Student Success at ETSU: Creating Conditions That Matter

George D. Kuh
East Tennessee State University
April 16, 2019
There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.

Desmond Tutu
Student Success

Insuring that the U.S. and its citizens thrive in the global future requires a postsecondary education that results in high levels of learning and personal development for ALL students.
The Major Tasks

Teach students to:

- **Reflect** – think about their thinking and experiences in and out of the classroom, on and off the campus

- **Integrate** – connect and realize the relevance of what they are learning from different courses, out-of-class experiences, and life beyond the institution

- **Apply** – transfer and use what one has learned in different settings that present novel challenges and opportunities
What If...

- Our work was based on what we know about students today and how they best learn and develop...?
- We created optimum conditions for learning and belonging for all students...?
- Then, how would we re-design our policies, programs and practices?
- And what would we do to be sure our work was making a difference?
Overview

- What the world and ETSU students need now
- Why and how engagement matters to student success and belonging
- One BIG idea
- Conversation
Today’s U.S. Workforce

What percent of the entire labor force changes jobs **ANNUALLY**?
(a) 9%  (b) 15%  (c) 21%
(d) 27%  (e) 33%  

e. 33+%  

DOL-BLS
Today’s U.S. Workforce

What percent of workers have been with their company fewer than 5 years?
(a) 18% (b) 29% (c) 38%
(d) 50% (e) 61%

d. 50%

DOL-BLS
Economy Defined by Greater Workplace Challenges and Dynamism

- More than 1/3 of the entire US labor force changes jobs ANNUALLY.
- Half of workers have been with their company less than 5 years.
- Every year, more than 30 million Americans are working in jobs that did not exist in the previous year.
The Gig Economy

- About **57 million** workers today are freelancers
- Linked estimates that about **43%** of workforce is contract, fixed-term, or self-employed
- The Freelancers Union has **375,000** members and predicts by 2027 half of all workers will be freelancers.
What the World Needs Now

1. ETSU graduates ready to hit the ground running, with the knowledge, proficiencies, and dispositions to be economically self-sufficient, and socially, personally and civically engaged and responsible

2. An educated citizenry prepared for a lifetime of continuous learning, reflection, and self-mediated intellectual, vocational, and personal development
**Know Your Students**

Part (not all) of being a good educator is knowing that you always have something new to learn — not so much about teaching and advising approaches, but about these particular students at this particular time and their particular set of aspirations, confusions, misconceptions, and ignorance (Bain, 2004, p.174)
Early College Indicators of Persistence and Success

- Psycho-social fit
- Academic and social support
- Credit hours completed
- Goal realization
- Student engagement
What *Really* Matters in College: **Student Engagement**

*Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of college impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement.*

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 602
It Takes a Whole Campus to Educate a Student
Something Else That Really Matters in College

The greatest impact appears to stem from students’ **total level** of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are **mutually reinforcing**…

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 647
Student Engagement Trifecta

- What students **do** -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions **do** -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the **right activities**
Good Practices in Undergraduate Education
(Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Mayhew et al., 2016)

✓ Student-faculty/staff contact
✓ Active learning
✓ Prompt feedback
✓ Time on task
✓ High expectations
✓ Respect for diverse learning styles
✓ Cooperation among students
Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, gains across a range of desired outcomes, and engagement go hand in hand
It’s more complicated than this…

- Many educational effects are “conditional”
- Some have unusually positive effects – high-impact practices
HIPs: An Epiphenomenon
High-Impact Activities

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Inquiry & Creative Activity
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service/Community-Based Learning
- Internships and Field Placements
- Capstone Courses and Projects
- ePortfolio
Why HIPs Are Important

- They are associated with positive effects on a variety of desired outcomes
- They have *salutary effects* for students from historically underserved populations
- They foster belonging by shrinking the psychological size of the institution
- Multiple HIPs have cumulative, additive effects
- They require applied, hands-on, deep integrative learning
What Has Driven Rapid Acceptance and Adoption of HIPs

- **Outside-In Pressures**
  - Policy makers want more college graduates
  - Employers want college grads ready to “hit the ground running” and value applied learning experiences
% saying each would help a lot/fair amount to prepare college students for success

84% Students complete a significant project before graduation that demonstrates their depth of knowledge in their major AND their acquisition of analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills (62% help a lot)

81% Students complete an internship or community-based field project to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences (66%)

81% Students develop research skills appropriate to their field and develop evidence-based analyses (57%)

73% Students work through ethical issues and debates to form their own judgments (48%)
What Has Driven Rapid Acceptance and Adoption of HIPs

- **Outside-In Pressures**
  - Policy makers want more college graduates
  - Employers want college grads ready to “hit the ground running” and value applied learning experiences
  - Cross-cutting skills needed for post college success
Key Capabilities Open the Door for Career Success and Earnings

“Irrespective of college major or institutional selectivity, what matters to career success is students’ development of a broad set of cross-cutting capacities…”

Anthony Carnevale, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
Narrow Learning is Not Enough: The Essential Learning Outcomes

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical & Natural World**
- **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
- **Personal and Social Responsibility**
- **“Deep” Integrative Learning**
Deep, Integrative Learning

- Attend to the underlying meaning of information as well as content
- Integrate and synthesize different ideas, sources of information
- Discern patterns in evidence or phenomena
- Apply knowledge in different situations
- View issues from multiple perspectives
Essential Learning Outcome: Deep/Integrative Learning

- Integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Included diverse perspectives in class discussions/writing
- Put together ideas from different courses
- Discussed ideas with faculty members outside of class
- Discussed ideas with others outside of class
- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory

