



# What Matters to Student Success: Lessons From High Performing Institutions

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**“Offering Diversity –  
Searching for Normality”**

**Berlin Germany**

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**We all want the same thing--an undergraduate experience that results in high levels of learning and personal development for *all students*.**

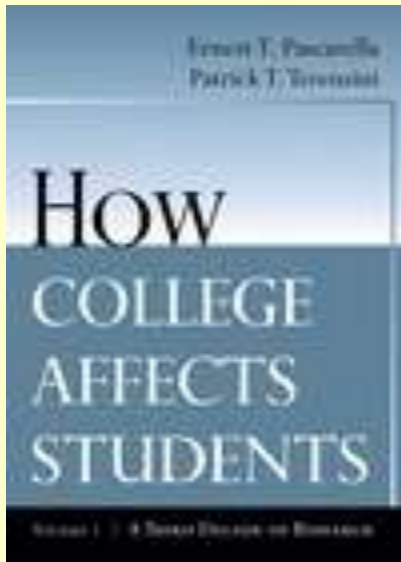


# Overview



- **Why student engagement and high-impact practices matter to diversity management and student success**
- **Characteristics of high-performing institutions**
- **Priorities for creating effective learning conditions for *all students***

# What *Really* Matters in University: **Student Engagement**



***Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of college impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage **student engagement**.***

# Student Engagement Trifecta

- What students **do** -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions **do** -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward ***the right activities***

# ***Good Practices in Undergraduate Education***

(Chickering & Gamson, 1987;  
Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

- ✓ **Student-faculty contact**
- ✓ **Active learning**
- ✓ **Prompt feedback**
- ✓ **Time on task**
- ✓ **High expectations**
- ✓ **Respect for diverse learning styles**
- ✓ **Cooperation among students**





