



*The Association of American Colleges and Universities  
invites applications for the 2010*

# Engaging Departments Institute

July 7–11, 2010  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Application Deadline: March 19, 2010

for deans, department chairs, and  
faculty working to advance  
integrative and engaged learning  
in and across disciplines



Association  
of American  
Colleges and  
Universities

## About the Institute

The Engaging Departments Institute offers campus teams intensive, structured time to advance plans to foster, assess, and improve student learning within departments and across the institution. The Institute provides an opportunity for colleges and universities to bring together a group of strategically selected campus leaders—including deans, department chairs, and faculty members—to collaboratively to advance integrative and engaged learning in and across disciplines.

Recognizing that faculty typically identify strongly with their discipline, department, or program and that students typically engage in their most complex and sophisticated academic work in their majors, the Institute builds from these academic “homes” toward effective educational leadership and intentional collaboration among departments to achieve field-specific program and institution-wide learning outcomes, consistently and at high levels.

The Institute will concentrate on:

1. **leadership** for engaged, intentional, and integrative learning within and across departments;
2. **essential learning through the major**, including civic engagement, personal and social responsibility, and global citizenship;
3. **assessments for achieving and improving essential learning outcomes**, concentrating on authentic assessments based on the work faculty and students are already doing in the classroom; and
4. **improving educational effectiveness and student achievement**, by identifying barriers and aligning new practices with departmental and institutional goals.

Campuses applying to attend the Institute should have a generally shared acceptance across departments of the need to improve student learning through engagement and assessment. Building on the principles of excellence described in AAC&U’s 2007 report, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, this Institute will focus on building and sustaining departmental practice and culture to foster and improve student learning.



## Institute Development

The 2010 Engaging Departments Institute builds on significant input from educational leaders and faculty members from around the country. In 2008, with support from the Teagle Foundation, AAC&U convened four regional meetings of faculty and administrators from public and private, two- and four- year campuses to explore how departments can become supportive and intentional communities of practice for student learning. This includes creating opportunities for students to integrate their learning within majors and across multiple fields of study, including in general education. In addition, AAC&U drew from discussions with leaders from disciplinary and accreditation associations as it developed the Institute curriculum.

## Institute Faculty

The Institute features national and international leaders on student learning and assessment and faculty development, as well as current and former deans and department chairs with extensive experience guiding significant change efforts to integrate high-quality learning in the majors and across the curriculum and cocurriculum. Institute faculty members offer expertise on an impressive range of topics, many of which appear throughout the Institute curriculum.

**Jo Beld**, Director of Evaluation and Assessment, St. Olaf College

**Katherine Bergeron**, Dean of the College and Professor of Music, Brown University

**David Brakke**, Dean, College of Science and Mathematics, James Madison University

**J. Elizabeth Clark**, Professor of English, City University of New York–La Guardia Community College

**Susan Elrod**, Director, Project Kaleidoscope, AAC&U

**Ashley Finley**, Program Director of Assessment for Learning, AAC&U

**Carol Geary Schneider**, President, AAC&U

**J. K. Haynes**, Dean, College of Science and Mathematics, Morehouse College

**Marilyn Kurata**, Director of Core Curriculum Enhancement, University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Peggy Maki**, International Education Consultant

**Kenny Morrell**, Associate Professor, Greek & Roman Studies, Rhodes College

**Terrel Rhodes**, Vice President for Quality, Curriculum, and Assessment, AAC&U

**Vasti Torres**, Associate Professor, Higher Education and Student Affairs, Indiana University

**Joseph S. Wood**, Provost, University of Baltimore

See [www.aacu.org/meetings/engaging\\_depts](http://www.aacu.org/meetings/engaging_depts) for additional information on the faculty.

## Institute Curriculum

The purpose of the Institute curriculum is to help teams as they strive to improve student learning. Topics are included based upon both the expected and stated needs of the participating institutions. While topics will be refined to reflect the plans of the accepted institutions, the Institute schedule will include the experiences described below.

An opening plenary, on Wednesday evening, sets the context for the Institute with a discussion of essential learning outcomes, being intentional about learning, the purposes of assessment, and the relationship of study in departments to general and liberal education (e.g., effective educational practices, research on engagement and ethical thinking, and learning for life in a global community).

Conference sessions follow four “tracks” (teams are encouraged to divide among the tracks according to interests and needs):

### Track 1: Educational Leadership

This track will focus on how departments can connect disciplinary goals with institution-wide learning outcomes; how institutions can support and reward faculty (including contingent faculty) for focusing on student learning within and beyond the department; how work in the major can advance students’ personal and social responsibility and engagement with global issues; and how senior leaders can build campus and student engagement with liberal learning outcomes.

### Track 2: The Aims and Outcomes of Contemporary Education

This track will explore the aims and outcomes of a contemporary liberal education and the particular role departments and majors can play in helping students to achieve these outcomes at high levels. Special attention will be paid to strategies for advancing knowledge, intellectual skills, and personal and social responsibility through the disciplines as well as integrating learning developed through general education and cocurricular experiences into students’ most advanced work.

### Track 3: Faculty Work

These sessions will emphasize ways to strengthen students' achievement of ambitious learning outcomes across their course of study. From reviewing research on effective practices, to advancing student intellectual development, to engaging students and monitoring their progress, this track will tackle issues that often are neglected when competing priorities dominate department life.

