

2001 AAHE RESEARCH FORUM

Private Gain and Public Good
Creating a Research Agenda for
Achieving Balance

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This year, the AAHE Research Forum took up the ways in which institutions of higher education balance the private gains students and faculty expect with community and national needs to create a research agenda. At a time when even parents, legislators, and public constituencies have diverse views about what colleges should accomplish, the Research Forum asked: What should colleges and universities take as their public purpose? Can these public purposes be reconciled with the expectations of internal and external constituencies?

The AAHE Research Forum is convened annually to involve individuals committed to research and scholarship in higher education. Participants worked in small groups to create the resulting research agenda based on conference themes.

Contents

History, Rationale, and Process for the AAHE Research Forum	1
2001 Research Forum Leaders.....	3
Foreword.....	4

The 2001 AAHE Research Agenda Topics:

Connections with the Community: What are Appropriate Boundaries?	5
Enhancing Faculty Participation in Curricular Reform Initiatives	8
Increasing Expectations for Grants and Contracts	11
K-12, K-14, K-16, K-20: Implications for Higher Education	12
Promoting Civic Responsibility	14
Distance Learning and Digital Delivery.....	18
Pre-Conference Participants.....	20
All-Conference Participants.....	22

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 will 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 has 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 at which research results are presented and discussed, but many of them are not regularly attended by or directed toward higher education administrators and faculty. 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 experts) 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 their topic and discusses with those who currently, or are likely to, research the year's agenda. Questions are synthesized in each group, and session leaders edit and prepare them for distribution at the All Conference session.
2. **The All Conference Forum and Panel.** Forum leaders bring the questions generated in the pre-conference session to the attention of the conference membership and involve the larger audience in discussion of issues and research questions in their own settings. Forum leaders also elicit discussion of research questions by a panel comprised of experts on the year's conference theme. The 2001 theme was Balancing Private Gain and Public Good. The panelists were *John DiBiaggio*, President, Tufts University, and *Edward Zlotkowski*, Senior Fellow, AAHE and Campus Compact Senior Faculty Fellow, Bentley College. Group discussions on each topic followed the panel and allowed for more focused critique and discussion of the pre-conference questions.
3. **The Research Agenda and Its Dissemination.** Following the session, Forum leaders edit and integrate questions from topic group syntheses and individual work sheets 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*,” the 1993 agenda, “*Reinventing Community: A Research Agenda to Create Common Purposes, Build Commitment, and Sustain Improvement*,” the 1994 agenda, “*A Research Agenda for Envisioning the 21st Century Academic Workplace Through Responsive Academic Citizenship*,” the 1995 agenda, “*The Engaged Campus: A Research Agenda to Serve Society’s Needs*,” the 1996 agenda, “*Crossing Boundaries: A Research Agenda Toward Productive Learning and Community Renewal*,” the 1997 agenda, “*Learning, Teaching, and Technology: A Research Agenda for the Way We Work*,” the 1998 agenda, “*Taking Learning Seriously: A Research Agenda for Learning*,” the 1999 agenda, “*Organizing for Learning: A Research Agenda*,” and the 2000 agenda, “*Diversity and Learning: A Research Agenda*” are available from Marcia Mentkowski, Office of Educational Research and Evaluation, Alverno College, 3401 South 39th Street, P.O. Box 343922, Milwaukee, WI 53215.

2001 RESEARCH FORUM LEADERS

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FOREWORD

This year, the AAHE Research Forum took up the conference theme of balancing private gain and public good to create a research agenda which can shed light on the varied needs and responsibilities of students, faculty, administrators, universities, and the local, national, and global communities of which they are a part. We asked a set of questions which brought up a complex set of competing issues:

- 1) What do students need to further their career goals, versus what do communities need to further their civic goals?
- 2) What are the boundaries universities need to keep to assure learning, versus the partnerships they need to have to help their communities solve intractable problems?
- 3) What role do grants play for universities needing to pay attention to the bottom line, for faculty who need to obtain grants to further their tenure and promotion possibilities, and for communities which need applied research to help them frame solutions that will bear fruit?
- 4) How does curriculum reform, which meets academic rigor, promote civic responsibility while setting under-prepared students loose on real people?
- 5) When does the university need to be the “expert” to the K-12 system, and when do models of reciprocity need to prevail to improve both K-12 **and** higher education?
- 6) Finally, when twenty-first century technology is overlaid onto these issues, do questions about balance rise to new levels of significance or sink into the morass of digital details?

