

National Institute for  
Learning Outcomes Assessment  
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

# **What Matters to Student Success: The Promise of High- Impact Practices**

**George D. Kuh**

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas A&M  
Assessment Conference**

**February 20, 2012**





**“It’s the Learning, Stupid”**



# The Major Tasks

Teach and assess how well students:

- **Reflect** – on their experiences inside and outside the classroom
- **Integrate** – see the connections between different courses, out-of-class experiences, and life beyond the institution
- **Apply** – use what one has learned in different settings presenting novel challenges and opportunities

## What If...

- ❖ We imagined what our work would be like using what we know about how students learn...?
- ❖ And we created optimum learning conditions for all our students...?
- ❖ And used assessment approaches that measure the learning we value?
- Then, how would we re-design our institution?
- What kinds of *teaching, advising, and assessment* approaches would we use?

# Overview



- **What the world needs now**
- **Why engagement matters**
- **High-impact practices**
- **Five priorities for our work**





# **US Economy Defined by Greater Workplace Challenges and Dynamism**

- **More than 1/3 of the entire US labor force changes jobs *ANNUALLY*.**
- **Today's students will have 10-14 jobs by age 38.**
- **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 World is Demanding More

- More college educated workers.
- Higher levels of learning and knowledge for all college graduates.



# Employer expectations of employees have increased

*% who agree with each statement*

Our company is asking employees to **take on more responsibilities** and to **use a broader set of skills** than in the past



Employees are expected to **work harder to coordinate with other departments** than in the past



The **challenges** employees face within our company are **more complex today** than they were in the past



To succeed in our company, employees need **higher levels of learning and knowledge** today than they did in the past





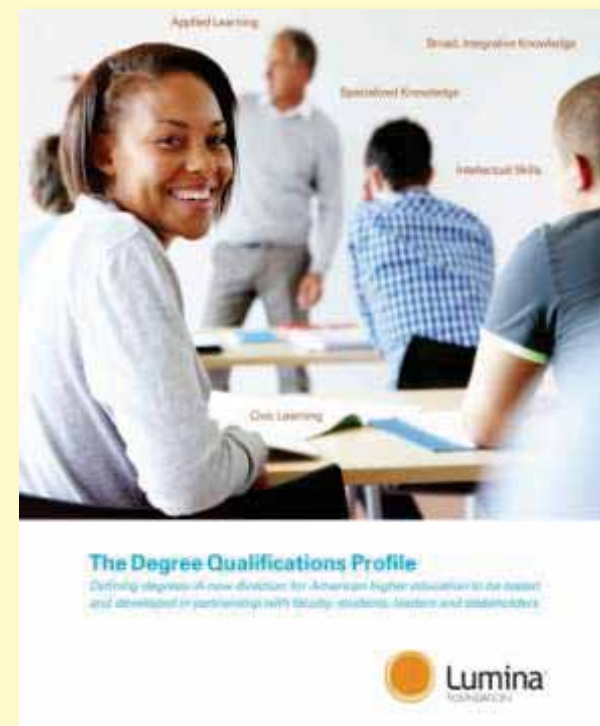
# Key Capabilities Open the Door for Career Success and Earnings

“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 U.  
Center on Education and the Workforce*

# Degree Qualifications Profile

- Broad, integrative knowledge
- Specialized knowledge
- Intellectual skills
- Applied learning
- Civic learning



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## Narrow Learning is Not Enough: The Essential Learning Outcomes

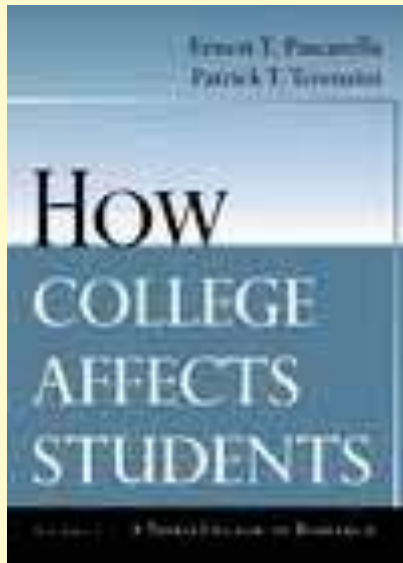


- ★ *Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical & Natural World*
- ★ *Intellectual and Practical Skills*
- ★ *Personal and Social Responsibility*
- ★ ***“Deep” Integrative Learning***

## ***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**

# 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

# Student Engagement Trifecta

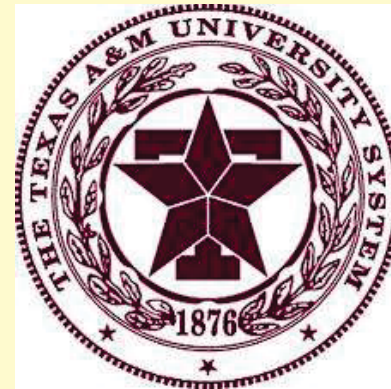
- What students **do** -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions **do** -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward ***the right activities***



# ***Good Practices in Undergraduate Education***

(Chickering & Gamson, 1987;  
Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

- ✓ **Student-faculty contact**
- ✓ **Active learning**
- ✓ **Prompt feedback**
- ✓ **Time on task**
- ✓ **High expectations**
- ✓ **Respect for diverse learning styles**
- ✓ **Cooperation among students**





