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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)



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Overview



- ★ Liberal Education for the Twenty-First Century
- ★ Liberal Education and New Markers for Student Success
- ★ Engaging Departments and Faculty



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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



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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!



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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





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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



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Breaking Out of Twentieth Century Silos



- ★ General Education—Necessary But Not Sufficient
- ★ The Majors—ALL Majors—Play a Crucial Role in Liberal Education



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In Brief: The Changes We Need



“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



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Liberal Learning and Student Success



- ★ Facing—and Overcoming—the Shortfalls in Achievement
- ★ The Role of High-Impact Practices



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*How Well Are Graduates
Achieving the
Essential Learning Outcomes?*



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Employers Evaluate College Graduates' Preparedness In Key Areas

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

*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**

Clifford Adelman, "Global Preparedness" of Pre-9/11 College Graduates: what the US Longitudinal Studies Say," *Tertiary Education and Management* 10 (2004): 243



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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% |



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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% |



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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”

| Current academic standing | % “Strongly Agree” |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| First Year | 49 |
| Sophomore | 38 |
| Junior | 37 |
| Senior | 35 |

Student sample: N = 23,950

Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan



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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”

| Current academic standing | % “Strongly Agree” |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| First Year | 44 |
| Sophomore | 35 |
| Junior | 36 |
| Senior | 34 |

Student sample: N = 23,950

Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan



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2007 Administration of the Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory

Dimension: Contributing to a Larger Community



“This campus has helped me expand my own awareness of the importance of being involved in the community and contributing to the greater good”

| Current academic standing | % “Strongly Agree” |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| First Year | 38 |
| Sophomore | 33 |
| Junior | 33 |
| Senior | 32 |

Student sample: N = 23,950

Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan



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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”

| Current academic standing | % “Strongly Agree” |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| First Year | 41 |
| Sophomore | 32 |
| Junior | 30 |
| Senior | 29 |

Student sample: N = 23,950

Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan



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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”

| Current academic standing | % “Strongly Agree” |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| First Year | 52 |
| Sophomore | 51 |
| Junior | 54 |
| Senior | 56 |

Student sample: N = 23,950

Source: pers. comm., Eric Dey, University of Michigan



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*NSSE 2007 – Students
Reporting Small or No Gains
in the Following Areas*



Integrative and Applied Learning:

No outcomes evidence found



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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



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***High Impact Practices:
What They Are, Who Has Access to
Them, and Why They Matter***

by George D. Kuh

(forthcoming LEAP report,
October 2008, www.aacu.org)

