Creating Campus Conditions for Student Success

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University of Iowa
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We all want the same thing--an undergraduate experience that results in high levels of learning and personal development for all students.
Overview

- What the world needs now
- Why engagement matters
- Lessons from high-performing institutions
- Implications for U of I
Advance Organizers

- To what extent do your students engage in productive learning activities, inside and outside the classroom?
- How do you know?
- What could we do differently -- or better -- to enhance student success?
Student Success in College

Academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post-college performance
College Learning for the New Global Century

A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise
Narrow Learning is Not Enough: The Essential Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical & Natural World
- Intellectual and Practical Skills
- Personal and Social Responsibility
- “Deep” Integrative Learning
Deep, Integrative Learning

- Attend to the underlying meaning of information as well as content
- Integrate and synthesize different ideas, sources of information
- Discern patterns in evidence or phenomena
- Apply knowledge in different situations
- View issues from multiple perspectives
Most Important Skills Employers Look For In New Hires

- Teamwork skills
- Critical thinking/reasoning
- Oral/written communication
- Ability to assemble/organize information
- Innovative/thinking creatively
- Able to work with numbers/statistics
- Foreign language proficiency

*Skills/abilities recent graduates think are the two most important to employers*
Pre-college Characteristics Associated with Student Success

- Academic preparation
- Ability and college-level skills
- Family education and support
- Financial wherewithal
Early College Indicators of Persistence and Success

- Goal realization
- Psycho-social fit
- Credit hours completed
- Academic and social support
- Involvement in the “right” kinds of activities
What *Really* Matters in College: Student Engagement

Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of college impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement.

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 602
Student Engagement Trifecta

- What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities

- What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things

- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities
Good Practices in Undergraduate Education
(Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Respect for diverse learning styles
- Cooperation among students
National Survey of Student Engagement
(pronounced “nessie”)

Community College Survey of Student Engagement
(pronounced “cessie”)

College student surveys that assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development
Since 2000:

✓ 2,000,000+ students from 1,334 different schools
✓ 80+% of 4-yr U.S. undergraduate FTE
✓ 50 states, Puerto Rico
✓ 59 Canadian IHEs
✓ 100+ consortia
NSSE Questionnaire

- Student Behaviors
- Institutional Actions & Requirements
- Reactions to College
- Student Background Information

Student Learning & Development
Effective Educational Practices

- Level of Academic Challenge
- Active & Collaborative Learning
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Supportive Campus Environment
- Student-Faculty Interaction
Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, and engagement go hand in hand
Student engagement varies more within than between institutions.
Level of Academic Challenge: Seniors at Doc-Extensive Schools

Doc-Extensive Institutions
Percentile 10
Percentile 50
Percentile 90
Student-Faculty Interaction: First-Year Students at Liberal Arts Institutions

Liberal Arts Institutions

Percentile 10
Percentile 50
Percentile 90
Worth Pondering

How do we reach our least engaged students?
It’s more complicated than this…

➢ Many of the effects of college are “conditional”

➢ Some are compensatory
NSSE: Who’s more engaged?

- Women
- Full-time students
- Students who live on campus
- Students with diversity experiences
- Fraternity & sorority members
- Students who start and stay at the same school
Impact of Educationally Purposeful Activities on First Academic Year GPA by Pre-College Achievement Level
Impact of Educationally Purposeful Activities on First Academic Year GPA by Race/Ethnicity
Impact of Educationally Purposeful Activities on the Probability of Returning for the Second Year of College by Race

- **African American**
- **White/Caucasian**

EDUCATIONALLY PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES (STANDARDIZED) vs. PROBABILITY OF RETURNING

- Probability of Returning ranges from 0.50 to 1.00
- Educationally Purposeful Activities range from -2 to 2

The graph illustrates the relationship between educationally purposeful activities and the probability of returning for the second year of college, differentiated by race.
Impact of Pre-College Achievement Level on Probability of Returning for the Second Year of College
What does an educationally effective college look like?
Project DEEP

To discover, document, and describe what high performing institutions do to achieve their notable level of effectiveness.
DEEP Schools

Doctoral Extensives
- University of Kansas
- University of Michigan

Doctoral Intensives
- George Mason University
- Miami University (Ohio)
- University of Texas El Paso

Master’s Granting
- Fayetteville State University
- Gonzaga University
- Longwood University

Liberal Arts
- California State, Monterey Bay
- Macalester College
- Sweet Briar College
- The Evergreen State College
- Sewanee: University of the South
- Ursinus College
- Wabash College
- Wheaton College (MA)
- Wofford College

