CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT AUSTIN COLLEGE: PATHS AND POSSIBILITIES

THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF AUSTIN COLLEGE

An Austin College education transforms the intellectual lives of students as it challenges them to deepen their understanding of social, ethical, and global issues as well as their own place in a rich complex of evolving cultural traditions. Sustained critical inquiry lies at the heart of an Austin College education, enhanced by breadth of experience and focused through in-depth study. The goal is to enable students to develop themselves as productive members of society who can think clearly and critically, understand and respect difference, and express themselves persuasively.

Consistent with the goals of a liberal arts education, Austin College encourages its students to inquire freely, to cross traditional boundaries, and to challenge conventional wisdom while respecting the rights of others. The college seeks to provide an academically challenging and lively community of students and teachers who are committed to intellectual growth through individual and collaborative endeavors. Austin College graduates are prepared for lives of responsible leadership, enhanced by continued learning, and enriched by lasting values.
GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Critical Inquiry Skills
- Oral Communication Skills
- Written Communication Skills
- Quantitative Reasoning Skills
- Information Literacy Skills
- Openness to Diversity
- Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Nick Corcodilos The Key Reporter FA 09

- Skills
  - Defining problems and tasks
  - Mastery of information retrieval
  - Planning and executing research
  - Organizing ideas and solutions
  - Writing and communicating
  - And perhaps most important, a well-honed ability to learn what you need to in order to accomplish a task

- Attributes
  - An open mind
  - Disciplined work habits
  - A critical eye and ear
TRIANGULATION

STUDENTS ENTERING AUSTIN COLLEGE FALL 2009

- 25% report that 1 or both parents are immigrants;
- 11.1% report being in the 1st generation of their families to go to college;
- 8% were home-schooled for at least part of their careers;
- 10.8% report that English is not their first language
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

- Close to 80% expect to travel internationally during a January term;
- About 50% say they will probably or definitely will travel internationally during a long semester;
- Close to 85% say that opportunities to travel internationally influenced their decision to come to Austin College.

RACE/ETHNICITY DATA 2009
PATHWAYS - CO-CURRICULAR

- Opportunities Fair (1st Thursday in September)
- Service Station
- Great Days of Service
- Alternative Spring Break
- Co-curricular transcript
- Saturday morning program, ACtivators, and other service programs
- Community involvement by organizations (e.g., ACCares, Habitat for Humanity)

PATHWAYS - CURRICULAR

- January term
- Internships
- GLOBE program (QEP)
- Regular courses
- Independent and directed studies
- Research opportunities
- Interdisciplinary minors
SENIOR SAMPLE 2009

- Representative of class of ‘09 by gender, ethnicity, SAT, division of first major, etc.;
- Reviewed curricular and co-curricular transcripts of group of 50 for oral communication, openness to diversity, citizenship and civic engagement;
- Tallied number of programs in which courses were taken and the mean number of kinds of co-curricular activity (e.g., all Spanish courses or all Student Assembly roles treated as one program)

BOTH FACULTY AND STUDENT LIFE STAFF WERE ASKED REGARDING:

- Oral communication skills
- Openness to diversity
- Citizenship
  - Is actively involved in a community with the goal of “making a difference”
  - Shows evidence of inquiry into ethical and/or moral behavior
  - Is involved in political processes and activities
  - Discusses current and/or historical events as they impact individuals and societies
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Engages in service learning or volunteering in nonprofit settings
- Exhibits leadership behavior in activities (including fundraising, planning, intervening)
- Investigates values and attitudes that focus on improving the lives of others
- Invests time and energy in improving the lives of others

Note: Citizenship & Civic engagement are pooled on next slide

MEANS AND RANGES FOR #S OF PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oral communication</th>
<th>Openness to diversity</th>
<th>Citizenship &amp; civic engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of programs in which courses were taken</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>3-11</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of co-curricular kinds of activities</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>1-10</td>
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**CIRP PLURALISTIC ORIENTATION –**
**SKILLS FOR A DIVERSE WORKPLACE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Austin F08 (n = 298)</th>
<th>Other religious 4 yr w/ hi SAT (n = 15,486)</th>
<th>All other religious 4 yr colleges (n = 34,122)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work cooperatively with diverse others</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of diverse others</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the world from different perspectives</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss controversial issues</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to my views being challenged</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
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</table>

