Academic Civic Engagement Student Survey Report
Summary and Analysis of Questions One Through Five
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Introduction

This report examines the experiences of St. Olaf students enrolled in select courses with an Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) component during the 2010-2011 academic year. The following results come from 14 courses from the Fall, Interim, and Spring Terms. A total of 239 students completed the survey out of a total 264 who were either enrolled in one of the relevant courses or participated in the ACE component of the course in question (90 percent response rate).

There were three versions of the survey administered, and faculty were responsible for administering the survey in their respective course. Ten of the 14 courses took place during the Spring Term of the 2010-2011 academic year, had the same format, and were administered on paper, with the exception of one survey from ES 399 which was administered online via Form Creator. The courses from the Fall Term (SW 254 and IS 216) and Interim Term of the 2010-2011 academic year (PSCI/AS 245 and PSYCH 224) had a version of the survey that did not ask them to identify their class year or course, and that did not ask them to identify the most meaningful aspect of the course.

Executive Summary

Demographics[1]

- For those who were asked to indicate their class year, juniors were the most common student type in the survey, with 32 percent of the respondents.
- Nearly one-quarter of the sample population (56 students) were given surveys which did not include a question regarding class year.
- The single most populous course surveyed was BIO/ES 288 – Environmental Health, with 14 percent of the sample population (33 respondents).
- The single most populous subject area surveyed was psychology, with a total of 74 respondents (31 percent of total respondents) from four different courses.

Impact of Academic Civic Engagement Course Component[2]

- Ninety percent or more of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed when asked if participation in the ACE component of their course:

[1] See questions one and two.
[2] See question three.

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- increased their ability to apply academic knowledge or proficiencies to address a community or civic goal (224 respondents/94 percent).
- increased their understanding of course theories and concepts (214 respondents/90 percent).

- Between 86 and 88 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that participation in the ACE component of the course:
  - increased their confidence in their ability to contribute effectively to community and civic endeavors (209 respondents/88 percent).
  - increased their interest in pursuing civic community or work roles that foster the common good (208 respondents/87 percent).
  - increased their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses (205 respondents/86 percent).
- Less than 70 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that participation in the ACE component of the course:
  - helped them identify or develop their personal interests or passions in life (162 respondents/68 percent).
  - increased their awareness of possible work roles or careers (159 respondents/67 percent).

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, INTERESTS, AND OTHER[3]

- When asked to identify a strength, weakness, or interest learned about a result of participation in the ACE component of the course, 88 percent of students (210 respondents) could identify something they had learned.
- Strengths were the most frequently identified, with 28 percent of students (68 respondents) specifically referring to a strength.
- An "other" category, created for those students who did not identify a strength, weakness, or interest, yet still conveyed that they had learned or gained something from the ACE component of the course, was the second most populous category, with 27 percent of students (65 respondents).
- Thematically, the most commonly mentioned topics (regardless of status as a strength, weakness, interest, or other) were:
  - **Communication**, defined as *"general communication with others, oral presentations, public speaking, or interviewing"* (51 respondents/21 percent).
  - **Community**, defined as *"working or interacting with local community members or children in the community"* (50 respondents/21 percent).

[3] See question four.

- **Group work**, defined as *"working collaboratively with others in a team setting"* (48 respondents/20 percent).
- **Career**, defined as *"possible career opportunities, interests, goals, or non-interests"* (37 respondents/15 percent).

MEANINGFUL ASPECT OF ACE COURSE OR PROJECT[4]

- Community was the most frequently mentioned topic. Fifty-seven percent (93 students) said that working with, being engaged in, or building relationships with the local community was the most meaningful aspect of their experience with the ACE course or project.
- Thirty-one percent (51 students) of all respondents said that helping others was the most meaningful aspect of their experience with the ACE course or project.
- All 37 respondents who said that working with children was most meaningful came from 3 classes: PSYCH 230A, ART 238, and BIO/ES 228.
- Sixteen percent (26 students) of all respondents said that working with real data in the real-world that could help address real problems was the most meaningful aspect of their experience with the ACE course or project.

Summary of Question #1

Of those asked to indicate their class year, juniors were the most common class year in the survey population. It is important to note, however, that four of the 14 surveys administered *did not* prompt students to provide their class year. As a result, this question was "not applicable" to nearly one-quarter of the students (56 respondents) included in this analysis.

1. *What is your class year?*

Response	*Frequency*	*Percent*
First-Year	3	1%
Sophomore	45	19%
Junior	76	32%
Senior	57	24%
Not Applicable	56	23%
No Response	2	1%
Total	**239**	**100%**

[4] See question five.

