

Standardized Wisconsin Evaluation Plan for Title VI (SWEPT): Survey Results

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Study objectives

- Conduct a survey of UW alumni who were actual or *potential* affiliates of Title VI centers in order to assess the impact of NRCs (and FLAS)
- Questions addressed
 - *How successfully do NRCs involve their “potential affiliates” in their activities?*
 - *How do alumni subjectively rate NRC programs and activities after graduating?*
 - *How effective are NRCs at providing experiences, contacts, and skills that help their affiliates in subsequent work careers?*

Study details

- Collaboration of all 8 UW-Madison National Resource Centers (NRCs)
 - under the umbrella of the International Institute
- Social scientist faculty evaluation director
- Other campus partners:
 - University of Wisconsin Survey Center
 - Wisconsin Alumni Association
- Funding from both NRC budgets and internal UW sources

Research Design

- Problem 1: Defining the population of interest. Who are “potential affiliates” of NRCs?
 - Doesn't make sense to compare NRC participants to the general student body because many students have no interest in international studies or foreign language and thus fall outside any conceivable purview of NRCs
- Solution: define potential affiliates as *all students who pursue programs of study involving foreign languages and/or expertise on foreign countries (whether or not they have any formal or informal involvement with NRCs)*
 - This is the population that NRCs can realistically be expected to reach.
 - Operationally, we defined potential affiliates as all students who completed at least 15 credits of course work in NRC-related subjects (including language).

Research Design

- Problem 2: Identifying and sampling treatment and control groups to assess NRC effectiveness
- Who are *actual* affiliates?
 - NRCs do not typically have formal membership criteria
 - Solution: affiliates are those who 1) received a FLAS through an NRC; and/or 2) participated in at least core NRC activity at least “sometimes” while at UW
- Non-affiliates are those who received no FLAS and did not participate in at least one core NRC at least “sometimes”

Research Design

- Non-affiliates (who were potential affiliates) are a reasonable control group for assessing NRC effectiveness
 - If NRCs are effective, their affiliates should show more evidence of successful outcomes after graduating from UW than non-affiliates
 - Without a control group of this nature, there is no reasonable benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of NRCs

Research Design

- We were able to identify graduates who had completed 15 credits of NRC-related coursework using registrar's records.
 - We limited the study to those who graduated in the last 20 years
 - We prepared target samples of (roughly) 400 such potential affiliates of each of UW's 8 NRCs , for total target sample of 3200
 - All FLAS recipients were included in the initial target samples
- The WAA gave us access to their address records for the sampled alumni

Research Design

- The WAA gave us access to their address records for the sampled alumni
 - This helped identify sampled individuals who had died or requested no contact from UW
- The UW Survey Research Center conducted the survey, and used a professional address locator tool
 - We substituted new names for target respondents who could not be located
 - Ultimately, we had 3198 targeted respondents with plausible addresses

Research Design

- Target respondents were sent *three* successive letters inviting them to participate in a web survey, providing them with a dedicated URL.
 - Both domestic and international addresses
- To “incentivize” participation, we sent each target respondent a \$2 bill in the first mailing.
- Eventually, 1176 respondents completed surveys from September 2-November 21, 2011
 - 1105 US-based and 71 foreign-based
 - 284 invitation letters “returned to sender”
 - Response rate was 40.4%, good for a web survey

Sample characteristics

- 66 respondents excluded because they took no courses in foreign language or area studies at UW
- Fairly even distribution across the 8 NRCs
 - Those affiliated with multiple centers chose which one they viewed as their “primary” center
- About 1/3 FLAS recipients, 1/3 other affiliates, 1/3 non-affiliates
- Most graduated in last decade, but 32% over 10 years ago
- Most received PhDs (37%) or Masters (33%), 25% BAs
- Reasonable representation of women, non-whites, Wisconsin residents (before and after graduation)

TABLE 1. Basic Sample characteristics (Total N=1100)

Primary field		Years since most recent UW graduation	
African Studies	11%	Under 5	39%
East Asian Studies	12%	5 to 10	23%
European Studies	17%	11 to 15	18%
Global Studies	7%	over 15	14%
LACIS	21%	Highest degree attained at UW	
CREECA	14%	BA/BS	25%
South Asia	8%	MA/MS	33%
Southeast Asian Studies	10%	Professional	4%
		PhD	37%
		Other	1%
Affiliation status		Still enrolled or missing	5%
Received at least one AY or summer FLAS	32%		
Other affiliates (at least one activity at least "sometimes")	35%	Non-white	18%
Non-affiliates	33%	Wisconsin resident (pre-UW)	38%
		Wisconsin resident (current)	31%
		Living abroad (current)	9%

Main results: involvement

- Majority of affiliates say they were aware of 5 of 6 core NRC activities while at UW
 - Lowest awareness for “career days/professionalization workshops” which not all NRCs do
- High participation rates (at least sometimes) among those who were aware
 - Slightly above or near 50% for all except “career days/professionalization workshops”

Table 3. Awareness of specific Center activities

Program/activity:	Academic-year fellowships	Summer fellowships	Brown bag/lecture series	Film series	Other cultural events	"Career days" and/or professionalization workshops
<i>When you were at UW did you know that the Center did the following (% yes):</i>						
	58.5%	56.8%	71.7%	63.9%	75.9%	20.7%
<i>Among those who were aware of each program, participated...</i>						
Sometimes	23.8%	25.3%	34.4%	32.7%	38.3%	21.2%
Often	17.6%	16.5%	18.0%	11.3%	17.1%	5.3%
Very Often	15.1%	10.0%	13.3%	5.6%	6.4%	4.4%
At least sometimes	56.5%	51.8%	65.6%	49.6%	61.8%	30.9%

Main results: involvement

- Conclusion: NRCs have been fairly effective at getting information out about their activities and getting potential affiliates involved
 - Perhaps more efforts on promoting career days/professionalization workshops would be in order

Main results: subjective ratings

- Asked how effective primary NRC was in five areas (Table 7)
 - About half of affiliates say “very” or “extremely” effective at helping make contacts with students & faculty with similar area-related interests providing language skills that were useful after graduating, area expertise that proved useful in later career, and an intellectual home while at UW
 - Under 20% said not at all or only a little effective in these areas
 - Less effectiveness at preparing to look for jobs
 - Affiliates consistently more positive than non-affiliates in their rating of NRC performance in these areas

Table 7. How effective was the Center in the following?

	Not at all	A little	Some- what	Very effective	Extremely effective	Not <i>applicable</i>
Helping make contacts with students & faculty with similar interests outside your major						
Total (among affiliates)	6.3%	12.7%	25.4%	27.0%	19.3%	9.2%
Total (non-affiliates)	17.2%	17.5%	13.9%	6.1%	0.6%	44.7%
Preparing you to look for jobs after you graduated						
Total (among affiliates)	25.6%	19.1%	17.1%	7.4%	4.6%	26.2%
Total (non-affiliates)	29.6%	10.1%	4.5%	1.7%	0.6%	53.6%
Providing you with language skills that were useful after graduating						
Total (among affiliates)	6.8%	7.4%	18.1%	26.1%	25.7%	15.9%
Total (non-affiliates)	13.9%	11.4%	13.9%	12.8%	4.7%	43.2%
Providing you with non-language expertise that proved useful in your career?						
Total (among affiliates)	5.8%	9.1%	20.0%	26.8%	23.0%	15.4%
Total (non-affiliates)	19.6%	8.7%	13.4%	12.0%	2.0%	44.4%
Providing an intellectual home for you at UW						
Total (among affiliates)	7.0%	12.9%	20.8%	22.9%	26.5%	10.0%
Total (non-affiliates)	18.7%	11.5%	14.0%	7.8%	5.3%	42.7%

Main results: subjective ratings

- Asked to rate quality of four areas and overall quality (Table 9)
 - Healthy majorities (66%-80%) of affiliates rate NRC faculty, office staff, cultural events, and outside lecturers as “very good” or “excellent”
 - 5% or less rate these as “fair” or “poor”
 - Two-thirds of affiliates rate overall quality as “very good” or “excellent”
 - Affiliates consistently more likely to rate NRCs highly than non-affiliates
 - Non-affiliates most likely to say “not applicable” in regard to most areas, but also rate NRC faculty highly

Table 9. How would you rate the quality of the following?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	N/A
Faculty affiliated with the Center						
Total (among affiliates)	1.1%	3.8%	13.3%	24.6%	54.5%	2.8%
Total (non-affiliates)	1.7%	5.3%	17.2%	20.5%	24.7%	30.8%
Office staff affiliated with the Center						
Total (among affiliates)	1.5%	3.5%	16.5%	24.0%	37.1%	17.5%
Total (non-affiliates)	2.5%	4.8%	13.1%	7.0%	8.1%	64.5%
Cultural events sponsored by the Center						
Total (among affiliates)	0.5%	3.5%	18.7%	35.3%	30.7%	11.2%
Total (non-affiliates)	2.2%	6.4%	17.6%	12.0%	3.4%	58.4%
Lectures by outside speakers sponsored by the Center						
Total (among affiliates)	0.8%	4.4%	15.7%	33.0%	35.4%	10.7%
Total (non-affiliates)	2.2%	5.0%	10.3%	13.4%	4.5%	64.6%
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the Center's programs?						
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	
Total (among affiliates)	1.2%	6.0%	26.5%	37.0%	29.2%	
Total (non-affiliates)	9.7%	18.5%	46.2%	20.0%	5.6%	

Main results: subjective ratings

- Asked to rate five specific services and overall performance (Table 11)
 - Affiliates rate NRC's communications about programs and course offerings very highly
 - More mixed picture regarding helping students meet students and faculty from other departments with similar area interests and finding funding opportunities
 - Still, more positive than negative ratings
 - 53% say NRC played a "very" or "extremely" important role in their overall UW experience
 - Again, affiliates consistently more likely to rate NRCs highly than non-affiliates

Table 11. Perceptions of specific services as performed by the Center (affiliates only)

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely	N/A
How effective was Center's communication about activities, programs, and events?						
Total (among affiliates)	1.1%	4.2%	27.5%	41.3%	22.7%	3.2%
Total (non-affiliates)	12.8%	17.0%	25.6%	9.2%	2.2%	33.2%
How broad were the course offerings related to the Center's region?						
Total (among affiliates)	0.7%	3.2%	23.5%	44.7%	17.7%	10.2%
Total (non-affiliates)	4.5%	5.3%	19.8%	21.7%	5.6%	43.2%
How well did the Center help you meet students from other depts. interested in the region?						
Total (among affiliates)	7.1%	14.5%	28.7%	25.1%	11.8%	12.8%
Total (non-affiliates)	18.4%	10.3%	13.4%	6.1%	1.4%	50.4%
How well did the Center help you meet faculty from other depts. interested in the region?						
Total (among affiliates)	7.0%	15.6%	29.4%	23.4%	12.6%	12.0%
Total (non-affiliates)	18.1%	11.7%	14.5%	5.6%	1.1%	49.0%
How available did the Center make funding opportunities to support your studies/research?						
Total (among affiliates)	8.3%	13.3%	20.4%	22.2%	19.9%	16.0%
Total (non-affiliates)	19.3%	11.5%	5.9%	2.5%	1.4%	59.4%
How important a role did the Center play overall in your UW experience?						
Total (among affiliates)	3.8%	12.2%	30.8%	28.0%	25.2%	
Total (non-affiliates)	37.2%	31.0%	21.5%	7.8%	2.5%	

Main results: subjective ratings

- Overall, NRC affiliates tend to have positive to very positive impressions about various aspects of UW's NRCs after they graduated
- Negative or critical views of NRCs are rare – both among affiliates and non-affiliates
- Non-affiliates consistently more likely to have no views at all
- NRCs are generally perceived positively, both in general and in terms of their specific programs and activities, especially by those who know them best and participated in their activities (affiliates)

Main results: careers

- Asked questions about up to 6 jobs respondents held after graduating from UW
 - Sector and occupation
 - Use of language and foreign area expertise
 - Usefulness of NRC-based skills and experiences in getting jobs and succeeding in jobs

Main results: careers

- NRC affiliates are somewhat more likely than non-affiliates to have held a job working for government after graduating
 - Modest but statistically significant difference
- NRC affiliates substantially *less* likely to have held a job in the private sector
 - But more likely to have held a job in education
- No significant variation by NRC affiliation in likelihood of holding a job in the military (low for both) or social services

Table 14. Job sector, by affiliation (full or part time jobs)

<i>Ever had a job in...</i>	<i>Non- affiliates</i>	<i>Affiliates</i>
Government	11.6%	15.8%
Private business	47.9%	24.4%
The military	1.1%	0.7%
Education	41.0%	57.3%
Social services	4.7%	3.7%
Government, business, or military	55.4%	38.0%

Main results: careers

- When it comes to using languages, expertise, and cultural skills associated with NRCs in jobs, NRC effectiveness is clear
 - Substantial majorities of NRC affiliates have had a job where they use(d) the foreign language skills and area knowledge they obtained at UW
 - Over half have had a job involving work trips abroad
 - About 60% have had jobs where they've dealt with foreign clients or with foreign collaborators at least "sometimes"
 - About 40% have had jobs involving dealings with foreign officials at least "sometimes"
 - These figures are consistently lower among non-affiliates

Table 16. Use of Center-related resources in jobs, by affiliation

<i>Ever had a job where you...</i>	<i>Non- affiliates</i>	<i>Affiliates</i>
Use language skills from Center	42.6%	63.3%
Use area expertise from Center	56.0%	81.2%
Travel abroad for work	28.1%	51.7%
Deal with foreign clients at least sometimes	44.6%	61.2%
Deal with foreign partners/collaborators at least sometimes	36.9%	62.0%
Deal with foreign officials at least sometimes	16.5%	41.4%

Main results: careers

- NRC affiliates also report that the contacts and language skills they obtained in connection with NRCs helped them to get and to succeed in jobs
 - 38%: NRC-related contacts helped them get or succeed in jobs
 - 59%: Language skills helped them get or succeed in jobs
- Levels are lower among non-affiliates

Table 17. Center was helpful for jobs, by affiliation

<i>Ever had a job where...</i>	<i>Non- affiliates</i>	<i>Affiliates</i>
Contacts obtained via participation in the Center...		
...helped you get the job	3.7%	22.8%
...helped you succeed at the job	5.1%	30.9%
...helped you get or succeed at the job	7.7%	37.5%
Language skills from UW associated with the Center...		
...helped you get the job	26.4%	43.1%
...helped you succeed at the job	28.7%	47.0%
...helped you get or succeed at the job	38.4%	59.0%
Center involvement overall		
...helped you succeed at the job "quite a bit" or more	21.0%	42.0%

Main results: careers

- In sum, NRC affiliation has modest but statistically positive effect on the likelihood of working in government after graduation
 - But a more substantial negative effect on the likelihood of working in the private sector and no effect on the odds of military employment
- However, by several other important measures, NRCs are having a clear positive impact on the subsequent careers of their affiliates
 - Use of language skills and area knowledge at work, travel abroad, deal with foreign clients, collaborators, partners
 - Use NRC contacts and language to obtain and succeed in jobs.

Caveats

- It is risky to infer causal effects of NRCs from these results
 - Possible self-selection into NRC affiliation status
 - Other omitted variables can bias estimates of causal effects
 - Possible sample selection effects: most successful NRC graduates more likely to take survey?
- The “counterfactual” question is: what would the outcomes be for affiliates had they not been affiliates?
 - Impossible to answer with certainty
 - Econometric techniques (matching, instrumental variables) require more extensive data for modeling who becomes an affiliate
- Studies of this scope are not cheap!

Next step

- A survey of all current seniors and sophomores assessing awareness of and participation in a range of international programs (including NRCs) on campus
 - Focus: impact of these programs on global competence of undergraduates
 - Sample design and background variables will permit use of matching techniques in an attempt to identify causal effects
- Survey will be fielded in the coming weeks