The AAHE Research Forum is convened annually to allow individuals committed to research and scholarship in higher education to ask “what questions should shape our scholarship?” We started this year’s efforts with a pre-conference workshop of presenters who brought their own experiences in diverse settings to the table. We then asked others to join in the next stage of this endeavor. This Agenda is the result of their joint effort.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY: WHAT ARE APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES?

Over the past decade community-based learning, service learning, and other close connections with the community have become distinguishing features for many institutions. These opportunities have emerged as requirements, integrated into different courses, as well as in the co-curriculum. While there is little question that these linkages contribute to student learning, issues of the role of community partners, the implications of partnerships with private for-profit entities as well as governmental and not-for-profit organizations, and the implications of students contributing to the activities of community partners as part of course requirements continue unresolved. In many respects the issue of defining boundaries that facilitate community connections and at the same time ensure that these activities contain significant academic learning remains to be addressed, often with little guidance.

On University Organization

How is engagement structured at the university level? What is the relationship between structure and outcome in terms of the effectiveness of engagement?

Is service learning more than a pedagogy? Is the university an advocate or a “neutral” observer in its connections with the community? When do relationships build social capital; when do they break it down?

What are the necessary institutional supports for faculty, students, and community partnerships?

How is community engagement rewarded? How do we address issues of accountability and ownership?

How does the university learn from the communities we serve?

How do we create ongoing, enduring, enabling structures for service success?

How do we convince universities to support service-learning courses when they often necessitate a small class size—given the increasing pressure to maximize SCH (enrollment) in our courses?

What are enabling structures to advance institutional engagement?

What are institutional measures of engagement?

What faculty are involved, and what are they doing?

What models most effectively “mesh” academic and community calendars?

What institutional/departmental structures are necessary to support partnerships? What are the faculty rewards systems?

What types of assurances are in place at the university and within the community regarding the ethical dimensions of community research: policies, dissemination (policies and findings), training and monitoring?

What is the role of human subjects reviews in student/community protection?

On Community Expectations

What might the community expect from the university in terms of resources? What is the community's access to on-campus resources?

What are models of policies shaping university-community partnerships?

How do faculty balance their obligations to students and pedagogical concerns with obligations to the community partner? How do we incorporate community expectations?

What are appropriate legal strategies to respond to potential university-community liabilities and obligations?

How can the university be a "problem-solver" for specific community problems?

How do we measure community service success?

To what extent does the university's educational and professional/vocational development programs provide a variety of entry points, role models, and career ladders for community residents (in contrast to "representatives")?

On Partnership Issues

What universalities or best practices do successful sustained partnerships show?

What is the appropriate time span of a university-community relationship?

How do we develop a taxonomy of engagement and distinguish various forms of university-community connections (e.g. engagement, service-learning, outreach)?

How do we define and understand reciprocity between the university and community partners?

Are intermediary organizations which mediate university-community links needed? If they are, what are effective models?

How do partnerships create/respond to leadership?

Who defines the issues? Who defines the boundaries? The projects? Partners? Outcomes? How can we establish partnerships as "two-way streets?"

What strategies have been most effective in both meeting community needs and academic demands?

Remaining in partnership, rather than in control, takes some work. What kinds of efforts are successful?

How does a partnership define leadership and engagement? What sectors and levels are represented? How do they participate (what types of evidence are available regarding the participation)? i.e. stakeholders

Who defines the goals and objectives of a partnership? Who participates in the evaluation process and monitors its results (both formative and outcomes)? How responsive is the leadership to emerging community and university concerns and to process evaluation findings?

There is a need to focus on authentic, reciprocal partnerships with asset based approach so that interests of community partners are well served. What are the elements of authentic partnerships and the enabling structures?

