



**SPECIAL REPORT:
TRENDS IN SENIORS'
SPIRITUAL BELIEFS,
ATTITUDES, AND
EXPERIENCES: 2010 AND
2018**

The Office of Assessment and Research (OAR)

Introduction

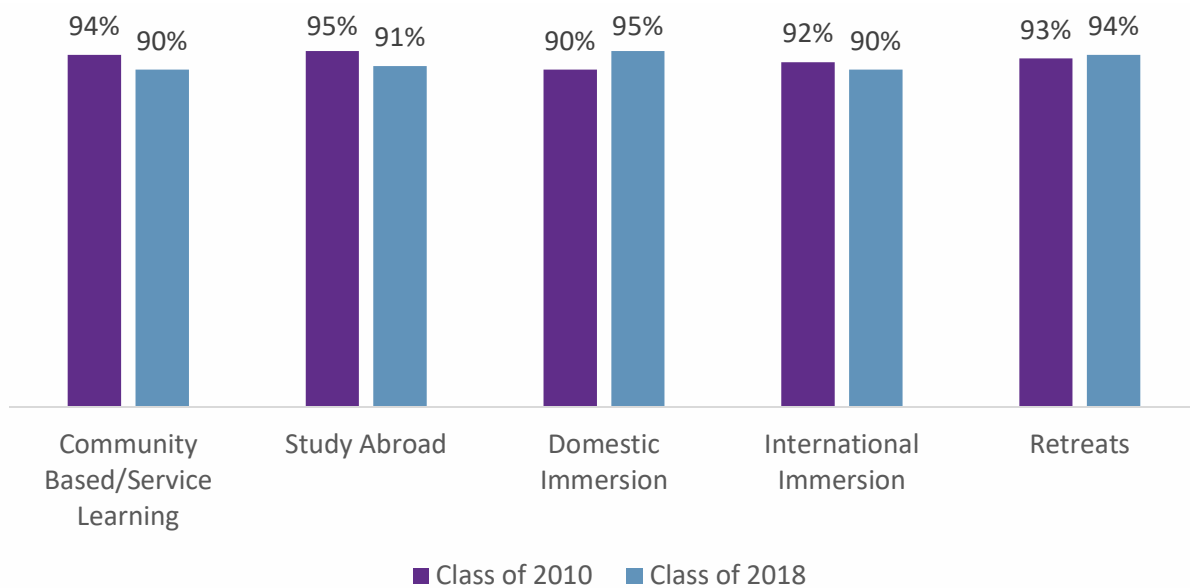
During their last semester at Holy Cross, senior students are given multiple surveys to measure different academic and non-academic outcomes of interest that they might have developed during their time at the college. One set of these outcomes of interest are outcomes related to seniors' spiritual and/or religious beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. This report examines similar questions that have been asked to two cohorts of graduating seniors: the class of 2010, and the class of 2018. Of the 702 students who graduated in 2010, 611 responded to the survey, giving a response rate of 87%. Of the 755 students who were invited to take the survey in 2018, 701 responded, giving a response rate of 93%.

Significance/Contribution of Experiences

One set of questions that seniors were asked dealt with the impact of their participation in activities that could reasonably have developed their spiritual/religious attitudes and beliefs. Importantly, these questions were asked slightly differently over time. The 2010 cohort was asked to rate certain activities in terms of their significance to their experience at Holy Cross using a 4-point Likert-type scale: Not significant, Somewhat significant, Significant, or Extremely significant. The 2018 cohort was asked more explicitly about the spiritual impact of these activities: "Please indicate the extent to which the following HC-sponsored activities contributed, if at all, to your spiritual and/or religious development." Respondents also used a 4-point Likert-type scale to respond, but the scale was slightly different: Did not contribute at all, Contributed a little, Contributed a moderate amount, or Contributed a significant amount.

Figure 1 compares the percentage of students who reported that they were impacted to any extent by these programs. In other words, the figure shows the combined percentage across every response on each group's 4-point Likert scale, excluding "Not Significant" and "Did not contribute at all". As shown, for each cohort of seniors, 90% or more of the students who participated in each program reported being impacted by it to some extent.

Figure 1: Percentage of Seniors Who Reported That Activities Impacted Them to Any Extent

