# SWOT Analysis - Library Certificate Program

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## Overview

This report contains a description and analysis of a SWOT activity conducted by the Library faculty at the 10 July 2019 faculty meeting and facilitated by the Curriculum Committee. For this activity, faculty responded to the following prompt:

"What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of library faculty offering a 9-14 credit undergraduate certificate in Information in Society?"

Faculty were asked to consider the impact of a library certificate program on different communities by responding to this prompt from four different perspectives: personal/individual, the library organization, the university, and students. The workshop was attended by 20 faculty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This includes 13 tenure-track faculty and 7 non-tenure-track faculty: Jason Clark, Jan Zauha, Star Bradley, Natalie Bond, Sophia Phillips, Sara Mannheimer, Matthew Regan, Anika-Anzum Prima, Meghan Salsbury, Christina Trunnell, Leila Sterman, Kris Johnson, Rachelle McLain, Venice Bayrd, Mary Anne Hansen, Anne Angus, Amy Foster, Doralyn Rossmann, Scott Young, and Hannah McKelvey.

### Thematic Summary

The SWOT activity revealed a number of key insights.

First, in the areas of strengths and opportunities, the library faculty expressed an interest in teaching credited courses, working more in depth with students, and expanding the current scope of our librarianship practice through pedagogy and curriculum development. We see an opportunity to bring information studies to students in ways that can connect learners more deeply with information concepts and skills which will be directly applicable to students' future jobs and careers. As faculty we can each integrate our unique perspectives on information and teaching, e.g. ethics, diversity, inclusion, equity, information literacy, information systems, and critical pedagogy for a co-designed curriculum. Such a curriculum could complement other departments on campus, align with broader university culture, and help MSU achieve its teaching mission. Thinking longer term and beyond a certificate, a fully-developed curriculum could positively impact library fiscal resources.

There are some notable challenges as well. Not every faculty member is interested in teaching credited courses. Questions of faculty autonomy were prominent, especially with regard to librarianship assignments. Many expressed concern that workloads and current service offerings are already at full capacity, and that the pressures on non-tenure-track faculty and staff to conduct teaching or library operations should be thoughtfully addressed. Some noted that we have yet to search for or see a clearly demonstrated need or interest from students for a certificate.

### Recommended Next Steps

The results of the SWOT analysis indicate a motivation among the faculty in continuing to develop a certificate curriculum, with a few key provisos that should be addressed by the Curriculum Committee and Library Administration—namely: staffing models for ongoing library operations, needs assessment for students and campus-wide curricula, an opt-in approach that respects faculty autonomy, and attunement to resource availability and workload pressures for all stakeholders, including tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, and library staff.

## Workshop Description

### Rationale for a Participatory Approach

The Curriculum Committee asked the faculty to engage in a participatory SWOT activity for three key reasons:

- An inclusive vision: to co-design our future
- An equitable practice: to include more voices equally in decision-making
- A *clear direction*: to strengthen and clarify our plan related to curriculum development and implementation

### <u>Terms</u>

- Strength: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by you
- Weakness: the negative elements of the idea controlled by you
- *Opportunity*: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to you
- *Threat*: the negative elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to you

### Workshop Structure

Please see Appendix A for workshop handouts and participant instructions.

## Outcomes

This section presents the main themes of the SWOT analysis, followed by the full data presentation.

	Main	Themes
	Opportunities + Strengths	Threats + Weaknesses
For us personally	<ul> <li>Rewarding opportunities for Professional development</li> <li>Existing expertise</li> <li>Existing buy-in, especially from library administration</li> <li>Increased student engagement and interaction</li> <li>Teaching is rewarding</li> <li>We like collaboration</li> <li>Ties in with mission</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Potentially reduced autonomy</li> <li>Uncertain need and untested process</li> <li>Time and resource constraints</li> </ul>
For the Library	<ul> <li>Higher profile and status</li> <li>Knowledge exchange and community building</li> <li>Innovate the practice</li> <li>Potential for funding</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Potentially no \$ or no student interest</li> <li>Could produce a "class system" where teaching is valued more than librarianship</li> <li>Lack of capacity</li> <li>No culture of teaching</li> </ul>
For the University	<ul> <li>Information Studies aligns with university mission</li> <li>New partnerships within MSU and MUS</li> <li>Brings new value to students for learning and career placement</li> <li>Higher profile for the university</li> <li>Could bring in more students</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Competition with other departments</li> <li>Teaching space</li> <li>Not a clearly demonstrated need and potential lack of student interest</li> <li>Labor dynamics, especially the potential for overreliance on NTTs and staff</li> <li>Funding</li> </ul>

For Students	<ul> <li>Raising career visibility for information studies</li> <li>Employment value of information studies</li> <li>Exposes students to a wider range of topics related to information</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Certificate might be too shallow or brief to be meaningful</li> <li>Degraded library services</li> </ul>
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### <u>Full Data</u>

Below are the transcripts for each individual sticky note, organized by perspective and SWOT dimension. Please see Appendix B for images of sticky notes and theming.

#### Students

- Opportunities
  - Increased recognition of librarians' teaching role and value on campus
  - Good PR for library and for individuals who haven't taught previously
  - Brings positive light to the library. Highlights importance of librarianship.
     What librarians can offer to support university mission.
  - An opportunity for library to mirror an activity other campus departments do.
  - Share knowledge amongst our faculty in new ways
  - A chance to change our internal structure: teaching faculty and functional specialties
  - Would/could get opportunity to get \$ for students in Cert. program
- Strengths
  - More intentional mutually-agreed-upon approaches to instruction
  - We can have control over curriculum development
  - Library could take lead in experimenting with new teaching strategies and models
- Threats
  - Would adequate number of students be interested in pursuing this certificate? ROI
  - Fiscal resources are tight, so we'll have to tighten belt and demonstrate need/benefit prior to\$\$\$ coming in

- One or two people may end up with bulk of work; someone ends up not having time, etc.
- Small faculty already spread thin
- Parity of teaching and librarianship could be further questioned if teaching outcomes are more heavily weighted/prioritized by Provost, etc.
- Could "diminish" value of traditional librarianship in eyes of those outside library—P&T
- Who decides course approach/content? Do faculty have the opportunity to shape pedagogy for classes they teach?
- Weaknesses
  - Less time and resources for other projects; things continually get pushed back
  - Does library have capacity to add this additional workload to the current staffing level? Too few faculty.
  - Capacity—enough people to cover teaching load?
  - We haven't been in under this expectation, so existing faculty may not want to do it. New, incoming faculty under new system easier.
  - This is not in the history of our library culture. Changing culture is difficult and slow.

### Students

- Opportunities
  - Address technical and critical learning about technology and information outside of computer science
  - Makes career in information studies more visible/accessible
  - Better chance at getting a job in an archive
  - More options for students interested in information-related careers
  - New course topics to support knowledge and job opportunities
  - Become more well-informed and see how information is used
  - Apply course ideas to more projects
  - Connects students to information resources (both within/outside of library)
- Strengths
  - Enable students to connect with info and technology questions from an ethical lens

- Confidence that they have a credential they need for their subject area (if designed that way)
- Students may learn skills that can help them in other classes/areas
- More credits, become more well-rounded
- More choices of courses
- Threats
  - Employer doesn't understand value of "certificate" vs. major/minor
  - Overlap with computer science BA and offering too many options for students
  - Potential to take away/reduce day-to-day services to students (if faculty occupied with teaching)
  - Might not be applicable to their majors
- Weaknesses
  - Take up time from major, job, personal life
  - Certificate doesn't allow enough depth of study for a rich topic (info + society)
  - Students may not understand what the purpose of the certificate is
  - confusion/resentment: why do I have to do this? Do i have to do this?