Stakeholders providing funding and resources need to be responsive to the partners' need for time and support for the work of partnership building. If external bodies such as foundations set the terms of partnership structures without fully understanding the complexities of partnership building they could undermine the project. What are good practices for funders as responsive partners in campus-community collaboration?

ENHANCING FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULAR REFORM INITIATIVES

A common theme for institutions embarking upon significant curricular reform initiatives is the difficulty encountered in securing broad and sustained faculty participation. Faculty face a number of pressures such as promotion and tenure that frequently provide little incentive for participation. Others have had the experience of working diligently on significant proposals only to be frustrated by the responses of colleagues or the administration. Is it possible to identify obstacles to faculty participation that are not bounded by the context of any particular institution? The second and equally problematic issue is the identification of incentives and rewards that are persuasive for faculty. Beyond the important strategy of revising promotion and tenure guidelines, what can institutions implement as rewards and incentives for faculty participation in reform initiatives?

On Managing Change

What conditions create an environment that makes curricular change a priority?

What structures encourage participation in curriculum reform?

How much freedom do faculty have to initiate curricular reform? How much power/freedom do faculty perceive themselves to have?

Who manages change? What role do chairs and deans have in promoting this discussion?

What is the role of undergraduate and graduate students, adjunct faculty, new faculty in curriculum reform?

How can we understand the psychological, turf, and generational issues that impede or support curricular reform?

Where do curriculum reform discussions occur? At what level? Privately? Between two peers? If you can't talk freely about curriculum reform in the department, then where?

How can faculty be motivated to take responsibility for their own institutions so that curriculum reform efforts are more effective?

What connections can I make between the faculty and the existing research outcomes to enable faculty to buy into the need for curriculum reform?

How do accreditation processes—which often provide reform directions and may include standards for community involvement—provide a lever with administrators for managing change?

At what point could AAHE expertise be introduced to spur curricular reform?

What models have worked to include attention to public good across the disciplines and how can this be translated to our universities?

How do we ensure broad campus involvement in reform conversations, as well as including off campus community representatives?

On the Research Imperative

Do we have data to support the curriculum reform process? Can we assess the impact of curriculum reform on faculty, staff and students?

How can we draw on existing research? What can we learn from successful reform initiatives? How will we know if we're successful?

How do varied and often disconnected understandings about the construction of knowledge affect curricular reform?

How does curriculum reform connect to the larger concerns of external constituencies? What role should employers have in influencing curriculum?

How can questions about the curriculum be understood in light of the technological and social needs and expectations of the 21st century?

How often should we be "changing," "enhancing," "reforming" the curriculum?

What roles will research play in reform activities? In particular, how will empirical data stimulate and sustain reform processes?

How effective are different curriculum reform models? Are there external models of organizational change that can be adapted to the task?

How do we measure alumni support (and hence likelihood of financial support) for this initiative?

What agents of change are available (e.g., external stimuli, faculty rewards, resources), and how can these be most effectively studied?

On Integrating Multiple Role Perspectives

What do different educator roles mean in pursuing curriculum reform and what priorities are significant for each?

How do we pull a busy president into this valuable activity? By helping him or her to realize the correlation with institutional mission?

In the context of existing leadership obligations and opportunities, what roles are critical for department heads and chairs? Where will leadership emerge?

How are roles and participation best constructed for faculty at different points in their careers (e.g., entry, junior, post-tenure)?

How does faculty expertise in the teaching/learning process contribute to reform efforts? What do faculty know about learning and how does this inform their teaching?

What role, if any, does student affairs play in curricular reform?

In terms of curriculum leadership and readiness, what effects need to be considered in the doctoral education of the future professoriate?

What roles will civic engagement play in curriculum reform? How does the president's role in initiating collaborative work compare with more faculty-driven efforts? If faculty apathy regarding service learning and civic responsibility occurs, how is it best dealt with?

