

FHS Graduate Study Survey

A SUMMARY OF RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Submitted: March 2007
Barbara Powers, Asst. Supt.

Introduction

In December of 2006, for the second year in a row, all FHS graduates in the most recent graduating classes (this year, the Classes of 2005 and 2006) were requested to complete an on-line survey responding to a series of statements about their experiences in high school, as well as questions requesting written comments. 43 students responded on line. Another 18 graduates accepted an invitation to come to the high school to be interviewed as a group; most of them also stayed to be part of a panel discussion for current FHS students. This report summarizes the parts of the survey designed to answer the following questions:

How well are Falmouth Schools preparing students for the transition to the rigors of college and university study? Is there a demonstrated need for strengthened or otherwise modified curriculum through instructional standards and/or additional course options? What are some other attributes of the high school that should be either honored or improved?

The Survey and Description of Respondents

The survey was primarily established as a Likert Scale with 58 prompts. The values on the scaled prompts were as follows: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. Prompts seeking a 1-5 response included statements and questions about school culture and environment, academic rigor, college preparation, and other school experiences. Five other prompts requested anecdotal, written information and were presented as follows:

- 1) What course or courses that you took at FHS have had the most positive effect on your current endeavors?
- 2) What experiences at FHS have proven most helpful to you in your current endeavors?
- 3) Are there courses that you wish had been offered at FHS that would have better prepared you for what you are currently doing?
- 4) Are there any other ways that FHS could have helped you transition from school to work or college?
- 5) Overall, the following is what I wish had been different at FHS:

Of the 43 total respondents, 40 are currently in a 4-year program, two are in a 2-year program, and one is taking a semester off and working. Programs represent a variety of school placements: local and state public universities, out of state public universities, private schools, highly selective smaller schools, and Ivy League universities. Majors,

when noted, included three in foreign language (Spanish and French), one in architecture, ten in the humanities, eight in business, seven in science and engineering, four in government or international relations, three in visual arts, and one in math. Six students listed themselves as “undecided.”

Study Group Membership

This year’s study group was made up of a group of school and district leaders, including Allyn Hutton, FHS principal; Karen Lechner, Director of Guidance; all four teacher members of the shared leadership team, including Mike Casey (representing English and World Languages), Kim Blenk (representing Science and Health); Cathy Stankard (representing Social Sciences and the Visual/Performing Arts) and Lee Fortier (representing Math and Physical Education); Sue Palfrey, Director of Student Planning and Learning Options; Beppie Cerf, Chair of the School Board; and, Barbara Powers, Assistant Superintendent. Beth Franklin, school board member, was able to participate in the group interview session.

Study Process

After completing the group interview and gathering the on-line survey data, the process followed was: 1) close review of survey responses, 2) close review of the group interview, 3) review of last year’s comparative data, 4) summary of findings, 5) consideration of current course availability, and 6) consideration of adding other options for students or otherwise modifying course expectations.

Sue Palfrey organized all of the survey information into manageable data sets. Student responses were first reported in raw numbers within each Likert score category. Next, they were calculated to represent raw scores and percentages of respondents choosing each Likert score 1-5, disaggregated by subgroups of students taking 0-2 AP courses, 3-5 AP courses, or 6+ AP courses. It was hoped that studying the response of students taking a varying amount of AP courses at FHS would allow us to discern any differing perspectives between groups of students. Also, Barbara Powers prepared a summary of the December group interview responses for consideration by the study group.

Summaries and Recommendations

During the meeting on March 16, the group first reviewed data from the general prompts as well as anecdotal responses to the five prompts listed above. A summary of highlights from that review will follow. Next, small work groups looked at each of the five core academic areas of English language arts, math, history and social sciences, science, and world languages. They focused entirely on the prompts regarding academic rigor and college preparedness, as well as anecdotal comments offered by many students specific to that academic area. These summaries and recommendations will also follow this overview.

Next Steps

The District Leadership Council and Falmouth High School's content teacher leaders and faculty will evaluate this report and the recommendations contained herein. Allyn Hutton also plans to immediately post this report on the FHS website so that students and parents can review the summary findings during this important period of course selection, so that parents and students can use the experiences of our recent graduates to aid in that process. This report will also be formally presented as part of the Assistant Superintendent's school board report on April 9th, with members of the study group also available to answer any questions.

