

CCAS Newsletter

Council of Colleges of Arts & Sciences

Liberal Education and Students' Success

Carol Geary Schneider's address to CCAS, November 13, 2008, was based on her introduction to George Kuh's recently published High-Impact Practices (AAC&U, 2008). The talk and introduction are emended here for purposes of the CCAS Newsletter.



Liberal education has had a complicated history in American society. On the one hand, liberal education has been since the founding this nation's signature educational tradition: a hallmark of many of our most widely known colleges and universities; a synonym for educational excellence and broad learning. Yet in part because of its own self-declared identity as "non-vocational," liberal education has also come to be seen as mainly an option for the fortunate—a curriculum for students who, because of family resources or native talent, can best make use of an "elite" education.

In reality, a strong liberal education is not "non-vocational" at all. Liberal education has always opened avenues to career opportunity and multiple kinds of "success." And today, as we explore below, the link between liberal education and economic success is stronger than ever. But college-bound students, especially first generation students, rarely understand the connections between a strong liberal education and the economic opportunities they seek. And, as a result, many students are leaving college with an overly narrow education, the very opposite of what they most need.

In the 21st-century liberal education must achieve a great deal more, and it must accomplish more for all students—not just the fortunate. AAC&U has been hard at work to explore and articulate this core educational priority for several years, initially through the Greater Expectations initiative (2000-06), and now through Liberal Education and

America's Promise (LEAP), which began in 2005 and will continue at least through AAC&U's centennial in 2015.

The key insight driving the LEAP campaign is this: in a world characterized by global interdependence, turbo-charged economic innovation, cross-cultural intersections and cascading waves of change, a liberal education has become the indispensable foundation for all aspects of life: economic,

But to make liberal education a resource for all students, especially underserved students, we will need to break free of those 20th century institutional definitions which limited liberal education only to certain disciplines or certain parts of the curriculum.

professional, civic, and personal. But to make liberal education a resource for all students, especially underserved students, we will need to break free of those 20th century institutional definitions which limited liberal education only to certain disciplines or certain parts of the curriculum. And, with due regard to the economic realities that are fundamental to our entire way of life, it is time to retire the term "non-vocational" once and for all.

The CCAS community understands very well the power and value of a liberal education. But now we must all band together, as educational leaders and as organizations, to show all college-bound students, their families and the public at large, why a liberal education is the best and most empowering preparation, for careers, for global interdependence, for civic vitality, and, yes, for success in all its multiple meanings.

Please turn to page 4

INSIDE

Changing of the Guard

Page 2

CCAS Year in Review

Page 3

Featuring:

William O. Bischoff

Page 5

New Board Member Named

Page 6

AACU—Engaging Department Institutes

Page 7

Changing of the Guard

Rex Ball, interim dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Texas A&M International University, has returned to the faculty. **Thomas Mitchell** is the new dean.

Gerald A. Fetz, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at the Univ. of Montana, has retired. **Christopher Comer** is the new dean.

Kate L. Forhan, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Northeastern Illinois State Univ., to provost and vice president for academic affairs at the Univ. of Southern Maine.

Gloria Gibson, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Arkansas State Univ., to provost at the Univ. of Northern Iowa.

Richard Gigliotti, dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M Univ., Corpus Christi, has retired. **Kelly Quintanilla** is the interim dean.

Steven D. House, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon Univ., to provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Mary Ellen Mazey, dean of the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences at West Virginia Univ., to provost and vice president for academic affairs at Auburn Univ.

Gary A Olson, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Illinois State Univ., to provost and vice president for academic affairs at Idaho State Univ.

Ruth Watkins is the new dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the Univ. of Illinois.

Barbara Way, dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences at California State Polytechnic Univ., Pomona, has retired. **Carol Richardson** is the new dean.

Welcome New Members

Cameron Univ., John McArthur, Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Clayton State Univ. – College of Information & Mathematical Sciences.
Lila Roberts, Dean.

West Liberty State College – College of Liberal Arts.
William Baronak, Dean.

West Liberty State College – College of Science. Robert Kreisberg, Dean.

Wilmington Univ. – Division of General Studies.
Johanna L. Adams, Dean.

