Confronting Student Success Challenges and the Academically Adrift



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Current Context in U.S. Higher Education



- Global Competitiveness in Degree Attainment
- Greater pressure to reduce persistence and graduation rate gaps
- Questionable evidence of student learning
- Challenging fiscal environment
- Increased employer demands and needs in 21st century economy

Increasing Completion Rates in the U.S

Lumina Foundation's Big Goal: Increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by 2025.

What % of New Hampshire working adults (25-64 years) hold *at least* a 2-year degree?

a). 25% b). 31% c). 46% d). 55%

c). 46% (higher than national avg. of 38%)

http://www.luminafoundation.org/state_data/Policy_Brief-Oregon.pdf

Current Concerns about Student Success in College



- College-going stakes higher today than at any point in history
- 45% students in 2yr-colleges depart during their first year, & 1 of 4 leave from 4-yr schools
- Enrollment & persistence rates of historically underserved students lagging
- 51% of high school grads have reading skills necessary for college; 25% of students in 4-yr colleges need 1 yr of remedial coursework

'Academically Adrift'

January 18, 2011, *Inside Higher Education*

"If the purpose of a college education is for students to learn, academe is failing, according to *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*."



Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses (2011, *University of Chicago Press)*

Academically Adrift: A Perfect Moment?

- **If book is right:** Under what circumstances do student learn? And what do we know about this? What are the conditions that promote learning and success?



- Concern about student learning outcomes demands that we examine educational practices.
- Draws renewed attention to the learning environment.
- ***What can we do to address the finding that students aren't learning?***

We know a lot about What Matters to Student Learning & Success

The challenge is using what we know.

Aligning resources, removing impediments, to optimize success for all students.



Student Behaviors & Activities Associated with Student Persistence & Success



- **Faculty-Student Contact** (important for first-gen, racial-ethnically diverse students)
- **Peer Interactions** (meaningful connections, peer teaching, tutoring)
- **Experiences with Diversity** (transforming for students)
- **Co-curricular Activities** (really important for persistence)
- **Student Satisfaction** (influences sense of belonging)

www.nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/Kuh_Team_Report.pdf

What We Know About Student Learning and Success

Educators must be concerned with the learning environment – in *and* outside the classroom, socio-cultural aspects and physical settings – in which students interact with peers, the content, educators and others, and the implementation of strategies that help guide the student toward the intended outcomes.

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Think About Your Campus Learning Environment



…How Prominent are the Key Features of Educationally Effective Environments?

1. Learning-centered practice
2. Engaging, experiential learning
3. Enriched environments
4. Shared responsibility
5. Student agency
6. Learning outcomes & assessment



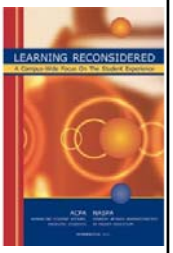
1. Learning-Centered Practice

- Promotion of seamless learning – *student learning has the potential to result from virtually all student experiences*
- Shared mission and learning goals between student & academic affairs
- *Learning Reconsidered (2004)* calls for greater integration of resources to educate and prepare the whole student and raise the quality of learning



Purposeful Pathways to Transformational Learning

A transformative education repeatedly exposes students to *multiple opportunities* for intentional learning through the formal academic curriculum, student life, collaborative curricular programming, community-based, and global experiences.



Learning Reconsidered (2004)

2. Engaging, Experiential Learning



- Philosophy of learning with characteristic pedagogies/ activities
- Demands students invest high levels of time & effort
- Blends in & outside classroom experiences
- Ample opportunities to apply learning to real-world contexts
- Emphasizes reflection and integration

3. Enriched Environments



- Physical environment used to maximum educational advantage – *to encourage peer, faculty, staff interaction, showcase student learning & leadership…*
- Connect to the local community in mutually beneficial, educationally purposeful ways
- Emphasize "high-impact" practices –service-learning, undergraduate research, first-year seminars – and ensure all students take part

4. Shared Responsibility

- Robust partnership between academic & student affairs
- Everyone is an educator



5. Student Agency

- Emphasis on student empowerment, initiative
- Policies and structures facilitate student ownership





6. Learning Outcomes & Assessment

- Learning outcomes - *What students accomplish by participating in your program* - are explicit
- Should be able to answer*: "What is the educative value of this program or policy?"*
- Assessment data used to improve quality and effectiveness



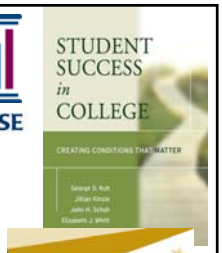
Educationally Effective Learning Environments

1. To what extent are the features of effective learning environments present on your campus? In your sphere of influence?
2. What does this emphasis demand of current practice?