As positive as this feedback has been for the past two years, there is still always room for growth in our cycle of continuous improvement. You will note that several of the recommendations in academic areas are followed by comments noting that specific steps have already been taken to address issues raised by our graduates. It is gratifying to know that we are on the right track!

One further note: Next year, we decided to add, in addition to a "neutral" response to a prompt, a choice indicating that a student has not yet taken courses within a particular area of study. Interpreting the "neutral" choice has been difficult, thus most discussion focused on the percentages of students responding favorably or unfavorably.

This survey process, with study group follow up, will be repeated for the Class of 2007 and subsequent classes to continue to monitor the degree of FHS's successful preparation of students for college and beyond.

FHS 06 Graduate Study Survey

General Observations about FHS Experiences

Student comments included feedback or statements that they:

- 1) Were comfortable speaking up in their classes
- 2) Needed more practice in analytical discussions
- 3) Felt very prepared
- 4) Selected their colleges for a variety of reasons beyond academics: family connections, finances, size, location, community feel, small class sizes, nice kids, all girls, something different than Falmouth, diversity, sports, undergrad focus, close to a city, aesthetics
- 5) Were well prepared in writing
- 6) Would like to have been encouraged to do more exploration and have been able to follow a passion
- 7) Felt relationships with teachers were very important to them
- 8) Noticed a lack of diversity in high school in terms of open minded experiences
- 9) Needed more experience with research papers
- 10) Had a tendency to stay in a track and would have liked more opportunity to explore other areas
- 11) Better appreciated the value of public speaking skills
- 12) Believed that study skills support was helpful
- 13) Believed that study skills support was insufficient
- 14) Would have appreciated more practice using technology for research and also would have liked to learn how to use both PowerPoint for presentations and Excel graphs for lab reports
- 15) Found a very high demand for reading in college, both in terms of the amount and complexity of expectations
- 16) Believed that the math sequence needs to allow for calculus by senior year
- 17) Would have appreciated more business courses
- 18) Would have appreciated more difficult courses in some academic areas
- 19) Needed to better learn how to prioritize, make outlines, and use note cards, as well as the logistics of self-monitoring
- 20) Felt they received much more help in navigating the college application process

DISCUSSION: Students are often advised to pay attention to teacher recommendations regarding course choices, study focus, etc. How can we use their strong relationships with teachers to help them develop resilience? How can we help them understand that seeking support is well worth the time? Can we better help students know how to access support services at the college or university level? Parents can play an important role around self-advocacy, too. There was also a general discussion about opening PowerSchool to students and parents and the transparency that action will allow, giving students even more opportunity as well as responsibility to self-monitor their progress in courses.

FHS 06 Graduate Study Survey
A SUMMARY OF RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT AREA: English

SUMMARY:

- 1) In response to the prompt, “*English courses at FHS were challenging,*” students at the 3-5 AP range responded most positively (83% agree or strongly agree) compared to 0-2 or 6+ AP courses during years at FHS.

- 2) In terms of disaggregated percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*English courses at FHS were challenging,*” the results were as follows:
 - a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 2 strongly agreed (10%)
 - ii. 7 agreed (35%)
 - iii. 7 were neutral (35%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (5%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 3 left blank (15%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 4 strongly agreed (24%)
 - ii. 10 agreed (59%)
 - iii. 1 was neutral (6%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (6%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (6%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 1 strongly agreed (17%)
 - ii. 1 agreed (17%)
 - iii. 2 were neutral (33%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (17%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)

- 3) In response to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in English,*” over 80% of students who took 6+ AP responded favorably as opposed to one student who did not. Between 65-88% of students responded favorably regardless of # of AP courses taken. Two students out of all responders disagreed with this statement.

