

Alliance for Equity
in Higher Education



Uniting for America's Future



National Survey
of Student Engagement

BEAMS is a partnership between the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education and the National Survey of Student Engagement and is supported by Lumina Foundation for Education.

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A letter from the Director

Dear BEAMS colleagues:

These are exciting times at the BEAMS Project and at the Institute for Higher Education Policy. At BEAMS campuses, we are seeing promising practices and trends ripe for documenting, researching, and sharing. These include lessons learned in developing and implementing first-year programs; realigning student support services; enhancing faculty development, service learning and volunteer activities; and engaging commuter, transfer, and part-time students, all in order to attract, engage, and retain students of color.

It's too early to gauge the long-term impact of BEAMS on retention and graduation rates, NSSE data, and other campus-based assessments. Nonetheless, both BEAMS staff and outside evaluators are noticing short-term outcomes that illuminate what it takes to institutionalize data-informed change initiatives. Thanks to the information generated by BEAMS campuses, we are learning about the infrastructure, process, and support needed for data-informed campus change and multi-campus information sharing. We are also learning about specific projects, some of which are ready for prime time.

To begin documenting and disseminating short-term outcomes from BEAMS, the research division of the Institute for Higher Education Policy is looking at the possibility of case studies of several BEAMS campuses to study, in depth, the process of data-informed campus change. Project staff have also begun conversations with a number of other research and policy groups interested in linking with the BEAMS project and specific BEAMS institutions to highlight initiatives and/or institutional infrastructures that lead to increased student access and success.

In addition to what is happening at BEAMS, we are thrilled by the opportunities for synergy with other Alliance for Equity in Higher Education and Institute for Higher Education Policy initiatives. Notable among them is the National Articulation and Transfer Network. An article about NATN's recent move to the Alliance is included in this issue of *BEAMS Beat*. From recent calls with representatives from the NATN Pilot Sites and Articulation Councils, I know that NATN sites are eager to cement their links with MSIs. The first opportunity for participants from each project to learn from each other's experiences and begin building connections will be at this year's Summer Academy, where NATN representatives will join the 2005 BEAMS cohort and other Academy teams in Puerto Rico, July 17-21.

I'd also like to tell you why this Summer Academy is going to be a very special one. It is held in a place where the three ethnic strands that make up our Alliance are joined. In Puerto Rico, indigenous peoples, Africans, and Hispanics came together through blood, sweat, and tears, to bring about a mix of cultures and races that might provide some clues to our own endeavors. Certainly, hospitality is a hallmark of all our cultures. We will do all we can to make you feel quite welcome in the 2006 Summer Academy. If you are a returning BEAMS campus still mulling participation in this year's Academy, I assure you it is not one to be missed!

Margarita Benítez, BEAMS Project Director

The 2005 Cohort Continues Preparation for the 2006 Summer Academy

The third, and final, cohort of the BEAMS project continues to prepare for this year's Summer Academy, "Cultivating Access and Success for Students of Color," at the Westin Rio Mar in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, July 17-21. In February, the 36 institutions began submitting registrations for the Academy, which include proposed project descriptions and Summer Academy team members. Some of the proposed projects focus on issues that the past cohorts have tackled including faculty development, centralized academic support centers, curricular reform, freshman year experience programs, and service learning initiatives.



Project staff recently provided feedback to the institutions regarding their project descriptions and team composition. In general, teams are building solid foundations for the creation of successful Summer Academy action plans by leveraging NSSE data to identify areas for improvement, exploring/developing initiatives that address these emergent issues within the context of their campus, and identifying appropriate team members for their Academy work. In April, the teams will be paired with consultants that will help

them continue to hone their project focus and prepare for the Summer Academy. Similar to last year, these consultants will work with the teams assigned to them prior, during, and after the Academy.

Summer Academy Registration Deadline Extended for Returning BEAMS Campuses

The Institute for Higher Education Policy is offering a special discount rate of \$675 per person for past BEAMS institutions that are interested in returning to the Summer Academy. This discounted rate is available for up to five members per team; extra members will be responsible for the full registration rate of \$775. A number of teams have already taken advantage of this special offer, but we hope that more schools use this opportunity to continue work begun through BEAMS and share experiences from the project. Information and registration for the Summer Academy is available at www.ihp.org/academy. The deadline to submit a registration has been extended to Friday, April 14, 2006. We look forward to seeing some of you in Puerto Rico!

