



AAC&U 2010 Annual Conference

Creating General Education Outcomes that Cross
Cultures: The China Link

Rita Kean, Nancy Mitchell, and David E. Wilson

Friday, Jan. 22, 8:45-10:15 a.m.

Overview

“The general education curriculum is a place where students can explore the values, institutions, and aspirations that are basic to democracy, examining these complex questions through multiple and cross-disciplinary lenses: philosophical, empirical, historical, cross-cultural.” (AAC&U, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, 2007, p. 39)



Questions raised:

- Are we prepared to include international student in our general education programs?
- How U.S. gen ed prepared students for their post-graduation plans?
- How can we make those educational experiences more meaningful?



More questions:

- Does general education cut across cultures? Can we assume all gen ed programs alike? What commonalities, differences?
- Are our general education outcomes Ameri-centric?
- How do international students interpret and understand our gen ed programs?



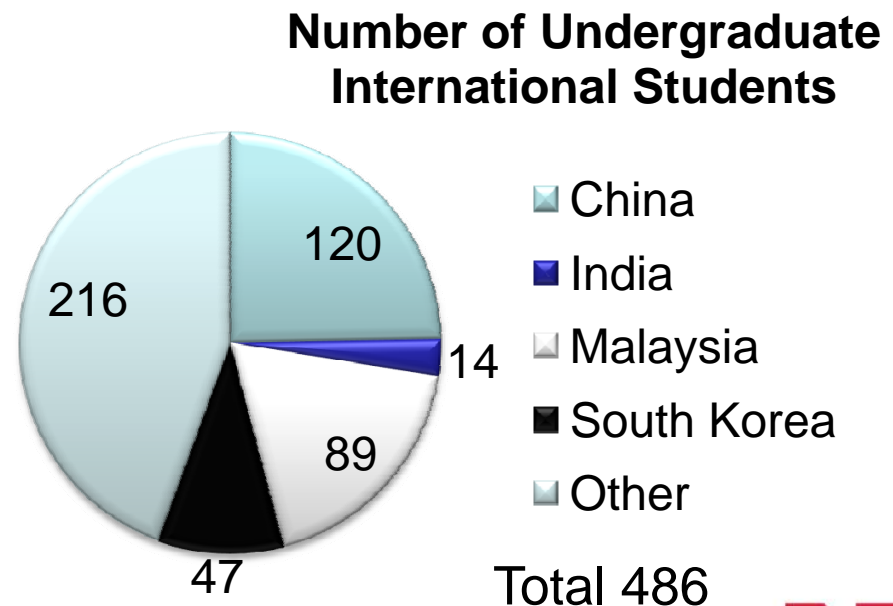
Session Preview

- Background
 - History at UNL with international students
 - UNL/China Link background -- Confucius Institute participation
 - New gen ed program
- Challenges
 - Institutional/Operational Challenges
 - Learning Contexts
 - Programmatic Challenges
- Discussion



Background

- New gen ed program
- Goal at UNL with international students
 - Increase from 2.6% to 6%
- UNL/China
 - Confucius Institute
 - Xi'an, Zhejiang Universities



Sources



Institutional/Operational Challenges

- Administrative:
 - Language-related (transcripts)
 - Advising (including English placement)
 - Faculty
 - Students
 - Communicating (dispelling rumors)