The CCAS Newsletter is published bi-monthly six times each year for its membership. CCAS membership is based on the institution and not the Dean or the individual College. If a Dean moves from a CCAS member institution to a non-member institution, the Dean must apply for CCAS membership for new institution to continue CCAS membership benefits.

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Large	\$650.00

The CCAS Staff

Executive Director
Anne-Marie McCartan

Executive Assistant
Dorothy C. Reyes

Student Assistant
Mark Streer

Graphic Designer
Jean Pokorny

Contact Us

Phone.....(757) 221-1784
Fax.....(757) 221-1776
Email.....ccas@wm.edu
Web site.....www.ccas.net

CCAS Mailing Address

Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences
c/o The College of William and Mary
POBox 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

For UPS or FedEx ONLY
46 Tennis Ct.
Alexander Galt House
Williamsburg, VA 23185

FEI: 42-6122857

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FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Anne-Marie McCartan



As many of you were unable to attend the annual Business Meeting in Portland, I thought it might be useful to reprise my summary of CCAS activities in 2008.

A year ago, the Board of Directors adopted a strategic plan to guide its priorities going forward for the next three years. This plan—with its three priorities—has proven highly valuable in focusing the attention and resources of the board and executive office staff.

Considerable progress was made on the plan's top priority:

◆ *To provide high-quality services to members*

Seeking to expand the learning opportunities for its members, two **new seminars were offered**: The Washington Seminar and Personnel Management.

Last March's **The Washington Seminar** was directed by Norine Noonan (The College of Charleston) and Vagn Hansen (University of North Alabama). High-level speakers from AAAS, NIH, NSF, NEH, NEA and the Department of Education briefed the 31 participants about programs and funding to benefit the arts and sciences. The seminar ended with a Congressional briefing in the Senate Ways and Means room by the chair's chief of staff.

Paul Bell (The University of Oklahoma) and Kate Forhan (Northeastern Illinois University) directed the **Personnel Management Seminar** in San Antonio in September. The relatively small enrollment of 23 allowed the participants ample opportunity to discuss case studies based upon real personnel problems they are facing. Those attending both this seminar and The Washington Seminar encouraged CCAS to offer these again.

We offered our first **web-based seminar** in late December and are scheduling a three-part webinars series on legal issues in higher education. The board hopes that this delivery method will prove increasingly popular as travel becomes more expensive and time away from the office more difficult to come by.

The July **News Deans' Seminar** was once again fully

enrolled with 30 new deans and 10 new associate deans. Director Richard Gigliotti (Texas A&M-Corpus Christi) was assisted by Mary Anne Fitzpatrick (University of South Carolina), Shila Garg (The College of Wooster), and Oliver Walter (University of Wyoming). The new deans told us they found the seminar highly valuable, particularly the session on "What Presidents and Provosts Expect of their Deans." Sally Frost Mason—president of the University of Iowa and a former CCAS president—shared her accumulated wisdom. In the evenings, the participants really enjoyed exploring a revitalized downtown Pittsburgh.

Both **Department Chairs' Seminars** – one in July in Pittsburgh, the other in San Diego in October—were fully subscribed and highly successful. Deans Don Para (CSU-Long Beach) and Nancy Gutierrez (UNC at Charlotte) lead both these sessions, and have willingly agreed to offer one more in Atlanta in February.

A word about revenues and expenses for all these seminars. You may recall that the board's policy is to price seminars to cover costs. This year all but one of these events were profitable. Only the Personnel Management Seminar lost a few thousand dollars, as hotel costs were high and enrollment was lower than projected. We thank all the deans who attended or sent members of their staff.

In other efforts to improve services to members,

— The **New Hires Survey** for 2008 hires was released earlier than usual, thanks to a new web-based approach to data collection, making submission and data collation go much more smoothly. This new approach is attributable to the members who wrote us last year and said they would never submit data again if we could not come up with a better way of doing this!

Please turn to page 6

Liberal Education *Continued from Page 1*

How do we make this case? We can make it, the LEAP campaign contends, by probing beneath the surface features of disciplines and courses to focus with new intensity on core purposes—on the aims of a liberal education, on the capabilities it develops and on the importance of these capabilities in every area of human endeavor, including the realm of work.

