

News from Institutional Research

Issues 5 and 6 of “News from Institutional Research” focused on the spiritual life of the 2004 Creighton freshmen. This issue and the one that will follow later this month report results from the HERI Faculty survey completed by one hundred fifty Creighton undergraduate faculty in the 2004-2005 academic year. That survey of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors provide a basis for looking at how faculty perceive the relationship between spirituality and higher education and how they view the role of spirituality and religion in their own lives.

Faculty in the School of Nursing (N=23) and the College of Business (N=16) are their own groupings. Faculty in Communication Studies, Education, Exercise Science, Journalism and Social Work (N=18) comprise the “Professional” grouping. Faculty in the Biological and Physical Sciences as well as Math and Computer Science (N=31) are included in the “Science” grouping. “Social Science” (N=22) includes faculty in History, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology. All the remaining faculty (N=40) are included in “Humanities”.

Spirituality and the Professoriate

For many Creighton faculty, the spiritual dimension of life is highly relevant. Nine out of ten consider themselves “spiritual” people, with over sixty percent (63% of the women and 59% of the men) reporting they are spiritual “to a great extent”. In addition, eight out of ten say they seek opportunities to grow spiritually to at least “some” extent and seven out of ten report they engage in self-reflection “to a great extent”. Further, sixty-two percent of the undergraduate faculty (68% of the women and 60% of the men) report that “integrating spirituality in my life” is an essential or very important life goal.

The analysis that follows compares the mean scores of each grouping of faculty on five questions. Statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) between faculty in different disciplines are indicated to the right. For example, on the question “Consider myself a spiritual person, the mean score of Nursing faculty is significantly higher (at the $p < .05$ level) than the mean score of faculty in “Science” and “Business”. On the other hand, the mean score of the Business faculty is significantly lower (at the $p < .05$ level) on same question than the mean score of faculty in the “Professional”, “Humanities” and “Nursing” groupings.

Consider myself a spiritual person (Three point scale (1=Not at all, 2= To some extent, 3= To a great extent)

Overall mean	2.53	Nursing =	2.78	▲ Science, Business
		Professional =	2.78	▲ Science, Business
		Humanities =	2.66	▲ Business
		Social Sciences =	2.45	
		Science =	2.31	▼ Professional, Nursing
		Business =	2.13	▼ Professional, Humanities, Nursing

Seek out opportunities to grow spiritually (Three point scale (1=Not at all, 2= To some extent, 3= To a great extent)

Overall mean	2.24	Humanities =	2.45	▲ Science
		Professional =	2.44	▲ Science
		Nursing =	2.39	▲ Science
		Social Sciences =	2.38	▲ Science
		Business =	2.07	
		Science =	1.72	▼ Professional, Humanities, Nursing, Social Sc

Engage In self-reflection (Three point scale (1=Not at all, 2= To some extent, 3= To a great extent)

Overall mean	2.70	Professional =	2.89	▲ Science, Business
		Humanities =	2.82	▲ Science
		Social Sciences =	2.77	
		Nursing =	2.65	
		Science =	2.52	▼ Professional, Humanities
		Business =	2.50	▼ Professional

Goal: Integrate spirituality into my life (Four point scale (1=Not important, 2=Somewhat important, 3=Very important, 4=Essential)

Overall mean	2.86	Professional	3.22	▲ Science
		Nursing	3.18	▲ Science
		Humanities	2.97	▲ Science
		Social Sciences	2.86	
		Business	2.75	
		Science	2.33	▼ Professional, Humanities, Nursing

Spirituality and Other Related Constructs

The HERI Research team combined questionnaire items with similar content to develop “scales” that measure various aspects of faculty spirituality as well as other constructs such as Focus on Student Personal Development, Civic-Minded Values, Civic-Minded Practices, Positive Outlook in Work and Life and Diversity Advocacy.

