Engaging Students in Assessment of General Education Goals: From Guided Inquiry and Analysis to Improvement

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About Hartwick...

- “Hartwick will be the best at melding liberal arts education with experiential learning.”
- Small, private liberal arts college
- 1550 students in 31 undergraduate majors and 13 minor programs
- Student:faculty ratio is 11:1
- Operates on a 4-1-4 system with a four-week intensive January term (J-term)
- Attention to increased affordability led to creation of 3-year bachelor’s degree
High-Impact Practices at Hartwick

- First-year seminars
- Community-based service-learning (CBSL)
- Practicums, Internships, Field placement experiences
- Study abroad, J-term experiences
- Undergraduate research with faculty
- Senior thesis/Capstone experiences
Faculty-Led “Team Consulting Model”

- Type of high-impact practice
  - Active inquiry as “assessment consultants”
- Professional development
  - Reinforce teamwork, critical thinking, complex and real-world problem solving, and oral and written communication
- Opportunity to frame issues for deeper inquiry
- Faculty as role models and guides for learning
- In use at Hartwick for 3 years, to explore:
  - Student engagement in high-impact practices (quantitatively and qualitatively)
  - First-year experience
  - Faculty engagement in high-impact practices
“Just having these curricular programs [to enhance the student experience] is not enough. Institutions need to think more thoughtfully not only about the quality of their offerings, but perhaps even more importantly about how well these experiences are integrated and central to the fabric of the institution.”

DeAngelo & Hurtado (in press)
Overview of Project

- Collaborative project to deepen the college’s understanding of faculty engagement in and perceptions of high-impact practices
  - Alignment with mission and general education goals
- Data components:
  - Quantitative analysis
    - NSSE/FSSE
    - HERI Faculty Survey
  - Qualitative analysis
    - Student-led interviews with faculty
- Presentation of findings to college administration
Areas for Inquiry:

- Relative importance of teaching, research, service among faculty
- Importance of high-impact practices to Hartwick student experience
- Disaggregation of results by gender, rank, division, tenure status, FT/PT
- Faculty engaging students through use of various high-impact practices
- Faculty perceived benefits for students of high-impact practices
- Perceived benefits for faculty of their own engagement
- Faculty’s perceived challenges of engagement in high-impact practices
- Advice to other faculty
Quantitative Findings

- 2010 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) n = 74
- 2010-11 HERI Faculty Survey (HERI) n = 92
  - Limited both to faculty whose primary role was teaching
- 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Seniors n = 86)
Hartwick Faculty Value High-Impact Practices (FSSE 2010)

- 93.5% of the faculty respondents think that the culminating senior experience is either “important” or “very important” at Hartwick.
- 80.7% think that practicums, internships, field research, co-op experiences or clinical experiences are “important” or “very important”.
- 67.7% think that study abroad is either “important” or “very important” to the students’ experience at Hartwick.
- 64.5% think student-faculty research is either “important” or “very important” to the students’ experience at Hartwick.
- 45.2% think that community service and volunteerism is either “important” or “very important” to the students’ experience at Hartwick.
### Hartwick Seniors Participate in High-Impact Practices (NSSE 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hartwick Seniors</th>
<th>Benchmark Peers</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>NSSE 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capstone, Senior Project, Theses</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-Based Service-Learning</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship, Practicums, Field Placement and Clinical</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Research</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Faculty Participation in High-Impact Practices (HERI Faculty Survey)
Participation in High-Impact Practices by Faculty Gender

- Service Learning
- Advised Volunteer/Service
- Collaborate Local Community
- Engaged Undergraduate in your Research
- Worked with Undergraduate on Research
- Seminar FY
- Senior Capstone
Participation in High-Impact Practices by Rank

Service Learning | Advised Volunteer/Service | Collaborate Local Community | Engaged UG in your Research | Worked w/ UG on Research | Seminar FY | Senior Capstone

- Professor
- Associate
- Assistant
- Lecturer
- Instructor
Quantitative Summary

We know from the survey analysis:

- There are gender differences in both the value faculty ascribed to research and ‘engage students in [their] research’
- Tenure and tenure-track faculty engage in high-impact practices more than non tenure-track faculty
- Full-time faculty engage in high-impact practices more than part-time faculty.

We were left wondering about their lived experience:

- Why these faculty engaged students in these practices?
- What they and their students gained from the experiences?
- What challenges they faced?
- How we could engage more faculty?
“Creating high impact practices that bring together both academic and personal success is key.”

◆ Benefits for students
  ◆ Skill building
  ◆ Professional development
  ◆ Gaining “real-world” experience

◆ Benefits for faculty
  ◆ “Makes teaching exciting”
  ◆ Enhances connections and collaborations
  ◆ Enhances their skills and creates opportunities to learn from the students
  ◆ Gets the job done!
Challenges

- **Structural**
  - Time constraints
  - Lack of resources

- **Personal**
  - Less perceived control over teaching and learning
  - Work-life balance
  - Haven’t had the opportunity
  - “Don’t know how it fits in my teaching”
Advice to Other Faculty

◆ “Present it as a different model of teaching; a different mode of teaching”
  ◆ “Don’t be afraid”
  ◆ “Start small”
  ◆ “Be open”
  ◆ “Go where your interests lie”
  ◆ “Be creative”
  ◆ “Be flexible”

◆ Seek out training
  ◆ “I decided to take ownership and go to workshops on how to teach better writing and just be better at teaching high school students the transition.”

◆ Seek out community connections: Make connections in the field
  ◆ “I think one of the keys to high-impact experience, especially having to do with experiential learning, is that we need to have one foot on campus, but also one foot off campus. We have to be aware of those community connections that are really critical to making experiential learning viable on a larger scale.”

◆ Trust Students
  ◆ “Don’t be afraid to recruit students in the classroom because they might not be aware at how rewarding it could be.”
Benefits of/Considerations for Engaging Students in Assessment Research

- High impact practice
- Encourages self-reflection on major, experience at Hartwick
- Professional skill-building

- Student motivation/preparation
- Group dynamic and teamwork
- Expect confusion/ambiguity
- High-touch for faculty
- Ethical implications of looking at data
Implications for Institutional Improvement

- “Top to Bottom” Support
- Training and Development
- Incentives for Experiential Learning
- Resources and Support for Students
Next Steps

- Further explore factors that impact faculty participation to inform programmatic improvement
  - Incentives
  - Barriers
  - Stressors
  - Work/Life Balance
- Use data as information in current “re-visioning”
- Continue to find avenues to share the data with key members of the institution
Questions?  Comments?