



2009 AAC&U Institute on General Education

Session Descriptions

Opening Plenary

Helping Students Connect: General Education, Liberal Education, and Intentional Practice Across the Curriculum

(Saturday, 8:45 – 9:30 am, Cowles Auditorium – Hubert H. Humphrey Center)

Faculty: Carol Geary Schneider

Achieving the sophisticated goals of a general education program requires an intentional approach to all aspects of the program, from planning, to connections with departmental goals, to assessment. Good designs for general education can challenge the widespread view of general education as a set of courses to “get out of the way.” Drawing upon visits to scores of campuses and relevant findings of leading researchers, Dr. Schneider will outline the challenges and hopes for general education as we strive toward achieving greater expectations for all students.

Recommended Resources

Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2007. *College Learning for the New Global Century. (A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise)*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Greater Expectations: A new vision for learning as a nation goes to college. 2002. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. Especially pages vii-xiv, 21-42, 44-51.

Ratcliff, James L. Quality and coherence in general education. Gaff, Jerry G., James L. Ratcliff, et al, ed. 1991. *Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Comprehensive Guide to Purposes, Structures, Practices, and Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 141-169.

Schneider, Carol G. and Robert Shoenberg. 1998. *Contemporary understandings of liberal education*. Washington: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Orientation and Introductions

(Saturday, 9:30 – 10:00 am, Cowles Auditorium)

This short session provides a quick overview of institute processes and the schedule. You will meet the faculty very briefly. The moderator will also talk about the elements of “intentionality,” a frequent AAC&U theme.

Closing Plenary

The Wabash Center Study Findings for Deepening Learning

Tuesday, 3:00-4:15pm

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: Charles Blaich

The results of a multi-year, multi-campus project to explore the relationship between what we do through our curriculum and co-curriculum and the impact on student learning will be the focus of this session. The findings point to important actions we can take that affect enhanced student learning.

The “Tracks”

Grouped by track to help teams and individuals choose a track to attend across three days

Tracks are comprised of three presentations over three days. Teams may stay together or choose to attend multiple tracks. However, we recommend that *individuals* remain in a single track throughout the Institute.

Track 1. The process of general education change

Intentional change is a political act (and curricular change is no exception). “All politics is local” (and campuses are no exception). Process is as important as product. The relevance of these pithy maxims to general education reform becomes evident as we recognize that a successful result involves more than designing an exciting curriculum. An understanding of both the change process and how to manage it, supplemented by close and constant attention to process issues throughout the gen-ed review/reform project, are as crucial as creative educational ideas. The most innovative and educationally sound model of general education can be relegated to the shelf—or to the dumpster—by a careless or institutionally inappropriate process. What can successful and unsuccessful gen-ed reform projects teach us about process? How can we maximize chances for a widely supported implementation?

This track, with its series of three sessions, is designed to help campuses succeed in general education reform by alerting them to a variety of process issues that require constant attention: issues of campus politics, institutional culture, and consultation/communication.

Building on research, examples, and the personal experience of Institute faculty, the track aims to a) raise consciousness about process, and b) provide tools for planning and guiding a successful process.

Track 1A: Politics and Process of Curricular Change

Saturday, 2:00-3:15pm

Blegen 150

Faculty: Ann Ferren

To manage the politics and process of curricular change calls for a good understanding of campus culture, stake holder interests, stages in engaging faculty and developing consensus, and the role of the task force in guiding the process. This first session in the track emphasizes the value of learning from the experience of others but also the importance of designing the change process and the curriculum to fit the needs of one’s own campus. Through dialogue and examples, participants will identify strategies for reading the political landscape of their campus, creating readiness for change, organizing the process, negotiating differences, finding common ground, and encouraging commitment and support.

Recommended Resources

Association of American Colleges and Universities. 1994. *Strong Foundations: Twelve Principles for Effective General Education Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Association of American Colleges and Universities. *Communicating Commitment to Liberal Education*. https://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/LEAPCommComm_Final.pdf

Gaston, Paul and Jerry Gaff. 2009. *Revising General Education—And Avoiding the Potholes*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Track 1B: Engaging and Advancing an Institutional Initiative: Constituent Commitment

Sunday, 8:45-10:00am

Blegen 150

Faculty: Devorah Lieberman

The “Tracks”

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This session focuses on various successful strategies available to assist institutional initiatives in gaining acceptability and momentum across the various (and at times competing) campus constituents (i.e., faculty, staff, students, administration, community). This session focuses on four questions: (1) What makes an “initiative” an “initiative”? (2) How does an initiative gain momentum and constituent support? (3) How does an initiative become sustainable? (4) When does an initiative become a sustainable part of the campus culture? Attendants in this session will address these four questions in relation to their own campuses, their initiatives, their constituent commitment to these initiatives as well as challenges they are facing along the way.

