



I Overview

45 students participating in the 2012-13 Messina-Honors Pilot Program were invited to participate in a web survey to assess how they experienced Messina during the fall semester. The survey was developed in consultation with the Messina Advisory Board and the Honors Program faculty. In addition, the Office of Institutional Research reviewed and offered suggestions to improve the survey instrument before it was sent to students. Questions were designed to correspond to the four main areas of Messina learning outcomes – Discernment, Critical Thinking, Community and Integrated Learning (see Appendix A for complete list of Learning Outcomes). An additional set of questions also addressed usage of Hillside area facilities.

The survey was conducted from January 23, 2013 – February 11, 2013. Overall, 21 students completed the survey. All three class sections were represented (at least six students in each section responded) and the reported gender of respondents was consistent with the composition of the Honors program first year students (14 women, 6 men, 1 preferred not to share). Before taking the survey, students were reminded of the various components of the Messina experience:

- The Human Drama seminars taken by First-Years in both the fall and spring semester
- Enrichment hours and activities connected to the Human Drama course
- Academic advising, specifically having your first semester seminar professor as your academic advisor
- Living in proximity to your Human Drama classmates in Flannery O’Connor Hall
- Theme-wide events (Homer and pizza, NYC trip) including events designed to familiarize you with Baltimore
- Plenary lectures held in the residence hall
- Connections with Student Development administrators and Student Peer Leaders/Evergreens through enrichment activities

II Summary of Findings

- **Community:** Students reported Messina “often” to “very often” helped them develop a sense of belonging to Loyola. Developing relationships with peers and faculty were rated highest among survey responses. Overall, students felt Loyola was a positive environment and felt Messina supported them in their academic and social pursuits.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students report that they felt supported in their academic coursework and decision making. Students report that Messina helped them develop better relationships with faculty and classmates and aided in developing critical thinking skills such as becoming a better writer. They also felt that their peers contributed to their learning. They reported little use of

campus resources that aide critical thinking (e.g., Writing Center, Tutoring); this finding is likely attributable to the fact that the pilot is exclusive to Honors students.

- Discernment: Students “sometimes” or “often” thought about their decision-making and career choices. Furthermore, most students report that Messina helped them to start thinking “a little” about the Jesuit tradition of discernment. Means regarding reflection activities such as prayer ranked lower among response means.
- Integrated Learning – On the whole, students did not feel a strong connection to the theme “Self and Other” in their Messina experience. This may be attributed to the lack of residential programming to the theme throughout the semester. In addition, the Honors students did not have to commit to a theme in order to be in the course. A more thorough assessment of theme connections should be done next year when all students living in Flannery O’Connor participate in Messina and its three themes – Self and Other, The Visionary and Stories We Tell.
- Hillside Facilities & Amenities – The Flannery O’Connor large floor lounges, free newspapers and use of the library and library resources rank highest in regards to usage.
- Overall, students felt positive about returning to Loyola for the spring semester and for future years.

III Qualitative Responses

Students also shared a variety of qualitative comments regarding their Messina experience. The following is a subset of the responses:

Biggest lessons learned during the first semester:

- “My first semester at Loyola and my participation in the Messina Honors Pilot program taught me a lot. I think something that I really took to the heart was the lesson of discernment and the need to take a step back from our busy lives and reflect. Being a part of the Honors program also allowed me to both find and feel a part of a smaller community. I was able to establish really close relationships with both my peers and my teachers. I feel that the program also allowed me to begin to find my place both at Loyola and in the greater community.”
- “I felt like I was able to establish a closer relationship with my professor as a result of the program. I also found that I was able to reflect more effectively and often as a result.”
- “How to write more effectively and concisely How to manage time and schoolwork more efficiently”
- “1)There can be a balance between school, friends, service, etc. 2)Everyone has a tough time at some point in their first year, so it is important to create strong friendships and ask for help when you need it.”

Are there topics you wish had been discussed during the enrichment hour time that would have helped you? Are there topics or conversations that you would like to see take place during the spring semester?