#### University

- Opportunities
  - Increased job expectation
  - Teaching is part of job-ties to Gen. Ed. expectations
  - Critical thinking and digital citizenship are huge talking points in Gen. Ed. nationwide
  - Respect for the program/dept
  - Partnering with other MUS institutions to create dynamic program
  - Existing programs (library media?)
  - Embedded practices across disciplines
  - Teaching is new (credit-based)
- Strengths
  - Enhanced course offerings and program offerings for students
  - Desire to prepare students for successful careers—most will need info. Lit. skills
  - People think they want stacked credentials

- Demonstrate IL value in student success
- Increased student enrollment
- Threats
  - Competition between rival institute
  - Funding for faculty
  - Library does not get funding for a certificate
  - Certificate does not drive enrollment
  - Disinterest in student body for such a program
  - Lack of understanding of importance by outside stakeholders
- Weaknesses
  - Lack of convenient classroom space
  - Lack of classroom space. Lack of faculty teaching experience.
  - There is no demonstrated need
  - Respect for the program/need
  - Overreliance on NTT to teach or do certain kinds of work

#### Personal

- Opportunities
  - Teaching is interesting
  - Teaching in fun
  - Interaction with students
  - Staying with one group of students throughout the semester = build on ideas and concepts
  - A new certificate offering would bring positive light to the importance of information science
  - Library and librarians more integrated int teaching mission across campus
  - This is a chance for the library to have a real, solid teaching mission. Will help with reputation in regards to faculty status.
  - Being seen by university as "equal
  - Collaborate more with faculty in department
  - Collaborate more with faculty outside the library as curriculum is developed
  - Connect with faculty across campus
  - Possibly co-working with faculty from other departments across campus

- New funding based on students/college. Library would potentially get funds for teaching from university budget
- Could get more faculty lines for teaching courses?
- More \$ coming into the library
- Administrative buy-in to development curriculum
- We are already instructors
- Integrate EID into library instruction
- Engage in critical pedagogy to connect community with collecting scope in meaningful ways
- Explore new subject
- To design specific courses toward a certificate for students in a degree area—integrated with their curriculum
- Strengths
  - Opportunity to teach in new topic areas
  - Developing new and exciting course content
  - $\circ$   $\,$  Engage with students on a deeper level and teach more than just basics
  - Learn student perspectives on subject
  - Get to work with and know class of students over the course of the semester
  - Contribute to the university's and library's mission and vision in a more integrated, in-depth teaching role
  - Access to and awareness of information resources
  - Integration of information technology and teaching practices into courses
  - Way to introduce new technologies and instruction methods (online modules)
  - Empower faculty
  - Ability to connect practice of librarianship to teaching
  - New task in librarianship
  - Increase teaching experience
  - Potential to co-teach/collaboratively develop materials
  - I have a previous background in this. I could contribute my knowledge.
  - I am a supporter of this so can assist in its advocacy
  - Greater use of our expertise and recognition/understanding of it
  - Already teaching lots of classes
  - Background in teaching credit-bearing courses in other disciplines
  - For those interested in teaching, this would be good

- Any one person would not be in control of teaching
- Threats
  - Unrelated to project. Takes time away.
  - Fiscal resources are tight, so something will have to be selected to go on backburner in order to launch
  - Teaching loads. Removing librarians from the practice of librarianship. More pressure on library staff to carry out this work.
  - How does this include/exclude NTT? Disempower?
  - Potential for further divide between all things data/digital and more practical aspects of library/archives work
  - Articulating the value of information instruction
  - We already have value
  - Buy-in from departments?
  - Lack of interest or low enrollment (may impact how you structure assignments)
  - What if 5 people enroll?
  - How to find out if students and other departments want this cert?
  - How does this certificate fit with majors?
  - Enough faculty?
  - I've been an actual teacher, but have moved on from that professionally. I might be asked to move into that again, but am not interested.
  - Forcefully assigned courses
  - Not controlling content creation
  - Library could be more vulnerable to upper admin judgement/expectations
  - Individuals should not be required to teach courses they don't want to teach
  - People wanting to teach/share the workload
  - Would not want to be required to teach
  - I am already teaching
- Weaknesses
  - Time management. Need to manage time for both teaching and other projects
  - $\circ$   $\,$  Less flexible time away from work for PL/VL  $\,$
  - Poor time management
  - Time constraints (not enough time to do it all)
  - Time constraints. Losing time to focus on other projects/day-to-day duties
  - Time and responsibilities—what will be given up?

- Already full workload. No time to teach nor interested.
- $\circ$   $\;$  Time it takes to integrate technology or create online tutorials
- $\circ \quad {\sf Time \ constraints}$
- Current workload or position doesn't allow for teaching
- Too few faculty to do the teaching with our current assignments?
- New faculty = uncertain expectations
- Want to change direction of class but find it's too late
- Personal unfamiliarity with subject
- $\circ$   $\;$  Wasn't what you though it would be
- Certificates may not be valuable to students
- There is no demonstrated need for a certificate

## Appendices

### Appendix A

Workshop handouts and participant instructions.

<u>Appendix B</u>

Images of sticky notes and theming

<u>Appendix C</u> Images of workshop participants Appendices begin below

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of library faculty offering a 9-14 credit undergraduate certificate in Information in Society?

#### **Session Outline**

- Introductions and session overview with outline and outcomes 5 minutes
- Individual work 10 minutes
  - Each participant writes 1-2 sticky notes for personal SWOT, and 1-2 sticky notes for their group's impact area (see related handouts for definitions and direction)
- Small group work 25 minutes
  - Review and discuss personal SWOT
  - Review and discuss group's impact area
  - o Identify themes or patterns
- Large group sharing 15 minutes
  - Each small group speaks for 4-5 minutes, presenting highlights/themes/patterns
- Wrap-up and next steps 5 minutes

#### **Session Outcomes**

- Vision: Co-design our future
- Practice: Include more voices equally in decision-making
- Product: Strengthen and clarify our plan related to curriculum development and implementation

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of library faculty offering a 9-14 credit undergraduate certificate in Information in Society?

#### For Library Faculty:

- Strength: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by you
   e.g. experiment with new types of teaching
- Weakness: the negative elements of the idea controlled by you
  - e.g. competition for time on other projects/activities
- **Opportunity**: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to you
  - e.g. it's easy for university admin and other faculty to understand the value of teaching credited courses
- **Threat**: the negative elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to you
  - $\circ~$  e.g. having courses assigned to me rather than selected; having to teach at all

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of library faculty offering a 9-14 credit undergraduate certificate in Information in Society?

### For the Library Organization:

- **Strength**: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by the Library
  - e.g. existing motivation towards teaching credited-courses
- Weakness: the negative elements of the idea controlled by the Library
  - e.g. not all faculty necessarily want to teach credited-courses; increased reliance on staff; reduced capacity for library projects
- **Opportunity**: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to the Library
  - e.g. more in line with faculty in other departments
- **Threat**: the negative elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to the Library
  - e.g. loss of autonomy; increased exposure to the provost

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of library faculty offering a 9-14 credit undergraduate certificate in Information in Society?

