The University of Wisconsin System’s participation in

Quality Collaboratives: Assessing and Reporting Degree Qualifications Profile Competencies in the Context of Transfer

A 3-year AAC&U-sponsored Project funded by the Lumina Foundation 2011-2014

Who:
- Two four-year and 2 two-year UW System institutions: UW-Oshkosh in partnership with UW-Fox Valley; and UW-Parkside in partnership with UW-Waukesha.
- The two pairings of a two-year and a four-year campus comprised the transfer partners, called Quality Collaboratives or QCs.
- A 3-person UW System Administration Team with expertise in policy, assessment and faculty development served as project liaisons with AAC&U and the other Systems.
- Eight other state higher education systems also participated: California, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Utah and Virginia. Oregon and North Dakota participated with modified projects.
- The project was led by AAC&U Vice Presidents Terrel Rhodes, Debra Humphreys, and Susan Albertine.
- Two Advisory Boards composed of national experts in policy and assessment provided additional support, including Judith Ramalay, Gary Brown, Rebecca Martin, Peter Ewell, Michelle Asha Cooper, and Trudy Banta, among others.

What:
For AAC&U:
- **Proof of Concept** for the Lumina Foundation’s Degree Qualifications Profile or DQP (http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/The_Degree_Qualifications_Profile.pdf)
  - The project was built on a consensus framework of learning outcomes—articulated in the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and the DQP—that charts levels of competence which every college student should...
achieve and integrate in five areas: specialized knowledge, broad and integrative knowledge, intellectual skills, applied and collaborative learning, and civic and global learning.

- **Project Goals:** Participating institutions and systems collaborated to test a family of approaches resulting in:
  - Improved transfer of students from two- to four-year institutions through a focus on competency and learning outcomes as the means to persistence and degree completion;
  - Student achievement of essential outcomes at appropriately high levels and at equitable rates across diverse student populations; and
  - Improved assessment and documentation of student learning, i.e., of student work and attainment of outcomes.

- **Project Outcomes/Deliverables:** There were three strands of the project that occurred in tandem to deliver the outcomes:
  - **Assessment:** A set of new national reporting templates and strategies for assessing student competence on essential learning outcomes for use in student transfer;
  - **Policy:** Recommended practices, policies, and examples for incorporating evidence of students’ demonstrated competence on a range of learning outcomes within transfer policies and priorities; and
  - **Faculty Leadership:** Recommended practices, models, and demonstration sites for institutionally fostering faculty leadership.

For UW QCs:

- **Beta-testing** took place at 1-2 Quality Collaboratives in each participating state.
- **UW-Oshkosh-UW-Fox Valley:** Focused on civic engagement learning outcomes as defined by Lumina. Guiding Question: What is the effect of student participation in civic engagement experiences at 2-year colleges on retention and student performance at 4-year institutions? In other words, the project looked at the efficacy of the integration of civic engagement practices into the curriculum.
- **UW-Parkside-UW-Waukesha:** Focused on applying the DQP to assess the new UW Colleges Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) degree. Guiding questions: How does the completion of the BAAS degree impact students’ global thinking, cognitive, and/or applied skills? How does the BAAS impact student completion rates?

**How:**

- **Funding:**
  - Each participating institution received a total $40,000 over the three years of the project (2011-14), directed toward meeting the project goals.
  - The UW System team also received $40,000 over the three years of the project, used in support of the project, including professional development and additional campus support.

- **Requirements:**
  - Each participating campus formed a QC team comprised of three leaders:
    - 1. Campus Team and Policy Leader: someone in an administrative role at a level to make or influence policy decisions who serves as the campus team leader;
    - 2. Assessment Leader: a person who oversees or leads assessment of student learning on the campus; and
    - 3. Faculty Leader: a faculty member or someone who works regularly with faculty on roles and rewards and faculty development.
  - A 3- person UW System Administration QC Team was assembled with expertise in policy, assessment and faculty development: Rebecca Karoff, Senior Special Assistant to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Diane Treis Rusk, Academic Planner for Undergraduate Education; and Yufeng Duan, Institutional Research Analyst for Policy, Analysis and Research.
  - Project participants were required to attend AAC&U-sponsored meetings and institutes dedicated to advancing the goals of the QC initiative (funded by AAC&U).

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