



AAU Undergraduate STEM Education Initiative
Effective STEM Education:
The Role of the Academic Department and Department Chair

Small Group Activity

*In small discipline-based groups reflect on the workshop sessions and discuss with your colleagues the strategies and approaches your department is considering and/or implementing to improve undergraduate STEM education. **The group is asked to consider both the opportunities and challenges in providing effective introductory STEM courses as well as identify actions that department chairs can take to advance a culture of teaching at research universities.** If necessary, use the following questions to help spur the group discussion. Create a just-in-time poster that summarizes the key points of the discussion.*

- What are the benefits and limitations of the various staffing models for introductory STEM courses? Is there intentionality that goes into teaching assignments?
- How is your department accessing curricular innovations? How do you calculate the costs of improvements?
- What are meaningful metrics and indicators for evaluating and rewarding faculty members' contributions to improving the effectiveness of introductory STEM courses?
- What strategies and approaches does your department use to create inclusive and welcoming learning environments?

Group roles

Identify a discussion facilitator, a note taker, a time keeper, and a spokesperson for your group.

- The discussion facilitator will be responsible for keeping the group on task and oriented toward its goals. The discussion facilitator also will make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and all voices are heard in the group discussion.
- The note taker will be responsible for keeping a record of the group discussion and any emergent, cross-cutting trends within the conversation.
- The time keeper will be responsible for making sure adequate time has been allotted for: the contribution of individual perspectives, deciding on the key themes for the poster, and the creation of the poster.
- The spokesperson will be responsible for presenting a three-minute flash presentation of the poster to all once reconvened.

Just-In-Time Poster Instructions

Create a poster that illustrates the key points and cross-cutting trends of the group conversation. Please return to the Pelican Room and hang your poster on the wall by 4:30 pm. We will go around the room with the spokesperson from each group giving a three-minute flash presentation.