Engaging the 21st Century Student: Re-Envisioning the General Education Curriculum for Relevance and Sustainability

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Participants will:
• Gain an awareness of alternative approaches to instruction which enhance student development and learning within the classroom
• Gain an awareness of how re-envisioning the general education curriculum can align with the other institutional programming to improve student outcomes and support skills development that is relevant to the labor market

Learning Outcomes

Challenges and Changes in Higher Education


### Changing Labor Market: Skills Mismatch

**Employers**
- Recent graduates underprepared for the labor market, lack soft skills.
- Recent graduates lack skills in communication, teamwork, and leadership.
- Soft skills mismatch facilitated by the use of technology, as it has replaced communication; students have developed alternative approaches not always appropriate for the workplace.

**Students**
- Recent graduates hold the view that they have embodied the skills that employers say they lack.

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### Challenges to Higher Education

- Changing landscape demands alternative approaches to teaching and learning that better equips students for the 21st century workplace.
- Focus on interdisciplinary teaching which engages students to develop their cognitive abilities.
- Institutions of higher education need to illustrate application and results that students are prepared once they complete their degree.

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### Cognitive Attributes of Interdisciplinary Learning

- **Acquire Perspective**
  - The capacity to understand multiple viewpoints on a given topic.

- **Develop Structural Knowledge**
  - Develop declarative (factual information) and procedural knowledge (process-based).

- **Integrate Ideas and Concepts**
  - Integrate conflicting insights from alternative disciplines.
Institutional Context

MISSION
Tougaloo College prepares its students to be lifelong learners who are committed to leadership and service in a global society through its diverse undergraduate and graduate programs. The College is accessible to all persons while making students aware of its rich legacy as an independent, historically black liberal arts institution, affiliated with the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

VISION
As a thriving internationally recognized institution, Tougaloo College will prepare its graduates to be productive in their time and lead the change for a better world.
Tougaloo College At-a-Glance

STUDENTS: 750 Students
Avg. ACT Score: 19

INSTITUTION TYPE: Small, Private, Liberal Arts College

UNDERGRADUATE PROFILE:
Black: 99%
Women: 95.3%

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE:
Retention Rate: 76%
Persistence Rate: 77%

STUDENT AID:
Pell Eligible: 90%

GRADUATION RATE:
Four-Year Rate: 40%
Six-Year Rate: 55%

FACULTY PROFILE:
Full-time Faculty: 70

Re-Envisioning General Education and Degree Programs

Linking Institutional Resources & Impact

- Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Research
- Office of Sponsored Programs and Research
- Quality Enhancement Plan
Forward Thinking and Workforce Development

- UNCF CPI
- NACE
- Faculty/Employer Council
- Education Design Lab
- INROADS
- ConneXions
- EMSI/Equifax

C.O.R.E./Interdisciplinary Instruction

- Courses Created
  - Ways developed
  - Evolution/Assessment
- Brown-Tougaloo Partnership
  - Joint lecturing via technology
e-Learning and Service Learning

**e-Learning**
- Convenient and flexible
- Engages the 21st-century student
- Provides digital record keeping

**Service Learning**
- Guidance and hands-on experiences
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Connects students with professionals and community members
- Students engage a deeper involvement in intellectual growth, leadership development, and personal and social growth

Assessment

- Quality Enhancement Plan
  - First-Year Program
  - GEP Courses
  - Co-Curricular Programming
- C.O.R.E.
  - Instructional Innovations
  - Research Developments
- Workforce Development & Career-Readiness
  - Career Pathways and Institutional Collaborations
Recommendations

• Consider revisiting your institution's instructional approaches, especially the General Education curriculum
• Identify pathways that link curricular and co-curricular for relevance to career-readiness
• Create a partnership between faculty and employers that facilitates improved classroom instruction that has relevance to the workplace
• Incentivize the campus, plan, and implement change

“It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow, and transform.”
— Roy T. Bennett

Contact Us

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