

B-Heard: Tell Us What You Think

Survey Results

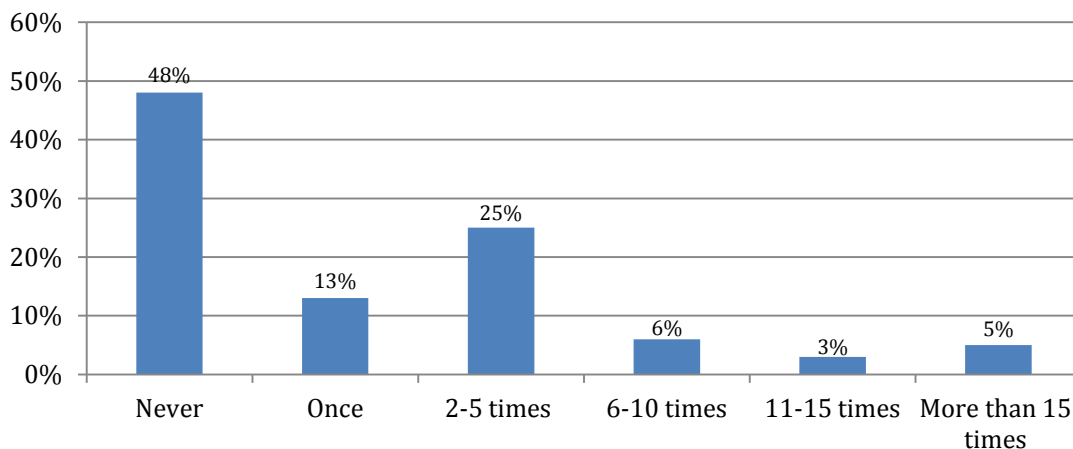
Fall 2011/ Spring 2012

At the beginning of both the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters students in classes associated with *The B-Word Project* were asked to complete pre-class surveys. One hundred and twenty-eight students in seven different classes across the two semesters completed pre-class surveys (80 women and 48 men). Survey questions covered a range of topics including questions about the *Carpenter Performing Arts Center* (CPAC) and censorship. Post-test surveys were administered at the end of the semesters to measure changes in exposure to CPAC and attitudes about censorship over the course of the semesters. A total of 102 students completed post-class surveys (64 women and 38 men). What follows is a brief summary of the survey results.

How many times have students been to the *Carpenter Performing Arts Center*?

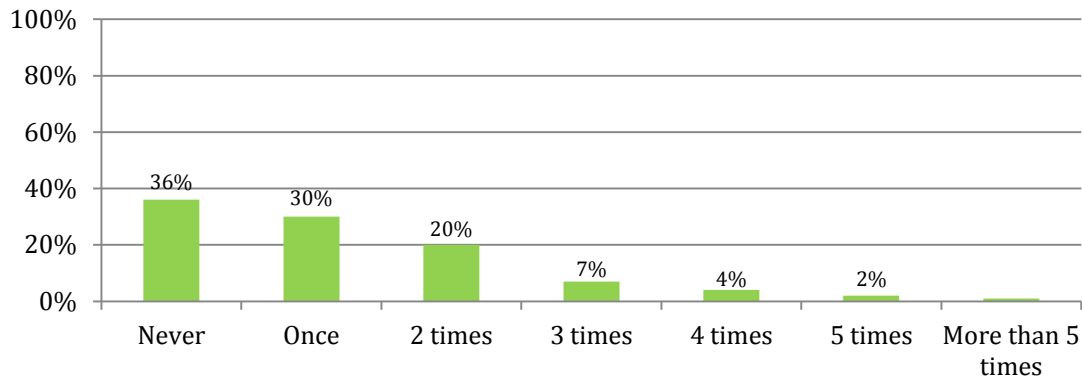
Students were asked to identify how many times they had been to CPAC prior to the semester they were enrolled in the class associated with *The B-Word Project*. Almost half of the students had never been to CPAC. For those who had been to CPAC, visits ranged from once to more than fifteen times.

Number of times students had been to CPAC prior to the start of the semester



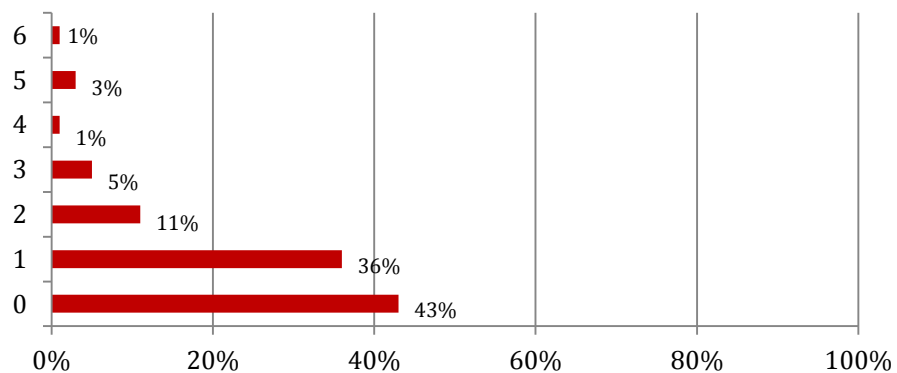
At the end of the semester, students were asked how many times they visited CPAC over the course of the semester. Thirty-six percent of students never went to CPAC during the semester; 30% went once.

