

1993 AAHE RESEARCH FORUM

Reinventing Community

**A Research Agenda to Create
Common Purposes, Build
Commitment, and Sustain
Improvement**

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The 1993 AAHE Research Forum calls us to reexamine our purposes and commitments to each other in order to better serve students, our communities, and the national interest. Lofty goals? Yes. We can easily become stalled when high expectations meet hard times. Personal disconnection, cultural boundaries, and conceptual divisions distract us from being responsive. New understandings, bold experiments, and creative inquiry can sustain educational reform. But what are these innovative ideas? This agenda taps our ability to engage in collective inquiry. We focus our energies on key questions that can guide and support our efforts. Here, we explore “community” as a framework for campus decision making, for balancing rights and responsibilities, and for imagining more diverse learning communities that also rekindle our common vision.

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The 1993 agenda focuses on these topics:

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What is the Purpose of the Research Forum? Involvement and critique from educators in dialogue with researchers is a critical element for achieving clarity about what research can benefit educational policy and practice. The AAHE Research Forum is convened annually to involve individuals committed to research and scholarship in higher education. The Forum stimulates educators' involvement in creating a research agenda that speaks to current educational concerns. Each year's agenda is developed around the conference theme. Thus, educators and researchers can continually rely on the Forum agenda as an up-to-date source of common research questions that flow from the year's most central educational issues. The Forum enables educators to provide leadership and support for those researchers who share educators' interests, who speak clearly to educators about their findings, and who actively respond to educators' most pressing questions.

Since 1985, the AAHE Research Forum has provided leadership from educators for bridging the gap between research and practice, and enabled educators and researchers to define the kinds of contexts that need to be reshaped within colleges and universities for research findings to benefit students.

Why AAHE? AAHE has traditionally brought together a wide range of interested educators, and has been successful in defining current issues that stimulate a broad spectrum of higher education constituencies. A recent survey shows the AAHE annual conference to be the most stimulating meeting of its kind. There are other forums where research results are presented and discussed, but many of them are not regularly attended by or directed toward higher education administrators and educators. AAHE membership has the desire and potential to stimulate research among its members, and to engage the research community in continual dialogue about research questions and findings that directly relate to educational practices for governance, for teaching and learning, and for student development.

What is the Forum Process and Product?

1. **The invitational pre-conference session.** Educators (selected from conference presenters) generate research questions on topics that emerge as central to the conference theme through a specially designed group process. Experts on each topic serve as group leaders and synthesizers. Each topic group reviews the current issues around the topic and dialogues with those who currently, or are likely to, research the year's agenda. For the 1993 agenda, 20 conference presenters who work in one of 6 topic areas generated questions for the agenda on March 15. Questions are synthesized in each group, and two session leaders edit and prepare them that evening for distribution the next day.
2. **The all-conference Forum and panel.** Forum leaders bring the questions generated in the preconference session to the attention of the conference membership and involve the larger audience in discussion. Forum leaders also elicit discussion of research questions by a panel comprised of experts on the year's conference theme. The 1993 theme was *Reinventing Community: Sustaining Improvement During Hard Vines*. The panelist was **Parker Palmer**, Author, Lecturer, Consultant, and AAHE Senior Consultant. Group discussions on each topic follow the panel and allow for more focused critique and discussion of the pre-conference questions. Experts on the topic serve as leaders and synthesizers in each group. In 1993, 124 persons attended this session. Of these, 81 participated in the topic groups, for a two session total of 101 individual contributions to the final agenda.

3. **The research agenda.** Following the session, two Forum leaders edit and integrate questions from topic group syntheses and individual worksheets for a final agenda. Thus, AAHE's annual research agenda is a timely, collaborative product of interactive, on-the-spot discussion. It is another way of knowing about the professional interests of a wide range of educators. The research agenda is a product of a process that captures and articulates the informal conversation that occurs at AAHE meetings about what should be researched. Conference presenters generate research questions on emerging topics in higher education, elicit questions from their colleagues, and then synthesize all questions. Dissemination and discussion of the agenda with researchers follows.