***National Survey of  
Student Engagement***  
(pronounced “nessie”)



***Community College  
Survey of Student  
Engagement***  
(pronounced “cessie”)



**College student surveys that assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development**

# NSSE Project Scope

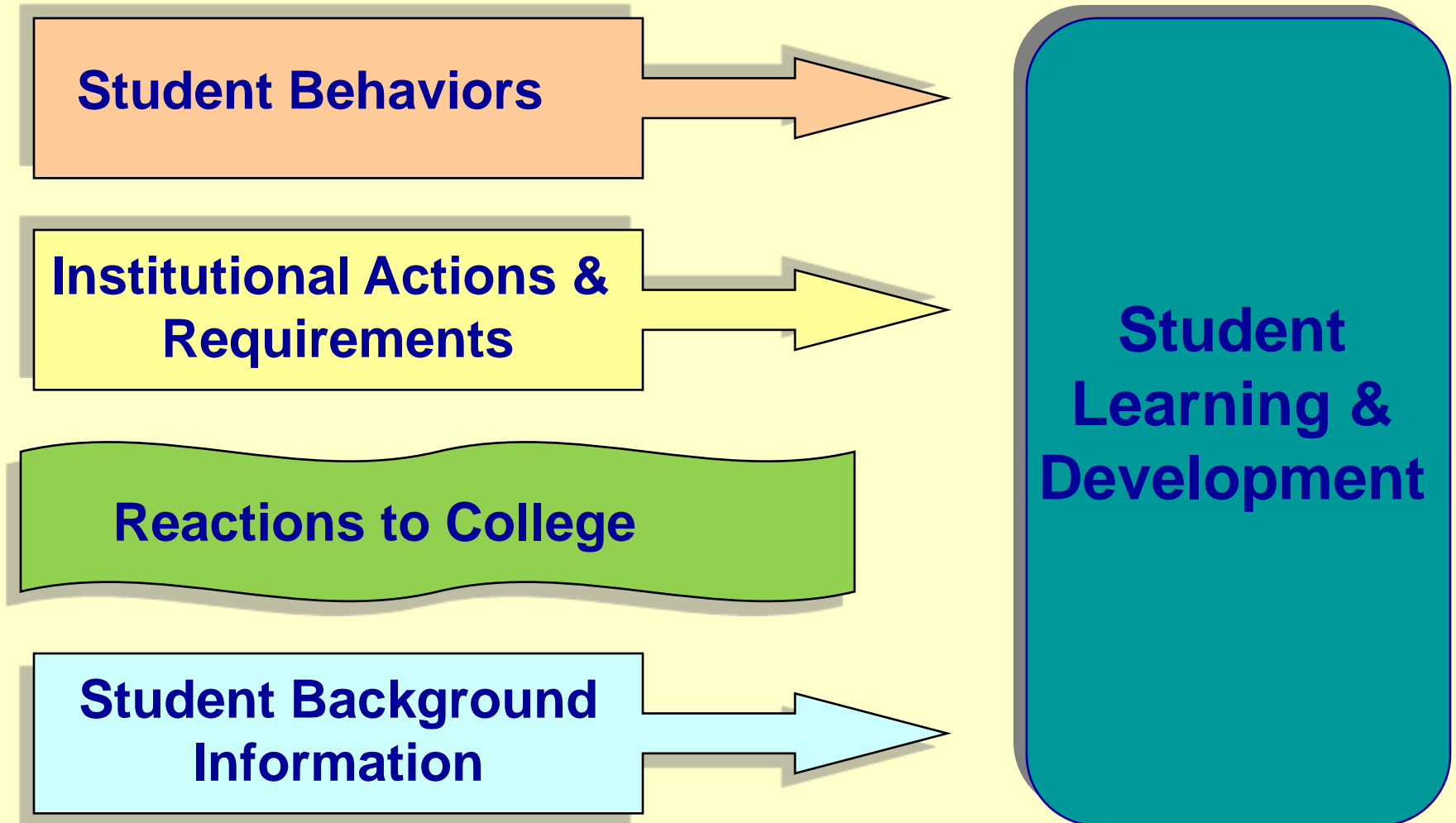
**Since 2000:**

- ✓ **3.4 million students from 1,500+ different schools**
- ✓ **80+% of 4-yr U.S. undergraduate FTE**
- ✓ **50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, VI**
- ✓ **84 Canadian IHEs**
- ✓ **60+ consortia**
- ✓ **AUSSE, SASSE, more**