- 3) In terms of disaggregated percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in English,*” the results were as follows:

- a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 7 strongly agreed (35%)
 - ii. 6 agreed (30%)
 - iii. 3 were neutral (15%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (5%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 3 left blank (15%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 8 strongly agreed (47%)
 - ii. 7 agreed (41%)
 - iii. 1 was neutral (6%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (6%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 3 strongly agreed (50%)
 - ii. 1 agreed (17%)
 - iii. 0 were neutral (0%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (17%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)
- 5) 29 students responded to the prompt, “*What course or courses that you took at FHS have had the most positive effect on your current endeavors?*” 17 students mentioned English. 7 of these specifically mentioned SUPA as positive preparation.
- 6) In response to the prompt, “*Are there courses that you wish had been offered at Falmouth High School that would have better prepared you for what you are currently doing?*” 2 students out of 17 responders mentioned desiring more English. Both responders indicate desire for more complex (critical theory: e.g. Feminist Theory, Marxist Theory, Deconstruction) reading in high school.
- 7) Finally, in response to the prompt, “*Are there any other ways that FHS could have helped you transition from school to work or college?*” English was mentioned 4 times, in particular more practice in research, public speaking, and the amount/complexity of reading.

COMMENTS FROM 19 STUDENT INTERVIEWS:

- 13 students out of 19 responding offered favorable comments toward the English experience at FHS especially pertaining to college preparation
- 3 specifically mentioned SUPA (though one did not get college credit)
- 7 students mentioned specifically being well-prepared in writing

COMPARISON WITH 05 SURVEY RESULTS:

In response to the prompt, “*English courses at FHS were challenging,*” students in the 3-5 AP range continued to respond the most positively.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Be sure the strengths of SUPA are continued in any eventual senior course offerings.
- 2) Public speaking opportunities or support should be offered across the curriculum; i.e., add an oral presentation component.

FHS 06 Graduate Study Survey
A SUMMARY OF RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT AREA: Math

SUMMARY:

- 1) In response to the prompt, “*Math courses at FHS were challenging,*” 65% of all responders either agreed or strongly agreed that their math courses at FHS were challenging. A few isolated students disagreed (3 of 43).

- 2) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*Math courses at FHS were challenging,*” the results were as follows:
 - a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 2 strongly agreed (10%)
 - ii. 9 agreed (45%)
 - iii. 6 were neutral (30%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (5%)
 - vi. 2 left blank (10%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 7 strongly agreed (41%)
 - ii. 8 agreed (47%)
 - iii. 1 was neutral (6%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (6%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 1 strongly agreed (17%)
 - ii. 1 agreed (17%)
 - iii. 1 was neutral (17%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (17%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (17%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)

- 3) In response to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in math,*” 44% of students of the students felt prepared and 19% of the students didn't feel prepared. It's difficult to ascertain if all students are taking a math course. This would be a good question to include in the survey next year.

- 4) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in math,*” the results were as follows:

- a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 1 strongly agreed (5%)
 - ii. 5 agreed (25%)
 - iii. 9 were neutral (45%)
 - iv. 2 disagreed (10%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 3 left blank (15%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 6 strongly agreed (24%)
 - ii. 5 agreed (29%)
 - iii. 2 were neutral (24%)
 - iv. 2 disagreed (6%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (12%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (6%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 1 strongly agreed (17%)
 - ii. 2 agreed (33%)
 - iii. 2 were neutral (33%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)
- 5) 29 students responded to the prompt, “*What course or courses that you took at FHS have had the most positive effect on your current endeavors?*” AP calculus was mentioned four times. AP statistics was mentioned once. Math courses in general were mentioned twice
- 6) In response to the prompt, “*Are there courses that you wish had been offered at Falmouth High School that would have better prepared you for what you are currently doing,*” two students included math courses in their response. One student requested AP calculus BC and one student wished there were more proofs required in math classes.
- 7) Finally, in response to the prompt, “*Are there any other ways that FHS could have helped you transition from school to work or college,*” nothing specific to math was mentioned.