4. **Dissemination.** The agenda is disseminated to all contributors; participants are credited. Advisors to the Research Forum process and other associations/groups in higher education also receive the agenda. The history and rationale for the American Association for Higher Education Research Forum are described in M. Mentkowski and A. W. Chickering, "Linking Educators and Researchers in Setting a Research Agenda for Undergraduate Education," *The Review of Higher Education*, 1987, 11(2), 137-160. The 1987 agenda, *The Classroom Researcher's Research Agenda*; the 1988 agenda, *A Research Agenda in Support of Our Highest Calling*; the 1989 agenda, *Improving the Odds for Student Achievement: A Research Agenda*; the 1990 agenda *The Future of the Professoriate: A Look in the Mirror*; the 1991 agenda, *Achieving the Promise in Diversity: A Research Agenda to Inform the Issues*; the 1992 agenda, *Reclaiming the Public Trust: A Research Agenda to Explore the Validity of the Criticisms* and the 1993 agenda, *Reinventing Community: A Research Agenda to Create Common Purposes, Build Commitment, and Sustain Improvement* are available from Marcia Mentkowski, Alverno College, 3401 South 39th Street, P.O. Box 343922, Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922, Phone: (414) 382-6263.

1993 RESEARCH FORUM LEADERS

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CREATING RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY IN THE ACADEMY

What new insights, bold experiments, and lines of inquiry can enable us to leap barriers to community, soften the pain of disconnection, and cross the divides that separate colleagues from each other? For starters, it may help to reexamine our models of community. What images of community do academics use, and how effective are these images in enabling educators to meet the challenges posed by the higher expectations society seems to have of its institutions? What new perspectives can break the barriers to community in academic life?

Next, what does it mean to create a *responsive* community? Critics argue that educational institutions are too aloof from societal needs, that they are not responsive enough to students, and that they often ignore the very communities that support them. Is this criticism valid? What aspects of the college environment support community? Which aspects distance and disconnect persons from each other and so limit their responsiveness? Then, what does it mean to shape community in ways that are inclusive of all its members and that also build common purposes? What enables departments to renew their commitments to their students, and to the college or university at large? What are critical supports for change once departments and institutions come together around their purposes?

On Definitions

What are definitions or models of academic community? What are boundaries? Who decides what the boundaries are? How do students and other constituencies define community?

How does a clear and compelling institutional mission foster community? How does vision and purpose influence community?

Is our discussion of community a romantic way to avoid dealing with the change in external expectations such as pressures for accountability? Will the discussion lead to more insularity? More involvement?

How do we define work (teaching, learning, research, service) so that tasks need to be completed collaboratively? What teaching methods encourage community?

What are the qualities of a positive community? of a negative community?

How adequate are the images of community? Is there any one image that can carry us? What role do the therapeutic, business, and civic images of community have for informing our definitions of community?

On Change

How has the academic community changed? What communities are present now that have not been part of the academy previously?

How have the changes from college as a residential group of scholars (faculty and students) to a group of part-time, commuting, non-tenured individuals affected the academic sense of

community? What is the effect on community of either rapid turnover or stasis in the administrative leadership and/or the faculty?

On Relationships With Other Communities

What are the institutional variables that influence the relationship of the academy to other communities?

What role can and should the academy play in working within the community on community problems (e.g., the local, national, global community)?

What is the impact on the academy of new electronic communities?

What is driving the academy to rethink the collaborative decision making process (e.g., tension among groups within the academy, changing purposes, faculty malaise and alienation)?

How does the accreditation process influence community? Does the process contribute to community? Weaken it?

How can the college/university community be connected to the city and surrounding community?

How do we model community before we “preach” it?

On Building Community

How can community be recreated when the “old” community goes through change?

How does a group consciously build community? Are there campus issues around which community can be built? How can reflective community building be induced?

What are our multiple community roles?

How might a successful community be replicated?

What is the role of leadership in creating community?

What is the importance of ritual to building community?

Would people be willing to give up traditional rewards and awards (e.g., titles and ranks) if it would mean gaining community?

How can action research enable campus groups to monitor their own operation and behavior toward community building?

How can action research help groups build community as the group interacts?

How can we be accountable to each other for results? What are the barriers/obsessions with products and results?

What is the source of the urge for community? Where does the call to community come from?