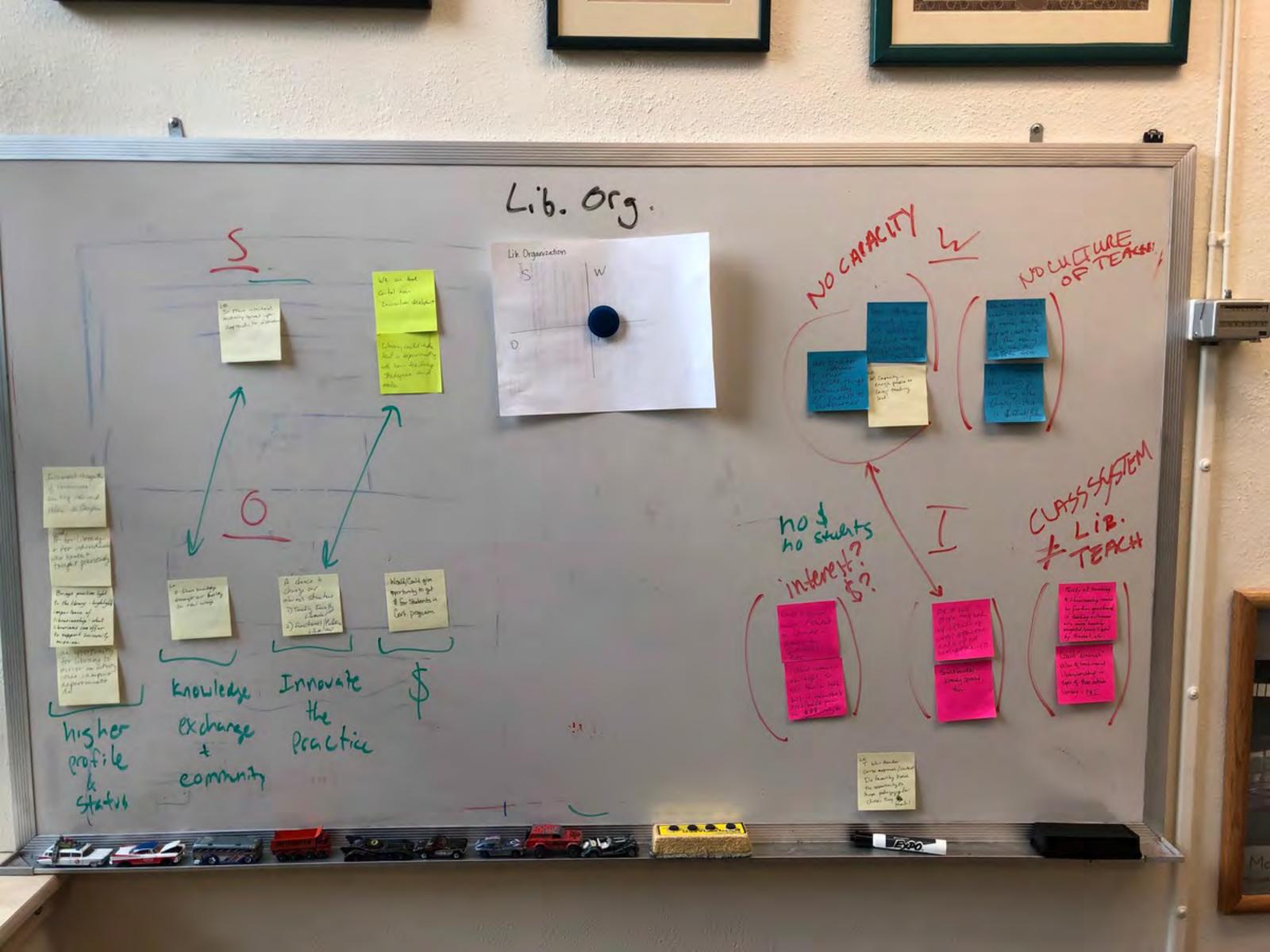
## For the University:

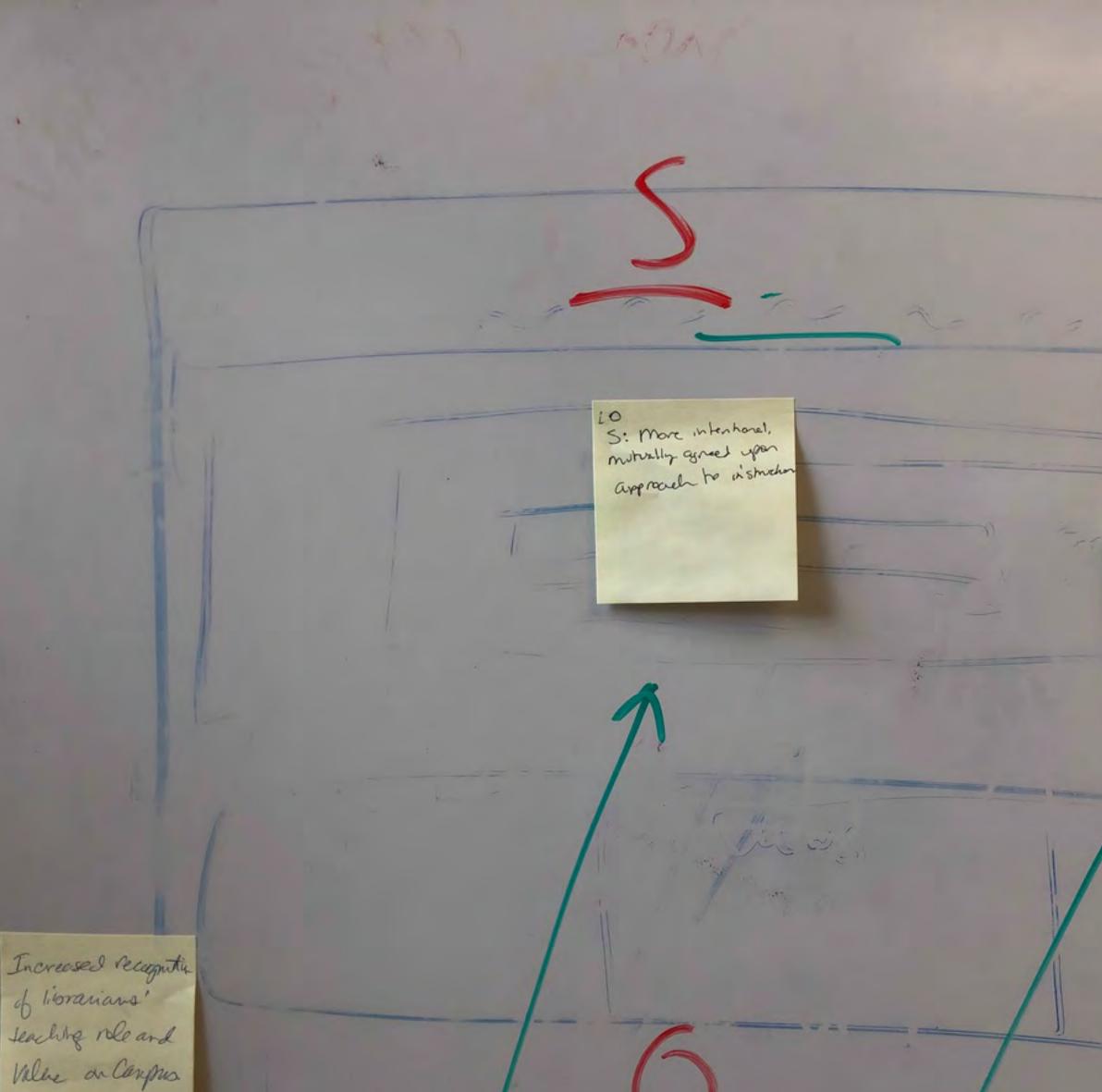
- **Strength**: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by the university
  - e.g. existing desire to increase student enrollment
- Weakness: the negative elements of the idea controlled by the university
  - e.g. lack of quality jobs for faculty; lack of classroom space
- **Opportunity**: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to the university
  - e.g. connecting with job expectations
- **Threat**: the negative elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to the university
  - e.g. a similar program at a rival institution

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of library faculty offering a 9-14 credit undergraduate certificate in Information in Society?