COMMENTS FROM 19 STUDENT INTERVIEWS:

- Math challenge is critical
- Calculus prepared student well
- More math would be great
- Hasn't taken math or science yet
- Calculus was really important preparation
- AP calc was amazingly difficult but prepared student well

- Well prepared for college level calculus
- Well prepared in calculus
- Unprepared with just pre-calculus
- College calculus really hard with just pre-calc (different student from above)
- AP statistics is really helpful in many courses from chem. To marketing and business

COMPARISON WITH 05 SURVEY RESULTS:

Challenging: The 3-5 AP group is similar between the two years. A slightly higher percent mentioned challenging in the 6+ and 0-2 AP group in the Jan. 2006 data. A slightly smaller % of students felt prepared in this year's data.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Continue to offer opportunities for students to take calculus in high school.
- 2) Continue current course path that allows for the above to happen.
- 3) Consider promoting accounting or personal finance courses for students.
- 4) Promote VHS course opportunities to add diversity to course selections.
- 5) Consider offering non-AP statistics to widen the appeal.

FHS 06 Graduate Study Survey
A SUMMARY OF RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT AREA: Science

SUMMARY:

- 1) In response to the prompt, “*Science courses at FHS were challenging,*” students at the AP 6+ level responded critically, compared with a total 82% agreement by students taking 3-5 AP courses during their years at Falmouth.

- 2) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*Science courses at FHS were challenging,*” the results were as follows:
 - a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 3 strongly agreed (15%)
 - ii. 7 agreed (35%)
 - iii. 7 were neutral (35%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (5%)
 - vi. 2 left blank (10%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 9 strongly agreed (53%)
 - ii. 6 agreed (35%)
 - iii. 0 were neutral (0%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (6%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (6%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 0 strongly agreed (0%)
 - ii. 4 agreed (67%)
 - iii. 0 were neutral (0%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (17%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)

- 3) In response to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in science,*” the majority of students tended to respond in either the neutral rating – 30%, 24%, and 40% respectively (perhaps indicating that they had not taken a college science course yet?) or the agree rating – 30%, 29%, and 40% respectively.

- 4) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in science,*” the results were as follows:
- a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 1 strongly agreed (5%)
 - ii. 6 agreed (30%)
 - iii. 7 were neutral (35%)
 - iv. 2 disagreed (10%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 4 left blank (20%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 8 strongly agreed (47%)
 - ii. 5 agreed (29%)
 - iii. 2 were neutral (12%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 2 left blank (12%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 2 strongly agreed (40%)
 - ii. 2 agreed (40%)
 - iii. 0 were neutral (0%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (20%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)
- 5) 29 students responded to the prompt, “*What course or courses that you took at FHS have had the most positive effect on your current endeavors?*” AP Chemistry was mentioned four times and Anatomy and Physiology was mentioned 3 times. Additionally, Biology was mentioned twice and Honors Earth Science was mentioned once.
- 6) In response to the prompt, “*Are there courses that you wish had been offered at Falmouth High School that would have better prepared you for what you are currently doing,*” AP Biology was mentioned 3 times, AP Physics or “more physics” was mentioned 5 times, and there was a general call for “more sciences.”
- 7) Finally, in response to the prompt, “*Are there any other ways that FHS could have helped you transition from school to work or college,*” one graduate wished science labs were harder and felt unprepared for the amount of work required each week in his/her college physics and chemistry labs. Another student “excelled in the physics program in high school but struggled in college.” Lastly, another student commented that science was one of the two “weakest parts of the high school.”

COMMENTS FROM 19 STUDENT INTERVIEWS:

Seven students mentioned science when meeting as a large group and summarizing their college experiences to date.

- 1) One student commented that 30-35% of their science grade in college was based on lab reports, for which they felt they had no experience writing and therefore were more unprepared than their peers. Another student mentioned science labs in college were hard. Several concurred that additional focus on the writing of lab reports in high school would have been personally helpful to them.
- 2) Again, a need for AP Physics was stated a couple times.
- 3) The need to do pre-lab work was a surprise at the college level.
- 4) A marketing major found 12th grade physics helpful with a survey of science course.

COMPARISON WITH 05 SURVEY RESULTS:

Both years, very few graduates disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “science courses at FHS were challenging”. Significantly fewer 6+ AP students strongly agreed or agreed with this statement this year (20%) compared to the last survey (90%).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Offer AP Physics immediately.
- 2) Develop consistent and rigorous science lab expectations (prep for labs and writing reports). Review rigor and appropriate curriculum alignment by content area and level.