# NSSE and CCSSE Questionnaires



# ***Effective Educational Practices***

**Level of  
Academic  
Challenge**

**Active &  
Collaborative  
Learning**

**Student-  
Faculty  
Interaction**

**Enriching  
Educational  
Experiences**

**Supportive  
Campus  
Environment**

***Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, gains across a range of desired outcomes, and engagement go hand in hand***



# It's more complicated than this...

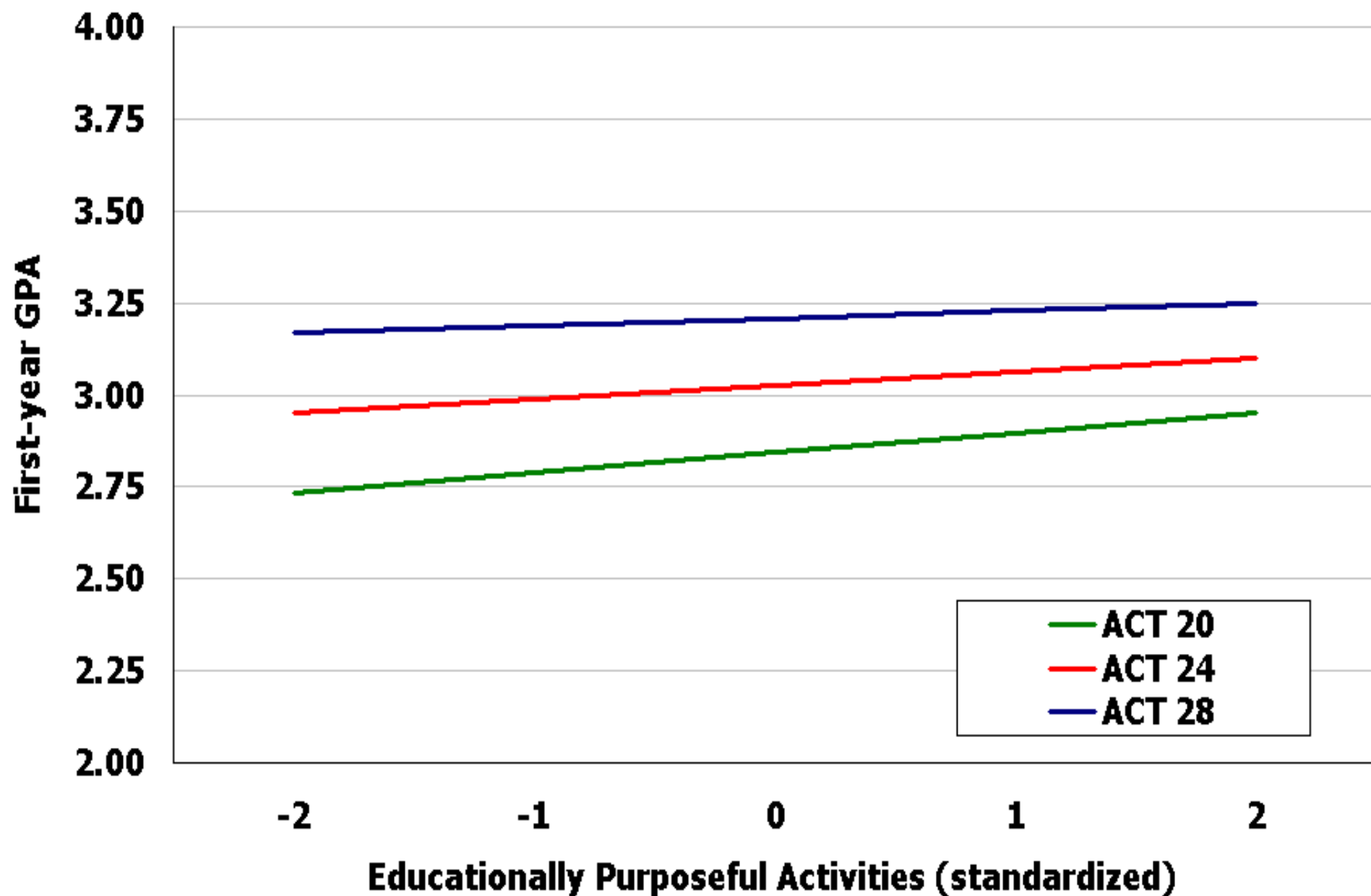
- *Many of the effects of college are “conditional”*
- *Some are compensatory*
- *Some have unusually positive effects*