- “I think more discussion about the actual theme "Self and Other" would be very beneficial. To be honest, I only recently found out that was the theme for this year. I feel strongly that there could have been very dynamic and interesting discussions focusing on this idea.”
- “I feel like we should have done more of the team building activities from the start. When we discussed how school is going for us and activities we are in, we enjoyed it the most. It was nice when we got off campus together or cooked together because those helped build a strong class dynamic. It was great to discuss our lives with one another...that was the most helpful part of it and I wish we had done that sooner. Classes on time management and getting involved were boring and useless to us. We have a lot of class time so just being together and sharing time together outside of class really helped our in class comfort and depth of discussion. We began to feel more comfortable as we got to know each other better through the enrichment hours.”
- “During the first weeks of the year, it would have been helpful to have been instructed how to utilize moodle and inside loyola, esp. when considering the limited time there was to join clubs and teams etc.”
- “I think a career talk is order and would be very beneficial.”

What advice do you have for next year's first year students about Messina and life as a first year student?

- “That it is a time commitment outside of class, but it really does enhance the classroom experience. Coming to college is not simply about getting the best education that you can from your classes, it is also about finding yourself. The Messina program allows you to be tested academically while also finding who you want to be through interactions with peers. The first year class should always remember that they are going through this college experience with a community of peers and staff--they don't ever have to stand alone in this new journey.”
- “Don't sign up for all your classes on the same day. Get involved with one extra-curricular immediately and then slowly add others. Don't waste time fake studying in groups. I've learned an inconceivable amount in one semester through classes and socially adjusting.”

IV Quantitative Responses

| Q1: During your Messina fall experience, how often did you do or feel the following? (1- Never, 2- Sometimes, 3- Often, 4- Very Often) | Mean |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Established positive relationships with your peers/classmates due to connections made in Messina (Community) | 3.67 |
| Felt that Loyola University provided a healthy and positive environment for you to attend college (Community) | 3.48 |
| Felt that you belong at Loyola University (Community) | 3.43 |
| Felt that you had support in regards to becoming a part of the Loyola community (Community) | 3.38 |
| Felt that you had support in regards to your academic coursework (Critical Thinking) | 3.3 |
| Established positive relationships with Messina faculty, administrators and student leaders (Community) | 3.19 |
| Felt that you had support in regards to academic decisions (Critical Thinking) | 3.19 |
| Actively participated in class discussions (Critical Thinking) | 3.15 |
| Thought about your possible career choices (Discernment) | 3.1 |
| Actively participated in enrichment hour discussions (Integrated Learning) | 3.1 |
| Thought about your choice of major (Discernment) | 2.86 |
| Developed study groups with my peers to learn class material (Critical Thinking) | 2.67 |
| Explored the values and principles involved in your own decision-making processes (Discernment) | 2.57 |
| Used knowledge and skills discussed or developed in the enrichment hours to contribute to your understanding of content in other courses (Integrated Learning) | 2.52 |
| Found additional resources for course assignments when you didn't understand the material (Critical Thinking) | 2.45 |
| Participated in college-sponsored events and activities not associated with Messina (Community) | 2.43 |
| Discussed the Messina and Honors program theme "Self and Other" in class and during enrichment hours (Integrated Learning) | 2.33 |
| Identified connections between coursework and enrichment hour conversations and activities (Integrated Learning) | 2.24 |
| Spent quiet time in reflection (Discernment) | 2.19 |
| Discussed topics related to diversity and multiculturalism (Community) | 2.14 |
| Considered the Messina and Honors program theme "Self and Other" more deeply on my own and in private (Integrated Learning) | 1.86 |
| Sought tutoring service when needed (Critical Thinking) | 1.85 |
| Discussed the Messina and Honors program theme "Self and Other" with friends or classmates outside of class (Integrated Learning) | 1.67 |
| Used the Writing Center when working on papers (Critical Thinking) | 1.1 |