New this year to help the third cohort prepare for the Summer Academy is a series of group orientation calls with the institutions' team leaders that will be conducted in late May or early June. The purpose of these calls is to continue strengthening the use of institutional NSSE data to inform Summer Academy action plans. During the calls, NSSE and BEAMS staff will discuss with teams the ways their NSSE data is informing their work and to answer questions teams may have as to how they can better leverage their data for the Summer Academy planning. Participants in the 2005 cohort will be receiving further information about conference call dates from project staff in April.

2004 Cohort Participates in February Mid-Year Meeting

A Sunday snow storm affecting the northeast could not keep 38 representatives from 28 of our second cohort schools from attending the 2006 Mid-year Meeting. The representatives met in Washington, DC from February 13th to the 15th to share their progress in implementing Summer Academy Action Plans and to learn more about strategies and resources for enhancing and sustaining their work over time.

The meeting began with each school sharing some of the major successes on their campus and the strategies that were used to achieve their success. Some of the strategies voted most useful by participants were: creating a partnership between Student and Academic Affairs, achieving buy-in from the Provost and Vice Presidential level, mapping the student engagement plan to the campus' strategic plan, and including faculty and staff in the planned intervention. Teams also identified allies on their campuses that have encouraged and supported the work that is being done. These allies varied across campuses, but most often included faculty, department chairs or directors, provosts, grant offices, support services, students, executive councils, and presidents. Sarita Brown, president of *Excelencia* in Education, added to the conversation on creating buy-in by sharing with participants some of the ideas and strategies that have emerged from the Latino Student Success project on capturing the attention of key leaders to move the BEAMS issues to the campus front burner.

Team representatives also shared implementation obstacles and discussed successful ways of addressing them. Common obstacles included time/overload, limited resources, lack of authority or limited buy-in. The full list of strategies for addressing each obstacle will be posted to the WebCenter in April.

During an afternoon devoted to Assessing Project Success, NSSE staff discussed campus-based assessments of project success, including the importance of planning for a campus's second NSSE administration while Urban Institute staff outlined the BEAMS evaluation goals and activities. NSSE's session underscored the importance of the second survey administration for the BEAMS project and discussed approaches that the institutions could use to identify appropriate measures to assess the intervention and progress toward improvement. UI's session provided an overview to participants on the work they are doing evaluating BEAMS. In addition, UI staff helped the team representatives identify performance measures most relevant to their projects to inform UI's evaluation activities, particularly the specific NSSE items for which teams expect to see positive change. Highlights of NSSE's session have been included below to help all BEAMS teams decide on an appropriate second NSSE administration as part of BEAMS, while both presentations have been added to the 2004 Cohort site on the WebCenter.

The mid year meeting ended with a panel of federal representatives focusing on how institutions could use federal grants to sustain their BEAMS project. Representatives from the US Departments of Education, Agriculture, and Defense and the National Science Foundation discussed the expectations of their agencies in terms of bringing about lasting improvement at institutions of higher education in the areas of student access and success, service to underrepresented populations and data based decision making.

In all, the Mid-Year Meeting was highly successful in reconnecting the cohort, determining common struggles and successes across the cohort teams, reenergizing work begun through the Academy, and planning for sustained success.

Planning for your Second NSSE Administration

Participation in the BEAMS project obligates institutions to complete a second NSSE administration. The second administration, which is funded by the campus, is designed to measure the impact of the institution's Summer Academy Action Plan. Since the effectiveness of the second administration is dependent on successful implementation of BEAMS action plans, it is essential that schools consider their second survey administration schedule. It is also helpful to give some thought to the identification of indicators to assess progress.

The first step in planning the second NSSE survey is determining the administration schedule. Administering the follow up NSSE before action plans have been fully implemented will render the data essentially meaningless if the purpose is to measure the effects of the intervention and progress toward improvement. The following schedule provides an example of a likely BEAMS project timeline: Spring 2004 first NSSE survey administered; Summer of 2005 BEAMS team participates in Summer Academy; Fall 2005 BEAMS team begins implementation of action plan; Spring 2006 action plan project fully implemented; Spring 2007 second NSSE administration conducted; Fall 2007 review NSSE results to assess impact and determine areas for additional improvement; Use NSSE results to inform refinements to action plan project. Timelines will vary by institution, with some schools scheduling their NSSE administrations three years apart while others choose a four year cycle.

