# WAGNER COLLEGE

# ENGAGED LEARNING, CIVIC DEVELOPMENT, AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

# BRINGING THEORY TO PRACTICE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

**July 2012** 



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## ENGAGED LEARNING, CIVIC DEVELOPMENT, AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM FINAL REPORT

**Section 1 - Grantee:** Wagner College

**Section 2 - Project title:** Identifying and Assessing the Relationships Between Models of Experiential Learning/Civic Engagement, Student Psycho-Social Well-Being and Persistence toward Graduation.

#### **Section 3 - Project team members:**

a. Project director and contact information:

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b. Project evaluators and contact information

Anne Goodsell Love, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Assessment: expertise in assessment and learning communities

Amy Eshleman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychology: expertise in research design and statistical analysis of data.

c. Additional team members and roles

Patricia Tooker, Dean for Integrated Learning: oversees all learning communities and civic engagement, through which most of the assessment is taking place.

Ruta Shah-Gordon, Assistant Vice President for Campus Life: oversees all Campus Life activities and the related assessment tools (CORE, Quality of Life survey)

Cass Freedland, Ph.D., Director, Center for Leadership and Service: facilitates civic engagement activities across campus and community.

### Section 4 - Project summary and major objectives

For the past two years faculty and administrators at Wagner College have engaged in an examination of students' experiential learning on and off campus, and how those experiences relate to student well-being. Data collection focused primarily on first-year students and the faculty members in the First-Year Program; it also included a survey of recent alumni (Class of 2002 and later; those who were a part of The Wagner Plan), a survey of undergraduate alcohol and other drug use, and reflective essays from students on Alternative Spring Break trips.

Key questions of the research were:

- 1. What are the relationships among different models of experiential learning and student well-being?
- 2. What are the relationships among different models of experiential learning and student retention?
- 3. How are faculty practices of experiential learning and student well-being related?
- 4. What can we learn about best practices in experiential learning, and about sustaining change based on those best practices?
- 5. What are the relationships among different models of experiential learning and alumni feelings of connectedness to the College?

#### Section 5 - Project activities to date

Since the Interim Report (Jan. 2012), the following project activities have occurred:

- Data analysis
  - Fall 2011 FYP student and faculty surveys
  - o Fall 2010 student cohort retention
  - Alumni survey
  - o Alternative Spring Break student reflective journal entries
- Dissemination of results
  - Presentation of FYP results as case studies, distributed in Main Dining Hall on napkin holders/dispensers and posted to web.
  - Presentation and discussion of results at First-Year Program retreat, May 2012.
- Civic Engagement Awards Ceremony, recognizing student, faculty, staff, and community partner commitment to building relationships that benefit all stakeholder groups (April 2012).
- Participation at BTtoP cross-site meeting in May 2012, spurring continued data analysis and application of findings.

#### Section 6 - Project accomplishments to date

In this section we provide results from the various pools of data that were collected. Overall summaries are presented in sections 11, 12, and 13.

## Type of experiential learning in the Fall 2011 FYP

Service learning is the predominant kind of experiential learning being done in the First-Year Program, followed closely by field trips and field-based learning, with community research a distant third. In the Fall 2011 semester, 62% of FYP LCs involved service learning, and 67% of FYP LCs involved field trips (many learning communities combine service learning and field trips, so students experience both types of experiential learning.) When LCs used service learning, the average percentage of the experiential hours dedicated to service learning was 72%. When LCs used field trips, the average percentage of the experiential hours dedicated to field trips was 52%.

### Comparison of Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 FYP results

For students who were engaged in service learning as a part of their experiential learning: Results from surveys of the Fall 2011 cohort of first-year students were similar to the results from surveys of the Fall 2010 cohort in the following ways:

• For students who were engaged in service learning as a part of their experiential learning, having an *orientation to the site* was positively related to emotional well-being.

Results from surveys of the Fall 2011 cohort of first-year students were different from the results from the Fall 2010 cohort in the following ways:

- Students who were engaged in service learning as a part of their experiential learning, and whose faculty members had *high levels of communication with the experiential learning site* reported higher levels of emotional and psychological well-being. (No differences on these measures for 2010.)
- The extent of *faculty accompanying students to the site* was not related to differences in student well-being. (In 2010 it was positively related to emotional and psychological well-being.)
- High levels of "connection of the experiential learning to the RFT" were associated with lower levels of emotional and psychological well-being (No differences on these measures for 2010.)

#### Fall 2011 FYP results, follow-up analysis

As we considered the mixed comparisons between the results from the Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 surveys, the research team hypothesized that some of the individual variables reported above might make more sense if they were analyzed as a cluster encompassing the *faculty-student-site connection*. Therefore the variables "faculty communication with the site", "orientation to experiential learning by faculty", "orientation to experiential learning by the site", and "faculty accompanying students to the site" were analyzed together. Similarly, the variables "communication of learning objectives" and "connection of experiential learning to RFT" were combined into a cluster encompassing the *experiential learning connection to the RFT*. These analyses produced a more consistent and concise picture of the relationships in question:

- Students in LCs with some or all service learning reported higher levels of social, emotional, and psychological well-being than students in LCs with primarily field trips.
- Students engaged in service learning had higher levels of "faculty-student-site connection" and higher "experiential learning connection to the RFT" than students primarily engaged in field trips.
- For students engaged in service learning, those that reported high levels of "experiential learning connection to the RFT" had lower levels of psychological well-being than students who reported medium levels of "experiential learning connection to the RFT".
  - Although this result is statistically significant we need to determine whether it represents a meaningful difference, since the well-being scores of both groups are relatively high. More research is warranted.

#### Future analysis

In considering how to carry out analysis of data in the future, it may make sense to re-examine the existing data and analyze future data in the following ways:

- Evaluate measures of student responses to see if similar questions yield stronger
  correlations between student responses and faculty responses. Based on the current data,
  the faculty responses do not predict the student responses regarding the connection of
  experiential learning to the RFT and the value of experiential learning. Revising the
  student measures of responses to experiential learning will allow us to look to see what
  differences, if any, would be shown based on how the students respond to these items.
- Re-examine how variables such as "connection of the experiential learning to the RFT", and "communication of learning objectives" are operationalized, so that results can be more instructive for faculty members who want to make changes.
- Examine the relationship between medium and high levels of "experiential learning connection to the RFT" and psychological well-being for students doing service learning, as noted above.

## Alumni Survey of The Wagner Plan

Alumni from the classes of 2002 and later were asked to complete a survey about their experiences in and out of class and after graduation. Respondents rated their overall satisfaction with their undergraduate education highly:

- 91% said that they were "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their experience,
- 61% identify with Wagner "strongly" or "very strongly", and
- 77% said they "probably would" or "definitely would" recommend Wagner to a high school senior.