Track 1C: Seeking Effective Implementation of a Curricular Proposal (“Moving Downriver”)

Monday, 8:45-10:00am

Blegen 150

Faculty: Paul Gaston

In addition to awareness of curricular principles and of the conditions required for a strong curriculum to thrive, the effective implementation of any general education reform requires a well-informed understanding of institutional structures and cultures. This interactive, game-based session will build on AAC&U’s new publication, *Revising General Education—And Avoiding the Potholes*, but will consider also political and symbolic forces within institutions as factors in positive change. Participants will take an active role in creating a positive dynamic for reform.

Recommended Resources

Bolman, Lee G. and Terrence E. Deal. 1991. *Reframing Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Gaston, Paul and Jerry Gaff. 2009. *Revising General Education—And Avoiding the Potholes*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Track 2. An Approach to Learning Improvement: the learning improvement cycle linking goals, curricular design, pedagogy, and faculty development

General education is more than a curriculum. It is a manifestation—possibly the most important one—of an institution’s educational mission. Track 2, a series of three sessions, will examine general education in an integrated manner. Institute participants will engage in extensive conversations about the important inter-relationships among goals, curriculum, and pedagogical practices. The overall aims of the track are 1) to develop an understanding of general education’s powerful potential to shape and improve student learning, and 2) to help ensure that the programs developed by the participant campuses reach this potential.

Track 2A: Goals for General Education

Saturday, 2:00-3:15pm

Blegen 250

Faculty: Scott Evenbeck

This session will build on the concept of intentional practice introduced in the opening plenary. Recent national work has revealed a growing consensus on the important aims of college study, many of which characterize general education. A campus needs to start with a clear articulation of both student learning and programmatic goals of general education to design a curriculum, select teaching methods, and assess in ways appropriate to the desired outcomes.

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Track 2B: Curriculum—and Beyond Curriculum (“At the Source”)

Sunday, 8:45-10:00am

Blegen 250

Faculty: Paul Gaston

This interactive session offers a brief overview of the emerging consensus on essential curricular values but moves quickly to a consideration of conditions required if a renewed curriculum is to thrive on campus. Participants will frame strategies to ensure (a) broad support from and the engagement of all faculty, (b) a widely embraced commitment to faculty development emphasizing accomplishment of clear learning outcomes, and (c) institutional structures and protocols that invite rather than inhibit innovative and interdisciplinary teaching.

Recommended Resources

Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2007. *College Learning for the New Global Century*. (A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise). Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. Available at http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap/documents/GlobalCentury_final.pdf

Track 2C: Learning Matters: Different Strokes for Different Folks

Monday, 8:45-10:00am

Blegen 250

Faculty: Lee Knefelkamp

This session focuses on how students differ in terms of their learning styles and how courses can be responsive to helping students expand their capacities to learn. Participants will complete several exercises related to their own campus issues in the context of the theories of David Kolb and William Perry.

Recommended Resources

Knefelkamp, L., and T. David-Lang. 2000. Encountering Diversity on Campus and in the Classroom: Advancing Intellectual and Ethical Development. *Diversity Digest*.

<http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/Sp.Sm00/development.html>

Knefelkamp, L. 1997. Effective Teaching for the Multicultural Classroom. *Diversity Digest*.

<http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/F97/curriculum.html>

Track 3. Assessment and Communication: Strategies and Processes for General Education

Assessment can serve many purposes on campuses but first and foremost, it should serve to improve learning. Far too often, assessment is an afterthought of curricular planning, a resented intrusion into an individual professor’s turf, or an imposed exercise to endure during an accreditation visit. Track 3 will emphasize the development of powerful, intentional processes and tools for assessment-as-learning.

Strongly related to the sessions in Track 2, Track 3 will also place assessment within the Goals-Teaching-Assessment-Improvement cycle, a cycle too often left uncompleted. Broader issues such as accreditation and campus culture will also be addressed.

