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Greater Expectations Releases Report Presents 21st Century Vision for Learning

On September 30, members of the Greater Expectations (GEx) National Panel joined other invited speakers, colleagues from the higher education community, and the press at a forum on the newly released report, *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*. The culmination of more than two years of work, the report outlines a vision for a New Academy that provides a high quality liberal education to all students in an era of near-universal access. Within this New Academy, a 21st century college education consists of a reinvigorated liberal education that panel chair Judith Ramaley emphasized as being "engaging and eminently practical."

More than 50 invited guests attended the Washington, D.C. Forum on the Quality of College Learning. Speakers outlined important themes of the report. Andrea Leskes, Vice President for Education and Quality Initiatives at AAC&U and Director of the GEx Initiative, identified the pressures for change, from the workplace, from society, and from an increasingly interdependent world.

Leskes also explained how today's near-universal participation in higher education calls for a reinvention of the college experience. There are "more students, different students, and new ways of attending college," she said. A full 75% of today's students are in some way non-traditional—working while in school, older than 18-22 years, and/or attending more than one institution.

"The desire for college study has created a new mission for higher education," Leskes said, "yet the academy is

not fulfilling this new role." Measures of "yesterday"—retention rates at individual institutions, evaluation of individual classroom work, and mastery of facts and information—are still the norm. Colleges need to prepare students for rapid technological and social change, a complex world, and informed citizenship.

AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider noted the report's vision for quality liberal education and its "realistic and achievable recommendations" to act on this vision, both in K-12 and in higher education contexts.

The vision, she said, needs to be "transparent" to the public, so policy decisions support educational quality.

Ramaley, former president of the University of Vermont, stressed that creating high standards to accompany higher expectations need not translate into standardization. She noted that both the "diversity of aspirations" among students and the diversity of institutions of learning are strengths with-

in the U.S. educational system. All educational paths, in their variety, need to be "illuminated" by powerful learning outcomes that build cumulatively from kindergarten onward.

The focus on cumulative learning was reinforced by Katharine Oliver, Assistant Superintendent for the Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning within the Maryland State Department of Education. Oliver lauded the report for its advocacy of collaboration across learning levels and its attention to meaningful assessment of liberal education outcomes within both K-12 systems and higher education. Research economist Anthony Carnevale explained how specialized



National panel chair, Judith Ramaley and forum speaker Anthony Carnevale

knowledge can spur economic growth in the short term, but general knowledge and "know-how"—the ability to use knowledge—move societies forward in the long term.

Richard Hersh, president of Trinity College, and Eduardo Padrón, president of Miami-Dade Community College, described how the report's analysis and recommendations play out in college settings. While speaking highly of examples of powerful learning outlined in the *Greater Expectations* report, both panelists stressed the need for more systemic change. Hersh argued that faculty development and reward systems as well as general resource allocation need to be aligned with the goal of powerful liberal learning. Padrón noted that stronger alignment is needed between the final years of high school and the first year of college to combat effectively many students' underpreparedness for college.

In the end, the forum speakers stressed how the report's release marked a beginning rather than a conclusion. They urged audience members to share the report in dialogue with diverse stakeholders, and bring it to life in ways appropriate for specific contexts. "We've lost the notion that education is a hand-crafted process," Hersh noted. "*Greater Expectations* urges us to have much higher expectations for ourselves as educators."

To obtain the *Greater Expectations* National Panel report, contact Nancy O'Neill at oneill@aacu.org. Small numbers of copies are provided free of charge. Large quantities can be ordered on-line at www.aacu.org/publications/index.cfm.

Greater Expectations Web site

www.greaterexpectations.org

The GEx Web site contains a print-ready (PDF) version of the report and highlights sections of special interest to students and parents, faculty, administrators, policy-makers, and the press. The site also contains briefing papers that informed the National Panel's work and links to other relevant sites. The greaterexpectations.org site is expected to grow over time with new examples and models of learning-centered practices.

