

Values & Ethics Assessment Summary

Executive Summary

During the Fall 2019 semester, the Drake Curriculum Analysis Committee (DCAC) reviewed the Values & Ethics (VE) Area of Inquiry (AOI) by analyzing student self-perceptions of academic engagement and perceived learning gains, and by initiating a faculty review of student work in the AOI. The VE AOI consists of the following outcomes: (1) ethical issues, (2) underlying values, (3) professional/civic ethics, (4) developing ethical solutions, and (5) personal values and core beliefs.

1. Recognize and reflect critically on ethical issues.
2. Identify values that underlie human activities.
3. Articulate ethical issues that arise in their professional or civic life.
4. Articulate relevant ethical issues and apply them in developing solutions for critical problems and questions.
5. Articulate a reasoned vision of their own values or core beliefs.

Based on results from the 2019 Drake Student Survey, Drake undergraduate students highly rate their ability to “articulate a vision of [their] own values, ethics, or core beliefs” (86% of undergraduates reported “strong” or “very strong” skills). Based on the 2013-18 Longitudinal Panel Study results, students’ perception of their skills significantly change ($p < 0.05$) throughout their time at Drake.

Faculty review of student work revealed proficiency at the basic level of learning outcomes. Faculty largely found that students are able to recognize and articulate values or ethical issues they see throughout their experiences, in particular their personal values or core beliefs; however, students struggled when asked to step outside of their personal experience and critically reflect on ethical issues, consider alternative perspectives, and develop ethical solutions to critical problems and questions. During the AOI workshop, faculty discussed that the primary challenge for this AOI is to encourage students to see beyond their own lens. Barriers toward achieving this goal include: (1) sufficient opportunities and effective pedagogies to practice ethical skills in a 15-week course, (2) a learning environment conducive to the practice of ethical thinking, (3) breaking down the systematic process of how to develop solutions using ethical perspectives/concepts, and (4) encouraging students to see how personal values or ethics can interact and integrate with other cultural values or ethics. Some ways to achieve this goal include: (1) opportunities for practice and application, including community engagement, and (2) scaffolding of learning.

To address these concerns, DCAC has developed the following recommendations.

Concerning the AOI,

1. Encourage AOI faculty to address both values and ethics in their AOI course, rather than one or the other.

2. Create a notification process for AOI faculty to remind them of their course's AOI status and provide relevant resources, including the AOI outcomes and rubric.

Concerning pedagogy and practice,

3. Encourage faculty development in (1) deploying learning activities that allow students to practice ethical thinking, (2) creating an environment conducive to the practice of ethical thinking, (3) developing higher-order thinking, and (4) scaffolding the learning processes into manageable pieces for students.
4. Organize resources (e.g., list of speakers, relevant alumni, list of sample assignments, community engaged learning, co-curricular opportunities) that faculty can use to encourage students to see the real-world application of this AOI.
5. Investigate a place and space for AOI faculty to discuss teaching within this AOI led by the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Overview

The Drake Curriculum promises to provide students with a meaningful liberal arts education through three components: a First-Year Seminar, a set of Areas of Inquiry (AOI) requirements, and a Senior Capstone. Our institution maintains a commitment to inquire into the consequences of our work with students, something Lee Shulman described as a “pedagogical imperative.”¹

To provide evidence of student learning in the Drake Curriculum, the Drake Curriculum Analysis Committee (DCAC) regularly performs on-going inquiry of the Drake Curriculum. During the Fall 2019 semester, DCAC analyzed the Values & Ethics (VE) AOI. Drake students will “develop the basic tools required to question themselves and others in a responsible manner and to evaluate the ethical implications of both collective and personal choices”² through (1) ethical issues, (2) underlying values, (3) professional/civic ethics, (4) developing ethical solutions, and (5) personal values and core beliefs.

1. Recognize and reflect critically on ethical issues.
2. Identify values that underlie human activities.
3. Articulate ethical issues that arise in their professional or civic life.
4. Articulate relevant ethical issues and apply them in developing solutions for critical problems and questions.
5. Articulate a reasoned vision of their own values or core beliefs.

DCAC provides evidence of student learning in this AOI through direct and indirect data.

Student Self-perceptions of Skills

Student self-reported data from several sources provide valuable context to understand challenges in particular skill areas. Student self-reported data is pulled from the 2016 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), 2019 Drake Student Survey (DSS), and the 2013-2018 Foundations of Learning Assessment (FLA).