Number of Times Students visited CPAC during the semester



At the end of the semester students were also asked how many *B-Word Project* events they attended during the semester, recognizing that students could be very involved in the *B-Word Project* and CPAC-sponsored events yet never step foot in CPAC given that several events were not held at CPAC. Attendance at *B-Word Project* events ranged from 0 to 6 events; the modal number of events attended was 0. Forty-three percent of the students did not attend any *B-Word Project* events over the course of the semester suggesting that many students did not get involved in the project beyond their specific course experiences. There were, however, course differences in attendance at *B-Word Project* events [$F(70,4)= 6.75, p < .01$]. In some classes, the average number of project events attended was 3, whereas in other courses no one attended any *B-Word Project* events. Course differences in attendance at project events is likely linked to the ways in which faculty integrated project events into their course curriculum. In some classes, faculty not only announced the project events but required attendance and linked course assignments (e.g., critical response essays) to specific events.

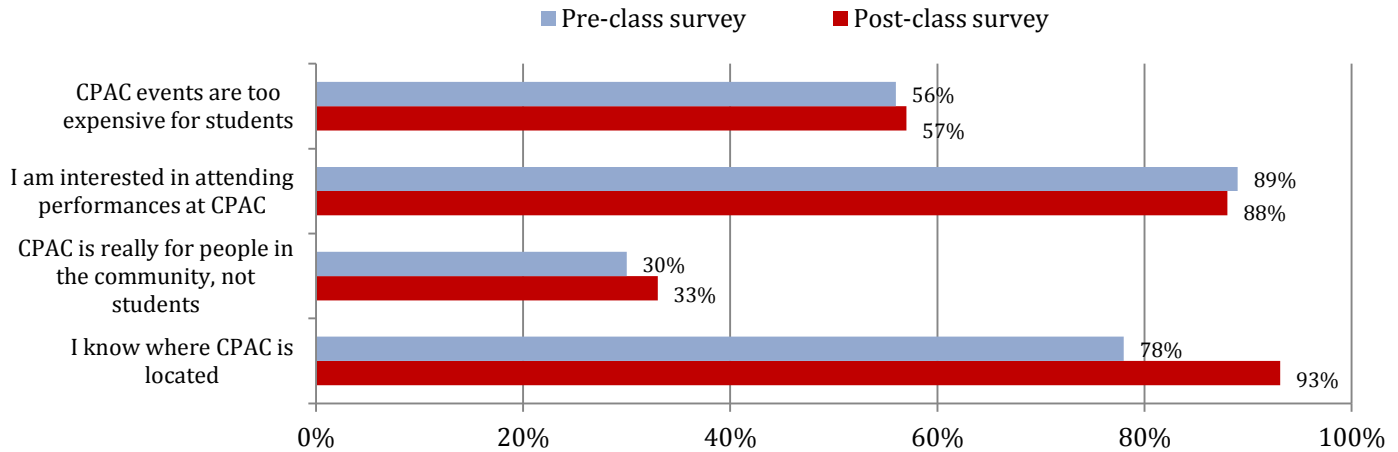
Number of *B-Word Project* events students attended during the semester



What do students think about the *Carpenter Performing Arts Center*?

As part of both the pre- and post-class surveys students were asked to respond to four statements about CPAC. Students were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Percent of students who agreed¹ with each statement about CPAC



¹“Agreement” represents those who either agreed or strongly agreed with various statements.

The only statistically significant change in students’ perceptions over time has to do with knowing where CPAC is located (and being able to give someone directions on how to get there). At pre-class testing, only 78% of students reported that they knew where CPAC was located; at post-class testing, 93% of students could give someone directions on how to get to CPAC. At both pre- and post-testing students indicated that they would be interested in attending performances at CPAC, suggesting perhaps a selection effect in *The B-Word Project* classes. That is, students already drawn to the performing arts were disproportionately attracted to the courses offered as part of the *B-Word Project*. It is interesting that one third of students at both pre- and post-class testing feel that CPAC is really for community members not students and over half at both pre-and post-class testing reported that CPAC events are too expensive for students. These results suggest that there is still work to be done in terms of changing students’ perceptions about the relevance of CPAC performances to their lives and the value of these performances. Efforts should be made to inform students about how ticket prices are set and to find avenues for offsetting ticket costs for students.

How do student feel about censorship?

As part of both the pre- and post-class surveys students were asked to respond to statements about censorship. Overall, most students (at both pre- and post-class testing) felt that censorship was negative and that censorship impacts them, as well as others, in a personal way. Nevertheless, students do hold some seemingly contradictory ideas about censorship. For example, despite the fact that over 90% of students believe that when people are censored society loses out because important voices are silenced, over half reported at post-class testing (52.5%) that some things ought to be censored.

