

CCCU Adult Program Data Point toward a Connection Between Christian College Attendance and Increased Religious Practice

The CCCU Center for Research in Adult Learning at Indiana Wesleyan University has been analyzing data from three Christian colleges to uncover the impact of these programs on spiritual growth. Data indicate that upon graduation there are fewer adult students who say they seldom or never pray or go to church.

Entry Surveys Compared to Exit Surveys: 3 Christian College Adult Programs

How often do you pray ?	Entry		Exit	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Response				
At least daily	1430	61.50%	521	61.80%
A couple times a week	495	21.30%	187	22.20%
Once a week	109	4.70%	54	6.40%
Seldom	227	9.80%	64	7.60%
Never	66	2.80%	17	2.00%

How often do you attend church?	Entry		Exit	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Response				
Weekly	982	43.50%	388	46.40%
A couple times a month	344	15.20%	103	12.30%
Once a month	127	5.60%	57	6.80%
A couple times a year	358	15.80%	150	17.90%
Rarely or never	449	19.90%	139	16.60%

Source: CCCU Center for Research in Adult Learning at Indiana Wesleyan University

Cynthia Tweedell, Executive Director of the Center for Research in Adult Learning, cautions on using these data to conclude that these adult programs change the religious behavior of their students. “Since these are two independent samples, we might be looking at a characteristic of those who are more likely to persist to graduation: Someone who does not attend church may be more likely to drop out of a Christian college.” To further investigate the spiritual differences between CCCU adult students from entry to exit, the Center for Research has been conducting an Adult Spiritual Formation Inventory, developed by a CCCU Task Force led by Larry Chamberlain of Indiana Wesleyan. Data indicate that exiting adult students are statistically more likely to report they volunteer in church or community organizations and are more likely to report they put the interests and well-being of others ahead of their own.

Three Christian Colleges: Entry and Exit Comparisons				
5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree				
*t-test indicates significant difference between entry and exit samples ($p < .05$)				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
*I volunteer my time to a church.	entry	2343	3.40	1.23
	exit	833	3.55	1.17
*I volunteer my time to community and/or not-for-profit organizations.	entry	2337	3.61	1.05
	exit	833	3.75	0.98
*I put the interests and well-being of others ahead of my own.	entry	2357	4.03	0.81
	exit	837	4.11	0.76

Source: CCCU Center for Research in Adult Learning at Indiana Wesleyan University

The finding that CCCU Adult Programs have a spiritual impact on students is further supported by the Center for Research in Adult Learning Student Learning Outcomes Project. Essays from 250 beginning and graduating adult students from seven Christian colleges indicate a significant difference in Christian worldview.

Of course these data only substantiate the testimonies Christian college educators hear from their adult students. There are many reports of lives transformed as a product of the adult programs at CCCU schools. While adult students most frequently attend to make career and financial gains, they frequently report that their lives were eternally touched by the presence of Christian faculty, staff and fellow students.

For more information and to participate in the CCCU Center for Research in Adult Learning Retention, Spiritual Formation and Student Learning Outcomes Projects, see <http://www.indwes.edu/CRAL/Current-Research/> or contact Dr. Tweedell at Cynthia.tweedell@indwes.edu.