Students have a high self-perception of their abilities to articulate their personal values, ethics, or core beliefs. On the 2019 DSS, 86% of Drake undergraduate and P1-P2 students reported “Strong” or “Very Strong” skills in articulating a vision of their own values, ethics, or core beliefs. This is similar to student perceptions from the 2017 DSS (84% “Strong” or “Very Strong”) and the 2016 DSS (85% “Strong” or “Very Strong”). On the 2016 NSSE, 72% of Drake seniors reported that their Drake experience contributed “Quite a bit” or “Very much” to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in “developing or clarifying a

¹Shulman, L. S. (2003). No drive-by teachers. Carnegie Perspectives. Retrieved from <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/perspectives/no-drive-teachers>

² The Drake Curriculum: Values and Ethics. (n.d.). Retrieved October 24, 2019, from <https://www.drake.edu/dc/areasofinquiry/valuesandethics/>

personal code of values and ethics.” This compared similarly to Drake’s peer institutions (72% “Quite a bit” or “Very much”). See Appendix A for full results.

Drake students’ perception of their skills in values and ethics significantly change throughout their time at Drake. Results of the 2013-18 Longitudinal Panel study show significant growth ($p < 0.05$) in students’ self-reported skills over their Drake experience. The 2013-18 Longitudinal Panel Study compares students’ self-reported skill on institutional learning outcomes from before entering Drake to at least a year into their Drake experience. See Appendix B for full results.

Faculty Review of Student Work

In Fall 2019, DCAC worked with a select group of VE AOI faculty to develop criteria and levels of performance per criteria based upon on the existing VE AOI outcomes. Then later in that semester, faculty teaching in the VE AOI reviewed samples of student work and explored student skills in values and ethics. DCAC aggregated results to focus on Drake’s overall effectiveness in supporting student learning. DCAC solicited samples of student work from AOI faculty and selected 27 representative samples from 9 different courses or sections that covered all colleges/schools.

In Fall 2019, faculty used the criteria and levels of performance described above to evaluate student work. The VE criteria include the following:

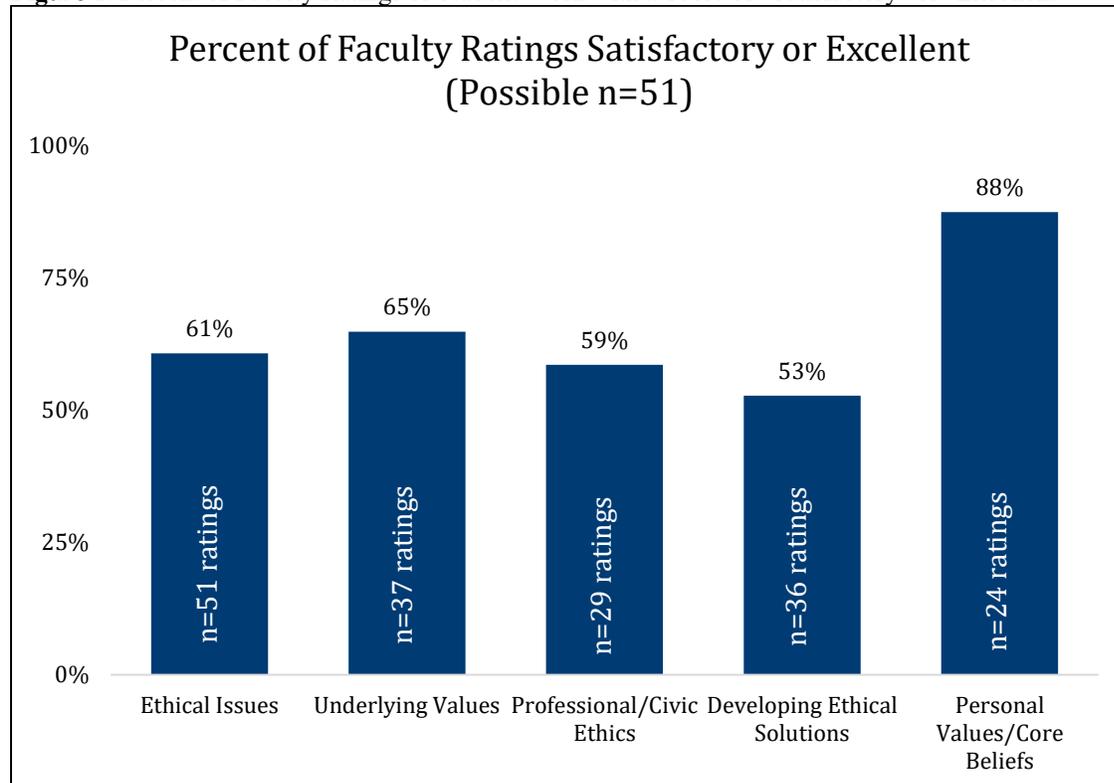
- Ethical Issues
 - Does the student recognize ethical issues?
 - Does the student reflect critically on ethical issues?
- Underlying Values
 - Does the student identify the values that underlie human activities?
- Professional/Civic Ethics
 - Does the student articulate ethical issues that arise in their professional or civic life?
- Developing Ethical Solutions
 - Does the student articulate relevant ethical issues and apply them in developing solutions for critical problems and questions?
- Personal Values/Core Beliefs
 - Does the student articulate a reasoned vision of their own values or core beliefs?

