

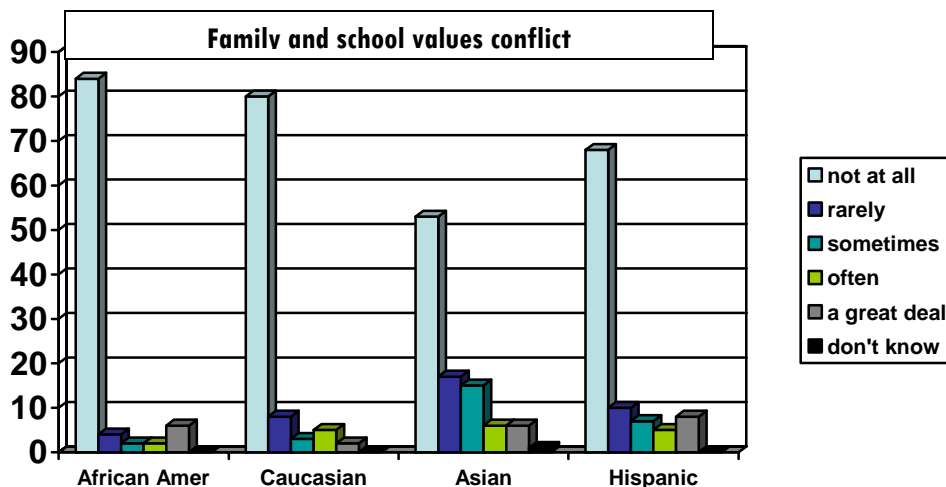
Reflections

Spring 2008 Volume 1 Number 4
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 Center for the Advancement of Staff & Student Learning
 Marybeth Buechner, Editor

Educational Research **CRC Student Perceptions** **Jeanne Edman**

CRC's research office conducted a student perception survey that measured campus satisfaction, cultural fit, student support and academic confidence during the 2005-2006 academic year. A total of 50 African American, 146 White, 204 Asian, and 75 Latino students volunteered to complete a questionnaire.

African American and White students reported higher levels of academic confidence and campus cultural fit than Asian and Latino students. Overall there were very positive responses to the cultural congruity items, especially among African American and Caucasian students, with over 80% of students reporting that they never had to change to fit in, leave family values behind at CRC or had cultural values than conflicted with school expectations.



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Upcoming CASL Events

CASL/DEMS Institute
 May 22, 23 2008
 Technology-mediated Education

CASL Colloquium
 August 2008
 Bridging the Gaps

Look for more in the Fall PD Booklet!



Notes from the Disciplines

Life in the front office

Cindy Petty, Admin Asst SME

As I look back the past 15 years that I've worked at CRC, I can see tremendous growth on campus. My "roots" assisting students began when I was hired as a clerk for the MESA Program. I was hired 4 years ago as the Admin Assistant for the SME Area. I learned quickly that the area office is one the first places students go to for help. With our location in the Learning Resources Center, we get students who need assistance for all of the other areas. Students have the notion that our area office knows everything about every other area on campus. I've come to realize the importance of all the area offices and student services to assist each other, since we're here to help all students.

There's nothing crazier than the first two weeks of a semester. Students are always in need of assistance. They need to know where their class is located, or the classroom that's listed on their schedule isn't the class that's meeting in that room, or they're looking for their class, not realizing that it's a late-start class, and most importantly, they're looking for that one professor for that all-important permission number.

I liken being located in the LRC building with being at Grand Central Station. We never know what type of questions we are going to be asked. One day we had a student on a scavenger hunt for an HCD class who needed a rock (yes, a rock). Marybeth happened to have a rock in her desk drawer (a leftover from a lab exercise), and gave it to the student. The student left very happy that she had her rock.. Who would have ever thought...

We get the occasional medical emergency or the student who is beyond upset about an instructor, which requires the area office staff to keep our wits about us. Other visits are easier; I had a student stop by the area office one day to say thank you to me for giving her assistance at the beginning of the semester. She said her mom always told her to thank those who helped her and that counsel had stuck with her.

One never knows when you'll bump into a student off campus. I was driving through a fast food place one day and the person at the window said, "Don't you work at CRC in the Science Area?" I was glad at that moment that I try to represent the college in a positive way.

It's great to have a student stop by just to say, "Have a great day." It's a good feeling to know that you've helped a student solve what they perceive as an insurmountable problem or those students who just need someone to listen to them. There's such a wide variety of students, that life is never dull at CRC. There's a great satisfaction in knowing at the end of each day, I've been able to help a student. I love working at CRC!

Teaching & Learning Reflections

Why take a Humanities course at CRC?

Kim Codella, Humanities

As a Humanities Professor here at CRC, I ask my students "What are the Humanities anyway?" I get a lot of interesting answers. Pretty much everybody guesses that it has something to do with culture and art. The "Human" in Humanities is a clue, but past that observation students often run into trouble.

