Assessing Student Outcomes in Interdisciplinary Programs

Why assess international programs?

- To comply with strategic plan and mission statement
- To assess and improve international competencies
- To assess existing programs and determine need for new programs
- To formulate comprehensive study abroad policy and practices
  - Who should study abroad?
  - Determine criteria
- Other Considerations
  - Enrollment
  - Budget

International Programs at Connecticut College

- Office of National and International Programs (ONIP) – For traditional study abroad programs
- Travel Research Immersion Program (TRIP)
- Study Away, Teach Away (SATA)
- Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)
The Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)

- A high selective interdisciplinary certificate program designed to internationalize every major (not a major itself)
- Created to meet the needs of students entering an interdependent world

The Examined Voyage

IS 201: Perspectives on Modern Global Society
IS 403: New Perspectives on Modern Global Society

What are the origins and dynamics of contemporary society?
What is the relevance of the past in understanding the present and the possibilities of the future?
What are the material, spiritual and ethical challenges of modernity?

Why Assess CISLA?

In an effort to assess the Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA) we conducted a study of the center alumni from the classes of 1992 through 2004 to trace the effects of interdisciplinary international learning after graduation.
Gathering Data
Tracing alumni academic and career moves

- The CISLA Online Alumni Questionnaire
- Institutional Research - Office of the Dean of the Faculty
- Cross checking alumni data - College Alumni Relations
- Cross checking data with the non-academic internship placement program - Career Enhancing Life Skills (CELS)
- Direct alumni contact through correspondence

What are our graduates doing now?

- Higher Education? (Pursuing or have attained a Masters Degree, PhD, JD)
- Continued use of Foreign Language studied at Connecticut College?
- Career Paths?

The CISLA Online Alumni Questionnaire
http://www.conncoll.edu/ccacad/CISLA/alumni/questionnaire.html

1. Name:
2. Year:
3. Address (home):
4. Street
5. City, State, Country
6. Zip
7. Phone:
8. Cell:
9. Fax:
10. Email:
11. Marital Status:

Employment Info
12. Company name:
13. Address:
14. Street:
15. City, State, Country
16. Zip:
17. Phone:
18. Fax:
19. Email:
20. Job description:
The CISLA Online Alumni Questionnaire

Graduate School
22 Name of School and Program:
23 Degree sought or attained:
24 Dates attended:

Spouse Information
25 Name:
26 Employment or graduate school:

27 What are you doing at your job? Do you like it?
28 What are your plans for the future?
29 Do you use your language?
30 Words of wisdom?
31 Do you feel any flashbacks or ongoing repercussions from a program like CISLA?
32 Would you attend a big CISLA reunion?
33 How can we network as a group?
34 Other suggestions?

The Quantitative Questionnaire Results

* 33% of the program alumni (classes 1992 to 2004 replied to the CISLA Questionnaire.)
** OUTREACH WORKS!

* 44% of program alumni surveyed continue to use their foreign language proficiency on an “often” to “regular basis.”

* 55% program alumni surveyed have begun or completed some level graduate education. According to the questionnaire, many attributed the Toor Cummings Center (CISLA) to having helped them better prepare for higher learning.

In their own words…

* Elisa Roller ’93, who is working at the European Commission as a policy analyst, writes, "My CISLA experience was the most practical-oriented part of my undergraduate degree and has served me the most in the real world."

* Sara Schaefer Munoz ’96, who is working as a news assistant at The Wall Street Journal in New York, writes, "Always be willing to do your share of grunt work to achieve your goals … IS201 laid the groundwork for understanding global economics and politics that I come across in my reporting."
Brent Never ’99 (right) in Benin, West Africa, conducted his CISLA internship at the Central Bank of West Africa. He has recently completed his PhD at the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs. In addition, he has accepted a position at the University of Illinois at Springfield as Assistant Professor of International Relations.

Lessons Learned

The college administration should make assessments of international programs a priority and determine criteria and assessment for intercultural competencies.

This is an initiative that requires professional guidance and research support.

Conclusion

A rigorous interdisciplinary academic program that requires study abroad experiences, an international internship, a high level of foreign language oral proficiency and a culminating senior integrative project will increase cultural literacy and competencies beyond the undergraduate years.

Thank you

Questions are welcome

Connecticut College
270 Mohegan Ave., New London, CT 06320
http://www.conncoll.edu