

# News from Institutional Research

This issue of “News from Institutional Research” looks at the CIRP Longitudinal Constructs of Habits of Mind and Social Agency as reported by the 2011 seniors who completed both the freshman and seniors surveys. Longitudinal data allow us to determine within-person change over time. Data are reported by academic division. For the Social Agency construct, data are also shown by participation in six Creighton activities/programs (Cortina Community, Encuentro Program, Freshman Leadership Program, Greek System, Honors Program and Service Trips).

## 2011 Graduating Seniors - Longitudinal Data—Habits of Mind

### “Constructs”

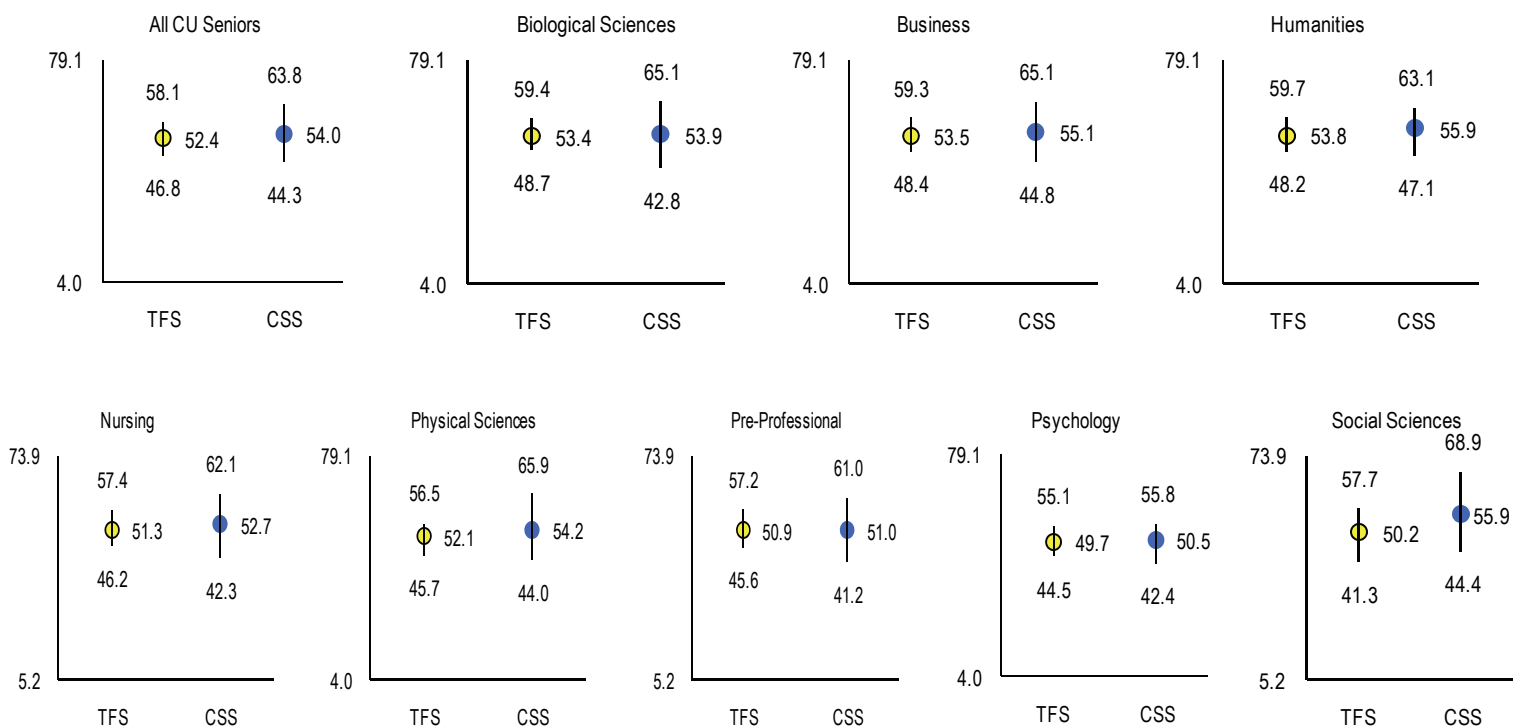
This issue continues to examine CIRP “constructs” which combine weighted individual survey items into global measures believed to capture the experiences and outcomes which reveal information about the student experience.

