

The Greater Expectations Gazette

Founded 2006

Today is Thursday, June 22, 2006. Today's temperature: Hi: 70 Lo: 41°



Preparing Students for an Era of Greater Expectations

Snowbird, UT – The 6th annual Greater Expectations Institute kicked off Wednesday afternoon with an opening address outlining the kinds of educational outcomes needed for the 21st century. AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider began by highlighting a number of forces compelling higher education to rework its vision, values, and goals, including unprecedented numbers of students aspiring to go to college, student attendance at multiple institutions, either simultaneously or sequentially, and continuing inequality and injustice. Schneider offered a framework for a practical, liberal education that grew out of a major AAC&U initiative, Greater Expectations: A Commitment to Quality as a Nation Goes to College. The framework provides a shared understanding about what matters for all students' educational experiences.

"The aims and outcomes of a 21st century liberal education are not an elective for some," Schneider said. She noted that preparing students today's world requires collaborative leadership and educational programs that foster knowledge of human cultures and the natural world; intellectual and practical skills; individual and social responsibilities; and integrative learning in the "inextricable context of diversity and inclusion."

Moving from framework to action, Judith Ramaley, President of Winona State University (WSU) asked "What kind of educational environment must we provide to foster learning, creativity, and good citizenship?" Using WSU as a model, Dr. Ramaley offered four concepts to help campuses link learning to life and provide students a sense of "place and purpose." Contemporary education, she said, should provide:

- formal study and deep reflection, with life, work, and study connected;
- conditions for fostering creativity including abundant cross-cultural exchange and risk-taking;
- educational experiences that build in complexity over time; and
- a curriculum built on an integrated model of scholarship, discovery, interpretation, and application.

See Greater Expectations, over



From the Director...

Welcome to issue 2! In it you'll find our newest feature, the question of the day, where we find out what's on your mind.

I am so impressed by the encounters I have had with teams so far. People are grappling with important questions about diversity, inclusion, and excellence. As we heard in the opening address, none of these terms are self-evident, and we hope to give you a sense of how some scholars have defined them in today's plenary.

Today also marks our first round of interest sessions. Don't forget the tip from issue #1—split your team up to attend these sessions, and then share the learning as a group. You'll also be spending time today in seminar session #2, processing what we have heard so far. I hope you have productive and meaningful conversations.

A few items of business—Saturday evening, don't miss our dessert mixer, starting at 7:30 pm at the Atrium Restaurant in Cliff Lodge. Also, Lee Knepfkamp reminds us that AAC&U will be selecting leadership schools for its new Core Commitments project this fall. Stop by Lee's interest group session for more information, or seek her out during the rest of the Institute.

Alma Clayton-Pedersen
Director, Greater Expectations Institute

The Student View

We caught up with Amanda Brownlee, Ashley Dieterich, and Robin Harris from Georgia College & State University to get their perspectives on engaging students in campus change initiatives. Their participation in the Institute is the latest development in a 10-year, student-driven HIV/AIDS educational initiative, which has become increasingly holistic over the years. Harris, an associate professor of historical sociology and the group's faculty advisor, summarized the importance of student involvement. "Students have to be the beginning catalyst for what we are doing," she said. Harris believes that it is essential to instill ownership and accountability in working with students, stating, "it has to be theirs for it to work."

Ashley Dieterich and Amanda Brownlee, students who work with Dr. Harris, noted how important it was to build a strong core of dedicated student leaders in order to sustain the work of student organizations. Brownlee also stressed the importance of building a collaborative and diverse group, describing A.N.G.E.L.S. (AIDS Now Grasps Every Living Soul) as "such a dynamic group because we all bring different stuff to it." Dieterich recommended demystifying leadership as a way of attracting more student participants. "Leadership," she said, "is nothing more than being dedicated enough and organized enough to help other students recognize their potential."

— Amy Addams and Patty Alvarez

Question of the Day

“What Are You Most Looking Forward to at the Institute?”

“Strengthening team bonds (trust, respect, vision, adaptability) so we can catalyze change at New College.” – Julie Morris, New College of Florida

“I am most looking forward to big picture thinking with very practical applications in terms of inclusive education and excellence.” – Ellen Hall, Wells College

“I am looking forward to intensive conversations about educational issues that matter.” – Bruce Pitman, University of Idaho

“As a student representative from Vassar College, I hope to help the team focus on student-centered efforts to alleviate persistent inequalities on campus.” – Victor Ray, Vassar College

Navigating the Institute: Interest Sessions

Today marks the first day of interest sessions, which address specific topics related to the goals of the Institute and to campus projects. In these sessions, faculty members will facilitate discussions with participants in order to “tap the expertise that is in the room,” said Alma Clayton-Pedersen, director of the Institute.

Today’s offerings begin on page 6 of the program, and suggested readings for each session are listed alongside the topic descriptions. Topics for today include civic engagement, curricular coherence, the educational benefits of diversity, using data to mobilize a campus toward underserved student success, information literacy, the nature of change, and personal and social responsibility.

Greater Expectations, con’t.

Ramaley urged participants to chart a path to an integrated curriculum that is about *all* learning—not just general education; that applies to graduate and professional programs as well as undergraduate programs; that requires diversity as a necessary path to educational excellence; and that reflects the successful assimilation of individual innovations into the campus culture. To succeed with change, she noted, educators must practice what they teach and align resources to support the campus mission.

Tori Haring-Smith, President of Washington and Jefferson College (W&J), talked about the connections between liberal learning, making excellence inclusive, and education for the 21st century.

“The state of our American democracy depends on the ability to talk across lines of difference with respect” she said. Yet she noted that in a context where television shows such as *Crossfire* serve as our most visible example of “dialogue” and dogmatic opinions serve as truth, the skills of civil debate and critical analysis are losing ground.

To prepare students for success in a diverse workplace and for active participation in civic life, Haring-Smith said, institutions must make diversity visible, bring students out of their comfort zones, and support their learning together “across lines of difference.” She advised campus leaders to

- look for the symbols and hidden values that shape the structures of the institution;
- identify the values by which the community wants to define itself; and
- acknowledge and then surpass the values that do not advance inclusive educational excellence.

The panel noted that integrating students’ curricular and co-curricular experiences to place learning at the core of campus work and institutional structures is central to the ultimate success of any change plan.

Photo of the Day

Opening Night Dinner on the Terrace



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Ground Squirrels: Friend or Foe?

Institute participants venturing outside may encounter more than just beautiful views. We are sharing close quarters with members of the genus *Citellus*, commonly known as the ground squirrel. According to the Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia (2003) the ground squirrel is the name applied to certain terrestrial rodents, of which there are approximately 30 North American species. They have rounded heads, short ears and legs, and shorter, less bushy tails than tree squirrels. Their length is 4¹/₂ to 13¹/₂ inches depending on the species, with a tail that is typically 1/3 to 2/3 as long. The encyclopedia notes that most ground squirrels are “gregarious,” live in extensive underground burrows, and are primarily vegetarian. This news comforted AAC&U staff member Amy Addams, who recently encountered one of these fine furry friends. It seems the squirrel, busy climbing on to her foot, was simply trying to get a better view of what she was having for lunch.

