2017 General Education and Assessment:

Design Thinking for Student Learning

February 23, 2017 to February 25, 2017

Sheraton Grand Phoenix Hotel

340 North 3rd Street

Phoenix, AZ 85004

General education sits at the intersection of an array of demands facing higher education—demands for more intentionally scaffolded, integrated, and engaged approaches to teaching and learning; more campus-community partnerships; more mentoring and advising; more multimodal learning experiences; and, above all, more meaningful assessment of student learning across these efforts. “General Education and Assessment: Design Thinking for Student Learning” will focus on how educators throughout all sectors of higher education can address these and other issues by designing, implementing, and evaluating high-quality general education pathways that are effective for all students—especially those from traditionally underserved groups. Conference participants will examine how faculty members and all campus educators are being supported and rewarded for innovative work and leadership in designing new approaches to teaching and learning that prepare today’s students to be active participants in our nation’s democracy and to succeed in an ever-changing global society.

AAC&U invites proposals that examine research, evidence, and models for effective general education programs and courses that help all students make meaning of their general education studies and of the connections to their major programs. With focused attention on equity, the meeting will examine (1) assessment models, tools, and feedback loops for advancing high-quality student learning; (2) assignment designs to support student agency and signature work; (3) new approaches to general education using design thinking as a guide; and (4) structures and practices that support, recognize, and reward the creativity and leadership of faculty members and educators across all campus domains.

A change in perspective from seeing general education as a checklist of requirements to seeing it as essential to meaning-making for learning requires rethinking the curriculum and co-curriculum and re-envisioning the nature of faculty roles and pedagogies. Participants will consider how campuses can support the development of, assess, and sustain effective general education programs. They will learn how to redesign general education programs to extend from cornerstone to capstone and how to scaffold high-impact practices in order to empower all students with the knowledge and skills required for successful professional, personal, and social lives. Participants will also explore how general education redesign efforts that include opportunities for students to pursue Signature Work can enhance the quality of learning for all students regardless of where and how they enter higher education.

Essential to any effective general education program will be opportunities for students and educators alike to work intentionally and collaboratively with diverse peers to make excellence inclusive. As AAC&U’s Board of Directors’ [Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence](http://www.aacu.org/about/statements/2013/diversity) notes, “Making excellence inclusive is a fundamentally democratic ideal. It expresses our confidence in the liberating power of education. Without inclusion, there is no true excellence.”

Join us at this year’s General Education and Assessment conference to explore how general education and more effective forms of assessment can help us truly make excellence inclusive and empower all our students for future success and well-being.

We invite you to review the Call for Proposals and to join us next February in Phoenix to lend your expertise and voice to these most important conversations.

For a review of the 2016 General Education and Assessment conference, please see [2016 conference information](http://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/gened2016).