Alumni "greatly" or "moderately" agreed that their undergraduate experience fulfilled their expectations for:

- Enhancing intellectual growth (89%)
- Acquiring in-depth knowledge in a field (89%)
- Fostering their personal growth (87%)
- Promoting their ability to form relationships (82%)
- Developing competency in career-relevant skills (77%)

There were no significant differences among alumni responses according to the type of experiential learning they had done in their First-Year Program (FYP), except that those whose experiential learning focused on field trips were more likely to report that their undergraduate experience enhanced their appreciation of arts, literature, music, and/or drama. It may be that the FYP learning communities that incorporate field trips also are more thematically focused on these areas of the arts.

#### Retention results

Students who entered Wagner as first-year students in the Fall of 2010 were surveyed at the end of their first semester, and their responses were analyzed according to whether they were enrolled at Wagner in the Spring of 2012 (after three semesters) or not. There were no differences across type of FYP experiential learning for those who stayed and those who left, and there were no differences according to the degree to which faculty accompanied students to the experiential learning sites.

We also compared students who stayed vs. students who left regarding whether they had been placed into their first choice of a learning community (yes or no). There was no significant correlation between these variables.

The one difference that was statistically significant between students who stayed and those who left was whether they had declared a major during their first three semesters. *There was a very strong correlation between students who stayed at Wagner and those who had declared a major.* Ninety-five percent of students who had declared a major persisted into their fourth semester at Wagner, whereas 63% of students who were undeclared persisted. It may be due in part to the fact that some of our students enter through a competitive process for majors in Theater/Performance and Physician Assistant, but that does not account for the large number of

decided majors at the time that the data was captured (students in those 2 academic programs were about 20% of decided majors).

A similar analysis will be done on the data from the Fall 2011 cohort of students once the Fall 2012 semester starts and we can confirm students' enrollment status.

## **Alternative Spring Break results**

In the spring semester of 2011, two groups of students participated in Alternative Spring Break trips to War, West Virginia, and Toronto, Ontario. The students engaged in service learning through community agencies at each site, and they were accompanied by staff members and graduate student assistants from the office of Co-Curricular Programs. The students' reflective journals included themes that were similar to some of the findings from the First-Year Program survey results, as shown below.

Importance of connection to the experiential learning site:

- "The problem with today was that I felt like I was one of a million [workers] and the work we were doing didn't make me feel anything."
- "I don't feel as connected to the community as I thought I would because I felt we were gonna do more interacting with the actual people in need as opposed to the workers at the places."

Students value experiential learning:

- "[War, W.V.] is entirely different from any other place I have been before and I honestly believe it is not possible to fully understand the lives and culture of W.V. until you live it. You must live and experience the culture shock to become more in tune to the people here and their ways."
- "It put it in perspective for me that no matter how small the act, it can make a difference." [Commenting on cleaning the kitchen rather than preparing or serving food.]

In the spring semester of 2012 a group of students participated in an Alternative Spring Break trip to Haiti. Again, students engaged in service learning and were immersed in intercultural exchange. Their reflective writing was to take the form of an online blog and although many photos of their experience were posted, very few written reflections were posted and therefore insufficient material is available for purposes of analysis. Administrators involved in development and implementation of Alternative Spring Break trips will be reviewing the ways in which student reflective writing is accounted for and preserved for assessment purposes.

# Section 7 - Provide a brief example that expresses the essence of your project at this point in its development. What would you like others to know about the trajectory of the work to date?

Our project focused on the variety of experiential learning models that Wagner faculty members incorporate within their courses and the relationships of those models to student well-being. On the whole, students engaged in some form of service learning reported higher levels of social, emotional, and psychological well-being than students whose experiential learning was comprised primarily of field trips. Quality service learning experiences reflected a balanced reciprocal relationship between the students, faculty members, and community partners. *Taken together, the ways that faculty members communicated with the community site(s), the ways that students were oriented to the site(s), and the extent to which faculty members accompanied students to the site(s) predicted higher levels of student well-being.* 

We would like others to know that the ways that faculty members interact with students and community partners are central to successful service learning and student experiences. As they actively participate in and communicate about the learning experiences, faculty members have a positive influence on student well-being.

# Section 8 - Identify changes, if any, from the original proposal and/or obstacles encountered thus far.

Our original proposal included a campus-wide symposium where results of the project could be disseminated and discussed, and changes in response to those results could be considered and proposed. The symposium did not occur, in part because results from both years of the project were not available until this summer, and in part because other activities on campus precluded this event. The renovation of Wagner's largest classroom building, Main Hall, which was to be completed in August 2011 but will be completed by August 2012, was a major focus of many administrators throughout the year as they juggled space and resources for classrooms, faculty offices, the Main Stage Theatre, and studio art facilities.

### Section 9 - Briefly explain approaches or plans for addressing these changes or challenges.

This fall's Focus on Faculty, an annual faculty development event led by the Provost, will take place in September 2012 and will include a presentation and discussion of Wagner's BTtoP results. Open to full and part-time faculty members as well as academic and student affairs administrators, this is an important opportunity to highlight what has been learned about students' experiences with engaged learning, faculty members' engagement with experiential learning, and the connections to student well-being. Furthermore, faculty members will be asked to consider what changes they will make in light of the findings, with the end goal of improved student learning outcomes.

#### Section 10 - Identify special program activities of which we should be aware.

As noted in section 14, dissemination of results will continue on and off-campus during the coming year:

- Presentation and discussion at First-Year Program faculty meeting in September
- Focus on Faculty event in September
- Talking points that incorporate the findings will be given to the Admissions Office and the Communications Office for use in educating prospective students, parents, and the general public about the mutually reinforcing benefits of engaged learning, civic engagement, and student well-being.
- Presentations at professional conferences
- An article about using BTtoP results (and using assessment results in general) has been submitted to the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), for publication on their website.

# Section 11 - What have you learned about the relationship between civic engagement and psychosocial well-being? What have you learned about student learning in connection with this relationship? (100 words or less)

The research conducted by Wagner College showed that service learning and student well-being are positively related:

- Students in LCs with service learning reported higher levels of social, emotional, and psychological well-being than students in LCs with field trips.
- Students engaged in service learning had higher levels of "faculty-student-site connection" and higher "experiential learning connection to the RFT" than students primarily engaged in field trips.

