Taking Stock of What Matters to Student Success

George D. Kuh
Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University Bloomington

<u>Conditions for Educational Effectiveness</u>

A "Living" Mission and "Lived" Educational Philosophy
- To what extent do academic and student life policies, programs, and practices reflect the institution's espoused mission and values?
- What is the institution's *enacted* institutional mission? That is, to what do people devote their time and energies? What is valued and rewarded? What do people say their institution is trying to do?
- What are the guiding beliefs and assumptions about how learning best occurs?
- In what ways does the enacted mission and philosophy influence students' experiences?

Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning
- How much do faculty and staff know about *all* your students and their learning and engagement? What do faculty and staff *not* know about students but should?
- How are faculty encouraged and supported to facilitate student learning?
- To what extent and in what ways are students expected and prepared to teach, and learn from, one another in and out of class?
- What resources, such as teaching and learning centers, are available and used by for faculty and for students?
- To what extent and in what ways are faculty and staff expected to make time for students and rewarded for doing so?

Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
- How do community members – students, faculty, staff, others – describe the institution's physical setting and appearance? To what extent do they identify a 'sense of place'?
- Do certain groups of students use the institution's resources differently? In what ways do these differences influence learning?

Clear Pathways to Student Success
- What messages are communicated to newcomers about expectations for student performance?
- To what extent are students' academic performance and out-of-class lives consistent with the institution's expectations? In what ways do students' out-of-class lives facilitate and inhibit their learning and success?
- What structures and process are in place to identify students who are less engaged in educationally-purposeful activities than they should be to succeed?

Improvement-Oriented Ethos
- To what extent are faculty and staff committed to ongoing institutional improvement and to enhancing student success?
- To what extent are resources 'front-loaded' to foster students' academic and social success? How might these resources be integrated more effectively?
- What data related to student success and effective educational practice are collected, for what purposes, and by whom? How are they used?

Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality and Student Success
- To what extent do academic and student life policies, programs, and practices support: (1) the educational mission of the institution? (2) academic programs and priorities? (3) students' learning and success?
- What messages are communicated to students about taking responsibility for their own learning and success? To what extent do students feel responsible for the quality of their peers' success?

<u>Effective Educational Practices</u>

Academic Challenge
- Are expectations for student performance clearly and consistently articulated and set at appropriately high levels, given students' academic preparation?
- Is student time on task consistent with faculty expectations and course demands? If not, why?
- Do classes emphasize higher-order cognitive and intellectual activities?
- Are examinations and class assignments challenging?
- Do students have to "stretch" to meet academic standards and expectations?
- Are academic challenges for students balanced by appropriate support?
- Are rigorous culminating experiences expected of seniors?

Active Learning and Collaborative Learning
- Is active learning expected and practiced throughout the undergraduate curriculum?
- Are students taught how to participate actively and collaboratively in class?
- Do electronic technologies foster active learning?
- Are group study and other forms of collaboration encouraged by physical and curriculum structures?
- Do students provide feedback to their peers?
- Are residential and non-residential learning communities available to address a wide variety of student needs and interests?

Student-Faculty Interaction
- Are faculty and staff *physically* and *psychologically* accessible to students?
- How often do faculty members meet with students outside of class?
- Do faculty members collaborate on research with undergraduates?
- Can students get two or more faculty members to write meaningful letters of reference?
- Do students receive extensive and timely feedback from faculty?

Enriching Educational Experiences
- Are diversity experiences infused in the curriculum and co-curriculum?
- What are the nature and quality of students' experiences with diversity?
- Are students required to participate in courses and/or activities that promote civic engagement?
- Do students take advantage of service-learning opportunities? Study abroad? Internships?
- Do co-curricular experiences enrich student learning, and how do you know?
- Do students take advantage of opportunities to develop leadership skills?

Supportive Campus Environments
- Do transition programs effectively welcome and affirm newcomers?
- Are early warning systems available and do they effectively identify and respond to at-risk students?
- Are multiple safety nets of personnel and structures available *and* used by various groups of students?
- Do early warning systems and safety nets work better for some students than others?
- Do residential living environments provide academic and social support?
- Do students view faculty members as available, helpful, and sympathetic?
- Do students view the campus administration as helpful and considerate?
- Do students view their peers as friendly and supportive?
- Are students satisfied with their overall college experience?

<u>Resources</u>:

Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., Whitt, E. J. & Associates (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., & Whitt, E.J. (2005). *Assessing conditions to enhance educational effectiveness: The Inventory for Student Engagement and Success.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.