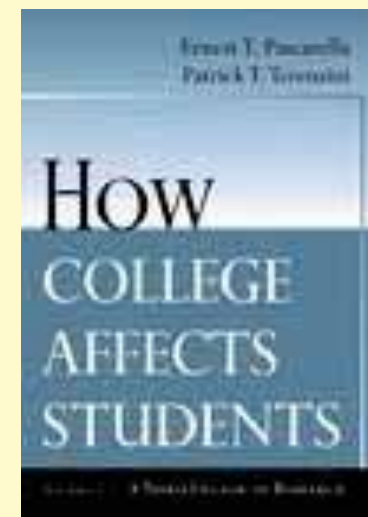
# ***It Takes a Whole Campus to Educate a Student***



# 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





***National Survey of  
Student Engagement  
(pronounced “nessie”)***



***Community College  
Survey of Student  
Engagement  
(pronounced “cessie”)***



**College student surveys that assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development**

**Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, gains across a range of desired outcomes, and engagement go hand in hand**



## 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



LEAP



LEAP



# High-Impact Educational Practices

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHAT THEY ARE,  
WHO HAS ACCESS TO THEM,  
AND WHY THEY MATTER

BY GEORGE D. KUH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY CAROL GEARY SCHNEIDER  
AND FINDINGS ON STUDENT SUCCESS FROM AAC&U'S  
LEAP INITIATIVE



[www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org)

## *High-Impact Activities*



- ★ 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



## *Essential Learning Outcome:*

# **NSSE 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

# ***Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Deep/Integrative Learning and Gains***

|  | Deep<br>Learning | Gains<br>General | Gains<br>Personal | Gains<br>Practical |
|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|

## **First-Year**

|                      |     |    |     |    |
|----------------------|-----|----|-----|----|
| Learning Communities | +++ | ++ | ++  | ++ |
| Service Learning     | +++ | ++ | +++ | ++ |

## **Senior**

|                          |     |    |     |    |
|--------------------------|-----|----|-----|----|
| Study Abroad             | ++  | +  | ++  |    |
| Student-Faculty Research | +++ | ++ | ++  | ++ |
| Internship               | ++  | ++ | ++  | ++ |
| Service Learning         | +++ | ++ | +++ | ++ |
| Culminating Experience   | ++  | ++ | ++  | ++ |

+ p < .001, ++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .10, +++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .30

# ***Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Student Engagement***

|  | Level of<br>Academic<br>Challenge | Active and<br>Collab.<br>Learning | Student-<br>Faculty<br>Interaction | Supportive<br>Campus<br>Env. |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|

## **First-Year**

|                      |    |     |     |    |
|----------------------|----|-----|-----|----|
| Learning Communities | ++ | +++ | +++ | ++ |
| Service Learning     | ++ | +++ | +++ | ++ |

## **Senior**

|                          |     |     |     |    |
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| Culminating Experience   | ++  | ++  | +++ | ++ |

+ p < .001, ++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .10, +++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .30



## ***High-Impact Activities*** **Increase Odds Students Will:**

- ✓ ***Invest time and effort***
- ✓ ***Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters***
- ✓ ***Experience diversity***
- ✓ ***Get more frequent feedback***
- ✓ ***Reflect & integrate learning***
- ✓ ***Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications***

## ***Impact of High-Impact Activities Enhanced When Students:***

- ✓ ***Strive to reach expectations set at appropriately high levels***
- ✓ *Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters*
- ✓ *Experience diversity*
- ✓ *Get more frequent feedback*
- ✓ *Reflect & integrate learning*
- ✓ *Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications*
- ✓ ***Demonstrate competence publicly***

## Keep in Mind...

- ✓ More college experiences can be or are “high impact” in addition to those on the AAC&U list
- ✓ Implementation quality matters!
- ✓ Implications for advising



# High-Impact Practices and the Disparities Within...

## Frosh: Service Learning and LCs

- ✓ *Parity among racial/ethnic groups*
- ✓ *Fewer 1<sup>st</sup> gen students*
- ✓ *Fewer part-time students*
- ✓ *Fewer transfer students*
- ✓ *Fewer older students*

# High-Impact Practices and the Disparities Within...

## Seniors in All HIPs

- ✓ ***Fewer 1<sup>st</sup> gen students***
- ✓ ***Fewer students of color***
- ✓ ***Fewer transfer students***
- ✓ ***Fewer part-time students***
- ✓ ***Fewer older students***



## Keep in Mind...

- ✓ More college experiences can be or are high impact in addition to those on the AAC&U list
- ✓ Implementation quality matters!
- ✓ Implications for advising
- ✓ **The characteristics of high-impact activities can be infused into any classroom, lab, studio or other learning setting**

# Five Priorities

## 1. Insist on doing what works



# **Engaging Pedagogies and Practices**

- a. Classroom organization***
- b. Early and continuing assignments requiring reflection and integration coupled with feedback***
- c. Use of peer preceptors/mentors***
- d. One minute papers (variations)***
- e. Case studies***
- f. Debates***
- g. Simulations***
- h. Small group problem sets***
- i. Others...***

## **Make Effective Practice Mandatory**

- **Require intrusive advising and orientation**
- **Stop late registration**
- **Math refresher before placement test**
- **Use valid placement tests**
- **Reduce D/W/F rates**
- **Deploy *effective* early warning systems**
- **Communicate with at-risk student family members**
- **Use assessment approaches that measure the outcomes we seek**



# Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) Rubrics

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Reading
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Civic knowledge and engagement
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
- Integrative learning