Resources

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – results from first-year students & seniors at 1,400 institutions
- *Student Success in College* (2005, 2010) – documents what 20 high-performing institutions do to promote student success
- AAC&U and Kuh's (2008) *High-Impact Educational Practices*





Engaged learning is a gateway to the desired outcomes of college.

Students who engage more frequently in educationally purposeful activities both in & outside the classroom get better grades, are more satisfied, and are more likely to persist and graduate.



Engaged Learning

- Demands students invest high levels of time and effort
- Ample opportunities to apply learning to real-world contexts
- Emphasizes reflection and integration





Who's more engaged?

- Women
- Full-time students
- Students who live on campus
- Students with diversity experiences
- Students who start and stay at same school
- Students who have done *"high-impact"* practices

Findings from NSSE and AAC&U: Some Educational Activities are Unusually Effective

Growing evidence that "high-impact practices" provide substantial educational benefits to students

[AAC&U, 2008 publication: *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access To Them, and Why They Matter*]

HIPs Resources

- **Five High-Impact Practices** (Brownell & Swaner, 2010) monograph examines body of research on five high-impact practices: **first-year seminars, learning communities, service learning, undergraduate research & capstones**.
  - Outcomes;
  - Outcomes for traditionally underserved populations;
  - Conditions under which positive outcomes are more likely to be found;
  - Strengths and weaknesses of outcomes literature.



www.aacu.org

High-Impact Practices

Educational experiences that make a significant difference to student persistence, learning outcomes, and student success.

1. Pedagogical practices
2. Structural features



High-Impact Pedagogical Practices in the First Year

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class on assignments
- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
- Participated in a community-based project as part of course
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from readings/classes with faculty outside class
- Received prompt feedback on your academic performance
- Worked harder than you thought
- Worked with faculty on activities outside coursework (committees, student life, etc.)
- Discussed ideas from readings/classes with others
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity and those who differ from you - religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values

High Impact Pedagogical Practices

- **Students who engage in these practices at high levels are more likely to persist and do well.**
  - ***To what extent have your first-year students had these experiences? What practices have you emphasized in your course, office, programs?***

To Ponder:

How might you ensure that students – particularly in their first year – understand the value of high-impact pedagogical practices?

And that more students experience these practices?

High Impact Activities

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AAC&U Association of American Colleges and Universities

- ★ **First-Year Seminars and Experiences**
- ★ **Common Intellectual Experiences**
- ★ **Learning Communities**
- ★ **Writing-Intensive Courses**
- ★ **Collaborative Assignments and Projects**
- ★ **Undergraduate Research**
- ★ **Diversity/Global Learning**
- ★ **Service Learning, Community-Based Learning**
- ★ **Internships**
- ★ **Capstone Courses/**



Check-in: High Impact Activities

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ **How many of these activities exist for your students?**

★ **Do most students take advantage of these practices?**



Benefits of High Impact Practices



High Impact practices are positively associated with:

- **Persistence and GPA**
- **Higher rates of student-faculty interaction**
- **Increases in critical thinking, writing skills,**
- **Greater appreciation for diversity**
- **Higher student engagement overall**

Bronwell, J & Swaner, L (2009). High Impact Practices: Applying the Learning Outcomes Literature; Kuh (2008)

Lessons from NSSE about Structural HIPs

- **Learning Communities** –programs that integrate material across courses associated with higher student engagement & learning
- **Study Abroad** - length of time abroad did not make a difference; first-gen students less likely to go abroad
- **Undergraduate Research** - associated with higher levels of student-faculty interaction and support

Service-Learning

- **Positively associated with deep learning and personal development**
- **Fewer Males**
- **Most beneficial feature: Community-based project as part of a regular course**



Service Learning and Reflective Learning



Students (First-years & Seniors) who participated in service-learning report more reflective learning experiences.

