

## What Works – A PKAL Worksheet

Taken from: Volume IV: What works, what matters, what lasts

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### **Departmental Thermometer**

For each item, please consider whether it is important, as well as whether it exists within your department. If your department lacks many of the items, there is a high possibility that a “chilly” climate exists.

1. High priority is given to understanding the background and career aspirations of students in their first course in the department to assure some probability of success and persistence of each qualified and interested student.
2. Faculty members are less concerned about “guarding the door” to the department to make certain that ill-prepared or incapable students do not become majors, instead focusing their attention and efforts to develop a departmental culture concerned about helping all students to achieve their full potential.
3. All faculty are clear about when and why students make decisions about majoring (or not majoring) in the department.
4. When students decide to work within the department, they are immediately assigned an advisor from the department.
5. Majors are hired to work within the department and are assigned projects directly related to their course of studies (grading papers, tutoring students in lower levels, conducting problem sessions, etc.)
6. Colloquia speakers and other visitors invited to meet and speak with students represented a diverse group in terms of gender, culture, and/or career.
7. Faculty teaching upper-level courses and involved with majors in undergraduate research projects represent a diverse group in terms of culture and gender.
8. Someone is responsible for ensuring that potential and current majors are aware of summer research programs (on- and off-campus), assisted in preparing applications for those programs and for graduate school, and supported their research grants and awards to pursue study and career options.
9. There are career panels, connections with alumni and/or contacts with local industries that inform students about possible career choices open to students majoring in the department.
10. All majors have opportunities to do undergraduate research on campus or elsewhere.

11. The department has goals for the learning of majors that are widely understood and that drive program planning.
12. Faculty work to ensure that their students see how courses in other departments are relevant to their major course of studies.
13. The spaces available to the department serve the needs of the community, with dedicated space for informal group work, easy access to technologies, etc.
14. The department offers opportunities to explore together new pedagogies, technologies, and approaches to teaching and learning.
15. The faculty reward system recognizes faculty whose efforts strengthen student learning within the department.
16. The department makes connections with the K-12 communities near campus.
17. The department keeps track of alumni and keeps apprised them of and engaged in campus activities.