Drawing on multiyear dialogues with faculty, employers, and accreditors, AAC&U has found emerging consensus on a set of educational aims and outcomes that provide a contemporary and more inclusive framing for liberal education, a framing that has direct implications for all disciplines and for all college students. Drawing from faculty members' own insights about what it will take to prepare students for a changing world, the LEAP campaign both reflects and projects the best thinking of the higher education community as a whole about what matters in college. Across school and college, LEAP reports, students should work to achieve the following:

THE ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring.

Intellectual and Practical Skills

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- Inquiry and analysis
 - Critical and creative thinking
 - Written and oral communication
 - Quantitative literacy
 - Information literacy
 - Teamwork and problem solving
- Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.*

Personal and Social Responsibility

Personal and Social Responsibility, including

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global

- Intercultural knowledge and competence
 - Ethical reasoning and action
 - Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
- Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real world challenges.*

Integrative and Social Responsibility, including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
- Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

With this framing, the LEAP campaign underscores the value of college students' active engagement with *unscripted* problems and questions. Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world should be focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring. Intellectual and practical skills should be practiced extensively across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and expectations for performance. Personal and social responsibility should be anchored through active involvement with the complexities of diverse communities and real-world challenges. Integrative learning should be demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems. In short, liberal education should make engaged learning a priority for all, including students most frequently underserved.



EXPANDING THE MARKERS FOR COLLEGE STUDENT "SUCCESS"

Describing liberal education this way—in terms of rich knowledge, strong skills, examined responsibilities and demonstrated achievement—challenges us in turn to rethink the markers we currently use within the academy to define and report student "success." In particular, the LEAP vision asks us to move beyond course credits and degree completion toward the harder and more difficult question of whether students actually are developing the knowledge and capabilities they need—for work, citizenship and personal fulfillment.

Conventionally, educational research has reported college student success—especially

for students from underserved groups—in terms of access, retention, graduation, and sometimes, grade-point average.

Retention and graduation rates are best described, however, as partial indicators of student success—necessary, but scarcely sufficient. The college degree is meaningful, after all, only when it represents forms of learning that are both valued by society and empowering to the individual. Twenty-first-century metrics for student success need to capture that reality. They need to address evidence about the quality of learning as well as evidence about persistence and completion.

Some of the core elements of an excellent education are enduring in every era: the development of intellectual powers and capacities; ethical and civic preparation; personal growth and self-direction.

But the particulars of educational excellence are necessarily always in flux—necessarily, because what counts as powerful knowledge must be periodically negotiated with the needs and realities of a changing world. Today we are in the midst of transformative changes—environmental, global, intercultural, technological, scientific—that have far-reaching implications for what counts as empowering knowledge. On every front, the world itself is demanding more from educated people.

In this context, the long-term "college success" question encompasses not only whether students have earned a degree, but also whether graduates are in fact achieving the level of preparation—the essential learning outcomes—that will enable them to both thrive and contribute in a fast-changing economy and in turbulent, highly demanding global, societal, and often personal contexts. These questions drive the emerging discussion about "student learning outcomes." What do students need to know and be able to do? Did they succeed in meeting these expected standards?

The new markers of student success also need to address the question of how students spend their educational time in college. How frequently, and with what results, do students engage in educational practices—curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical—that provide them with realistic opportunities

Please turn to page 8

FEATURING: **William D. Bischoff**



Do you have a favorite dean who might be profiled under "Featuring?" Send your nominations and a few words about the dean to ccas@wm.edu.

Dean, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Wichita State University

How did you find your way to the deanship?

Kind of by luck and unintentionally. When I was chair of the department of geology at Wichita State, the then-associate dean stepped down and nominated me for the position. When he called, I said, "No, I'm not going to the dark side!" But I went home and talked it over with my partner and the next thing you know I'm the associate dean. When I was associate dean, I really had my eyes opened wide to the things that were going on around the college. I found it exciting to work with people from all different disciplines. So when the dean took another position, I knew I was going to apply for his job. That was in 2001, and I was named the permanent dean the next year.

What benefits do you derive from being a member of CCAS?