Who can we turn to in crisis? What is the short-term fix versus the long-term fix?

How is community transformational?

What is our common good?

How do we as citizens in a democracy deal with the important issues of power, resources, and the ability to think?

On Members of Community

What fosters alienation in different groups of students?

What is the impact of part time faculty on the sense of community?

What is the impact of faculty hierarchy on community? Does hierarchy undermine community?

How can we address the *whole* community and not just fragments of it?

How do and can religious groups play a role in both academic and group peacemaking?

What do various members of a campus actually regard as their community? How do these perceptions vary from college to college? From unit to unit?

What do students perceive to be the value of and need for an academic community?

How can the smaller interest communities within an institution become better linked?

How do we develop a healthy respect for each other? What leadership qualities are needed to evoke change?

How do we invite the personal story of each member of the community? What is the value of vulnerability as an intellectual virtue? How do we avoid the danger of reducing all members of the community to the norm of intimate experience; so that we are cut off from others we cannot be intimate with?

How can we eliminate fear so that we can work well together?

CAMPUSES, COMMUNITIES, AND SOCIETY: REWRITING THE CONTRACT

Educators are looking for new ways to bridge boundaries, cross cultures, and use off-campus collaboratives to energize campus teaching initiatives. They are rethinking their disciplines for new ideas about public responsibilities. At the same time, educators are expected to contribute more directly to the local communities they serve as well as the larger society. This means taking a new look at civic education, and probing the successes of community colleges for new insights.

As we consider the role of service nationally in developing community and advancing social goals, the role of higher education in community building becomes crucial. Part of rewriting the contract means examining the role of service in the curriculum as the campus shifts away from producing new knowledge in isolation from community. The Wingspread Research Agenda for Service-Learning noted, "As a philosophy of education, service-learning reflects the belief that education must be linked to social responsibility and that the most effective learning is active and connected to experience in some meaningful way."

On Rewriting the Contract

How do we find a new balance between the rights and responsibilities that form the basis of the contract between society and its educational institutions?

What kind of support should educators expect, and what should they be prepared to provide in return?

What is the nature of the contract, and why are we asked to reexamine it now?

How should the academy treat and evaluate community service in tenure and rank decisions? What perceptions of responsibility do various constituents hold? What are the public's perceptions of the academy's responsibilities to them? What are our perceptions of our responsibilities to the public? What are public perceptions of their responsibilities to us?

How does the mission of the institution enhance or clarify its social contract with its external community?

How can we develop community external to the institution without serving as models for community?

How can community agencies be engaged as partners in the education of our students? Can we reach an internal consensus about this?

What is the role of a community college in being a partner in the solution of problems of the communities it serves?

On Service Learning

How can higher education provide excellent learning and service? Can research justify the argument that, at base, service learning is simply good education?

How can service learning promote social responsibility in the communities of the future?

How can educators rewrite the contract so that communities are active partners in the learning process as well as the beneficiaries of “learning products?”

The national service agenda seems to connect with the educational reform agenda. But what does it mean to develop active, community linked, problem based learning? How best might we demonstrate that service learning makes a difference in society?

Does the concept of “service learning” tend to reinforce and reproduce the dichotomy between service provider and recipient? Would an approach called “community learning” move in a more positive direction?

What are the essential qualities of good citizenship? Does the current service learning agenda promote these qualities? If so, how?

What is the appropriate *collegiate* role for national service? How can campuses rise to the issue given current resources? How can students do national service *during* college? How might the collegiate community do training, evaluation, and administration of the programs?

How do we engage 14,000,000 students? Who may serve, who should serve, and how do we key the program to *all* students?

On Funding

How might a national service program be funded? Is national service just a reformulation of a financial aid strategy for the middle class?

What are the fairness issues? Who can and who cannot serve? How can everyone attend college? What about income contingent loans in exchange for service?

What might be the cost of national service if we do or do not do it? What about worker displacement and the concerns of unions? What is the priority in relation to other issues such as infrastructure, jobs, economy, or health care?