# **Who's (on average) more engaged?**

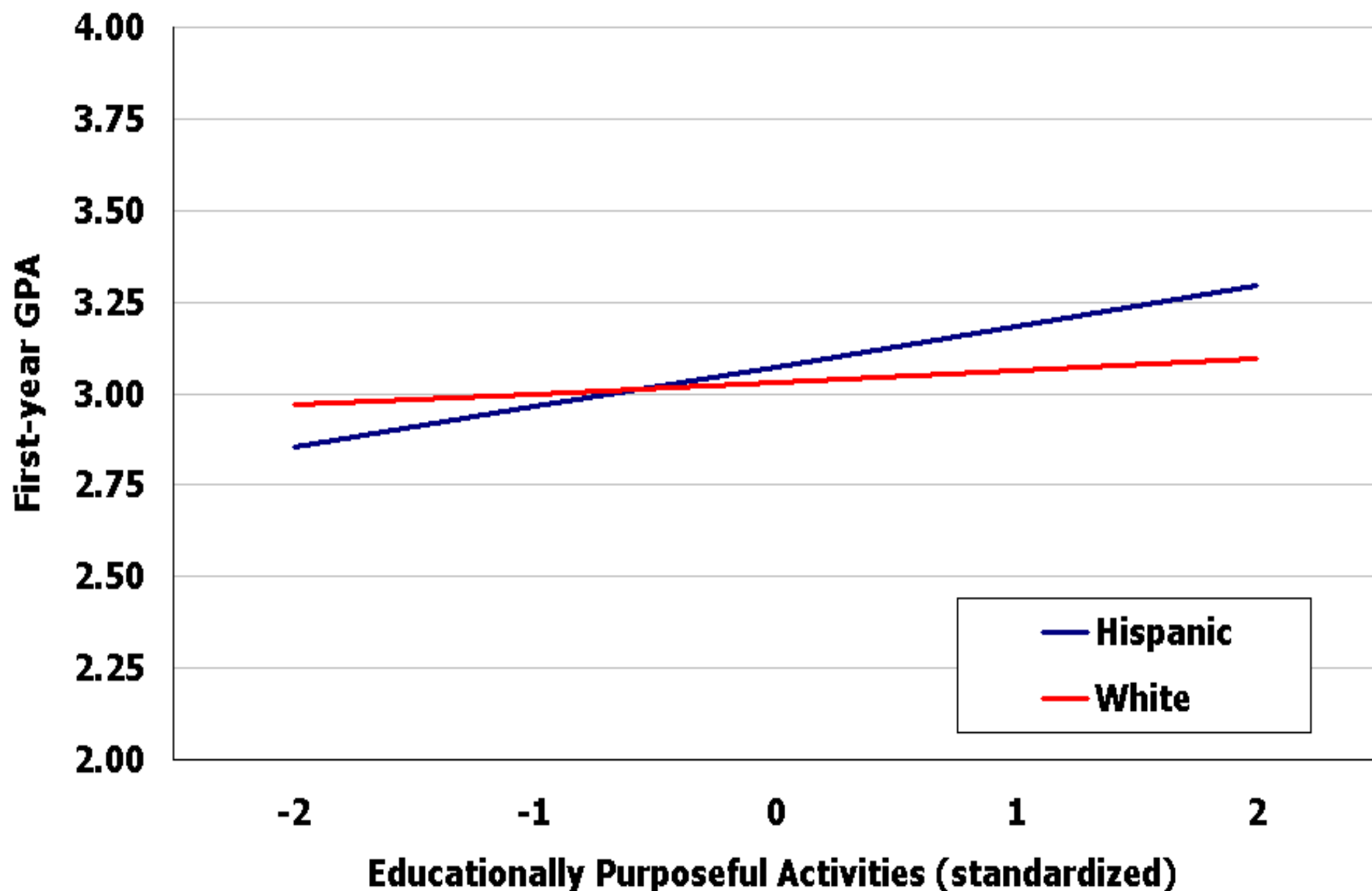
- **Women**
- **Full-time students**
- **Students who live on campus**
- **Students with diversity experiences**
- **Students who start and stay at same school**