INCREASING EXPECTATIONS FOR GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

As institutions seek alternative sources of support, many faculty are under increasing pressure to secure grants and contracts. In some cases tenure and promotion are dependent upon success in these activities. The implications of this institutional focus for faculty, students, and the institution can be profound. What are the implications of and possible rules for contract research with both governmental and private organizations? What has the effect of this pressure been upon faculty and institutional priorities? What are the implications of these pressures for a core mission of the academy: the discovery and advancement of knowledge? In what respects are institutions relinquishing their historic role of supporting publicly disseminated scholarship? How is the resulting internal distribution of resources impacting areas of inquiry that do not have established access to grant and contract research? These are not new questions for the academy, but they have become increasingly important with the rising pressure to acquire external resources.

Why should colleges of all types be involved in grants and contracts? What role does institutional mission play?

What factors work for and against faculty assuming grant and contract acquisition roles?

How do we align all components of the institutions to accommodate the heightened focus on grantsmanship? What are the institutional investments and structures needed to support faculty grant and contract activity?

What are appropriate strategies and policies to link emphasis upon acquisition of grants and contracts with other institutional priorities such as improved student learning and connections with the community?

How are grant-making agencies and foundations influenced in their choice of funding priorities? How do funding priorities influence research choices?

What are the consequences of this emphasis on the commitment of institutions to respond to external needs and pressures, such as supporting the success of an increasingly diverse student population and contributing to the improvement of education at all levels?

How can we communicate to external constituencies the consequences of our funding success for faculty, students, and community?

How can definitions of fundable research change to encompass scholarship on student learning and service to the community as well as basic research?

How can the emphasis upon funded research be integrated into learning opportunities for students?

What are the structures needed for involving students in funded research?

What are the appropriate policies to respond to intellectual property issues that arise when involved in grants and contracts?

K-12, K-14, K-16, K-20: IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The linkages between K–12 education and higher education continue to be prominent issues for the academy. Most often these issues are framed in terms of removing obstacles to the transitions of students from one system to another. These obstacles include concerns that have important implications for higher education such as graduation requirements for all levels, assessment, entry requirements, and transfer issues. What other issues are embedded in these linkages? What are examples and strategies for institutions to develop appropriate responses to these increasing pressures?

On the “Big Question”

Why should there be partnerships and alignments? Who is serving whom?

What are the new structures or processes that have potential to develop connections among institutions at all levels?

How will these new models differ from outreach models that have traditionally been used?

What is gained and lost by systematic coordination across all levels between K and 20?

What is the value of collaborative research/outreach scholarship?

Why do we need to address this problem of connectedness?

Where and what specific places do disconnects exist?

How can we conduct more research on the points of common ground, i.e., student learning outcomes, across the bridging groups between K–Higher education, such as accrediting agencies, professional/learned groups, community groups, workplace, teacher providers, etc?

How can we address intellectual property issues in K–20 partnerships?

How can we develop better connectedness through different types of conversations that include K–12, higher education, and community components? How can we come together on common ground to address education as civic, community, and national issues? Is the goal continuous improvement?

The transitions between K–14, K–16, K–18, K–20 are not all the same. What are these transitions and how can we best address them?

On the Importance of Models

What new models should replace “higher education as teacher, K–12 as learner” models that have prevailed?

What can we learn from reciprocal models that already exist?

What new models of instructional delivery facilitate K–20 student learning within the changing social and technological context?

What are effective connections between the senior year of high school and the first year of college (advanced placement in high school, remediation in college)? What can we learn from state and national associations that have provided research findings and new policies about the bridge between the 12th and 13th year?

How can we find and organize existing successful models for K–20 connections that can help develop new models of “best practices?”

How can models for bridging connections be developed?

What are the implications of “grade-level” models of higher education that assume that we have grades 13–20 in our institutions?

On Assessment

What are the new measurement systems and how can they be coordinated across the K–20 landscape? What are the indicators? What are our assumptions?

How do we go about researching the discrepancies between K–12 outcomes (such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes) and higher education expectations (such as critical thinking, intellectual development)?

What has been/will be the impact of aggressive standardized testing accountability systems in public education on student retention and graduation and on retention of teachers and school administrators?

On Systems

What role do the accreditation agencies have in bridging K–12 and higher education (universities and community colleges)?

What will be necessary to provide a sufficient sense of urgency to create/improve effective systems?

What are the institutional structures necessary to support higher education’s responsibilities in K-16 partnerships?