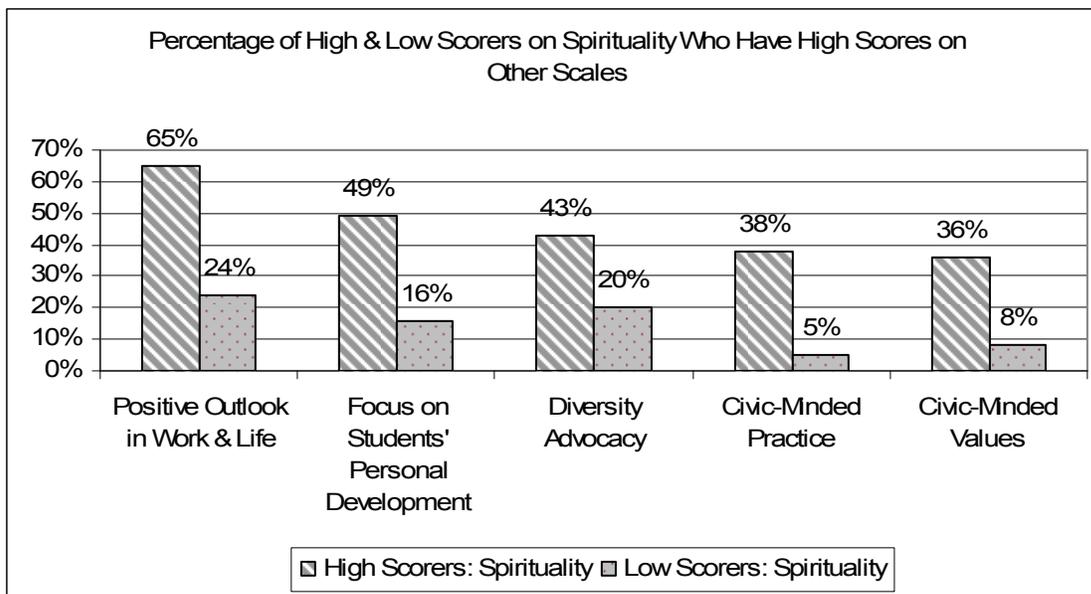
The information that immediately follows examines mean score differences on the “Spirituality” scale between the various faculty grouping. The data indicate that the faculty in the Professional, Nursing and Humanities categories have a significantly higher mean score on the Spirituality scale than faculty in the Sciences.

Spirituality (“is defined as seeking out opportunities to grow spiritually, considering oneself a spiritual person and having an interest in integrating spirituality into one’s life.”) Three questions; maximum score = 10, minimum score = 3

Overall mean	7.61	Professional =	8.44	▲ Science.
		Nursing =	8.36	▲ Science
		Humanities =	8.04	▲ Science
		Social Sciences =	7.62	
		Business =	6.94	
		Science =	6.31	▼ Professional, Nursing, Humanities

The chart below compares faculty with high and low scores¹ on the Spirituality scale in terms of their scores on five related constructs. In every instance, highly spiritual faculty are much more likely than their less spiritual counterparts to be high scorers on Positive Outlook in Work & Life, Focus of Students’ Personal Development, Diversity Advocacy, Civic-Minded Practice and Civic-Minded Values.

By far the largest difference for Creighton faculty is seen on the scale measuring Positive Outlook in Work & Life (65% versus 24%, 41 percentage points). The content of the scale² suggest that highly spiritual faculty have been better able to integrate their personal and professional lives and to effect a better alignment between academic work and personal values. These results also suggest that institutional time and resources given to faculty personal and spiritual development are resources well spent. As there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the faculty groupings on the “Positive Outlook in Work & Life” scale, it appears that all Creighton undergraduate faculty benefit from such support.



¹Given that the range of possible scores on the Spirituality scale was 3—10, a faculty member who scored 8 or above is considered to be a “high scorer” while anyone with a score of 3 is considered to be a “low” scorer. Under these definitions, 57% of the Creighton undergraduate faculty achieved high scores and 18% obtained low scores (nationally, 43% of the faculty were “high” scorers and 15% scored “low”).

² The questions that comprise this scale are: Experience joy in your work, Feel good about the direction in which your life is headed, Achieve a healthy balance between you personal life and your professional life, Feel that your work adds meaning to your life, and Experience close alignment between your work values and your personal values.