### For Students:

- **Strength**: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by students
  - e.g. gaining an additional credential
- Weakness: the negative elements of the idea controlled by students
  - e.g. requirements of current major don't leave time to take 9-14 credits outside that major
- **Opportunity**: the positive elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to students
  - e.g. more interaction with people outside my (student's) major more perspectives
- **Threat**: the negative elements of the idea that are controlled by forces/people external to students
  - e.g. how the certificate translates to future career





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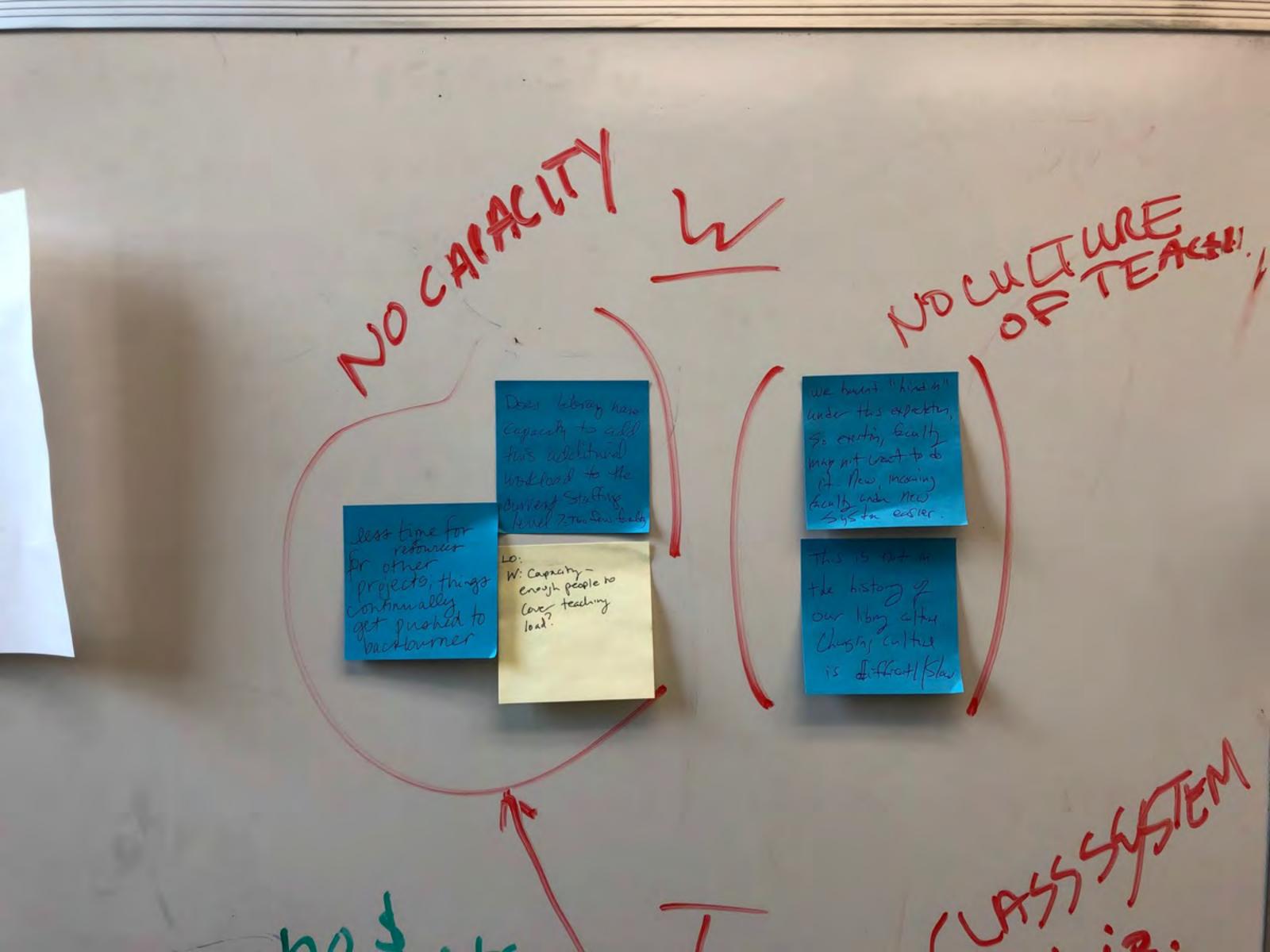
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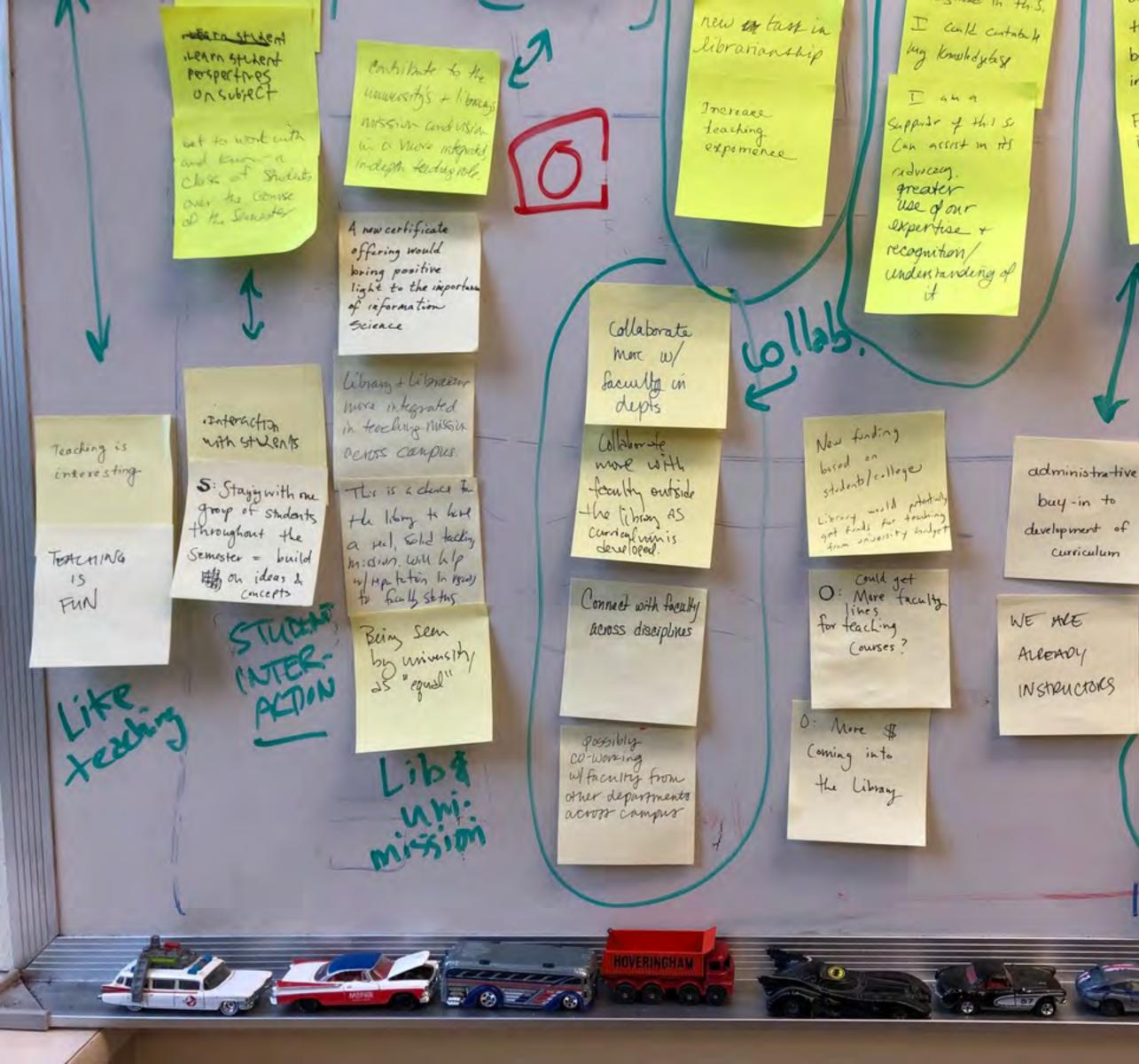
