

2011

College of Charleston
Wabash Assessment
Portfolio

Submitted by the
College of Charleston



[SECTION III: INCOMING STUDENT QUALITIES (8.1.11)]

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**College of Charleston
Institutional Assessment Portfolio: Section III**

Assessment question to be addressed

How, when, and under what conditions does integrated learning occur in the First Year Experience and other high impact learning experiences (such as senior capstone, undergraduate research, internship/field placement, global immersion, study abroad, and community engagement), and in interdisciplinary minors, majors, and programs of study?

AAC&U definition of integrative learning

Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

Two outcomes for this study

- Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate integrative learning skills through their FYE coursework based on the AAC&U Value Rubric (Expectation: scores will fall within the levels of 1 and 2 on a 4 point continuum where 0 is a possible score for the elements “connections to experience” and “connections to discipline”).
- Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate integrative learning skills through a study abroad/ global immersion experience based on the AAC&U Value Rubric. (Expectation: scores will fall within the levels of 2 and 4 on a 4 point continuum where 0 is a possible score for the elements “transfer” and “reflection and self-assessment”).

Brief overview of The College and the incoming class of 2014

The College of Charleston has approximately 10,000 undergraduate students and 1,500 graduate students. The campus is composed of 66% female students, 16% minority students, and approximately a third of our students are residential.

The Class of 2014 is composed of 2039 freshmen representing 43 states and 12 countries. The incoming class is a high achieving group with SAT scores averaging between 1070 and 1230 for in-state students and 1140 and 1280 for out-of-state students and 182 students enrolled in the Honors College. The projected number of freshmen for the Class of 2015 will be approximately 2350 with 198 of those students participating in the Honors College.

**Summary of Evidence: Integrative Learning and the FYE:
Main themes noted from data and lessons learned**

Evidence 1.1: BCSSE data of incoming students regarding their high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

Evidence 1.2: CIRP Freshman Survey data regarding high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

1. Student-Faculty Interaction

Our incoming students do not have a strong history of interacting with their high school teachers and do not foresee regular, substantive interactions as a part of their college experience.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:

- 33% of students discussed ideas from their readings or classes with high school teachers outside of class regularly
 - This number is slightly higher for males (36%) than for females (32%)
- 51% of incoming students expected to discuss ideas from their readings with faculty members outside of class regularly
 - This number is higher for males (56%) than for females (48%)
- Less than half of the incoming students (47%) expect to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework
 - Higher achieving students have higher expectations (50%) than do lower achieving students (44%)

CIRP 2010 survey results:

- Only a third of the incoming students reported that there was a “very good chance” that they would communicate regularly with their professors (30.8%)
 - Women report slightly higher numbers than men (33%, 27%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (34%, 27%)
- Only a quarter of incoming freshmen thought there was a “very good chance” that they would work on a professor’s research project (26%)
 - Women report slightly higher numbers than men (28%, 23%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (30%, 21%)

2. Integrative Learning Practices

Our incoming students reporting have had minimal, regular opportunities to integrate knowledge from various learning environments in high school but have high expectations that they will be expected to do this work as college freshmen.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:

- 93% of incoming students expect to work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources.

- Female students report slightly higher numbers than male students (94%, 90%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (94%, 91%)
- 81% of incoming students expect to put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments on a regular basis.
 - Higher achieving students have higher expectations (84%) than do lower achieving students (77%)

CIRP 2010 survey results:

- Only a half of the incoming students reported that they “frequently” integrated skills and knowledge from different sources as a high school senior (54.4%)
 - Women report slightly higher numbers than men (56%, 52%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (57%, 52%)
- Less than half of our incoming students (46.6%) reported that they frequently sought alternative solutions to a problem in their last year of high school.
 - High achieving students (48%) were only slightly more likely to report that they sought alternative solutions to a problem than were lower achieving students (45%)

Lessons learned (path forward):

1. The above presents an opportunity to ensure we are communicating the message that interacting with faculty is welcomed, valued, and expected as part of the learning process.
 - a. Marketing messages, information given by admissions counselors and on campus tours regarding faculty-student interaction and FYE specifically should be reviewed for content.
 - b. It was noted that these surveys are conducted very early in orientation and that students have not yet been impacted by any information received via orientation. Simply changing the point at which these surveys are administered may impact results.
2. Opportunities for professional development exist among our FYE faculty as well as the peer facilitators who work with FYE students.
 - a. Discuss the different ways “office hours” can be structured to encourage more interaction with students.
 - b. Discuss with faculty the use of a more intentional approach with students regarding integrative learning, why it is important, and how to do it correctly.
 - c. Educate and use the peer facilitators to discuss integrative learning and how it applies to the FYE with students.
3. Review our campus environment to ensure it offers both the intellectual environment and physical environment that offer opportunities for intellectual discourse.
 - a. Review the master plan – are there spaces available and/or planned in upcoming development that aid these types of interactions?
 - b. Current restructuring in “convocation discussions” (small group interactions with a faculty member that occur early in the first semester) – are there opportunities here to include a discussion of the importance of integrative learning in a liberal arts education?

