

Evidence: Program Assessment for Continuous Improvement

Newsletter

October 2014

Collegiality and Appreciation Different Environments



The COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey has several questions that relate to collegiality, appreciation, and recognition. Last year, faculty rated their satisfaction with the feedback that they receive from their deans and colleagues for teaching, scholarship and service activities. In addition, they rated the support and concord that they experience in their programs and schools with respect to personal interactions, “fit”, the willingness of their colleagues to “pitch in” when needed, and the overall collegiality of the program/school. The graphs show that faculty perceive their environments differently by gender and race.

Figure 1: Appreciation by gender and race

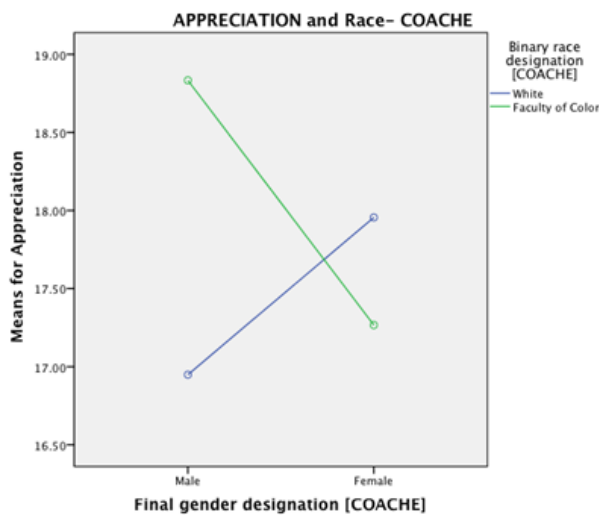
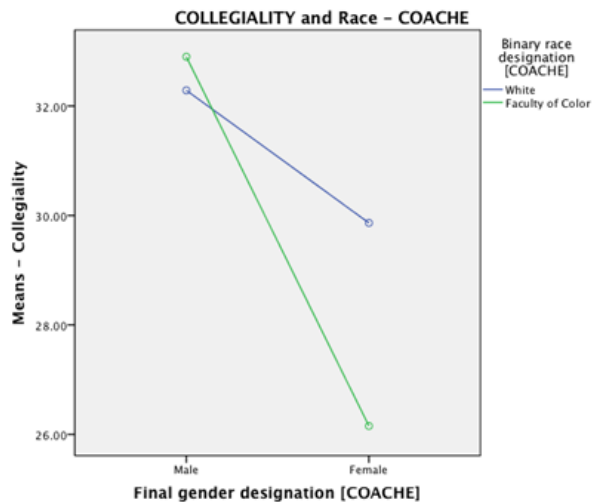


Figure 2: Collegiality by gender and race



Female faculty overall, and white males are less satisfied than male faculty of color with the appreciation that they receive, and female faculty of color are less satisfied that all other groups with the collegiality that they experience. Males, regardless of race, enjoy higher levels of collegiality than do females. Collegiality and appreciation are significantly and strongly related (r , Spearman's rho = .56). This means that faculty who report high levels of collegiality are also more likely to report high levels of appreciation. The appreciation scores range from five to 25 and the collegiality scores from five to 40. We cannot, at this point, provide insights

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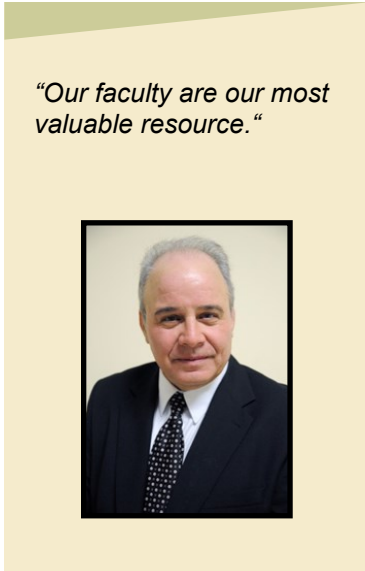
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to explain these data from faculty, but we can follow up with more qualitative inquiry that will hopefully give us a fuller picture of the different ways that faculty perceive their environment. Some of these differences by race are related to the significantly different experiences of both collegiality and appreciation across schools.