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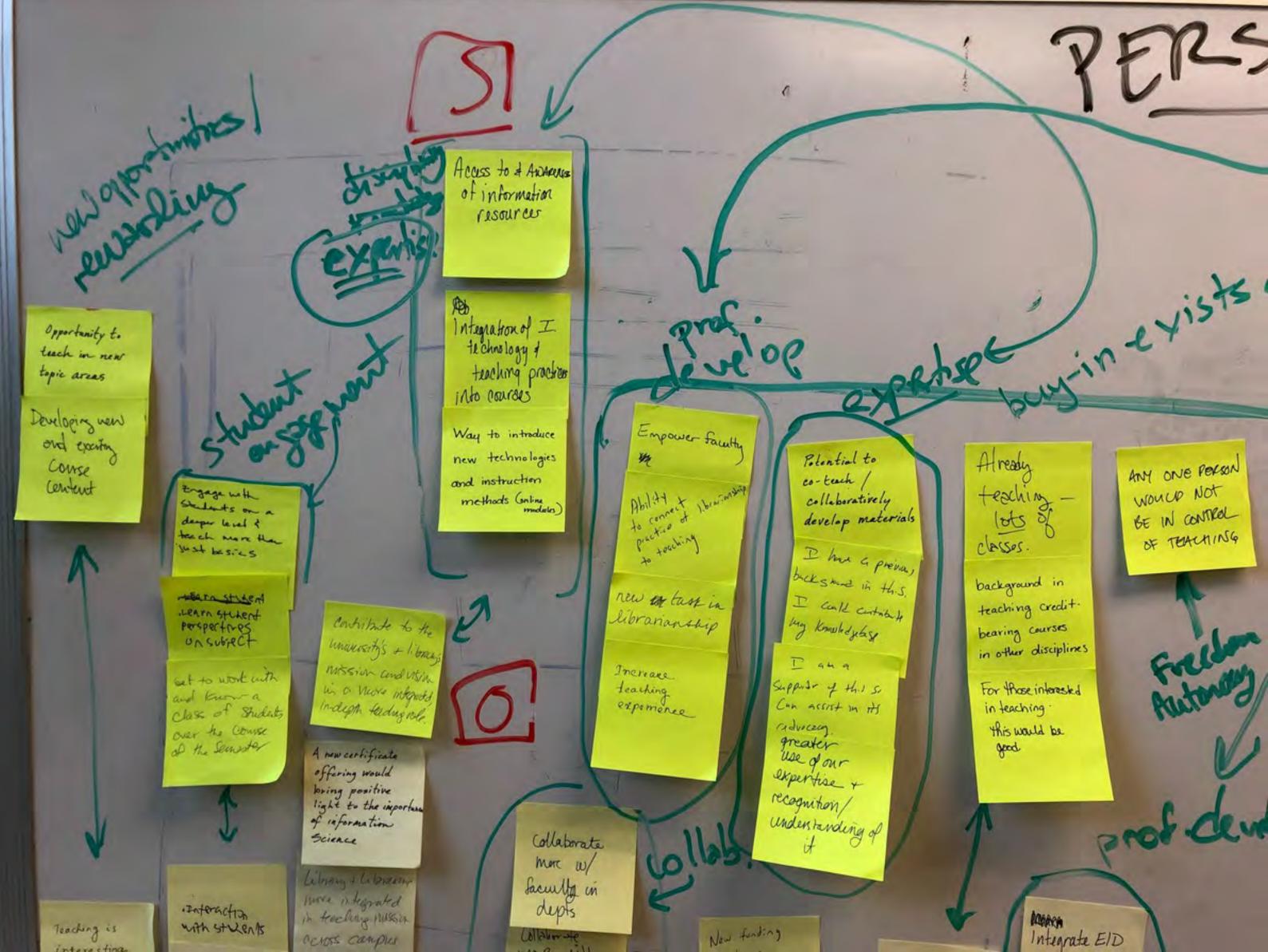
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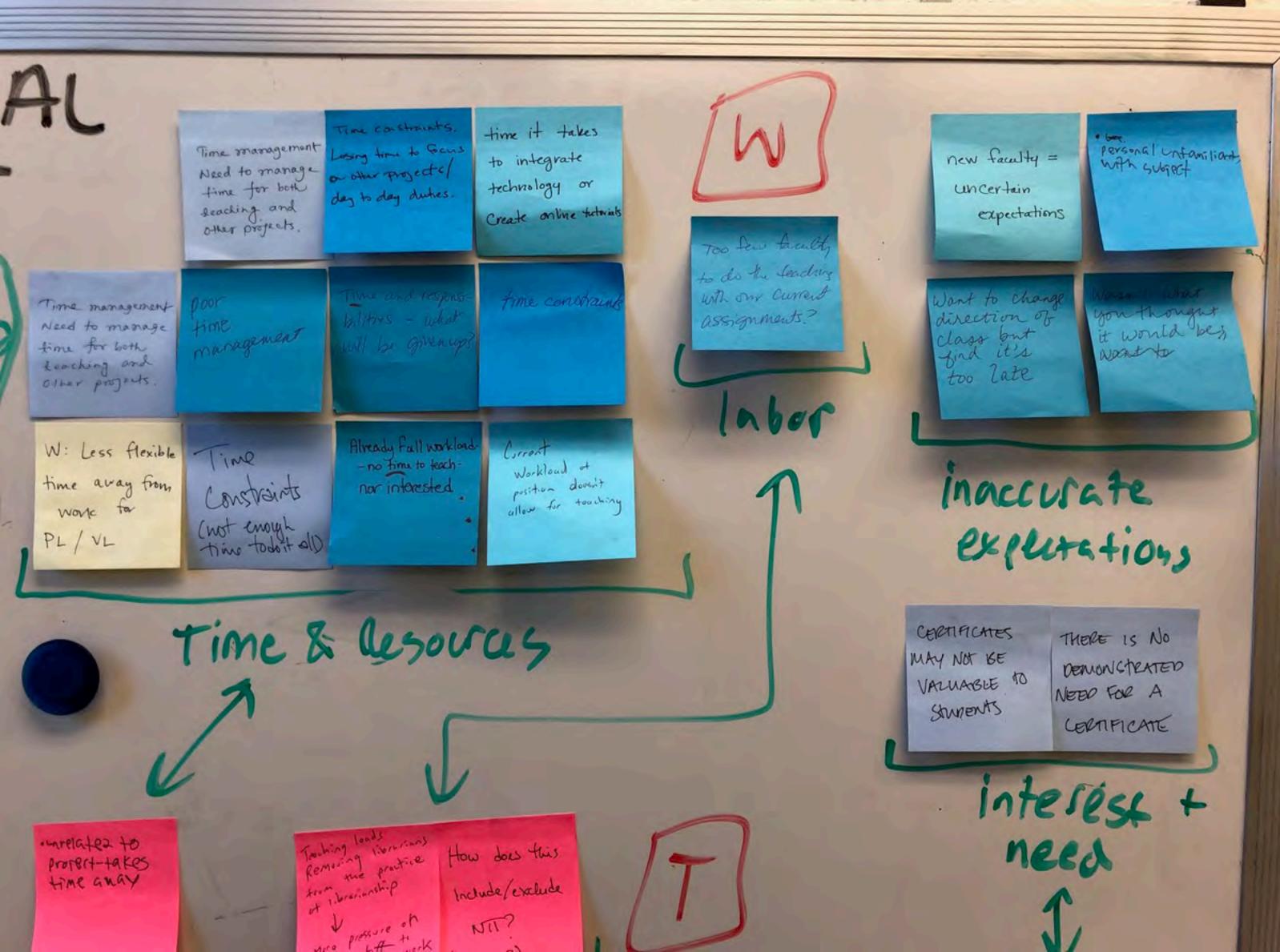
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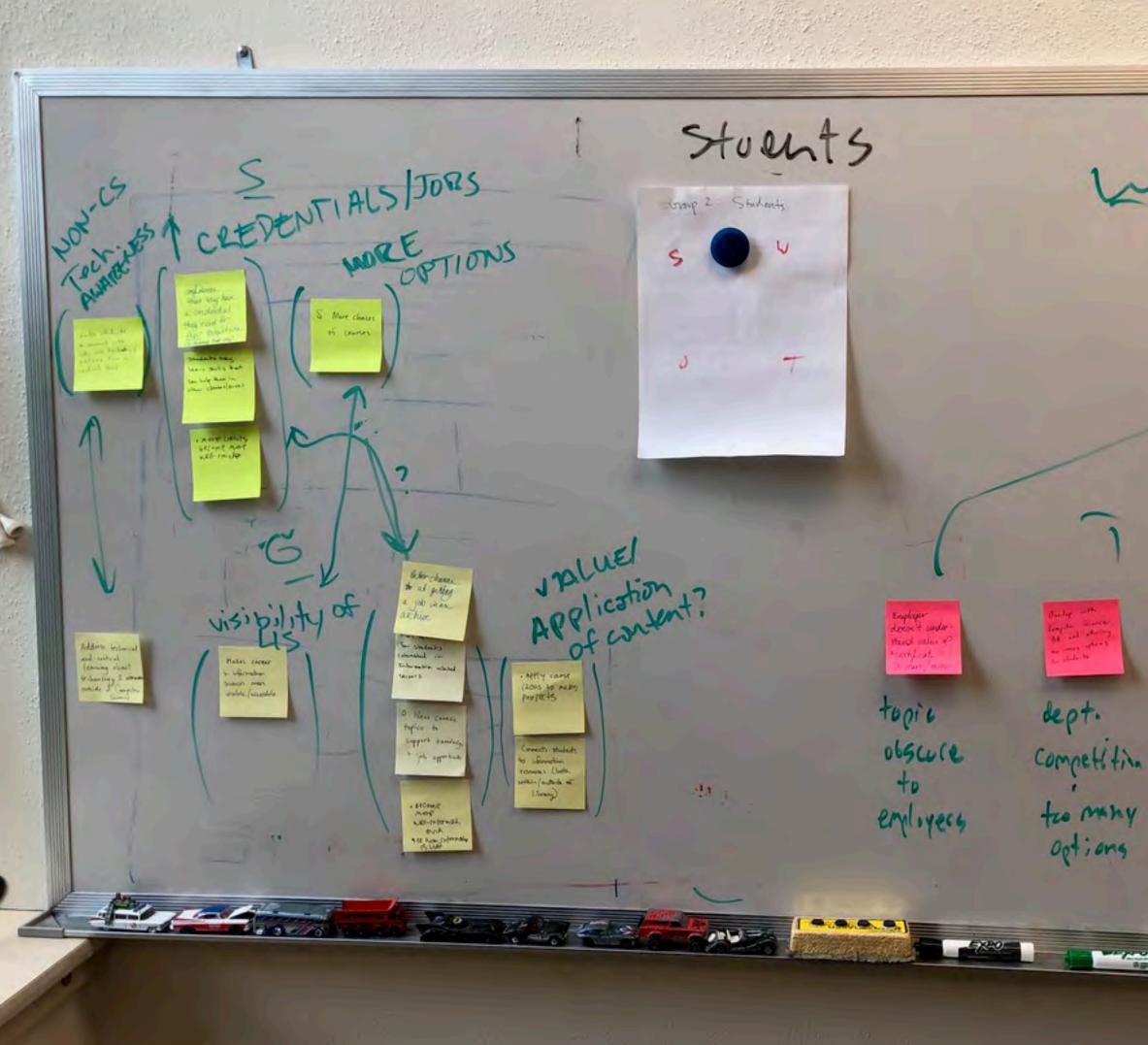
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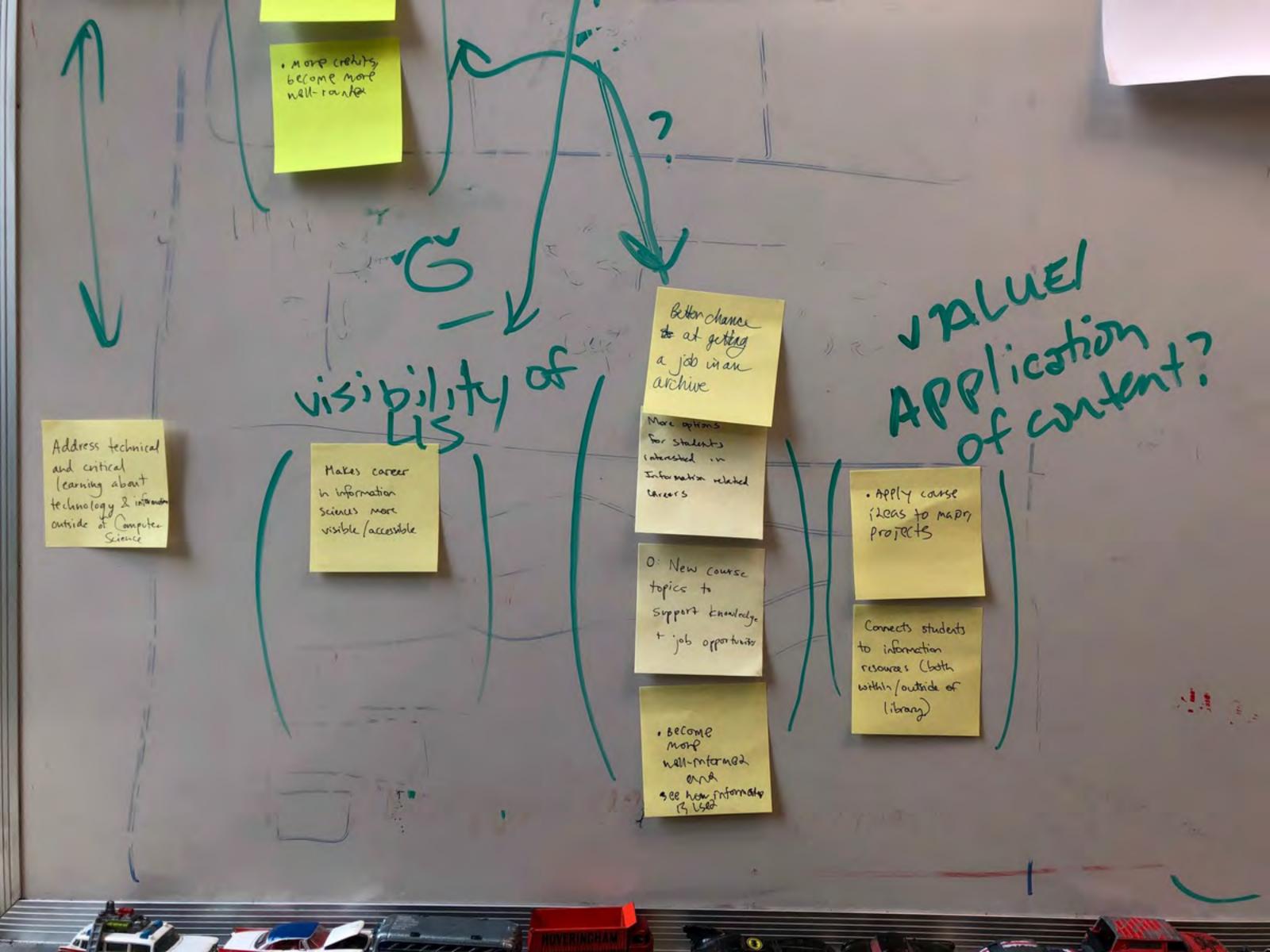


