

FSSE 2015 Civic Engagement Module Findings

New to FSSE for the 2013 administration were topical modules, short sets of questions on a topic related to current issues in higher education and student engagement. The Civic Engagement module assessed institutional emphasis on conflict resolution skills and examined how often students are encouraged to engage with local, state, national, and global issues.

These results use responses from 1,303 faculty members from 7 institutions who responded to the 2015 Civic Engagement module. A majority of faculty members (88%) said that their institution substantially (“very much” or “quite a bit”) encouraged undergraduate students to contribute to the well-being of their community. In addition, a majority of faculty members reported that their institution substantially emphasized the following activities for undergraduate students: helping people resolve their disagreements with each other (92%); resolving conflicts that involve bias, discrimination, and prejudice (94%); and leading a group where people from different backgrounds feel welcomed and included (88%). Across all disciplinary areas, faculty said that their institution emphasizes conflict resolution skills to a moderate extent. Faculty in social service (62%) and education disciplines (59%) reported the highest rates of emphasis, while biology sciences and business (38%) reported lowest rates of emphasis.

With respect to the frequency of student engagement with local, state, national and global issues, most faculty at least sometimes encouraged students to discuss local and campus issues (86%) and state or national issues (88%). However, about one-third of faculty members said that they never encourage their students to ask others to address local (33%) or national issues (34%). Further, nearly half of faculty members said that they never encourage their students to organize others to work on either local or national issues. Across all disciplinary areas, faculty encouraged students to engage in local (43%) and national (45%) issues to a moderate extent. In particular, faculty in education and communication, media, and public relations disciplines (94%) reported the highest percentage of encouragement compared to that of other disciplinary areas. Faculty in physical sciences (62%) reported the lowest rate of encouraging students’ engagement in both state and national issues. The figure below shows how encouragement of students to raise awareness about state, national, or global issues differs by discipline.