## Impact of Educationally Purposeful Activities on First Academic Year GPA by Pre-College Achievement Level

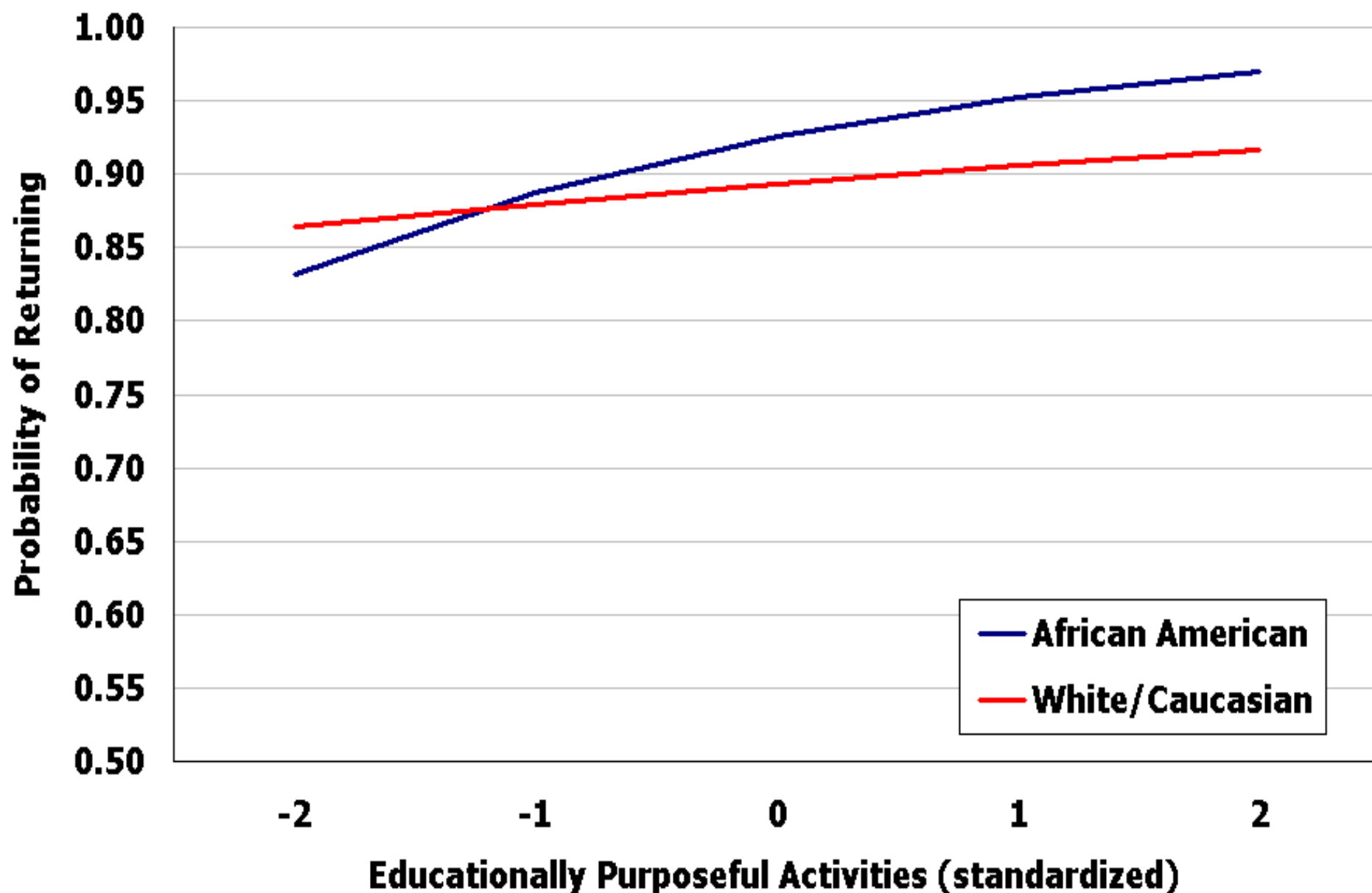




## Impact of Educationally Purposeful Activities on First Academic Year GPA by Race/Ethnicity



## Impact of Educationally Purposeful Activities on the Probability of Returning for the Second Year of College by Race



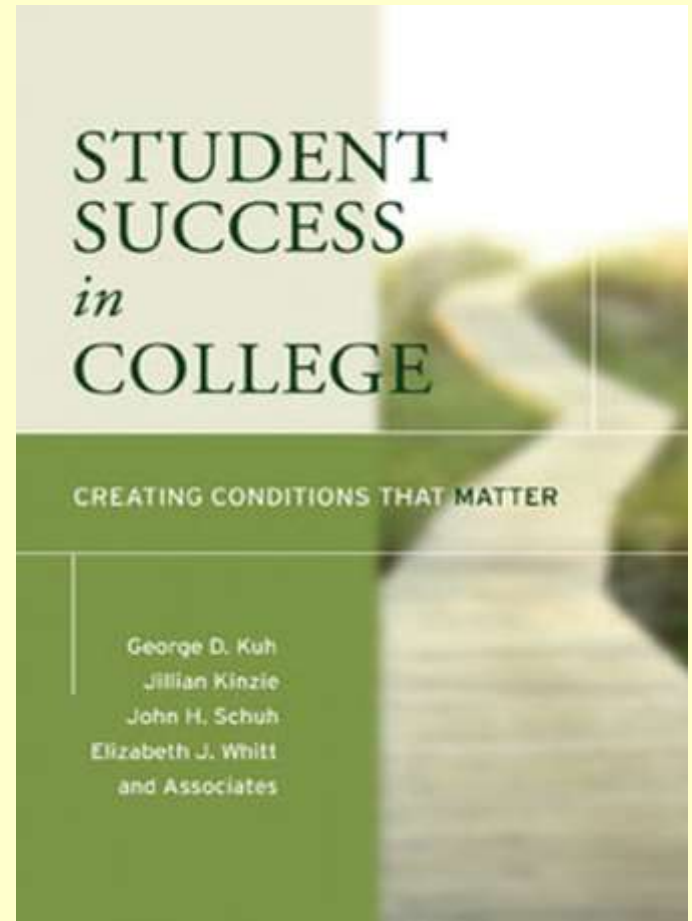


***What does an educationally effective institution look like?***



# Project DEEP

**To discover,  
document, and  
describe what high  
performing  
institutions do to  
achieve their  
notable level of  
effectiveness.**



# DEEP Schools\*

**\*Higher-than  
predicted NSSE  
scores and  
graduation rates**

## Doctoral Extensives

University of Kansas

*University of Michigan*

## Doctoral Intensives

George Mason University

Miami University (Ohio)

University of Texas El Paso

## Master's Granting

Fayetteville State University

Gonzaga University

Longwood University

## Liberal Arts

California State, Monterey Bay

Macalester College

Sweet Briar College

The Evergreen State College

Sewanee: University of the South

Ursinus College

Wabash College

Wheaton College (MA)

Wofford College

## Baccalaureate General

Alverno College

University of Maine at Farmington

Winston-Salem State University

# Worth Noting

**Many roads to an engaging,  
educationally effective institution**

- ✓ **No one best model**
- ✓ **Different combinations of  
complementary, interactive,  
synergistic conditions**
- ✓ ***Anything worth doing is worth  
doing well at scale***



# Six Shared Conditions

- ❖ “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy
- ❖ *Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning*
- ❖ Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
- ❖ *Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success*
- ❖ *Improvement-Oriented Ethos*
- ❖ Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality

## ***Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning***

- ❖ **Student learning and personal development are high priorities.**
- ❖ **“Cool passion” for talent development (students, faculty, staff)**
- ❖ **Making time for students**
- ❖ **Bent toward engaging pedagogies**
- ❖ **Meet students where they are**

# **“Meet students where they are”**

## **Fayetteville State**

- ❖ **Faculty members “teach the students they have, not those they wish they had”**
- ❖ **Center for Teaching and Learning sponsors development activities on diverse learning needs**

## **California State U - Monterey Bay**

- ❖ **“Assets” philosophy acknowledges students’ prior knowledge**

# ***Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success***

- ❖ **Institutional publications accurately describe what students experience.**
- ❖ **Make plain to students the resources and services available to help them succeed.**
- ❖ **Mutually reinforcing student expectations and behavior, institutional expectations, and institutional reward systems.**
- ❖ **Redundant early warning systems and safety nets**