### Track 4: The Learning, Assessment, and Improvement Cycle

While many issues of departmental effectiveness in teaching and learning naturally fall into both the leadership and faculty work tracks, this part of the Institute curriculum will focus on the connections between assessment and the improvement of learning. Sessions will emphasize the need for campuses to learn more about assessing the quality of student work in ways that benefit students, faculty, departments, and programs in everyday practice and planning.

**Daily synthesis sessions** provide a chance for attendees as a group to integrate the ideas, issues, and challenges emerging in the tracks. Institute faculty will facilitate discussion among the participants and address questions related to the day's presentations. Synthesis and integration of ideas also continues during daily team times.

A **closing plenary**, on Saturday evening, allows campus teams to explore next steps in engaging their colleagues with their proposed plans of action and reflect on critical issues related to educational change.

**Team consultations and team time** provide extensive opportunities to work as a group, with other teams, and with the experienced faculty/consultants available throughout the Institute. Along with the schedule of topical presentations, team time and expert individual consultations allow teams to make substantial progress on their specific goals and action plans. ***Teams are expected to be in residence for the entire Institute.***

**Pre- and Post-Institute Work** helps participating teams prepare for and reflect on the Institute.



## Application Procedures

Visit [www.aacu.org/meetings/engaging\\_depts](http://www.aacu.org/meetings/engaging_depts) to apply online.

### Team Composition

The minimum team size is five with at least one senior academic officer. Key administrative leaders are essential for accomplishing broad-based changes on campus; campus teams will ideally include a dean or someone from the provost's office and several chairs from the same college. Building networks of chairs promises to enhance opportunities for sustained changes. Chairs might also be joined by faculty from their departments or others responsible for faculty development or assessment when this would be particularly helpful on a campus.

### Questions to be addressed in the narrative portion of the application:

1. **Goals:** What high-priority tasks for strengthening and/or assessing student learning do you expect your team to work on during the Institute? These should be tasks that, if advanced substantially during the Institute, would lead your team and campus to judge your efforts a success.
2. **Need:** What educational changes do you envision within and among the participating departments on your campus and what motivated a desire for action? What work already has been accomplished and by whom? Have assessment results prompted the review or are you just beginning to create an assessment plan? What resource or political issues are at play in the process? Has a unified vision of a plan emerged?
3. **Team characteristics:** What was your rationale for choosing the particular members of your campus team? What roles do you envision each playing in your campus efforts? In what ways will your team structure affect on-campus efforts after the Institute?
4. **Contributions:** What do you believe your team can contribute to the Institute?

***The narrative should be clear and concise—no more than five pages in length.***

**Application Deadline: Applications should be received by March 19, 2010. Notification will be sent by April 5, 2010.**

## Fees

### Special Subsidies for Institute Participants

For the 2010 Institute, a grant to AAC&U from the Teagle Foundation will underwrite each accepted team's Institute expenses. One-hundred fifty dollars [\$150.00] per team member will be remitted to the campus upon payment of the registration fee. The intent of the grant is to support expenses related to preparing for and traveling to the Institute.

The registration fee for the Institute covers room, most meals, tuition, materials, and access to the faculty consultants. Meals begin with breakfast on Thursday, July 8 and continue through breakfast on Sunday, July 11. On Thursday and Friday, July 8 and 9, no dinner is served so participants can sample the excellent restaurants in the Philadelphia area.

- \$6,500 per five-member team from AAC&U member institutions
- \$7,200 per five-member team from AAC&U nonmember institutions

Each additional team member is charged one-fifth of the five-member team fee.

### Selection Criteria

Applications will be judged on the extent to which the Institute can assist the applying institution in its department initiative. Reviewers will also balance a number of other considerations to assure a representative group of participants—for example, institutional type and project focus.

### Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania Campus

The Institute will be held on the historic campus of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Located just five minutes from Center City, Philadelphia, the campus is home to landmarks such as Houston Hall, the nation's first student union, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology. Participants will be housed in the university's residence halls and sessions will be held in some of the historic campus buildings.

For additional information contact Kathryn Angeles, 202.884.7413 or [angeles@aacu.org](mailto:angeles@aacu.org).



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*Photos courtesy of University of Pennsylvania; Skidmore College, photographer Mark McCarty; Southern Oregon University*

# AAC&U Summer Institutes

AAC&U summer institutes offer campus teams a time and place for sustained collaborative work on a project of importance—away from the daily pressures of campus life. Participants learn from new research, national trends, other campus' efforts, and consultations with distinguished Institute faculty to develop campus action plans that are thoughtful, research-based, and feasible.

## Institute on General Education and Assessment

June 4 – 7, 2010 | University of Vermont

—for campuses working on redesign and assessment of general education programs

## Greater Expectations Institute

June 16 – 20, 2010 | Vanderbilt University

—for campuses seeking to increase student engagement and achievement—and make excellence inclusive

## Engaging Departments Institute

July 7 – 11, 2010 | University of Pennsylvania

—for deans, department chairs, and faculty working to advance integrative and engaged learning in and across disciplines, and to assess student learning outcomes



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