- Synthesizing & organizing ideas, info., or experiences
- Making judgments about the value of information
- Applying theories to practical problems or in new situations
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views
- Tried to better understand someone else's views
- Learned something that changed how you understand an issue
What Has Driven Rapid Acceptance and Adoption of HIPs

- **Inside-Out Initiatives**
  - Leadership from AAC&U

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*Liberal Education & America’s Promise*

*Excellence for Everyone as a Nation Goes to College*
AAC&U HIPs Resources
Assessing Underserved Students’ Engagement in High-Impact Practices

By Ashley Finley and Tia McNair

With an Assessing Equity in High-Impact Practices Toolkit Developed by Estela Mara Bensimon, Alicia C. Dowd, and Debbie Peterson Hanson of the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California

Investing in Success

Cost-Effective Strategies to Increase Student Success

By Jane Wellman and Rima Bruski

AAC&U HIPs Resources
What Has Driven Rapid Acceptance and Adoption of HIPs

- **Inside-Out Initiatives**
  - Leadership from AAC&U
  - NSSE-led research and crosswalk
    - 2013 revision featured four engagement indicators/themes, HIPs and topical modules
    - Multiple studies linking engagement, HIPs, and deep learning
  - CCSSE formulation of HIPs
# Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Deep/Integrative Learning and Gains

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<th>Deep Learning</th>
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# Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Student Engagement

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What Has Driven Rapid Acceptance and Adoption of HIPs

- **Inside-Out Initiatives**
  - Leadership from AAC&U
  - NSSE-led research and crosswalk
  - Equity minded concerns
High-Impact Practices and the Disparities Within...

Frosh: Service Learning and LCs

- Parity among racial/ethnic groups
- Fewer 1st gen students
- Fewer part-time students
- Fewer older students
High-Impact Practices and the Disparities Within…

Seniors in All HIPs

✔ Fewer 1st gen students
✔ Fewer students of color
✔ Fewer part-time students
✔ Fewer older students
Graduation Rates by Ethnicity and Participation in High-Impact Practices

Source: CSU Northridge Institutional Research
August, 2010

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  - Half of all IHEs trying to improve or scale HIPs including the more selective schools (NILOA Provost 2017 Survey)
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- HIPs-focused institutional improvement plans for HLC, SACS, MSA, etc.
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- SUNY applied learning requirement
- Other efforts to promote active and experiential learning
WAIT -- There’s More

- HIPs are particularly promising for cultivating sense of belonging and dispositional attributes such as intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies, which are considered essential for a success during and after college.
**Dispositional Attributes**

- **Interpersonal competencies** -- expressing information to others, interpreting others’ messages and responding appropriately.
- **Intrapersonal competencies** -- self-management, conscientiousness, flexibility, resilience
- **Neuro-cognitive competencies** – crystallized and fluid intelligence
What Google Managers Prefer

- Generosity
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Emotional intelligence
- Effective communication and listening skills
- Egalitarian sensibilities
- Collaborative problem solving
High-Impact Activities Increase Odds Students Will...

- Strive to reach expectations set at appropriately high levels
- Invest time and effort
- Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Experience diversity
- Get more frequent feedback
- Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications
- Demonstrate competence publicly
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- Invest time and effort
- Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Experience diversity
- Get more frequent feedback
- Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications
- Demonstrate competence publicly
- Reflect and integrate learning
Keep in mind...

- More college experiences can be or are “high impact” in addition to those on the AAC&U list. Likely suspects:
  - campus publications
  - intercollegiate athletics
  - touring bands and choirs
  - dramatic arts
  - leadership positions
  - peer mentoring & tutoring (KNACK)
  - campus employment …
THE BIG IDEA
Make campus employment something akin to a HIP
Supervisors had two structured conversations with every student employee during spring semester and coded conversations into the following categories:

- How the job and academics complement each other ("How is your job fitting in with your academics?")
- Transfer between work and academics ("What are you learning here at work that is helping you in school?")
- Transfer between academics and work ("Are you learning anything in class that you can apply here at work?")
- Transfer between work and future career ("Give me a couple of examples of things that you are learning here at work that you will be using in your future profession?")
IOWA GROW® participants were more likely (p<.01) to agree/strongly agree that their job was helping them attain the following outcomes of student employment:

1. My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my life as a student.
2. My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time employment.
3. My job has helped me improve my written communication skills.
4. I can see connections between my job and major/coursework.
5. My job has helped me learn about career options.
6. My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills.
7. My job has helped me improve my oral communication skills.
8. My job has helped me develop conflict resolution skills.
9. My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.
10. Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.
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Something Else That Really Matters in College

For many students, working while in college is a defining characteristic of the undergraduate experience. A Good Job makes the case for campus employment as a high-impact practice and provides models for how to implement effective student employment strategies.

McClellan et al., 2018
Other Practices That Matter a Lot

- Front-load resources and support
- Require orientation (also for transfers)
- Practice proactive advising
- Deploy *effective* early warning systems
- Reduce D/W/F rates
- Organize residences around educational themes
- Scale up Supplemental Instruction
- Communicate regularly with students’ family members
The Major Tasks

Teach students to:

- **Reflect** – think about their thinking and experiences in and out of the classroom, on and off the campus
- **Integrate** – connect and realize the relevance of what they are learning from different courses, out-of-class experiences, and life beyond the institution
- **Apply** – transfer and use what one has learned in different settings that present novel challenges and opportunities
The things we have to learn before we do them, we learn by doing them.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Questions & Discussion