All Things Assessment at KU is edited by Dr. Gil Clary, and members of the Advisory Board are Dr. David Beougher, Dr. Mahfuzul Khondaker, Dr. Michelle Kiec, Dr. John McCarthy, Professor Krista Prock, and Dr. Carole Wells. Suggestions for articles, announcements, and feedback of any sort are welcomed and appreciated.

High Impact Practices

In recent years, a great deal of attention in higher education has been directed toward the concept and experiences known as High Impact Practices or HIPs. Generally speaking, HIPs are educational experiences that require high levels of student engagement and promote deep learning. According to George Kuh, who originated the term, HIPs lead students to “(1) invest time and effort; (2) interact with faculty and other students about substantive matters; (3) experience diversity; (4) respond to frequent feedback; (5) reflect and integrate learning; and (6) discover the relevance of learning through real-world application” (Kuh, 2010, p. ix). More simply, HIPs are marked by (1) high levels of intentionality, (2) high levels of interaction, and (3) reflection (Clayton-Pederson & Finley, 2010).

Assessments have revealed that HIPs are associated with high levels of student engagement and deeper learning. Moreover, Brownell and Swaner’s (2010) review of five HIPs revealed that, generally speaking, the practices were related to higher rates of retention, higher grade point averages, and higher graduation rates. Not surprising, however, the positive outcomes appear to be more likely when the HIPs are effectively implemented, which is to say implemented so that the key ingredients identified above are present. Lastly, there is some evidence that HIPs are especially likely to positively affect students from underserved groups – students from under-represented minority groups, Pell recipients, and first-generation college students.

What, precisely, are these HIPs? The list includes capstone experiences, collaborative assignments and projects, common intellectual experiences, diversity and global learning, first-year seminars and experiences, internships, learning communities, service learning, undergraduate research, and writing-intensive courses. The AAC&U chart of these practices and a short description of each can be found at the end of this newsletter, or accessed electronically via http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm.
Without a doubt, readers will recognize that many of the practices are already occurring at Kutztown University. In fact, the Office of Assessment is working with the assessment committees of each college to conduct an inventory of HIPs in the academic programs of the university. The inventory will give us a sense of the degree to which Kutztown University students are already presented with opportunities to experience HIPs, and then provide the basis for conversations about how to build on this foundation and increase these experiences for students.

In anticipation of those conversations, readers are alerted to three opportunities to learn more:

- the current issue of AAC&U’s Peer Review is devoted to articles about HIPs in the classroom, and some of those articles can be accessed via [http://www.aacu.org/peerreview](http://www.aacu.org/peerreview) (a copy of the journal is available in the Office of Assessment, Graduate Center 201);
- the January 2013 General Education and Assessment Workshop will focus on strengthening the connection between curricular and co-curricular experiences (January 24, 2013, with the workshop led by Dr. Nancy Mitchell of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln); and
- Clarion University’s First Annual Conference on HIPs, to be held on February 14 – 15, 2013, with each PASSHE institution invited to send a three to six member team. (The announcement appears at the end of this newsletter.)

To summarize, institutions across the nation are increasingly attending to HIPs, and looking for ways to provide these experiences to more students, more often, and in a variety of venues. Research suggests that these experiences have positive benefits on rates of retention, persistence, and graduation, and most importantly, on the level of student engagement with their educational experiences and their learning. Moreover, HIPs can be introduced as stand-alone co-curricular experiences, as part of a semester long course, or as an experience in a single class session. In all cases, the key ingredients appear to be high levels of intentionality, interaction, and reflection.

Resources available in the Office of Assessment include:

**College Assessment Committee News**

**College of Education**

Kutztown University teacher preparation programs of study integrate Field Experiences as part of all initial certification and advanced (graduate) programs. Along with opportunities for learning and feedback for individual students, the field experiences provide settings for assessments of program learning goals.

Courses in all initial program areas require involvement with schools and/or agencies in diverse settings plus requisite hours of observation completed during the first two years of study. Observations have specific objectives and guidelines, dependent on course of study. Formal observation reports are generated by candidates and reviewed by program advisers. Candidates may enroll in the professional semester after approval is
gained for candidacy status and all pre-requisites have been fulfilled. Varying with each program of study, the professional semester experience is paired with academic courses and occurs in a school setting.

Clinical Experience (student teaching) is the final phase of the program of study. Clinical Experience is a full semester-long experience scheduled during either the fall or spring semester. Teacher candidates receive two separate eight-week placements in different grade levels and school districts. Each placement constitutes a separate six-credit course with required attendance at a two hour weekly practicum or seminar.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Continuing its focus on assessing student retention, persistence and graduation, The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has pursued multiple vectors for data collection, discussion, analysis and dissemination. Assessment activities have focused on moving from the myriad theories of high impact practices discussed in national forums and moving into the discovering of what constitutes ‘high impact’ in the unique environment that is Kutztown University. Initial analysis of data provided by students and faculty suggests that personal contact is a leading factor in students remaining in school as well as in their progress towards completing a degree program and graduating. Often overlooked in national studies, this personal contact, early and regular, is evidenced in a wide variety of manners such as advising and one-on-one discussions. These efforts maximize the focus of faculty input reinforcing the local perception that individual attention matters to students. Continued study and refinement of data will continue in the spring.