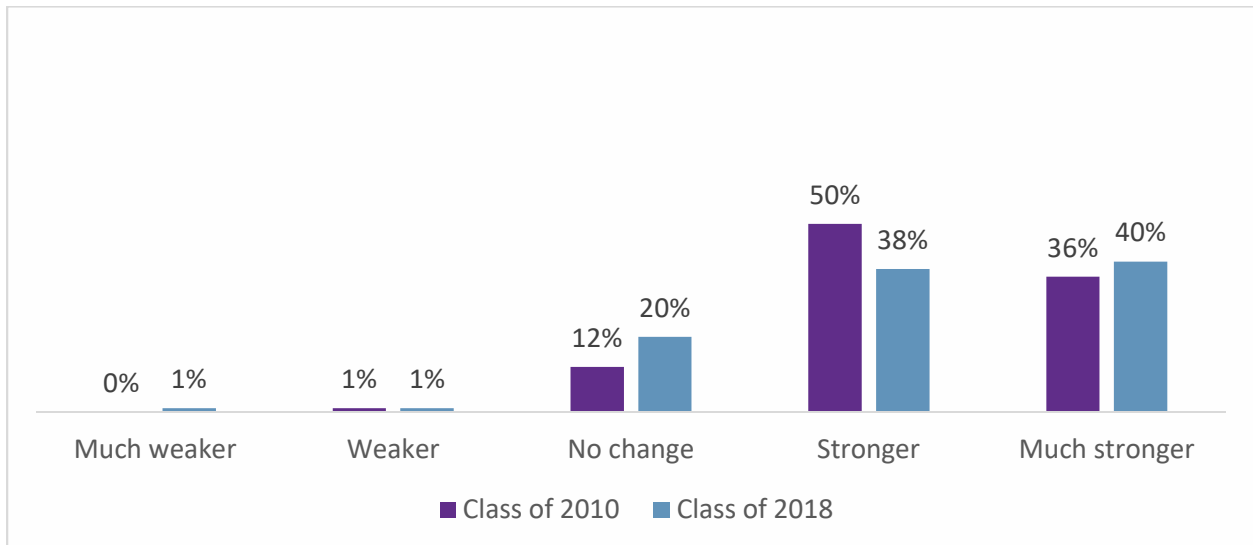


Spiritual/Religious Growth

Both of these students were also asked questions about their spiritual/religious growth. One question was asked exactly the same with exactly the same answer options between the two cohorts: “Compared with when you first started at Holy Cross, how you would now describe your **ability to reflect on your life and life choices?**” Participants could choose from answer options that were provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale: Much weaker, Weaker, No change, Stronger, or Much stronger.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of seniors who chose each answer option in 2010 versus 2018. As shown, in 2018, a higher percentage of students chose Much stronger compared to 2010. However, a greater percentage of students chose Stronger in 2010 compared to 2018.

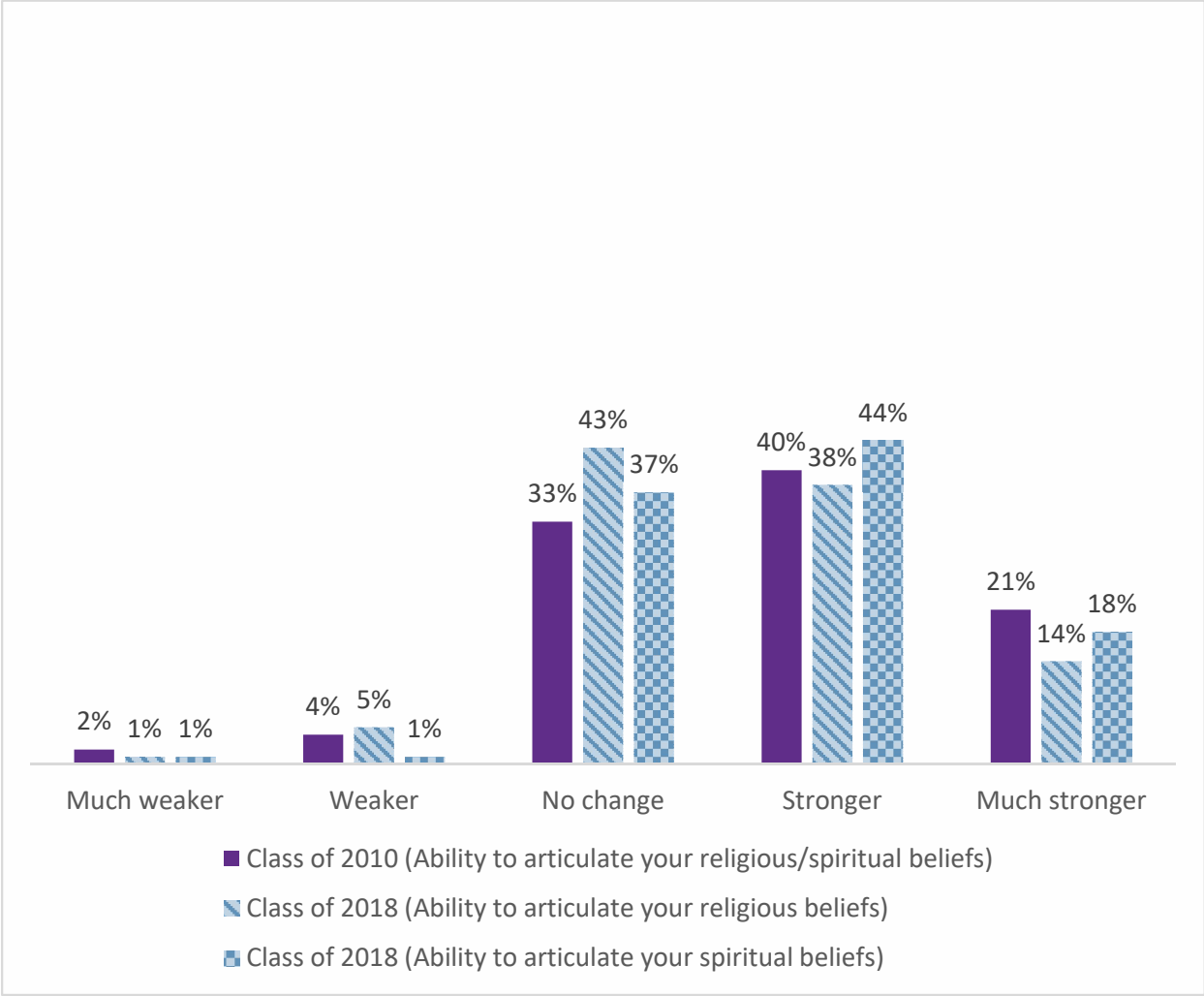
Figure 2: Percentage of Seniors by Cohort Who Selected Each Answer Option for the Question: “Compared with when you first started at Holy Cross, how you would now describe your ability to reflect on your life and life choices?”