# AAC&U VALUE Project – 15 Rubrics



Association  
of American  
Colleges and  
Universities

## FALL 2008 VALUE INTEGRATIVE LEARNING METARUBRIC DRAFT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

*This rubric is the first step in a rubric development process that will produce additional drafts, each responsive to the feedback received. Feedback deadline is February 15, 2009. The next draft of this rubric will be available in May 2009. For more information or to give feedback, please email Wende Morgaine at [wendenm@gmail.com](mailto:wendenm@gmail.com). Thank you!*

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a **zero** to any performance that doesn't meet level one performance.

|                                                                                                      | 4                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3                                                                                                                     | 2                                                                                                                                   | 1                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Connections to experience</b><br><i>Connects relevant experience &amp; academic knowledge</i>     | Shows evidence of combining fields of study and one's own perspective on classroom content as well as life situations to illuminate and deepen one's analysis, synthesis, or interpretation(s). | Demonstrates an understanding of the influence of fields of study with one's own experience outside of the classroom. | Begins to appropriately associate one's own experience outside of the classroom with fields of study.                               | Demonstrates some understanding of how one's own experience outside of formal classroom relates to fields of study. |
| <b>Connections to discipline</b><br><i>Sees (makes) connections across disciplines, perspectives</i> | Extends and recombines theories/frameworks using examples and facts to deepen analysis of issues or define/solve problems; takes multiple perspectives on a range of issues.                    | Uses examples, facts, and theories from beyond a field of study, and identifies multiple perspectives.                | Includes an example, fact, or theory from outside a field of study; acknowledges the presence or possibility of other perspectives. | Stays within the confines of a discipline in the context of assignments; and articulates one perspective.           |
| <b>Transfer</b><br><i>Adapts knowledge, concepts, and/or tools from one discipline to another</i>    | Adapts familiar frameworks for new uses.                                                                                                                                                        | Synthesizes familiar frameworks into new uses.                                                                        | Applies familiar frameworks to new situations.                                                                                      | Connects familiar frameworks to new situations.                                                                     |
| <b>Communication</b><br><i>Balances form and content in communication choices</i>                    | Within context of portfolio (or artifacts being reviewed), demonstrates clear ability to integrate or synthesize content, medium, and form to skillfully communicate complex learning.          | Begins to use medium and form to contribute and respond to content.                                                   | Demonstrates of an awareness of how form can contribute and respond to content.                                                     | Uses medium and form adequately to convey content.                                                                  |
| <b>Identity as Learner</b><br><i>Reflects on</i>                                                     | In challenging learning situations, articulates one's identity as a learner and contributor to a variety of settings, which may include academic work, campus and civic environments.           | Articulates one's identity as a learner, beginning to contribute in environments characterized by ambiguity and risk. | Articulates one's own learning strengths and sets goals for improvement.                                                            | Begins to identify one's self as a learner, differentiating appropriately one's self from what one is learning.     |



## **NILOA**

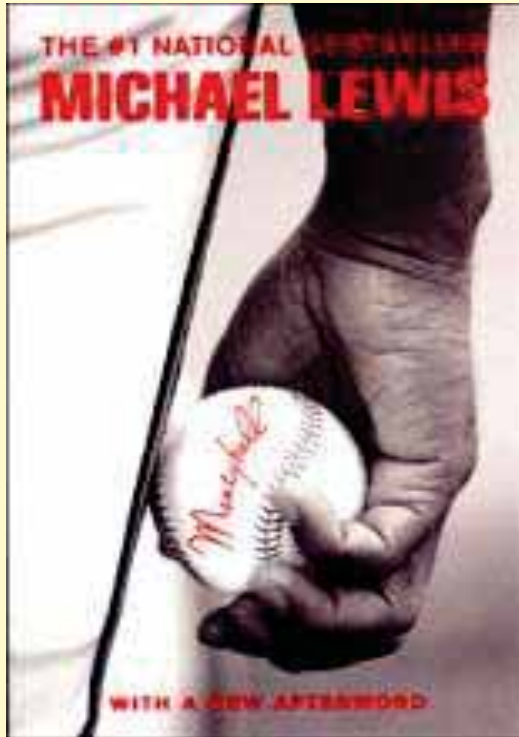
**NILOA's mission is to document student learning outcomes assessment work, identify and disseminate best practices, and support institutions in their assessment efforts.**

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**[www.learningoutcomesassessment.org](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org)**

# Five Priorities

## 2. Put money where it makes a difference to student success.

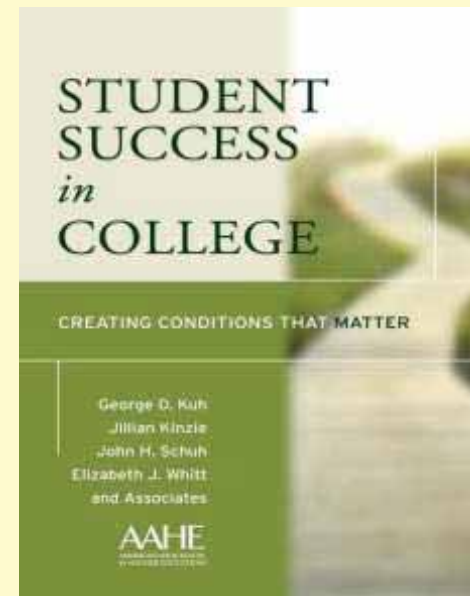
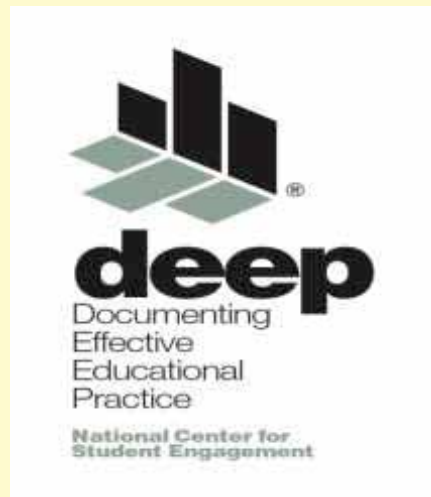