How might we finance college if not through service? What might happen if we go to direct loans for service? If people take out loans, can they pay them back? What is the potential for having part or all of one’s loans forgiven? Do all scholarships have income contingent payment (to ensure that they *can* pay back after college) or graduated repayment schemes? What is the role of the IRS in collecting loans through the income tax system?

How do we reform current student aid programs? Through full, direct lending? Collection through the IRS? Who should do the lending? What kind of institutions can do direct lending? How best can loans be made so they are direct to the student?

On Research

How might community-oriented research help universities be more successful?

SUSTAINING IMPROVEMENT: USING COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Educational reform efforts are well underway in a range of institutions. How do we sustain improvements in hard times? What are the institutional structures and innovative ideas that enable us to work smarter and accomplish our goals despite limited resources? Several new approaches are: quality management (e.g., TQM), information technologies, and new strategies for assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness. Some educators are even rethinking the academic calendar, changing the time and the consequences. But how do we simultaneously build a community that can sustain the changes demanded by new ideas, new tools, and new ways of working together? What else might it take?

Sustaining improvement can mean developing the technologies that may not only make communication easier and more effective, but also cross barriers to community building. How do we extend the concept of community through information technology? Can “connectivity” help? How will we know?

The elements that define an *academic* community need to be explored in relation to quality-driven management systems so that they can be integrated with existing values and culture. What are the implications for investments in quality management? Which TQM principles are most important for higher education, and how should these principles be formulated to serve educational institutions? What does it really mean to *do* TQM, and what are likely costs and benefits for higher education? Critics wonder whether the academic culture in its current form can support cross-functional problem solving teams that seek continuous improvement. What do we need to know to minimize the negatives that can threaten continuous improvement strategies at first (assumptions that past efforts are “bad,” that expectations can never be met, that interdisciplinary activities might threaten depth in a discipline)? Several issues may include documenting process improvement, bringing about a greater emphasis on student needs and their learning, and building community committed to continuous improvement. What are the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic barriers to successfully implementing quality management strategies? If cultural changes are involved, how do we go about making the required shifts?

Where do efforts from a decade of higher education assessment integrate with new technologies and quality management systems? What do assessment principles add? What are the similarities? What have we learned from a decade in assessment that can bolster our new efforts to sustain improvement?

On Community and Values

What is a definition of “community?” What characteristics distinguish a community from any other group of people? How might a higher education “community” move beyond an individual institution?

What are our values and how do they relate to definitions of community in institutions for educating individual learners? For serving society? How might higher education focus on the learning that is essential throughout life?

A technology drives change. What elements that we already value in higher education do we want to maintain?

How does the institution identify its core values and communicate them to the entire community, (e.g., for continuous improvement)?

How does an institution identify its core values and decide what kinds of technology might support and enhance those values?

On Supportive Structure and Processes

Are traditional core processes (teaching/research/service) still relevant? Do we need new processes for new purposes? What are these?

How might staffing be changed to support new kinds of teaching/learning communities?

How might budgeting be changed to support new kinds of learning communities?

How might institutional rewards be changed to support new learning communities?

What modifications in governance structures and processes are necessary to sustain continuous quality improvement?

On Technology

How are we defining technology and information literacy, and how can technology support collaborative learning and collaborative work to solve problems and extend human capacity?

What can we learn from the experiences of health care? For example, how do we ensure that utilization of technology does not simply drive up costs?

With regard to information technology, when does access become intrusive?

What kind of cost-benefit analysis should we be using as we consider new technologies?

What are best ways to introduce faculty, students, and administration to the use of new technologies?

On Teaching and Learning

How can teachers better model learning?

How do we break down and bridge barriers among different subsets of knowledge?

How can and will the changing role and nature of textbooks in the learning environment affect learning communities? How are the role and nature of textbooks changing?

Are our current methods of assessment accurately reflecting the learning that takes place, especially concerning learning how to learn and the affective domain of learning?

On The Larger Context

How might we better assess the impact of state and funding policies on technologies and information resource acquisition and utilization? How do state and funding policies affect the development of useful communities?

How do we establish priorities if we are to serve the broader community?