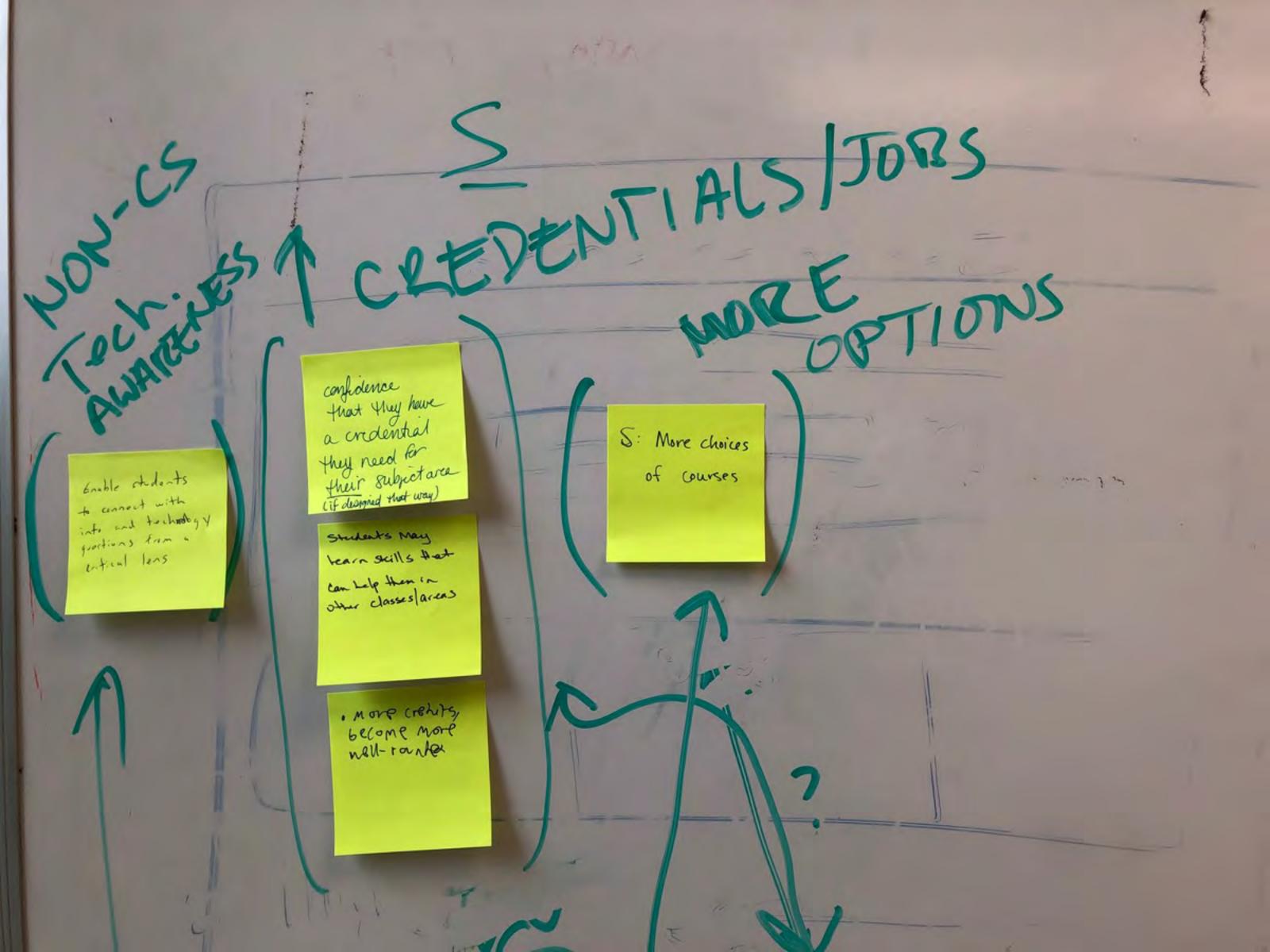






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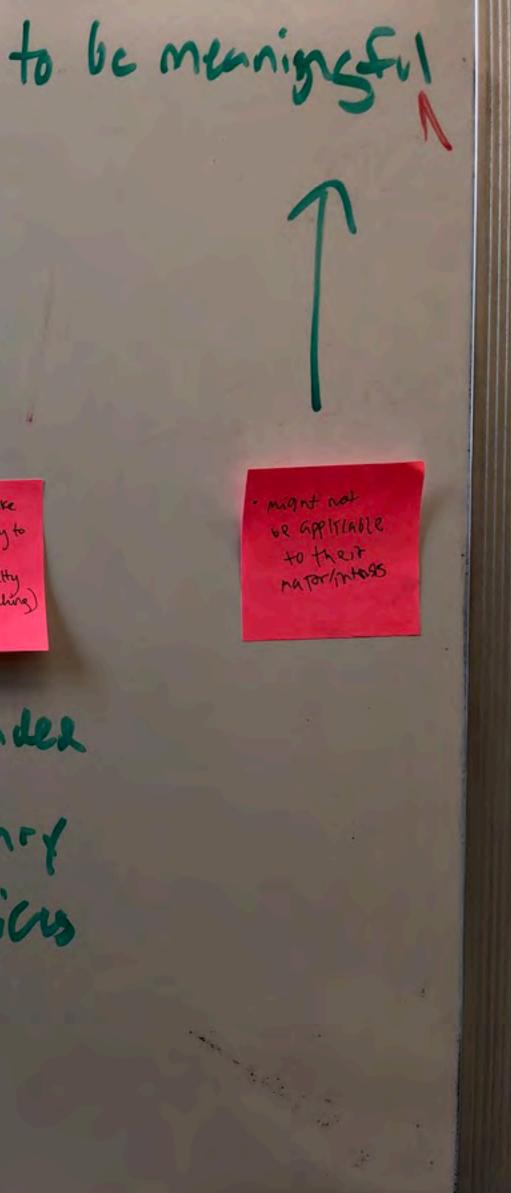
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