The second aspect of planning for your second administration involves the identification of assessment indicators. Since the aim of the BEAMS project is to help institutions realize positive change in student engagement and success, it is reasonable to expect to see some improvement in NSSE scores. As your team prepares to assess impact, it is helpful to consider where you are likely to see changes in student engagement. Changes might occur at the item, scale, and NSSE benchmark level. For example, an institution might expect to see increases in the "percent positive" (the percentage of students indicating "often" and "very often") across several student engagement items related to the BEAMS action plan. Another approach might be to identify the NSSE items in which the institution would anticipate reductions in the percentage of students reporting "never." For example, if a BEAMS project focused on increasing student-faculty interaction outside the classroom, an institution might expect the percentage of first-year students and seniors indicating that they have never had these experiences to be lower in the second NSSE administration. Other institutional data, such as faculty reports regarding their involvement with students on activities outside of class might also be relevant data to use to assess project impact. Determining the appropriate indicators to measure the impact of your project is an important step in the assessment process.

Finally, to help institutions plan for their second administration, NSSE project associates will follow up with BEAMS schools that register for NSSE beginning in 2006 and collaborate with staff at the Institute to advise institutions on the appropriate schedule for the second administration. This spring, NSSE will provide all BEAMS schools with information about the costs associated with their second administration. To help institutions budget, NSSE has agreed to provide a constant cost based on 2006 administration fees. Therefore, 2006 fees will be applied regardless of when the second survey is administered.

The second NSSE administration is an important step in completing the assessment loop. Please let us know how we can help you make the most of your second NSSE administration.

Highlights from the 2005 BEAMS Evaluation Report



The Urban Institute (UI), the external evaluator for the BEAMS project, has recently submitted a second BEAMS evaluation report to the Lumina Foundation, focused on both NSSE administrations and use of NSSE data to inform Summer Academy action plans at 2004 cohort campuses. The report highlights some of the issues that institutions faced during their first NSSE administration in the hopes that as BEAMS teams begin preparing for their second NSSE administration, they can avoid common problems and leverage promising practices to increase student response rates and the validity and reliability of their data. A synopsis of the report follows:

Strategies for Survey Administration: NSSE offers three types of survey administration methods: a web only administration, a web and paper administration, and a paper only administration. Of these three forms of administration the most common form across both the 2003 and 2004 cohorts was the Web and paper administration. This holds true for surveys administered wholly by NSSE and those administered jointly by NSSE and the institution. For local administrations conducted solely by the institution, the survey is more often administered through the paper only approach. The strengths of each administration depend on the institution. Where an institution can provide correct contact information for its students, it will benefit from using a web and paper approach, with the hopes that it will achieve a random sample with a high response rate. If an institution has problems with students' contact information, it is more likely to achieve a higher participation rate from a local, paper only approach.

When institutions choose either a web only or web and paper approach, they need to be cognizant of the problems that they may face. In their interviews with UI staff, most institutions mentioned that the web-based survey caused difficulties in administration. Many institutions struggled with obtaining correct contact information and email addresses used by their students. A couple of institutions also had complications due to a new school e-mail system. UI outlined a number of supporting conditions that are required for the web-based approach to be effective in achieving a high response rate: records of valid email addresses, sufficient technological capabilities on campus, and an alternative plan to reach students who aren't accessible online.

Institutions often mentioned that they used different forms of publicity to encourage students to participate in the survey and increase the response rate. Most schools identified emails and letters as their main form of publicity, while some used classroom announcements, flyers and posters. However, most institutions only used publicity prior to survey administration. Once the survey had been initiated on campus schools were less likely to continue to publicize it. Follow up to increase response rates was also not always used, even when response rates were low. UI recommends that institutions continue to use publicity and increase the use of follow up activities in order to see their response rates increase.

Use of NSSE for Planning Purposes: Based on the UI's findings, schools in both the 2003 and 2004 cohort have little difficulty in understanding the NSSE results for their institution. However, institutions are only very loosely using the information from their NSSE report to craft a BEAMS project. Over half of the institutions in both cohorts reported that there were already ongoing efforts on their campuses that addressed the area of focus the team was basing their BEAMS project on. Though this can lead to institutions' having a greater number of resources to deal with an ongoing problem, it can also lead to institutions neglecting other important problems that the NSSE results uncovered.