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Track 3A: The Interrelationship among Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Saturday, 2:00-3:15pm

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: Peggy Maki

A robust commitment to assessing student learning is grounded in identifying how pedagogy, the curriculum, educational experiences inside and outside of the classroom, tools of instruction, such as the web; students’ ways of knowing; and assessment interrelate. This interrelationship forms the backbone of inquiry into the efficacy of the educational practices that you believe foster GE learning outcomes. Participants will go through the initial assessment tasks of identifying and then verifying several GE outcomes (mapping) to assure that students have multiple and diverse opportunities to develop these outcomes.

Recommended Resources

Leskes, A., and Barbara D. Wright. 2005. *The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes*. “Assessment Methods Close Up.” Chapter 6.

Track 3B: Approaches, Reproaches: The Joy of Methods

Sunday, 8:45-10:00am

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: Barbara Wright

Assessment “methods” are the multiple ways in which we can collect evidence of student learning. The decision about what method(s) to use is critical: the evidence produced needs to align with our questions about learning and generate actionable findings that can be used for improvement. Otherwise, “assessment” is just an empty exercise. Fortunately, the list of available methods is longer than you may think, most alternatives are compatible with the more elusive goals of GE, and there’s plenty of room for creativity and customizing. Take a tour through the methods landscape as we weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches. The session will include discussion of a case study.

Recommended Resources

See WASC rubrics at www.wascsenior.org: 1. Student Learning Outcomes 2. Portfolios 3. Capstones 4. General Education 5. Program review

Track 3C: Planning Assessment Backwards

Monday, 8:45-10:00am

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: Peggy Maki

More than an act of finding out who does or does not achieve your expectations for GE learning, assessment begins with collaborative agreement on the study question or research question you want to answer. This session will take you through the tasks of identifying your methods of assessment and the criteria and standards of judgment you will use to score student work. Several brief case studies will illustrate the importance of selecting direct and indirect assessment methods to derive patterns of strength and weaknesses in students’ work—useful results that answer your study or research question and, thus, lead to change in educational practices.

Recommended Resources

Leskes, A., and Barbara D. Wright. 2005. *The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes*. “The Contemporary Context.” Chapter 1 and “An Introduction to the Assessment Process.” Chapter 2.

The “Tracks”

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Track 4. Building Institutional Capacity: Making Excellence Inclusive

This new track will focus on ways in which all parts of a campus can be engaged in student success. If general education is an integral part of an institution’s mission and is essential for preparing all students for successful lives, then the entire campus has a role in contributing to every student’s education. Track 4 will invite campuses to examine information the institution already has, infuse active pedagogies into the curriculum, and to communicate the goals of general education to students in clear and meaningful ways so that all students have an improved opportunity to succeed on our campuses.

Track 4A: Making Excellence Inclusive as Part of the Institutional Fabric

Saturday, 2:00-3:15pm

Blegen 155

Faculty: Lee Knepfelkamp

Given the diversity of students entering higher education and the national goals for providing a college education for all citizens, how can campuses respond when resources are limited, quality is essential, and demands on time and energy are tremendous? Democratic principles, economic prosperity and a life fulfilled depend on developing and enhancing the strategies and creativity we can bring to rethinking how, where and why we engage in teaching and learning. We will explore ways in which we can address these challenges in rewarding and powerful ways for all students.

Track 4B: Retention and Graduation of Undergraduate Students: A Comprehensive Approach

Sunday, 8:45-10:00am

Blegen 155

Faculty: Herman Blake

In recent years discussions of student success have intensified as we seek to increase institutional effectiveness as well as accountability. As an active participant in many of the most critical considerations we have developed comprehensive strategies/principles that may be applied to very different academic settings. This session will build on ideas presented in the distributed paper. The emphasis will be on discussion and sharing experiences that work.

Track 4C: Building Institutional Capacity for Making Excellence Inclusive

Monday, 8:45-10:00am

Blegen 155

Faculty: Alma Clayton-Pedersen

This session will explore AAC&U’s Making Excellence Inclusive (MEI) initiative. MEI is designed to help colleges and universities fully integrate their diversity and educational quality efforts and embed them into the core of academic mission and institutional functioning. Through this initiative, AAC&U—and campuses that have adopted the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) and the MEI framework—re-envision diversity and inclusion as a multi-layered process through which we achieve excellence in learning; research and teaching; student development; institutional functioning; local and global community engagement; workforce development; and more.