*“...in professional baseball it still matters less how much you have than how well you spend it”*

# Five Priorities

## 2. Put money where it makes a difference to student success.

*It's not **how much** you spend but **where** (DEEP study, Delta Cost Project, Cornell studies)*

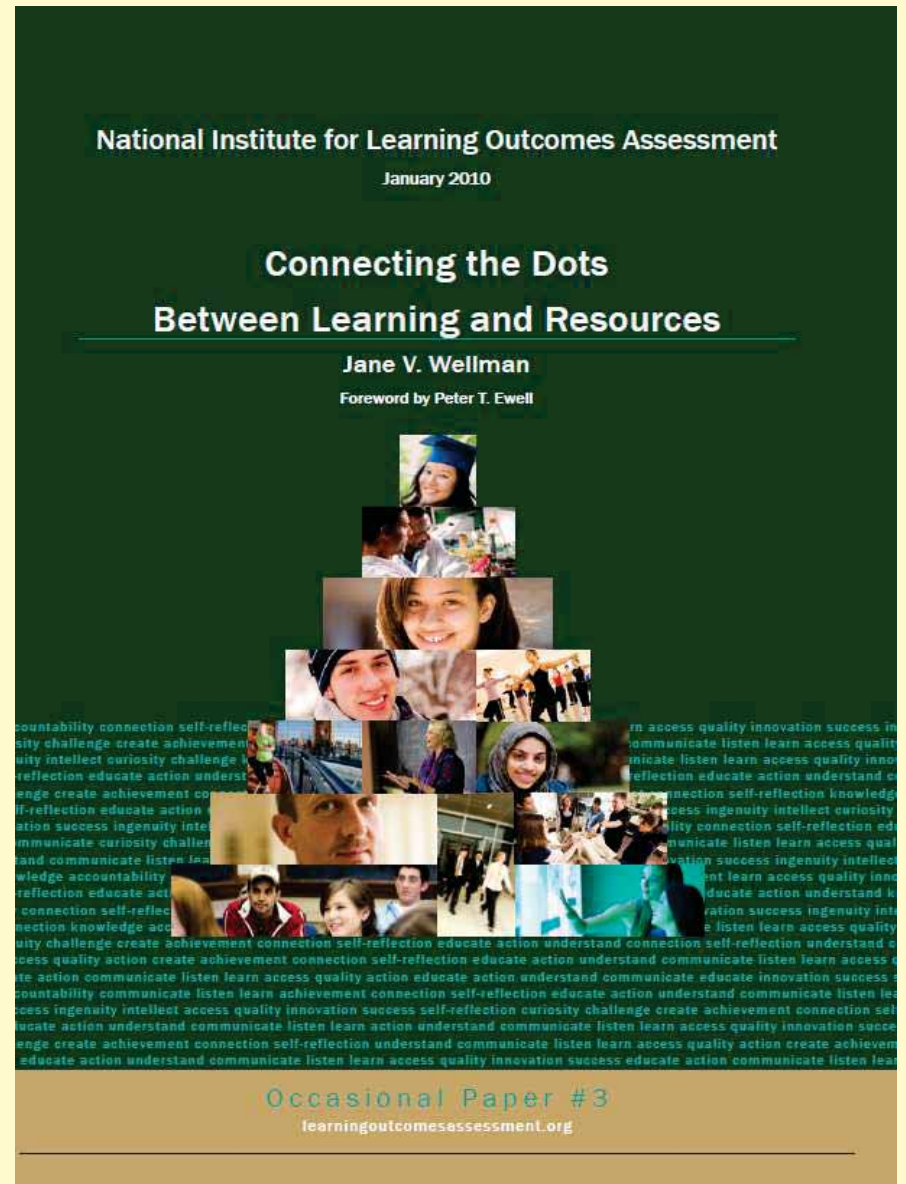


# Occasional Paper #3

# Connecting the Dots Between Learning and Resources

# Jane V. Wellman

With all the talk about the need for more accountability, surprisingly little is known about what kind of resources an institution needs in order to produce a given level of student attainment.