Learning contexts

- Language, competing purposes
 - Proficiency
 - Rhetoric

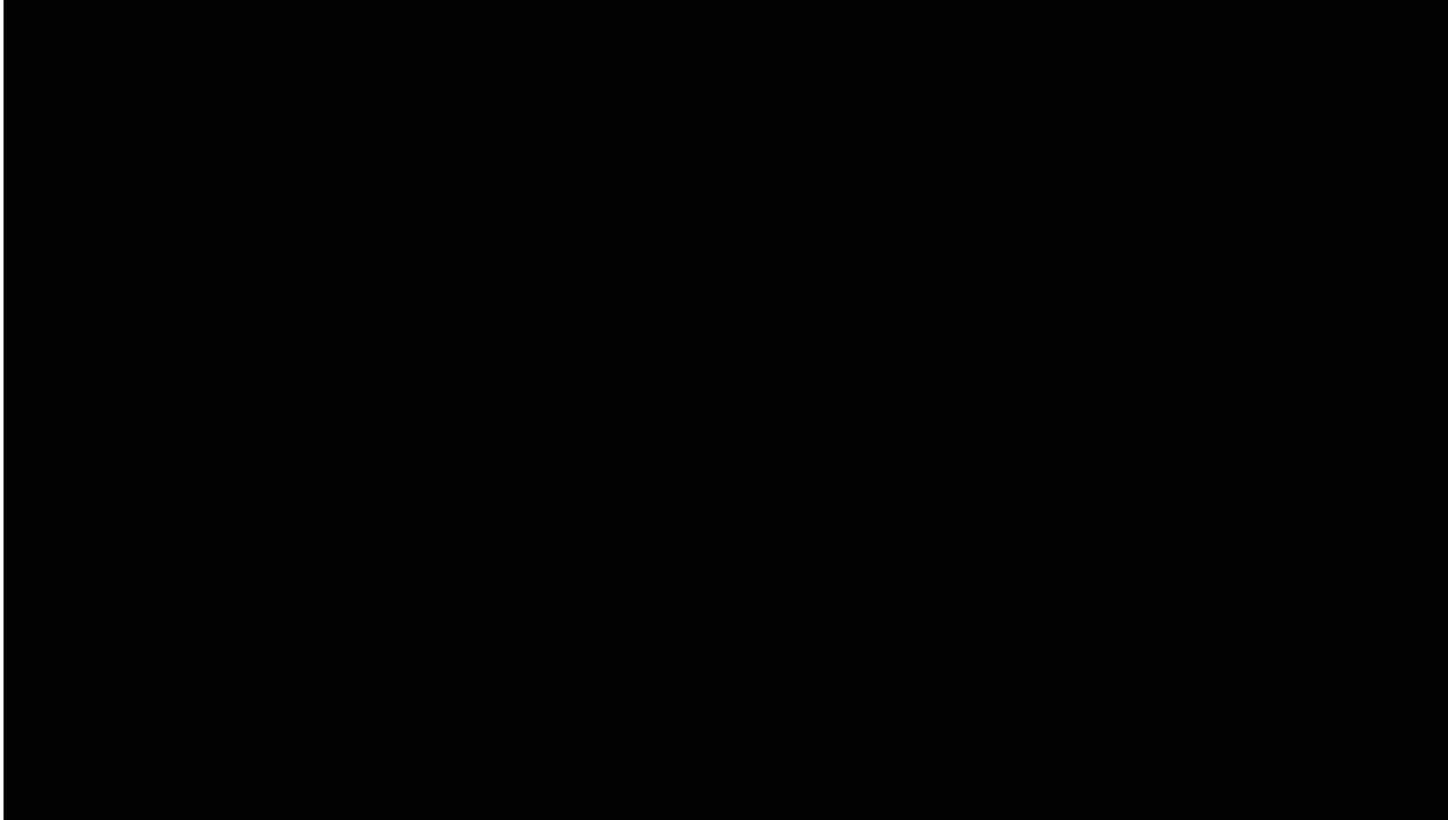


Learning Contexts

- Classroom Dynamics
 - Physically
 - Environmentally
 - Teamwork
 - Discussions
 - Grades
 - Seeking help