Four factors related to "faculty-student-site connection" are key to student well-being:

- faculty communication with the site
- orientation to experiential learning by faculty
- orientation to experiential learning by the site
- faculty accompanying students to the site

There were no differences according to first-year experiential learning type on measures of alumni connectedness and satisfaction, but those whose experiential learning focused on field trips were more likely to report that their undergraduate experience enhanced their appreciation of arts, literature, music, and/or drama.

# Section 12 - Thus far, what have you learned about the implementation of sustainable institutional change? Have you been able to identify or evaluate particular institutional benchmarks against which you can track progress over time?

At the conclusion of the BTtoP project we have determined that institutional change is occurring with greater faculty involvement within the models of experiential learning in our learning communities. This involvement has demonstrated effectiveness on a variety of levels including but not limited to student engagement, faculty development and community partner satisfaction.

Wagner College faculty members have constructed and instructed in service learning courses for a number of years, however recent findings clearly indicate a trend toward a new understanding of service learning with a deeper passion and commitment to the broader campus community and community partners. Faculty members have a greater understanding that service learning is a partnership based not only on their goals and objectives but also on how their efforts can support the community partner's goals and objectives. Wagner faculty members are seeing more clearly the goals of their partners, and are listening to what their partners say about their mission(s) and how they envision themselves.

First-Year Program surveys indicate that the faculty presence in service learning provides a number of benefits. When service and learning are effectively joined students grow in a positive manner and communities improve because of the assets each offers the other. The factors identified through this research project will be measured over time so that we can document continued revisions and improvements as they are made.

# Section 13 - Briefly detail implementation of assessment plans and/or any data collection activities since the annual report.

Assessment activities since January include analysis of the Alumni Survey of The Wagner Plan, Alternative Spring Break reflective writing, retention of the Fall 2010 cohort, and the Fall 2011 FYP survey of students and faculty (results reported in Section 6 of this report). A fair amount of time was spent on organizing the separate pools of data and making connections wherever possible. There is more to be done in this regard, and this relates to sustainability of the work consistent data collection over time, combined with careful connection to other student information (continued enrollment, selection of major, involvement in co-curricular programs) can provide a more complete and comprehensive picture of student well-being, student learning, and ways to impact those outcomes.

Data collection that will continue in the 2012-2013 academic year includes the FYP surveys of faculty and students, tracking enrollments of the Fall 2011 cohort (retention report), and following up on the results related to student retention and declaration of major.

# Section 14 - Describe plans and/or timelines for data analysis and reporting of findings. (100 words or less)

Data analysis concluded recently, although as with any research there are outstanding questions that will continue to be pursued. Our priority for reporting the findings are to share them with faculty at an FYP meeting in early September, and at the annual Focus on Faculty, led by the Provost in September. The materials presented will be posted on Wagner's assessment web pages, distributed in print to all faculty and administrators, and shared with the Admissions and Communications offices.

In addition, we will be disseminating results at a regional curriculum planning retreat in October, and have submitted a proposal with Tufts, Cortland, and Georgetown to present results at the 2013 Annual meeting of AAC&U.

# Section 15 - Attach a financial report which summarizes project-related expenditures. If there are significant changes from proposed budget, please include a budget narrative.

Two activities that were proposed in the original budget did not take place: a campus symposium, and bringing a national speaker to campus for faculty development during year 2. As noted above, results from this project will be disseminated to faculty and administrators this fall and we are encumbering \$4,000 for that purpose.

Expenditures that were much greater than proposed were for van services taking students to their experiential learning site. As more faculty members bring their students to areas on Staten Island, less transportation can be covered by the College's ferry shuttle (which only takes students to and from the ferry terminal to Manhattan). More money was spent to transport students to areas of Port Richmond and other sites.

Finally, we will be presenting results of this research at a regional curriculum planning retreat in October, and a proposal has been submitted for a research presentation at the 2013 annual meeting of the AAC&U. Funds to provide registration, travel, accommodations, and meals are encumbered in the budget (\$10,500).

BTtoP BUDGET - Wagner College	Year 2		
	07/01/11 - 06/30/12		
	Grant Encumbered	Grant Spent	In Kind/Cash Sper
Personnel			
Graduate students (25% effort, \$2500 x 2 students)			1,250
Secretary (20% of \$40,000)			8,000
Total in-kind salary (Based on breakdown below)			55,000
Director, Center for Leadership and Service (10% effort)			
Dean of Integrated Learning (5% effort)			
Wagner College FYP Faculty Coordinator (5% effort)			
Wagner College ILC Faculty Coordinator (5% effort)			
Wagner College SLC Faculty Coordinator (5% effort)			
Associate Provost of Assessment (15% effort)			
Assoc. Dean of Campus Life (5% effort)			
Grad. Student Intern - data prep (10 hours/wk; 35 wks/yr = 350 hrs x \$25/hr=\$8750)		3,000	5,750
Evaluator (Assessment) - 3 assessments or analyses/year		1,000	,
(1st/2nd@\$250 - data consolidation and preliminary analysis; 3rd@\$500 - analysis and write up)		•	
Faculty Scholar, Center for Teaching and Learning Stipend		3,000	1,000
Personnel Subtotal	0	7.000	71.000
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Non-personnel Expenses			
		F 000	
National assessment survey tools and promotion (Year 2)		5,000	
National assessment survey tools and promotion (Year 2) Survey tech support		5,000	
Survey tech support		,	
Survey tech support Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations)		500	1,000
Survey tech support Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations) Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement		500 2,000 2,000	
Survey tech support Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations) Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement Faculty Retreat - Spring		500 2,000 2,000 11,000	15,000
Survey tech support Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations) Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement		500 2,000 2,000	15,000 19,000
Survey tech support Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations) Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement Faculty Retreat - Spring Van Services to placement site (325 RT multiple-site Civic Engagement student trips) Award Ceremony	3,000	500 2,000 2,000 11,000 10,000	15,000 19,000
Survey tech support Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations) Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement Faculty Retreat - Spring Van Services to placement site (325 RT multiple-site Civic Engagement student trips) Award Ceremony Faculty development (Fall 2012 - Focus on Faculty)	3,000	500 2,000 2,000 11,000 10,000	15,000 19,000
Survey tech support  Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations)  Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement  Faculty Retreat - Spring  Van Services to placement site (325 RT multiple-site Civic Engagement student trips)  Award Ceremony  Faculty development (Fall 2012 - Focus on Faculty)  Regional curriculum devel. conf. (travel, hotel, reg., food, transp.)	3,000	500 2,000 2,000 11,000 10,000 3,000	15,000 19,000 2,000
Survey tech support Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations) Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement Faculty Retreat - Spring Van Services to placement site (325 RT multiple-site Civic Engagement student trips) Award Ceremony Faculty development (Fall 2012 - Focus on Faculty)		500 2,000 2,000 11,000 10,000 3,000	15,000 19,000 2,000
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Survey tech support  Campus-wide dialogues (2 Integretion Celebrations)  Co-curricular experiential learning/civic engagement  Faculty Retreat - Spring  Van Services to placement site (325 RT multiple-site Civic Engagement student trips)  Award Ceremony  Faculty development (Fall 2012 - Focus on Faculty)  Regional curriculum devel. conf. (travel, hotel, reg., food, transp.)  Dissemination of results at national confs. (travel, hotel, reg., food, transp.)  Publications/Printing/Office Supplies/Postage	3,000 6,500	3,000 3,000 3,000 3,000 3,000 2500	1,000 15,000 19,000 2,000 6,500 2,500 46,000