PROMOTING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Institutions of higher education have both the opportunity and obligation to cultivate in their graduates an appreciation for the responsibilities and rewards of civic engagement, as well as to foster the capacities necessary for thoughtful participation in public discourse and effective participation in social enterprises. Leaders from the Moral and Civic Responsibility Project of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching argue that a morally and socially responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimension of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate. What are the most effective ways to weave together rigorous learning within the disciplines and civic learning? What pedagogies are most useful? What are the most effective ways to provide civic learning to the largest numbers of students? How do we know what is working? What are the most useful ways to ensure a campus climate that promotes civic teaching and learning? What should be done to enhance the interest and involvement of students in politics and political action as well as community service?

On the Role of Institutions/Administrations

How do we define civic responsibility in its political, social, community, national, international forms?

What are the key indicators of a socially engaged postsecondary institution? Would creating a national report card be a tool for self-improvement and useful as a pressure point?

How will we know when we're successful with our students? What are meaningful measures for determining the long-term effects of civic learning?

How can the campus create institutional/community teams to create models for civic responsibility and research to analyze effectiveness?

How can higher education better model in its own structures the values of civic responsibility?

Campuses are heterogeneous entities (faculty and students are not homogenous groups).

Can civic responsibility be seen as a unifying factor for disunited groups on campus?

What could be an enabling structure that would permit/reward faculty for "deep participation in civic engagement?"

How can civic engagement partnerships be evaluated? Who participates in this evaluation?

On the Role of Faculty/Pedagogy and Curriculum

What are the most effective pedagogical strategies for teaching civic responsibility in a way that endures and is integrated into career and work?

What curricular structures are most effective in creating a student commitment to civic responsibility?

What are the best strategies to engage faculty in civic life and to foster scholarship of engagement utilizing campus and discipline-based resources?

What is the potential for reform of graduate education to create a new generation of socially engaged faculty?

What is the impact of the increased numbers of graduate students, part-time, and non-tenure track faculty on the civic learning priorities of the institution?

How can we insure that civic responsibility is an educational continuum between K-12 and higher education?

How can disciplines re-think the learning process to effectively challenge students to make informed choices about being socially involved?

How can we insure that global and multicultural perspectives remain central to civic responsibility preparation?

How do we encourage integration of reflection of personal ethics with commitment to civic responsibility?

How do we engage disciplines and learned societies in rewarding and promoting research and teaching that enables work on civic responsibility?

How do we sustain a diverse faculty's engagement in work on civic engagement?

How do we begin to define "global civic responsibility" and its place in the outcomes of the degree? How do we address student understandings of poverty and the socio-political mechanisms that generate inequalities of wealth, power, and life opportunities?

What do students need to know to become effectively engaged? How can assessment models be designed to answer this question?

How can we model civic responsibility on our campuses in order to set examples for life after college?

Is civic responsibility a desired student learning outcome across the curriculum? If so, how should it be assessed?

How can we make advancing knowledge of civic responsibility a goal of students' service learning and work experience?

How can we combine the abstract ideals of the university with ideas presented to students in the classroom in concrete ways?

On the Role of Students

What do students need to know to become effectively engaged? How can assessment models be designed to answer this question?

How do we integrate civic responsibility throughout the student's undergraduate education within both the curriculum and the co-curriculum?

On the Role of the Community

What processes enhance community participation in the process for realigning the institution to become socially engaged?

How do we give the community and stakeholders a voice in the process of defining what it means to be engaged and socially responsible? How can we make the community a copartner in these endeavors?

How do we insure that the community is a full partner with the institution in preparing socially responsible citizens?

What do we know about the lifelong developmental process for community involvement?

How can citizenship education reform movement learn from/ally with the multicultural education reform movement and the critical pedagogy movement? What does this mean when students come from a variety of backgrounds and differing political orientations?

How does an institution of higher education begin to answer the question how do we "produce democracy" globally? How can we begin the academic shift from our institution being viewed as "consuming democracy" to "producing democracy?" Locally, nationally, globally?

How can this concept of "producing democracy" be disseminated throughout the structure of the institution from administration, faculty, students, staff, community, alumni, trustees, local governance leaders?

