel?”
  2. Can faculty be encouraged to share, occasionally, in class that which might encourage the development of evangelistic values in his or her students?
     1. For a class devotion, the instructor could share with the students about an opportunity he or she had witnessing.
     2. Or, have a student share about an opportunity to share the Gospel with others.
     3. Or, take a moment at the beginning of class to pray for relatives and friends of students who do not know Christ (especially before times when the students return home for Christmas or Easter or summer).
     4. In asking the great questions within our disciplines can we explore what the Gospel has to contribute in answer to these questions?
  3. Does evangelism matter when it comes to Christian Liberal Arts? If so, how does it matter? And, if it matters, is that reflected in the curriculum or the teaching practices at Wheaton College?
  4. Can the Liberal Arts and General Education give breadth to student understanding thus making it possible to connect the Gospel winsomely in a wide range of conversations?
  5. If it does matter can we point to models that reflect best practices?
  6. How do I (as a faculty member) do evangelism? Do I integrate my faith in the papers I read at academic gatherings in my discipline? Do I pray for my neighbors and others in my community? Do I ever mention this to my students? Do I ever mention any of the spiritual disciplines to my students providing them an example of one seeking to follow Christ in a serious manner (that is, in the way “serious” used to be applied to Christians a century or so ago)?
  7. What misconceptions have developed over recent years that seem to some to be challenges to the disciple-making mission of the church?
     1. The bifurcation between Gospel words and Gospel works.
     2. Evangelism and pluralism.
     3. The exclusive claims of Christianity.
     4. Evangelism in the context of Liberal Arts objectives.
     5. Evangelistic practices in an age of fluidity and contingency.
     6. Questions as to the definition of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God.
  8. Is encouraging academics to share their faith different than encouraging the public at large? If so, what are the unique challenges for the missional role of the Church and the academy? How might these challenges be addressed?
  9. 21st century challenges (repeated from 7 above):
     1. Questions (Bible school; pluralism; justice; etc.)

1) Is evangelistic fervor a threat to the liberal arts? Is it the purview of a Bible School rather than a liberal arts institution? If so, why so; if not, why not?

2) Where does evangelism fit in a pluralistic society? Does it give way in the face of challenges? Or, does it recognize the cultural specificity of its day and seek to engage fresh cultural challenges whatever they may be?

3) Is there a conflict between social justice and evangelism? Are these incompatibles? Or, are these complimentary? When they seem to be antithetical what are the dynamics? Can the situation (when conflicts arise) be improved? How might this be so?

* + 1. Communication: What is the best way to communicate the Gospel? Is it through mass evangelism; personal witness; journalism and the written word; etc.? All of the above? Some of the above? It depends on the gifts and aptitudes of the faithful Christian mediating evangelism through his or her own gifts and circumstances?
  1. How do we come to faith today (there is no sawdust trail; we do not tend to sign a commitment card)?
     + 1. We in the Church sing the song of ascents because we have a history with God.
       2. Are there cautions and criticisms we ought to listen to? What are these and how might they be addressed?
       3. Should we have modest expectations; or, should we expect more from ourselves: as representatives of the Church, or representatives of the academy?
       4. Perhaps we can begin with the way we communicate the message:
          1. Give stories that remind us that God does change lives.
          2. Give stories that remind us of a shared humanity between believer and unbeliever.
          3. Recognize the value of evangelism.
  2. Could we expect pushback from the faculty? This needs to be seen, not as a threat, but an opportunity to learn from the questions more robust ways to do evangelism more robustly. We have opportunity to give to others out of the great love and forgiveness we have received in Christ.
  3. Develop the Curriculum Day with focus groups.