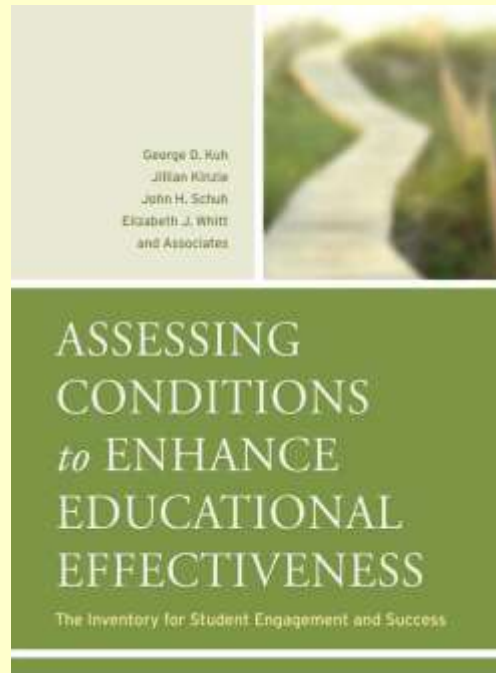
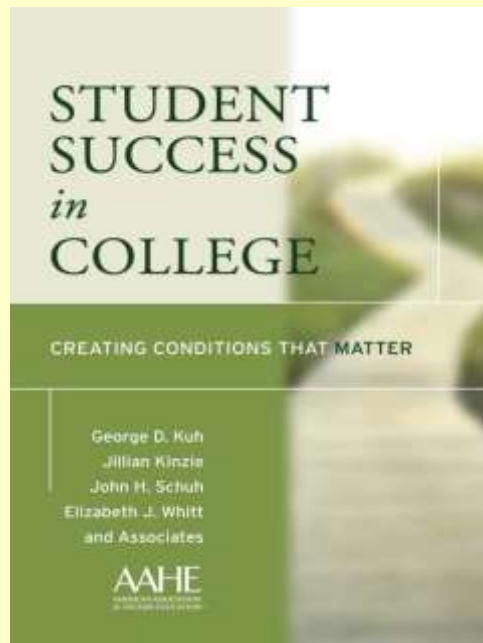
## **Redundant early warning systems**

**FSU's Early Alert program enables faculty to contact first-year student mentors and University College personnel to alert them to students experiencing difficulty during the first two weeks of the semester. Mentors contact students to advise and refer as appropriate.**

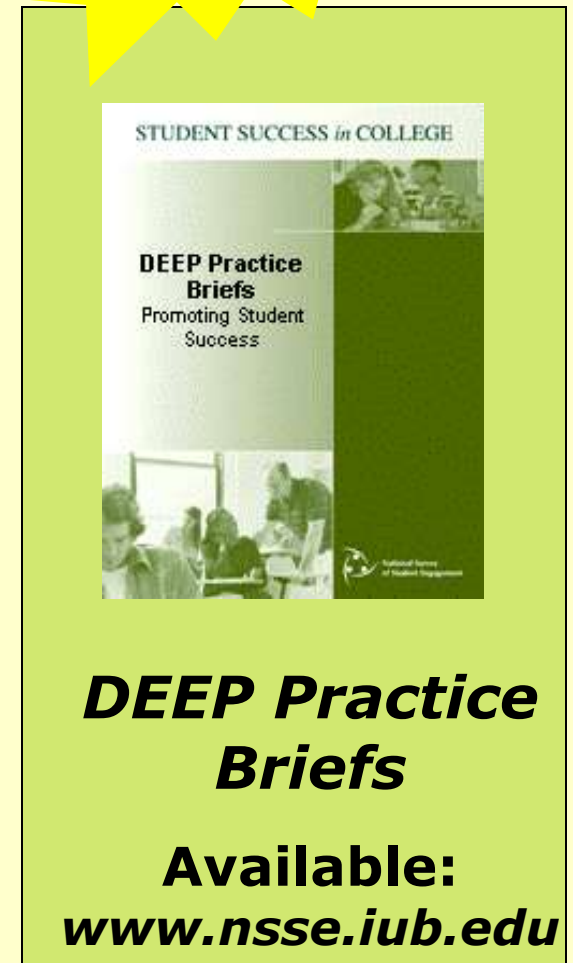
## ***Improvement-oriented ethos***

- ❖ **Confident, responsive, but never quite satisfied...**
- ❖ **“We know who we are and what we aspire to.”**
- ❖ **“Positive restlessness”**
- ❖ **Self-correcting orientation**
- ❖ **Continually question, “are we performing as well as we can?”**





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# Six Priorities

## 1. Insist on doing what works



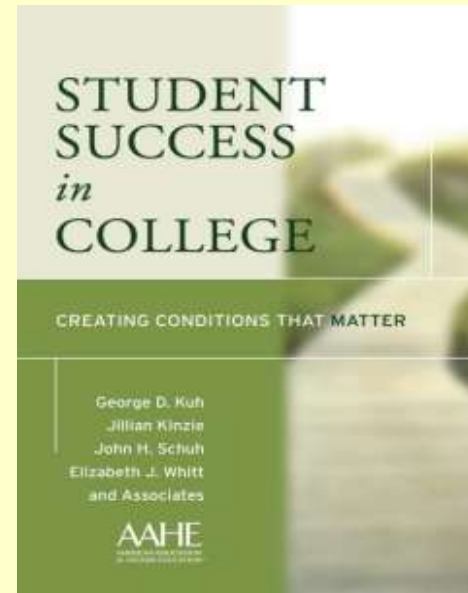
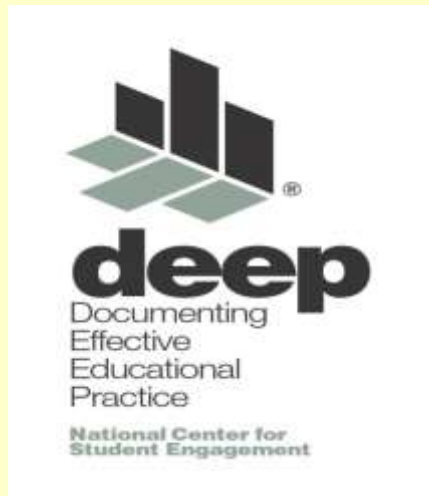
# **Engaging Pedagogies and Practices**