Report's Release Sparks Interest and Dialogue Across the Country

❖ The media noted the release of the GEx National Panel report. Newspapers ranging from the *Christian Science Monitor* to the *Washington Post* to the *Hartford Courant* have articulated the premises of the report to wide audiences. Many groups have quoted the *Monitor* story (available at

www.csmonitor.com/2002/1001/p11s02-lehl.html), which summarizes the learning outcomes recommended by the panel and gives examples of innovative campus models being used to achieve them.

❖ The GEx National Panel report's release dovetails with another AAC&U initiative, the **Presidents' Campaign for the Advancement of Liberal Learning (CALL)**. As part of the CALL, many campuses are organizing Campus-Community Dialogues involving stakeholders from inside and outside higher education. Participants are using the GEx National Panel report in these dialogues, which have taken place thus far in Maryland, Connecticut, North Carolina, Utah, Oregon and New Jersey. At these events, "the vision of learning described in *Greater Expectations*... is being embraced, endorsed, and elaborated among varied constituents," said AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider. For more information on the Presidents' CALL, visit www.aacu.org/CALL/index.cfm.

❖ AAC&U Senior Fellow Barbara Hill brought the *Greater Expectations* National Panel findings to the Arts and Humanities Summit of the University System of North Dakota in early October. Hill presented a concurrent session with the same title as the report and was interviewed about liberal education in the 21st century on the North Dakota public radio show "Hear it Now."



Andrea Leskes presents the *Greater Expectations* National Panel report at the September 30 forum.

❖ The report was also discussed during an October meeting of the Cable in the Classroom initiative, of which National Panel member, Professor L. Lee Knefelkamp, is a participant. The meeting included representatives from the National PTA, Sesame Street, and other cable industry and education organizations.

❖ President Schneider led a plenary session about the report at the University of Michigan/Kellogg Forum on Civic Engagement in late October. The event drew more than 150 educational leaders and graduate students in higher education from across the country. University of Michigan graduate students have also written papers on the report in a class taught by National Panel member Professor Sylvia Hurtado.

❖ Andrea Leskes, Director of the GEx Initiative, presented findings from the report to international educators at the College Board in October and to the Independent Educational Consultants Association in early November. In addition, she distributed the report at the Business and Education Conference sponsored by The Conference Board and the National Alliance of Business. While there, she also spoke as part of a panel titled "The Business Role in PreK-16 Learning: Aligning the Knowledge Supply Chain."

An Autumn Harvest with the Greater Expectations Forum

The Forum on 21st Century Liberal Arts Educational Practice is designed to facilitate the achievement of four liberal learning outcomes suggested in the National Panel report—inquiry capacity, global preparedness, civic engagement, and integrative learning. A working group assigned to each outcome has the charge of discovering promising practices from across the country and preparing practitioner guides intended to improve student learning from high school through college. The working groups are also gathering examples of strategies for assessing and sustaining innovative programs. The practitioner guides, to be published in 2003, will provide "straight from the field" advice for educators as they establish or develop purposeful programs in the four outcome areas.

The **Working Group on Inquiry-Based Learning** has finished its regional seminars and begun to distill its findings. The group held seminars at Stanford University, Hampshire College, and Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis. Each seminar drew educators from a range of institutions including public high schools, community colleges, liberal arts colleges, regional universities, and doctoral and research institutions, both public and private. Bob Shoenberg, leader of the group and AAC&U senior fellow, noted that inquiry-based learning is being practiced in a variety of disciplines, sometimes by individual faculty members and sometimes as a deliberate strategy of academic departments or whole institutions, including high schools.

Following a trail of suggestions from members of the **Working Group on Global Preparedness**, forum leader and AAC&U senior fellow Barbara Hill talked with faculty and program directors from numerous institutions across the country. Many people are committed to improving global learning and the working group has reaped the benefits. The reflective seminar at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) highlighted engineering programs (at WPI, the University

of Rhode Island, and the University of Connecticut-Storrs) that have a powerful international focus. The three campuses used different curricular models, suggesting that professional programs can integrate global learning in a number of ways. Other discoveries from this seminar included high school and community college programs that offer faculty development abroad, thereby making global learning a potential part of a wide array of courses. Future regional seminars will be held at the Community College of Philadelphia, the Community College of Denver, and the American University of Paris.