College of Visual & Performing Arts

The Art Education and Crafts Department holds an annual Fall conference to provide professional development for art teachers working in public and private PreK-12 settings, community art centers, and museums. On Friday, November 16, over 100 people attended this year’s conference, Framing the Future. KU undergraduate, certification and graduate art education and crafts majors exercised advocacy leadership in several ways that were indispensable to the success of the program. The NAEA (National Art Educators Association) student chapter and students involved in student teaching gathered and mounted an exhibition of PreK-12 student work. Graduate students lead sessions related to their research. Undergraduate students taught workshops under the tutelage of crafts faculty. Students provided hospitality that included greeting attendees at the beginning of the conference and upon entrance to individual sessions throughout the day. Publicity materials were both generated and distributed by students. NAEA student chapter members provided hospitality for presenters to ensure a fluid experience for them. Post-conference surveys indicate that this conference, due in large part to student involvement, had a tremendous IMPACT on the art educators in attendance. Thus, the fall Art Education Conference, a High Impact Practice, provided art education students with hands-on exposure to best practices in the field while encouraging dynamic interactions between students and pedagogues in the field.

General Education and Assessment Update:

High Impact Practices

Students, both here at Kutztown University and nationally, seem to have a difficult time engaging with general education. As we often hear, general education is something that just needs to be “gotten out of the way” and its courses are largely irrelevant to the student’s education. The reality, of course, is that general education is foundational, fundamental, and interwoven with all majors. Students, however, need assistance to recognize this and high impact practices may help us achieve this goal.
Research suggests that high-impact practices – those that require students to “(1) invest time and effort; (2) interact with faculty and other students about substantive matters; (3) experience diversity; (4) respond to frequent feedback; (5) reflect and integrate learning; and (6) discover the relevance of learning through real-world application” (Kuh, 2008) – have a positive effect on students’ engagement with their learning. If students are more likely to engage with high-impact practices such as internships, learning communities, service learning and undergraduate research, then perhaps one part of the solution is to assess students participating in these activities for outcome achievements related to general education.

In order to do this, general education learning goals and outcomes must be attached to applicable high-impact practices. Some examples are suggested below, aligned with the Kutztown University General Education goals:

**Goal 1:** To cultivate intellectual and practical skills that are practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance. 

Thematic courses, such as writing or critical thinking, address the domains of this goal. Learning communities and collaborative learning address teamwork and problem solving.

**Goal 2:** To develop an understanding of human cultures and the physical and natural world that is focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring. 

Undergraduate research can address the disciplines in this goal. Student research in a discipline can strengthen student understanding of and commitment to that discipline.

**Goal 3:** To inculcate a sense of personal and social responsibility that is anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real world challenges.

Study abroad, service or experiential learning, or internships can address the domains of this goal.

In their article about campus Living-Learning Programs, Brower and Inkelas (2010) illustrate that one particular high-impact practice, the Living-Learning Program (which incorporates academics into a residential program), has an effect on student outcomes related to general education:

Students who lived in LLPs applied more critical-thinking skills (such as thinking critically about what they read and developing opinions by analyzing the pros and cons of an argument) and took advantage of opportunities to apply knowledge to new settings (such as applying what they learned in one class to their work in another class). They expressed more commitment to civic engagement, and they acted on their commitment by volunteering or taking service-learning courses more frequently. Finally, students in the LLPs felt they made a smoother transition to college, both academically and socially. (p. 40)

This type of living-learning program is available to Kutztown University Physical Science majors. Currently there are approximately 30 freshman science majors living on Schuylkill Hall. The majors represented are Biochemistry, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Geology, Marine Science and Physics. Faculty and current students helped these students move into their dormitory room at the beginning of the fall semester. Faculty offered programs in the dorms to help students acclimate to this new academic climate. Programming was offered in time management, how to approach advisement, and study skills for upcoming tests. The anecdotal information coming back to the faculty is that the students are forming a close community and over half the students plan to live together for the 2013 – 2014 academic year.
Many of the high-impact practices discussed in the literature are being implemented at Kutztown University. In the current General Education program, students must complete 21 credit hours of competency requirements which are viewed as high-impact practices. To provide students with these HIPs, many departments have been revising their curriculum to include competencies. So far, the General Education Committee at KU has approved 353 competency proposals:

- 80 for Cultural Diversity
- 16 for Communication Intensive
- 18 for Computer Intensive
- 75 for Critical Thinking
- 16 for Quantitative Literacy
- 25 for Visual Literacy
- 123 for Writing Intensive

This large number of courses shows KU’s commitment to provide HIPs for students. It is hoped that these courses, in conjunction with other examples of HIPs at KU, will help students engage with the goals of general education.