# WAGNER COLLEGE

"Making meaning with the campus community: Data, dissemination, discussion, decisions"

Presented at the AAC&U Annual meeting, January 2012

Wagner College faculty, administrators, and students gathered during the Fall 2011 semester to review preliminary results of the Bringing Theory to Practice research, which explores the relationships between experiential learning and student well-being. Results of a survey of first-year students and FYP faculty were displayed at two "Integration Celebrations"; those reviewing the displays were invited to speculate about the meaning of the results, propose explanations for the relationships reported, and ask further questions.

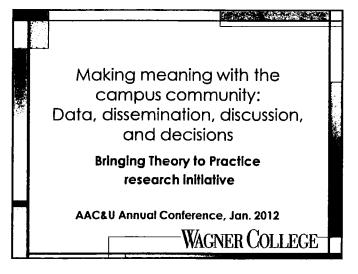
All Wagner First Year students engage in experiential learning as a part of a fall semester learning community, integrating three courses around an interdisciplinary theme. The experiential learning may involve service or research at a community agency, trips to museums, labs, neighborhoods or other sites connected to course themes, or a combination of off campus experiences. Preliminary results of the research include:

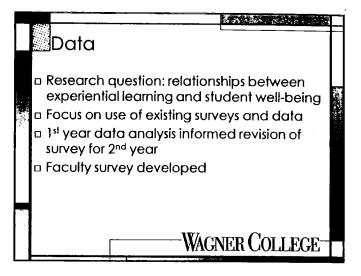
- o For students who are engaged in service learning as a part of their experiential learning, having an orientation to the site was positively related to:
  - Emotional well-being
  - Psychological well-being
- Higher levels of faculty accompanying students to their service learning site were related to higher levels of:
  - Psychological well-being of students
  - Emotional well-being of students
- Students engaged in low levels of service learning reported:
  - Higher levels of "enhancement of communication across difference"
  - Higher levels of "connection of EL to course and problem solving" than students engaged in high levels of service learning.
- Students engaged in high levels of service learning, and who gave positive responses to questions about the value of service learning also gave positive answers to questions about social well-being.

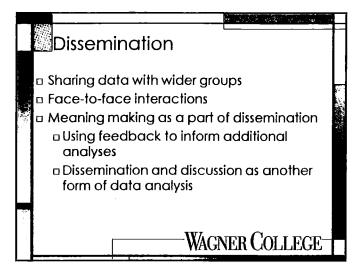
Next stages of the Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) research will examine survey results from seniors, and incorporate survey results from students about their participation in co-curricular experiences. The BTtoP project "supports campus-based initiatives that demonstrate how uses of engaged forms of learning that actively involve students both within and beyond the classroom directly contribute to their cognitive, emotional, and civic development." For more information about BTtoP visit their website at: <a href="http://www.aacu.org/bringing\_theory/index.cfm">http://www.aacu.org/bringing\_theory/index.cfm</a>.

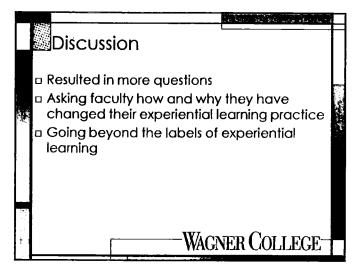
For more information go to: <a href="http://www.wagner.edu/provost/assessment">http://www.wagner.edu/provost/assessment</a> or contact:

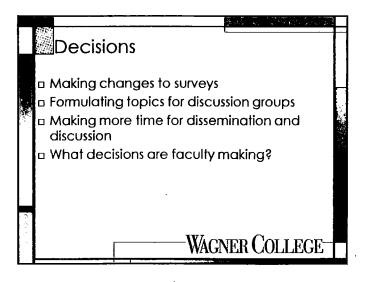
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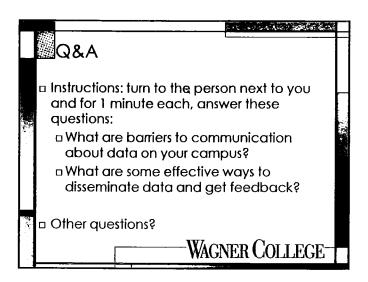














What are the relationships between experiential learning and student well-being?

Research sponsored by Bringing Theory to Practice



WAGNER COLLEGE



### In Conclusion . . .

- Students generally agreed in the value of experiential learning (EL) and that EL was connected to the RFT (2011)
- Students generally indicated positive well-being (2011)
- Students reported higher well-being when service learning includes
  - · orientation to the site
  - · faculty accompanying students to the site (2010)



Students generally agreed that Experiential Learning (EL) was connected to the RFT and to problem solving

- The syllabus outlined objectives of experiential learning
- Having an opportunity to periodically discuss the relationship of experiential learning to course content
- Experiential learning helped students become more aware of different approaches to problems
- This was true across all types of experiential learning



Students generally agreed that EL had value

- Experiential learning benefitted the community
- Feeling a personal responsibility to meet the needs of the community partner
- Community work helped students to become aware of personal strengths and weaknesses
- This was true across all types of experiential learning
- Women rated the EL as more valuable than men (p=.034)



Across all types of EL, students reported high levels of emotional well-being

- On average, students reported feeling happy, interested in life, and satisfied more than 3 times a week.
- This and all other well-being items are from the Flourishing Scale, C. Keyes, 2006.



Across all types of EL, students reported moderate levels of social well-being

- On average, students reported feeling aspects of social well-being 2-3 times a week or more:
  - I have something important to contribute to the community
  - · People are basically good
  - I belong to a community
  - · The way our society works makes sense



# Across all types of EL, students reported high levels of psychological well-being

- On average, students reported aspects of psychological well-being more than 3 times a week to almost every day:
  - · I like most parts of my personality
  - I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life
  - I have warm and trusting relationships with others
  - · My life has a sense of direction or meaning to it



#### No significant differences found . . .

- Between the 2 measures of EL and the 3 measures of well-being
  - None of the measures were good predictors of the others
- · When considering students' racial identity



# Higher levels of emotional and psychological well-being . . .

- For students who were doing service learning and who
  - · had an orientation to the site
  - · had faculty accompany them to the site



# Alumni of The Wagner Plan greatly or moderately agreed . . .

- Undergraduate experience fulfilled their expectations for
  - Enhancing intellectual growth (89%)
  - · Acquiring in-depth knowledge in a field (89%)
  - · Fostering their personal growth (87%)
  - Promoted their ability to form relationships (82%)
  - Developed competency in career-relevant skills (77%)

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# Amount of time students spent volunteering on or off campus did not correlate with . . .

- · Binge drinking (past 2 weeks)
- Alcohol use (past 30 days)
- · Marijuana use (past 30 days)
- How often a class was missed due to alcohol or drug use
- Performing poorly on a test or important project due to alcohol or drug use
- Student responses to CORE Survey, Spring 2011, N=274



## Selected student quotes reflecting on Alternative Spring Break experiences

- "It put it in perspective for me that no matter how small the act, it can make a difference." [Commenting on cleaning the kitchen rather than preparing or serving food.]
  - Value of experiential learning
- "The problem with today was that I felt like I was one of a million [workers] and the work we were doing didn't make me feel anything."
  - · Importance of orientation to site
  - Students on ASB to Toronto, Ont.



## More student quotes reflecting on Alternative Spring Break experiences

- "I don't feel as connected to the community as I thought I would because I felt we were gonna do more interacting with the actual people in need as opposed to the workers at the places."
  - · Importance of orientation to site
- "[War, W.V.] is entirely different from any other place I have been before and I honestly believe it is not possible to fully understand the lives and culture of W.V. until you live it. You must live and experience the culture shock to become more in tune to the people here and their ways."
  - · Value of experiential learning

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### Disseminating the results

- "Learning by Doing" student and faculty profiles
  - Students + Community = Growth for Both
  - Faculty + Community = Flourishing Students
- http://www.wagner.edu/wagner\_plan/

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#### Questions?

- The Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) team:
  - Lily McNair
  - · Pat Tooker
  - · Cass Freedland
  - Amy Eshleman
  - · Ruta Shah-Gordon
  - Anne Love
- Go to Wagner's Assessment page on the web: <a href="http://www.wagner.edu/provost/assessment">http://www.wagner.edu/provost/assessment</a>

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# LEARNING BY DOING A CASE STUDY



STUDENTS + COMMUNITY

GROWTH FOR BOTH



# **KEVIN FERREIRA '13**

Major: Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) in global conflict studies

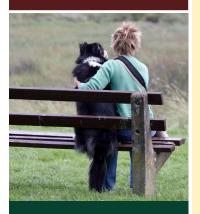
**Community Involvement:** Kevin helps immigrants at El Centro and throughout the North Shore of Staten Island to improve their quality of life. His activities have included English teaching, connecting parents to their children's schools, assisting immigrants in accessing resources, and organizing human rights initiatives.

**Personal Accomplishments:** Kevin increased his conflict resolution skills while combining public policy advocacy and programming to address multiple community concerns.





# LEARNING BY DOING A CASE STUDY



# STUDENTS + COMMUNITY GROWTH FOR BOTH



# COURTNEY HEISERMAN '12

Major: Sociology and Psychology; Minor: Gender Studies

Community Involvement: Working with Staten Island Legal Services' Alliance for the Safety of Animals and People, Courtney advocates for finding adoptive homes for the pets of domestic abuse victims, so that victims will not have to leave a beloved pet in a violent home.

**Personal Accomplishments:** Courtney increased her leadership abilities, her teamwork experience, and her advocacy skills, while also strengthening her resolve to help others.





# LEARNING BY DOING A CASE STUDY



# FACULTY + COMMUNITY FLOURISHING STUDENTS



# MARGARITA SANCHEZ, PH.D.

**Department:** Modern Languages

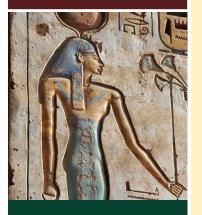
**Community Involvement:** A board member of El Centro del Inmigrante in Port Richmond, Dr. Sanchez takes her first-year learning community to community agencies that provide immigrants with educational resources.

Student Responses: "By going to El Centro and Make the Road New York, we get to understand different cultures and the struggles other people have." "We can understand that we are not all so different."





# LEARNING BY DOING A CASE STUDY



# FACULTY + COMMUNITY FLOURISHING STUDENTS



# SARAH SCOTT, PH.D.

**Department:** Art and Art History

**Community Involvement:** Dr. Scott accompanies her first-year learning community to P.S. 19, where students worked in teams to create art history curricula as a way to advance literacy.

**Student Responses:** "Good teams are collaborative, openminded, and flexible to changes in plans. I gained knowledge about leading a class and developing a civic engagement component. I will use the skills I learned from this experience in my future career."





# Wagner College URLs documenting student learning related to civic engagement and service learning

BTtoP case studies of students and faculty, on the website of the Center for Leadership and Service:

http://www.wagner.edu/cls/

Student "digital stories" of their experiences in Port Richmond (Fall 2011 FYP learning community with Drs. Sanchez and Donovan):

http://www.wagner.edu/newsroom/node/223

Assessment webpages, with links to BTtoP and other reports:

http://www.wagner.edu/academics/assessment

"Newsroom" article featuring 2011 winners of Civic Engagement Awards

http://www.wagner.edu/newsroom/node/319

# WAGNER COLLEGE

# Alumni Survey of The Wagner Plan Summary of results

Spring 2012



Bringing Theory to Practice research project

## **Alumni Survey Introduction**

Alumni from the Classes of 2002 and later (students earning bachelor's degrees) were sent an email requesting that they complete the survey. Approximately 2,300 alumni were contacted and 214 surveys were completed. Email requests were sent in the summer of 2011, and again in the winter of 2012.

Questions included the type of experiential learning done in the First-Year Program (FYP) and Senior Learning Community (SLC), type and amount of co-curricular involvement while at Wagner, type and amount of community involvement since graduation, estimated impact of their education on learning and skill development, post-graduate educational achievements and plans, and type and amount of participation in alumni activities.

#### Highlights of results

- 91% said that they were "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their experience
- 77% said they "probably would" or "definitely would" recommend Wagner to a high school senior
- High numbers reported that their expectations for growth and development were fulfilled in the areas of:
  - o enhanced intellectual growth (89%)
  - o acquiring in-depth knowledge in a particular field (89%)
  - o fostering personal growth (87%)
- 91% were employed full-time or were in graduate school full-time in the year immediately following graduation

Survey administered by the Associate Provost for Assessment, Dr. Anne Love. Questions may be directed to her at <a href="mailto:alove@wagner.edu">alove@wagner.edu</a>.

# **Demographic overview**

Gender: Female – 72% \*

Male - 28%

Ethnicity: Caucasian (non-Hispanic) – 91% \*

African-American – 3% Hispanic/Latino – 2%

 $\begin{array}{l} Other-2\% \\ Asian-1\% \end{array}$ 

Middle Eastern – 1%

\*The percentage of respondents who are female is higher than the undergraduate population (typically 60-65% female). The racial/ethnic breakdown is also higher for Caucasian than the undergraduate population (approximately 85%).

Residence: On-campus – 69%

Commuted from home – 19% Combination of both – 11%

### Graduation year:

Year	Percentage of respondents
2002	11%
2003	10%
2004	6%
2005	12%
2006	13%
2007	12%
2008	10%
2009	13%
2010	13%

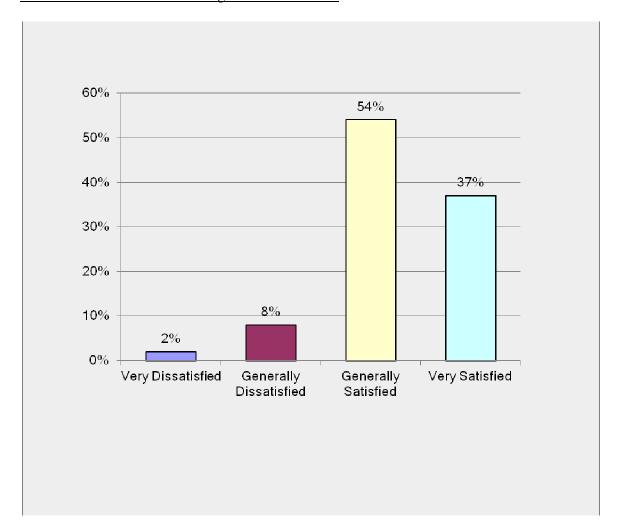
# Level of satisfaction with the Wagner experience

Respondents rated their overall satisfaction with their undergraduate education highly:

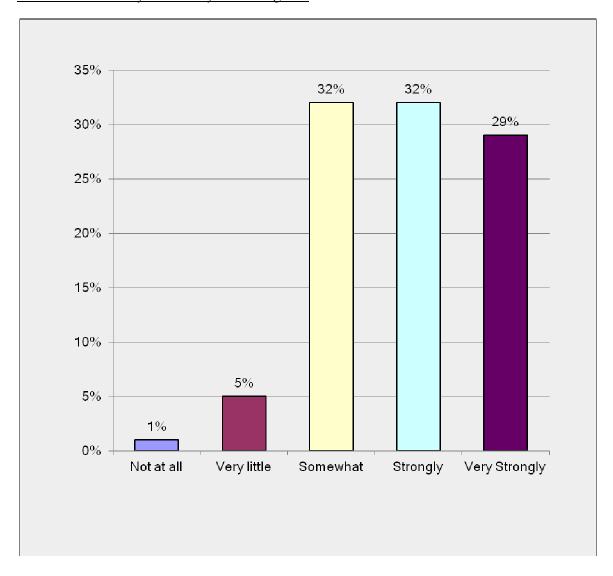
- 91% said that they were "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their experience,
- 61% identify with Wagner "strongly" or "very strongly", and
- 77% said they "probably would" or "definitely would" recommend Wagner to a high school senior.

The graphs below show the results for these three items.

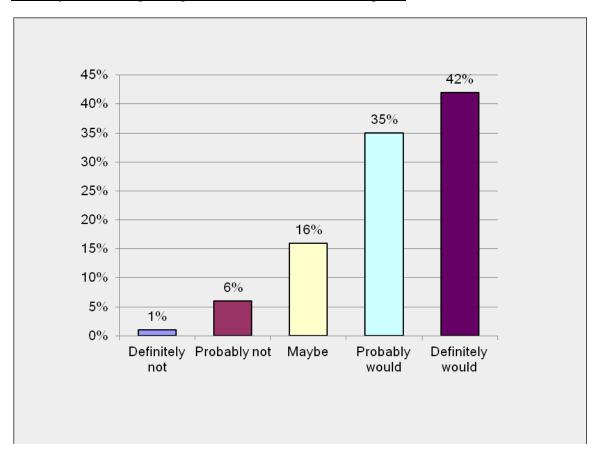
## Overall satisfaction with undergraduate education



# To what extent do you identify with Wagner?



# Would you encourage a high school senior to attend Wagner?



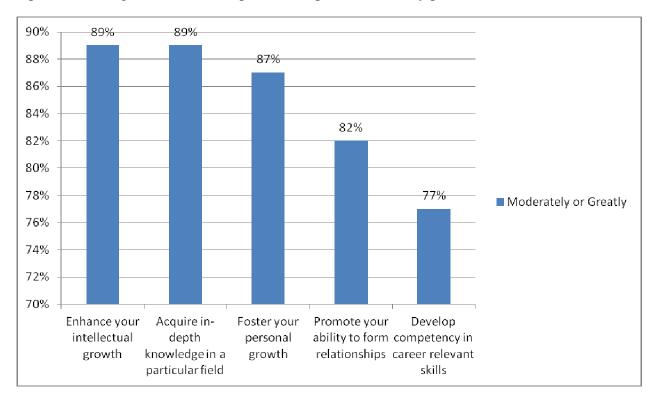
## Skill development enhanced by undergraduate experience

Alumni were asked about the extent to which their skill development was enhanced by their undergraduate experience. Responses generally were very positive, with the lowest ratings given for enhancement of reading or speaking a foreign language, and understanding science and technology. Percentages of respondents agreeing that their skills were enhanced "moderately" or "greatly" are shown below.

Critical Thinking- Extent enhanced by undergraduate experience				
	Moderately or Greatly			
Acquire new skills and knowledge	91%			
Think analytically and logically	89%			
Formulate creative/original ideas	86%			
Academic ability	86%			
Skills/ Learning- Extent enhanced by undergraduate exp	perience			
	Moderately or Greatly			
Gain in- depth knowledge of a field	89%			
Write effectively	83%			
Appreciate arts, literature, music, drama	76%			
Use quantitative tools	69%			
Read or speak a foreign language	25%			
Relationship Skills- Extent enhanced by undergraduate	experience			
	Moderately or Greatly			
Understand others	86%			
Communicate well orally	85%			
Function effectively as a member of a team	83%			
Relate well to people of different cultures/races	76%			
Lead and supervise tasks and groups of people	73%			
Understanding Science and Technology- Extent enhance	ed by undergraduate experience			
Understanding Science and Technology- Extent enhance	ed by undergraduate experience  Moderately or Greatly			
Understanding Science and Technology- Extent enhance Use technology				

## Expectations of growth and development

Alumni were asked to what extent their undergraduate experience fulfilled their original expectations for growth and development. Responses were very positive, as shown below.

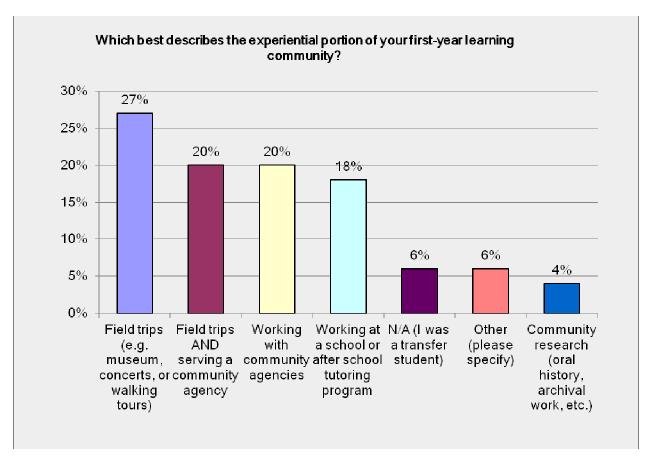


# **Experiences and activities at Wagner**

## Courses

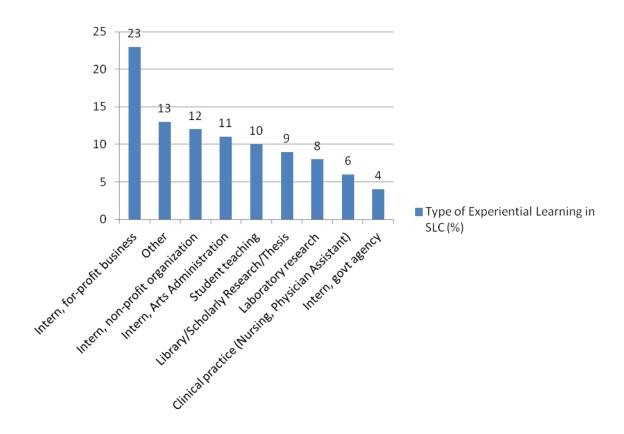
One or more of respondents' courses included internships or experiences with: Community agency -51% School (K-12) -39% Public service organization -46% For-profit business -40%

## Type of experiential learning (EL) in First-Year learning community (FYP):



## Type of experiential learning (EL) in Senior learning community (SLC):

As shown below, the highest response was "internship at for-profit business" (23%), followed by "internship at non-profit organization" (12%), "internship for Arts Administration" (11%), student teaching (10%), and "library/scholarly research/thesis" (9%). Senior learning community experiences may be difficult to categorize, as shown by the high response rate for "other" (13%).



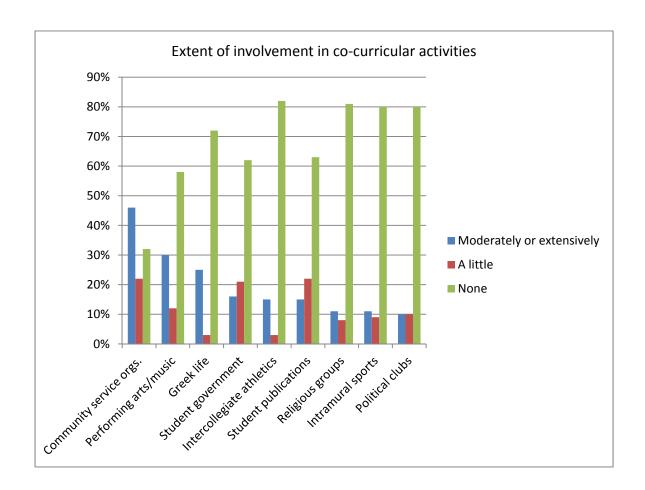
### Student organizations

Alumni reported that they were very involved outside of classes in a wide range of organizations.

- 87% of respondents were members of one or more organized student groups.
- 84% of respondents were involved in community service projects as a part of these organizations; 21% were "extensively" involved.

The graph below shows extent of involvement in co-curricular activities. There was a substantial level of involvement in:

- Community service organizations (46% moderately or extensively involved),
- Performing arts/music (30% moderately or extensively involved), and
- Greek life (25% moderately or extensively involved).

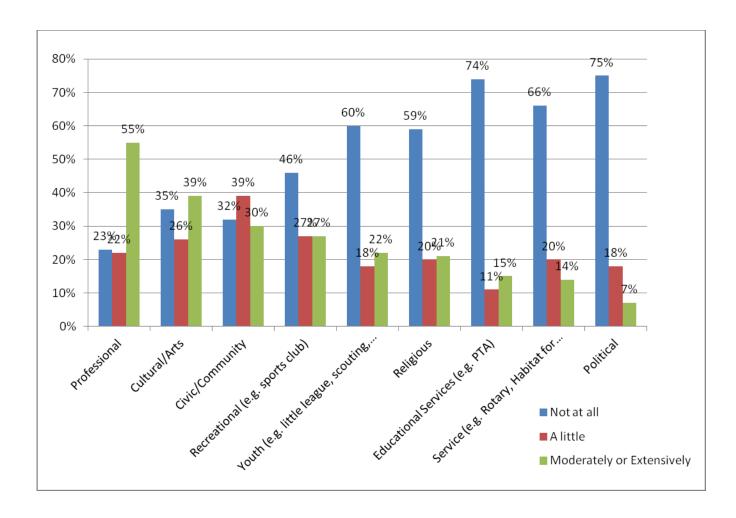


# **Experiences and activities after Wagner**

### Alumni participation in organizations

Similar to their involvement in co-curricular activities while students at Wagner, respondents report high levels of involvement as alumni. The graph below shows the extent of participation in organizations since graduating. Alumni are active in:

- Professional organizations (55% moderately or extensively involved),
- Cultural or Arts organizations (39% moderately or extensively involved), and
- Civic/Community organizations (30% moderately or extensively involved).



## Employment and graduate study

The table below shows responses to the question, "which best describes your primary activities during the year immediately following graduation?"