Baccalaureate General
- Alverno College
- University of Maine at Farmington
- Winston-Salem State University

*Higher-than-predicted NSSE scores and graduation rates
Research Approach

Case study method

✓ Team of 24 researchers review institutional documents and conduct multiple-day site visits

✓ Observe individuals, classes, group meetings, activities, events
  • 2,700+ people, 60 classes, 30 events

✓ Discover and describe effective practices and programs, campus culture
Worth Noting

Many roads to an engaging institution

✓ No one best model
✓ Different combinations of complementary, interactive, synergistic conditions
✓ *Anything worth doing is worth doing well at scale*
Six Shared Conditions

- “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy
- Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning
- Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
- Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success
- Improvement-Oriented Ethos
- Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality
Ponder This

1. Which of these areas needs attention right now at the U of Iowa or your institution?

2. What might you do about it?
Creating Conditions That Matter to Student Success

DEEP Lessons

We can’t leave serendipity to chance
Lessons from National Center for Academic Transformation

✓ If doing something is important, require it (first-year students don’t do ‘optional’)

✓ Assign course points to the activity

✓ Monitor and intervene when necessary

http://www.thenccat.org/Newsletters/Apr06.htm#1
1. Lay out the path to student success

a. Intentionality matters
b. Engagement early is critical
c. Front load resources to smooth transitions
d. Teach newcomers about academic culture & expectations
e. Focus on underengaged students
f. If something works, maybe require it?
Targets of Opportunity

- Require advising and orientation
- Use valid placement tests
- Reduce D/W/F rates
- Deploy early warning systems
- Communicate with at-risk student family members
“Meet students where they are”

**Fayetteville State**

- Faculty members “teach the students they have, not those they wish they had”
- Center for Teaching and Learning sponsors development activities on diverse learning needs

**Cal State Monterey Bay**

- “Assets” philosophy acknowledges students’ prior knowledge
U of Michigan Mentorship Program matches groups of four first-year students with an older student and a faculty or staff member who share similar academic interests. The goal is to provide students with mentoring relationships, networking opportunities, yearlong guidance and support, and in general to help ease the transition to college.
It Takes a Whole Campus to Educate a Student
Something Else That Really Matters in College

The greatest impact appears to stem from students’ total level of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are mutually reinforcing…

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 647
2. Recruit, socialize and reward competent people

a. Recruit faculty and staff committed to student learning

b. Emphasize a relentless focus on student success in faculty and staff orientation

c. Reward and support competent staff to insure high quality student support services
“Difference Makers”

Student success is the product of thousands of small gestures extended on a daily basis by caring, supportive educators sprinkled throughout the institution who enact a talent development philosophy.

“Miss Rita”
3. Promote and reward collaboration

a. Tighten the philosophical and operational linkages between academic and student affairs

b. Potential collaborations:
   - Peer tutoring and mentoring
   - First year seminars
   - Learning communities
4. Put money where it will make a difference to student success

“...in professional baseball it still matters less how much you have than how well you spend it”
4. Put money where it will make a difference to student success

a. Align resources and reward system with institutional mission, values, and priorities

b. Sunset redundant and ineffective programs

c. Invest in “high-impact” activities that contribute to student success
High-Impact Educational Practices

What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter

By George D. Kuh

With an introduction by Carol Giary Schneider and findings on student success from AAC&U’s LEAP initiative

www.aacu.org
High Impact Activities

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- “Science as Science Is Done”; Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects
Essential Learning Outcome:
NSSE Deep/Integrative Learning

- Integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Included diverse perspectives in class discussions/writing
- Put together ideas from different courses
- Discussed ideas with faculty members outside of class
- Discussed ideas with others outside of class
- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory

- Synthesizing & organizing ideas, info., or experiences
- Making judgments about the value of information
- Applying theories to practical problems or in new situations
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views
- Tried to better understand someone else's views
- Learned something that changed how you understand an issue
## Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Deep/Integrative Learning and Gains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deep Learning</th>
<th>Gains General</th>
<th>Gains Personal</th>
<th>Gains Practical</th>
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<td>Learning Communities</td>
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<td>Service Learning</td>
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<td><strong>Senior</strong></td>
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<td>Study Abroad</td>
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<td>Student-Faculty Research</td>
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<td>Internship</td>
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<td>Service Learning</td>
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<td>Culminating Experience</td>
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**Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Student Engagement**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level of Academic Challenge</th>
<th>Active and Collab. Learning</th>
<th>Student-Faculty Interaction</th>
<th>Supportive Campus Env.</th>
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High Impact Activities
Increase Odds Students Will:

- Invest time and effort
- Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Experience diversity
- Get more frequent feedback
- Reflect & integrate learning
- Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications
High-Impact Practices and the Disparities Within...