How does education for civic responsibility help students become agents for change? How can civic responsibility be broadened from willingness to volunteer to making policy changes to confront the problems that cause the need for the volunteer work in the first place?

What are the developmental issues for students concerning civic responsibility?

How does resistance to civic responsibility across different stakeholders deflect from the idea of a common good viewpoint?

How to promote civic responsibility to different stakeholders using an overarching vision (of its value) and recognizing enlightened self-interest?

How to bring together campus groups and stakeholders not share a common interest (i.e., diversity, globalization, etc.)?

What role does language play in these processes? To what extent do we need to address specific language that should pervade the conversations among our diverse communities?

How can we get a handle on how civic responsibility is being taught in K–12—before our students come to us—so that our efforts can be a continuing of earlier efforts? What will this mean for our adult learners and our international students?

DISTANCE LEARNING AND DIGITAL DELIVERY

As new technological horizons emerge for higher education, we need to continually revisit our current understandings of learning and educational practice. What obligations do campuses assume for students enrolled in distance programs? How will assessment processes work best for learners and how can their learning be effectively validated? The delivery structures in distance learning can profoundly affect the nature of faculty work, sometimes involving more technological expertise, usually affecting student-teacher relationships. How will these conditions affect career paths for professors and the support structures implemented by institutions? How will technological expertise integrate with pedagogical expertise? What are the implications for issues of access and equity? How will these approaches align with the expectations of external stakeholders including accrediting agencies?

On Delivery Systems

How might the consequences of different delivery systems be compared and analyzed?

What are best practices for assessment of learning outcomes from different delivery systems, including traditional classroom pedagogies?

What are differing models for developing distance learning and digital delivery courses? How do these need to change to take advantage of the possibilities afforded by emerging technologies?

What is the appropriateness of different distance and digital delivery systems for institutions with differing missions and student characteristics?

What have we learned from the unexpected large enrollment of campus students in e-learning courses?

Some colleges are joining consortia (i.e., with state colleges) to offer distance learning collaboratively. How can system-wide courses/programs be assessed?

What are the issues of accreditation?

On Teaching/Learning

Some research has suggested that students become independent learners through interaction/support with instructors. At what point are students developmentally ready to be independent learners, and do distance learners need to be independent learners?

How do we reconceptualize student-faculty interactions in a virtual environment?

How do cultural assumptions about teaching and learning affect distance learning pedagogies?

How might the definition of a course change with distance learning?

What are the different learner constituencies that are participating? How are their needs alike/not alike?

What are the specific issues that apply to different constituent groups who use distance learning (e.g., traditional, corporate, non-traditional learners)?

How is “learning community” defined? How effectively are we mobilizing students’ real life contexts for engagement in learning?

What is the role of service learning in distance education?

How can distance learning serve or promote the non-cognitive mission of the university?

How can the university place a layer of engagement (social responsibility, civic engagement, active learning) on courses offered at a distance?

How are the policies that define the traditional faculty role being challenged by digital/electronic learning?

On Institutional Responsiveness

How does distance learning affect the definition of a campus community?

Are current faculty roles and rewards structured to foster initiatives in distance learning (e.g., training and ongoing technological and pedagogical support)?

What are appropriate institutional policies to respond to intellectual property issues? What models and structures exist?

What student services are needed for distance learning? Learning resources? Student development, advising, library services, counseling, activities?

How can understanding of the various complexities of distance learning be increased among such public constituencies as legislatures, employers, specialized accrediting bodies, governmental agencies, and funding sources?

Some institutions want the entire degree program spectrum available online with two years. Are all courses amenable to on-line delivery?

What are the faculty rewards and motivations for participating in distance learning/digital delivery initiatives? Often, distance learning courses are more, not less, work for individual faculty. Should these classes be limited in number of student? Should remuneration be greater? Should course loads be reduced?

What models exist to address policy issues?

Who assures quality assurance?

Who owns what? What are we learning from the variety of solutions? How do certain policies on ownership relate to educational processes?

What is the role of faculty governance? How is academic quality assured, especially with “content experts” being only one component? How is it impacted by a “for-profit” context?

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