

Discipline-Based Differences in Internationalization

For faculty survey respondents from all Colleges except Dentistry, Nursing and Public Health, frequency of teaching non-U.S. topics courses was the first or second most highly correlated international activity to question #8.2 (infusion of international perspectives into teaching). If this activity is removed from the list of possible international activities, though, the results show significant fluctuation in correlations, College by College. In CLAS, the top three remaining positively correlated activities to #8.2 are the amount of time spent on researching international topics (.54), the number of languages used in teaching, research and service (.32) and the number of languages read or spoken (.25). All of these activities are also significant for Education, with the amount of time spent researching international topics the single most highly correlated activity after frequency of teaching non-U.S. topics courses (.48). In Medicine, however, these activities are all much less correlated to #8.2, and the number of languages read or spoken does not show any significant correlation, while the number of international long-distance courses taught (.31) and the number of study abroad courses led (.28) are highly correlated to #8.2. In Business, the number of international service experiences (.50) has the highest correlation to #8.2 of all possible activities. In Law, the amount of time spent on international research topics (.75) and the number of international conferences attended (.59) are highly correlated to infusing international content into teaching. In Engineering, research on international topics, international service experiences, and visiting professorships at overseas institutions all show significant relationships to #8.2.

Correlations do not necessarily seem to relate to types of disciplines. That is, we do not see significant similarities in correlations for the various Health Sciences Colleges. Dentistry, for example, shows high correlations for non-service related international professional experiences as well as international service experiences. For Pharmacy, however, there is actually a negative correlation between international service experiences and #8.2. Likewise, the most highly correlated activity for Public Health (number of international conferences attended, at .53) does not register as an activity significantly related to #8.2 for the College of Nursing.

Negative correlations broken out by College are particularly striking. In Education, for example, there is a negative correlation (-.21) between #8.2 and teaching international long-distance courses. The most dramatic negative correlation is found in the College of Engineering, where the number of languages used in teaching, research and service is negatively correlated to the integration of international perspectives into course content (-.34). This fact is difficult to reconcile with common sense; however, the answer may have to do with the fact that #8.2 focuses entirely on teaching, while the other activity relates to teaching, research and service. It may be that non-U.S. born Engineering faculty are using multiple languages in conducting research but they feel particularly compelled, for various reasons, to avoid bringing non-U.S. perspectives into their teaching.