Concurrent Sessions and Workshops

Grouped by scheduled time to help in choosing which of several concurrent events to attend

Sunday Concurrent Sessions, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.

Yes, It Does Take a Campus

Blegen 155

Faculty: Susan Albertine

This session will facilitate an active discussion of general education—renewal, redesign, reform—in campus context, specifically attending to relations between student affairs and academic affairs and involving students most actively themselves.

Opportunities for Reflection and Community-Building Using Emerging Technologies

Blegen 250

Faculty: Helen Chen

How can we identify and design opportunities in general education programs for today's students to effectively integrate their in-class and out-of-class learning experiences? In this session, participants will explore the potential contributions of Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, blogs, ePortfolios and other social software tools to support teaching, learning, and assessment goals. Together, we will view models to scaffold student reflection and brainstorm strategies to foster communities of practice that can facilitate the dissemination and sustainability of innovative practices.

Recommended Resources

ePortfolios Meet Social Software, By John K. Waters, Campus Technology (10/01/07) ;
<http://campustechnology.com/Articles/2007/10/ePortfolios-Meet-Social-Software.aspx?Page=1>

Faculty Development: From Classroom Change to Institutional Transformation

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: Bret Eynon

Most efforts at educational improvement—including most General Education reform initiatives—depend to some degree on faculty development. Centers for Teaching and Learning and targeted professional development programs can not only encourage change in classroom practice and the development of reflective practitioners, but can also support (or even precipitate) institutional transformation. This session will identify ask participants to identify best practices in faculty development, review examples of robust teaching centers, and consider ways to strengthen the linkage of faculty development to general education reform on their own campuses.

Connecting General Education and the Major

Blegen 150

Faculty: Carol Geary Schneider

One of the important trends in general education is a focus on "goals-across-the curriculum." This trend implies the development of clear connections between goals for general education (e.g., writing competence) and expectations within the major, as well as between liberal

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education and pre-professional fields. This session will review organizing principles for connecting general education goals with both liberal arts and pre-professional majors. It also will explore case examples from institutions already making these connections, both in curriculum design and in assessment.

Monday Concurrent Sessions, 1:15 – 2:30 pm

ePortfolios for General Education: Enriching & Assessing Student Learning

Blegen 250

Faculty: Bret Eynon

ePortfolios create opportunities for students and faculty to examine and enrich the learning process. Digital collections of students' work and their reflections on learning, ePortfolios can build engagement, advance core competencies, and help students craft new identities as learners. At the same time, ePortfolios can support the authentic assessment processes that are often seen as crucial to meaningful general education reform. Reviewing examples of student ePortfolios, participants in this workshop will explore relationships among pedagogy, technology, and assessment, and consider the challenges and opportunities for ePortfolio work on their own campuses.

Models of General Education Programs

Blegen 150

Faculty: Ann Ferren

General Education programs have evolved into far more than just a collection of course requirements. Programs now are integrated with the major, co-curricular activities, and practical experiences in the community and the work place. They often include distinctive aspects to reflect the mission, character, and location of the institution. This session will describe a variety of effective models that align objectives, content, pedagogy, structure, and assessment with the goals of the overall undergraduate experience. Despite the high priority given to these programs, all campus face daunting financial realities, thus this session will also address the resource implications for the different models.

Recommended Resources

- Ferren, Ann and Richard Slavings. 2000. *Investing in Quality: Tools for Improving Curricular Efficiency*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Kuh, George D. 2008. *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Shoenberg, Robert. 2005. *Why Do I Have to Take This Course? A Student Guide to Making Smart Educational Choices*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Concurrent Sessions and Workshops

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How We Can Engage Students in General Education: Advising as a Liberal Learning Experience

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: Ned Laff

The presenter will argue that academic advising can be a learning opportunity and an effective means for helping students recognize the value of liberal learning; learn to integrate their liberal learning experiences regardless general education program designs; and recognize the value of liberal learning outcomes. Participants will be led to rethink advising as we normally think of it; explore a new approach, based in problem-based learning (PBL), that engages students in advising reconceived as a liberal learning process. Presenters will experience how this approach helps students understand the educational values in general education and engage their learning intentionally to integrate their general education experience with studies in their major field. Participants will see how this approach has worked in different campus settings – a research university, an urban campus, a liberal arts campus. Finally, participants will explore how advising as liberal learning can work on their campuses.

