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INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Assessment News

Volume 7, Issue 2

November 26, 2007

The Benefits of Faculty-Supported Student Research: Let us count the ways

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The Faculty Development Conference this January will address the topic of Faculty/Student Collaboration. A question on the *Senior Survey* (administered since 2000) offers an entrée into at least one dimension of this collaboration. It reads as follows: *How often have professors at your college provided you with an opportunity to work on a research project?* (response options are: *Frequently, Occasionally, Not at All*). Twenty percent (20%) of the 2015 seniors completing the *Survey* endorsed the “Frequently” option. Forty-three percent (43%) selected “Occasionally;” the remainder (37%) chose “Not at all.”

We focused on seniors who selected the “**Frequently**” option. Here are some highlights.

- 20% of female seniors and 19% of male seniors chose the “Frequently” response.
- No academic discipline had less than 10% “frequently” responders. Higher percentages occurred in e.g., Chemistry (53%), Psychology (38%), Music (38%), Biology (32%), Marketing (29%), and English (26%).
- 58% had self-reported GPAs of “B+” or higher; an additional 28% reported GPAs of “B.”

The following table compares Seniors reporting frequent opportunities to work on faculty-supported research projects (“Frequently Seniors”) to All Seniors on a variety of self-reported increases in knowledge and skills.

| SRs. Reporting "Much Stronger" | "Frequently" Seniors | All Seniors |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Knowledge of a particular field | 75% | 65% |
| General Knowledge | 56% | 47% |
| Critical Thinking | 46% | 38% |
| Problem-Solving Skills | 44% | 33% |
| Writing Skills | 45% | 33% |
| Public Speaking Skills | 37% | 29% |
| Math Skills | 14% | 10% |
| Computer Skills | 41% | 32% |
| Interpersonal Skills | 43% | 36% |
| Understanding Global Issues | 36% | 27% |
| Understanding Social Problems | 33% | 25% |
| Understanding Community Probs. | 24% | 17% |
| Accepting Diff. Races/Cultures | 25% | 18% |
| | N = 405 | N = 2015 |

The table below provides a similar comparison on a variety of “satisfaction” items.

| SRs. Reporting "Very Satisfied" | "Frequently" Seniors | All Seniors |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Overall Quality of Instruction | 34% | 26% |
| Courses in Major Field | 50% | 41% |
| Relevance of Courses to Life | 15% | 11% |
| Science/math Courses | 18% | 10% |
| Social Science Courses | 19% | 19% |
| Lab Facilities & Equipment | 8% | 5% |
| Library Facilities | 4% | 3% |
| Overall College Experience | 37% | 32% |

These findings offer support for the benefits of faculty-supported student research projects and, hopefully, can become a part of the discussion at the January Faculty Development Conference.

See you there!

New Course Options Suggested by SNC Alumni

For many years, the annual SNC Alumni Survey has asked graduates to evaluate the range of courses offered in their major. At the request of several faculty, a open-ended follow-up question was added to the most recent administration which asked graduates to identify specific courses they would like to have taken in their major while at SNC. Appearing below are a summary of those responses for the Class of 2005. Each line corresponds to a different respondent.

Accounting

--practical applications of auditing

Art

--Dreamweaver, XHTML, more webdesign courses
 --more technique/skill focused painting courses
 --gallery techniques
 --more advanced graphic design courses
 --welding, casting, art theory, contemporary art history, fibers, metals
 --internship opportunities, an art education program
 --typography

Biology

--neuroscience
 --field environmental biology
 --mammalogy, physiology
 --embryology

Business Administration

--more integration of technology and business
 --more marketing courses
 --marketing design, advertising classes as well, copywriting
 --business etiquette
 --logistics or politics and business

Chemistry

--medical technology, e.g. hematology, coagulation, clinical chemistry, urinalysis

Communication, Media & Theatre

--multiculturalism, PR, advertising, diversity, corporate situations
 --a sales course
 --technological communication
 --journalism courses

Computer Information Systems

--enhanced web development & more project management training

Computer Science

--artificial intelligence
 --other programming languages

Economics

--practical economics where we use econ in real world applications
 --more econometrics

Education

--classroom management
 --balanced literacy for the middle childhood range
 --dealing with parents
 --special education

English

--literature courses outside of basic American and English, African-American Literature, more specialized literature classes
 --courses in linguistics, grammar, and language theory mixed in with literature courses
 --classes focusing on analytical writing

History

--special topics courses that look in depth in to one specific event/time/place, e.g. Rape of Nanking, Spanish Inquisition, Civil War, the 1960's in the United States

International Business & Language Area Studies

--international business law

Music Teacher Education

--instrument repair
 --orchestration
 --composition

Physics

--electricity and magnetism II, quantum mechanics II, nuclear physics, solid state physics

Psychology

--an internship experience
 --more industrial organization courses

Religious Studies

--standards and curriculum for religious education and youth ministry
 --practical applications in religious education
 --classes focusing on youth ministry

Sociology

--more field placements



Assessment Resources

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