CIVIC LEARNING in the MAJOR

BY THE NUMBERS

AAC&U’s employer survey data show there is strong agreement among employers that all students, regardless of their chosen field of study, should gain broad learning in democratic institutions and values — 87% and civic capacity — 86%.

61% of seniors responding to a recent NSSE survey shared that they “often” or “very often” connected learning to societal problems or issues in their major. Most majors reported percentages that ranged from 59% – 75% but physical science, math, computer science, and engineering reported only 38% – 39%.

A recent NSSE survey on civic engagement illustrates a discernible gap between civic awareness and civic action. Whether course-related or not, a much higher percentage of seniors shared they “often” or “very often” participated in civic experiences related to awareness. The percentages drop dramatically when asked if they “often” or “very often” participated in civic experiences related to action.

NSLVE data illustrate voting rates among students have increased between 2012 and 2016 across different academic fields of study.

BY THE NUMBERS

2012 2016

SOCIAL SCIENCES: 49.7% 53.2%
HEALTH PROFESSIONS: 46.9% 50.9%
HUMANITIES: 45.3% 49.2%
BUSINESS: 43.2% 45.7%
STEM: 40.8% 43.6%

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LOCAL OR CAMPUS ISSUES

SOCIAL SCIENCES: 42%
HEALTH PROFESSIONS: 42%
HUMANITIES: 21%
BUSINESS: 17%
ENGINEERING: 11%

STATE, NATIONAL OR GLOBAL ISSUES

SOCIAL SCIENCES: 69%
HEALTH PROFESSIONS: 61%
HUMANITIES: 31%
BUSINESS: 22%
ENGINEERING: 11%

INFORMED yourself about

LOCAL OR CAMPUS ISSUES %

SOCIAL SCIENCES: 42%
HEALTH PROFESSIONS: 42%
HUMANITIES: 21%
BUSINESS: 17%
ENGINEERING: 11%

SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS: 69%
COMM, MEDIA, PR: 61%
ARTS & HUMANITIES: 31%
EDUCATION: 22%
ENGINEERING: 11%

FOOTNOTES from the NSLVE (National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement) data:

1. AAC&U survey Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success by Hart Research Associates
3. The National Survey of Student Engagement, a project of Indiana University’s Center for Postsecondary Research
4. The National Survey of Student Engagement, a project of Indiana University’s Center for Postsecondary Research

1. Field of study categorization is available for 39% of students in 2012 and 59% of students in 2016
2. We were not able to remove all non-resident alien students from our sample, so the analyses includes some students who are non-resident aliens and thus ineligible to vote. This produces downward biased estimates of voting rates, particularly among groups that include a disproportionate number of non-resident aliens such as STEM students.