

### Preparing College Students with High Impact Activities

Recent findings from the National Survey on Student Engagement, a survey which we have participated in for the last fifteen years, identify the most significant activities that boost important skills such as team-work, critical thinking and problem solving (Gonyea, Kinzie, Kuh and Laird, 2008).

**Table 1. College activities and their impact on learning**

Activity	Definition	Impact on Learning
1. Learning communities	Formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	These programs integrate material across courses and are associated with better student engagement and learning.
2. Service learning	A community-based project integrated as part of a regular course.	Service learning activities are positively associated with deep/integrative learning and personal development for both freshman and senior years.
3. Research with a faculty member	The research collaboration is done outside of course or program requirements.	<i>Reviewing literature</i> and <i>interpreting findings</i> most closely correlated with deep learning. <i>Data collection</i> tasks had the weakest correlation.
4. Study abroad	Educational opportunities for students to study in countries outside the U.S.	<i>Living with host nationals</i> was correlated to more integrative and reflective learning, and personal and social growth. <i>Length of time spent abroad</i> made no difference.
5. Culminating senior experience	Participation in culminating activities such as capstone courses, field placements, thesis, formal presentations, or comprehensive exams.	<i>Field placement</i> had most effect on deep learning, general education, personal/social development, and practical competence.

Source of basic data: Gonyea, Robert; Kinzea, Jillian; Kuh, George; and Laird, Thomas Nelson. "High impact Activities: What They Are, Why They Work, and Who Benefits". Indiana University, Center for Postsecondary Research. AAC&U, Washington D.C. January 2008.

#### How Pepperdine compares

**Table 2. On average, college students of Pepperdine University are more exposed to high-impact learning activities compared to students at other colleges/universities.**

(Figures correspond to the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement.)

Activity	Pepperdine University	Private Liberal Arts	Overall NSSE 2007 data
1. Learning communities	18% of freshmen; 41% of seniors	12% of freshmen; 26% of seniors	17% of freshmen; 25% of seniors
2. Service learning*	72% of freshmen; 88% of seniors	49% of freshmen; 83% of seniors	38% of freshmen; 59% of seniors
3. Research with a faculty member	27% of seniors	42% of seniors	19% of seniors
4. Study abroad	71% of seniors	41% of seniors	14% of seniors
5. Culminating senior experience	54% of seniors	72% of seniors	32% of seniors