Instead of comparing Creighton seniors to those at other Catholic institutions, this “News from Institutional Research” looks at the changes between freshman and senior year. The graphs below, therefore, while similar to those seen previously, reflect the mean scores as well as the 25th and 75th percentiles freshman year (TFS) and senior year (CSS).

### LONGITUDINAL CONSTRUCT— Habits of Mind

Habits of Mind is a “unified measure of the behaviors and traits associated with academic success. These behaviors are seen as the foundation for lifelong learning”. It includes the following items and weights in response to “how often in the past year did you”: Support your opinions with a logical argument (2.30), Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others (2.25), Seek alternative solutions to a problem (1.90), Evaluate the quality or reliability of information you received (1.73), Ask questions in class (1.50), Take a risk because you felt you had more to gain (1.39), Seek feedback on your academic work (1.28), Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for a class (1.24), Revise your papers to improve your writing (1.15), Look up scientific research articles and resources (0.73) and Accept mistakes as part of the learning process (0.69).

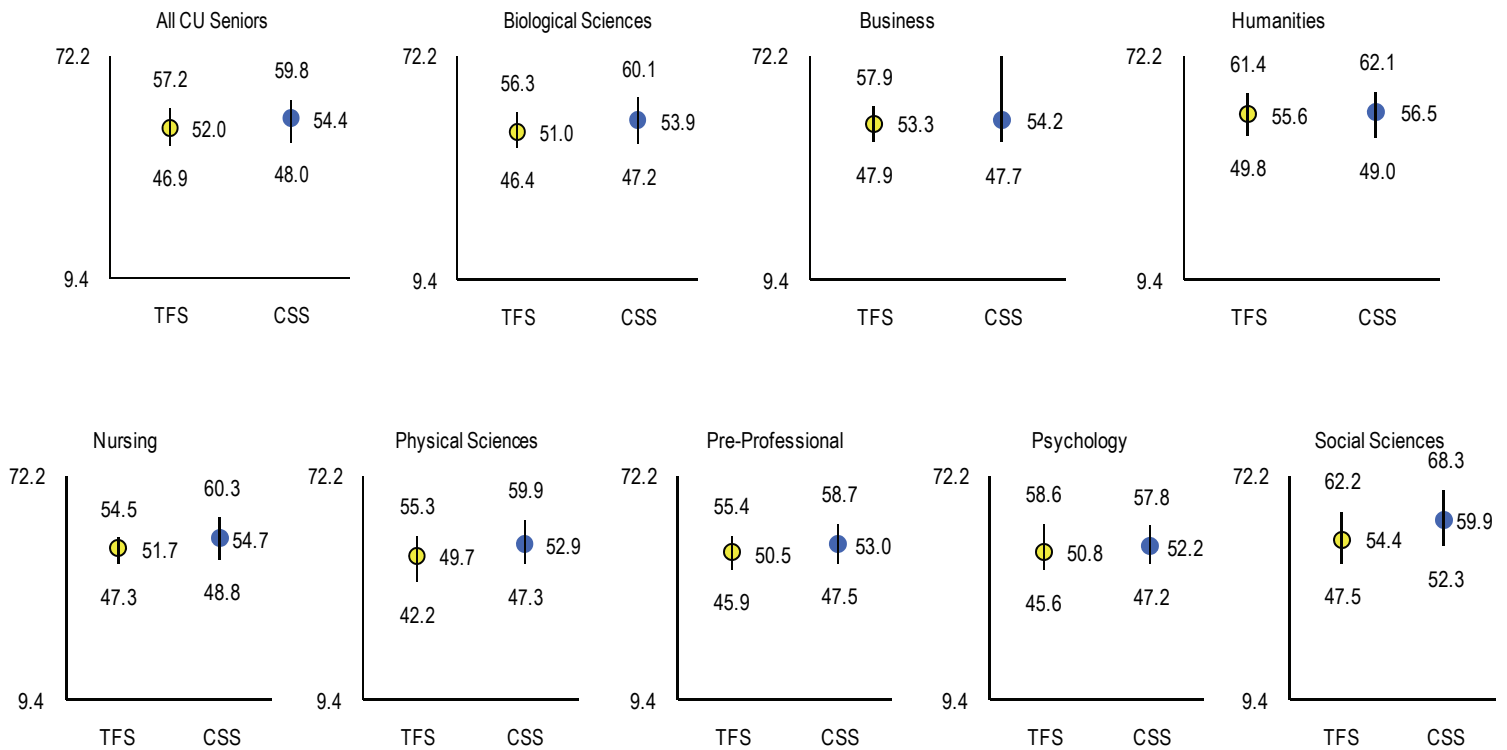
Three hundred forty-four Creighton seniors completed both the freshman and senior surveys and responded to all the questions that are included in the Habits of Mind construct. There was a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between the freshman and senior mean score for all seniors. The only academic discipline that showed a significant difference ( $p < .02$ ) between freshman and senior year was Social Sciences.



