



## Core Commitments:

Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility

## Core Commitments: Contexts and Framings

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Symposium: "Taking Seriously the  
Perspectives of Others as a Core  
Institutional Commitment"

October 15-16, 2008 Long Beach, CA



## Liberal Education

- A philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind, cultivates intellectual judgments, and fosters ethical and social responsibility
- By its nature, liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world.

## The Higher Education Challenge

**But what do college students say they are hoping to get from their time studying?**

### Top tier outcomes for college education in student focus groups

- Maturity and ability to succeed on one's own
- Time-management skills
- Strong work habits
- Self-discipline
- Teamwork skills and ability to get along with different types of people

## Middle tier outcomes for students

- Tangible business skills and specific expertise in field of focus
- Critical thinking skills
- Communication skills
- Problem-solving skills and analytical ability
- Exposure to business world
- Leadership skills

## Least Important Outcomes

- Values, principles, ethics
- Tolerance and respect for different cultural backgrounds
- Competency in computer skills
- Expanded cultural and global awareness and sensitivity
- Civic responsibility and orientation toward public service

## Oppositional Views

“Civic responsibility and leadership are qualities that individuals are born with. . .”

High School Student in an  
AAC&U Focus Group

## Benjamin Barber

“We may be born free, but we are not born citizens—we have to acquire the traits that enable us to participate effectively in the world.”

## Making the Case for Educating for Personal and Social Responsibility

- Colleges and universities in the U.S. agree on essential learning outcomes for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## The Essential Learning Outcomes

Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World**
- **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
- **Personal and Social Responsibility**
- **Integrative Learning**

## Essential Learning Outcome # 3

### ■ Personal and Social Responsibility

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

*Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges*

## PSR Institutional Inventory Measures Opportunities for--

- Striving for Excellence
- Cultivating Personal and Academic Integrity
- Contributing to a Larger Community
- Taking Seriously the Perspectives of Others
- Developing Competence in Ethical and Moral Reasoning

## Core Commitments Goals

- Orchestrate a proactive, high visibility initiative
- Serve as a catalyst for fostering ethical and civic outcomes of a contemporary liberal education
- Invent more purposeful, transparent, and developmental pathways for students to acquire new capacities
- Generate research tools and evidence that reveals what kind of new capacities students have actually gained our institutions

## Components of Core Commitments Initiative

- Mobilize Presidential Leadership
- Identify a Leadership Consortium of Colleges and Universities
- Generate a Widespread National Conversation
- Expand the Network of Faculty, Staff, and Student Advocates
- Measure Progress in Student Learning

## Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory

- A new AAC&U instrument to determine where people perceive PSR education resides
- Used with pre- and post-survey dialogues across campus constituent
- Inventory surveys four different groups: students, faculty, student affairs staff, and academic administrators
- Illuminates congruences/dissonances across groups and campus dimensions

## Core Commitments Strategy

■ Research

■ Practices

■ Resources

...are vehicles for...

COLLECTING

DISSEMINATING

AMPLIFYING

...EVIDENCE of  
PSR Learning

■ Conferences/Events

■ Publicity/Press