

Taking Stock of What Matters to Student Success

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Conditions for Educational Effectiveness

A “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy

- To what extent do academic and student life policies, programs, and practices reflect the institution’s espoused mission and values?
- What is the institution’s *enacted* institutional mission? That is, to what do people devote their time and energies? What is valued and rewarded? What do people say their institution is trying to do?
- What are the guiding beliefs and assumptions about how learning best occurs?
- In what ways does the enacted mission and philosophy influence students’ experiences?

Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning

- How much do faculty and staff know about *all* your students and their learning and engagement? What do faculty and staff *not* know about students but should?
- How are faculty encouraged and supported to facilitate student learning?
- To what extent and in what ways are students expected and prepared to teach, and learn from, one another in and out of class?
- What resources, such as teaching and learning centers, are available and used by for faculty and for students?
- To what extent and in what ways are faculty and staff expected to make time for students and rewarded for doing so?

Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment

- How do community members – students, faculty, staff, others – describe the institution’s physical setting and appearance? To what extent do they identify a ‘sense of place’?
- Do certain groups of students use the institution’s resources differently? In what ways do these differences influence learning?

Clear Pathways to Student Success

- What messages are communicated to newcomers about expectations for student performance?
- To what extent are students’ academic performance and out-of-class lives consistent with the institution’s expectations? In what ways do students’ out-of-class lives facilitate and inhibit their learning and success?
- What structures and process are in place to identify students who are less engaged in educationally-purposeful activities than they should be to succeed?

Improvement-Oriented Ethos

- To what extent are faculty and staff committed to ongoing institutional improvement and to enhancing student success?
- To what extent are resources ‘front-loaded’ to foster students’ academic and social success? How might these resources be integrated more effectively?
- What data related to student success and effective educational practice are collected, for what purposes, and by whom? How are they used?

Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality and Student Success

- To what extent do academic and student life policies, programs, and practices support: (1) the educational mission of the institution? (2) academic programs and priorities? (3) students’ learning and success?
- What messages are communicated to students about taking responsibility for their own learning and success? To what extent do students feel responsible for the quality of their peers’ success?

Effective Educational Practices

Academic Challenge

- Are expectations for student performance clearly and consistently articulated and set at appropriately high levels, given students' academic preparation?
- Is student time on task consistent with faculty expectations and course demands? If not, why?
- Do classes emphasize higher-order cognitive and intellectual activities?
- Are examinations and class assignments challenging?
- Do students have to "stretch" to meet academic standards and expectations?
- Are academic challenges for students balanced by appropriate support?
- Are rigorous culminating experiences expected of seniors?

Active Learning and Collaborative Learning

- Is active learning expected and practiced throughout the undergraduate curriculum?
- Are students taught how to participate actively and collaboratively in class?
- Do electronic technologies foster active learning?
- Are group study and other forms of collaboration encouraged by physical and curriculum structures?
- Do students provide feedback to their peers?
- Are residential and non-residential learning communities available to address a wide variety of student needs and interests?

Student-Faculty Interaction

- Are faculty and staff *physically* and *psychologically* accessible to students?
- How often do faculty members meet with students outside of class?
- Do faculty members collaborate on research with undergraduates?
- Can students get two or more faculty members to write meaningful letters of reference?
- Do students receive extensive and timely feedback from faculty?

Enriching Educational Experiences

- Are diversity experiences infused in the curriculum and co-curriculum?
- What are the nature and quality of students' experiences with diversity?
- Are students required to participate in courses and/or activities that promote civic engagement?
- Do students take advantage of service-learning opportunities? Study abroad? Internships?
- Do co-curricular experiences enrich student learning, and how do you know?
- Do students take advantage of opportunities to develop leadership skills?

Supportive Campus Environments

- Do transition programs effectively welcome and affirm newcomers?
- Are early warning systems available and do they effectively identify and respond to at-risk students?
- Are multiple safety nets of personnel and structures available *and* used by various groups of students?
- Do early warning systems and safety nets work better for some students than others?
- Do residential living environments provide academic and social support?
- Do students view faculty members as available, helpful, and sympathetic?
- Do students view the campus administration as helpful and considerate?
- Do students view their peers as friendly and supportive?
- Are students satisfied with their overall college experience?

Resources:

- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., Whitt, E. J. & Associates (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., & Whitt, E.J. (2005). *Assessing conditions to enhance educational effectiveness: The Inventory for Student Engagement and Success*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

“High Impact Practices: What They Are, Why They Work, and Who Benefits”

George D. Kuh, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

AAC&U identified 10 of the more promising “high impact” activities in its 2007 report, *College Learning for a New Global Century* including: first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, service learning, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, study abroad & other experiences with diversity, internships, and capstone courses and projects.