Overcoming Obstacles: When interviewed, most institutions in both cohorts anticipated that they were likely to encounter buy-in problems, specifically with faculty, when they began to implement their campus action plan. Campuses may find it difficult convincing the faculty on their campus that the proposed intervention is needed if a low response rate challenges the usefulness of the NSSE data. Institutions should continue to use methods of survey administration that increase the response rates to help deal with the obstacle of buy-in. From the beginning of their planning process teams should also identify ways that faculty can be engaged. Disseminating the NSSE results on campus also may help to convince faculty that the intended change is needed.

Institutions also often mentioned that they anticipated resource constraints, either human or financial. Low response rates may also affect teams that would need to demonstrate the need of their intended intervention to request resources to continue with their action plan.

These UI findings are based on interviews with the 2004 cohort at the 2005 Summer Academy and trends across 2003 and 2004 cohort interviews. UI staff will further explore preliminary findings and other issues regarding project implementation and outcomes through subsequent cohort follow-up interviews and other ongoing evaluation activities.

Urban Institute Campus Interviews and Data Collection Continues

The Urban Institute has completed all but three interviews with 2003 Cohort campuses on action plan implementation. We encourage the remaining campuses to immediately schedule a time to talk with UI staff so that this critical aspect of the BEAMS evaluation proceeds on schedule. Similar interviews will be conducted with the 2004 cohort in Spring of 2007 to follow up on your cohort's implementation progress.

And thanks to the many 2003 cohort campuses that recently turned in data release forms authorizing UI access to your NSSE data collected as part of BEAMS. For those campuses in the 2003 and 2004 cohorts that have not yet completed these forms, we urge you to do so immediately so the UI data analysis work can continue as planned. Follow-up notices will be sent to all campuses that have not yet responded to UI requests.

Grants Available to Report BEAMS Work Nationally

To showcase the good work begun through BEAMS, we encourage institutions to begin to present what they have done at national meetings and conferences. We believe that the BEAMS institutions will be an asset to other colleges and universities who are interested in increasing student engagement at their universities. To support this dissemination of best practices and short-term findings, the BEAMS project provides \$500 travel grants per team. We encourage teams to present their work in conjunction with other BEAMS teams who are working on similar projects. For these collaborative sessions we offer \$500 per campus involved in the session. Some upcoming conferences which your team may be interested in presenting at are:

- **The Middle States Annual Commission on Higher Education** will host its Annual Conference, "Navigating the Winds of Change in Higher Education", in Philadelphia, PA this year on December 6-8th. For further information visit <http://www.msche.org/>. The deadline to submit proposals for this conference is **May 5, 2006**.
- **The Southern Association of Colleges and Universities'** annual conference will focus on "Excellence and Innovation: Pathways to Student Success." The city of Orlando, FL will be hosting this meeting on December 9-12th. You can find more information about SACs' conference on their webpage - <http://www.sacscoc.org/aamain.asp>. They have a deadline of **March 31, 2006** for proposal submission.

In addition to the two conferences listed above, we encourage you to identify other regional or national opportunities to report your BEAMS work. For those teams interested in requesting the travel grants please email Melissa Del Rios, BEAMS Program Associate, at mdelrios@ihep.org to receive more information for formal submission. If you are interested in a joint session with your fellow BEAMS colleagues contact Lacey Leegwater, BEAMS Senior Program Manager, at lleegwater@ihep.org.

Campus-To-Campus Visits

Project funds are available for campus-to-campus visits, providing teams the opportunity to visit other schools in the BEAMS Project to observe the structures and practices implemented there, participate in a campus-based meeting or conference, or exchange drafts of plans for feedback. If your team is interested in visiting a fellow BEAMS campus or would like guidance as to an institution that your team would benefit from visiting, contact Melissa Del Rios at mdelrios@ihep.org for further information.

