



AAC&U 2009 Engaging Departments Institute

Session Descriptions

Opening Plenary

Remapping Liberal Education: The Integrative Work of the College Major

Wednesday, 6:30pm (Houston Hall - Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: *Carol Geary Schneider*

The importance of departments as supportive and intentional communities for liberal learning and how to create an environment in which students are helped to integrate their learning within departments and across multiple fields of study.

Daily Synthesis Sessions

Thursday-Saturday, 3:00pm (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: Susan Albertine, Nancy O'Neill, Alma Clayton-Pedersen

The three synthesis sessions are opportunities for Institute participants to come together to discuss the integration of ideas from all of that day's sessions, through the questions and experiences of the campus participants.

Closing Plenary

Sunday, 9:00am (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: Terry Rhodes, Susan Albertine, Ashley Finley

This session will provide a summary synthesis of key ideas drawn from participating campus action plans and Institute sessions.

Track 1: Educational Leadership (see pages 2-3)

Track 2: Faculty Work (see pages 4-5)

Track 3: The Learning, Assessment, and Improvement Cycle (see pages 6-7)

Concurrent Sessions (see pages 8-9)

Track Sessions

(Arranged first by track, then in chronological order)

Track 1: Educational Leadership

This track focuses 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.

The Curriculum Reform Process and Leading for Success

Thursday, 9:00am (Ben Franklin Room)

Faculty: *Joseph Wood*

I start with the verity that the Faculty owns the curriculum, indeed, as Lee Knefelkamp has put it, the curriculum is “our collective autobiography.” As owners of the curriculum, the Faculty has responsibility for ensuring that it exhibits intellectual honesty, that it coheres philosophically, that it scaffolds learning, and that students actually achieve learning objectives we set for them. And just as our disciplines evolve, adopt new epistemologies and ideas, and construct and express new knowledge, so we must adapt or reform curriculum. Reforming curriculum requires bold academic leadership, but also leadership that understands institutional mission, goals, and practices, and how institutional processes and governance work. Because the work is political, leadership must build consensus and energize colleagues. Such leadership, I will argue, is all about community organizing.

Suggested Resources

Rosemary J. Cleary and Eve Allegra Raimon, 2009. Whose "Greater Expectations" Are They, Anyway? Exposing the Tensions within the Rhetoric of Educational Reform. *Liberal Education*, Vol. 95, No. 1. http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-wi09/le-wi09_GEx.cfm

Intentionality and Liberal Learning: Communicating common purposes to faculty and students

Thursday, 1:15pm (Ben Franklin Room)

Faculty: *Katherine Bergeron*

What are the goals of a liberal education? How do we ensure that these goals are broadly understood on our campuses? This session considers the problems of defining and refining a curriculum and how to engage campus constituents in a more fruitful dialogue about their common mission. Curricular reviews are always fraught, and the results are often less than impressive, considering the amount of time required to come to agreement over small structural changes. By shifting the conversation from structure toward meaning, away from requirements and toward articulating common learning goals, it becomes possible to engage departmental faculty in a conversation about shared purposes, and to encourage students to make more intentional choices about their education both within and beyond the academic major.

Suggested Resources

Laura Donnelly-Smith, “Enhancing Intentionality in the Requirement-Free Curriculum.” *Peer Review* 10:4 (Fall 2008). http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-fa08/pr-fa08_Laura.cfm

Administrative Support for Making “Curricular” Things Work

Friday, 9:00am (Ben Franklin Room)

Faculty: *David Brakke*

The goal of this session is to consider the range of possibilities for administrative support for priming pumps, encouraging, supporting and funding groups to accomplish objectives in curricular change. We will discuss aligning priorities and building teams that can effectively carry out the necessary tasks. Fundamental in our conversation will be addressing top-down vs. bottom-up approaches and how administrative support may vary as a result and the possible pitfalls from the different approaches.

Rewarding a Faculty Focused on Student Learning

Friday, 1:15pm (Ben Franklin Room)

Faculty: *Joseph Wood*

Reappointment, promotion, and tenure, especially when tied to compensation, are the primary means of acknowledging and rewarding faculty colleagues' individual accomplishments. Yet these actions, and tenure in particular, are effectively intended as means of mutual investment between individual and institution. That is why, from my administrator perspective, RPT is really a measure of a department's success, not just a faculty member's success (and why I argue the most important thing senior faculty members can do is ensure success of their junior departmental colleagues, something not always self-evident or well practiced). A great failure of our evaluation processes is to be explicit about what is entailed in teaching and learning, or, for that matter, in scholarship. For instance, more institutions invoke Boyer than employ Boyer. Institutions have quite varied practices for determining and employing criteria and establishing standards for evaluation, including through collective bargaining. How might you use your own institution's evaluative practices to reward individuals for departmental and institutional accomplishment?