Assessment Spotlight: Internships

We all know how helpful an internship can be for a student to connect classroom learning to real-world applications. Typically though, most KU students participate in internships later in their college career (in fact most of the identified High Impact Practices tend to occur later in students’ university careers). What can students do earlier in their college career to gain exposure to professionals and career fields of interest to them? The staff in the career development center have been highly encouraging students to complete an externship. Externships are a 1-3 day job shadowing opportunity allowing students to spend time with a professional currently working in a career field of interest to them.

The experience of job shadowing can include the three key ingredients of high impact practices: intentionality, interaction, and reflection. While the overarching intention is to expose them to professionals and their careers, students also build communication skills, interpersonal skills, and self-confidence from the experience. The opportunity to interact with one or more professionals, ask questions, and gain insight into their responsibilities and the career path needed to get there, provides much needed direction for many students as they begin planning their own career journey. In addition, students expand their network of professional contacts and get to experience the culture of an organization. Numerous students have shared with our staff that it was “the most interesting day” of their lives and such an “eye-opening experience”.

If students complete a job shadowing experience as a class requirement or for extra credit, an assignment such as reflective paper or class presentation provides a framework for students to process their experience. Taking the time to think about and communicate to others what was observed and discussed is critical to applying what is learned in the classroom to real life experiences. Students whose interest was sparked often find themselves seeking out additional job shadowing opportunities as they realize not only how informative and helpful they can be, but also how enjoyable! Students are strongly encouraged to add these experiences to their resume. Prospective employers are impressed by this demonstration of professional development and interest in their field. In addition, students often fare better when interviewing for internships as they are more knowledgeable about the industry compared to peers.
A few semesters ago a biology student worked with Linda Lantaff in the career center to secure an externship with Lancaster Labs. She truly enjoyed the experience and later applied for a professional position. When they called to offer her a technician position, she happily accepted! While future employment is not the intention of an externship, it can certainly be a positive outcome. As you may well know, in these current economic conditions, employers are inundated with applicants. An impressive extern or intern is remembered fondly and often sought out before other applicants.

For faculty interested in encouraging their students to “GET OUT THERE!”, the following student tip sheets are available on the Career Development Center website:

- **Guide for Conducting Informational Interviews:**
  
  [http://cdc.dept.kutztown.edu/students/documents/InformationalInterviewing.pdf](http://cdc.dept.kutztown.edu/students/documents/InformationalInterviewing.pdf)

- **Guide for Arranging Job Shadowing Experiences:**
  
  [http://cdc.dept.kutztown.edu/students/documents/JobShadowing.pdf](http://cdc.dept.kutztown.edu/students/documents/JobShadowing.pdf)

The CDC staff is available to individually assist students in identifying employers of interest to them.

---

**AAC&U Chart of High-Impact Educational Practices**

**First-Year Seminars and Experiences**

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies.

First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members’ own research.

**Common Intellectual Experiences**

The older idea of a “core” curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs the main street often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students.

**Learning Communities**

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

**Writing-Intensive Courses**

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and on some campuses, ethical inquiry.
Collaborative Assignments and Projects
Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different background and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research
Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning
Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures or both, often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
In these programs, field-based "experiential learning," with community partners is an instructional strategy and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships
Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting usually related to their career interests--and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects
Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

Source: http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm
High-impact practices (HIPs) such as first-year seminars, learning communities, collaborative projects, undergraduate research and service learning are known to increase student engagement and lead to better outcomes for students. Clarion University’s vision is to become a leader in the use of HIPs and we invite faculty, administrators and students from across PASSHE to join us on our journey to realizing our vision.

This is a working conference! In addition to dynamic keynote presentations, the conference will include time set aside for campus teams to discuss and plan the use of high-impact practices in their courses and programs. Our invited participants and the Clarion HIPs team members will be available to consult with teams and facilitate their planning efforts.

Dr. Alma Clayton-Pederson, CEO of Emeritus Consulting Group and AAC&U Senior Scholar
· Dr. Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director, Center for
· Dr. Megan Bradley, National Center for Academic Transformation Redesign Scholar and Professor of Psychology at Frostburg State University.

Call for University Teams
Teams from PASSHE universities are invited to attend. Ideally, a team would have three to six members. Teams will be asked to identify the HIP on which they will focus during the conference. Faculty, administrators, and students are all encouraged to participate.

More information and online registration is at www.clarion.edu/362876.
Registration begins November 15, 2012. Space is limited, so register early to reserve a spot.

Tentative Schedule
Thursday, February 14
· Dinner and keynote speaker - 6pm-8:30pm

Friday, February 15
· Breakfast and keynote speaker - 8am
· University team work session
· Lunch
· Large group reassembles for idea sharing and feedback

We will be finished by 3 p.m. on Friday afternoon.

Registration fee
$50 per person includes 3 meals, refreshments, and conference materials (registration fees are waived for Clarion Employees and all PASSHE students)