



WASHINGTON CENTER
FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION



THE WASHINGTON CENTER

A HOMEGROWN, STATEWIDE RESOURCE

Emily Lardner & Gillies Malnarich

Co-Directors

Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate
Education, The Evergreen State College

www.evergreen.edu/washcenter

HEC Board Meeting: March 10, 2010



WASHINGTON CENTER

FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

“While the value of strong leadership on campus cannot be overstated, raising the quality of student learning across the board will require concerted and collective action at all levels of education.

The barriers to higher achievement are systemic, and no institution can overcome them on its own.

Leaders at all levels will need to work together to build public and student understanding about what matters in college and to establish higher operative standards across the board for college readiness and college achievement.”

~ AAC&U's LEAP Report, Executive Summary, 2008 edition

“Form Coalitions, across Sectors, for All Students' Long-Term Interests”



WASHINGTON CENTER

FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ❖ Introduction to the Washington Center as a public service center based at The Evergreen State College
- ❖ Recent and ongoing national projects
- ❖ Current partnerships and initiatives within WA State
- ❖ Opportunity for system-wide collaboration around a shared learning outcome and agenda



WASHINGTON CENTER'S FOUNDING & FUNDING

“By working together to cross the traditional boundaries of educational politics, we can maximize the benefits of sharing and adapting the best ideas from each arena.”

~ Gov. Booth Gardner, 1987, upon passage of the Washington Center budget proviso

“\$400,000 of the general fund appropriation is provided solely for the Washington State Center for the Improvement of the Quality of Undergraduate Education.”

~ Excerpt from passed legislation, State of Washington 50th Legislature, 1987 Regular Session

“...At least \$200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2010 and at least \$200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2011 shall be expended on the Washington Center for Undergraduate Education.”

~ Excerpt from passed legislation, State of Washington 61st Legislature, 2009 Regular Session



WASHINGTON CENTER'S OVERALL FOCUS

" We are for the academic success of *all* students."

- Improving students' *college readiness* and *completion rates* through the design and use of learning communities
- Supporting campuses in creating sustainable *professional development* programs tied to student learning goals
- Organizing intensive *curriculum planning retreats and consultations*
- Developing tools, approaches and strategies for *assessing student learning*
- Expanding *connections between schools and the community* through projects such as "Curriculum for the Bioregion"
- Sharing resources from leading national, state, and campus-based projects



SHIFT IN FOCUS: AN EXAMPLE

Learning communities as an intervention strategy

What is the purpose of your learning community program?

- Identify where students are “at risk” in the curriculum using institutional data, i.e. curricular trouble spots
- Situate learning communities where student need is greatest

Shift from LC models to *purposeful learning*

What kind of learning do you want students to experience?

- Design integrative assignments that intentionally develop students' understanding and abilities based on contemporary issues

~ “A New Era in Learning Community Work.”

Emily Lardner and Gillies Malnarich, *Change*, July/August 2008.



WASHINGTON CENTER
FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

RECENT AND ONGOING NATIONAL PROJECTS

National Summer Institute on Learning Communities (annual institute)

From 2004 to 2009

141 campuses (86 two-year institutions; 55 four-year institutions) from 32 states
4 countries (United States, Canada, Norway, United Arab Emirates)

National Project on Assessing Learning in Learning Communities

From 2006 to 2008: twenty-two campuses from across the nation
Co-researchers from Washington State

Everett Community College, North Seattle Community College, Skagit Valley College,
Yakima Valley Community College, The Evergreen State College,
University of Washington-Bothell

Online survey: Students' Experiences of Learning in Learning Communities
Partnership with Skagit Valley College

Participating Washington State campuses will be field-testing faculty development
modules



CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE STATE

Re-thinking Pre-College Math (with Bill Moore)

- ❖ Work with six to eight colleges on changing curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices in order to increase student success in math



I-BEST Model Expansion (with Tina Bloomer)

- ❖ Work with ten colleges to design curriculum and pedagogy that effectively integrates academic skills/abilities into professional and technical programs



WASHINGTON CENTER
FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

WASHINGTON LEARNING COMMUNITIES CONSORTIUM

The WLCC is a group of two-year and four-year institutions working together to foster, nurture, and support integrative learning in Washington state.