COMMENTS:

- 1) Three science teachers have agreed to work on developing an appropriate lab report sequence for grade 9-12 lab courses.
- 2) AP Physics is currently on the course of studies for the fall of 2007. If enough student interest is indicated, it will be offered.

FHS 06 Graduate Study Survey
A SUMMARY OF RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT AREA: Social Sciences

SUMMARY:

- 1) In response to the prompt, “*History and social studies courses at FHS were challenging,*” 74% of all responders either agreed or strongly agreed. Only 3 of the 39 students surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, students who took at least 3 AP courses found the social studies curriculum significantly more challenging than students who took fewer than 3 AP courses.

- 2) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*History and social science courses at FHS were challenging,*” the results were as follows:
 - a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 3 strongly agreed (15%)
 - ii. 7 agreed (35%)
 - iii. 7 were neutral (35%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (5%)
 - vi. 2 left blank (10%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 9 strongly agreed (53%)
 - ii. 6 agreed (35%)
 - iii. 0 was neutral (0%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (6%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (6%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 0 strongly agreed (0%)
 - ii. 4 agreed (67%)
 - iii. 0 were neutral (0%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (17%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)

- 3) In response to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in history and social sciences,*” 67% of all responders either agreed or strongly agreed that Falmouth prepared them well. Only 3 of the 36 students surveyed disagreed and none strongly disagreed. As above, students who took at least 3 AP courses felt significantly more prepared than students who took fewer than 3 AP courses.

- 4) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in the social sciences,*” the results were as follows:
- a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 1 strongly agreed (5%)
 - ii. 6 agreed (30%)
 - iii. 7 were neutral (35%)
 - iv. 2 disagreed (10%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 4 left blank (20%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 8 strongly agreed (47%)
 - ii. 5 agreed (29%)
 - iii. 2 were neutral (12%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 2 left blank (12%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 2 strongly agreed (33%)
 - ii. 2 agreed (33%)
 - iii. 0 were neutral (0%)
 - iv. 1 disagreed (20%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)
- 5) 29 students responded to the prompt, “*What course or courses that you took at FHS have had the most positive effect on your current endeavors?*” 13 students mentioned Social Studies courses or teachers. Specifically, students cited U.S. History, AP European History, Holocaust, Psychology, AP Psychology, and World History. They also named three teachers, one repeatedly, and one who has relocated out-of-state.
- 6) In response to the prompt, “*Are there courses that you wish had been offered at Falmouth High School that would have better prepared you for what you are currently doing,*” two students mentioned economics, two students mentioned non-survey history courses (*e.g.*, French Revolution, Constitution), and one student mentioned a course that related current world events to the history of specific places.
- 7) Finally, in response to the prompt, “*Are there any other ways that FHS could have helped you transition from school to work or college,*” one student mentioned seminar-style courses similar to Holocaust, one student mentioned more research paper writing, and one student mentioned greater preparation for the heavy amount of reading required at college.

COMMENTS FROM 19 STUDENT INTERVIEWS:

Five students mentioned Social Studies when meeting as a large group and summarizing their college experiences to date:

- Two students suggested greater emphasis on civics and government;
- One student said AP history courses provided good preparation;
- One student wished we had offered economics when he was here; and,
- One student praised a particular teacher.

COMPARISON WITH 05 SURVEY RESULTS:

Data collected this year was similar in terms of percentages and in the disparity between students who took more than 3 AP courses and those who took fewer than 3 AP courses.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Assign more research papers in required courses.
- 2) Continue to offer Economics as a semester elective.
- 3) Offer more seminar-style, non-survey electives.

COMMENTS:

- 1) As a result of last year's revision of the high school Social Studies scope and sequence, U.S. Civics and Government is now required of second semester 10th graders. Students may take this course at the CP or AP level.
- 2) The Social Studies Content Team is in the middle of a K-12 Curriculum Review, one outcome of which will be a writing sequence that includes at least one 8-10 page research paper during high school.
- 3) In addition to the electives currently offered, the Social Studies Content Team has added six seminar-style, non-survey electives to next year's Program of Studies. These are: Asian Studies, History Through Literature, Latin American Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, World Religions I, and World Religions II.
- 4) Any effort to increase the amount of reading required in specific courses must take into account the fact that high school students have different academic schedules and extracurricular demands than college students.