Percent of students who agreed¹ with statements about censorship

	Pre-class testing	Post-class testing
Censorship is something that only happens in the Arts—it does not happen in the sciences or political arenas.	2.0%	2.0%
Some things should be censored.	48.7%	52.5%
When people are censored society loses out because important voices are silenced.	91.8%	93.0%
Censorship these days is more subtle—less overt.	48.4%	50.5%
People who say they hate censorship often try to censor other people’s ideas.	65.0%	68.0%
Being censored can hurt your well-being (e.g., self-esteem).	89.6%	91%
The United States censors more things than other countries.	36.9%	38.1%
The historical and cultural context shapes how censorship is experienced.	97.5%	96.0%
Censorship is necessary for maintaining a civil society.	21.5%	25.2%
There is less censorship today than there was 50 years ago.	41.4%	24.7%
Censorship has a negative impact on artists today.	75.6%	85.5%
Having our choices narrowed for us is a type of censorship.	92.8%	89.0%
We all self-censor at times when we watch we say in order not to offend others or be “politically correct.”	94.5%	93.1%

¹“Agreement” represents those who either agreed or strongly agreed with various statements.

In only two cases were there statistically significant changes in students’ perceptions about censorship over the course of the semester. First, students were more likely at pre-class testing to agree that there is less censorship today than 50 years ago ($t(df\ 227)= 3.15, p < .01$). After taking the *B-Word Project* classes, students were less likely to agree with this statement, perhaps as a result of being exposed to a range of current day examples of censorship. Second, students were more likely at post-class testing to agree that censorship has a negative impact on artists today ($t(df\ 227)= 1.78, p < .10$). Again, perhaps as a result of exposure to current examples of censorship and a more nuanced understanding of censorship, students were more likely to agree that censorship has a negative impact on artists today.

How do students define and experience censorship?

At both pre- and post-class testing students were asked to define censorship in their own words. Several themes emerged from coding students’ open-ended responses, themes that appeared in both pre- and post-testing definitions: not being able to fully express the self, not having freedom of expression or freedom of speech, and keeping information from the general public. Despite the similar themes across pre- and post-class testing, definitions at post-class testing were somewhat more nuanced and contained more concrete examples.

Example quotes from student responses at pre-class testing:

- Censorship is the act of taking away someone's self-expression because it is seen as obscene or indecent by one's self, a group of people or outside person.
- Censorship is the act or attempt to prohibit, mitigate, or ignore a claim that does not fit a particular worldview.
- Censorship is when an idea or work is blocked from public view or is edited in a way that makes it more acceptable to other people. To be censored is to block out the things that aren't acceptable. There is censorship in movies to block out things like language and adult themes.
- Censorship is any instance where personal opinions, expressed through any outlet, are monitored and/or muted so the audience is denied access.

Example quotes from student responses at post-class testing:

- Censorship is to be de-legitimized by a hegemonic power. An example would be Blu's mural at MOCA that was white washed after it had been painted because of the anti-war sentiment it carried.
- Censorship is explicitly or implicitly silencing someone from their true ideas and opinions in various forms, such as writing, free speech, art, class, friends, etc. Censored means undermining individual and self-esteem or socially mobilizing individuals to not pay attention to "wrong ideas." Examples today are Egypt barring foreign news commentators from in front of the British consulate in Egypt.
- It's hard for me to define censorship in simple terms, because it's more than just not letting someone be heard. Its restriction of thought, speech, ideas, and opinions. It's restricting the things we need to hear but are afraid to know.

Finally, at pre-class testing students were asked to indicate if they had ever been censored and if so, how they were censored and what they did about it. It is interesting that only **51% of students responded that they had experienced censorship.**

Example quotes from students who said they had been censored:

- When I used to go to church, I wrote a play that had certain themes that dealt with drug abuse and alcoholism. Before producing it, I was asked to change the language in an effort to not offend people. I felt that people were just in denial, but of course, I gave in.
- Yes I have and I believe it happens more often than I'd like to believe. When I turn on the news I see stupid stories instead of important ones, and I believe that is censorship. It makes me upset we are still being censored in today's modern time, in the land of the free.
- I usually self-censor myself subconsciously.
- I believe that everyone has been censored at one point in their life. As a minority student in a Cal State University system, I feel that my thoughts and opinions are censored. I also feel that my history and culture has been censored out of the books.
- My school shut down a rally on gay rights I had orchestrated through the school because it was "obscene".
- I was censored for an art piece explaining the government neglect of Native Americans after exposing them to high levels of radiation. My painting was removed from the show. I responded by refusing to exhibit in the show again.
- My political views are often self-censored due to fear of rejection.
- I am an indigenous dancer and I was told not that they wanted my presence at a function but asked me not come dressed traditional because they did not want for "culture" to be showed, so me and my people came dressed and did not dance. Just came in our resignation--silent dancing, silent presence.