Frosh: Service Learning and LCs

✓ Parity among racial/ethnic groups
✓ Fewer 1\textsuperscript{st} gen students
✓ Fewer part-time students
✓ Fewer transfer students
✓ Fewer older students
High-Impact Practices and the Disparities Within…

Seniors in All HIPs

✓ Fewer 1\textsuperscript{st} gen students
✓ Fewer students of color
✓ Fewer transfer students
✓ Fewer part-time students
✓ Fewer older students
Assessing Student Engagement in High-Impact Practices

To what extent does your institution provide these experiences?  
[√ = have on campus; √ = required; estimate the % of various student populations in these activities]

<table>
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<th>Learning Community</th>
<th>First Year Seminars</th>
<th>Research w/ Faculty</th>
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<td>On Our Campus</td>
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<td>Required for all</td>
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<td>% Students involved</td>
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<td>% First Generation</td>
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<td>% Transfer Students</td>
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<td>% African American</td>
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<td>% Latino Students</td>
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<td>% Asian American</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Adult Students</td>
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4. Put money where it will make a difference to student success

a. Align reward system with institutional mission, values, and priorities
b. Sunset redundant and ineffective programs
c. Invest in activities that contribute to student success
d. Scale up effective practices
e. Document performance through **assessment**!
Triangulate multiple data sources

✓ ACT/SAT score reports
✓ BCSSE
✓ NSSE
✓ FSSE
✓ CIRP/CSS
✓ Noel Levitz
✓ CLA
✓ ACT CAAP
✓ ETS MAAP
Evidence of College Graduates Skills/Knowledge

- **Supervised internship/community-based project**: 69% Very effective, 83% Fairly effective
- **Senior project (e.g., thesis, project)**: 46% Very effective, 79% Fairly effective
- **Essay tests**: 35% Very effective, 60% Fairly effective
- **Electronic portfolio & faculty assessments**: 33% Very effective, 56% Fairly effective
- **Multiple-choice tests**: 7% Very effective, 32% Fairly effective
Triangulate multiple data sources

✓ ACT/SAT score reports
✓ BCSSE
✓ NSSE
✓ FSSE
✓ CIRP/CSS
✓ Noel Levitz
✓ CLA
✓ ACT CAAP
✓ Campus audit (Inventory for Student Engagement and Success)
DEEP Practice Briefs
Available: www.nsse.iub.edu
5. Focus on culture sooner than later

*Ultimately, it’s all about the culture...*

a. Expand the number of cultural practitioners on campus

b. Instill an ethic of positive restlessness

c. Identify and address cultural properties that impede success
“Checking the Truth”

 ✓ What is distinctive about the U of I: To students? To faculty/staff?

 ✓ How do these distinctive aspects affect the learning environment? Student success?

 ✓ In what ways do the campus culture and dominant subcultures promote, or inhibit, establishing an unrelenting focus on student learning and success?
6. Put someone in charge

When everyone is responsible for something, no one is accountable for it...

a. Senior leadership is key
b. Some individual or group (high profile ‘think force’) must coordinate, monitor and report the status of initiatives
c. Those ‘in charge’ not solely responsible for bringing about change
Ponder This

✓ Who is “charged” with maintaining an institutional focus on student success?

✓ What indicators are used to measure institutional performance in key areas and to determine that data inform policy and decision making?

✓ To what extent do norms, reward systems and other aspects of the institution’s culture value student success?
7. Stay the course

The good-to-great-transformations never happened in one fell swoop. There was no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Sustainable transformations follow a predictable pattern of buildup and breakthrough…

(Collins, 2001, p. 186)
7. Stay the course

- Academic leadership
- Intentionality
- If it works, consider requiring it
- Beware the implementation dip
If We Could Do One Big Thing...

✓ Make it possible for every student to do at least one “high-impact” experience in the first year and another later linked to the major.
We Need to Do One More Thing...

☑ Ensure programs and interventions are of high quality.
What is your evidence for effectiveness?
We must embrace the lineage of our students.

Campus cultures do not change easily or willingly.

To foster more student success we must use promising policies and practices more consistently throughout the institution.

Do we have the will to do so?