Integrated Elements of Action Plan Leading to Institutional Change

CHARLES HENDERSON, Western Michigan University — Researchers in undergraduate STEM education have shown that many aspects of teaching can be systematically studied and improved using scientific methods. There is now a convincing body of research showing that a wide variety of innovative programs and practices can consistently improve student learning and other desired outcomes when compared to traditional programs and practices. Like most fields, though, there is a substantial gap between the research-based knowledge about effective instruction and actual practices. Change agents in higher education typically attempt to bridge this gap by developing stronger evidence supporting the efficacy of innovative practices and telling more people about this evidence. In this presentation I will argue that this type of change strategy, focused on convincing individuals through rational arguments, is not sufficient to bring about large-scale change. I will introduce a framework of four core change strategies and discuss how institution-based change agents can align change tactics within a larger change strategy to improve their chances of success.