Summary of Question #2

The single course with the largest number of respondents was BIO/ES 228 – Environmental Health, which had 33 students respond out of a total of 35 possible. The single topic area with the most responses was psychology, with 74 respondents from four different courses.

- Overall response rates for each course were high, with only three courses having response rates lower than 85 percent.
- One course (PSCYH 230B) contained more surveys than there were students enrolled in the course. This could be due to a survey from another section or course being put with the group of surveys from this course. After consulting with staff from the CEL, however, the IR&E Office was unable to account for this discrepancy, and were unable to determine which survey could be excluded. As a result, the course appears to have a response rate of 104 percent.

2. *What is the title of this course?*

Course Title	***Number of respondents***	***Students in course***	***Response Rate***	***Percent of total responses***
BIO/ES 228 – Environmental Health	33	35	94%	14%
PSYCH 230B – Research Methods in Psychology	24	23	104%[1]	10%
STAT 316 – Advanced Statistical Modeling	23	29	79%	10%
PSYCH 230A – Research Methods in Psychology	22	26	85%	9%
ES 399 – Environmental Studies Senior Seminar	21	26	81%	9%
SOAN 373 – Ethnographic Research Methods	17	18	89%	7%
IS 216 – Ideals to Action: Cultivating Social Change	17	18	94%	7%
PSYCH 224 – Community Applications of Psychology	16	16	100%	7%
SW 254 – Inclusive Practice with individuals and Families	13	14	93%	5%
PSCI 350 – Immigration and Citizenship	12	15	80%	5%
PSYCH 350 – Parenting and Child Development in Diverse Families	12	13	92%	5%
SW 261 – Inclusive Practice: Groups, Organizations, and Communities	10	10	100%	4%
PSCI/AS 245 – Nationalism, Regionalism, Globalization in Asia	10	11	91%	4%
ART 238 – Intermediate Photography	9	10	90%	4%
Total	**239**	**264**	**90%**	**100%**

Summary of Question #3

Ninety percent of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the ACE component of their course increased either their ability to apply academic knowledge or proficiencies to address a community or civic goal or their understanding of course theories and concepts.

With slightly lower cumulative agreement (though still high rates of agreement or strong agreement) 86 to 88 percent of respondents indicated they the ACE course component increased:

- their confidence in their ability to contribute effectively to community and civic endeavors.
- their interest in pursuing civic community or work roles that foster the common good.
- their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, a slightly lower 67 to 68 percent indicated that the ACE course component:

- helped them identify or develop their personal interests or passions in life.
- increased their awareness of possible work roles or careers.

3a. *Participating in the academic civic engagement component of the course increased my understanding of course theories and concepts.*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	54	23%
Agree	160	67%
Subtotal Strongly Agree and Agree	***214***	***90%***
Disagree	17	7%
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Subtotal Strongly Disagree and Disagree	***19***	***8%***
Does not apply	5	2%
No Response	1	0%

3b.*Participating in the academic civic engagement component of the course increased my ability to apply academic knowledge or proficiencies (such as written and oral communication, teamwork, critical and creative thinking, information literacy, intercultural competency, quantitative skills, etc.) to address a community or civic goal.*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	111	46%
Agree	113	47%
Subtotal Strongly Agree and Agree	***224***	***94%***
Disagree	11	5%
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Subtotal Strongly Disagree and Disagree	***13***	***5%***
Does not apply	2	1%
No Response	0	0%

3c.*Participating in the academic civic engagement component of the course increased my awareness of my own strengths and weaknesses.*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	66	28%
Agree	139	58%
Subtotal Strongly Agree and Agree	***205***	***86%***
Disagree	31	13%
Strongly Disagree	1	0%
Subtotal Strongly Disagree and Disagree	***32***	***13%***
Does not apply	2	1%
No Response	0	0%

3d. *Participating in the academic civic engagement component of the course helped me identify or develop my personal interests or passions in life.*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	35	15%
Agree	127	53%
Subtotal Strongly Agree and Agree	***162***	***68%***
Disagree	62	26%
Strongly Disagree	6	3%
Subtotal Strongly Disagree and Disagree	***68***	***29%***
Does not apply	8	3%
No Response	1	0%

3e.*Participating in the academic civic engagement component of the course increased my confidence in my ability to contribute effectively to community and civic endeavors.*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	68	29%
Agree	141	59%
Subtotal Strongly Agree and Agree	***209***	***88%***
Disagree	24	10%
Strongly Disagree	1	0%
Subtotal Strongly Disagree and Disagree	***25***	***10%***
Does not apply	1	0%
No Response	4	2%