NSSE items – Reflective Learning

Frequency of…

- *Tried to better understand someone else's views*
- *Learned something that changed understanding on a topic or issue*
- *Examined strengths & weaknesses of own view*

Never / Sometimes / Often / Very Often

Service-Learning Participation

(NSSE 2010 results)

1. What proportion of first-year students at 4-year colleges have done service-learning?

(a) 25% (b) 36% (c) 41% (d) 75%

c. 41%

(49% seniors)

CCSSE reports about 22%

Do All Students Experience High-Impact Practices?

- **Nope**. High Impact Practices Only Reach A Fraction of Students

OVERALL NSSE Participation Levels:

		FY Expectations??
First Year Students:		
Learning Communities	16%	
Service Learning	41%	
Seniors:		**FY Plan to Do:**
Research With Faculty	19%	33%
Internship	50%	75%
Study Abroad	16%	42%

First-generation, racial-ethnic, major differences too

NSSE results, see "Annual Results"

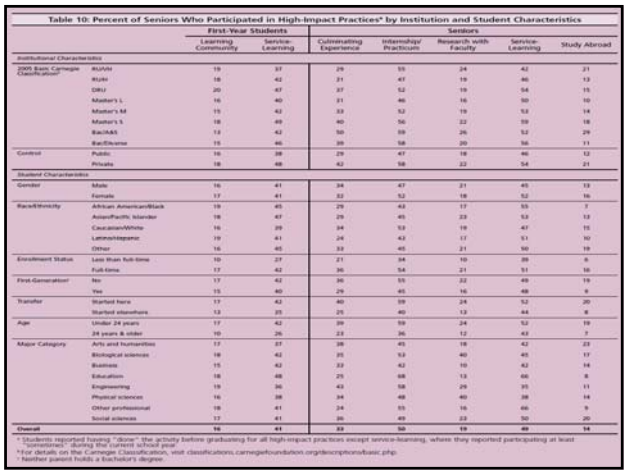


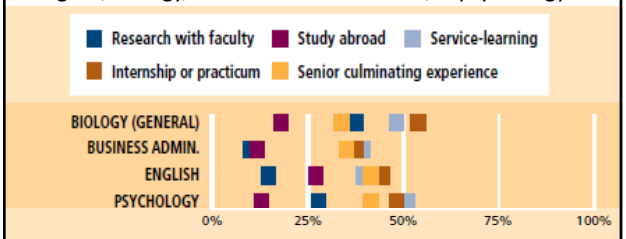
Table 10: Percent of Seniors Who Participated in High-Impact Practices* by Institution and Student Characteristics

		First-Year Students		Seniors				
		Learning Community	Service-Learning	Culminating Experience	Internship/ Practicum	Research with Faculty	Service-Learning	Study Abroad
Institutional Characteristics								
2005 Basic Carnegie Classification†	RU/VH	19	37	29	55	24	42	21
	RU/H	18	42	31	47	19	46	13
	DRU	20	47	37	52	19	54	15
	Master's L	16	40	31	46	16	50	10
	Master's M	15	42	33	52	19	53	14
	Master's S	18	49	40	56	22	59	18
	Bac/AS	13	42	50	59	26	52	29
	Bac/Diverse	15	46	39	58	20	56	11
Control	Public	16	38	29	47	18	46	12
	Private	18	48	42	58	22	54	21
Student Characteristics								
Gender	Male	16	41	34	47	21	45	13
	Female	17	41	32	52	18	52	16
Race/Ethnicity	African American/Black	19	45	29	43	17	55	7
	Asian/Pacific Islander	18	47	29	45	23	53	13
	Caucasian/White	16	39	34	53	19	47	15
	Latino/Hispanic	19	41	24	43	17	51	10
	Other	16	45	33	45	21	50	19
Enrollment Status	Less than full-time	10	27	21	34	10	39	6
	Full-time	17	42	36	54	21	51	16
First-Generation‡	No	17	42	36	55	22	49	15
	Yes	15	40	29	45	16	48	9
Transfer	Started here	17	42	40	59	24	52	20
	Started elsewhere	13	35	25	40	13	44	8
Age	Under 24 years	17	42	28	59	24	52	19
	24 years & older	10	26	23	36	12	43	7
Major Category	Arts and humanities	17	37	38	45	18	42	23
	Biological sciences	18	42	35	53	40	45	17
	Business	15	42	23	42	10	42	14
	Education	18	48	25	68	13	66	8
	Engineering	19	36	43	58	29	35	11
	Physical sciences	16	38	34	48	40	38	14
	Other professional	19	41	24	55	16	46	9
	Social sciences	17	41	36	49	23	50	20
Overall		16	41	33	50	19	49	14