| Q2: To what extent did your participation in the first semester of Messina help you to... (1- Not at all, 2- A Little, 3- Somewhat, 4- A Great Deal) | Mean |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Develop close (deep) relationships with at least one other student at Loyola (Community) | 3.62 |
| Get to know your Messina professor (Community) | 3.52 |
| Look forward to the spring semester and future years at Loyola (Community) | 3.52 |
| Improve your ability to critically read content so that you can put the author's words into your own words (Critical Thinking) | 3.48 |
| Develop mutually respectful and beneficial relationships with your peers (Community) | 3.48 |
| Understand expectations of your professors (Critical Thinking) | 3.43 |
| Work effectively with others (Community) | 3.38 |
| Become a better writer (Critical Thinking) | 3.33 |
| Feel that you contribute to a community that benefits your peers' learning (Community) | 3.29 |
| Express your own opinions when they might be in the minority of opinions (Community) | 3.24 |
| Feel part of a supportive community that benefits your learning (Community) | 3.24 |
| Find a balance among academics, family/friends, leisure time and work (Discernment) | 3.14 |
| Meet people in your residence hall (Community) | 3.14 |
| Understand the learning strategies that are most effective for you (Critical Thinking) | 2.95 |
| Examine issues of interpersonal ethical conduct (Discernment) | 2.76 |
| Learn more about campus activities (including clubs, organizations, sports and service) that you have or wanted to become involved in while at Loyola (Community) | 2.76 |
| Understand the role that the Jesuit traditions of discernment and reflection play in making more informed, contemplative and sound academic and personal decisions (Discernment) | 2.71 |
| Learn how to resolve conflicts in a timely and satisfactory fashion (Community) | 2.71 |
| Become familiar with Baltimore (Integrated Learning) | 2.65 |
| Dedicate time to reflection, meditation, deep contemplation, or prayer (Discernment) | 2.24 |

| Q3: How often do you use the following amenities in or near Flannery O'Connor Hall? (1- Never, 2- Sometimes, 3- Often) | Mean |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Large Floor Lounges | 2.44 |
| Loyola-Notre Dame Library (going to the physical building) | 2.33 |
| Smart market on First Floor | 2.31 |
| Free Newspapers (by first floor elevator or in the Student Center) | 2.3 |
| Small/ side floor lounges | 2.28 |
| Loyola-Notre Dame Library (utilizing online resources) | 2.26 |
| Group Study Rooms or Classrooms in Flannery (212, 230 and 427) for Group Study | 1.89 |
| Butler Hall Computer Lab | 1.79 |
| Large Kitchen on First Floor | 1.74 |
| Fava Chapel in Hammerman | 1.65 |
| Floor Kitchenettes | 1.53 |
| Hammerman Hall Recreation Room (e.g., Pool Table) | 1.05 |

Appendix A: Messina Learning Outcomes

As a result of the *Messina*, first-year students will....

Jesuit Mission and Values

- Develop habits of discernment and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.
- Explore and articulate the values and principles involved in their personal decision-making.

Critical Understanding

- Develop habits of reading, writing and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.
- Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.

Connections to Loyola Community

- Establish healthy, mutually beneficial and respectful relationships with others including faculty, administrators, staff and peers.
- Demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community at Loyola University both in and out of the classroom.

Integrated Learning

- Integrate multiple sources of knowledge gained through various disciplinary lenses, texts, instruction, out of class experiences and personal reflection to offer a perspective on the interdisciplinary theme of the community.

Note: The learning outcomes listed above incorporate current goals of the Alpha program and FE 100 and the AAC&U's VALUE: Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education. In addition, Terra Schehr, Assistant Vice-President for Institutional Research and Effectiveness was consulted to ensure that the outcomes could be measured. An assessment plan will be developed over the next year to assess progress for these aims as well as to gather evidence of individual student learning after their first year at Loyola.

Appendix B: Copy of Survey Instrument

1. During your Messina fall experience, how often did you do or feel the following?

NEVER SOMETIMES OFTEN VERY OFTEN

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spent quiet time in reflection |
| Explored the values and principles involved in your own decision-making processes |
| Thought about your choice of major |
| Thought about your possible career choices |
| Sought tutoring service when needed |
| Found additional resources for course assignments when you didn't understand the material |
| Used the Writing Center when working on papers |
| Developed study groups with my peers to learn class material |
| Participated in college-sponsored events and activities not associated with Messina |
| Discussed topics related to diversity and multiculturalism |
| Established positive relationships with Messina faculty, administrators and student leaders |
| Established positive relationships with your peers/classmates due to connections made in Messina |
| Felt that you belonged at Loyola University |
| Felt that Loyola University provided a healthy and positive environment for you to attend college |
| Felt that you had support in regards to academic decisions |
| Felt that you had support in regards to your academic coursework |
| Felt that you had support in regards to becoming a part of the Loyola community |
| Actively participated in enrichment hour discussions. |
| Actively participated in class discussions. |
| Discussed the Messina and Honors program theme "Self and Other" in class and during enrichment hours. |
| Discussed the Messina and Honors program theme "Self and Other" with friends or classmates outside of class. |
| Considered the Messina and Honors program theme "Self and Other" more deeply on my own and in private. |
| Identified connections between coursework and enrichment hour conversations and activities. |
| Used knowledge and skills discussed or developed in the enrichment hours to contribute to your understanding of content in other courses. |

2. To what extent did your participation in the first semester of Messina help you to...

NOT AT ALL A LITTLE SOMEWHAT A GREAT DEAL

| |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dedicate time to reflection, meditation, deep contemplation, or prayer |
| Understand the role that the Jesuit traditions of discernment and reflection play in making more informed, contemplative and sound academic and personal decisions |
| Examine issues of interpersonal ethical conduct |
| Understand the learning strategies that are most effective for you |
| Become a better writer |
| Understand expectations of your professors |

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Improve your ability to critically read content so that you can put the author's words into your own words |
| To find a balance among academics, family/friends, leisure time and work |
| Work effectively with others |
| Express your own opinions when they might be in the minority of opinions |
| Learn how to resolve conflicts in a timely and satisfactory fashion |
| Get to know your Messina professor |
| Meet people in your residence hall |
| Develop close (deep) relationships with at least one other student at Loyola |
| Develop mutually respectful and beneficial relationships with my peers |
| Feel part of a supportive community that benefits your learning |
| Feel that you contribute to a community that benefits your peers' learning |
| Learn more about campus activities (including clubs, organizations, sports and service) that you have or wanted to become involved in while at Loyola |
| Become familiar with Baltimore |
| Look forward to the spring semester and future years at Loyola |

3. How often do you use the following amenities in or near Flannery O'Connor Hall?

NEVER SOMETIME OFTEN VERY OFTEN N/A

| |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Large Floor Lounges |
| Floor Kitchenettes |
| Small/side floor lounges |
| Group Study Rooms or Classrooms in Flannery (212, 230 and 427) for Group Study |
| Large Kitchen on First Floor |
| Smart Market on First Floor |
| Butler Hall Computer Lab |
| Free Newspapers (by first floor elevator or in the student center) |
| Fava Chapel in Hammerman |
| Hammerman Hall Recreation Room (e.g., Pool Table) |
| Loyola – Notre Dame Library (going to the physical building) |
| Loyola – Notre Dame Library (utilizing online resources) |

4. What other amenities would contribute to the residential experience in Flannery O'Connor Hall?
5. Are there topics you wish had been discussed during the enrichment hour time that would have helped you? Are there topics or conversations that you would like to see take place during the spring semester?
6. What are the two biggest lessons you learned from your first semester at Loyola by participating in the Messina-Honors Pilot program?
7. What should next year's first year students know in advance of signing up for Messina? What advice do you have for next year's first year class?
8. Are there any other comments you would like to share?