LONGITUDINAL CONSTRUCT– Social Agency

Social Agency measures “the extent to which students’ value political and social involvement as a personal goal”. It includes the following items and weights in response to indicate the importance to you personally: Participating in community action program (2.72), Helping to promote racial understanding (2.61), Becoming a community leader (2.27), Keeping up to date with political affairs (1.76), Influencing social values (1.75), and Helping others who are in difficulty (1.61).

Three hundred eighty-seven seniors also completed the freshman survey and responded to all the questions that are included in the Social Agency construct. There was a significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) between the freshman and senior mean score for all seniors. Students in Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Pre-Professional and Social Sciences had significantly higher mean scores on the Social Agency construct as seniors than as freshmen.



As freshmen, Humanities students had a significantly higher mean score ( $p < .01$ ) than all other groups except Business, Nursing and Social Sciences. By seniors year, Social Sciences students had a significantly higher mean score ( $p < .01$ ) than all other groups except Humanities, Nursing and Psychology.

Freshman Year

Humanities	55.6
Social Sciences	54.4
Business	53.3
Nursing	51.7
Biological Sciences	51.0
Psychology	50.8
Pre-Professional	50.5
Physical Sciences	49.7

Senior Year

Social Sciences	59.9
Humanities	56.6
Nursing	54.7
Business	54.2
Biological Sciences	53.9
Pre-Professional	53.0
Physical Sciences	52.9
Psychology	52.2

LONGITUDINAL CONSTRUCT– Social Agency (cont.)

Upon entering Creighton, the students who would go on to participate in CCSJ-sponsored service trips, the Cortina Community, the Honors Program, the Creighton Greek Community, the Encuentro Program and the Freshman Leadership Program had higher mean scores on the Social Agency construct than the class as a whole. Consequently, we have a group of students who are positively pre-disposed in their commitment to political and social involvement. While we know there are many factors that influence change in people during their college years, would students in these programs look any different than their peers on the Social Agency construct as seniors?

Twenty-eight students who participated in the Freshman Leadership program completed both surveys. While those twenty-eight freshmen had the highest mean score on this construct upon entering Creighton, their personal commitment to political and social involvement did not increase during their four years.

Thirty-three students who lived and studied in the Cortina Community as sophomores completed both surveys. As the chart below indicates, the mean score for those thirty-three students rose from 56.1 as incoming freshmen to 60.8 (p<.001) as seniors.

Seventeen students who studied in the Dominican Republic completed both surveys. The mean score for those seventeen rose from 54.5 as freshmen to 59.1 (p<.05) as seniors.

Eighty-nine students participated in CCSJ-sponsored service trips while at Creighton and completed both surveys. The Social Agency mean score for those eighty-nine students rose from 54.9 as freshmen to 57.6 (p<.006).

Thirty-seven students who were enrolled in the Honors Program and completed both surveys. The mean score for those seventeen rose from 54.9 as freshmen to 57.6 (p<.017) as seniors.

Finally, 137 students who were members of Greek chapters completed both surveys. The Social Agency mean score for those one hundred thirty-seven students rose from 52.5 as freshmen to 54.3 (p<.002).

