

Assessing How Liberal Arts Colleges Can Teach Undergraduate Students about Key Issues in Migration, Immigration, and Human Rights

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Abstract : INTRODUCTION: The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) recommends the development of 'high-impact practices,' in an effort to increase rates of student retention and student engagement at undergraduate institutions. To achieve these goals, the Scripps College Humanities Institute and HI Fellows Seminar not only featured distinguished academics presenting their scholarship about current immigration policy and its consequences in the USA and around the world but integrated socially significant community leaders and creative activists/artivists in public talks, student workshops and collaborative art events. Students participated in experiential learning that involved guest personal presentations and discussions, oral history interviews that applied standard oral history methodologies, detailed cultural documentation, collaborative artistic interventions, and weekly posts in Internet Digital Learning Environment Sakai collaborative course forums and regular responses to other students' comments. Our teaching pedagogies addressed the four learning styles outlined in Kolb's Learning Style Inventory. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Over the academic year 2017-18, the Scripps College Humanities Institute and HI Fellows Seminar presented a Fall 2017 topic, 'The World at Our Doorsteps: Immigration and Deportation in Los Angeles'. Our purpose was to address how current federal government anti-immigration measures have affected many students of color, some of whom are immigrants, many of whom are related to and are friends with people who are impacted by the attitudes as well as the practices of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. In Spring 2018, we followed with the topic, 'Exclusive Nationalisms: Global Migration and Immigration'. This addresses the rise of white supremacists who have ascended to position of power worldwide, in America, Europe, Russia, and xenophobic nationalisms in China, Myanmar and the Philippines. Recent scholarship has suggested the existence of categories of refugees beyond the political or social, who fit into the more inclusive category of migrants. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES: Assessment methodologies not only included qualitative student interviews and quantitative student evaluations in standard rubric format, but also Outcome Assessments, Formative Evaluations, and Outside Guest Teacher feedback. These indicated that the most effective educational practices involved collaborative inquiry in undergraduate research, community-based learning, and capstone projects. Assessments of E-portfolios, written and oral coursework, and final creative projects with associated 10-12 page analytic paper revealed that students developed their understanding of how government and social organizations work; they developed communication skills that enhanced working with others from different backgrounds; they developed their ability to thoughtfully evaluate their course performance by adopting reflective practices; they gained analytic and interpretive skills that encouraged self-confidence and self-initiative not only academically, but also with regards to independent projects. CONCLUSION: Most importantly, the Scripps Humanities Institute experiential learning project spurred on real-world actions by our students, such as a public symposium on how to cope with bigots, a student tutoring program for immigrant staff children, student negotiations with the administration to establish meaningful, sustainable diversity and inclusion programs on-campus. Activism is not only to be taught to and for our students- it has to be enacted by our students.

Keywords : immigration, migration, human rights, learning assessment

Conference Title : ICRSHR 2018 : International Conference on Refugee Studies and Human Rights

Conference Location : San Francisco, United States

Conference Dates : June 06-07, 2018