

AAC&U General Education Institute Final Report

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Erik Anderson, Kristi Berg,

Conrad Davidson, Andrea Donovan,

Jane la Plante, Cheryl Nilsen, Deb Olson

The Institute: Our Expectations

Prior to the Institute our team identified four focus areas. We hoped to explore various models of general education; find ways to strengthen or implement integrative learning in general education; understand student intellectual development in regards to the development of our general education curriculum and; develop strategies to market the general education curriculum to students, both current and prospective, as a tool valuable to their future goals.

Upon leaving the Institute our team expected to create initial outlines of one or two possible new models of general education; connect with other institutions and the Institute to draw upon for future support and resources; develop a unified view of how general education at MSU can support the campus mission and vision; and understand the political underpinnings of general education reform and how to avoid the inherent pitfalls of the process.

The Institute: Advancing our Project

During the Institute our entire team came to the realization that our focus should not be general education reform, rather we embraced the notion of an outcomes-based liberal education consistent with Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) essential learning outcomes.

One of our goals is to understand the extent to which the administration supports a change in liberal education. Using the knowledge we have gained by participating in the Institute we will now be able to start a dialogue with administration and develop a vision that can then be brought forward to the entire campus (faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community) for discussion.

Prior to the Institute we became aware that the University of North Dakota (UND) is also in the process of transforming their undergraduate education program. Another goal, communication with UND regarding their process and findings, may inform our own progression.

Whereas we came to the Institute with the idea of returning with a plan, we now see ourselves as facilitators of a process that should begin with open conversation. Key information to guide this process will include our experiences, publications, and data from the Institute as well as analysis

of current data available at MSU. One essential purpose for this is to better understand our students and their needs.

Our ultimate goal is to guide the process toward a distinctive and unique outcomes-based liberal education that supports the 21st century learner.

Our Campus: Sharing the Institute

Our team plans to share the knowledge, insights, and expertise gained during the Institute with our campus by serving as a community of learners. Our vision includes a commitment to student learning at MSU; the knowledge that we are doing a good job right now; and a desire to be even better! Serving as guides for our campus we envision vitality in student learning and in our teaching; energy in the programs already in place; and inspiration through proven leadership.

How will we engage the campus in the conversation? Our ideas include a university-wide reading experience, campus forum series, distribution of literature and data, web presence, place one outcome in action, and the ad hoc committee continuing informal individual dialog.