- a. Classroom organization***
- b. Early and continuing assignments requiring reflection and integration coupled with feedback***
- c. Use of peer preceptors/mentors***
- d. One minute papers (variations)***
- e. Case studies***
- f. Debates***
- g. Simulations***
- h. Small group problem sets***
- i. Others...***

# Six Priorities

## 2. Put money where it makes a difference to student success.

*It's not **how much** you spend but **where** (DEEP study, Delta Cost Project, Cornell studies)*



# Invest Wisely

- **Intentionality matters as much or more than money alone**
- **Spending on instruction and student services pays off in learning, retention and graduation**
- ***No relationship* between student success and research expenditures, external grants and contracts, and other traditional measures of “institutional excellence.”**

# Six Priorities

1. Insist on doing what works
2. Put money where it makes a difference to student success.
3. Sunset redundant and ineffective programs
4. Have ***every student*** do (at least) one high-quality “high-impact” experience in the first year and another linked to the major



LEAP



LEAP



# High-Impact Educational Practices

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHAT THEY ARE,  
WHO HAS ACCESS TO THEM,  
AND WHY THEY MATTER

BY GEORGE D. KUH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY CAROL GEARY SCHNEIDER  
AND FINDINGS ON STUDENT SUCCESS FROM AAC&U'S  
LEAP INITIATIVE



[www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org)

## *High-Impact Activities*



- ★ **First-Year Seminars and Experiences**
- ★ **Common Intellectual Experiences**
- ★ **Learning Communities**
- ★ **Writing-Intensive Courses**
- ★ **Collaborative Assignments and Projects**
- ★ **“Science as Science Is Done”;  
Undergraduate Research**
- ★ **Diversity/Global Learning**
- ★ **Service Learning, Community-Based  
Learning**
- ★ **Internships**
- ★ **Capstone Courses and Projects**

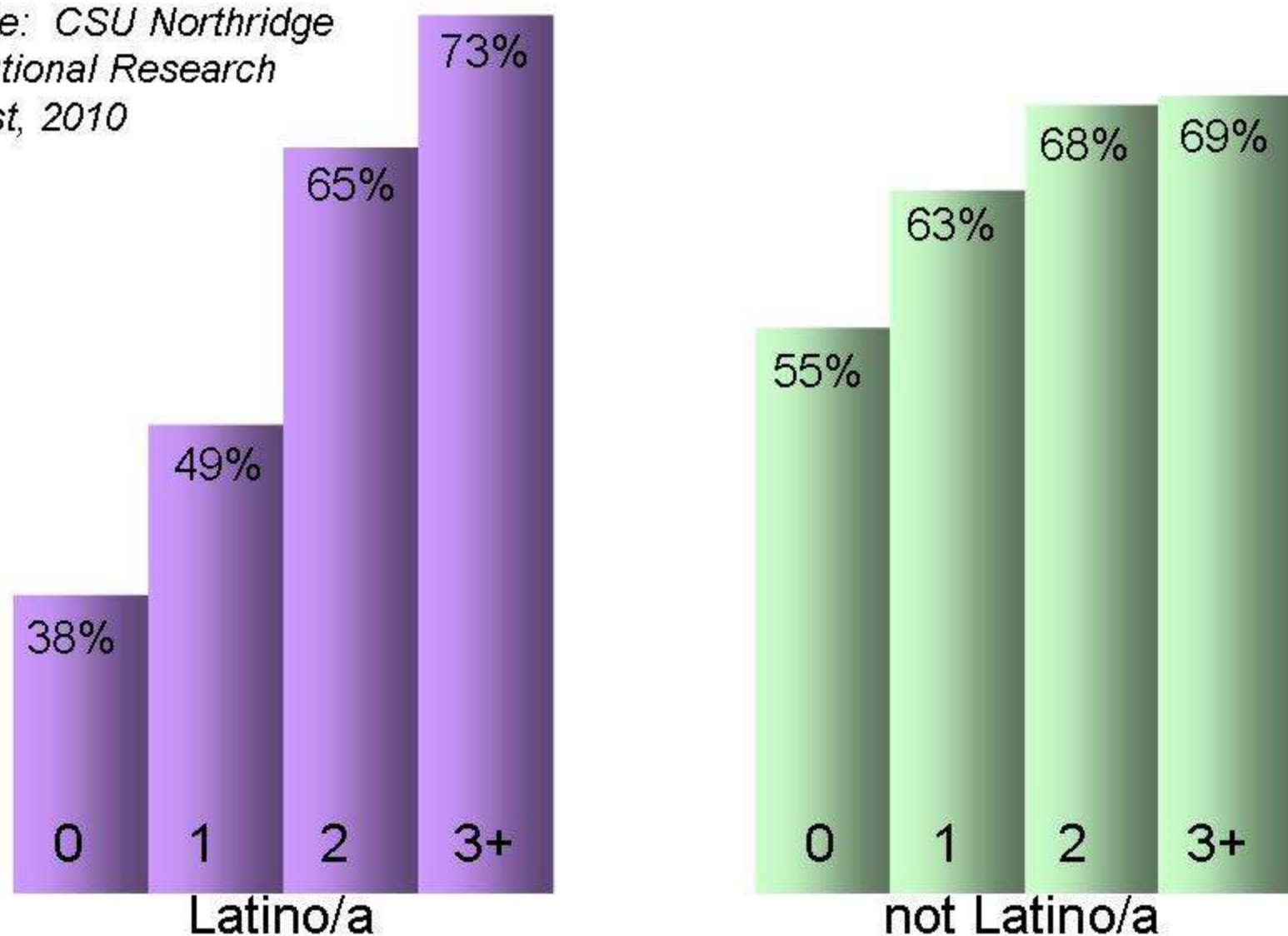
# ***Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Student Engagement***