REDEFINING FACULTY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty priorities are gaining status as a prominent national issue. Tensions are deepening across many fronts as the nature of faculty work is challenged and reexamined in the context of changing academic and social norms and needs. Upon joining the professoriate, membership has been granted automatically in two communities: the institution and the discipline or professional area. Both communities have distinct missions, expectations, and tasks. Increasingly, faculty are expected to be contributing members of yet a third community, social citizenship.

How faculty roles and responsibilities are construed and how they are performed affects the culture of both the academic and social community. What are the essential roles of faculty? To whom and for whom are faculty responsible? How clear are the signals about what faculty should be doing?

Sharp tensions exist among faculty roles and responsibilities, which makes redefinition a complex task. Several tensions are: renewed attention to teaching vs. reward systems that favor research; teaching as imparting knowledge vs. teaching as empowering learning; scholarship as an independent domain vs. teaching and service as dimensions of scholarship; scholarship that advances knowledge in the discipline vs. scholarship that emphasizes practice and use by various publics; senior vs. junior faculty; full-time vs. part-time faculty; holding issues private within the academy vs. Parker Palmer's notion of entering issues into the mix of "communal discourse."

A common thread among these tensions is expecting that faculty roles and responsibilities should expand. Should teaching encompass more than classroom instruction? Should scholarship include various definitions, purposes, methods, and dissemination strategies? Should service mean more visible contributions to the larger community? How should faculty roles and responsibilities be redefined to shape an ideal more suited to the transition into the 21st century? What alternative systems are needed to support these redefinitions?

On Community

The meaning of community may involve a desire for an identity, for respect, and for being united around a common goal. What is the heart of the academic community? What behaviors are markers of strong "community?"

Where does the urge to reestablish community originate? How do we know when community exists? Who feels the longing for community? Students? Faculty? Administrators? What exactly does each group miss that they do not have now? What does each group want? What purposes do these groups have in common?

What are the responsibilities of faculty to various communities?

Faculty seem to rethink general education in cycles. Is the quest for configuring general education actually a search for community?

On Faculty Roles

If higher education reinvents itself, what might the roles of faculty be? What are the expectations of faculty and who sets them? How do faculty see themselves? What do they worry about most? What tensions do they feel? What is the relationship between how faculty spend time, what they do, and what they achieve? How does each “stakeholder” view faculty roles? How do students view the role?

As we consider the development and protection of various aspects of the faculty role, which aspects should have priority?

Traditionally, the university has constructed what it does as teaching, research, and service. How useful is this construction? How do we describe the other aspects of faculty life other than the core “teaching, service, research?” If we consider faculty as providers of scholarly service, who decides what these services are worth and what kinds and quantity of these services are needed? What assumptions about the faculty role might change if we constructed the role in these terms?

How does the mission of the institution and the preparation of faculty affect expectations of roles? What assumptions about faculty role might change if the department were the unit of analysis rather than the individual faculty member? Is it feasible within an academic institution to engage some faculty whose primary responsibility is research and others whose primary responsibility is teaching? Could each primary function be evaluated accordingly? How can the discourse of defining faculty roles be used to close the perceived gap between faculty at community colleges and four-year institutions? Should faculty be encouraged to become moderators of student extracurricular activities? What might the reward structure be? How can faculty be helped to move on a continuum from teaching to research, especially when their teaching, responsibilities co-occur across undergraduate and graduate student bodies?

On the Role of Research

What are ethical limitations on diverting funds for undergraduate education to research? If the public interest values teaching, why do research faculty have higher public prestige or pay?

How valid is the research role in the current world, with the changes that have occurred recently in the global community (e.g., the collapse of the USSR as “enemy;” the changes in eastern Europe)?

On Continuous Quality Improvement

How can part time faculty be considered in the assessment of institutional quality?

A continuous quality improvement mode assumes the goal is continuous reassessment of the quality of processes and practices. What ways engage faculty in ongoing change of this kind?

On Rewards for Faculty

How do we describe and document the “scholarship of teaching?” How does this weigh in promotion and tenure decisions?

How do we evaluate good teaching and give it credit equivalent to publishing in refereed journals?

How can restructuring of rewards for faculty occur within a collective bargaining context?