3f.*Participating in the academic civic engagement component of the course increased my awareness of possible work roles or careers.*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	46	19%
Agree	113	47%
Subtotal Strongly Agree and Agree	***159***	***67%***
Disagree	60	25%
Strongly Disagree	7	3%
Subtotal Strongly Disagree and Disagree	***67***	***28%***
Does not apply	12	5%
No Response	1	0%

3g.*Participating in the academic civic engagement component of the course increased my interest in pursuing civic community or work roles that foster the common good.*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	81	34%
Agree	127	53%
Subtotal Strongly Agree and Agree	***208***	***87%***
Disagree	20	8%
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Subtotal Strongly Disagree and Disagree	***22***	***9%***
Does not apply	4	2%
No Response	5	2%

Summary of Question #4

Communication and Community were the two topics about which respondents learned most, regardless of their status as a strength, weakness, interest, or other. Group work and career were also mentioned frequently as topics learned about a result of participation in the ACE component of a course.

- Of the 239 students who completed the survey, 210 (88 percent) could identify something they had learned.
- Of the three categories listed in the question (strength, weakness, or interest) strength was the most frequently cited, with 28 percent of respondents indicating that the ACE course component enabled them to learn about a strength of theirs.
- The way in which the question was phrased produced many comments that lacked an identifier to classify a response as strength, weakness, or interest. In order to include these comments which still conveyed that they had learned or gained something from the ACE component of the course, an "other" category, was created. It was the second most populous category, with 27 percent of students (65 respondents).

4. *What did you learn about your own strengths, weaknesses, and interests as a result of your participation in the Academic Civic Engagement component of the course?*

Code	Description	Frequency[5]	Percent[6]
Identified something they learned	***Respondent identified something that they learned from the ACE component of their course.***	***210***	***88%***
Thematic Outcome		**183**	**77%**
Communication	General communication with others, oral presentations, public speaking, or interviewing.	51	21%
Community	Working or interacting with local community members or children in the community.	50	21%
Group Work	Working collaboratively with others in a team setting.	48	20%
Career	Possible career opportunities, interests, goals, or non-interests.	37	15%
Organization	Organizing information, groups, or coordinating and planning group/project work.	23	10%
Research	Research or finding sources on their project.	17	7%
Real-World	Making reports that helped others or contributed to a cause, working with real data, or real-world problems.	12	5%
Writing	Writing abilities or skills.	12	5%
Data Analysis	Working with or analyzing statistical data.	7	3%
Strength		**68**	**28%**
Communication	General communication with others, oral presentations, public speaking, or interviewing.	19	8%
Group Work	Working collaboratively with others in a team setting.	13	5%
Organization	Organizing information, groups, or coordinating and planning group/project work.	13	5%
Community	Working or interacting with local community members or children in the community.	8	3%
Research	Research or finding sources on their project.	3	1%
Other		**65**	**27%**
Community	Working or interacting with local community members or children in the community.	27	11%
Group Work	Working collaboratively with others in a team setting.	19	8%
Communication	General communication with others, oral presentations, public speaking, or interviewing.	16	7%
Real World	Making reports that helped others or contributed to a cause, working with real data, or real-world problems.	9	4%
Research	Research or finding sources on their project.	8	3%

[5] Category frequencies may not equal the total count of its subcategories as not all responses fit into a specific subcategory and many responses were placed into multiple subcategories.

[6] Percentages may total to more than 100% because respondents referenced more than one topic in their comments.

Code	Description	Frequency[5]	Percent[6]
Career	Possible career opportunities, interests, goals, or non-interests.	5	2%
Writing	Writing abilities or skills.	3	1%
Weakness		**58**	**24%**
Communication	General communication with others, oral presentations, public speaking, or interviewing..	18	8%
Organization	Organizing information, groups, or coordinating and planning group/project work.	8	3%
Data Analysis	Working with or analyzing statistical data.	7	3%
Group Work	Working collaboratively with others in a team setting.	5	2%
Interest		43	18%
Career	Possible career opportunities, interests, goals, or non-interests.	32	13%
Community	Working or interacting with local community members or children in the community.	2	1%
Interest	**Respondent identified an interest that resulted from, or was enhanced by the ACE component of their course.**	**43**	**18%**
Career	Possible career opportunities, interests, goals, or non-interests.	32	13%
Community	Working or interacting with local community members or children in the community.	2	1%
Did not identify anything they learned	***Respondent did not learn anything new from the ACE component of their course.***	***14***	***6%***
No response	***Respondent did not offer any response.***	***15***	***6%***

Examples of Thematic Outcomes:

Communication

- *"I learned that I am gifted at speaking publically and conversing with adults."*
- *"The ACE course helped to build my confidence conducting interviews."*
- *"I learned that I am not a good public speaker."*

Community

- *"I learned that I enjoy working with little kids and that I do well at it."*
- *"I'm more interested in becoming engaged in my community since I got to see first-hand how appreciative people are of community work, and the impact it can have on others."*
- *"I learned that I am able to use my skills to further help out people in the community."*

Group Work

- *"Working with a group is very helpful."*
- *"I learned how to work more effectively in a group scenario."*
- *"I learned a lot about how I work best in a group and how to balance other people's schedules."*

Career

- *"I learned that I have a passion to teach."*
- *"I learned I probably do not want to pursue a career in teaching."*
- *"The work definitely solidified my interests in doing non-profit work at some point in my life or as a potential career."*

Organization

- *"I learned about my strength as an organizer."*
- *"I mainly learned that I need to work on my organizational skills in order to get something meaningful done on time."*

Research

- *"I learned more about my interests in conducting research."*
- *"Learning to compile research to be used by an actual organization was a great experience."*

Real-World

- *"It was good to assess our engagement on a real social work setting and to work with real people toward a goal."*
- *"I enjoy applying statistical modeling processes to real-world problems, hoping to increase the common knowledge of how things work."*

Writing

- *"I could work on technical writing."*
- *"I learned that I was good at concise writing and finding good sources."*

Data Analysis

- *"The ACE component of the course really showed me that I need to improve and develop more statistical analysis skills."*
- *"Weaknesses: analyzing data, using computers, and SPSS."*

Summary of Question #5

Fifty-seven percent (93 students) said that working with, being engaged in, or building relationships with the local community was the most meaningful aspect of their experience with the ACE course or project. Relatedly, thirty-one percent of all respondents said that helping others was the most meaningful aspect of their experience with the ACE course or project.

While "working with children" became a subcategory of "community," its dispersion across the survey population was not even. In fact, all 37 respondents who said that working with children was most meaningful came from 3 classes: PSYCH 230A, ART 238, and BIO/ES 228.

The concept of being a part of, working with, and impacting the "real-world" was also frequently mentioned. Sixteen percent of all respondents said that working with real data in the real-world that could help address real problems was the most meaningful aspect of their experience with the ACE course or project

5. *What has been the most meaningful aspect of your experience with this Academic Civic Engagement course or project?*

Topic	Description	Frequency	Percent[7]
Community	Working with, being engaged in, or building relationships with the local community	93	57%
Working with Children	Working with, teaching, or influencing children in the local community	37	23%
Helping Others	Helping others, doing work that would benefit others, or giving back to others	51	31%
Real-World	Working with real data, addressing real problems, or real-life experiences	26	16%
Learning Something	Learning a specific skill, technique, practice, concept, or idea	25	15%
Career	Gaining insight into possible careers, areas of interest, job opportunities, or internships	10	6%
Connecting Academics to Projects	Taking academic coursework and applying it to real-life situations or projects	10	6%
Working with Other Students	Working with, or learning to work effectively with, a group of other students	7	4%
No Response	Respondent did not offer any response.	5	3%
Was not Meaningful	Respondents indicated that there were no meaningful aspects of their experience with this ACE course or project.	2	1%
No Code	Respondent gave a response that could not be placed into any categories.	1	0%

Examples of Topics Areas:

Community

- *"Working and interacting with a wide variety of groups within Northfield."*
- *"Being involved with the community."*

Working with Children

- *"The chance to work with local kids."*
- *"I really enjoyed actually visiting the elementary school and seeing the children"*

Helping Others

- *"Knowing that I potentially made a difference in the lives of others."*
- *"Knowing that what I am doing is directly helping someone."*

[7] Percentages may total to more than 100% because respondents referenced more than one topic in their comments.

Real-World

- *“Working with real data in a new and meaningful way.”*
- *"Having the chance to talk to real people about the issues which face this area, rather than only seeing a textbook. It makes the concepts stick much better.”*

Learning Something

- *“Gained the ability to conduct interviews and valuable experience making presentations.”*
- *“Learning how to design and appreciate good research.”*
- *“I learned greater patience.”*

Career

- *“It also opened my eyes to future internship opportunities.”*
- *“I feel this type of data analysis could directly apply to my future career.”*

Connecting Academics to Projects

- *“Getting the experience of applying the knowledge and theory we learned in class in real-life situations.”*

Working with Other Students

- *“Working with classmates on the project.”*

Was Not Meaningful

- *"To be perfectly honest the project wasn't all that meaningful. Students didn't really have to do much at all for it.”*