**Summary of Evidence: Integrative Learning and Study Abroad:
 Main themes noted from data and lessons learned**

Evidence 2.1: BCSSE data of incoming students regarding their high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

Evidence 2.2: CIRP Freshman Survey data regarding high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

1. Diverse Perspectives

Students entering college with strong foreign language experience and a sense of open-mindedness to learning about other cultures are more likely to have meaningful study abroad experiences and, thus, increase the propensity for integrative learning to occur. The evidence shows that our incoming students have some experience with diversity, have expectations that this will increase in college, and that women tend to be more inclined to intercultural experiences than are men.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:

- 59% of incoming students had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own during their last year in high school
 - Women (64%) were more likely to report this than are men (57%)
 - Lower achieving students (62%) were more likely to have racially diverse conversations than were higher achieving students (57%)
- 58% of incoming students had serious conversations with students who are different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values during their last year of high school
 - Men (63%) were more likely to report this than are women (57%)
- Less than half of the incoming students (47%) expected to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework
 - Higher achieving students (50%) have higher expectations to work with faculty than do lower achieving students (44%)
- 70% of students expect to have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own
 - Men (74%) were more likely to report this than are women (68%)
- 75% of incoming students expect to have serious conversations with students who are different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
 - Women (76%) were slightly more likely to hold this expectation than are men (73%)
- 81% of incoming students expected to try to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
 - Women (82%) were slightly more likely to hold this expectation than were men (79%)
- 61% of incoming students reported that it was important that their college provide opportunities to interact with students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
 - Women were more likely to report this as important than were men (51%)
 - Higher achieving students (63%) were more likely to report this as important than were lower achieving students (59%)

CIRP 2010 survey results:

- 76% of incoming students rated themselves as tolerant of others with different beliefs
 - Women (77%) were more likely to report this than were men (74%)
- 80% of students rated themselves as being able to work cooperatively with diverse people
- 64% of students rated becoming a more cultured person as a very important factor in deciding to go to college
 - Women (67%) were more likely to rate this as important than were men (57%)
- 55% of incoming students rated improving their understanding of other countries and cultures as important to them personally.
 - Women (58%) were more likely to rate this as important than were men (48%)
 - Higher achieving students (56%) were more likely to rate this as important than were lower achieving students (53%)

2. Foreign language experience

Fewer than half of our entering students have developed the foundation necessary upon which to build fluency or a very deep intercultural competency.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:

- 54% of incoming students had 3 years of language experience in high school
 - Men (53%) were slightly more likely to have 3 years of experience than were men (57%)
- 35% of incoming students had 4 or more years of foreign language experience
 - Women (38%) are more likely to have 4 or more years of experience than were men (26%)

CIRP 2010 survey results:

- 49% of incoming students had 3 years of language experience in high school
 - High achieving students (51%) were slightly more likely to have 3 years of experience than lower achieving students (47%)
- 36% of incoming students had 4 or more years of experience in a foreign language
 - Women (37%) were slightly more likely to have 4 or more years of experience than were men (32%)

3. Study Abroad Expectations

At the point of entering college, less than half of the students reported a strong interest in studying abroad with a striking difference between women and men.

CIRP 2010 survey results:

- 46% of the incoming students reported that there was a “very good chance” that they would participate in a study abroad program.
 - Women are much more likely to indicate a strong interest in study abroad (52%) than are men (32%)

Lessons learned (path forward):

1. The above presents an opportunity to review the information and materials potential students and incoming students receive to ensure we are communicating the message that we view study abroad as an opportunity where integrative learning should occur.
2. Create assignments that have students connect their study abroad experience to course work and personal "at-home" experiences. This work should be structured enough so that assessment occurs via a rubric, similar to the writing assignments for the FYE.
3. Opportunities for professional development exist among our faculty to provide tools and guidance regarding how they may assess student learning to capture integrative learning as it occurs in study abroad experiences.
 - a. Review current institutional support provided to faculty for study abroad experiences.
 - b. Provide training on the use of reflective writing and portfolios as tools to assess student learning in study abroad experiences.
4. Review curriculum in programs that require study abroad for consistency in experiences and missed opportunities for integrative learning.
 - a. Begin review with International studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and alternative spring break.
 - b. Examine how the varying levels of language ability present in our incoming students prepares them to use those skills as a tool to gain greater access to integrative learning experiences while abroad.

