



2009 AAC&U Institute on General Education

Making the Most of the Institute on General Education: Resources for Your Team

There are several rich resources available at the Institute that your team should consider utilizing. All have proven valuable for teams attending the Institute in the past. Not all teams will use all resources but by knowing about them before you arrive, your team can strategize for getting the most out of what is available. Attendance is never “required” at formal sessions: if some other activity will better serve your team, that is what you should do.

Attend the Tracks:

Presentations in the three tracks cover issues that arise during nearly every campus’s efforts in general education reform: Track 1: The process of general education change, Track 2: An Approach to Learning Improvement: the learning improvement cycle linking goals, curricular design, pedagogy, and faculty development, Track 3: Assessment and Communication: Strategies and Processes for General Education, and new this year, Track 4: Building Institutional Capacity: Making Excellence Inclusive.

The presentations in a particular track are planned to be sequential and cumulative. For curricular coherence, it makes the most sense for individuals who begin in one track to continue to attend sessions in that same track. Teams can split up in order to have team members attending all tracks if they wish.

Attend the concurrent sessions

Concurrent sessions often cover elements of general education that are commonly used but are not present in every general education design or educational issues of general interest. Some sessions are designed to augment presentations from the morning “track” sessions. Again, teams may choose to split up to attend all of the concurrent sessions, attend selected sessions together, or pick from among the topics only those of interest to their reform efforts.

Make appointments with the consulting faculty

Read the consultants’ short biographies (available on the Institute website) to discover their areas of expertise. Make appointments with those who you believe can assist your efforts. Consultants will work with teams throughout the entire Institute; however, it may be advisable to schedule your appointments early since consultant time is limited. Teams generally find that the advice received directly from the consultants is of the highest value in advancing their general education reform efforts.

Meet with other teams

Meeting with other campus teams can also be a valuable experience. You received via e-mail profiles of each campus attending the Institute along with descriptions of their general education reform plans (a reference copy of these profiles will also be available at the Institute). Campus pairings of many different kinds may prove useful: by size, mission, type of general education reform, pressures from state regulations, stage of general education reform, etc. **Because campus needs are so different, we will ask your team leader to plan any between-team meetings directly with the team leader from the institution of interest.** The key to this resource is your own initiative in reading the campus descriptions, choosing the institutions with which to meet, and contacting the those teams either before or during the institute. Important collegial exchanges also take place informally during the Institute, particularly at meals, breaks, and in the evenings.