Cultivating Active Citizens: An Evaluation of the Citizenship and Public Scholars Program

Presented by:
Meredith S. Billings & Dawn Geronimo Terkla

Office of Institutional Research & Evaluation (OIR&E)

AIR Annual Forum, Toronto, Canada, May 21 – 25, 2011
Agenda

- Description of the Study
- Findings
- Practical Challenges
- Implications for Future Research
- Questions?
SOME BACKGROUND...
Civic Engagement at Tufts

- Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service

- Focuses on four key areas:
  - Students
  - Faculty
  - Community Partnerships
  - Alumni
Tisch College Outcomes Study
Scholars Program

- Multi-year, leadership development program engaging students as catalysts for change
- Academic
- Experiential
- Community
- Advising
To understand how participation in various activities and programs at Tufts and beyond affects students’ civic and political attitudes
Nine-Year Longitudinal Study with Classes 2007 - 2010

Four cohorts split into three research groups
- Tisch Scholars
- High-School High Participators (HS High)
- High-School Low Participators (HS Low)
Data Collection

- Time Series Design with Retrospective Pre-Test
  - Participant Survey (*Recruitment Stage*)
  - Civic and Political Activities & Attitudes Survey (*Undergraduate*)
  - Follow-Up Interviews (*Undergraduate*)
  - Post-Graduate Alumni Civic and Political Activities & Attitudes Survey (*Alumni*)

Office of Institutional Research, June 11
CPAAS SURVEY

- Designed with input from national experts
  - Dwight E. Giles, Jr. – U. Mass - Boston
  - Andrew Furco – U.C. Berkeley
- Integrated questions from other surveys to enable national comparison
  - Questions from CIRCLE, PEW, CASQ, Public Service Motivational Scale, Social Responsibility Inventory, Community Service Self-Efficacy Scale, and AmeriCorps Baseline Survey
  - Adapted questions to cover political activities and attitudes
Key components:

- Activities
  - Activities at Tufts
  - Activities outside of Tufts
  - Political involvement

- Attitudes
  - Personal ability to affect change
  - Personal responsibility to counteract problems
  - Societal responsibility to counteract problems
## Tisch College Outcomes Evaluation Administration Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Class of 2007 Cohort</th>
<th>Class of 2008 Cohort</th>
<th>Class of 2009 Cohort</th>
<th>Class of 2010 Cohort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>Participant Survey</td>
<td>CPAAS</td>
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<td>Sophomore</td>
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<td>CPAAS</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>CPAAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>2 Years out</td>
<td>Alumni CPAAS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Year out</td>
<td>Alumni CPAAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>2 Years out</td>
<td>Alumni CPAAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Year out</td>
<td>Alumni CPAAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Years out</td>
<td>Alumni CPAAS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Year out</td>
<td>Alumni CPAAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Years out</td>
<td>Alumni CPAAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Current Academic Year:**
Recruitment/Retention

- Participant Survey
  - Fall of freshmen year

- Incentives
  - $20 for ea. completed survey
  - $150 bonus for completing all 6 surveys
  - Each participant = $270 (maximum)
  - Interview = $20

- Facebook Page
Demographics of Participants

- 101 HS Highs, 87 HS Lows, 84 Scholars
- 57% Female; 43% Male
- 55% White, 14% Asian, 8% Hispanic, 7% Black, 2% Multiracial, 2% International, 12% Unknown

- 85% Liberal Arts, 15% Engineering
- Cohort Size/Undergraduate Retention
  - Cohort 2007: N = 59; 89.8% Retention
  - Cohort 2008: N = 61; 96.7% Retention
  - Cohort 2009: N = 77; 88.3% Retention
  - Cohort 2010: N = 75; 75.0% Retention

1 new IPEDs race/ethnicity classification
Methodology

- Preliminary Undergraduate Analysis
  - Factor Analysis of Survey Items
    - 10 factors for civic attitudinal items
    - 5 factors for civic activity items
  - Leadership composites
    - 4 composites
- Link the themes in the interviews to the attitudinal, activity, and leadership items
FINDINGS
## Civic Engagement Attitudinal Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Efficacy Thru Community Service</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Efficacy Thru Political Action</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Connectedness</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognizance of Societal Realities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Citizenship</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement of Differences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of Cultural Differences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Agency</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
Summary of Attitudinal Outcomes

- Positive growth (4)
  - Change Agency, Informed Citizenship, Cognizance of Societal Realities, and Acknowledgment of Differences

- Negative growth (4)
  - Personal Efficacy Through Political Action, Social Responsibility, Social Justice, and Appreciation of Cultural Differences

- Mixed depending on Research Group (2)
  - Personal Efficacy Through Community Service, Community Connectedness
Personal Efficacy Through Political Action Trends

Scholars
HS High
HS Low

Freshmen Sophomore Junior Senior
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Action</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embodying a Civic-Minded Lifestyle</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Education and Outreach</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to Public Discourse</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive growth for all Tisch Scholars except for political action

- HS-Highs and HS-Lows variance decreased and some converged senior year
  - Political Action, Civic Education and Outreach, & Embodying a Civic-Minded Lifestyle

- HS-Highs and HS-Lows variance increased or remained the same
  - Community Service, Contributing to the Public Discourse
# Leadership Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composites</th>
<th>N of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tufts-specific leadership</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political leadership</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy/Activism leadership</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Leadership Composites

- Scholars held more leadership roles and added more leadership roles over time for all four areas.
  - Tufts-specific and Community Leadership: All groups increased over time.
  - Political Leadership: HS-Highs declined; HS-Lows remained at the same low level.
  - Advocacy/Activism Leadership: HS-Highs increased; HS-Lows remained at the same low level.
Practical Challenges

- **Relationship & collaboration with stakeholders**
  - Timing of data collection, analysis, and results dissemination
  - Complexity associated with defining civic engagement

- **Problematic characteristics of evaluation design**
  - Study recruitment, retention, and attrition
  - Lack of critical baseline data
  - Alterations to instruments’ effect on results
  - Programmatic changes over time

- **Validity of results due to confounding factors**
  - Multiple sources of input for students’ civic and political attitudes
  - Impact of expected personal and social development due to maturation versus impact of activities at Tufts
As we collect additional years of data (complete in 2012), we will be able to link civic engagement activities and attitudes from participants’ collegial years to their alumni years.

Potential areas for undergraduate analysis include gender & ethnicity differences as well as looking at the cohort effect.

Analyze interview data looking for the themes of the attitudinal, activity, and leadership outcomes.
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