Our goals include:

- ~ assisting in the development of new learning community programs and technologies
- ~ creating resources for mentoring and training
- ~ encouraging collaborative exchanges among faculty and staff
- ~ examining assessment methodologies for integrative learning and learning communities
- ~ supporting the development and continuation of institutions' efforts to improve student achievement through integrative learning experiences



WASHINGTON CENTER

FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

WASHINGTON LEARNING COMMUNITIES CONSORTIUM

Steering committee members from:

- Antioch University-Seattle
- Highline Community College
- Skagit Valley College
- North Seattle Community College
- Seattle Central Community College
- Spokane Community College
- Washington State University

~ Go to www.evergreen.edu/washcenter and click on regional networks



WASHINGTON CENTER
FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

WASHINGTON CENTER'S REACHING COLLEGE READINESS PROJECT*

Clark College, Skagit Valley College, Spokane Community College,
Spokane Falls Community College, Walla Walla Community College

Teaching for college readiness: How can our classes best engage students in preparation for college-level work?

Teaching for understanding: How can we design learning experiences that generate relevant, integrative, and transferable understanding?

Improving programs: How can our collective work inform practice on our campuses and beyond?

*Funded by College Spark Foundation



OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF COLLEGE READINESS

“College readiness (is) the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program.

Succeed is defined as completing entry-level courses with a level of understanding and proficiency that makes it possible for the student to be eligible to take the next course in the sequence or the next level course in the subject area. ”



WASHINGTON CENTER

FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

COLLEGE "CULTURE": CONTEXTUAL SKILLS & AWARENESS

KEY COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

- Intellectual openness, curiosity
- Analysis, interpretation
- Precision, accuracy
- Problem solving, reasoning

ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

- Overarching abilities as a reader, writer, researcher, quantitative thinker
- "Big ideas" of content areas

ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS

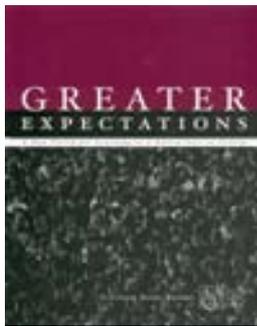
- Persistence
- Time management
- Study skills
- Learning how to learn
- Self-monitoring



WASHINGTON CENTER
FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

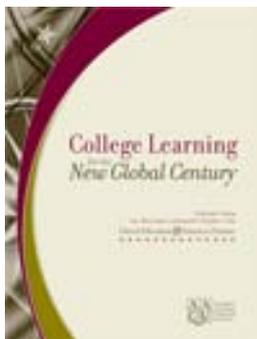


NATIONAL CONTEXT: A DECADE OF INCLUSIVE CONVERSATIONS



Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College, AAC&U 2002

- “Everyone is entitled to an education of quality.”
- Two interconnected goals: “access to college learning of *high quality* for every student” and “appropriate preparation for all to *succeed* at this demanding level.”



College Learning for the New Global Century, AAC&U 2007

- Identifying “essential learning outcomes”
- Remapping liberal education for the 21st century



INTEGRATIVE LEARNING AS AN ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOME

- ❖ **Knowledge of human cultures and the natural and physical world**
 - focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring
- ❖ **Intellectual & practical skills**
 - practiced extensively, across the curriculum--progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards of performance
- ❖ **Personal & social responsibility**
 - anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges
- ❖ **Integrative learning**
 - Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies**
 - demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems



WASHINGTON CENTER

FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Writing-Intensive Courses

Undergraduate Research

Internships

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

Learning Communities

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Diversity/Global Learning

Capstone Courses and Projects

~ Excerpt from High-Impact Educational Practices: What they Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter, George D. Kuh (AAC&U, 2008)



AACU'S LEAP PROJECT IN STATEWIDE CONTEXTS

Designated LEAP states

Oregon, California, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin

Focus on essential learning outcomes across a system
(i.e., CSU system)

Potential for Washington State to focus as a two- and four-year system on:

- ❖ college readiness attributes
- ❖ essential learning outcomes
- ❖ high impact practices





WASHINGTON CENTER

FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

REFERENCES

About AAC&U's LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) initiative

<http://www.aacu.org/leap/>

AAC&U's LEAP Report Executive Summary, 2008 edition

https://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/GlobalCentury_ExecSum_3.pdf

Examples of state-wide initiatives – Oregon and California

http://www.aacu.org/leap/oregon_initiative.cfm

About the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

<http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/home.asp>