Women, both tenured and untenured report lower levels of collegiality than men but tenured male faculty join all the female faculty in reporting lower levels of appreciation than the untenured men.

Provost Kesselman has paid close attention to the disaggregated COACHE data and has strongly reaffirmed his commitment to respond to faculty concerns. With respect to the ongoing review of the COACHE findings,

Dr. Kesselman remarked: *“Our faculty are our most valuable resource. I fully respect their opinions about the ways in which they experience the college, and will be attentive to their recommendations and suggestions to help make Stockton a most nurturing place for all faculty to do their best work”*



The Provost has tasked a team of faculty to study the COACHE reports, review the internal differences among our faculty experiences, explore possible clarifying hypotheses, and make recommendations that will result in a more supportive environment for all faculty. The team has representatives from every school in the college and has already begun to review the report. They will work through the spring semester and prepare a summary report in June.

Figure 4: Collegiality by gender and tenure

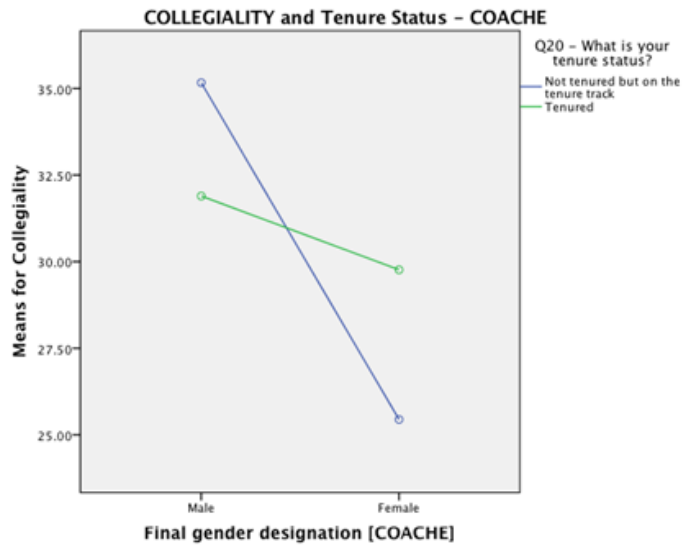
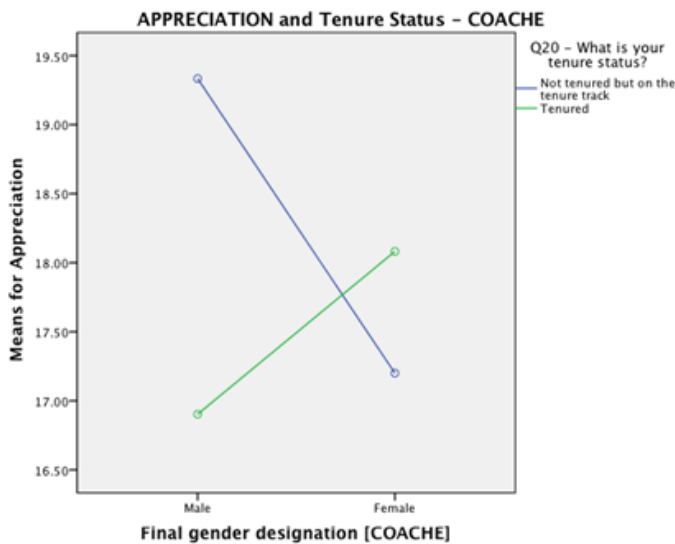


Figure 3: Appreciation by gender and tenure



Doing it right – The Assessment Process in Visual Arts

Program assessment in Visual Arts has not uncovered any great truths so far as I know, but they are doing it right. For the program outcomes, they started with a question that was important to the faculty – “How effectively can students relate their work to the works of contemporary or historical artists?” To answer this question, they developed an instrument, administered it, and found that they were not satisfied with the students’ development in this area. They designed interventions (curricular and co-curricular) to increase the likelihood that students would know and relate to contemporary and historical artists. The interventions fell short of the achieving the goal, and this semester, they are modifying the interventions to make them more effective. This is the work of assessment for student learning, reflective, iterative, and authentic. Hats off to you!