Suggested Resources

Lee Knefelkamp, 1990. Seasons of Academic Life: Honoring or Collective Autobiography. *Liberal Education*, 76(1):4-11.

Integrating Departments: Putting the Concentration in Context

Saturday, 9:00am (Ben Franklin Room)

Faculty: *Katherine Bergeron*

This session explores how departmental reviews—and particularly how the review of an academic major—can serve not only to clarify but also to advance an institution's broader educational mission. Although the academic major defines a liminal space between professional and liberal education, departments are generally more focused on the professional, on defining the rigors of their discipline for undergraduates. By asking departmental faculty to reflect on how their curricula contribute to the university's liberal learning goals—not how they advance a particular area of knowledge but how they help students improve their communication skills, learn another language, develop quantitative reasoning, promote critical thinking, or enhance ethical or global awareness—an institution can advance its own mission while engaging faculty across the disciplines in a broader conversation about their shared responsibility to student learning.

Suggested Resources

Robert Connor, “What’s Happened to the Major in Liberal Education?” *Liberal Education* 95:2 (2009)
http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-sp09/le-sp09_GuestMessage.cfm

Session T.B.D.

Saturday, 1:15pm (Ben Franklin Room)

Note: The presenter and title for this session will be announced at the opening plenary session on Wednesday.

Track 2: 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 tackles issues that often are neglected when competing priorities dominate department life.

Interdepartmental Collaboration: Why and How

Thursday, 9:00am (Claudia Cohen Hall – Terrace Room)

Faculty: *Kenny Morrell*

This session will draw on the work of Sunoikisis, an inter-institutional collaborative initiative among departments of classics that began in 1995 as a vehicle for expanding curricular options for students and research opportunities for faculty members. We will look at several models of collaboration and discuss the benefits and challenges of each based on our experiences in the classroom. The session will also address barriers to collaboration and discuss some practical ideas that can help overcome them.

Inquiry in Support of Student Learning: Linking Assessment to Faculty Work and Identities

Thursday, 1:15pm (Claudia Cohen Hall – Terrace Room)

Faculty: *Jo Beld*

When departments are asked to gather systematic evidence of student learning, it is not unusual for faculty to feel, both individually and collectively, a bit at sea. Few of us received much guidance in effective teaching as we moved from graduate school to our first jobs as faculty members, and even fewer of us received any preparation at all for assessing the impact of our pedagogy and programs on student learning. Academic leaders can ease faculty fears, and even attract faculty to the intellectual and collaborative work of assessment, by linking the purposes and processes of assessment to the realities of faculty work and faculty identities. This session will offer suggestions for framing assessment that connect it to faculty roles and identities as classroom instructors, as disciplinary researchers, as department members, and as institutional citizens. Participants will be provided with useful language they can borrow or adapt at their own institutions; examples of realistic "assignments" for departments; and thoughts about the productive role a faculty governance system can play in fostering faculty ownership of the work they are being asked to do.

From Isolated Individuals to Engaged Community: Acculturation, Communities of Practice, and the Evolution of Department Culture

Friday, 9:00am (Golkin Room)

Faculty: *Liz Clark*

Etienne Wenger defines communities of practice as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis." How might we, as departments, take on the work of teaching and professional responsibilities as a collaborative community? In this session, we will consider how to strengthen and create community in your department, focusing on strategies for bringing part-time faculty into your overall department culture. We will also concentrate on creating an intellectual "community of practice" which guides the goals, structures, and vision for your department.

Goals for the Major

Friday, 1:15pm (Golkin Room)

Faculty: *Adele Wolfson*

The defining task for undergraduate departments is the design of a major. Department members must weigh the demands of the discipline against the other elements of an undergraduate's course of study. By emphasizing skills rather than content, and comparing the skills for a given major with those recommended by AAC&U's LEAP project, departments and institutions can find the commonalities of desired outcomes among all majors. We will use the report issued by the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology to the Teagle Foundation as a case study in mapping specific disciplinary goals onto the LEAP outcomes.

Suggested Resources

AAC&U LEAP and ASBMB learning outcomes [Page 8 in American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, "Evaluation of the Biochemistry / Molecular Biology major as defined by the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology" available at http://teaglefoundation.org/learning/pdf/2008_asbmb_whitepaper.pdf]

Helping Students Get More from their Major Programs of Study

Saturday, 9:00am (Golkin Room)

Faculty: *Kenny Morrell*

This session will look at the results of a study conducted by the Center for Hellenic Studies on major programs of study in classics at eighty-four institutions in the United States. With funding from the Teagle Foundation, the study sought to gain a better sense of how the major fit within the broader agenda of liberal education. Classics majors themselves collected most of the data, which offer some insights into how and why students choose their majors and how departments can create a more supportive and productive academic environment for them.