COMMUNITY AS COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND PEDAGOGY

Collaborative learning and related forms of instructional strategies are earning high respect because they empower many kinds of learners. Now, educators' conversations include ideas for building learning communities through collaborative pedagogy. What models promote critical community building among students and between students and faculty? What models support effective working relationships among faculty and facilitate integration of the disciplines?

As with most emerging approaches, naming and definition remain an issue. What are the critical attributes of collaborative, cooperative, and team learning? How do related instructional strategies differ, and what do they hold in common?

Classroom research and collaborative pedagogy seem to be natural partners. Emerging evidence suggests that collaborative pedagogy advances student achievement, increases self-esteem, deepens engagement in subject matter, and even enhances cross-cultural awareness. How is this achieved, and how can faculty assess for these outcomes? What kinds of adaptations are needed to accommodate diverse learners in different learning contexts (e.g., younger learners on residential campuses, part-time adult learners)? What are barriers to collaborative pedagogy and who experiences them?

On Definitions and Assumptions

What are core principles that guide building community? How universal are they across different kinds of groups?

What are the various forms of collaborative learning and the permutations in different disciplines and settings? How do various forms of collaborative learning differ in outcomes and process?

Are there distinctions between collaborative learning and cooperative learning? If so, what are they?

What assumptions underlie collaborative learning from the perspective of its practitioners? To what extent is it related to a larger social agenda about community? To what extent is it merely an interesting technique?

In what ways does collaborative learning conflict with our other values about individual scholarship and learning? (For example, "cheating" is often the definition put on the practice of collaborative learning; "collaboration" is a term and practice which has mixed associations.)

On Values

Is collaborative teaching and learning valued in the academic reward system? What are some models for valuing it by the individual and the "system?"

How widely is collaborative learning used? What are barriers to collaborative learning?

How do faculty acquire skills and interest in collaborative learning and group dynamics? How does this become a campus responsibility? How do we assist administrators to understand collaborative learning so they can better appreciate and support it?

What are the relationships between values in our workplaces, communities, and collaborative learning and teaching on campuses?

Is American society and culture ready for community development strategies in educational institutions?

On Students

To what extent do different student groups feel comfortable with collaborative learning strategies? How do and should teachers deal with different levels of student comfort?

How does differential student readiness including differential power affect the collaborative learning process? How might the teacher equalize power and create a safe learning environment? For what settings and audiences is collaborative learning appropriate? How can teachers create alternative ways for students to contribute and yet not undermine the collaborative learning process?

Are there important differences relative to nontraditional students (e.g., students of color, international students), with respect to learning, understanding, and becoming effective at collaborative learning?

What are transferable benefits of collaborative learning for students?

What kinds of activities work best to enable beginning students to become comfortable with collaborative learning?

Are there certain groups or types of students who do not do well with collaborative learning?

How can we deal with students' prejudices when expressed in a collaborative, more open setting?

On Research and Assessment

What is known about the effect and effectiveness of collaborative learning from the standpoint of both the teacher and the student?

How can we revamp grading processes to support collaborative learning? What are some practical ways to do alternative grading and assessment?

To what extent can we develop some overarching standards to evaluate collaborative learning? To what extent is the lack of evaluative research a barrier?

What can classroom research tell teachers about collaborative learning? Which classroom research techniques are most effective in this context?

Given that so much research focuses on individual levels of assessment, how can we introduce systems levels of analysis into evaluating an entire group's change?

What research techniques might determine what factors in group work are essential for success? What techniques can move the level of analysis to the group rather than the individual?

What models of "change research" can be imported from other disciplines, (e.g., group therapy)?

How can we assess the impact of collaborative learning techniques outside the classroom (e.g., in residence halls)?

What are student learning outcomes in group work? What factors lend to achievement and community?

On Teaching

As more teachers adopt collaborative learning approaches, how can all teaching styles be appreciated by faculty? by students?

How is a feeling of community created in the classroom?

What factors encourage or inhibit faculty willingness to adopt collaborative learning strategies?

What processes do traditionally trained faculty undergo to prepare to teach collaboratively? Who or what is that catalyst?

On Institutional Support

How, in every dimension of our work, can we create a climate of community on our increasingly diverse campuses? What do students have to tell us about this?

How do campuses introduce, facilitate and support collaborative learning and teaching?