In addition to the eight (8) faculty/staff members of DCAC, the approximately 25 faculty who teach in this AOI were invited to participate. Thirteen (13) AOI faculty and/or DCAC faculty/staff participated in some or all of the AOI assessment process. Aggregate results of nine (9) raters are shown in Figure 1 below. This figure represents the percent of faculty ratings of student work with a score of “Satisfactory” or “Excellent.”

Faculty review of student work showed two important points:

1. High proficiency for students' ability to articulate their personal values or core beliefs and the origins of those values or beliefs.
2. Demonstrated ability to articulate and recognize values and ethics in their daily lives, especially if they understand the personal connection to them; however, students struggled when asked to step outside of their personal experience and critically reflect on ethical issues, consider alternative perspectives, and develop ethical solutions to critical problems and questions

Figure 1: Percent of Faculty Ratings of Student Work with a Score of “Satisfactory” or “Excellent”



Faculty reviewers identified the following consistent themes per criteria. Included below are also exemplar quotes from faculty.

- ***Ethical Issues:*** Students can proficiently articulate ethical issues and the different context of ethical issues, but struggle with articulating and reflecting on ethics in context, and the interrelationships between issues.
 - “The student identifies several ethical issues involving the portrayal of sexual and gender identity. The student could have gone further by addressing additional perspectives on the content of the chosen program.”
- ***Underlying Values:*** Students can articulate the underlying values of human activities in complex contexts, but often do so in simplistic terms (i.e., implied understanding of complexity, but consider each context one at a time). Students struggled with providing depth, examining different perspectives, and stepping outside their own experience and examining how their personal values interacted with other cultural and social values.

- “The student has a clear sense of the human values (e.g., empathy, truth), yet failed to address how these values intersect with social and cultural values.”
- Professional/Civic Ethics: Students can articulate the ethical issues in everyday life and provide evidence, but sometimes struggle with considering arguments against that issue. Once they see an ethical issue, they can't unsee it.
 - “Identifies some issues regarding using college students as research subjects, but does not completely provide arguments for both sides.”
- Developing Ethical Solutions: Students can state a solution to an ethical question, and they can state different ethical perspectives and concepts, but they have difficulty in tying these two together, such that the student develops a solution based on evidence provided and an ethical perspective/concept.
 - “Clearly states both sides of the ethical dilemma. Has marginal grasp of ethical dilemma, but fails to present the interrelated issue of the dilemma. Clearly documents relevant ethical positions on this issue. Presents solution, but the ethical question is not new, nor are is the solution. Maybe takes into account stakeholders, but difficult to tell without hearing the presentation.”
- Personal Values & Core Beliefs: A strength. Students confidently articulate their personal values/core beliefs and the origins of these beliefs. Students could go deeper by providing greater depth and nuance in their values/beliefs (i.e., including more specifics and examples), and by considering the weaknesses and arguments for competing claims against their values/beliefs.
 - “Strong articulation of core value/beliefs independent of ontological framework. This is a powerful ownership and understanding of personal values/beliefs rather than simply rattling off beliefs that align with a particular framework or perspective. The author owns these and can use these across various situations and contexts. This allows for a stronger articulation of the rational (depth and clarity).”

Faculty Discussion of Teaching in the Values & Ethics AOI

On October 24, 2019, DCAC held an AOI Workshop on the Values & Ethics AOI to engage AOI faculty around the results of the faculty review of student work. Faculty in attendance discussed that the primary challenge for this AOI is to encourage students to see beyond their own lens. Faculty discussed that students are able to recognize and articulate values or ethical issues they see throughout their experiences, in particular their personal values or core beliefs; however, students struggled when asked to step outside of their personal experience and critically reflect on ethical issues, consider alternative perspectives, and develop ethical solutions to critical problems and questions. That is, students demonstrate some of the AOI outcomes as stated (articulate/recognize), but in some circumstances are unable to apply these skills toward a deeper understanding.