LIBQUAL + 2014 SURVEY

Richard E. Bjork Library

During the Spring 2014 semester, Bjork Library participated in the LibQUAL+ survey. The survey is designed to rate user satisfaction with library services and to gather feedback for potential improvements. The Bjork Library participates in the survey every 3 years.

Survey

The survey scores 3 categories: *Affect of Service* (covering user attention from employees, responsiveness to users' questions, employees who answer user questions correctly); *Information Control* (availability of electronic resources on or off campus, the library website usability, completeness of collections); and *Library as Place* (does the Library space inspire study and learning, quiet space for individuals and community space for group learning). Using a numeric scale, participants rate statements about the library that span the three categories.

Participants

In 2014, **629 participants** completed the survey – our highest number of respondents to date! Of that total number: 471 were undergraduate students, 61 were graduate students and 60 were faculty. The rest were library and college staff.

Results

Affect of Service

Respondents consistently rated library service as exceeding their minimum expectations. Undergraduates felt library service was higher than their minimum expectations, but less than the ideal desired. Graduate students actually rated staff willingness to help users as **higher** than their ideal desire. Faculty, though rating library service above minimum standards in most respects, rated staff willingness as poor. Positive service-related comments far outnumbered negative ones, though some criticisms of service were expressed.

Information Control

While overall ratings in this category rose above minimum expectations, they were not as high as those for service. Undergraduates felt the library consistently delivered higher-than-minimum-standard information control. However, graduate students felt that print journal holdings were not meeting their minimum expectations. Faculty were most critical of the library in this category, scoring the library lower than their minimum expectations on all counts – save for one: accessibility of re-

sources both on and off campus.

Library as Place

Like the other two categories, respondents overall scored the library space as higher than their minimum expectations. Overall, undergraduates felt the library space exceeded their minimum expectations – though it only did so marginally in terms of offering quiet study spaces. Graduate students were less impressed with library space, rating it lower as an ideal space for study, research, and learning. Faculty, like undergraduates, were largely positive about library space, except for its rating as a “good getaway for study and learning,” where they rated it below their minimum expectations. The majority of the critical comments related to the need for quiet study areas, group collaboration areas, extended hours, food guidelines enforcement, and a greater number of accessible electrical outlets.

What We Heard and How We Improved

Affect of Service

Better Staff Searching Skills

Negative comments about service seem to center, not on the demeanor of desk staff, but on their ability to help users find what they need. We have used the occasion of opening the Learning Commons to initiate an on-going series of searching workshops, for want of a better term, to aid Info and Circ desk staff in using the core resources of the major disciplines. Liaisons will provide short “how to” sessions to desk staff members and to other liaisons to bolster all of our searching skills

Information Control

Improving Access to Information

Comments on the dearth of materials in parts of our holdings probably are founded, as the collection is not large and is not a “research” collection by definition. We have prepared ourselves to improve by instituting a liaison program through which we will profile all Stockton programs with respect to core resources and teaching concentrations. Profiles will reveal more accurately the subjects in which we should be collecting; these subjects also should include areas of faculty research. We have expanded our inter-library loans services by participating in Rapid-ILL, a resource sharing systems that facilitates expedited document delivery. The result is