## **Wellman's Conclusions**

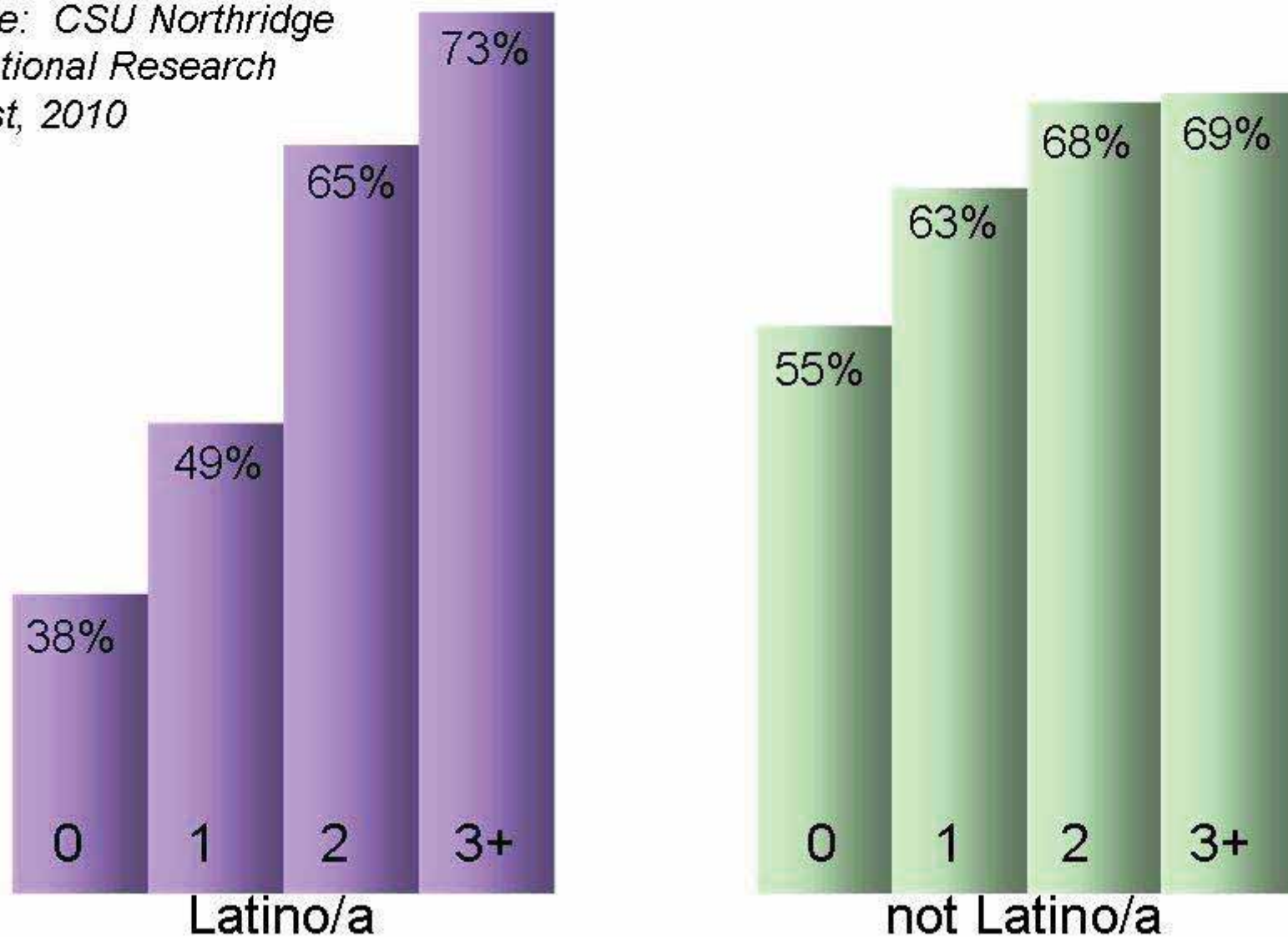
- **Intentionality matters as much or more than money alone**
- **Spending on instruction and student services pays off in learning, retention and graduation**
- **Excess units cost institutions money, cost students in time and money, and do not get students to the finish line**

## Five Priorities

1. Insist on doing what works
2. Put money where it makes a difference to student success.
3. Sunset redundant and ineffective programs
4. Have **every student** do (at least) one high-quality “high-impact” experience in the first year and another linked to the major

