



Miami University
 Assessment

Student Engagement within an Academic Community

Background Information

All Miami University faculty (full- and part-time) were invited to participate in the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), a national survey conducted by the Center for Post-Secondary Research. The on-line survey was completed by 723 faculty members: 94 Hamilton campus faculty (41% response rate), 60 Middletown faculty (33%), and 569 Oxford faculty (39%). Regional campus faculty referred to their specific campus when responding to questions about their “institution.” For questions pertaining to class activities, faculty referred to a class of their choosing.

The current brief focuses on FSSE questions related to student engagement within the academic community. The results suggest that faculty on all three campuses express similar expectations for student engagement and provide opportunities for students to meet these expectations. However, the manner in which students are encouraged to meet these expectations varies across campuses.

Engagement in an Academic Community

The majority of faculty on all three campuses (Oxford-69%; MUH-70%; MUM-70%) indicated that it was “important” or “very important” for students to understand other people’s views by imagining how an issue looks from that person’s perspective. To that end, over half of the faculty (Oxford-56%; MUH-64%; MUM-56%) reported structuring their selected course so that students developed their ability to work effectively with others.

Table 1: Student-Faculty Engagement

	Oxford	MUH	MUM
<i>% of faculty who spend time with undergraduates...</i>			
--working on research	58%	24%	21%
--advising	78%	57%	58%
--supervising internships/other field experiences	26%	16%	18%
--working on activities other than course work	51%	38%	33%
--engaging in other interactions outside of the classroom	81%	66%	69%

Student-Faculty Engagement. One way in which students can learn about other people’s views and working effectively with others is through interaction with faculty. Although faculty on all three campuses reported interacting with their students outside of the classroom, Oxford faculty reported higher levels of faculty-student

interaction than did regional campus faculty. For example, Oxford campus faculty are more likely to work with undergraduates on research, advising, or activities other than course work (e.g., committees, student life activities). (See Table 1 for details.)

Peer Engagement. Although regional campus faculty reported less faculty-student interaction outside of the classroom, they reported greater emphasis on student interaction with diverse peers in the academic community. On the Oxford campus, 28% of faculty reported that their institution emphasizes “encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.” However, 46% of MUH faculty and 64% of MUM faculty reported that their institution emphasizes such contact.

Table 2: Peer Engagement

	Oxford	MUH	MUM
<i>% of faculty reporting that students “often” or “very often” have serious conversations in class with students:</i>			
--of a different race or ethnicity	15%	35%	28%
--who are very different from them in terms of religions beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	24%	34%	33%

Within their classes, MUH (54%) and MUM (48%) faculty were more likely than Oxford faculty (37%) to report structuring their class so that students understand people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. MUH and MUM were also more likely to report that students in their course have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own or students who are very different in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values. (See Table 2.)

Summary

On all three campuses, Miami students have opportunities to understand other people’s views and to develop their ability to work effectively with others by interacting with others within the academic community. Oxford campus faculty are more likely than regional campus faculty to interact with students outside of the classroom, while regional faculty report more institutional and in-class emphasis on student interaction with peers from a diverse background than do Oxford faculty. As we work toward becoming a more engaged university, we can make use of our differences and learn from one another.