Faculty discussed the following barriers to achieving this goal

- Perspective on how personal values or ethics can interact and integrate with other cultural values or ethics. Students strongly articulate their personal values and core beliefs, and detailed sound reasoning behind these values and beliefs. They have

used these values and beliefs in their ethical decision making throughout their lives. Faculty noted that VE courses forced students to take an intentional step back and retrain how they think about moral decision making using a different perspective and different tools. Students struggled to apply a “new way of thinking” to frame their decision-making, while maintaining their personal moral stance (“It’s difficult to turn off the lightbulb.”)

- Opportunities to practice ethical thinking. Because of students’ strong personal values and beliefs, students need opportunity to practice new ways of thinking, in whatever form is most applicable to the course. Faculty noted that a 15-week course does not provide a lot of opportunity to create an environment for students to freely exchange ideas and practice skills. Faculty who noted student success in this space often had students several times throughout their degree program.
- Learning environments conducive to the practice of ethical thinking. Faculty noted how importance it is that students feel comfortable enough to practice ethical thinking. In order to practice these skills, students must demonstrate vulnerability to examine their personal values and core beliefs. While faculty could provide space to practice these skills, other students snap judgments may discourage further vulnerability (“You don’t have to agree with someone to learn.”) Faculty who noted success in creating a learning environment conducive to practice VE skills, often discussed less personal and more content-specific material.
- Critical thinking processes to move from ethical perspectives/concepts to application/development of solutions. After faculty encouraged students to take a step back and use a different perspective, students then had to synthesize all of the content they learned with different ethical perspectives. Faculty who noted student success were able to break down the critical thinking process and allow students a method to apply their knowledge.

Faculty discussed the following as opportunities to enhance achievement of this goal:

- Practice and application. Faculty needed tools and opportunities to learn how to create spaces and pedagogies for students to practice skills. The practice of VE skills is essential to move beyond their personal perspective and use a different perspective. In particular, faculty noted that community engaged learning is an essential tool.
- Scaffolding of learning. To encourage students to take on different perspectives, faculty noted the importance of breaking down the learning and thinking process into its component parts to allow students to slowly gain comfort and confidence.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Through student self-reported perceptions, faculty review of student work, and in-depth faculty discussions about student learning in this AOI, DCAC found that students grapple with how to see beyond their ethical lens and how to consider alternative or competing perspectives. Faculty specifically wrestle with the opportunity and pedagogy to complete this task in a 15-week AOI course. To address these concerns, DCAC has developed the following recommendations.

Concerning the AOI,

1. Encourage AOI faculty to address both values and ethics in their AOI course, rather than one or the other.
 - a. VE AOI courses are only required to satisfy two (2) of the five (5) VE AOI outcomes. Of the VE outcomes, two (2) outcomes explicitly mention values and three (3) outcomes explicitly mention ethics. AOI faculty noted that students are stronger in values (internal/articulation) than ethics (external/application).
2. Create a notification process for AOI faculty to remind them of their course's AOI status and provide relevant resources, including the AOI outcomes and rubric.
 - a. As seen in other AOI's, faculty could benefit from a reminder of their AOI status and specific AOI resources that provide specific language and tools.

Concerning pedagogy and practice,

3. Encourage faculty development in (1) deploying learning activities that allow students to practice ethical thinking, (2) creating an environment conducive to the practice of ethical thinking, (3) developing higher-order thinking, and (4) scaffolding the learning processes into manageable pieces for students.
4. Organize resources (e.g., list of speakers, relevant alumni, list of sample assignments, community engaged learning, co-curricular opportunities) that faculty can use to encourage students to see the real-world application.
 - a. AOI faculty, in particular faculty without specific ethics training, noted a need for development and resources to support their efforts to get students to see beyond their lens.
5. Investigate a place and space for AOI faculty to discuss teaching within this AOI led by the Center for Teaching Excellence.
 - b. Allowing AOI faculty regular space to discuss these specific courses encourages sharing of best practices and an emphasis on the AOI.

Appendix A

Data for Student Self-Perception of Skills

Students complete several institutional surveys that provide data about their self-reported perceptions of their own learning. These surveys include the Foundations of Learning Assessment taken before their Drake experience, and the Drake Student Survey taken in the spring. These data are compared in the Longitudinal Panel Study that examines students' change in their perceptions of their skills over time.