Join the BEAMS Panel at the AAC&U Diversity and Learning Conference:

BEAMS has been tapped to lead a session entitled "Strategies for Increasing Student Access and Success at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs): Learning from the BEAMS Project" at the AAC&U Diversity and Learning Conference in October. Project staff will be joined by two to three campus representatives to discuss short-term outcomes of BEAMS and campus experiences in implementing data-driven change initiatives. The campus representatives for the panel have not yet been identified, but we would like to draw from campuses in the first or second cohorts that have made significant progress in implementing their Summer Academy Action Plans. If you are interested in participating in the session, please notify Lacey to discuss possibilities.

- **AAC&U Diversity & Learning**, "Network for Academic Renewal Conference" Oct. 19-21, 2006 Philadelphia, PA

The WebCenter Gets an Upgrade

The WebCenter continues to be the central mode of communication for the BEAMS project. BEAMS staff use the WebCenter to help cohorts prepare for current and upcoming work. It also provides resources for teams as they continue to develop their work and through its discussion and chat features, facilitates communication amongst all involved in the project. The homepage for the WebCenter is located at <http://webcenter.msi-alliance.org>.

The rSmart group has been working diligently on our WebCenter to ensure that it is as user friendly as possible to further encourage its use among cohorts, teams and individuals. Recent improvements outlined below will address some of the common problems identified by participants and staff as hindering their regular use of the WebCenter. As the WebCenter becomes easier to use project staff will begin increasing their use of the site for disseminating information to BEAMS institutions and prompting cross-campus collaboration and information sharing. Teams should feel comfortable to use their own site for communication with others working on their project. The cohort site and the general BEAMS sites are available for teams to share or request information from those with whom they attended the Summer Academy or with all in the project. We encourage teams to continue to familiarize themselves with the WebCenter as it is an invaluable tool for sharing and supporting the work that is being done nationally through the BEAMS project.

Some of the new upgrades to the WebCenter are:

- **Password Reset:** No longer will you have to email or call BEAMS project staff if you forget your password! From the WebCenter homepage you can now reset your password by clicking on the Password Reset tab on the left hand side of your screen. Passwords can also be reset from an invalid password screen that will appear if the password you type is incorrect.
- **Email Attachments:** Attachments included in emails sent through the WebCenter will no longer be received as a link; they are now available as embedded documents in the email. This form of receiving attachments has proven to be more familiar with our users as it is similar to the way attachments are received through most email servers (Outlook, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.).
- **System Welcome Message:** Participants who are added to the WebCenter will now receive an email welcome message letting them know that an account has been created for them. The message will be received in the inbox of the email address registered with the BEAMS project. Project staff will continue to send their own message welcoming participants and informing them of the specific sites to which they will have access.
- **User Profile:** A key component to building community online is getting to know your fellow participants. To foster this sense of community, all participants are now able to add their profile on to the WebCenter. Through the Profile tool, participants can add their contact information, discipline, a short bio, and a picture that others can access to learn more about their colleagues in the project. Participants can add a profile from their Worksite space by pressing the Profile tool to the left of the screen. To view the profiles of others in a site you can visit the Site Info tool on the left of your team site, cohort site, or general BEAMS site. The names of individuals who have added a profile will appear as a link. Once you click on the link the person's profile will appear in a separate window. **So, please log on to the WebCenter today and take a few minutes to add your profile details.** We strongly encourage all of you to add your information to both help project staff get to know you better and help others in the BEAMS project get to know you and perhaps use you as a resource.

During the 2006 Summer Academy project staff will host WebCenter Orientations for the schools in the third cohort. This session will provide background on how to use the WebCenter for communication and as a resource for information. We look forward to having at least one member from each team join us during this time!

Resources Recently Posted on the WebCenter

On the BEAMS site—All BEAMS participants have access to these resources. To access the resources, click the tab at the top of the WebCenter titled BEAMS.

- DEEP Issue Briefs prepared by the NSSE Institute provide summaries to key findings from the DEEP Project and share useful suggestions for promoting student success. The file name with the briefs is "DEEP Practice Briefs".

On the 2004 Cohort site—Only team members who attended the 2005 Summer Academy will be able to access these resources. To access this information, click the tab at the top of WebCenter titled BEAMS: 2004 Cohort.

- PowerPoint presentations used by presenters during your group's mid year meeting have been posted for your use. You can find these under Mid Year Meeting Presentations.