Evidence 1. Data for Outcome 1: FYE and Integrative Learning

1.1. Before College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE): College of Charleston 2009 Results

Experience in high school

During your last year of high school, about how often did you do each of the following? ~ Response of "often" or "very often" ~	Gender			H.S. Grades	
	Total	Female	Male	A grades	B or lower grades
◇ Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with teachers outside of class	33% (N=1700)	32% (N=1192)	36% (N=487)	33% (N=933)	33% (N=755)
◇ Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, etc.)	51% (N=1700)	52% (N=1192)	49% (N=487)	53% (N=932)	49% (N=756)

Expectations for college

During the coming school year, about how often do you expect to do each of the following? ~ Response of "often" or "very often" ~	Gender			H.S. Grades	
	Total	Female	Male	A grades	B or lower grades
◇ Work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources	93% (N=1694)	94% (N=1191)	90% (N=486)	94% (N=931)	91% (N=751)
◇ Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	81% (N=1690)	81% (N=1187)	80% (N=486)	84% (N=928)	77% (N=750)
◇ Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	51% (N=1693)	48% (N=1190)	56% (N=486)	52% (N=931)	50% (N=750)
◇ Work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	47% (N=1691)	48% (N=1190)	46% (N=484)	50% (N=929)	44% (N=750)
◇ Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	62% (N=1694)	62% (N=1192)	60% (N=486)	64% (N=931)	58% (N=751)

1.2 CIRP Freshman Survey: College of Charleston 2010 Results

High school experiences	Gender			H.S. Grades	
	Total (N=1563)	Men (N=544)	Women (N=1019)	A Grades (N=783)	B+ or lower grades (N=801)
During the past year, did you "Frequently":					
Seek alternative solutions to a problem	46.6%	46.7%	46.5%	48.2%	45.0%
Integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences	54.4%	51.8%	55.8%	56.6%	51.9%
College expectations					
Student estimates "Very Good Chance" that they will:					
Communicate regularly with your professors	30.8%	26.8%	32.8%	34.4%	27.1%
Discuss course content with students outside of class	37.3%	29.7%	41.0%	41.1%	32.8%
Work on a professor's research project	25.9%	22.8%	27.5%	30.4%	21.0%

Evidence 2. Data for Outcome 2: Study Abroad and Integrative Learning

2.1. Before College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE): College of Charleston 2009 Results

Experience in high school

During your last year of high school, about how often did you do each of the following? ~ Response of "often" or "very often" ~	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B or lower</u>
				<u>grades</u>	<u>grades</u>
◊ Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	59% (N=1702)	57% (N=1192)	64% (N=488)	57% (N=933)	62% (N=757)
◊ Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	58% (N=1699)	57% (N=1190)	63% (N=487)	59% (N=931)	58% (N=756)

Foreign language experience in high school

During high school, how many years of foreign language experience did you complete?	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B or lower</u>
				<u>grades</u>	<u>grades</u>
◊ 3 years of experience	54% (N=1699)	53% (N=1190)	57% (N=487)	54% (N=932)	54% (N=755)
◊ 4 or more years of experience	35% (N=1699)	38% (N=1190)	26% (N=487)	36% (N=932)	35% (N=755)

Expectations for college

During the coming school year, about how often do you expect to do each of the following? ~ Response of "often" or "very often" ~	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B or lower</u>
				<u>grades</u>	<u>grades</u>
◊ Have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own.	70% (N=1693)	68% (N=1190)	74% (N=486)	71% (N=930)	70% (N=751)
◊ Try to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.	81% (N=1692)	82% (N=1190)	79% (N=485)	82% (N=929)	81% (N=751)
◊ Have serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.	75% (N=1690)	76% (N=1191)	73% (N=482)	76% (N=929)	74% (N=749)

How important is it to you that your college provides you with each of the following? ~ Important is defined as a response of 5 or 6 on a 6 point scale~	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B or lower</u>
				<u>grades</u>	<u>grades</u>
◊ Opportunities to interact with students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	61% (N=1682)	66% (N=1190)	51% (N=484)	63% (N=926)	59% (N=744)

2.2 CIRP Freshman Survey: College of Charleston 2010 Results

Student reported ratings:

Student rated self as "Highest 10%" or "Above Average" as compared with the average person their age:	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	Total	Men	Women	A Grades	B+ or lower grades
Tolerance of others with different beliefs	76.2% (N=1519)	74.3% (N=522)	77.1% (N=997)	77.4% (N=780)	75.0% (N=798)
Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people	80.0% (N=1522)	80.4% (N=525)	79.7% (N=997)	80.8% (N=783)	79.1% (N=801)

Foreign language experience in high school

During high school, how many years of foreign language experience did you complete?	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	Total	Men	Women	A grades	B+ or lower grades
3 years of experience	49%	51%	48%	51%	47%
4 or more years of experience	36% (N=1563)	32% (N=544)	37% (N=1019)	35% (N=768)	35% (N=778)

College expectations:

Student estimates "Very Good Chance" that they will:	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	Total	Men	Women	A Grades	B+ or lower grades
Participate in a study abroad program	45.6% (N=1563)	32.3% (N=544)	52.2% (N=1019)	46.6% (N=783)	44.1% (N=801)

"Very important" factor in deciding to go to college:	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	Total	Men	Women	A Grades	B+ or lower grades
To make me a more cultured person	64% (N=1445)	57% (N=487)	67% (N=958)	64% (N=729)	63% (N=728)

Personal priorities:

Importance to you personally: (very important or essential)	<u>Gender</u>			<u>H.S. Grades</u>	
	Total	Men	Women	A Grades	B+ or lower grades
Improve their understanding of other countries and cultures	55% (N=1392)	48% (N=459)	58% (N=933)	56% (N=707)	53% (N=698)