From Here to There: How General Education Learning Communities Can Serve as a Conduit to the Major

Saturday, 1:15pm (Golkin Room)

Faculty: *Liz Clark*

How do students really know, in the course of their initial studies, what they want to major in? How do major-areas of study build on earlier course work? How can we better coordinate general education studies and work in the major? In this session, we will examine how learning communities can serve as a locus for organizing student advisement, student development, and student immersion in the major. Based on LaGuardia Community College's work with First Year Academies and ePortfolio, this session will provide a case study for how to interface between General Education and the major.

Track 3: 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 focuses 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.

Our Students' Best Work: Frameworks for Assessment That Are Worthy of Our Mission

Thursday, 9:00am (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: *Carol Schneider*

Our Students Best Work focuses on students' and faculty's identity with their discipline, department, or program and how students can engage in their most complex and sophisticated academic learning in both their majors and the essential liberal learning outcomes through integrated milestone and capstone work.

Suggested Resources

Association of American Colleges and Universities Board of Directors. 2008. *Our students' best work: A framework for accountability worthy of our mission*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Part I: A Framework for Anchoring A Commitment to Assessment and Developing A Process of Inquiry into Student Learning

Thursday, 1:15pm (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: *Peggy Maki*

How chairs position assessment within their departments shapes how faculty accept and engage in this work. Part I of this two-part session focuses on faculty intellectual curiosity as the framework to engage collaborative inquiry into student learning—the same curiosity that characterizes faculty commitment to their discipline or fields of study. This framework, then, becomes the anchor for developing the tasks and sub-tasks that underlie an assessment process that leads to robust results. Using a case study, this first session will identify the initial tasks that underlie a successful assessment process: (1) articulating agreed upon department-level learning outcome statements; (2) companioning these outcome statements with research or study questions that department members are interested in answering; (3) verifying the intentionality of these statements in curricular-co-curricular maps to assure curricular coherence.

Suggested Resources

Maki, P. (May 2002). Moving From Paperwork to Pedagogy: Channeling Intellectual Curiosity into a Commitment to Assessment. *AHE Bulletin*. Available at http://www.aacsb.edu/resource_centers/assessment/Maki-Reprint.asp

Post Institute: When Inspiration Meets Paralysis—Moving Forward

Friday, 9:00am (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: *Susie Leslie*

It is common to return from a conference or workshop deeply inspired to do good work only to face the current realities of your unique campus environment. In this session we will break down the steps of establishing the culture, the practical aspects that are essential regardless of stage of development or type of assessment including cycles designed to build capacity for change and developing a shared context for this work.

Part II: A Framework for Anchoring A Commitment to Assessment and Developing A Process of Inquiry into Student Learning

Friday, 1:15pm (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: *Peggy Maki*

Part II continues to identify the remaining tasks that underlie a successful assessment process using the case study introduced in Part I: (4) designing or identifying direct and indirect methods of assessment; (5) developing criteria and standards of judgment to apply to student work; scoring, (6) analyzing and interpreting patterns of strength and weakness in student work in departmental “neutral zones”; (7) collaborative discussing innovations or changes in educational practice to improve student learning; (8) implementing proposed agreed upon changes; and (9) re-assessing student work after implementing changes to ascertain the efficacy of those changes.

Practical Strategies for Gathering “Actionable” Evidence of Student Learning at the Department Level

Saturday, 9:00am (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: *Jo Beld*

In the early years of assessment, the mandate from accrediting institutions seemed to be: “Do assessment!” In more recent years, the mandate has become “Use assessment!” For assessment to be worth faculty time, energy, and imagination, it must be “actionable.” Department-level assessment can speak to the content of individual courses, connections across courses, pedagogical practices, and requirements for completion of a major. At its best, authentic assessment evidence can help departments sustain what is working, and remedy what is not. This session introduces a wide array of specific instruments or approaches that departments can use to gather evidence of student learning they can act on. Specific examples of both “direct” and “indirect” approaches, including rubrics, written questionnaires, learning outcome inventories, interview protocols, and subgroup analysis of institutional-level assessment findings, will be shared. Many of these instruments can be used as they are; others can be readily adapted to specific disciplinary or departmental needs.

Suggested Resources

Beld, J., M. Walczak, and D. Gross. (2009). *Engaging Faculty in Department-Level Assessment*.

Banta, T. W., and Lefebvre, L. A. (April 2006). Leading change through assessment. In *Effective practices for academic leaders*. 1(4). Stylus Publishing: Sterling, VA.