And watch for additional resources to be posted in the next few months as a number of Institute for Higher Education reports are slated for release in the near future including:

- **Convergence: Trends Threatening to Narrow College Opportunity in America**, supported by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation;
- **Mississippi's Mandate**, the latest study in the Institute's USA Funds Investing In series; and
- **Championing Success: A Report on the Progress of Tribal College Alumni**, supported by the American Indian College Fund.

The Alliance Tapped to Manage the National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN)

The Alliance for Equity in Higher Education has assumed leadership and management of the National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN), a major national initiative designed to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for minority students. The move was announced after more than a year of discussions about how best to advance the national goals and impacts of this innovative project.

Established in 2001 at the City College of San Francisco, NATN includes several interrelated activities. The primary focus of the network is to develop articulation agreements that simplify transfer processes among community colleges and four-year colleges and universities, and expand transfer participation for minority-serving institutions. NATN also is developing an Internet-based college information search engine and transfer audit system known as CollegeStepz. This evolving initiative currently is in the testing phase with pilot sites in several selected cities.

Current CollegeStepz Pilot Sites

Group 1:

- City College of San Francisco, California
- Community College of Baltimore County, Maryland
- Houston Community College System
- San Antonio College, Texas

Group 2:

- Bronx Community College, New York
- Bunker Hill Community College, Massachusetts
- Lansing Community College, Michigan
- Mesa Community College, Arizona
- Shoreline Community College, Washington

Since 2001, NATN has grown into a coalition of more than 200 of the nation's large urban high schools, community colleges, and four-year degree-granting institutions. Its work has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the United States Congress, the Ford Foundation, and more recently by Lumina Foundation for Education. The technology partner for CollegeStepz is The rSmart Group.

Jamie Merisotis, president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, the research and policy organization that manages programs of the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, said: "NATN takes on an important national presence with leadership from the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. This collaboration provides an opportunity to consolidate efforts on behalf of access for minority students and ultimately create broader opportunities for all prospective students." On behalf of the Alliance, the Institute exercises fiduciary responsibility and operational authority for NATN.

NATN founder Dr. Philip Day, chancellor of the City College of San Francisco, commended the transition and said: "As a national organization committed to student access and opportunity, the Alliance is the right place for NATN. I am happy and hopeful on behalf of the students that will benefit from this new continuum of pathways to educational opportunity." He added, "NATN's initiatives have galvanized support among the educational community and policy leaders." Leaders of the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education expressed great expectations for the initiative and the integration of NATN's mission and goals with those of the Alliance.

Dr. Lezli Baskerville, president of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), said, "NATN senses the growing demand from education and policy leaders for a coherent transfer policy that provides all students opportunities in higher education."

Dr. Antonio Flores, president of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), said, "We have many efforts underway to reshape education policy to increase access for minority students. NATN has the potential to open that access even wider and to revolutionize the way students approach their educational success and persistence."

Dr. Gerald Gipp, executive director of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), said, "NATN understands the importance of education in today's marketplace. Without access to higher education, our students will find career options narrowed and advancement difficult."

NATN addresses a number of challenges in the current transfer system where the flaws in program and course articulation increase the burden for transferring students. These students typically lose credits previously earned, take more time and coursework because of redundant requirements, incur added costs to complete degrees, and often abandon plans for graduation as a result of these barriers. Visit the Alliance website at <http://www.msi-alliance.org>, or see <http://www.collegestepz.net> for more information.

The BEAMS Beat

March 2006

About BEAMS

BEAMS is a 5-year initiative fostering the ways in which Historically Black, Hispanic-serving, and Tribal colleges and universities using National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) can develop data-based decision making and increase student engagement and learning.

BEAMS serves over 100 four-year colleges and universities from the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. Each institution commits to analyzing the scope and character of their students' engagement in learning and to implementing well-designed action plans for improvement of engagement, learning, persistence, and success. The project offers five primary ways for campuses to move toward these institutional goals.

- Data on the student experience from the National Survey of Student Engagement
- Design of action plans at the Summer Academy for initiatives to enhance student engagement and learning
- Collegial support for implementing action plans
- Web-based support throughout Project participation
- Opportunities to report nationally on campus initiatives and successes

Campuses administer NSSE at least twice during the project. Consortia of BEAMS campuses generate action plans based on NSSE data at the 2004, 2005, and 2006 Summer Academies. They interact and disseminate their learning throughout the project.

BEAMS

Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students

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or the WebCenter at <http://webcenter.msi-alliance.org>.