	Level of Academic Challenge	Active and Collab. Learning	Student- Faculty Interaction	Supportive Campus Env.
<b>First-Year</b>				
<b>Learning Communities</b>	++	+++	+++	++
<b>Service Learning</b>	++	+++	+++	++
<b>Senior</b>				
<b>Study Abroad</b>	++	++	++	+
<b>Student-Faculty Research</b>	+++	+++	+++	++
<b>Internship</b>	++	+++	+++	++
<b>Service Learning</b>	++	+++	+++	++
<b>Culminating Experience</b>	++	++	+++	++

+ p < .001, ++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .10, +++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .30

# Graduation Rates by Ethnicity and Participation in High-Impact Practices

Source: CSU Northridge  
Institutional Research  
August, 2010



# Employers assess the potential value of high-impact educational practices

*% saying each would help a lot/fair amount to prepare college students for success*

- 84%** Students complete a significant project before graduation that demonstrates their depth of knowledge in their major AND their acquisition of analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills *(62% help a lot)*
- 81%** Students complete an internship or community-based field project to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences *(66%)*
- 81%** Students develop research skills appropriate to their field and develop evidence-based analyses *(57%)*
- 73%** Students work through ethical issues and debates to form their own judgments *(48%)*

## ***High-Impact Activities*** **Increase Odds Students Will:**

- ✓ ***Invest time and effort***
- ✓ ***Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters***
- ✓ ***Experience diversity***
- ✓ ***Get more frequent feedback***
- ✓ ***Reflect & integrate learning***
- ✓ ***Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications***

# ***High-Impact Activities Enhanced When:***

- ✓ ***Structure and expectations set at appropriately high levels***
- ✓ *Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters*
- ✓ *Experience diversity*
- ✓ *Get more frequent feedback*
- ✓ *Reflect & integrate learning*
- ✓ *Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications*
- ✓ ***Publicly demonstrate competence***



## **5. Address culture sooner than later**

- ❖ **unshakeable focus on student learning** (*“teach the students we have, not the students we wish we had”*)
- ❖ **“get the right people on the bus”**
- ❖ **high performance expectations for all**
- ❖ **identify and address cultural properties that impede success**
- ❖ **improvement-oriented ethic**
- ❖ **inclusive language and traditions**
- ❖ **caring supportive community**

## **6. Stay the course**

***The good-to-great-transformations never happened in one fell swoop. There was no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Sustainable transformations follow a predictable pattern of buildup and breakthrough...***

*(Collins, 2001, p. 186)*

# Six Priorities

1. Insist on doing what works
2. Put money where it makes a difference to student success.
3. Sunset redundant and ineffective programs
4. Have **every student** do (at least) one high-quality “high-impact” experience in the first year and another linked to the major
5. Address culture sooner than later
6. Stay the course

## ***Last Word***

- ❖ **We must embrace the lineage of our students.**
- ❖ **Academic and institutional cultures do not change easily or willingly.**
- ❖ **To embrace diversity and foster student success we must use promising policies and practices more consistently throughout the institution.**
- ❖ **Do we have the *will* to do so?**



# Discussion