Does your institution provide these experiences? Do all students have an equal chance of participating? To what extent do underrepresented students participate in these activities? Use the worksheet below to inventory the high-impact practices on your campus. [✓ = have on campus; required; estimate the % of various student populations in these activities]

	Learning Community	First Year Seminars	Writing-Intensive Courses	Research w/ Faculty	Service Learning	Study Abroad	Internship	Senior Capstone
On Our Campus								
Required for all								
% Students involved								
% First Generation								
% Transfer Students								
% African American								
% Latino Students								
% Asian American								
% other								
% Adult Students								

For high-impact activities to make more of a difference to student learning and success:

- ✓ Make it possible for students to participate in *at least two high impact activities* during their undergraduate program, one in the first year, and one later related to their major field.
- ✓ Ensure that **all** students have a chance to participate in these experiences – *are students in some majors less likely to participate? To what extent do first-generation students take advantage of these experiences?*
- ✓ Reduce barriers to participation, encourage all students to see potential for their involvement.
- ✓ Ensure that programs are of high quality. *What is your evidence for effectiveness?*
- ✓ Know how your students benefit from the experience.

Results for High Impact Practices from the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement

Percent Participation in High-Impact Activities by Institutional and Student Characteristics

		<i>FY students</i>		<i>Seniors</i>				
		Learning Community	Service Learning	Research w/ Faculty	Study Abroad	Service Learning	Intern- ship	Senior Capstone
2005 Basic								
Carnegie	Doc RU-VH	20	33	23	18	40	57	29
	Doc RU-H	18	37	19	14	44	51	33
	Doc DRU	18	39	17	13	52	51	33
	Masters-L	16	35	16	10	47	48	30
	Masters-M	16	39	17	11	51	52	30
	Masters-S	14	44	18	14	53	51	36
	Bac-AS	13	43	29	33	53	66	55
	Bac-Diverse	13	41	18	11	55	60	37
	Other	13	29	15	8	38	49	29
Sector								
	Public	17	34	18	12	44	50	29
	Private	16	44	22	21	53	61	42
Barron's								
Selectivity	Less selective	16	36	16	10	47	48	30
	More selective	18	37	23	21	45	59	35
Ethnicity								
	African Amer./Black	18	40	17	9	51	45	27
	Asian/Pacific Is.	17	37	22	14	49	50	28
	Caucasian/White	17	36	19	15	45	56	34
	Hispanic	20	36	17	11	47	45	26
	Other	15	38	19	18	46	46	31
Enrollment								
	Part-time	10	26	12	7	37	38	22
	Full-time	17	37	21	16	48	56	35
First- Generation								
	No	18	37	22	19	46	57	36
	Yes	15	35	16	9	46	48	29
Transfer								
	Started here	17	37	23	19	49	61	38
	Started elsewhere	13	32	14	9	43	43	25
Age								
	Under 24 years	17	37	23	18	49	61	37
	24 years & older	10	24	13	7	41	40	24
Overall Participation		17	36	19	14	46	53	32

For more information: National Survey of Student Engagement. (2007). *Student engagement: Experiences That Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary, http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE_2007_Annual_Report/

Creating the Conditions That Matter to Student Success (Kuh et al., 2005)
Institutional Assessment Template

Effective Educational Practices

	Grade	Comments/Action
Academic Challenge		
Active and Collaborative Learning		
Student-Faculty Interaction		
Enriching Educational Experiences		
Supportive Campus Environment		

Properties and Conditions of DEEP institutions

	Grade	Comments/Action
A “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy		
Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning		
Clear Pathways to Student Success		
Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment		
Improvement-oriented Ethos		
Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality and Student Success		

BENCHMARKS OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

LEVEL OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGE

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, etc. related to academic program)
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more; number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages; and number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizing analysis of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizing application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work

ACTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
- Tutored or taught other students
- Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION

Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.

- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)
- Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
- Worked with a faculty member on a research project outside

The benchmarks are based on 42 key questions from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that capture many of the most important aspects of the student experience. These student behaviors and institutional features are some of the more powerful contributors to learning and personal development.

ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Complementary learning opportunities in and out of class augment academic programs. Diversity experiences teach students valuable things about themselves and others. Technology facilitates collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge.

- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.)
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- Community service or volunteer work
- Foreign language coursework
- Study abroad
- Independent study or self-designed major
- Culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.)
- Serious conversations with students of different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity
- Using electronic technology to discuss or complete an assignment
- Campus environment encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together

SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive the working and social relations among different groups on campus.

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices