

## INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, graduates are expected to compete globally. Thus, Educational Testing Service (ETS) launched HEIghten®, a pilot study in which Bowie State University participated in during fall 2017. The purpose of the study was to evaluate students' learning in civic and intercultural competencies and to design assessments that specifically measure these domains.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

**Civic Competency and Engagement (CCE)** - what individuals know, do, believe, and participate in (i.e., *civic knowledge, civic skills, civic attitudes, & civic participation*)

**Intercultural Competency and Diversity (ICD)** - a person's capability to gather, interpret, and act upon radically different cues and function effectively in multicultural situations

## METHODS

Over 200 academic officers at community colleges and four-year institutions participated in the pilot study. Four pilot forms were designed for the CCE assessment and three pilot forms were designed for the ICD assessment. Each CCE form had 80 items and each ICD form had 76 items. Each form was designed to be less than 40-minutes long. Multiple item formats were used to gather information which included: Likert-type items, single-selection multiple-choice, multiple-selection multiple-choice, dropdown menus, situational judgment (SJT), and hypothetical scenarios.

## RESULTS

A total of 1,841 students from 38 U.S. higher education institutions took the CCE assessment, and 1,901 students from 37 U.S. higher education institutions took the ICD assessment.

**Table 1: Student Demographic Information ~ Fall 2017**

Demographic Information	CCE		ICD	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	<b>1617</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>1706</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>1667</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>1740</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Black/African American</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Bowie State University</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>7%</b>

Note: CCE = Civic Competency & Engagement; ICD = Intercultural Competency & Diversity

Cross-sectional data with separate cohorts across college grade levels revealed that sophomores, juniors, and seniors statistically significantly outperformed freshman students on civic competency by three, five, and nine percentage points; seniors had attitudinal levels of 0.25 higher than freshmen on civic attitudes, and students' civic participation was higher for seniors as compared to freshmen by 0.50.

## CONCLUSION

- Results indicated that there is opportunity for improvement in terms of students' civic and intercultural knowledge and skills that institutions can focus on in their efforts to further promote these essential competencies.
- Students reported having more opportunities to learn about other cultures and to interact with others from ethnically-diverse backgrounds performed substantially better on both the attitudinal and knowledge and skills dimensions of the HEIghten ICD assessment.
- Results suggest that more exposure to intercultural experiences is associated with greater awareness and enhanced performance.

## DISCUSSION

As institutions around the globe strive to achieve academic excellence, it is imperative that they promote critical skills such as civic and intercultural competencies so graduates are likely to gain a competitive advantage in the global workplace. Individual institutional results will be reported back to the university by summer 2018 for further analysis.

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