**DEEP AND INTEGRATIVE LEARNING –**
**NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

- Included diverse perspectives in class discussions/writing
- Put together ideas from different courses
- Discussed ideas with faculty outside of class
- Discussed ideas with others outside of class
- Analyzed the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- Integrated ideas or information from various sources
- Synthesized and organized ideas, information, or experiences
- Made judgments about the value of information
- Applied theories to practical problems or in new situations
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own view
- Tried to better understand someone else’s views
- Learned something that changed how you understand an issue
Roughly 2/3 first years and seniors completed the NSSE in ’09

- Austin College first year students and seniors have higher means than the national sample on all twelve items.
- Austin College first year students have significantly higher means than the national sample six times while seniors have significantly higher means eleven times.
- Austin College first year students have higher means than the Carnegie peers six times while seniors have higher means than Carnegie peers nine times (with one item on which means are equal) so Carnegie senior peers have higher means than Austin College seniors only twice.

Value added

- We administered NSSE ‘03, ‘06, ‘09;
- If we look at the SY-FY difference in both ’06 and ’09, Austin has the highest mean difference in both cohorts;
- This also allows us to examine a class longitudinally, e.g., “Integrating ideas or information from various sources” was significantly higher than only the national sample as FY 06, but significantly higher than Carnegie peers and other CTCL peers as well when they are seniors in 2009.
The link to the survey was distributed by email in early April 2009 with a May 4th deadline. We sent the survey to 1876 alumni/ae for whom we thought we had good email addresses. 554 responded (only 826 opened the email so 67.1% of those who opened the email responded, but only 29.5% of the whole sample).

The first set of questions asked alumni about their level of involvement and the “degree to which the experience contributed to your development.”

Each item could be checked:
Not at all, A Little, Moderately, or Extensively.
TOP 5 ACTIVITIES: INVOLVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT

- Collaborative assignments or team/group projects (97.5%)
- Writing-intensive courses (94.6%)
- Diversity/global experiences in or outside of class (93.0%)
- Service-learning, community-based learning in or outside of class (91.7%)
- Internship – whether or not for academic credit (67.7%)

Note that the % is the sum of all responses other than not at all for activities; the same items, in a slightly different order emerge for contribution to development.

PREPARATION FOR POST-BACCALAUREATE ACTIVITIES

- Post-baccalaureate education (94%);
- Current employment (94.6%);
- Social and civic engagement (96.5%)
- Leadership roles (97.3%)
- Interpersonal relationships and family living (93.6%)
**DO YOU THINK THAT AUSTIN COLLEGE PREPARED YOU FOR ‘THE REAL WORLD’?**

Interest in:
- Literature (96.2%)
- Arts (95.8%)
- Culture (97.7%)
- Travel (98.0%)
- Politics (93.9%)
- Current affairs (96.8%)
- Community involvement (97.1%)

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**BOB HERBERT  NYT 10-31-2009**

“The whole idea of apprenticeships is coming back into vogue, as it was 100 years ago,” said John Noble, director of the Office of Career Counseling at Williams College. “Certain industries, such as the media, TV, radio and so on, have always exploited recent graduates, giving them a chance to get into a very competitive field in exchange for making them work for no - or low - pay. But now this is spreading to many other industries.”
Maggie Mertens graduated in May from Smith College, where she was an editor of the student newspaper. She applied for “tons” of jobs and internships, probably 50 or more. “I was totally unemployed all summer,” she said. She eventually landed an internship at NPR in Washington, which she described as “Awesome,” but it is unpaid.

“I was lucky enough,” she said, “to connect up with a family that let me live with them for free in exchange for watching their baby a few times a week.” But there was still no money coming in. So in addition to the 40-hour-a-week internship and the baby-sitting chores, Ms. Mertens is doing part-time seasonal work at a Whole Foods store.
The world for college graduates implied by Herbert’s piece requires far more citizenship and civic engagement and far less linear pursuit of a “job” or a goal.

Mentoring may be especially critical during this era.

Austin College seems to prepare the kind of graduate who can adapt to this world.