

2011 Foundations of Learning Assessment
Select Results for Provost's Council
October 28, 2011

Introduction

A total of 702 students completed the Foundations of Learning Assessment (FLA) during Welcome Weekend. The instrument asks students about their learning experiences before coming to Drake and their expectations for their experiences at Drake. The instrument also asks students about ways they plan to engage at Drake (e.g., outside of class activities, interaction with faculty, sources of information). The information below represents select results from specific questions.

Summary

- Incoming students identified weaknesses in several learning areas including: analyzing civic and global issues, knowledge of how to participate in the democratic process, reading and understanding scientific writings, and creating or interpreting fine art (see Table 1)
- Students want to connect their out-of-class involvement in clubs and organizations with their academic experience and professional goals (see Tables 2 and 3).
- Students expect to interact with faculty members in several different ways. A vast majority expect to visit faculty during office hours (91%) and interact through study groups (83%). A high percentage of students also expect to interact with faculty through research or creative projects (see Table 4).
- Students plan to seek advice from various sources (see Table 5).
 - Students have high expectations for academic advisors, who were the top source of advice for 5 of 9 categories (course and semester scheduling, career or graduate school planning, connecting academic/professional/personal development, advice on co-curricular activities, guidance on developing leadership skills).
 - Peers (friends, PMACs, Resident Assistants) are an important source of advice, especially for balancing work and personal life, finding personal support services, advising on co-curricular activities, and developing leadership skills.
 - Students plan to seek advice from college and department offices on academic, co-curricular, and internship activities.
 - Incoming students may not know the types of support and services available through Professional and Career Development Services.
- A high percentage of students plan to take courses that include service learning, enhance perspectives on international issues, and enhance perspectives on diversity issues (Table 6). Similarly, a high percentage of students indicate planning to study abroad (almost 60%), which is lower in comparison to the number of students who actually study abroad (approximately 20%).
- Students have a high level of interest in volunteer service (Table 7).
- Few students expressed interest in joining a club or organization related to diversity/multiculturalism (13% in Table 2). However, two-thirds of students are interested in taking courses that will enhance perspectives on international issues (67%) or diversity issues (66%) (Table 6).

Table 1. 2011 FLA Responses to Skill Areas Ranked by Percent "Strong" or "Very Strong"

Based on your experiences in high school and other education venues prior to attending Drake, how strong do you believe your skills are in these areas?	Percent "Strong" or "Very Strong"
Articulate a vision of my own values, ethics, or core beliefs	83%
Ability to read carefully	82%
Understand the perspectives & experiences of people who are different than you	78%
Ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences	77%
Construct reasoned arguments	71%
Evaluate reasoned arguments	71%
Communicate effectively with people from other cultures and backgrounds	68%
Apply understanding of ethical issues when developing solutions	67%
Understand the ethical issues related to the use & misuse of information	66%
Evaluate the quality or reliability of information	65%
Employ evidence effectively in writing	62%
Execute appropriate mathematical operations for a given question	59%
Analyze differences between industrialized and developing areas of the world	55%
Understand the historical, political, and social connections of past events	52%
Ability to use educational experiences to analyze civic and global issues	50%
Knowledge in how to participate effectively in the democratic process	50%
Read and understand scientific writings written for an informed lay audience	37%
Create or interpret fine art (ex. painting, sculpture, music, theatre)	32%

Table 2. 2011 FLA Responses to Club or Organization Interest Areas Ranked by Percent

I am most interested in joining a Drake student club or organization related to the following areas:	Count	Percent
Hobby or recreational pastime	505	72%
Academic major	474	68%
Future professional interest	406	58%
Volunteer Service	396	57%
Sports	338	48%
Religion or Spirituality	165	24%
Diversity/Multiculturalism	94	13%
Not sure	33	5%
Do not plan to join a student club or organization	2	0%

Table 3. 2011 FLA Responses to Reasons for Involvement Ranked by Percent

I plan to get involved in a student club or organization to:	Count	Percent
Meet new people	670	96%
Learn something new	513	74%
Enhance my academic major	454	65%
Stay busy	345	49%
Network with alumni/community leaders	321	46%
Other	25	4%

Table 4. 2011 FLA Responses to Faculty Interaction Ranked by Percent

I hope to interact with Drake faculty outside the classroom in the following ways:	Count	Percent
By visiting them during office hours	629	91%
Through study groups for courses they teach	573	83%
On a research or creative project	444	64%
As advisors to my student organizations	352	51%
In social settings	308	44%

Table 5. 2011 FLA Responses to Where Students Will Seek Advice

For the following activities, please indicate where you will seek advice	College/ department offices in my major	Faculty advisor	Friends	On-line resources	PMAC or upper level students	Professional and Career Development Services staff	Resident Assistant (RA)	Other
Available courses & semester scheduling	74%	80%	31%	35%	41%	19%	16%	2%
Career or graduate school planning	73%	83%	10%	24%	16%	51%	5%	4%
Connecting academic, professional & personal development	48%	63%	38%	13%	42%	32%	22%	3%
Developing a balance between your academic work & personal life	11%	28%	76%	8%	67%	5%	49%	7%
Find personal support services (ex. counseling, health, roommate or relationship issues)	5%	22%	66%	12%	45%	4%	66%	13%
Advice on co-curricular activities important to developing a meaningful personal life	13%	31%	71%	17%	71%	9%	47%	7%
Finding and obtaining internships	83%	80%	13%	40%	20%	66%	9%	4%
Advice on co-curricular activities important to my professional development	70%	75%	18%	21%	33%	51%	14%	2%
Guidance on developing leadership skills	36%	61%	25%	13%	60%	33%	40%	10%

Table 6. 2011 FLA Responses on Interest/Plan Areas Ranked by Percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree"

To what extent do you agree with the follow statements:	Percent "Agree" or "Strongly Agree"
I am interested in taking a course that has a service learning component/experience.	68%
I am interested in taking courses that enhance my perspective on international issues.	67%
I am interested in taking courses that enhance my perspective on diversity issues in the U.S.	66%
I plan to study abroad while enrolled at Drake.	59%
I plan to attend lectures or debates on current events.	47%
I plan to study a language other than my native language at Drake.	37%

Table 7. 2011 FLA Responses to Community Service/Volunteer Items

Question	Count	Percent Indicating "Yes"
My high school had a volunteer/community service requirement for all students	192	28%
My high school volunteer/community service requirement included written or oral reflection	116	60%
I am interested in joining a Drake student club or organization related to volunteer service	396	57%
I plan to volunteer 1 or more hours a week	524	74%