Objective

The overarching objective for the AAU PhD Education Initiative is:

*To promote more student-centered doctoral education at AAU universities by making diverse PhD career pathways visible, valued, and viable.*
Motivation

- AAU 1998 Report on Graduate Education
- Graduate Education Workshop hosted at AAU (November 2014)
- Crafting an AAU Agenda for Doctoral Education (AAU Presidents Meeting April 2015)
- The Big Picture: An AAU Agenda for Doctoral Education (AGS Annual Meeting September 2015)
- Discussions by AAU Chief Academic Officers in 2016 and 2017 resulting in statement on doctoral education data transparency (September 2017)
- Mary Sue Coleman, President of AAU beginning May 31, 2016
  -- "The Three V's of Graduate Education," Mary Sue's Desk, June 4, 2018
- Recent National Academies Reports
Goals

1. **Institutional Change.** Influence the culture and behavior at the department level to provide PhD students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in careers both within and beyond academia.

2. **Data Transparency.** Identify institutional policies and practices to make PhD program data—including data about the career pathways and employment trends of their PhD alumni—widely available.

3. **Strategies.** Highlight and encourage effective university, disciplinary society and federal agency strategies and programs.
Lessons Learned from AAU Undergraduate STEM Education Initiative

INSTITUTIONAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

- Shift from individual to collective responsibility by departments.
- Provide additional expertise within departments.
- Harness institutional and departmental data.
- Reorganize administrative support services to better support departmental reform efforts.
- Develop new institutional business and financial models to promote sustained improvement.
- Leverage existing federal programs and incentives.
- Reports alone are not enough!
Lessons Learned from AAU Undergraduate STEM Education Initiative

ROLE OF A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

- **Using a systems approach is promising to scale change.** Work across the multiple levels within an institution as well as across the higher education system.

- **Develop a multi-theory strategy for maximum impact.** Using multiple strategies to scale change can be very valuable in projects with multiple stakeholders and complex motivations.

- **Understand and intentionally plan influence strategies.** Influence leaders such as presidents and provosts as well as other prestige and influence organizations.

- **Carefully evaluate the framing and language used to communicate the change.** Define overarching logics or value systems.

- **Create and leverage networks.** Connecting multiple networks, providing support for networks, and developing leadership to maintain networks.

- **Consider culture change at multiple levels.** Changing AAU’s own culture was just as important as encouraging change within its member institutions.
University Activities

In partnership with AAU, an identified pilot cohort of member institutions will engage in the following key activities:

- **Institutional Change**
  - Map the institutional landscape as it relates to supporting diverse PhD career pathways
  - Develop and implement a comprehensive multi-year institutional action plan

- **Data Transparency**
  - Develop an infrastructure and the institutional policies required to regularly and uniformly capture and make public PhD program and career outcome data

- **Strategies**
  - Participate in cross-cohort learning activities (e.g., site visits and workshops)
  - Disseminate effective strategies and practices to AAU and non-AAU universities.
AAU Activities

The AAU project team will
- Engage with pilot campuses and facilitate cross-cohort learning
- Encourage the broader AAU community to participate in the initiative
- Identify institutional and federal policies and practices that can be levers for change
- Collaborate with professional and disciplinary societies and other national stakeholders

Conduct a qualitative action research project that will contribute to our understanding of the conditions that influence institution and department culture & behavior around doctoral student education and career pathways.
Institutional Policies & Practices:

- Curriculum changes
- PhD data transparency (national and institutional efforts)
- Additional career guidance and student support
- Multiple advisors

Tools and Resources:

- MyIDP
- Alumni & Employers
Levers for Change  PhD Education Initiative

Federal Programs and Policies:
- NIH BEST
- NSF Broader Impacts
- Fellowship/traineeship programs and requirements
- Support for innovative new campus-based programs and approaches

Disciplinary Societies:
- Framing, language and leadership
- Career development initiatives

Private Foundations:
- Innovative programs (e.g. HHMI Gilliam fellows; Keck Graduate Institute)
- Support for institutional, association, and disciplinary society efforts
Why AAU? Why Now?  

**PhD Education Initiative**

**Association Levers:**

- AAU has a long history with working to improve graduate education
- Has an existing network
- Can reach multiple levels within our institutions (i.e. top down, bottom up and middle out)
- Has significant convening power within and across campuses and externally
- Can harness the collaborative competitiveness of AAU institutions (i.e. coopetition)
- The timing is right