When the **Working Group on Integrative Learning** first met, its members quickly realized that integrative learning infuses and influences educational planning at micro and macro levels. Exciting practices described during the regional seminar at Babson College ranged from challenging students through short integrative projects, such as producing a video, to organizing entire institutions around integrative themes. The seminar also revealed a significant need to develop assessments for integrative learning to capture its unique contributions to learning. Upcoming seminars will be held at Metropolitan College of NY, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Richland College in Dallas.

By mid-November, the **Working Group on Civic Engagement** will have held regional seminars at Portland State University, Oberlin College, the University of Michigan, and the University of Southern California. Participants have attested to the transformative influence that structured opportunities for responsible, effective public engagement have had on students. Practices identified include progressive curricular pathways, hands-on experience in communities, and engagement with common, unsolved social problems. Pedagogies include experience with intergroup dialogue, examination of personal and communal values, and opportunities to learn how individual and collective acts make a difference in a democracy.

GEx Student Transfer Initiative Brings Educators and State Legislators Together

In September, Mid-Atlantic higher education leaders (mainly college presidents and state governing and coordinating board representatives) and state legislators met in Washington, D.C. Nearly 40 invited representatives from a 10-state area assembled under the aegis of the D.C.-based Center for Policy Alternatives, with cooperation in sponsorship and planning from the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education and the Public Good, AAC&U, and the American Council on Education. Participants entered into a series of facilitated discussions that modeled ways in which states can conduct dialogues among higher education leaders and state legislators. The discussions stressed a process for finding common values on which to base public policy. This program is planned as the first of five, eventually including representatives of all 50 states.

Institute on Campus Leadership for Sustainable Innovation

In July, twenty-four campuses participated in the second annual GEx Institute on Campus Leadership for Sustainable Innovation. The Institute brought campus teams together to work on goals related to learning-driven change. Team members explored their own change initiatives, discussed relevant research and practices with colleagues, and developed plans for sustaining institutional efforts. After five days of intense work, teams left the Institute with concrete plans to engage their campus constituents "in the work of transformation, without it seeming like an add-on."

Participants described how they accomplished a great deal more than would have been possible by meeting on their own campuses. They attended plenary and concurrent sessions, tapped into the expertise of Institute faculty, and shared campus experiences. They commended the Institute's overall usefulness and specifically praised the intellectual quality of the curriculum.

Next summer's Institute will be held in Denver, Colorado, June 25-29, 2003. For more information on the Institute or to receive an application, visit www.aacu.org or contact Siah Annand at annand@aacu.org.

How can you get involved?

AAC&U encourages broad participation and active involvement in *Greater Expectations*. Please

- Join the Friends of *Greater Expectations* mailing/e-mail list to receive GEx Newsletters and other mailings (contact Nancy O'Neill at oneill@aacu.org).
- Review information about GEx on the AAC&U Web site (www.aacu.org/gex.index.cfm).
- Access the companion Web site to the GEx National Panel report (www.greaterexpectations.org) for:
 - full text of the report in print-ready (PDF) format
 - the National Panel briefing papers
 - related data and links
 - report guides for administrators, faculty, students and parents, policymakers, and the press.
- Access ordering information for the National Panel report at www.aacu.org/publications/index.cfm.
- Discuss the National Panel report with colleagues inside and outside higher education.
- Attend an AAC&U meeting.
See www.aacu.org/meetings/index.cfm for more details.



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AAC&U is the leading national association devoted to advancing and strengthening liberal learning for all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Since its founding in 1915, AAC&U's membership has grown to nearly 800 accredited public and private colleges and universities of every type and size.

AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Its mission is to reinforce the collective commitment to liberal education at both the national and local level and to help individual institutions keep the quality of student learning at the core of their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges.

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