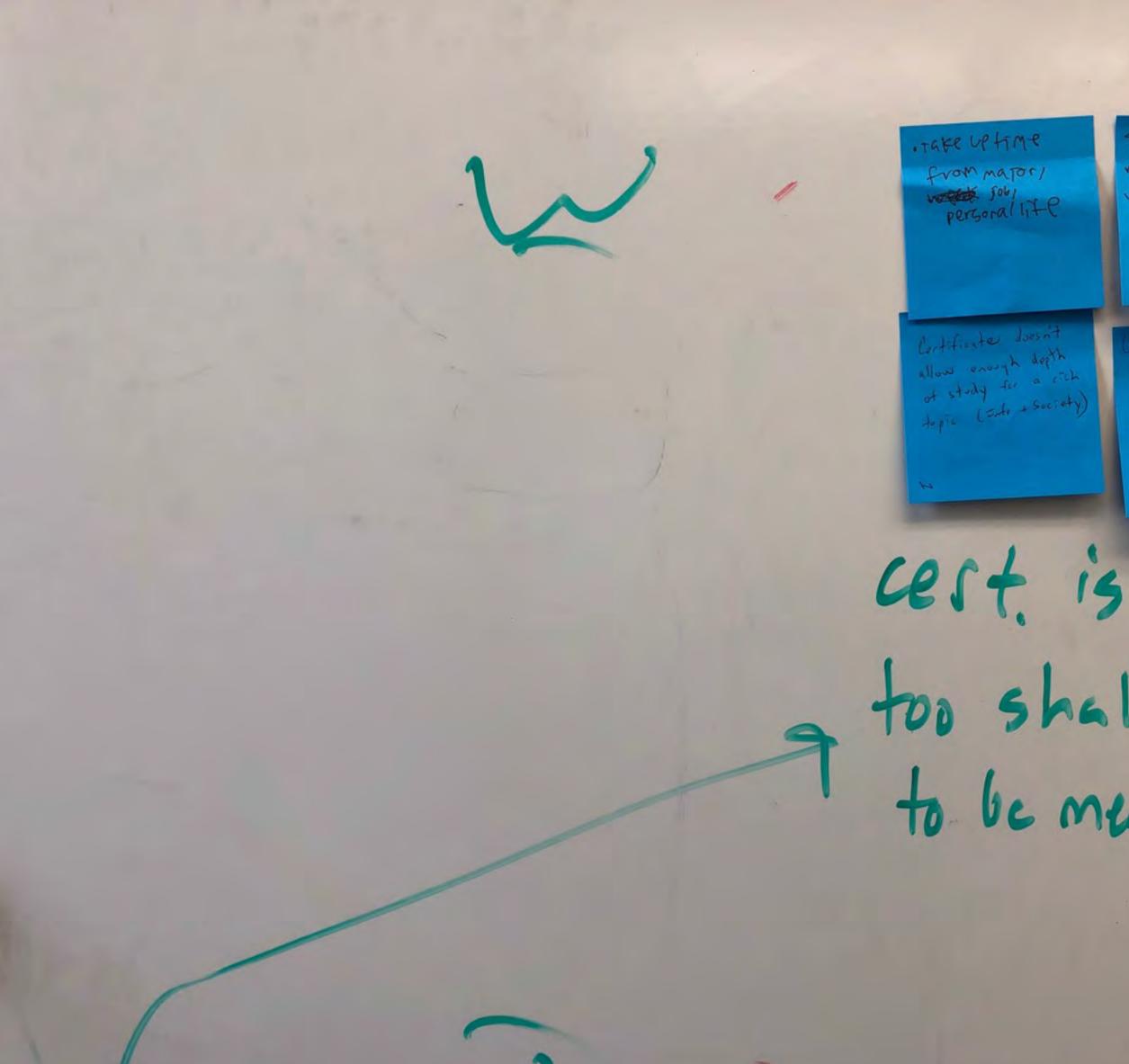
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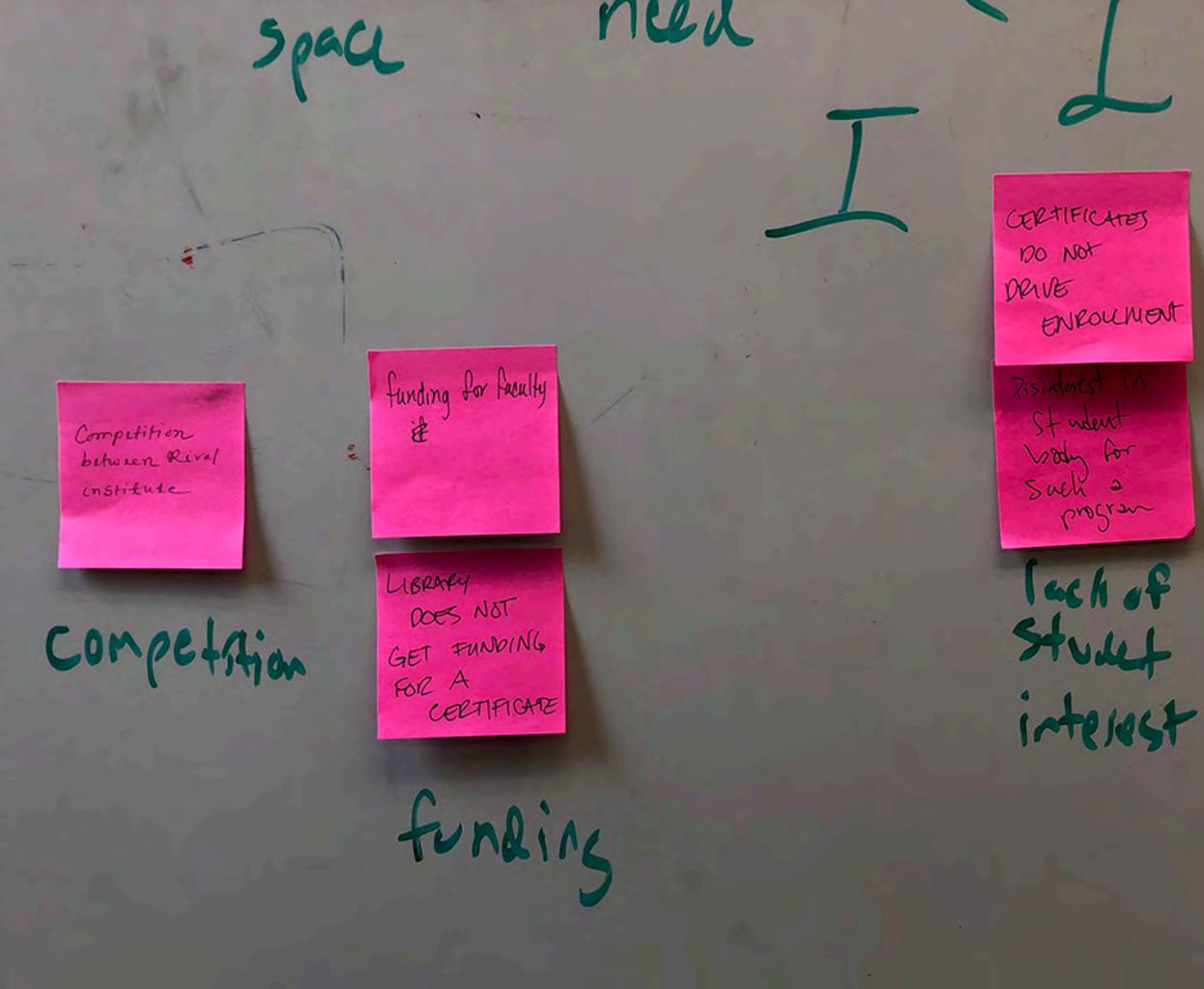
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