Learning Contexts: Classroom

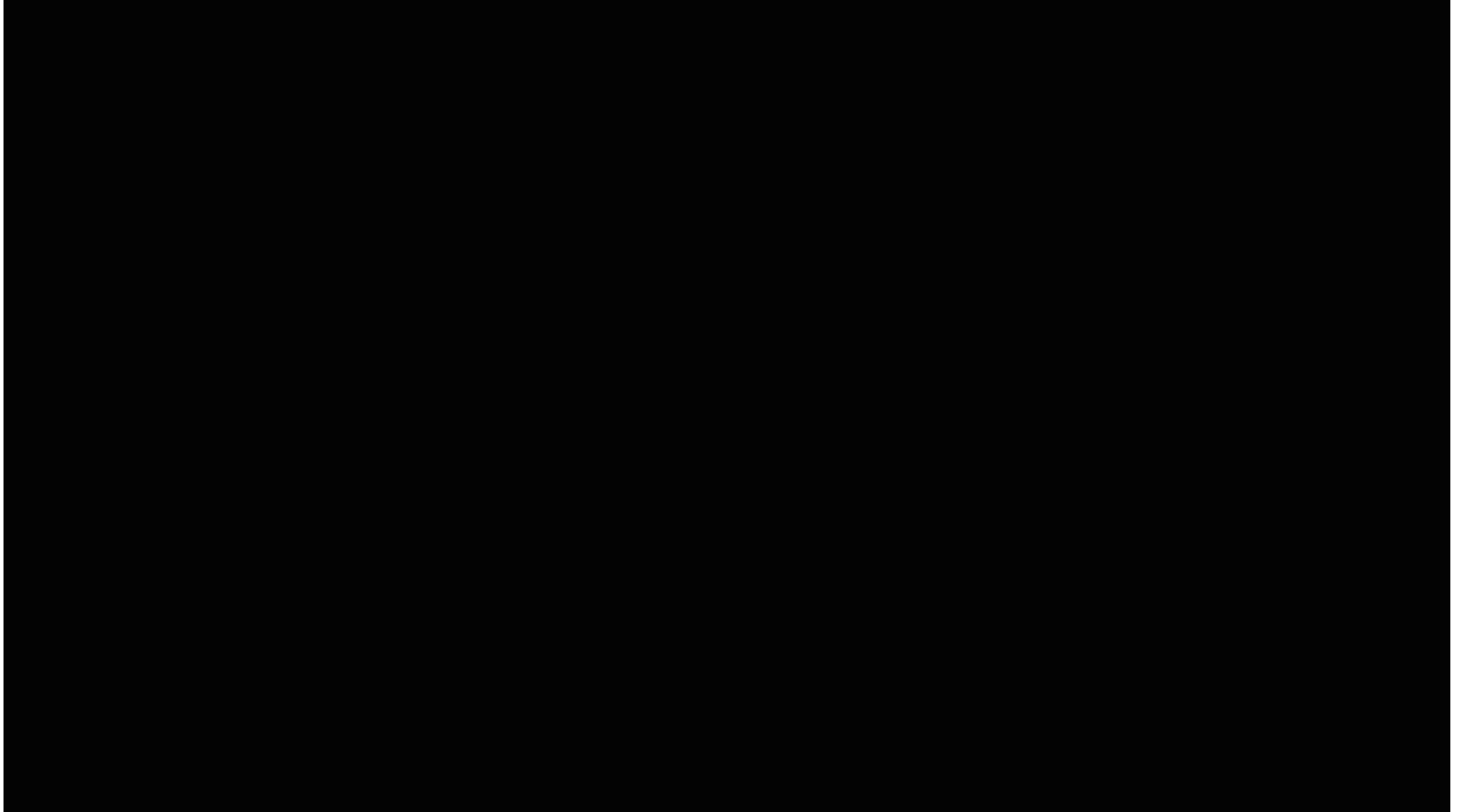


Learning Contexts

- Some things we don't usually think about
 - Chinese students afraid to make mistakes
 - Majors
 - Single children
 - Other



Learning Contexts: Culture



Programmatic Differences Between Cultures

- Chinese system is different from U.S. system, gen ed and generally
- U.S. students know too little about other cultures



Discussion: What can we do to improve?

- What are your experiences?
- What other gaps? Solutions?
- Ideas to close those gaps, improving relationships, interactions, learning:
- Do outcomes translate, such as civic engagement?



Contact Information

Dr. Rita Kean

Dean of Undergraduate Studies

rkean1@unl.edu

(402) 472-1185

Dr. Nancy Mitchell

Director of General Education

nmitchell1@unl.edu

(402) 472-5647





© 2007, THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