FHS 06 Graduate Study Survey
A SUMMARY OF RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT AREA: World Languages

SUMMARY:

- 1) In response to the prompt, “*World language courses at FHS were challenging,*” most students agreed or were neutral, while at the AP 6+ level, students were more critical than their peers.

- 2) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*World language courses at FHS were challenging,*” the results were as follows:
 - a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 0 strongly agreed (0%)
 - ii. 7 agreed (35%)
 - iii. 8 were neutral (40%)
 - iv. 2 disagreed (10%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 3 left blank (15%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 2 strongly agreed (12%)
 - ii. 12 agreed (71%)
 - iii. 1 was neutral (6%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (6%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (6%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 0 strongly agreed (0%)
 - ii. 1 agreed (17%)
 - iii. 1 was neutral (17%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 3 strongly disagreed (50%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)

- 3) In response to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in world languages,*” a majority of students in the 0-2 and 3-5 AP level agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, but many “neutrals” were hard to analyze as it was unclear whether this response was due to no experience with a language course in college yet, or simply a less enthusiastic response. Next year, “NA” will be an option to indicate no experience as of yet.

- 4) In terms of disaggregated numbers and percentages of students as they responded to the prompt, “*Falmouth prepared me well for college-level courses in world languages,*” the results were as follows:
- a. Of the 20 students with 0-2 AP courses:
 - i. 4 strongly agreed (20%)
 - ii. 4 agreed (20%)
 - iii. 7 were neutral (35%)
 - iv. 2 disagreed (10%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 3 left blank (15%)
 - b. Of the 17 students with 3-5 AP courses:
 - i. 5 strongly agreed (29%)
 - ii. 4 agreed (24%)
 - iii. 4 were neutral (24%)
 - iv. 2 disagreed (12%)
 - v. 0 strongly disagreed (0%)
 - vi. 2 left blank (12%)
 - c. Of the 6 students with 6+ AP courses:
 - i. 2 strongly agreed (33%)
 - ii. 0 agreed (0%)
 - iii. 2 were neutral (33%)
 - iv. 0 disagreed (0%)
 - v. 1 strongly disagreed (17%)
 - vi. 1 left blank (17%)
- 5) 29 students responded to the prompt, “*What course or courses that you took at FHS have had the most positive effect on your current endeavors?*” two students mentioned French with one particular teacher.
- 6) In response to the prompt, “*Are there courses that you wish had been offered at Falmouth High School that would have better prepared you for what you are currently doing,*” world languages was mentioned twice. More language choices, including Chinese, Arabic or Italian, were suggested, along with AP Spanish.
- 7) Finally, in response to the prompt, “*Are there any other ways that FHS could have helped you transition from school to work or college,*” two students responded that the language program needed to be improved, especially in Spanish.

COMMENTS FROM 19 STUDENT INTERVIEWS:

Six students mentioned world languages when meeting as a large group and summarizing their college experiences to date:

- 1) Two French students noted that they switched to Spanish in college to “be more practical.”
- 2) Two students who studied French through level IV felt they were appropriately placed at an intermediate level of study in college, or third semester.
- 3) One student felt under prepared in Spanish.
- 4) One international studies student wished he had been able to take Russian.

COMPARISON WITH 05 SURVEY RESULTS:

Data collected this year differed most significantly this year in terms of “agree” or “strongly agree” about course challenge and preparation for college coursework, with more positive responses from the class of 2005’s three levels of respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Plan for the addition of AP level courses in Spanish and French in 2009, and determine what curriculum modifications will be necessary in order to achieve that level of performance by the end of high school.
- 2) Promote VHS opportunities in other language studies.
- 3) Seek ways to begin Chinese instruction at the high school in the fall of 2009.
- 4) Seek ways to expand the influence of the foreign language department within the school’s culture, as diverse experiences continue to be requested on the “wish list” from our graduates.

COMMENTS:

A proposal to address recommendation #1 has been approved by the school board.