Using Results—Closing the Loop

Saturday, 1:15pm (Class of 1949 Auditorium)

Faculty: *Susie Leslie*

You’ve got the data, now what? Building in time for reflection is critical and often the one aspect hardest to accomplish. In this session we will explore various forms of reporting and how to use that reporting to the greatest effect. We will consider the pros and cons of transparency—who sees what, the subtleties of assessment and accountability, and sharing results up, down, and across.

Concurrent Sessions

(In chronological order)

Making Excellence Inclusive through High Impact Educational Practices

Thursday, 9:00am (Platt Rehearsal Room)

Faculty: *Alma Clayton-Pedersen*

AAC&U's Give Students a Compass project is a collaborative that intends to redesign general education in three state higher-education systems. A strand of the Compass project—Making Excellence Inclusive—examines existing effective educational practices, documents underserved students' participation in them, and probes the implications of the findings in light of the priorities for educationally productive change in general education. This inquiry illuminates action options for campuses when they uncover inequities in underserved student persistence, completion, and other traditional measures of "success." This session will explore how to spur innovation and place underserved students' success at the center of campus-level redesign work by focusing on these students' access to and participation in a set of high impact practices (or HIPs).

Education for Personal and Social Responsibility: A Major Focus?

Thursday, 1:15pm (Platt Rehearsal Room)

Faculty: *Nancy O'Neill*

What is the role of the major in educating students for personal and social responsibility? Should this be assigned to general education or to student affairs? Or should students grapple with their ethical responsibilities to self and others in the context of the knowledge, methods, and habits of mind of the disciplines? In this interactive session, the facilitator will highlight new campus climate data on education for personal and social responsibility. The data point to strong interest in this type of education, yet also reveal common curricular pitfalls that exist at many institutions. The facilitator will engage participants in brainstorming ways to strengthen education for personal and social responsibility in the majors, and along the way, they will learn about promising work being done by a leadership consortium of institutions involved in AAC&U's signature initiative, Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility.

Suggested Resources

- Hersch, R. H., and C. G. Schneider. (2005) Fostering Personal & Social Responsibility on College & University Campuses. In *Liberal Education* 91(3). Association of American Colleges and Universities: Washington, DC.
- Colby, A. and W. M. Sullivan. (2009) Strengthening the Foundations of Students' Excellence, Integrity, and Social Contribution. In *Liberal Education* 95(1). Association of American Colleges and Universities: Washington, DC.
- Morrison, T. (2002) How Can Values Be Taught in the University? In *Peer Review* 4(4). Association of American Colleges and Universities: Washington, DC.

Communicating Results of Assessment and Other Public Sharing

Friday, 1:15pm (Platt Rehearsal Room)

Faculty: *David Brakke*

In launching a new program or managing curricular change, how often is assessment planned from the start? If there are clear plans for assessment, are they tied to an effective communication plan? This session will discuss planning for assessment and give examples of how communication of results is fundamental to completing a cycle of curricular change, much as in the case of the process of scientific study leading to dissemination of results. The session will attempt to define the basic elements leading to a sound underpinning of assessment and then a clear program of communication of results.

VALUE and E-portfolios

Saturday, 9:00am (Platt Rehearsal Room)

Faculty: *Terry Rhodes*

An examination of fifteen essential learning outcomes rubrics developed through the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education project and their use as an alternative to standardized testing. E-portfolios will be examined as a medium for students to demonstrate the broad range of their learning and how it can be used for accreditation and other purposes.

The Role of Undergraduate Research in a Liberal Education

Saturday, 1:15pm (Platt Rehearsal Room)

Faculty: *Adele Wolfson*

Undergraduate research - an investigation using methods that are accepted in the discipline, produces new knowledge, and is done in collaboration with a faculty mentor - is an important experience in the sciences and increasingly in the social sciences. In this session we will explore the benefits for students of undergraduate research. We will also discuss the trade-offs for faculty, how research is supported by institutions, and whether there are alternative ways to accomplish some of the same goals. We will consider whether the model of collaborative research in the sciences is adaptable to other fields.

Suggested Resources

Hunter, A-B., Laursen, S, & Seymour, E. (2007) *Becoming a scientist: The role of undergraduate research in students' cognitive, personal and professional development*, Sci. Ed., 91 (1), 36 – 74.

(http://amath.colorado.edu/uploads/event_docs/BECOMING%20A%20SCIENTIST%20Hunter%20Laursen%20and%20Seymour.pdf)

David Lopatto, "Undergraduate Research Experiences Support Science Career Decisions and Active Learning" *Cell Biology Education*, 2007, 6, 297-306. (Available at

<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=2104507>)

Published or Accessible Papers Related to Efficacy, Assessment, and/or Innovation in Undergraduate Research. <http://cwt4.chem.pitt.edu/ugrad/reu/efficacy.htm>