Table 1: Percent of Drake students (undergraduate and P1-P2 students) who have “Strong” or “Very Strong” skills in the educational goals of Drake, compared to previous years. (Source: 2019 Drake Student Survey Lite)

Item	2019	2018	2017
Articulate a vision of my own values, ethics, or core beliefs	86%	84%	85%

Table 2: Percent of Drake seniors that believe their Drake experience has contributed (“Quite a bit” or “very much”) to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in this area, compared to Peers. (Source: 2016 National Survey of Student Engagement)

Item	Senior	
	Drake	Peers
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	72%	72%

Table 3: Select Mean Scores from 2013-18 Longitudinal Panel Study (“How have you or your abilities changed in each of the following areas since coming to Drake?” 1=Much Worse, 5=Much Better). *Significance:* *=<.05, **=<.01, *Effect Size:* 0.30-0.50=Moderate

	Pretest Mean (FLA)	Posttest Mean (DSS)	2018		2017		2014	
			Sig.	Effect Size	Sig.	Effect Size	Sig.	Effect Size
Articulate a vision of my own values, ethics, or core beliefs	4.09	4.23	**	.15	*	.10	*	.09

Appendix B

Longitudinal Panel Study (2013-18)

The Longitudinal Panel Study examines how students' perceptions of their skills change over time.

		Pretest Mean (FLA)	Posttest Mean (DSS)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Repeated Measures Mean Comparison				2017 Comparison		2014 Comparison	
				Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Effect Size (<i>d</i>)	Sig. (2- tailed)	Effect Size (<i>d</i>)	Sig. (2- tailed)	Effect Size (<i>d</i>)
Pair 1	Ability to read carefully	4.12	4.26	.200	.086	4.94	796	.000	0.18	0.001	0.13	0.604	0.02
Pair 2	Employ evidence effectively in writing	3.85	4.20	.417	.295	11.54	794	.000	0.41	0.000	0.36	0.000	0.33
Pair 3	Construct reasoned arguments	3.92	4.25	.390	.269	10.67	795	.000	0.38	0.000	0.34	0.000	0.20
Pair 4	Evaluate reasoned arguments	3.95	4.25	.360	.239	9.69	793	.000	0.34	0.000	0.31	0.000	0.25
Pair 5	Evaluate the quality or reliability of information	3.86	4.23	.433	.304	11.25	791	.000	0.40	0.000	0.45	0.000	0.32
Pair 6	Understand the ethical issues related to use and misuse of information	3.86	4.31	.517	.379	12.69	794	.000	0.45	0.000	0.36	0.000	0.26
Pair 7	Create or interpret art (ex. Sculpture, painting, music, theatre)	3.00	3.06	.143	.030	1.29	790	.197	0.05	0.033	0.08	0.687	0.02
Pair 8	Understand the historical, political, and social connections of past events	3.58	3.75	.238	.096	4.60	790	.000	0.16	0.027	0.09	0.091	0.07
Pair 9	Analyze differences between industrialized and developing areas of the world	3.54	3.79	.322	.174	6.58	789	.000	0.23	0.001	0.13	0.320	0.04
Pair 10	Understand the perspectives and experiences of people who are different than you	4.00	4.23	.291	.159	6.70	789	.000	0.24	0.000	0.19	0.854	0.01
Pair 11	Read and understand scientific writings written for an informed lay audience	3.33	3.80	.541	.387	11.79	792	.000	0.42	0.000	0.44	0.000	0.34
Pair 12	Execute appropriate mathematical operations for a given question	3.75	3.77	.091	.048	0.61	788	.541	0.02	0.476	0.03	0.821	0.01
Pair 13	Ability to use educational experiences to analyze civic and global issues.	3.56	3.92	.430	.292	10.34	794	.000	0.37	0.000	0.40	0.000	0.23
Pair 14	Knowledge of how to participate effectively in the democratic process.	3.53	3.78	.332	.178	6.53	795	.000	0.23	0.000	0.46	0.008	0.11
Pair 15	Communicate effectively with people from other cultures and backgrounds.	3.79	4.12	.399	.255	8.92	794	.000	0.32	0.000	0.35	0.005	0.12
Pair 16	Articulate a vision of my own values, ethics, or core beliefs	4.09	4.23	.215	.076	4.09	790	.000	0.15	0.014	0.10	0.039	0.09
Pair 17	Apply understanding of ethical issues when developing solutions	3.80	4.15	.424	.294	10.79	793	.000	0.38	0.000	0.33	0.000	0.25
Pair 18	Ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences	4.01	4.29	.347	.222	8.96	793	.000	0.32	0.000	0.29	0.000	0.19

