



Are You Engaged?

Surveys say engagement helps ensure academic, career success

Four recent surveys have brought into focus the notion that being engaged with your educational institution and your profession has a direct impact on your academic success and career aspirations.

The Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University conducted its National Survey of Student Engagement in 2005. Approximately 237,000 students at more than 500 four-year colleges and universities nationwide participated in the NSSE's study titled "Exploring Different Dimensions of Student Engagement."

The NSSE results were categorized into five benchmarks of effective educational practice: level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.

designed to enhance their academic skills and social environment were more likely to use campus services, and gained more in terms of personal and social development.

"Engagement is a critical factor in the educational process because the more time and energy students devote to desired activities, the more likely they are to develop the habits of the mind that are key to success after college," said NSSE Director and IU Professor of Higher Education George Kuh. "In addition, engagement is positively related to grades and graduation ... outcomes that everyone agrees are important."

Coinciding with the NSSE study was the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, which measured faculty priorities, preferred approaches, and expectations for student engagement in effective educational

practices. Taken together, FSSE and NSSE findings show that students are more inclined to be engaged if faculty members frequently use and emphasize effective educational practices.

Separate

studies from Robert Half International Inc. found that there is a high level of appreciation and support for the benefits of professional engagement. Most understand the importance of professional associations for gaining knowledge of current issues, accessing information, and exchanging ideas, knowledge and views. Professional engagement is seen to aid people in their career development, help them work more effectively, develop their company

and achieve strategic business objectives.

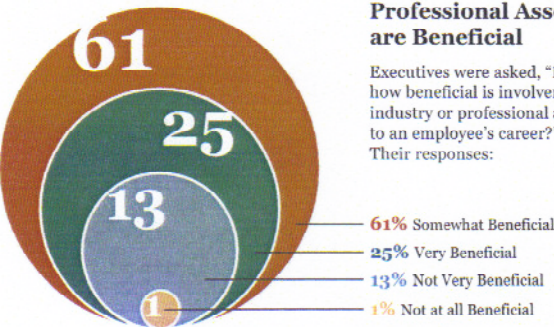
According to Max Messmer, Robert Half chairman and CEO, "taking an active role in associations allows members to strengthen their leadership abilities, interpersonal skills, and business acumen. Companies value employees who proactively seek opportunities to develop their skills and expertise."

In the national poll conducted by Accountemps, responses were received from 150 senior executives from the nation's largest companies. The survey found that 86 percent of hiring managers believe involvement in professional associations is beneficial to a career.

In another survey developed by Accountemps, responses were gathered from 1,400 CFOs from a random sample of U.S. companies and were compiled into the Next Generation Accountant initiative, a report that examines how today's trends will shape the future of accounting and finance.

According to this survey, a majority of CFOs believe that possessing a professional designation – such as CPA, certified internal auditor (CIA) and certified fraud examiner (CFE) – enhances a candidate's marketability. "The ability to build upon one's knowledge base is critical for next generation accountants. They must dedicate themselves to continuing education, including the pursuit of additional certifications, in order to move forward in their careers," Messmer said.

The messages are clear: Students gain more from their college experience by actively participating in activities in and out of the classroom. Employers value accounting professionals who not only have technical expertise, but also exhibit a commitment to their profession. So the question is ... Are you engaged? ■



Some of the key findings included that the single best predictor of satisfaction with college is the degree to which students perceive their college environment to be supportive of their academic and social needs; schools that have a lower student-faculty ratio, more full-time faculty, and more classes with fewer than 20 students generally score higher on all five benchmarks; and 54 percent of first-year students who attended a seminar specifically