

2011

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- Honors Forum
- study abroad
- credit-bearing internships (courses coded in the catalogue as IN 100, XX 299, or XX 399)
- faculty-student collaborative research during the summer
- the SGA-sponsored Responsible Citizenship Internship Award (RCIA) for a summer experience

The ELLP designations assigned to courses were based on Catalog descriptions. *The experiences considered should not be interpreted as an exhaustive list of “engaged learning,” nor should the inclusion, grouping, or omission of certain experiences be interpreted as an indication of educational equivalency or significance.* Rather

fashion not to imply an equivalency between experiences, but rather to quantify the magnitude of participation and the degree to which students engage in multiple experiences.

Findings: credit-bearing internships

Here, we examine participation rates in credit-bearing internships using data from the 2010-11 academic year and following summer. During that time, 61 faculty members from 22 departments and programs sponsored 156 credit-bearing internships. Most of these were pursued by students within (or between) their junior and senior years (Table 1). Participation is greatest in disciplines where praxis is

**Table 3.** Links between internship experiences and student-reported gains in learning, including those areas associated with Skidmore’s *Goals for Student Learning and Development* (provided in rightmost column).

	Credit-Bearing Internships		RCIA Internships		*
	Moderate, Large, or Very Large Gain	Large or Very Large Gain	Moderate, Large, or Very Large Gain	Large or Very Large Gain	
Readiness for more demanding research	<b>69.3%</b>	33.9%	<b>47%</b>	35%	<i>Demonstrate advanced learning and synthesis...</i>
Ability to read and understand primary literature	<b>50.0%</b>	32.8%	<b>77%</b>	56%	

**Table 4.** Outcomes of credit-bearing internships and the SGA-sponsored Responsible Citizenship Internship Award (RCIA) as they relate to clarification of post-baccalaureate aspirations. Numbers show percentage of students responding in the affirmative.

**Credit**



may inadvertently infer a relationship between participation and one identity (e.g., race) that is in fact driven by another identity (e.g., gender).

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Accounting for the footprint of ELLPs in terms of faculty time is far more challenging. All of the ELLPs studied involve participation by faculty. This may include direct participation (e.g., collaborative research), supervision (e.g., independent studies, individualized discussion and evaluation of credit-bearing internshi

Participation and demographics

The questionnaire was distributed to 348 faculty members. The

Faculty participation is inconsistent across ELLPs, division lines, and demographic lines. For the purposes of the following analysis, participating faculty are those that self-identify as participating often or occasionally. A narrow majority of respondents in the Humanities and the Studio and Performing Arts participate in faculty-student collaborative projects, whereas reported participation is much higher by faculty in the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Pre-professional disciplines (71.4, 94.4 and 100%, respectively). Respondents in Pre-professional disciplines and the Vis

scientists (and to some extent the pre-professional disciples) see



In general, the nature of the comments parallels the numerical ratings. Regarding institutional support, the greatest number of positive comments concerns study abroad (current support rated optimal by 50%). The most uncertainty is about practica and service/community-based learning (65% and 50% not sure, respectively). Although some question the place of service/community-based learning in a liberal arts curriculum, the collective ambivalence seems to stem mainly from a lack of clear definitions for these experiences and uncertainty about whether they are relevant to a respondent's discipline.

There are many calls for some kind of compensation (course credit, course release, stipend, or increase in existing funding) for faculty involvement with collaborative projects, culminating senior projects, and independent study



incapable of taking on any additional responsibilities: they cannot add more hours to the day than those already allocated to the College. Therefore, if there is consensus that a given experience is valuable to students but burdensome for faculty, faculty involvement should be incentivized, richly supported with easily accessible resources, and rewarded—even as we protect the freedom of faculty to shape their teaching practices as they see fit.

#### Equalize student access

Project II indicates that, although the faculty views may vary, there is considerable support for ELLPs. However, the findings of Project I suggest that there may be some uneven patterns of student participation in certain ELLPs based on gender, ALANA identity, and financial need. No study is required to understand that high-need students may be unable to participate in unpaid summer internships, or that some students may not have the opportunity-yielding networks that come with socioeconomic privilege and a family culture of professional ambition. But it is not clear that all faculty are aware of the potential for inequity or prepared to help students overcome it—or even that all faculty consider ELLP access essential or regard the encouragement of ELLPs as part of their roles as academic advisors. Further investigation and discussion is needed to determine whether demographic differences in ELLP participation are persistent and significant, and, if so, how they should be addressed. This concern is fundamentally related to Goal II of the *Strategic Plan*: to support a diverse student body, we must ensure that all students can choose to experience any of the opportunities that may enrich their educations and support their post-baccalaureate transitions. The SEE-Beyond Awards are a step in this direction: the first round of awards in Spring 2012 funded 21 experiences that spanned the disciplines and provided opportunities to a diverse group of students who are demographically representative of the overall population.



provide helps participating institutions identify areas of strength and improvement, as well as leads to constructive discussions related to teaching, learning, and the quality of students' educational experience.<sup>15</sup>

The scope of the survey obviously extends beyond the themes of T&T, but it includes a number of relevant items and it could be instructive to compare views on T&T-related items with views on other educational concerns. It is our understanding that the College has recently registered for the joint administration of NSSE and FSSE in Spring 2013.