Liberal Education & America’s Promise

Excellence for Everyone as a Nation Goes to College

ASSESSING UNDERSERVED STUDENTS’ ENGAGEMENT IN HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES

Dr. Tia McNair
Senior Director for Student Success, AAC&U
February 7, 2014
Strategies for Long-Term Student Success

• Define in measurable terms institutional goals for Making Excellence Inclusive.

• Utilize disaggregated data and continuous feedback to inform campus designs for student success.

• Incorporate direct assessment of learning.

• Examine current institutional policies and practices that are not “equity-minded” and do not reflect how students’ learn best.
Cognitive Frame:

Acquired knowledge, in the background, below consciousness

Determines:
- What questions are asked
- What information is collected
- What is noticed
- How problems are defined
- What courses of action should be taken
Cognitive Frames are developed through everyday practices, are culturally and socially transmitted, and guide actions.

Dominant Frame

DEFICIT-MINDED:
LACK OF...

- Motivation
- Direction
- Engagement
- Discipline
- Interaction with Faculty
- Time
- Study Skills
- Commitment
Equity-Minded Best Practitioners say…

- Equity ≠ Access
- Policies affect students of color
- We need to reframe deficit thinking
- We need to focus our attention within the institution’s walls
- We have benchmark goals and interventions to reach equity.
- Equity-mindedness means being color conscious
“High-Impact Practices” that Help Students Achieve the Outcomes

★ First-Year Seminars and Experiences
★ Common Intellectual Experiences
★ Learning Communities
★ Writing-Intensive Courses
★ Collaborative Assignments & Projects
★ Undergraduate Research
★ Diversity/Global Learning
★ Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
★ Internships
★ Capstone Courses and Projects
High-Impact Practices: Good Effects & Equity Effects

- In what ways can campuses engage with data on high-impact practices and student learning to inform an equity-minded, inquiry-based model for improving student success?

Developing an Inquiry-Based Model

1) Who participates?
2) What are the effects of participation in specific experiences?
3) What are the effects of participation in multiple activities?
   - Compared to students in the same group who do not participate?
   - Compared to students in other groups that do participate?

Developing an Inquiry-Based Model

1) What learning experiences do underserved students value in developing the skills and competencies they view as important to employers?

2) What factors do underserved students identify as barriers or obstacles to their participation in high-impact learning experiences?

How “high-impact”? And for whom?

- Data from 38 institutions (CA, OR, WI)
- NSSE data from 2006-2008 (one year of data from each campus)
- HIPs examined
  - Learning Communities
  - Service learning
  - Study Abroad
  - Internship
  - Capstone
  - Student/Fac. Res.
  - 0-6 experiences
- 20,000+ students
  - First Year = 36.5%, SR = 51.1% (included Soph., Jr, Unclassified)
  - Transfer = 33%
  - First-generation = 51%
- Race
  - White = 58.7%
  - African American = 2.5%
  - Asian American = 11.8%
  - Hispanic = 13.2%
  - (Other = 6.2%, No Response = 7.5%)

Who participates in HIPs?

- Overall students participated in 1.3 HIPs experiences
- Non first-generation students participate in more HIPs than first-generation (1.5 vs. 1.2)
- Transfer students participate in more HIPs than non-transfer (1.5 vs. 1.2)
- White students participate in more HIPs than Asian American and Hispanic students (1.4 vs 1.3 & 1.2, respectively)
  - No difference bet. White and African American students

What are the effects of participation in certain high-impact experiences?

What are the effects of participation in multiple high-impact experiences?

Outcomes Examined

- **Deep Learning** = Pursuit of learning beyond memorization to seek underlying meanings & relationships
- **Gains in General Education** = Writing/speaking skills, acquire broad general educ, analyzing quant. probs
- **Gains in Practical Competence** = Work related knowledge & skills, working effectively w/ others, use of technology, quant. problem-solving, solving complex real-world problems
- **Gains in Personal & Social Development** = Developing ethics, understanding diff. bkgrds, understanding self, contributing to community, voting

HIP Participation vs. No Participation: Avg. Boost Across All Outcomes

- Learning Com: +7.7pts
- Serv Learn.: +8.5pts
- Study Abroad: +4.2pts
- Internship: +5.2pts
- St/Fac Res: +8.1pts
- Capstone: +6.1pts

Effect of participation in *Multiple* HIPs on Outcomes

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

- Deep Learning
- Gains Gen. Ed.
- Gains Practical
- Gains Pers. & Soc.