Rubrics for Learning

Blegen 155

Faculty: Terry Rhodes

Faculty and programs can avoid “reinventing the wheel” when it comes to assessment of general education outcomes. Many campuses have worked on general education assessment and developed interesting approaches that can inform others’ efforts. Participants will review and analyze a variety of rubrics and assessment approaches that they may adapt to local usage, including a national framework for engaging in campus work.

Tuesday Concurrent Sessions I, 8:45 – 10:00 am

Assessing Campus Readiness for ePortfolios

Blegen 155

Faculty: Helen Chen

ePortfolios are more than just a technology: they imply a process of planning, keeping track of, making sense of, and sharing evidence of learning and performance. Using ePortfolios well requires embracing a set of practices and an understanding of learning called Folio Thinking. This session will model a framework for exploring, designing, and implementing an ePortfolio approach to meet specific learning outcomes and objectives in general education and the disciplines. Participants will engage in discussions around a range of ePortfolio case studies from students, programs, and institutions drawing upon emerging research findings from the International Coalition on Electronic Portfolio Research. An overview of relevant resources will be shared in order to help move campuses towards developing a plan for putting ePortfolios into practice on their campuses.

Concurrent Sessions and Workshops

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Recommended Resources

Portfolios to Webfolios and Beyond: Levels of Maturation (2004), *Educause Quarterly* (27), 2 ; By Douglas Love, Gerry McKean, and Paul Gathercoal. [This article provides a framework for thinking about the added value of the electronic portfolio. Descriptions of developmental stages offer institutions guidance about their place in the process and how to move to the next level]
<http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/EDUCAUSEQuarterlyMagazineVolume/PortfoliostoWebfoliosandBeyond/157290>

Making Excellence Inclusive through High Impact Educational Practices

Blegen 250

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).

Program Assessment and Intentional Learning

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: Scott Evenbeck

How do we move from thinking about our many goals for our general education programs to thinking about program impact? What kinds of logic and frameworks can we use other than adding up all of the pieces? What makes a general education program more than a collection of courses and how do we know if we are being successful in realizing that more?

Personal and Social Responsibility Outcomes

Blegen 150

Faculty: Devorah Lieberman

"Personal and Social Responsibility" is a student learning outcome that Institutions nationally are seeking to define, to integrate into the curriculum, and to measure. This session focuses on each of those: defining, integrating, and measuring. Wagner College will be used as a case study to identify how each of these elements is being addressed. The successes and the challenges will be discussed. Session attendants will address how these outcomes are defined, integrated and assessed on their own campuses. As importantly, attendants will serve as consultants to one another with the goal of completing this workshop with tools and strategies to take to their own campuses.

Concurrent Sessions and Workshops

Grouped by scheduled time to help in choosing which of several concurrent events to attend

Tuesday Concurrent Sessions II, 1:15 – 2:30 pm

Creating and Sustaining Community in Academia.

Blegen 155

Faculty: Herman Blake

The session will discuss the town/gown community. My presentation will challenge people to face the challenges of deeper learning--values, beliefs and norms that go beyond the limits of "rhetoric and representation." I will draw upon participants' experiences and my own experiences over the past 45 years--from the Sea Islands of South Carolina (Gullah/Geechee People) to urban communities and organizations such as The Woodlawn Organization in Chicago. We will work from a paper that will seed our discussions.

Student Transfer

Blegen 250

Faculty: Terry Rhodes

Most students in higher education complete their education at more than one institution. This session will look at some of the obstacles for students and campuses that result from this student "swirl" and look at examples of efforts to improve student learning as part of the transfer process.

GE, Assessment, and Capacity: Look before you Leap/LEAP

Blegen 150

Faculty: Barbara Wright

The assessment loop is a useful point of departure for a discussion of what it takes, in terms of capacity, to implement a good, solid, sustainable assessment plan. In this session we examine each of the basic steps in the assessment cycle, from articulation of outcomes and gathering of evidence to the interpretation and use of findings. At each step, we ask what is required in terms of capacity, and how we would know that the process is effective. The session closes with an exercise to help you inventory your institution's existing resources and identify needs.

Recommended Resources

See WASC Educational Effectiveness Framework at www.wascsenior.org

Ad Hoc Session - for topics requested by Institute faculty and participants

HHH Auditorium

Faculty: TBD

Is there something you want to learn more about? Let us know and we'll include it in this session.