# Graduation Rates by Ethnicity and Participation in High-Impact Practices

Source: CSU Northridge  
Institutional Research  
August, 2010



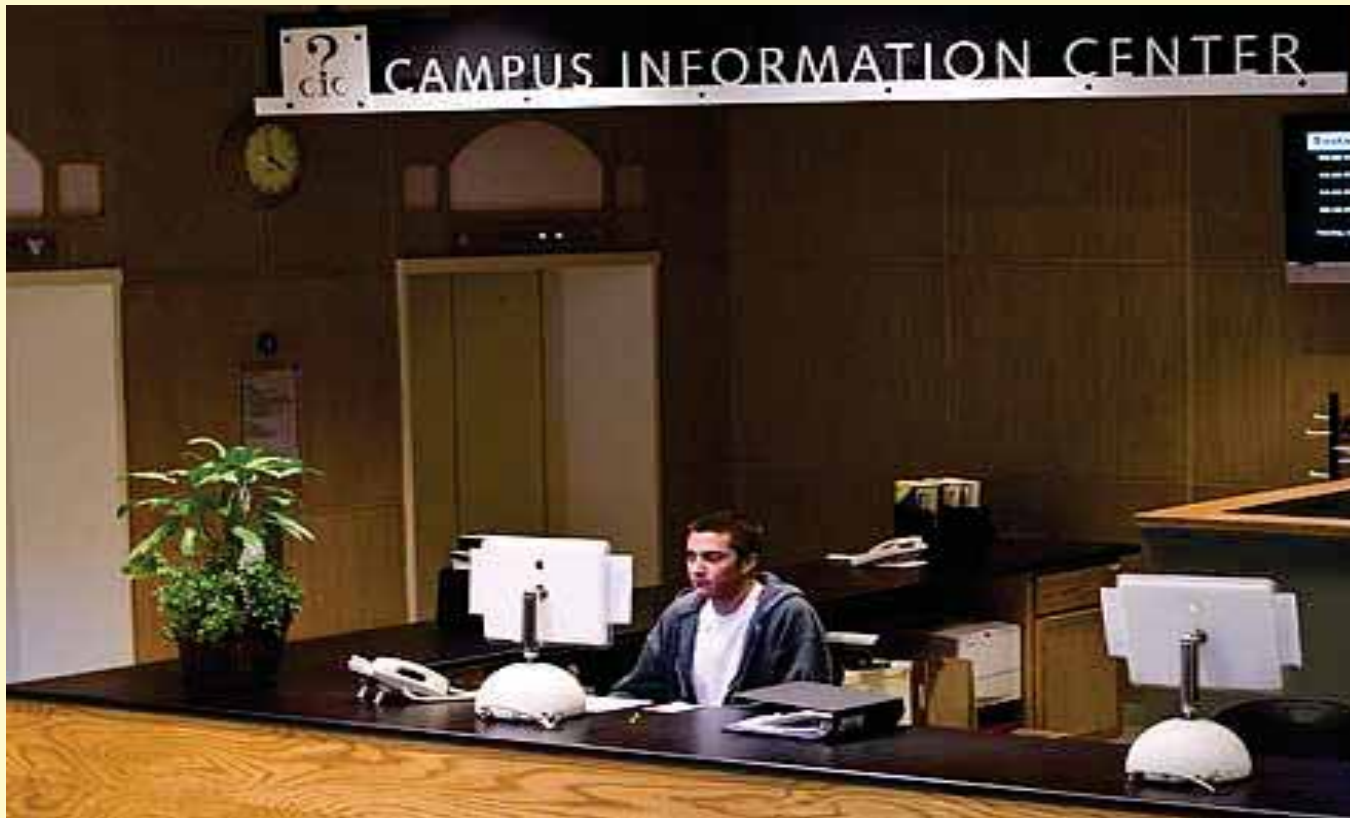
# Employers assess the potential value of high-impact educational practices

*% 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%)*

## Five Priorities

**5. Make work a high-impact activity.**





# **U of Iowa Student Employment Project “Guided Reflection on Work” (GROW)**

- Supervisors from Student Health Service/, Housing, Iowa Memorial Union, Libraries
- Supervisors received one hour of training on:
  - Outcomes of student employment
  - Results from the previous year’s Division of Student Services Student Employment Survey
  - Background on the role supervisors can play in helping students make connections between work and academics
  - Expectations for the Pilot Projects

# **U of Iowa Student Employment Project**

## **“Guided Reflection on Work” (GROW)**

- 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?”)

# **U of Iowa Student Employment Project “Guided Reflection on Work” (GROW)**

- **Student Employment Survey used to examine differences between pilot and non-pilot participants.**



# Student Employment Outcomes: “Guided Reflection on Work” (GROW)

| <b><i>Outcome</i></b>                                                             | % agree/strongly agree |           | Mean  |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|                                                                                   | Pilot Participants     | Non-Pilot | Pilot | Non-Pilot |
| My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my life as a student. | 60%                    | 51%       | 3.8   | 3.3       |
| My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time work.                     | 62%                    | 51%       | 3.6   | 3.4       |
| My job has helped me improve my written communications.                           | 16%                    | 21%       | 2.6   | 2.7       |

# Student Employment Outcomes: “Guided Reflection on Work” (GROW)

| <b><i>Outcome</i></b>                                         | % agree/strongly agree |           | Mean  |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|                                                               | Pilot Participants     | Non-Pilot | Pilot | Non-Pilot |
| I can see connections between my job and my major/coursework. | 56%                    | 36%       | 3.4   | 2.9       |
| My job has helped me learn about career options.              | 30%                    | 39%       | 3.2   | 3.3       |



# Student Employment Outcomes: “Guided Reflection on Work” (GROW)

| <b><i>Outcome</i></b>                                                                                                       | % agree/strongly agree |           | Mean  |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|                                                                                                                             | Pilot Participants     | Non-Pilot | Pilot | Non-Pilot |
| Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures. | 82%                    | 77%       | 4.1   | 4.0       |
| My job has helped me use critical thinking skills                                                                           | 70%                    | 57%       | 3.8   | 3.5       |

# Student Employment Outcomes: “Guided Reflection on Work” (GROW)

| <b><i>Outcome</i></b>                                           | % agree/strongly agree |           | Mean  |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|                                                                 | Pilot Participants     | Non-Pilot | Pilot | Non-Pilot |
| My job helped me develop more effective time management skills. | 76%                    | 76%       | 4.0   | 4.0       |
| My job helped me improve my oral communication skills.          | 78%                    | 72%       | 4.0   | 3.8       |
| My job helped me develop conflict resolution skills.            | 74%                    | 61%       | 3.8   | 3.6       |

## **Ponder This**

- 1. What high-impact practices (HIPs) are available and which students do them?**
- 2. Are our HIPs designed for and available only to certain majors? Should they be?**
- 3. Do students know about the HIPs available here? How do they learn about them?**
- 4. How do we know our HIPs are effective? What is the evidence?**

***The things we have to learn  
before we do them, we learn  
by doing them.***

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*



# The Major Tasks

Teach and assess how well students:

- **Reflect** – on their experiences inside and outside the classroom
- **Integrate** – see the connections between different courses, out-of-class experiences, and life beyond the institution
- **Apply** – use what one has learned in different settings presenting novel challenges and opportunities



# Questions & Discussion



# High-Impact Educational Practices



## First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies.

First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

## Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a “core” curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

## Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link “liberal arts” and “professional courses”; others feature service learning.

## Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice “across the curriculum” has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

## Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

## Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

## Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

## Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

## Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

## Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called “senior capstones” or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of “best work,” or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.



Table 1

### Relationships between Selected High-Impact Activities, Deep Learning, and Self-Reported Gains

|                               | Deep Learning | Gains General | Gains Personal | Gains Practical |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| First-Year                    |               |               |                |                 |
| Learning Communities          | +++           | ++            | ++             | ++              |
| Service Learning              | +++           | ++            | +++            | ++              |
| Senior                        |               |               |                |                 |
| Study Abroad                  | ++            | +             | ++             |                 |
| Student-Faculty Research      | +++           | ++            | ++             | ++              |
| Service Learning              | ++            | +++           | +++            | ++              |
| Senior Culminating Experience | ++            | ++            | +++            | ++              |

+ p < .001, ++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .10, +++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .30

Table 2

### Relationships between Selected High-Impact Activities and Clusters of Effective Educational Practices

|                               | Level of Academic Challenge | Active and Collaborative Learning | Student-Faculty Interaction | Supportive Campus Environment |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| First-Year                    |                             |                                   |                             |                               |
| Learning Communities          | ++                          | +++                               | +++                         | ++                            |
| Service Learning              | ++                          | +++                               | +++                         | ++                            |
| Senior                        |                             |                                   |                             |                               |
| Study Abroad                  | ++                          | ++                                | ++                          | +                             |
| Student-Faculty Research      | +++                         | +++                               | +++                         | ++                            |
| Service Learning              | ++                          | +++                               | +++                         | ++                            |
| Senior Culminating Experience | ++                          | ++                                | +++                         | ++                            |

+ p < .001, ++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .10, +++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .30

Source: *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* by George D. Kuh, (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2008). For information and more resources and research from LEAP, see [www.aacu.org/leap](http://www.aacu.org/leap).

# National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

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## About NILOA

**NILOA's mission is to champion and support efforts by colleges and universities to obtain, use and share evidence of student learning to strengthen student attainment and improve undergraduate education.**

- Founded three years ago, NILOA is based at the University of Illinois and Indiana University. Stan Ikenberry and George Kuh serve as co-principal investigators.
- Influential thought leaders, heads of national higher education associations, and academic leaders serve as members of the NILOA Advisory Panel and oversee our work.
- NILOA is currently supported by Lumina Foundation for Education, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and The Teagle Foundation.
- While NILOA has a strong record of accomplishment, it seeks to expand its impact going forward as much remains to do in order to realize the promise of student learning outcomes assessment as a means to improve student and institutional performance.

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## NILOA's Reach

**NILOA has become the leading resource on learning outcome assessment at the collegiate level. The primary communication link with campuses is through a rich, well-developed and continuously updated website and a monthly electronic Newsletter.**

- Each month over 5,000 individuals visit the NILOA website seeking information, tools, and other resources. In the last three months, 16,169 visitors reviewed 40,792 pages. One third of these are regular return visitors, but nearly two out of three are new to the site, and so the level of use is expanding. While most users come from the US, NILOA's reach extends to over 100 countries/territories. A majority of people come directly to us or come through a search engine, but others come from The Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Education. Most people start on our home page, and review our Occasional Papers, Reports, and Resources pages. The NILOA website continues to grow. Among the regular features are:
  - Networking opportunities with various groups focused on assessment
  - Information about curriculum mapping
  - Several exemplars of assessment handbooks
  - Networking opportunities with various groups focused on assessment.
- The NILOA newsletter alerts nearly 7,000 college presidents, provosts, institutional research directors and assessment professionals to new resources, best practices, and fresh thinking about assessment and related topics.
  - The monthly newsletter is the primary mechanism for announcing NILOA work.
  - *Viewpoints* offer informed perspectives on assessment challenges designed to stimulate conversations.
  - Featured Websites illustrate good approaches to communicate assessment activities and information. These institutions are announced in the newsletter and information is available on our website. Some institutions have listed their featured status on their own campus websites.
- NILOA has addressed the challenge of making learning outcomes visible and useful to the public. A *Transparency Framework* was created for institutions to use in advancing this work.
  - Some 3,000 individuals viewed the framework in the last six months and institutions are using the Framework to modify their websites.
  - The Voluntary Framework for Accountability being developed by the American Association of Community Colleges has adopted NILOA's *Transparency Framework*.
  - Among the institutions that are using the *Transparency Framework* on their own institutions websites, are IUPUI, Brigham Young University-Idaho, Point Loma Nazarene University, Indiana University School of Informatics, Kalamazoo College, and Central Michigan University.

## NILOA's Focus

NILOA is committed to creating and disseminating tools, resources and perspectives useful to campuses as they assemble and use evidence of student learning to improve academic performance and respond to calls for greater accountability to society.

- NILOA Research Reports provide the first systematic examination of assessment on a national scale in the last ten years.

*More Than You Think, Less Than We Need: Assessment in Higher Education*, reported findings from the first national study about learning outcomes assessment at two- and four-year institutions;

*Down and In: Assessment Practices at the Program Level* presents a national profile of learning outcomes assessment at the program level where improvements in teaching and learning must occur;

*Exploring the Landscape: What Institutional Websites Reveal About Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Activities*, summarizes the state of institutional web page transparency;

*Perspectives from Campus Leaders on the Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* shares the views of campus leaders and others on the current state of quality assessment; and

*Making Student Learning Evidence Transparent: The State of the Art* is a collection of four reports on aspects of how institutions make available their efforts to assess student learning on their websites.