- No HIPs
- 1-2 HIPs
- 3-4 HIPs
- 5-6 HIPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No HIPs</th>
<th>1-2 HIPs</th>
<th>3-4 HIPs</th>
<th>5-6 HIPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep Learning</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gains Gen. Ed.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gains Practical</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gains Pers. &amp; Soc.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the effect of participation in multiple HIPs relative to students in the same group who do NOT participate?
Avg % Increase in Outcomes w/ Participation in Multiple HIPs Vs. No Participation (by First-Generation & Transfer Status)

Avg % Increase in Outcomes w/ Participation in Multiple HIPs Vs. No Participation (by Race)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-2 HIPs</th>
<th>3-4 HIPs</th>
<th>5-6 HIPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afr. Amer</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Amer</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are the comparative effects of participation in multiple HIPs for different groups of students?
Participation by Race: Deep Learning

Participation by Race: Gains in Gen Ed

Participation by Race: Gains Pract. Comp.


In Their Own Words: What Matters To Students…

- 15 focus groups
- 3 campuses/state (9 campuses total)
- 91 students

Focus Grp Characteristics:
- 48 first-generation
- 40 transfer
- 46 low-income
- 28 Hispanics
- 24 African-Americans
- 14 Multi-racial
- 11 Asian-Americans
- 9 Caucasians
- 4 Native Americans
- 1 Arab-American

Reality Check: What’s this stuff called?

“...I have teachers that take us out of the building. I don't know what it's called. It's called--it's called something here. They take you out of the building, and you go learn about like the vegetable gardens that they have growing here, among the Hmong society...So there's a lot of professors here that teach differently.”

Student, Wisconsin

- Expectations set at appropriately high levels
- Sig. investment of time & effort
- Interactions w/ faculty & peers
- Experiences with diversity
- Freq., constructive feedback
- Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect & integrate
- Relevance through real-world applications
- Public demonstration of competence

Learning Communities: Interaction with peers

“I was in a learning community, that’s what they called it. All the students who were in that English and public speaking class. So twice a week we had class…we were in the same room from 8-10:45 every Monday and Wednesday…We had group work, we’d present our speeches and we’d look over their English stuff, so we were comfortable with each other by the end of the semester. We were just used to being around each other.”

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0T0JIA54VHB1ygrH15oar-EOAqtglpQQ
Collaborative Assignments: 
Public demonstration of competence