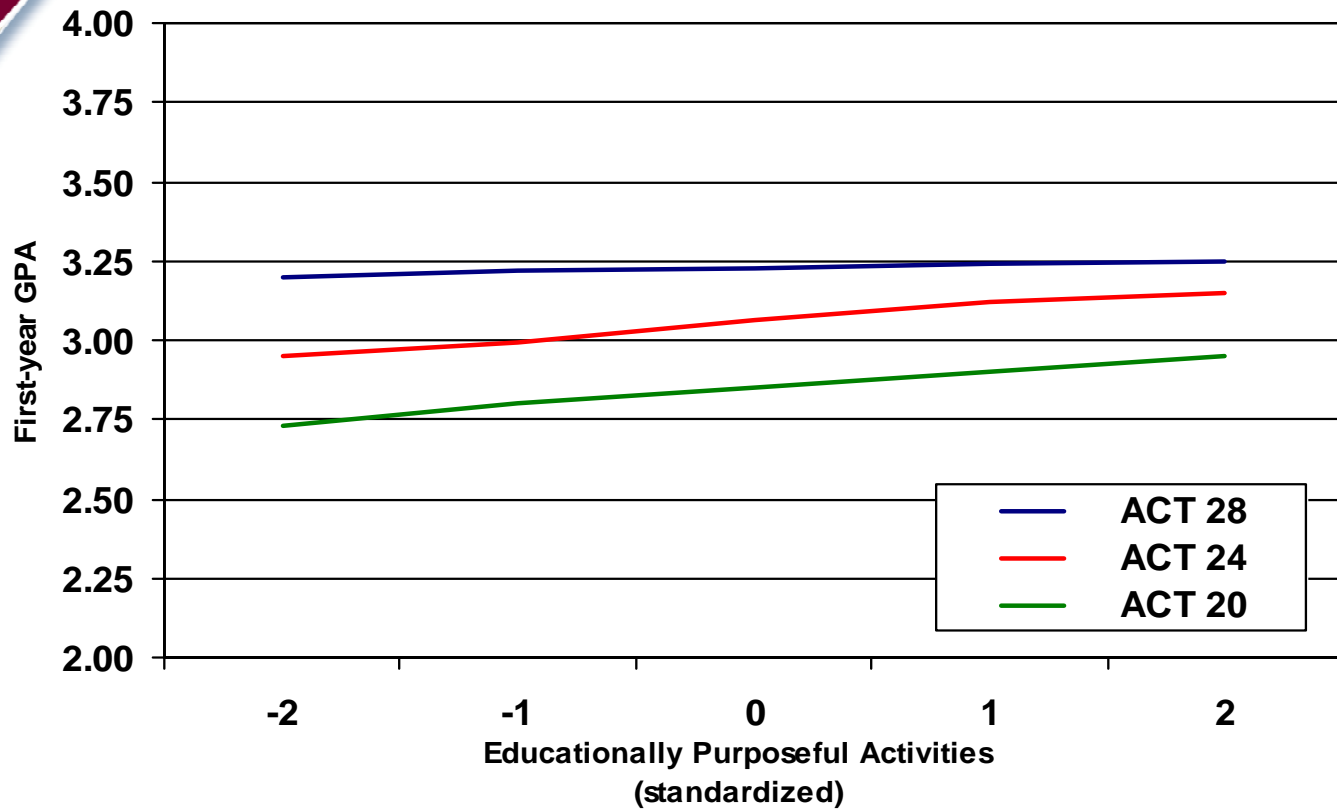


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Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on First Academic Year GPA by Pre-College Achievement Level



*Findings developed by LEAP National Leadership Council Member George Kuh and used with permission

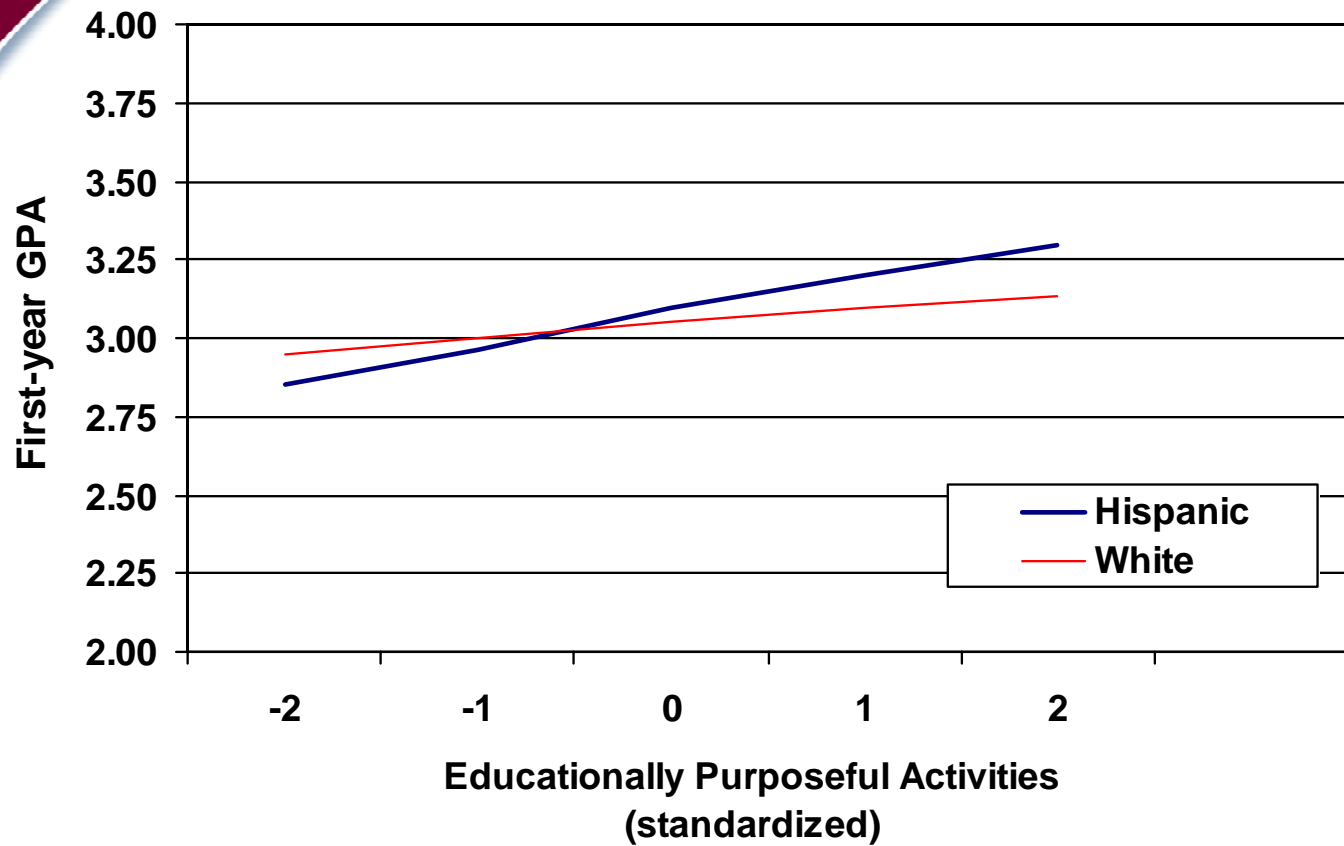


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Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on First Academic Year GPA by Race/Ethnicity



