

Civic Competency/Engagement & Intercultural Competency/Diversity Pilot Study

The HEIghten pilot program is sponsored by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and is interested in exploring the areas of students' civic competency and engagement and intercultural competency and diversity.

More than 40 higher education institutions are participating in this pilot in January and February of 2017. These institutions, including Bowie State University, represent a diversity of types of institutions (HBCUs, MSAs, public/private, community colleges, liberal arts/research, etc.). Each of these tests will be taken by at least 50 students, with about half of them being newer students and half being further along in their college careers. In the fall of 2017 (September and October) a field test will take place for HEIghten, where the same institutions will assess 100 students on each of the two tests.

According to the ETS, civic competence and engagement is:

- seen as a public and private good
- seen as a component of higher education
- links educational institutions with the community and nation
- is valued in the workplace, and
- contribute to young adults' development.

The assessment framework for civic competency is made up of civic knowledge, analytic skills and participatory/involvement skills. In the area of civic engagement, the components are motivations, attitudes and efficacy; democratic norms/values, participation, and activities.

The assessment tasks that students will be given for civic competency and engagement consist of activities such as:

- analyzing a document and developing a response
- drawing conclusions from analysis of a document
- reviewing/analyzing facts and opinions to recognize misleading and biased information, and
- role-playing and perspective-taking, and recognizing what response is appropriate for particular participants/stakeholders.

The other part of the HEIghten pilot program is Intercultural Competency and Diversity (ICD). According to ETS, intercultural competency and diversity is defined as:

“...the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

ETS states that ICD is important particularly to:

- student learning outcomes
- student success, and
- workforce and civic skills.

The assessment for Intercultural Competency and Diversity will be scenario-based items that give students a particular scenario with an intercultural situation. The students will need to analyze the situation and identify the response that provides the solution that is the most appropriate. The follow-up field test to the early spring 2017 HEIghten Civic Engagement and Intercultural Competency and Diversity assessment will occur during the fall 2017 semester.