“I think projects with real world implications. I was really lucky enough to have more than a couple of classes where we did group work, where the outcomes of our projects at the end of the term made a real world difference where we were working at the nonprofit, at the library, and all the research that we did actually went to publication. All of the systems that we had researched and designed actually went someplace and that was incredible. Also, I'm kind of hearing like having guest speakers provides such important networking opportunities I think especially for upper classmen that are wanting to get an internship or get, you know, work experience right after college, having networking knowledge, and this is really important.”
“I thought, you know, from high school, I knew how to do an essay. So I was all gung ho, I'm like, yeah, so I'm getting in all done. I turned it in, and they're like, nah, wrong, go back and try again, and then try adding this. So I'm like, okay, so I started adding more. Next thing I knew I got a six-page essay with seven drafts, and then I turned it back in, and they're like you don't have a thesis. I thought I did. No, this is what a thesis is supposed to look like. So now I'm like, you know, essay ten, finally getting it drafted to turn in. I mean it was, it was a learning experience for me, and the way she done it, it made it to where, okay, hey, I want to do better. I mean she gave me positive feedback. She actually gave me the material that I was not presented with in high school. So I was actually able to go out, do my studies and do my research, and do what needed to be done to get my essays done.”
“Like when I did my capstone… that really required me to apply what I have learned through my own voice, and… then being engaged with my professor where my paper went back and forth and back and forth several times to understand what I was understanding and what I wasn't understanding…”
“I think I've grown a lot more accepting of like different people through like different organizations because I mean you go to like an organization, like I would have never thought this person would have been interested in this or anything like that, and I think I kind of, not to say that I was like more ignorant before I came to the situation, but it's kind of like there's just so many different walks of life around campus, there's so many people in the community, and then here, that you just kind of are pushed into, especially when you have classes where you have discussions, you're pushed into conversations with people that have a completely different background than you and completely different points of view. And I think it's really, you kind of grow, like your maturity grows a little more because you have to, you have to accept their views, and then you can also, I mean you can argue with them, but I think you learn to accept it and kind of just let it sink in and not just like attack back, and that's what I think I've learned is before I kind of felt like I had to defend myself, but it's like everyone has different opinions. That's just how it is so I think that is worth a lot.”
"I'm doing two capstones because I'm getting the two degrees. One of them I did at another university. I got to do a summer research experience, and that was, that was huge for me not just in, you know, I got to work with really great hardware. I got to work with an electron microscope. I got to work with really nice hardware that we don't necessarily get access to, but the largest part of that for me, if I'm working on imaging on an electron microscope, you can give me a class on that, you can talk to me about accelerating voltage, you can talk to me about how the electron interacts with this thing or that thing, but you sit down on this thing, and the image doesn't work. The picture looks horrible. I can't see what it is I'm supposed to see. So I got to go read this book. I've got to go work out these equations. I've got to go figure out all of this stuff. And I get this real understanding that came from trying to solve a problem first, and so then I get real in-depth, applied understanding, and then I understand why it is I'm learning this. Why am I looking at this stuff in this book? Why should I care about this stuff? It doesn't seem like it would apply to anything, and you find out it really does."
“And I know that when I went to Latin America, I was able to then really see what I was learning, how it was impacting in the world, what influence I had with other people, and to create networks and to create kind of a sense of community and see change, and so it was connecting those kind of, the learning versus the real world, again, and reminded me of that, of that connection and to actually see it. So.”
“I recently, well, last term, I took a, uh, it was an anthropology class and it was uh, water systems… eh… good class. And the research project I chose was a little creek around here, and this little creek used to be horribly polluted… like bad, bad, bad, it stank. It’s not that way today. But I got to go out and find out that there are actually people who care, people trying to make a real difference for the whole world- city workers and blah, blah, blah, but I got to interview these people and talk with them and it changed my perspective on the world. You know it’s like, ‘it’s hopeless, it doesn’t really matter, we’re all going to die, it’s too far gone…’ There’s people who care and are trying to make differences, however small. I was amazed at the willingness of these people to talk to me for a silly little research paper, but they had passion and wanted to talk about this stuff… and it was cool.”
High-impact Learning

“I feel like by doing something hands-on and seeing how like more so like real world application, that’s when you walk away with like a meaningful like benefit to what you’re learning in the classroom”

“He would apply it to like our daily lives. Like he would use like TV shows or use radio or something else that like we actually listened to instead of just like and here’s Aristotle and blah-blah-blah, like all these old people that are already dead that like none of us knew or know anything about”

“I think it has to do with like it being relatable to who you are in your experiences”
High-impact Learning

“I feel like when you’re in an engaged environment like your interactions with both like your classmates and your professor is like a positive one to where not only is the professor helping you, but you are also receiving help and learning how to do something with your fellow peers, and I feel like that itself makes like the classroom and lab, for example, and engaging environment is when the professor and the students like collectively as a whole are willing to like work for like a certain outcome.”
What are the barriers or obstacles to participating in high-impact learning experiences?
Barriers and Obstacles

- They desire to participate in high-impact practices outside of the classroom, but there are competing priorities (e.g., family, work, earning money to pay for school)
- Students lack information about where to find engaged learning courses
- Underserved students are keenly aware of their academic deficiencies
- They strongly desire a caring adult—Teachers who care about their learning and advisors who have access to information so they can stay on course