How might learning environments be made a safe place for collaborative learning? For innovation and experimentation?

How do campus physical structures facilitate or inhibit collaborative learning?

CREATING COHERENT, DIVERSE CURRICULA

What are relationships between efforts to rethink community and creating curricula? Apparently, demographic diversity does not guarantee a diverse curriculum. Now educators are faced with a new challenge: seeking common purposes by creating coherent curricula that also resolve issues around diversity: Clearly, the campus conversation about multiculturalism is changing. How do these new conversations connect with community building within and across groups? And how can the curriculum preserve its inherent diversity of content and process and still develop students' ability to integrate learning across courses? What kinds of curricula sustain learning beyond the campus so that students can deal with multiple perspectives, and still be willing to commit to some common, civic purposes?

New alliances for women and minority participation in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering are exploring these and other issues, as are efforts to incorporate and integrate ethnic studies into the curriculum. Throughout, educators express concerns for building strong foundations for general education. What do we need to know to create curricula that are coherent, yet diverse? How can curricula yield a sense of common purposes in students that supports community, and still enable them to benefit from disparate perspectives, topics, and disciplines?

On Perspectives and Values

How do we create a broader sense of ownership for the "whole curriculum" among students and faculty that extends beyond a more narrow view based on one's singular role or responsibility? How might faculty best communicate a picture of an integrated curriculum?

What strategies work for bringing various disciplines together? How do we develop a common language to communicate across specialties?

Why do some forms of knowledge become central and others peripheral? What is in the "canon" and why? How might the canon be expanded?

What kinds of perspectives from general systems theory can serve to promote synergy among smaller communities to contribute to a more embracing whole?

How can we value diversity of world views or epistemologies without homogenizing differences?

How can diversity of world views contribute to new knowledge? How can we value and use the tension between different world views as a resource for learning and understanding?

On Program and Curriculum Design

What kinds of models exist for coherent, diverse curriculum? For general education? For the major? For special populations? What models work? What existing programs are effective?

What kind of resources are available for faculty to develop more coherent, diverse curricula? What kinds of leadership are needed for articulating a vision for a coherent, diverse curriculum?

Why has it been so difficult to move beyond “distribution” concepts of curriculum? What does relying on this model signify?

What are some effects of mainstreaming versus development of special programs in multicultural education? What is the current state of knowledge about women and minority participation in higher education? Who is doing what kind of research and with what effect?

What reconfigurations of curriculum requirements in the disciplines are needed to support particularistic and pluralistic views?

How might smaller collaborative learning communities work together to periodically rework the canons of institutions and the academy?

How do we restructure curriculum to promote *both* integration and community?
How can general education courses be integrated with other interests of students?

On Assessment

How are coherent, diverse curricula working? What are better ways to build on and disseminate successful programs? What are barriers to adaptation and dissemination of successful programs?

What forms of educational reform seem to work? What are rationales for breaking with existing educational forms? How can the benefits of change be better articulated? How can risks be diminished?

What do exiting students perceive to be the contribution of general education courses?

What role can self-assessment play in building a learning community? in developing individual identity? in developing community identity? in having students place the curriculum in the context of their own lives?

How can collaborative assessment contribute to quality and community?

How can faculty identify when paradigm shifts are beginning to happen for students? How can faculty best prepare for dealing with students during the process of a shift?

On Community

How can members of the academy come to expand their sense of community so that community supports coherent, diverse curricula?

How can shared planning, decision making, and conflict resolution contribute to community and academic quality?

How can thematic approaches, which cut across disciplines, enhance ownership of curriculum and learning among diverse individuals and groups?

What are developmental phases of community as public discourse takes place over time on issues of diversity?

How can we use community to break down adversarial relationships that form between faculty, administration, and student groups?

How can we use community to encourage and create a safe atmosphere for questioning.

INVITATIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION PARTICIPANTS¹

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¹ Ninety-eight conference presenters committed to attend this session. Because of the “big snow” that occurred on the East Coast that weekend, most were unable to get to Washington. We acknowledge their interest “in absentia,” and trust that we will find ways to tap their expertise in future AAHE Research Forums. This group is included on pages 21 and 22.

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