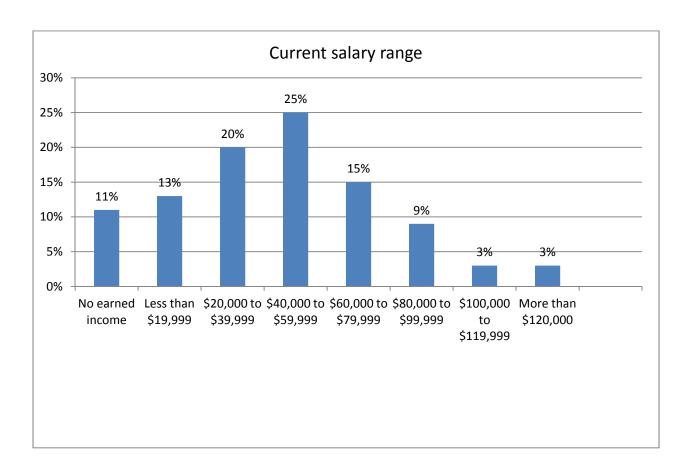
- 91% were employed full-time or were in graduate school full-time.
- 7% described themselves as seeking employment.

(Percentages equal more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one response.)

Employment full-time	53%
Employment part-time	14%
Graduate/prof. school full-time	38%
Graduate/prof. school part-time	3%
Not employed, seeking employment	7%
Not employed by choice	2%

## Salary range

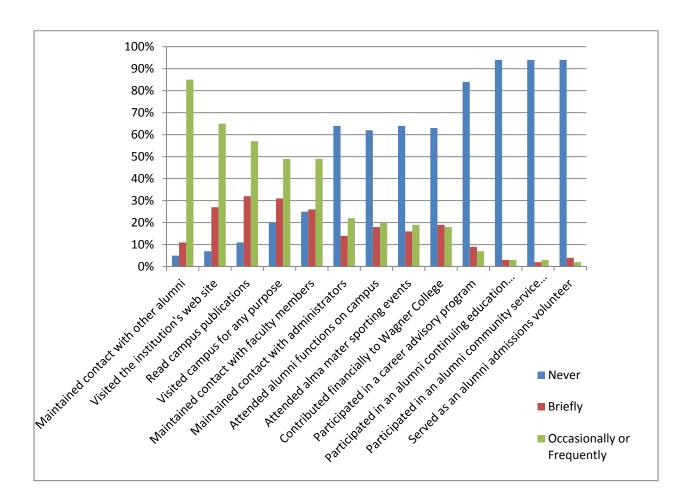
Respondents were asked to indicate their current salary range (before taxes). There was no clear relationship between the number of years since graduation and salary range.



### Recent involvement with Wagner

Alumni were asked to indicate their involvement with various College activities during the past five years. Respondents:

- maintained contact with other alumni (85% occasionally or frequently),
- visited Wagner's website (65% occasionally or frequently),
- read campus publications (57% occasionally or frequently, 32% briefly),
- visited campus (49% occasionally or frequently, 31% briefly) and
- maintained contact with faculty members (49% occasionally or frequently, 26% briefly).



Final proposal for AAC&U Annual Meeting, Jan. 2013

Conference theme: Using Evidence

(one sub-set of this theme): As attention increasingly turns to integrative and interdisciplinary learning and to educating students to be responsible citizens, how have our measures and expectations of success changed?

**Program Title**: Using Evidence to Promote Engaged Learning and Student Well-being

**Brief Description** (50 words): Data linking outcomes related to engaged, interdisciplinary learning, student well-being, and education for responsible, participatory citizenship will be presented by representatives from four institutions involved in the Bringing Theory to Practice project. Discussion will include what our measures and findings have been and how they have changed over time.

#### **Proposal Abstract** (400 words):

The Bringing Theory to Practice project "supports campus-based initiatives that demonstrate how uses of engaged forms of learning that actively involve students both within and beyond the classroom directly contribute to their cognitive, emotional, and civic development" (<a href="http://www.aacu.org/bringing\_theory/index.cfm">http://www.aacu.org/bringing\_theory/index.cfm</a>). As Demonstration Sites for the 2010-12 academic years, Wagner College, SUNY Cortland, Georgetown University, and Tufts University (among others) have learned much about the relationships among experiential learning and student well-being. Presenters will describe the initiatives involved (courses, programs, partnerships) and share data linking outcomes related to engaged and interdisciplinary learning, student well-being, and education for responsible, participatory citizenship.

- At Wagner College, experiential learning takes various forms including civic
  engagement/service learning, field-based learning and field trips, research in a lab or in
  the community, and combinations thereof. Results of BTtoP research confirmed the
  positive relationship between faculty involvement in the experiential learning and
  students' social, emotional, and psychological well-being.
- At SUNY Cortland, faculty members examined the impact of various forms of engaged learning (e.g., service-learning, learning communities, internships, and study abroad) on student flourishing (perspective taking, emotional competence, persistence, and resilience) and measures of alcohol use. The data point toward a positive relationship between high impact learning practices and psychosocial well-being. Data indicate students experience positive affect as a result of engaged learning.
- At Georgetown University, college health issues are integrated into courses across the curriculum in order to help students transgress the boundaries between their academic and personal lives. Project findings show that students are examining their attitudes and health behaviors, acquiring new knowledge about psychosocial well-being and health resources on campus, and using reflection to put meaning to their college experiences.

At Tufts University, a campus-wide longitudinal survey was used to investigate the
impact of civic engagement opportunities on students' psychosocial well-being.
 Significant effects were found from opportunities that incorporated sustained, socialchange-oriented experiences.

Session participants will be encouraged to ask questions, contribute relevant research results and/or resources, and suggest avenues for future research and practice.

**Intended Audience** (25 words): Faculty members, academic and student affairs administrators, persons involved with assessment, institutional research, and faculty development (centers for teaching, learning and research).

## **Expected Learning Outcomes** (50-75 words):

Synthesis of outcomes across institutions: What do we mean by engaged learning and student well-being? What results were in common across the institutions? What meaning can be made of differences in outcomes?

Applicability of research results for other institutions: How can other institutions make use of this information? What new research questions emerge?

**Proposed Format**: Research Session, 75 minutes (50 min. presentation of research, 25 min. Q&A)

**Proposed presenters**: Anne Goodsell Love, Associate Provost for Assessment at Wagner College; Richard Kendrick, Professor of Sociology and Director, Institute for Civic Engagement, and Amy Shellman Assistant Professor in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies at SUNY Cortland; Mindy McWilliams, Assistant Director of Assessment of the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship, and Joan Riley, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Science at Georgetown University; Peter Levine, Director of CIRCLE (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement) at Tufts University.