Primarily the conversations with other deans at the Annual Meeting -- both conversations with those with similar problems and those seeking solutions to problems where I might have something to offer. I also get ideas from the sessions but what goes on behind the scenes is the most exciting part. I also enjoyed chairing the Committee on Metropolitan/Urban Institutions.

I notice that you always bring along several associate and assistant deans to the Annual Meeting. What's that about?

When I was the associate dean, the former dean always brought along his staff. I just continued that. There is a lot of benefit they get out of these meetings, and what they gain helps me do my job better. It's like having five of me at the meeting!

Surely Kansas is experiencing some of the same fiscal travails as most colleges and universities around the country. What is a dean to do during these times of retrenchment?

I think it takes a lot of careful planning, and looking out as far as you can about what potential budget scenarios may be ahead and how you would meet those different budget possibilities. And it requires a lot of consultation, particularly with the chairs. I just finished having a meeting with the chairs. I had given them guidelines for making cuts, and they came back with all kinds of budget savings while still maintaining access for students.

As you look back on your deanship, what is a particular accomplishment?

I think my proudest accomplishment is helping develop a sense of the College as a whole rather than simply a collection of departments. Many of our faculty members now feel part of the College as well as part of their department.

When you find time for relaxation, what do you do?

I learned what to do from Geoff Feiss' presidential speech at the 2003 Annual Meeting, where he told us he had a cabin in the woods where he can get away. So in 2005 I bought a cabin in the woods (and on a lake!), and I manage to get away 2-3 weekends a month. I have a cellphone with access to email, which I can turn on -- or not. ❖

New Board Member Named



With Mary Ellen Mazey's departure to a provostship, CCAS President Denise A. Battles has named **Gregory M. Sadlek**, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, to the Board of Directors.

Year in Review *Continued from Page 3*

- The Board arranged a partnership with *Change – the magazine of higher learning* to offer discounted subscription rates for CCAS members.
- In the member survey conducted in 2007, you asked us for more opportunities to network with your fellow deans. I'm happy to report that the **listserv** has become much more active this year. We now summarize each discussion thread, send it along to subscribers, and post it in the listserv archive on the website.
- The board increased the opportunities for **networking at the annual meeting** by doing such things as adding a welcome session for newcomers, a continental breakfast with discussion tables, and more meetings of statewide or regional deans' groups.
- Finally, the board proposed to the membership that the number of **seats on the board be expanded** by three. This would allow representation from a greater array of institutional types, and help solve a perennial problem of board turnover due to the apparent career mobility of those whom you elect as your representatives on the board.

◆ *Increase membership*

The board set as its second goal the need to increase institutional membership by 10% over three years. Increasing membership requires – as we all know – both retaining existing members and recruiting new ones.

I am happy to announce that we have completed this year's membership renewal cycle, and only 10 members out of 431 chose not to renew – or just over 2 percent. Moreover, 23 new members have joined CCAS since last June.

◆ *Engage with other associations and to advocate nationally for arts & sciences*

The board signed a memorandum of agreement with the board of the **International Council of Fine Arts Deans (ICFAD)** to offer associate membership to CCAS deans who oversee the fine and performing arts within a larger college of arts and sciences. For our part, we agreed to offer ICFAD deans member registration rates for our professional development offerings.

The board established the **Arts & Sciences Advocacy Award**, whose first recipient—The Phi Beta Kappa Society—will be honored in the lunch following this meeting. This

award is not meant to pat each other on the back, but to recognize politicians, business leaders, authors, and others who demonstrate exemplary advocacy for the arts & sciences.

Born from a lively discussion between two board members during an airline flight, the board became convinced of the imperative of adding its voice to those clamoring for attention in the presidential campaigns. Under the hand of CCAS President Matt Moen, the idea took shape as an open letter to the presidential candidates and Congress, with the board adopting a statement this summer that it calls, **Building a Stronger Democracy Through an Educated Citizenry**. With the blessing of our membership, the statement was sent to all the candidates and congressional leadership, major higher-education news outlets, and the One-Dupont Circle associations. We received press coverage in the daily online versions of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education* – and a letter back from the Obama for America campaign.

