Selected Data on Student Achievement of Essential College Learning Outcomes

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- **79 percent** of students in a study done by the Wabash Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts recorded no growth or decline on measures of scientific knowledge while in college.
- Only **28 percent** of college students surveyed by the Higher Education Research Institute (UCLA) reported in 2010 that their “understanding of global issues” was much stronger than when they began college.
- The average score on a civic literacy exam administered in 2007 to 14,000 college seniors was **50 percent** (an F grade).
- ETS data suggests that only **10 percent** of college seniors test proficient in mathematics.

Intellectual and Practical Skills

- ETS data suggest that only **8 percent** of college seniors test proficient in critical thinking.
- ETS data suggest only **9 percent** of college seniors test proficient in written communication.

Personal and Social Responsibility

- In a multi-institutional study using the Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRI), only **33 percent** of students report that their campus experience “helped expand their awareness of the importance of being involved in the community and contributing to the greater good.”
- PSRI data show that about **53 percent** of college students report that they developed in college “an increased ability to learn from diverse perspectives.”
- PSRI data show that **47 percent** of college students report that they “expanded their capacity for ethical and moral reasoning while in college.”

Integrative and Applied Learning

- According to data collected in 2012 by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), only **20 percent** of college seniors report having worked with a faculty member on a research project.
- NSSE data show that **49 percent** of seniors report doing internships.
- NSSE data show that **33 percent** report participating in a senior culminating experience (capstone project).

*For summary of data on student achievement, see Making Progress? What We Know About the Achievement of Liberal Education Outcomes by Ashley Finley (AAC&U, 2012); for additional data on students’ civic knowledge, see A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy’s Future (AAC&U, 2012).*