



Connecticut College



270 Mohegan Ave., New London, CT 06320

Assessing Student Outcomes in Interdisciplinary Programs



Connecticut College

New London, Connecticut

Ranked among the most selective private liberal arts colleges in the nation, Connecticut College enrolls 1,900 men and women from 46 states and 40 countries.

Mission Statement: Connecticut College educates students to put the liberal arts into action as citizens in a global society.

Why assess international programs?

- To comply with strategic plan and mission statement
- To assess and improve international competencies
- To assess existing programs and determine need for new programs
- To formulate comprehensive study abroad policy and practices
 - Who should study abroad?
 - Determine criteria
- Other Considerations
 - Enrollment
 - Budget

International Programs at Connecticut College

- ★ **Office of National and International Programs (ONIP) – For traditional study abroad programs**
- ★ **Travel Research Immersion Program (TRIP)**
- ★ **Study Away, Teach Away (SATA)**
- ★ ***Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)***

The Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)

- A high selective interdisciplinary **certificate program** designed to internationalize every major (**not a major itself**)
- Created to meet the needs of students entering an interdependent world

Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA) program components

Core of six courses outside of the major

ACTFL certified Foreign language oral proficiency

Senior Integrative Project (S.I.P)

Skills enhancing workshops

Overseas 8 to 12 week internship using foreign language

The Examined Voyage

IS 201: Perspectives on Modern Global Society
IS 401: New Perspectives on Modern Global Society

- What are the origins and dynamics of contemporary society?
- What is the relevance of the past in understanding the present and the possibilities of the future?
- What are the material, spiritual and ethical challenges of modernity?

Why Assess CISLA?



In an effort to assess the **Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)** we conducted a study of the center alumni from the classes of 1992 through 2004 to trace the effects of interdisciplinary international learning after graduation.

Gathering Data

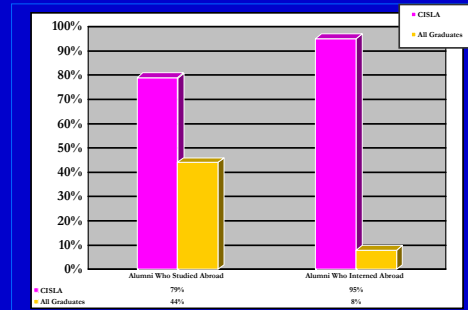
Tracing alumni academic and career moves

- The CISLA Online Alumni Questionnaire
- Institutional Research - Office of the Dean of the Faculty
- Cross checking alumni data - College Alumni Relations
- Cross checking data with the non-academic internship placement program - Career Enhancing Life Skills (CELS)
- Direct alumni contact through correspondence



Examining International Experiences

Connecticut College Alumni Statistics from Classes 2000 through 2004



What are our graduates doing now?

- Higher Education? (Pursuing or have attained a Masters Degree, PhD, JD)
- Continued use of Foreign Language studied at Connecticut College?
- Career Paths?



The CISLA Online Alumni Questionnaire

<http://www.conncoll.edu/ccacad/CISLA/alumni/questionnaire.html>

1. Name:
2. Year:
3. Address (home):
4. Street
5. City, State, Country
6. Zip
7. Phone:
8. Cell:
9. Fax:
10. Email:
11. Marital Status:

- Employment Info**
12. Company name:
 13. Address:
 14. Street:
 15. City, State, Country
 16. Zip:
 17. Phone:
 18. Fax:
 19. Email:
 20. Job description:

The CISLA Online Alumni Questionnaire

Graduate School

- 22 Name of School and Program:
23 Degree sought or attained:
24 Dates attended:

Spouse Information

- 25 Name:
26 Employment or graduate school:
27 What are you doing at your job? Do you like it?

- 28 What are your plans for the future?
29 Do you use your language?
30 Words of wisdom?
31 Do you feel any flashbacks or ongoing repercussions from a program like CISLA?
32 Would you attend big CISLA reunion?
33 How can we network as a group?
34 Other suggestions?

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The Quantitative Questionnaire Results

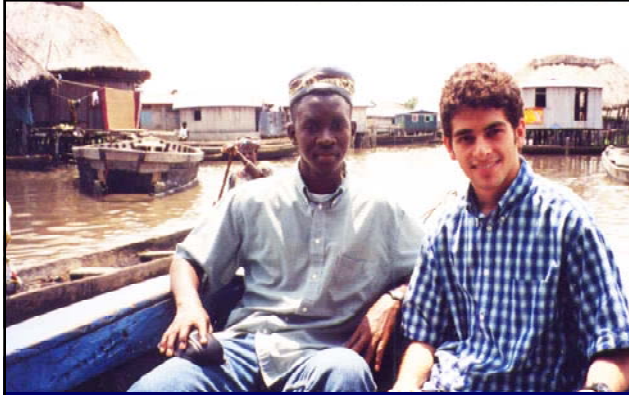
- ★ **33 %** of the program alumni (classes 1992 to 2004 replied to the CISLA Questionnaire.)
OUTREACH WORKS!
- ★ **44%** of program alumni surveyed continue to use their foreign language proficiency on an “often” to “regular basis.”
- ★ **55%** program alumni surveyed have **begun or completed** some level graduate education. According to the questionnaire, many attributed the Toor Cummings Center (CISLA) to having helped them better prepare for higher learning.

The Qualitative Questionnaire Results

- ★ Under CISLA Flashbacks, alumni cited *IS 201 Perspectives on Modern Global Society* as a challenging course that influenced their undergraduate academic experience.
- ★ Virtually all alumni participants offered their assistance in helping current students with internships, career counseling, and travel advice.

In their own words...

- Elisa Roller '93, who is working at the European Commission as a policy analyst, writes, "My CISLA experience was the most practical-oriented part of my undergraduate degree and has served me the most in the real world."
- Sara Schaefer Munoz '96, who is working as a news assistant at The Wall Street Journal in New York, writes, "Always be willing to do your share of grunt work to achieve your goals ... IS201 laid the groundwork for understanding global economics and politics that I come across in my reporting."



Brent Neve '99 (right) in Benin, West Africa, conducted his CISLA internship at the Central Bank of West Africa. He has recently completed his PhD at the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs. In addition, he has accepted a position at the The University of Illinois at Springfield as Assistant Professor of International Relations.

Lessons Learned

The college administration should make assessments of international programs a priority and determine criteria and assessment for intercultural competencies.

This is an initiative that requires professional guidance and research support.

Conclusion

A rigorous interdisciplinary academic program that requires study abroad experiences, an international internship, a high level of foreign language oral proficiency and a culminating senior integrative project will increase cultural literacy and competencies beyond the undergraduate years.

Thank you Questions are welcome

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