- NILOA has engaged the nation's leading scholars and leaders to address challenging contemporary issues. A series of Occasional Papers examines the current state-of-the-art in assessing learning outcomes in American higher education. Twelve have been released to date on a broad range of topics:

Banta, T.W., Griffin, M., Flateby, T.L., & Kahn, S. (2009, December). *Three Promising Alternatives for Assessing College Students' Knowledge and Skills*.

Blaich, C.F., & Wise, K.S. (2011, January). *From Gathering to Using Assessment Results: Lessons from the Wabash National Study*.

Ewell, P. (2009, November). *Assessment, Accountability, and Improvement: Revisiting the Tension*.

Gold, L., Rhoades, G., Smith, M., & Kuh, G. (2011, May). *What Faculty Unions say About Student Learning Outcomes Assessment*.

Hutchings, P. (2010, April). *Opening Doors to Faculty Involvement in Assessment*.

Nunley, C., Bers, T., & Manning, T. (2011, July). *The Status of Learning Outcomes Assessment in Community Colleges*.

Prineas, M., & Cini, M. (2011, October). *Assessing Learning in Online Education: The Role of Technology in Improving Student Outcomes*.

Provezis, S. (2010, October). *Regional Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Mapping the Territory*.

Schuh, J.H., & Gansemer-Topf, A.M. (2010, December). *The Role of Student Affairs in Student Learning Assessment*.

Swing, R.L., & Coogan, C.S. (2010, May). *Valuing Assessment: Cost-benefit Considerations*.

Volkwein, J.F. (2011, September). *Gaining Ground: The Role of Institutional Research in Assessing Student Outcomes and Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness*.

Wellman, J.V. (2010, January). *Connecting the Dots Between Learning and Resources*.



- NILOA has commissioned short, informative pieces on the purpose and practical use of assessment geared to particular audiences. So far two have been released:

Hutchings, P. (2011, April). *What new faculty need to know about assessment*. (NILOA Assessment Brief: Faculty).

Bresciani, M. (2011, August). *Making assessment meaningful: What new student affairs professionals and those new to assessment need to know*. (NILOA Assessment Brief: Student Affairs).

- NILOA Examples of Good Assessment Practice feature colleges and universities that are using assessment data to improve the institutions and programs.

Jankowski, N. (2011, July). *Juniata College: Faculty Led Assessment*. (NILOA Example of Good Assessment Practice).

Jankowski, N. (2011, August). *Capella University: An Outcomes-Based Institution*. (NILOA Example of Good Assessment Practice).

Kinzie, J. (2011, August). *Colorado State University: Academic and Student Affairs Improvement*. (NILOA Example of Good Assessment Practice).

Provezis, S. (2011, July). *Augustana College: An Assessment Review Committee's Role in Engaging Faculty*. (NILOA Example of Good Assessment Practice).

## NILOA Presence

**NILOA is shaping and advancing the student learning outcomes agenda in American higher education at the national level through dialogue at national conferences of academic leaders and faculty members from public and independent colleges and universities, community colleges, state governing and planning boards, regional accrediting bodies and many others. Here is a sampling of where NILOA staff have presented or their work appeared:**

- At the annual meetings of American Association of University Professors, American Council on Education, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Evaluation Association, Assessment Institute, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, Association of Institutional Research, College Student Educators International, Council of Graduate Schools, National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, Southern Education Foundation, State Higher Education Executive Officers, and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- At meetings for several regional accreditation organizations, including Higher Learning Commission, New England Association for Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
- In media outlets and journals, including *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Education*, *Higher Education Management and Policy*, *Assessment Update*, *University World News*, *Library Journal* and so on.
- In several college and universities websites which provide links to NILOA information, including Carleton College, Miami Dade College, Mohawk College, Oklahoma State University, St. Olaf College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and many others.



## NILOA's Future

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**Much remains to be done. Looking to the future NILOA aspires to expand its impact through advocacy and capacity building. NILOA intends:**

- To take advantage of key leverage points by working with accreditors, major systems of public and private universities, and affinity groups such as the CIC (Big Ten universities) and others. Specifically,
  - o Accreditation: We will track initiatives underway by the Higher Learning Commission and Western Association of Colleges and Universities.
  - o Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC): Given the interest expressed in assessment by provosts at Big 10-member schools and the University of Chicago, NILOA is engaged in an initiative to examine assessment of undergraduate student learning and related quality assurance strategies currently in place at all 13 CIC-member universities.
- To assist and evaluate current transparency initiatives.
  - o NILOA is collaborating with American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) on its Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA). AACC has selected NILOA's Transparency Framework as a tool to be used as part of the VFA. This will present opportunities for NILOA to call attention to the DP in these conversations.
  - o NILOA is assessing the impact of the current VSA, including its impact on institutional behavior. We are in conversations with the New Alliance for Student Learning Accountability, and collaborate with APLU, AASCU, and other interested groups to develop and test a second generation reporting template. A distinctive feature of the template will be the "roll up" of program-level outcome results to assemble a more comprehensive and useful portrait of student performance at the institutional level.

**Successfully pursuing these opportunities requires that NILOA build on its accomplishments to date in advancing student learning outcomes assessment to insure that the gains in access are translated into student success and strengthened academic performance nationwide.**

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## NILOA Staff

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## NILOA Sponsors

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**Carnegie Corporation of New York**

**Lumina Foundation for Education**

**The Teagle Foundation**

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