



## Assessment of Diversity Awareness At Miami

“Intercultural knowledge and competence” is identified among the Essential Learning Outcomes for undergraduates by the American Association of Colleges and Universities. Miami has been making efforts to understand how well our students are doing toward meeting this goal.

**Results from national surveys (compiled by the Office of Institutional Research)** Miami University participates in several national student surveys that include questions related to diversity. The following results are based upon two of these surveys: 1) The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, completed by first-year students prior to entering Miami (1971 – 2009), and 2) The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), completed by first-year students and seniors in the spring (2001 –09).

**Student interaction with diverse groups prior to entering Miami.** The percentage of incoming students who reported frequently socializing with someone of another racial/ethnic group in the past year has remained relatively stable for the past ten years at about 61%. By comparison, other “highly selective public universities” showed an increasing trend over this time period, resulting in 73%.

**Student interaction with students from diverse groups while at Miami University.** In 2009, there was an increase in the percentage of first-year students and seniors who reported that Miami University encouraged contact among students from different economic, social and racial or ethnic backgrounds “quite a bit” or “very much.”

**Learning about diversity while at Miami University.** Since 2001, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of first-year students and seniors who “often” or “very often” included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments. After decreasing for several years, the percentage of first-year students and seniors who reported that Miami contributed to their understanding of people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds “quite a bit” or “very much” increased in 2009.

**Summary of national survey results.** The pattern of results from the CIRP and the NSSE suggest that student experiences with diversity at Miami University are improving. Students in recent years are more likely to report that Miami encourages contact with students from diverse backgrounds and that they are learning about diversity while at Miami University. This is especially important since they may be at a disadvantage in this area compared to students at similar institutions. The surveys also suggest that there is plenty of room for additional improvement and growth in students’ awareness and appreciation of diversity.

**Results from the MUDAS (summarized by Susan Mosley-Howard)** The MUDAS (Miami University Diversity Awareness Scale) was designed by Raymond Terrell and validated by Susan Mosley-Howard, Aimin Wang and Raymond Witte. The MUDAS is designed to measure self-reported level of student *knowledge about culture/ethnicity, appreciation of diversity, inter-group interaction, social justice* and the degree to which students believe these constructs should be presented in the college classroom in preparation for their professional practice (*discipline based practice*). The validation study on over 1,000 first year students suggested that instrument items were discrete and consistent measures.

**General Strengths & Weaknesses.** First-year self-assessment scores were highest in the area of *diversity knowledge* and lowest in *inter-group interaction*.

**Gender and ethnic differences in MUDAS scores.** Female first-year students rated themselves higher than male first-year students suggesting that in general women report being more in tune with these diversity-related variables than their male counterparts. Significantly higher ratings were found for women as compared to men on all survey factors *except* for social justice. In general Asian American, African American (black), and Latino students generated significantly higher diversity rating scores (MUDAS Total, *Appreciation, Inter-group Interaction, and Social Justice*) than white students. International student scores did not adhere to a consistent pattern.

**Differences among students intending different majors.** Preliminary data were collected on the intended major of the students. None of these students had taken the required curriculum and/or Miami plan “cultures” courses. Future assessment will examine student views after they have completed relevant core courses for their majors.

**Next Steps and Other Initiatives** This year institutional plans are in place to further test and validate the MUDAS, examine MUDAS results after taking Miami plan courses, and compare MUDAS data with similar NSSE, CIRP, YFCE, and CSS items. The collected data will be shared with appropriate instructors in order to develop and enhance the diversity knowledge of students across the university. Other efforts at the university to enhance diversity awareness include: the Global Miami Plan, study abroad workshops through Lifelong Learning and a collaborative effort between the Center for American & World Cultures and Student Affairs to assess the impact of diversity-related co-curricular events.