* Students reported having "done" the activity before graduating for all high-impact practices except service-learning, where they reported participating at least "sometimes" during the current school year.
† For details on the Carnegie Classification, visit classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/basic.php.
‡ Neither parent holds a bachelor's degree.

Involvement in HIPs Varies Substantially by Major

- Considerable differences in 4 largest-enrollment majors: English, biology, business administration, & psychology.



[a] Percent responding "Done" for each activity, except service-learning, which is the percent responding at least "Sometimes." Results are unweighted. The first four majors (shaded at top) are examined in the following sections.

***NSSE Annual Results 2010**, Major Differences: Examining Student Engagement by Field of Study*

Percent of Service Learning by Major

(% who responded at least "Sometimes")

1	Nursing	78%	16	Anthro	43%
2	Phys Ed.	75%	17	Econ	43%
3	Elem Ed	69%	18	ENGL	42%
4	Urban Plan	65%	19	Math	42%
5	Occup/PT	64%	20	Civil Engr.	42%
6	Sec Ed	61%	21	History	41%
7	Pharmacy	57%	22	Industrial Engr.	41%
8	Health Tech	57%	23	BUSINESS ADM	41%
9	Ethnic Studies	53%	24	Chem	41%
10	PSYCH	51%	25	BioChem/BioPh	40%
11	BIO (gen)	47%	26	Acctg	40%
12	Poli Sci	47%	27	Botany	36%
13	Journalism	46%	28	Physics	34%
14	Finance	45%	29	Chem Engr.	34%
15	Art, fine,	43%	30	Elec Engr.	34%

Best Practices for Service Learning

(Brownell & Swaner, 2010)

Within Service-Learning Programs

- Create opportunities for structured reflection.
- Ensure that faculty connect classroom material with the service experience.
- Require enough service hours to make the experience significant.
- Focus on the quality of the service, ensuring that students have direct contact with clients.
- Oversee activities at the service site.

What to Do?

Make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high impact activities



- **One in First Year**
  - FY seminars
  - Learning communities
  - Service learning
- **One Later in Major**
  - Study abroad
  - Student-faculty research
  - Field placement or internship
  - Capstone project

Educationally Effective Institutions and High Impact Practices

- Weave experiences into courses, and require
- Introduce HIPs to students early – pre-school and orientation - and reinforce in advising
- Craft short term study abroad, "mini-HIPs"
- Emphasize HIPs relevant to the educational environment – i.e., Urban institutions emphasize internships
- Encourage pilots & support faculty development
- Bridge curriculum and co-curriculum

Be Intentional about Exposing Students to Educationally Effective Practice



Considerations for Expanding Engagement in HIPs

1. Historically underrepresented students benefit substantially from HIPs, yet not all take part (First-generation, some racial-ethnic groups, transfer students)
2. Introduce HIPs early and often -- *get experience on students radar*
3. Explore students' assumptions about practices (who participates, cost, demands, etc.) – *debunk myths*
4. How might student & academic affairs work together to make these experiences more widespread?

To ponder: Transformational learning & student success



1. Which high-impact practices are distinctive to your campus? Why?
2. How might opportunities for ALL students to participate in high-impact practices be expanded?
3. What cross-campus collaborations exist for service-learning?

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Discussion and Comments

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