

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENT

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One of Pitzer College's educational objectives is intercultural understanding. This report is supplemental to other pieces of evidence that indicate the College's emphasis on intercultural understanding. For this report, data from various sources are collected.

1. Each year, a significant number of Pitzer students apply for one of the most prestigious national awards, the Fulbright Scholarship. This suggests that students desire the knowledge and exposure to cultures other than their own and are willing to go through the competitive process for scholarship.

Fulbright	Applicants	Student Awards
2001-02	23	2
2002-03	22	6
2003-04	27	5
2004-05	24	8
2005-06	49	16
2006-07	71	8
2007-08	52	14
2008-09	67	

Source: Office of Graduate Fellowships

2. Prior to seniors graduating in May, they complete a survey evaluating their undergraduate experience while at Pitzer College. The Senior Survey has been outsourced to Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS). For 2008, Pitzer College's peer institutions are Dickinson College, Hamilton College, Kalamazoo College, Reed College, and Vassar College. While other items in the Senior Survey have been reported in "The Undergraduate Experience" and "Life After Pitzer" reports, the following questions are relevant to the construct of intercultural understanding.

Participants	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Degrees Granted*	244	207	221	217	228	231
Survey Participation	187	193	182	188	199	204
% Rate of Participation	77	93	82	87	87	88

* Source: Registrar's Office

12. Which of the following did you participate in during college	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2008 Peers
Semester or year studying abroad	58	54	52	52	55	57	56

11. My program enhanced my capacity to...(% of "Greatly" rating)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2008 Peers
j. read or speak a foreign language	26	21	25	30	28	31	28
o) relate well to people of different races, nations, and religions	56	45	55	48	52	47	31

18. How satisfied are you with each of the following services or aspects of your college? (% "Very satisfied" + "Generally satisfied")	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2008 Peers
an) Climate for minority students on campus	70	73	68	81	77	71	54
am) Ethnic/racial diversity	70	69	71	79	72	68	54

Questions asked on HEDS Senior Survey but only of Pitzer students. (% rating)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I developed close friendships with people of a different ethnicity/race as me.	78	73	78	78	87	74
When I hear the word "diversity," my first images are about racial/ethnic issues.	69	74	70	67	59	62
Because of my background (such as ethnic, class, sexual orientation, religion), I did not fit in well at Pitzer.	15	17	14	16	16	12
Down deep, I would be unhappy if someone close to me turned out to be gay or lesbian.	7	4	7	6	3	7

2. New custom questions were created to tap into intercultural understanding and administered to our First Year, Sophomore, and Senior students, and Alumni in 2007-08.

	First Years, Nov 2007	Sophomores Apr 2008	Seniors, May 2008	Alumni, Mar 2008
Intercultural Understanding ("Agree" + "Strongly Agree" % rating)				
Total Number of Participants	210	48	204	117
I am able to speak sensitively about a culture other than my own.	92	96	86	92
It would be OK if my roommate or someone else close to me turned out to be gay or lesbian.*	92	100	93	95
I find it easy to develop close friendships with people of another culture.	87	83	74	73
I seek out opportunities to interact with people from different cultures.	86	92	70	75
One of my college goals is to take courses that will help me become more knowledgeable about diverse cultures.*	78	84	75	86
When I hear the word "diversity," my first images are about race.	73	67	62	51
In general, I prefer being with people from my own cultural background.	22	40	18	57
Because of my socio-economic class background, I feel that I may not fit in well.*	9	19	14	16
Because of my racial/ethnic background, I feel that I may not fit in well at Pitzer.*	3	15	12	10

* Items were modified slightly to reflect respondents' status (for example, past tense was used for seniors and alumni; phrases about "in class" or "registered to vote" changed to "voted in every election" etc.).

3. Pitzer participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in April 2004. NSSE is a nationwide outsourced survey evaluating student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. Survey items on the NSSE represent empirically confirmed "good practices" in undergraduate education. That is, they reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college. More than 1200 different colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada have participated in NSSE since it was first administered in 2000. For the April 2004 wave of data gathering, there were 2200 students from private, liberal arts colleges.

	First Years	Seniors
Compared to 2200 students in private liberal arts colleges, Pitzer students self-reported MORE that they:		
Included diverse perspectives (race, gender, religions, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments		X
Had serious conversations with students of a different race/ethnicity than one's own	X	X
Had serious conversations with students who are very different in religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	X	
Studied abroad		X
Believe their college encourages contact among students from different economic, social, racial/ethnic backgrounds	X	X
Understand people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds	X	X
Total Number of Participants	89	85

Interpretation: Compared to seniors from other private, liberal arts colleges, Pitzer seniors reported more that they "Included diverse perspectives (race, gender, religions, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments." Both Pitzer first-year students and seniors reported more that "Understand people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds." The data can also be used to compare first-years with seniors within a college: First-year students at Pitzer were more likely to report they "had serious conversations with students who are very different in religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values" compared with seniors at Pitzer.

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