



IE IN ACTION

The Providence College Institutional Effectiveness Newsletter (Spring 2022)

HEDS Student Success Focus Groups

On behalf of the college, the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) conducted several student focus groups in February 2022. Undergraduate students were asked to describe their visions of success and how the college is contributing to them. HEDS spoke with 24 students across all the focus groups - five first-year students, six sophomores, two juniors, and 11 seniors.

Overall, PC students' vision of a successful life followed the same four themes that were observed from students at other institutions – enjoyable work, financial security, balance, and meaningful relationships.

When imagining a successful life, PC students talked about finding jobs they enjoyed and would be happy doing after college. Like students elsewhere, students from more affluent backgrounds were more likely to talk about finding a job that paid well and less likely to talk about finding work that made a positive difference in the world, work that was meaningful, or work they were passionate about.

Students were asked about the experiences at PC that have most helped them move toward their vision of success. Similar to other institutions, PC students mentioned relationships with roommates, friends, staff, and faculty; opportunities to get involved in clubs and organizations on campus; and, for the athlete participants, involvement in their sport. When PC students spoke about faculty and staff who had helped them, they mentioned people who cared about them, knew about their lives and interests, and wanted them to learn and succeed.

To learn more about the findings of this project, the [full report summary](#) can be found on the IE Portal site.

Student Success and Retention in STEM Majors



[1 - Executive Summary of Phase 1](#)

In accordance with the college's goals to increase student success and to provide equitable opportunities for all students in STEM, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) conducted a study in Fall 2021 on undergraduate degree recipients who entered the institution between 2010 and 2014. The purpose of the study was to analyze movement within four different academic areas: STEM, education, the liberal arts, and business and specifically identify academic and demographic factors associated with STEM attrition. This research was conducted in collaboration with the STEM Faculty Advisory Committee, which received funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to develop and institute meaningful evaluation of effective and inclusive teaching in STEM fields. To view the [executive summary of Phase 1](#) please click here. The OIR and the STEM Faculty Advisory Committee are now working on Phase 2 of this research project which will provide a deeper analysis on historically disadvantaged students who major in STEM.

Assessing Students' Civic Engagement Skills



[2 - Civic Engagement - Summary of Key Findings](#)

Working collaboratively with the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC), the college continues to cycle through a deep level of assessment of the core curriculum's mission-related learning goals. In the spring 2020 and 2021 semesters, assessment focused on whether students' civic engagement skills were at a level that would be expected. The college complemented survey data with more direct assessment of students' skills in this area. Students in early- and late-career courses were asked to individually complete a brief survey/scale and then a group case study exercise.

The scale, an adapted version of the IUPUI Civic-Minded Graduate Scale created in collaboration with faculty, was used to better understand the influence of the PC experience on civic development. Upon examining students' scale scores, seniors reported higher levels of agreement in terms of their perceived knowledge and skills in this area.

The second part of this study involved group discussions of a case study concerning a public school system with pressing issues. Instructors were asked to summarize group discussions by having students consider things like the key facts and alternatives available to the decision-maker and make recommendations. First-year students and seniors provided feedback regarding their recommendations to improve the situation. Both student groups shared commonalities in that the main themes coded were to improve leadership, funding, and professional development. Overall, seniors demonstrated more advanced thinking and provided more refined recommendations in regard to the improvement of leadership.

To view the results of this Civic Engagement [assessment](#) please click here.

First Destination Outcomes for the Class of 2021



3 - [Class of 2021 - First Destination Results Summary](#)

In 2021, 95% of UG day school respondents reported being employed and/or attending school within six months of graduation. Of those who reported working full-time, 89% were working in their desired fields.

The mean salary of those respondents who reported full-time employment was \$51,833. The top four fields of employment were: financial management/consulting/sales, marketing/advertising, health care/health policy/health care administration, and scientific research/engineering.

To view the full [First Destination Report for the Class of 2021](#) please click here.

Preparation of interim accreditation report



The college has begun the process of compiling its Interim (Fifth-Year) Accreditation Report for the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). The more limited Interim Report will be submitted to NECHE in early summer 2022.

The Interim Report's goal is to reflect on the progress made by PC in the last five years on each of NECHE's nine Standards for Accreditation and selected areas of emphasis identified by the Commission. The update includes a reflective essay on educational effectiveness that addresses what a PC graduate gains as a result of their education and how PC is assessing student outcomes.

News Briefs

Phi Beta Kappa

Over the last two and half years, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) partnered with Dr. Sheila Adamus Liotta and Dr. Joan Branham on applications to shelter a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, which was approved in 2021. The college's Phi Beta Kappa chapter, Gamma of Rhode Island, was formally installed in April. To learn more about the installation ceremony, please visit the [college's News site](#).

Assessment of Quantitative Reasoning

Currently in process is the assessment of students' skills in critical, logical, and quantitative reasoning. In addition to survey data, direct evidence has been gathered from Educational Testing Services' Proficiency Profile (ETS PP) test scores (first-year students and seniors) and quantitative reasoning work scores from the Core Qualitative Portfolio Study (Class of 2017). After these data are compiled and the Core Curriculum Committee is consulted, there will be a determination regarding whether further assessment of student work products is needed.

Continuous Improvement Program Schedule

The college is in its second cycle of the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP). To access the review schedule or learn more about the [CIP](#), please visit the IE Portal site.