Next, on behalf of the board, incoming president Denise Battles is exploring the idea of submitting a national dissemination grant proposal to the National Science Foundation under its **Project ADVANCE**, which seeks to expand the number of women and minorities in the STEM disciplines. Denise is working with members of the ADVANCE team at the University of Washington to see if CCAS can bring their successful model to scale.

Finally, a connection made through The Washington Seminar bore fruit when one of the speakers, the education program director for NEH, wrote me directly this fall to pass along the application for a special grant program that he thought would be of interest to our members.

Looking Forward

In sum, the board made considerable progress this year toward achieving its goals. This coming year, membership recruitment will be a major focus of the board's activities, which unfortunately coincides with the financial recession, resulting in travel freezes, budget cutbacks, and scrutiny of all non-essential activities. The challenge for the board will be to help you justify your continued membership in CCAS by providing valuable services to members at affordable rates. We hope that you will continue to find your affiliation with CCAS so beneficial that come spring, you will renew your members and join us in Baltimore next November. Thank you for your continued support. ❖

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Liberal Education *Continued from Page 4*

to actually develop the kinds of learning they need? How does such participation relate to expected learning outcomes?

These questions point us toward new and more comprehensive frameworks for judging student success. Persistence still counts, of course. But a contemporary framework for student success also needs to address both student learning outcomes and the kinds of practices that foster intended outcomes.

LEAP AND THE ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

As the list of “essential learning outcomes” presented above attests, the LEAP vision for student learning places strong emphasis on global and intercultural learning, technological sophistication, collaborative problem-solving, transferable skills, and real-world applications—both civic and job-related. LEAP repositions liberal education as the most practical and powerful preparation for “success” in all its meanings: economic, societal, civic, and personal.

In principle, if not yet in practice, this vision challenges higher education to “make excellence inclusive,” by reaching out with data-informed intentionality to the kinds of students who have the most to gain from this kind of learning, but who frequently are steered toward much narrower and more limiting degree programs. It is not enough to report liberal education outcomes for the fortunate while tracking college completion for everyone else, LEAP insists. Making excellence inclusive means setting empowering educational goals for all students and not just for some of them.

ESSENTIAL LEARNING, UNCERTAIN ACHIEVEMENT

Naming something as essential does not mean that it is necessarily or easily achieved. Faculty know very well that, even when students do cross the stage to receive their diplomas, not all of them possess the full set of learning outcomes faculty themselves consider “essential.” Derek Bok, president emeritus of Harvard and a member of the LEAP National Leadership Council, shows in considerable detail just how far students fall short on many of the LEAP essential learning outcomes in his prize-winning 2005



book, *Our Underachieving Colleges*.

Employers, of course, are the constituency that many college students most want to impress. Today employers are weighing in with their own perceptions of graduates’ underachievement. In increasingly urgent tones, they are making plain their view that the college degree needs to comprise something much more than forty courses and a major.

In AAC&U’s 2006 LEAP-commissioned survey of employers, 63 percent reported that too many college graduates lack the skills they need to succeed in the global economy. And, in that same study, strong majorities of responding employers thought that college students needed to work harder on almost all the “essential learning outcomes” LEAP recommends.

Probing employers’ discontent further, a follow-up LEAP-commissioned survey asked business leaders to grade—on a scale of one to ten—college graduates’ achievement of key learning outcomes (see Figure 1. Both surveys are on-line at www.aacu.org/leap).

As Figure 1 suggests, employers give graduates decidedly low marks on many of the essential learning outcomes, with global learning the most striking area of under-preparation. While the majority of those surveyed view college graduates as

FIGURE 1 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

ready for entry-level jobs, employers also report that many graduates lack the skills they need to be promoted.

If we turn to the realm of “personal and social responsibility,” in the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement, students themselves tell us that these essential forms of learning remain unachieved by roughly half of graduating seniors. Just 51% of seniors report participating in a community-based project related to a course. Just 53% say that college helped them make significant gains in contributing to the welfare of their communities. Fewer than half, 46%, say that they have gained significantly in understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Even fewer of these seniors, 42%, tell us that college learning helped significantly in their developing a personal code of values and ethics. The academic community’s identification of personal and social responsibility as essential, in other words, is but a first step toward an urgently needed outcome.