“It's hard because there are some classes that are here that offer some of that, but then there is also like the time constraint and the homework load, and with engaged--I mean I think engaged classes do work, but sometimes they offer more work, and so you also have to think about that.”
“Sometimes I think it's just your personal like demographic like I know like me I'm an independent student. I have no parents. And so like it's just finding the time. Like I have to work my butt off everyday, you know, in order to like pay my bills because, you know, I'm not like so-and-so, whose parents pay their cell phone. I still have a life, you know, with classes like, you know, I can't just come to college and forget about everything else. So I think it's more like your personal situation as well.”
“So, you know, asking what are some of these barriers to finding this engaged learning, I think a couple of barriers that exist are, one, course catalogues or when students are trying to register for courses. If you're lucky, you get maybe a two-sentence blurb about what the course is about. Well, there's no way in that two sentence blurb to say this prof is just going to lecture at you for, you know, the whole class period or this prof has field trips scheduled and you know focus groups and all of this other stuff. There's no way to know. It's just I need this for my degree, and you know pick the course, pick the time, but also you don't really have any opportunity most of the time to go to the class in advance, see how the professor does things. So a lot of it is just a lot of whether or not you get that engaged learning experience or not is that it's luck of the draw based on who the professor is, whether or not you need that course as a degree requirement, and you know not being able really to have any sort of informed course descriptions or informed professor descriptions or even how their teaching styles are.”
“I don't think they prepare you to go on to college. They prepare you to get a basic education to where you can count money and speak at a okay level and to be able to interact with other people who just graduated high school. I don't think they prepare you for secondary education, and I think that's why the retention rate, especially the people who come out of my school system or a school system like my school system, across the states, are horrible because we're not prepared. When we get to a secondary institution where you come, especially those who are traditional students in the sense who they graduate in May, and they're in college in September, then in December, they're back home because in that four-month period, there was no good transition to learn, especially people like me who only come out of high school playing these games and learning how to play the game for the last four years. You learn how to navigate the system because that's what you're taught. You're taught to, oh, you got to get good grades in high school. Well, if I'm going to get good grades by giving this man a Snickers, that's what I'm going to do.”
“Like in my high school, I don't want to say like, I mean, it was a joke to me because, and it's crazy, because I'm, like I'm not trying to like boast on myself or anything, but I knew I had like some kind of academic gift, and I'm mad that my gift have not been like, you know, like nurtured and everything because I feel like I could have been like in a better place, but where I come from in the city and state and the school system where I came from, it was overlooked.”
Inquiry Questions

- What are the effective practices that your institution uses to engage students?
- Are these practices high-impact?
- Are they embedded in both curricular and co-curricular activities?
- Are they tied to learning outcomes?
- How are they assessed?
- How can they be integrated?
VALUE Rubrics

• Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural Worlds
  – Content Areas → No Rubrics

• Intellectual and Practical Skills
  – Inquiry & Analysis
  – Critical Thinking
  – Creative Thinking
  – Written Communication
  – Oral Communication
  – Reading
  – Quantitative Literacy
  – Information Literacy
  – Teamwork
  – Problem-solving

• Personal & Social Responsibility
  – Civic Knowledge & Engagement
  – Intercultural Knowledge & Competence
  – Ethical Reasoning
  – Foundations & Skills for Lifelong Learning

• Integrative & Applied Learning
  – Integrative & Applied Learning
Located at:
http://www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm
The Anatomy of a VALUE Rubric

### Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connections to Experience</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Performance Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connects relevant experiences and academic knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (e.g., community experiences, interdisciplinary experiences, and experiences of work and life) focusing on the development of understanding and dispositions that align with the local and global society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Criteria:**

- **Connections to Experience:** Connects relevant experiences and academic knowledge.
- **Conclusions to Discipline:** Sees themes and patterns across disciplines.
- **Transfer:** Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations.
- **Integrated Communication:** Fulfills the assignment by choosing a format, language, or graph to effectively communicate the argument and the meaning of the interdependent ideas.
- **Reflection and Self-Assessment:** Evaluates changes in own learning over time, reflects on experiences, and makes connections across multiple contexts. Analyzes strengths and challenges (within specific performance or event) to enhance effectiveness in other contexts (through increased self-awareness).
Thank you!

- Dr. Tia Brown McNair  mcnair@aacu.org
  Office of Diversity, Equity and Student Success, AAC&U

- Finley & McNair, *Assessing Underserved Students’ Engagement in High-Impact Practices*
  http://www.aacu.org/assessinghips