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CRITICAL THINKING

What Students Say on the National Survey of Student Engagement

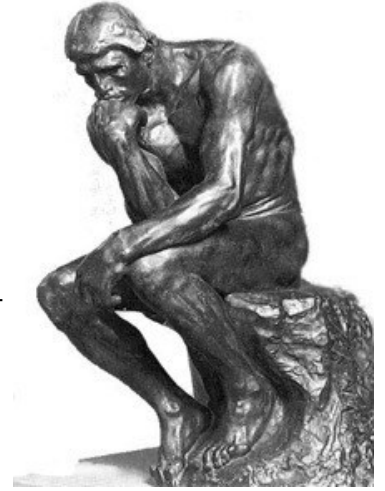
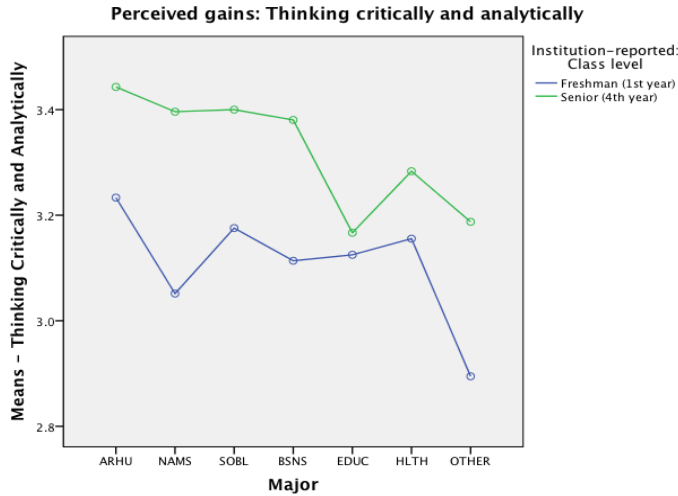


Figure 5: NSSE – Thinking Critically and Analytically



In spring 2014, three hundred and eighty six freshmen and 643 seniors completed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). There were in excess of 200 students each from the schools of NAMS, SOBL, and HLTH; EDUC had fewer than 50 students. In this issue of Evidence, we review students’ perceptions of their instruction and learning in the area of critical thinking. The NSSE ratings are on a 4-point scale.

Figure 5 above shows that by the spring of their senior year, seniors rate their critical thinking and analytic skill development higher than do freshmen. This is hardly a surprise. The descriptive differences by school are interesting but not statistically significant. In response to a question about the emphasis of their coursework on one aspect of critical thinking - evaluating information, points of view, or decision, the picture was different .

(Figure 6). Here, seniors and freshmen were not significantly different, but there were differences among students from different schools. Students in SOBL and EDUC rated this aspect of their coursework higher than did students from NAMS and HLTH.

In Figure 7, (next page) students responded to a question about the frequency with which they were called upon to examine the strength and weakness of their views on a topic. There were significant differences between the two groups of students as well as among students from different schools. Overall, seniors said that they did this more often than freshmen, and students in ARHU and EDUC said that they examined their views more often than did students in NAMS and HLTH.

Perspective taking is positively related to critical thinking and is, in the view of some scholars, a prerequisite for critical thinking. In Figure 8 (next page) the picture is very clear. Seniors are much stronger than freshmen in this area, and the difference between seniors and freshmen is more marked in some schools than in others.