There were three more questions that the two cohorts of students that were comparable in terms of their spiritual/religious growth during their time at Holy Cross. In 2010, students were asked “Compared with when you first started at Holy Cross, how you would now describe your **ability to articulate your religious/spiritual beliefs?**” In 2018, this question was broken into two separate questions: one asking students about their ability to articulate their **religious beliefs**, and one asking students about their ability to articulate their **spiritual beliefs**. The same 5-point Likert-type scale was used as before: Much weaker, Weaker, No change, Stronger, and Much Stronger.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option across these three questions. As shown, the results are comparable between the two cohorts with the majority of students either selecting Stronger or No Change. For the 2018 cohort, it appears that students reported more growth in their ability to articulate their spiritual beliefs than their religious beliefs.

Figure 3: Percentage of Seniors by Cohort and Question Wording Who Selected Each Answer Option



Appendix: Question By Question Breakdown of Spiritual Belief, Attitude, and Experience Trend Data

Section 1: Significance/Contribution of Experiences

Community Based/Service Learning

Holy Cross Experience Survey 2010

Not significant		Somewhat significant		Significant		Extremely significant	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
21	7%	59	19%	118	38%	114	37%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018

Did not contribute at all		Contributes a little		Contributes a moderate amount		Contributes a significant amount	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
40	10%	143	37%	129	34%	72	19%

Study Abroad

Holy Cross Experience Survey 2010

Not significant		Somewhat significant		Significant		Extremely significant	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11	5%	5	2%	25	12%	171	81%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018

Did not contribute at all		Contributes a little		Contributes a moderate amount		Contributes a significant amount	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
26	9%	45	16%	52	18%	162	57%

Domestic Immersion

Holy Cross Experience Survey 2010

Not significant		Somewhat significant		Significant		Extremely significant	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15	10%	16	11%	30	21%	83	58%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018

Did not contribute at all		Contributes a little		Contributes a moderate amount		Contributes a significant amount	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
10	5%	69	33%	65	31%	65	31%

International Immersion

Holy Cross Experience Survey 2010

Not significant		Somewhat significant		Significant		Extremely significant	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11	8%	4	3%	23	17%	98	72%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018

Did not contribute at all		Contributes a little		Contributes a moderate amount		Contributes a significant amount	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
13	10%	23	19%	22	18%	66	53%

Retreats

Holy Cross Experience Survey 2010

Not significant		Somewhat significant		Significant		Extremely significant	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
14	7%	27	14%	70	37%	79	42%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018

Did not contribute at all		Contributes a little		Contributes a moderate amount		Contributes a significant amount	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16	7%	103	43%	75	31%	48	20%

Section 2: Spiritual/Religious Growth

Ability to reflect on yourself and life choices

Holy Cross Experience Survey 2010

Much weaker		Weaker		No change		Stronger		Much stronger	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
3	0%	7	1%	73	12%	302	50%	219	36%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018

Much weaker		Weaker		No change		Stronger		Much stronger	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4	1%	9	1%	136	20%	259	38%	270	40%

Ability to articulate your religious/spiritual beliefs

Holy Cross Experience Survey 2010

Much weaker		Weaker		No change		Stronger		Much stronger	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
12	2%	24	4%	201	33%	242	40%	127	21%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018 (Religious Beliefs Only)

Much weaker		Weaker		No change		Stronger		Much stronger	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	1%	35	5%	283	43%	250	38%	90	14%

The Spiritual Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences Survey 2018 (Spiritual Beliefs Only)

Much weaker		Weaker		No change		Stronger		Much stronger	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2	1%	4	1%	138	37%	166	44%	68	18%