

Meaningful General Education Reform: Integrating Core Curricula and Institutional Values

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Abstract : A central element of higher education today is the “core” or “general education” curriculum: that configuration of courses that often encompasses the essence of liberal arts education. Ensuring that such offerings reflect the mission and values of the institution is a challenge faced by most college and universities, often more than once. This paper presents an action model of program planning designed to structure the processes of developing, implementing and revising core curricula in a manner consistent with key institutional goals and objectives. Through presentation of a case study from a university in the United States, the elements of needs assessment, stakeholder investment and collaborative compromise are shown as key components of a planning strategy that can produce a general education program that is comprehensive, academically rigorous, assessable and mission consistent. The paper concludes with recommendations for both the implementation and evaluation of such programs in practice.

Keywords : academic assessment, academic program planning, curriculum development, general education reform

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