HOW CAN WE RAISE STUDENTS’ LEVEL OF LEARNING?

For the past few years, the nation has been obsessively engaged in the search for new systems of assessment and accountability for what students are learning in college. Much of this discussion has proceeded as though the only task at hand is the selection of the right measures and formats for making college achievement “transparent.”

Yet all the available evidence suggests that, whatever measures we use, including the old-fashioned but still essential metric of faculty members' considered judgment, the real challenge is to significantly raise students' overall level of college accomplishment.

In this context, the question to be asked is not how we are doing but rather, how do we improve? Or, more precisely, how do we create educational contexts and practices that help our students improve?

If the essential learning outcomes are goals, then our curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical practices need to be recognized as the means to achieving these larger educational ends. As George Kuh's recent report on *High-Impact Practices* (AAC&U 20087) argues and as gathering evidence in a wide array of studies has begun to confirm, we can help our students improve by making educationally effective practices the norm, rather than the exception. High-impact practices include

- 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

What these practices have in common, of course, is that they characteristically ask more effort from students, involve students more with peers and faculty, and challenge them to work through unscripted problems for which there is no readily available "cook-book" solution. And, as the Kuh study shows, the more frequently students experience these kinds of engaged learning practices, the higher their educational gains. Persistence improves and so does academic achievement. The findings on this point are so striking for underserved students that the Kuh study speaks of a "compensatory benefit" to involving students in these challenging, high effort educational experiences.

But involving students in high-impact practices is only part of the solution. The next step is to create clear connections between intended learning outcomes and specific

high-impact practices. By deliberately connecting intended outcomes with these "hands-on" educational practices, we can also construct more "purposeful pathways" for students and more "intentional institutions" in which all units work together to ensure that all students achieve the outcomes they need and deserve. AAC&U, in fact, titled one of its Greater Expectations publications *Purposeful Pathways* (2006) to emphasize this point—and to call for a much greater level of coordination and intentionality not only within individual colleges and universities but also across that all-too-gaping chasm between K-12 and higher education.

Over the past decade, progress has certainly been made in developing and expanding access to highly effective, high-impact practices such as first-year-experience programs, learning communities, undergraduate research, community engaged or service learning, study abroad, capstone courses. But, as the Kuh study shows, even today, only a fraction of all college students participate in these practices, with first generation and transfer students particularly underserved.

And, we have made far too little progress in bringing all the pieces together for all students, either within general education or within departmental programs. If our goal is to help students achieve the essential learning outcomes that both educators and employers endorse, then the long-term challenge is transparently to connect these intended outcomes with students' successful engagement in a thoughtfully planned sequence of high-impact practices, undertaken across the curriculum, and providing recurrent opportunities to practice and improve the essential learning outcomes.

Facing the prospect of prolonged economic hardship, institutional leaders may object that the practices recommended here are labor-intensive and therefore costly. And, if we view these high-impact activities primarily as curricular "add-ons," then they will indeed be more costly. The best choice for the immediate future is embed these effortful practices in programs we already run and in the courses and departments where faculty already teach. We are already paying for teaching time—and, increasingly,

for new investments in forms of technology that have the capacity to support students' involvement in challenging, hands-on intellectual work. As we all go through difficult budget cuts, we should ask, not just whether certain course content is essential, but also whether every course we

As we all go through difficult budget cuts, we should ask, not just whether certain course content is essential, but also whether every course we pay for provides meaningful opportunities for students to develop essential learning outcomes.

pay for provides meaningful opportunities for students to develop essential learning outcomes.

Legitimate concerns about cost, moreover, should be set in a larger context. In a volatile and competitive world, the quality of citizens' learning has become our most important societal resource. If students leave college without the preparation they need for this new global era, the long-term cost to them—and to our society—will be cumulative and ultimately devastating.

Well in advance of the current economic crisis, the educational community has already identified liberal education outcomes that matter to the future of our society and, through new research, highlighted educational practices that help students achieve these essential outcomes. Armed with these insights, wise leaders will find the will, the means and the focus to make students achievement of liberal education our shared priority. With so much at stake, how can we not? ❖



Carol Geary
Schneider

President,
*Association of
American Colleges
and Universities*



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