Figure 6: NSSE – Coursework Emphasis—Evaluating a Source

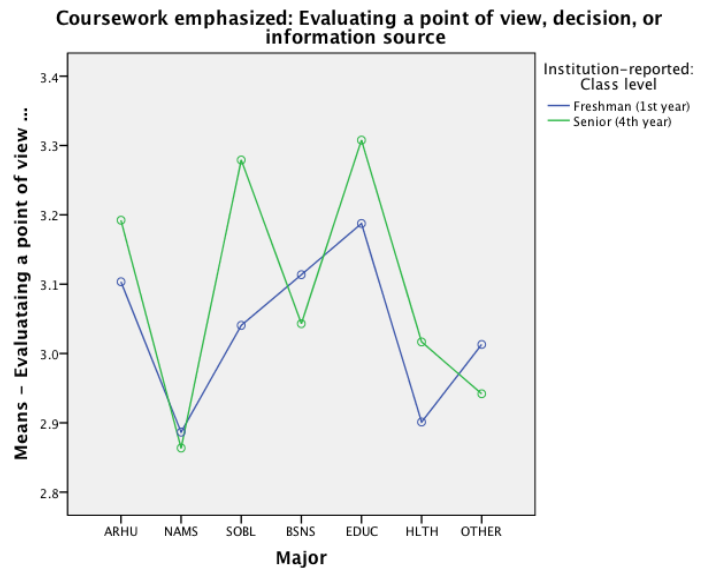


Figure 7: NSSE- Examined Strength and Weakness of Views

Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue

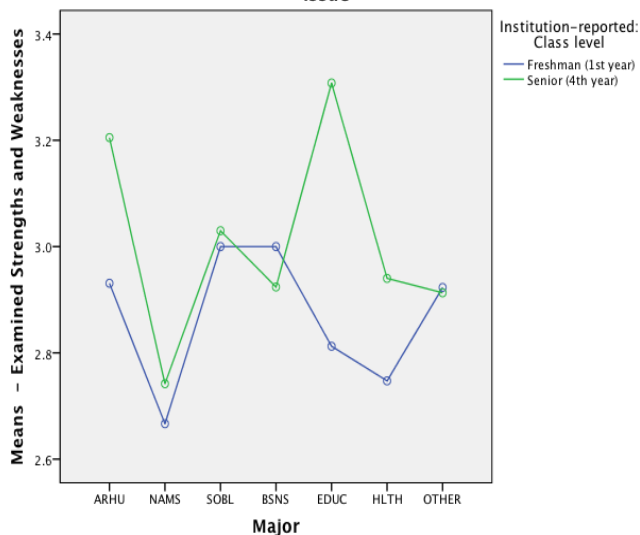
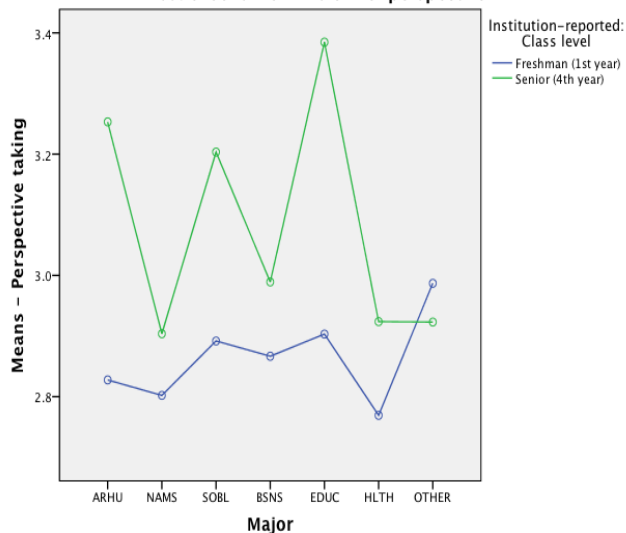


Figure 8: NSSE - Perspective Taking

Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective



Marc Richard, Associate Professor of Chemistry looked at the NSSE school comparisons and had this to say "It is clear that students from NAMS make strong gains in Critical Thinking by their senior year (figure 5). The more specific questions are not stated in ways that would solicit strongly positive responses from students in NAMS. Critical thinking is fundamental to the sciences; in chemistry we are constantly collecting data and using the data to support claims. Although students in the sciences engage in perspective taking and in examining views, these skills may not be explicitly described to students in these terms."



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LIBQUAL 2014

that requests to borrow have increased and delivery times decreased.

Library as Place Group work areas

Beginning in the Fall 2014 semester, the library opened a new Learning Commons space. Designed for group collaboration, the area will be equipped with modular furniture, computer terminals, electrical outlets, and comfortable seating to facilitate students working alone or in groups. This space will also include a service desk for technology assistance and a reference desk for research help.

Quiet study areas

Also in Fall 2014 semester, the library opened a new Quiet Study Area. Located in the rear of the library's first floor, the space contains many individual-user study carrels, comfortable seating, and small tables – as well as guidelines for keeping the space free of noise and groups.

Food/Noise Guidelines

Beginning in Fall 2014 semester, the library staff will support food guidelines within the library by handing out special cards to patrons who are violating the rules on food or noise. The small cards have the guidelines for food on one side and those for quiet areas on the other, and can be handed to any patron who is in violation of the rules, informing them without needing to create a confrontational situation.