Liberal Education and Students’ Success

Council of Colleges of Arts & Science Annual Meeting

November 13, 2008

Carol Geary Schneider
Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
Overview

★ Liberal Education for the Twenty-First Century

★ Liberal Education and New Markers for Student Success

★ Engaging Departments and Faculty
How Do We Prepare Students for Twenty-First Century Realities?

2000-2005 – Greater Expectations –
A National Dialogue About Goals and Effective Practices in College Learning

2005-2015 – Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP)
A Ten-Year Effort to Make Excellence Inclusive
Liberal Education: The Essential Aims and Outcomes

- Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
- Intellectual and Practical Skills
- Personal and Social Responsibility
- Integrative Learning

Narrow Learning Is Not Enough!
The World is Demanding More...

- Global economy in which innovation is key to growth and prosperity
- Rapid change and innovation as new realities in the workplace and the economy
- Global interdependence and increasingly complex cross-cultural interactions
- Changes in the balance of economic and political power
- Fragility of democratic institutions and civic values
The National Discussion About the Quality of Learning—and Whether Students Are Actually Prepared for These New Realities—is Just Beginning

LEAP Frames That Dialogue
Breaking Out of Twentieth Century Silos

★ General Education—Necessary But Not Sufficient

★ The Majors—ALL Majors—Play a Crucial Role in Liberal Education
“More big-picture thinking in the professions and more real-world applications in the liberal arts and sciences.”

Stephen H. Weiss (1935-2008)
Former Managing Director,
Neuberger Berman LLC
Liberal Learning and Student Success

★ Facing—and Overcoming—the Shortfalls in Achievement

★ The Role of High-Impact Practices
How Well Are Graduates Achieving the Essential Learning Outcomes?
## Employers Evaluate College Graduates’ Preparedness In Key Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Not well prepared (1-5 ratings)*</th>
<th>Very well prepared (8-10 ratings)*</th>
<th>Mean rating*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical judgment</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural skills</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative reasoning</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-knowledge</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-direction</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global knowledge</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ratings on 10-point scale:  10 = recent college graduates are extremely well prepared on each quality to succeed in entry level positions or be promoted/advance within the company
Global Knowledge and Skills

- Less than 13% of college students achieve basic competence in a language other than English
- Less than 34% of college students earn credit for an international studies class; of those who do, only 13% take more than four classes
- Less than 10% of college students participate in study abroad programs
- Between 5 and 10% of college students meet all criteria for global competence

ETS Reports the Following on Intellectual Skills:

Seniors “proficient” in critical thinking 8%

Seniors “proficient” at level 3 writing 10%

Seniors “proficient” at level 3 math 10%
NSSE 2007 – Students Reporting Small or No Gains in the Following Areas

Personal and Social Responsibility:

Participating in a community-based project related to a course 51%
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds 46%
Developing a personal code of values and ethics: 42%
Contributing to the welfare of your community 53%
2007 Administration of the Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory

Dimension: Contributing to a Larger Community

“The importance of contributing to a larger community is a major focus of this campus”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current academic standing</th>
<th>% “Strongly Agree”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student sample: N = 23,950
Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan
2007 Administration of the Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory

Dimension: Contributing to a Larger Community

“Faculty publicly advocate the need for students to become active and involved citizens”

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student sample: N = 23,950
Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan
“This campus has helped me expand my own awareness of the importance of being involved in the community and contributing to the greater good”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Student sample: N = 23,950
Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan
### 2007 Administration of the Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory

**Dimension: Taking Seriously the Perspectives of Others**

"Helping students recognize the importance of taking seriously the perspective of others is a major focus of this campus"

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<th>Current academic standing</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student sample: N = 23,950

Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan
2007 Administration of the Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory

Dimension: Taking Seriously the Perspectives of Others

“I have developed an increased ability to learn from diverse perspectives during the time I have been in college”

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<th>% “Strongly Agree”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Student sample: N = 23,950
Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan
NSSE 2007 – Students Reporting Small or No Gains in the Following Areas

Integrative and Applied Learning:

No outcomes evidence found
The Crucial Role of High-Impact Educational Practices

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- “Science as Science Is Done”/Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects
High Impact Practices:
What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter

by George D. Kuh

Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on First Academic Year GPA by Pre-College Achievement Level

*Findings developed by LEAP National Leadership Council Member George Kuh and used with permission*
Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on First Academic Year GPA by Race/Ethnicity

*Findings developed by LEAP National Leadership Council Member George Kuh and used with permission*
Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on the Probability of Returning for the Second Year of College by Race

*Findings developed by LEAP National Leadership Council Member George Kuh and used with permission*
Markers of College Success—Now

Enrollment

Persistence

Degree Completion
Markers of College Success—Future
Access/Persistence
Essential Learning Outcomes
Effective Educational Practices
Engaging Departments and Faculty
The Major Plays the Decisive Role in:

- Developing intellectual and practical skills
- Educating citizens for civic, intercultural and ethical responsibility
- Teaching students to integrate and apply their learning
Questions for Each Department to Ask:

Do students practice essential skills at progressively higher levels?

Do we provide feedback and reflective discussion about the civic, ethical and societal uses of our discipline?
Questions to Ask:

Are students working on problems that cross-disciplinary lines?

What do we ask them to do that fosters integrative learning—

Across disciplinary lines?

In real-world settings?
We can—and should—provide all students with the decisive advantage of a liberal education—not just some of them.