To be technical, the Humanities are everything but the sciences, but here at CRC we are a little more specific. "The Humanities" include religions, philosophy, literature, music, dance, theater, visual arts, architecture, and history. The difference in studying these topics in a Humanities class versus say a History class is that we combine these disciplines together and look at how they *relate to one another* in time and context. This synthetic approach asks students to look at these topics in relation to each other, how are changes in technology, history and society reflected in the arts, human expression and values? In a History class you might study how many people lost their heads to the guillotine during the French revolution, in a Humanities class we would be looking at Romanticism in Music, Literature and Art.

We all know about the global economy and the need to compete. With the need to compete and the need for employment many students bypass the Humanities to take courses that they feel are more practical. In American society today we tend to stress specialization; we are a culture of experts and specialists. Students here at CRC are asked to declare majors and to focus on their academic goals as early as possible; this is not a bad thing, but in a Humanities class we take the opposite approach. In our classes we stress how the Humanities are interconnected and how they impact our lives and our human experience.

Why study the Humanities...why study art? The first answer is a practical one; these courses give you a historical perspective, a better understanding of the world around you and the forces that shaped it. The ability to bring together several viewpoints, art forms, or historical periods prepares you for a future in any field or job, where you will be continually required to synthesize new information and act on it (trust me on this). The second answer is more profound, and therefore more difficult to express. I yield to the words of Maya Lin (the designer of the Viet Nam Memorial in Washington D.C.). In 1989 she gave a speech at Juniata College where she was asked to talk about the meaning of art, in which she said "*We are connected to one another through time by our creations, works, images, thoughts and writings. We communicate to future generations what we are, what we have been, hopefully influencing for the better what we will become...*" -- Maya Lin

Ultimately, the Humanities are what connect us to each other. In a society where we often feel disconnected or alienated from those around us, or the culture at large, the Humanities reconnects us, and most importantly recharges us to face the challenges of our own time and culture with greater insight and understanding.



Staff Profile:
Emmanuel Sigauke, English

If you have any time in your day, you could do much worse than to take the time to meet Emmanuel Sigauke – a CRC English professor, a poet, a native of Zimbabwe, and a lover of words.

Emmanuel has wanted to be a writer for as long as he can remember. He has had a variety of his poems published and his first major collection of poetry, “*Forever Let Me Go*”, will be published this summer. He has wanted to be a teacher for almost as long. He was hired as a full time English professor at CRC in 2006. Take a moment to talk to him and you will sense the joy that these two pursuits bring to his life.

Emmanuel grew up in a village in Zimbabwe where he first discovered his love of writing and his talents for languages, especially English. He notes that when he was in primary school English was considered fairly difficult to learn and his friends were very impressed with his facility with the language. After primary school he completed his A-level study in the capital city of Zimbabwe where he began publishing his poems. He went on to the University of Zimbabwe, majoring in English and Linguistics and helping to found the Budding Writers Association of Zimbabwe.

After graduating from the University, Emmanuel joined family members in California and completed his MA in English at CSUS. He taught at City College of San Francisco and at Sacramento City College for two years while living in Sacramento. That meant some days of leaving Sacramento at 5:00am in order to teach a 7:30am class in SF – talk about a commute!

Emmanuel has been teaching full time at CRC for two years. When he talks about teaching at CRC, it is with intensity. He speaks of a meaningful attachment to the college, the uplifting experience of impacting the lives of his students and his commitment to making a positive change in the world. He is proud of his students and their accomplishments, laughingly noting that they will find their university work easy after what they have accomplished at CRC. His book of poetry has many themes, but one reoccurring image is that of “soaring”- which, he notes, reflects our ability to succeed at whatever we do; that is also his goal for his students.



Outcomes Dialogue:
The following is excerpted from an email sent from the OATF to the whole campus

Last fall, the Outcomes Assessment Task Force (OATF) convened to formulate and recommend the process, and resources needed, to implement and sustain an ongoing assessment cycle at the college. The Task Force wants to update you about the status of our work. We have reviewed processes adopted by other colleges, examined our interests, discussed our current strategies and explored our various options. Our goal is to not reinvent the wheel, to make this process beneficial for employees and students, and to keep the process as streamlined and simple as possible. From our research, we are proposing the following structure for outcomes assessment at the college. Key elements of this proposed structure include the following:

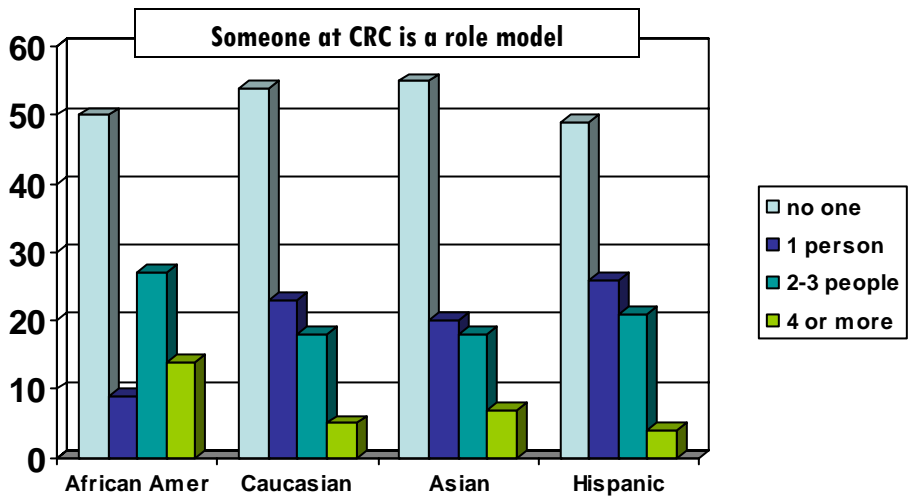
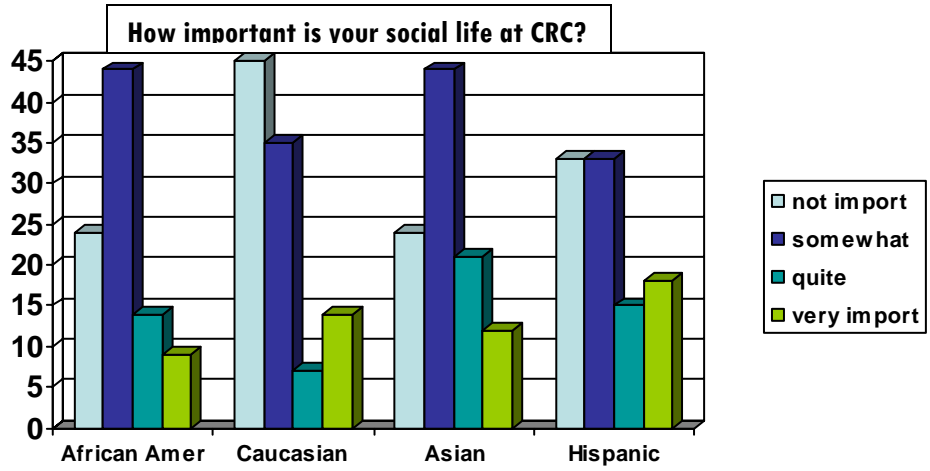
1. College-wide and GE outcomes will be assessed on a four-year cycle that includes: Graduation Competencies and General Education (Year 1), Program Completion (Year 2), Student Development as Self-Reliant Learners (Year 3), and Society, Ethics and Pluralism (Year 4).
2. During the fall convocation, faculty will have the opportunity to identify and discuss assessment needs in their department. For example, a department may choose to focus assessment on the college-wide outcome or on specific outcomes critical to a program (e.g. gatekeeper courses). After identifying departmental assessment needs, faculty will then choose which outcome(s) they will assess during the fall semester. The goal here, of course, is to complete assessments that will ultimately improve instruction and facilitate student learning.
3. Faculty and staff will complete a **brief** web-based assessment form at the end of fall semester that reports the results of their outcomes assessment. We envision an easy process requiring the faculty to select the options that reflect their assessment. This data will be helpful in affirming the strengths of the methods used and can be used for dialogue at the departmental level about ways to strengthen and enhance student success.
4. Time for departmental dialogue about what was learned from the fall assessments will be provided during spring convocation. Again, a brief reporting form will be utilized to document this assessment evaluation and dialog process.
5. The committee is also recommending a Phase I and Phase II implementation of the assessment plan. Phase I will be an initial trial and evaluation period and will commence during the 2008-2009 academic year. Phase II will be the full implementation of the four year cycle (with any modifications that are deemed necessary after Phase I).

Educational Research Continued:

Although Asian students reported the lowest level of cultural congruity, the overall responses were positive with 60% reporting that ethnic values didn't conflict with college expectations, 50% did not have to change to fit in at CRC, and 70% did not have to leave family values behind when attending college.

There were no ethnic differences in perceptions of social support or mentoring, as students rated these items very low. For example 77% of students did not participate in campus clubs or activities, 21% never socialized on campus, 11% had no friends on campus, and 34% reported that their social life at CRC was not important. More than 50% of the students reported no mentor or role model.

The research office is presently completing a similar survey with a larger, more diverse sample to further explore various student perceptions on our campus and what impact they may have on student success.



Time to Register
3rd Annual CASSL
Research-to-Practitioner
Colloquium
Bridging the Gaps

Bridging the expectations gap: Transitions from high school to college

Bridging the basic skills gap: Tools for student success

Bridging the sustainability gap: Helping students sustain their efforts

Wednesday August 20th
9am-4pm

Contact M. Buechner to register

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