*Findings developed by LEAP National Leadership Council Member George Kuh and used with permission

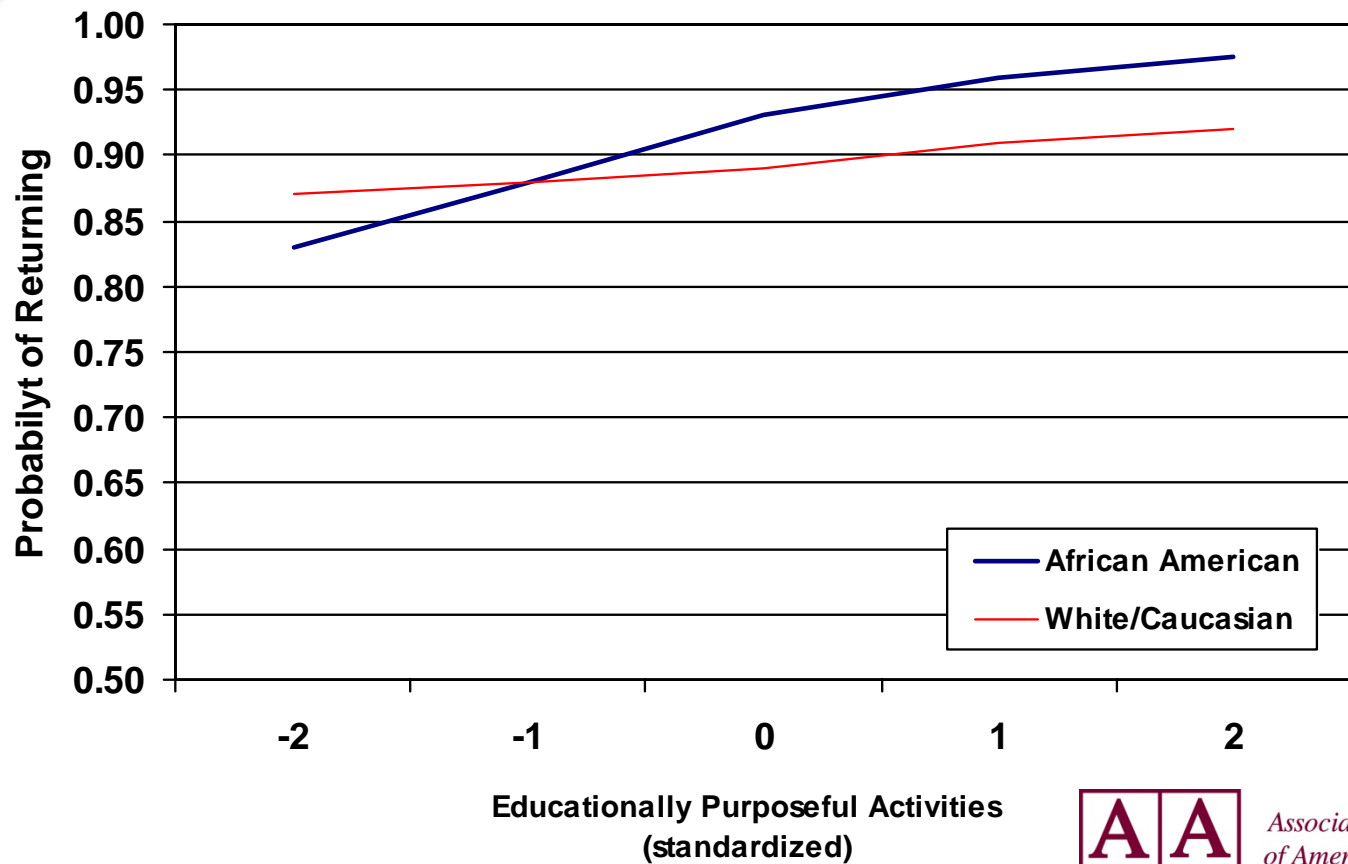


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Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on the Probability of Returning for the Second Year of College by Race



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Markers of College Success—Now

Enrollment

Persistence

Degree Completion



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Markers of College Success—Future

Access/Persistence

Essential Learning Outcomes

Effective Educational Practices



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Engaging Departments and Faculty



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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



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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 to we ask them to do that fosters integrative learning—

Across disciplinary lines?

In real-world settings?





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We can—and should—
provide all students with
the decisive advantage of
a liberal education—not
just some of them.