



National Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Snapshot 2011

Virginia Commonwealth University

Dear Colleague:

This document presents some key findings from your institution's participation in the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement. We hope you can use this information to stimulate discussion on your campus about the undergraduate experience at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Sincerely,

Alexander C. McCormick

Director, National Survey of Student Engagement

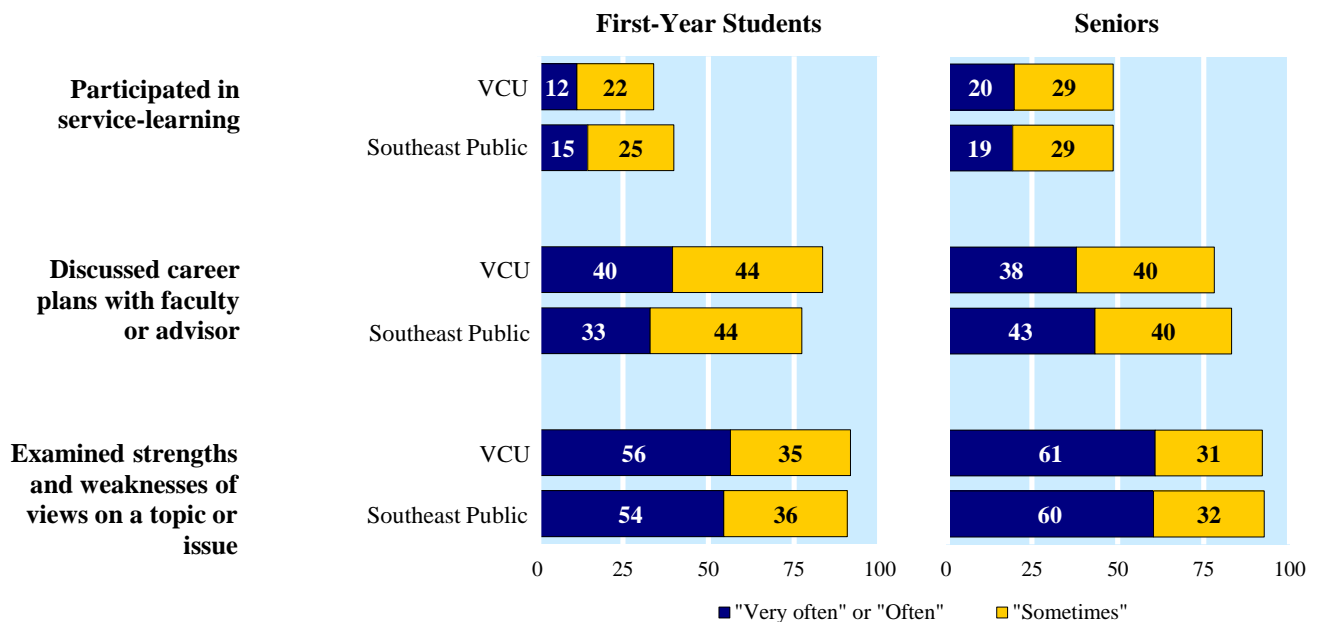
Fostering Student Engagement Campuswide

NSSE is more than a survey. It's an improvement enterprise, an agenda for action to improve undergraduate education that depends on collaboration among many players on your campus. The featured theme of NSSE's *Annual Results 2011* – “Supporting Student Engagement Across Campus” – emphasizes the value of connecting NSSE results to specific campus programs and units, and suggests sharing pertinent results to promote campus partnerships dedicated to the quality of the undergraduate experience.

Having received your NSSE reports and data, the next step is to dig into the results to develop a contextualized understanding of student engagement at your institution. Many constituents—leadership, faculty, student affairs staff, institutional researchers, and students—can contribute to this process. What should follow is the design and implementation of improvement-focused action plans.

Student engagement data can inform the work of many departments and offices on campus, such as academic affairs, career services, and student activities. For example, the figure below illustrates comparative results for survey items that might be examined by these units at your institution. Results like these may suggest areas to investigate or may validate the impact of ongoing improvement efforts.

Percentage of Students Participating in Selected Activities at VCU and Selected Comparison Institutions*



*Response options were "Very often," "Often," "Sometimes," and "Never." "Never" responses are not displayed. Comparison institutions are the first comparison group from your NSSE 2011 Selected Comparison Groups report unless your institution requested a different group for this Snapshot.



NSSE 2011 Question Comparisons

By examining individual NSSE questions, you can better understand what contributes to your institution's overall benchmark scores. This section features the five questions on which your first-year and senior students scored the highest and the five questions on which they scored the lowest, relative to students at the indicated comparison group (the group's members are listed in your *NSSE 2011 Selected Comparison Groups* report).

While we chose these questions to represent the largest differences (in percentage points), they may not be the most important to your institutional mission or current program or policy goals. We encourage you to review your NSSE *Institutional Report 2011* for additional results of particular interest to your campus.

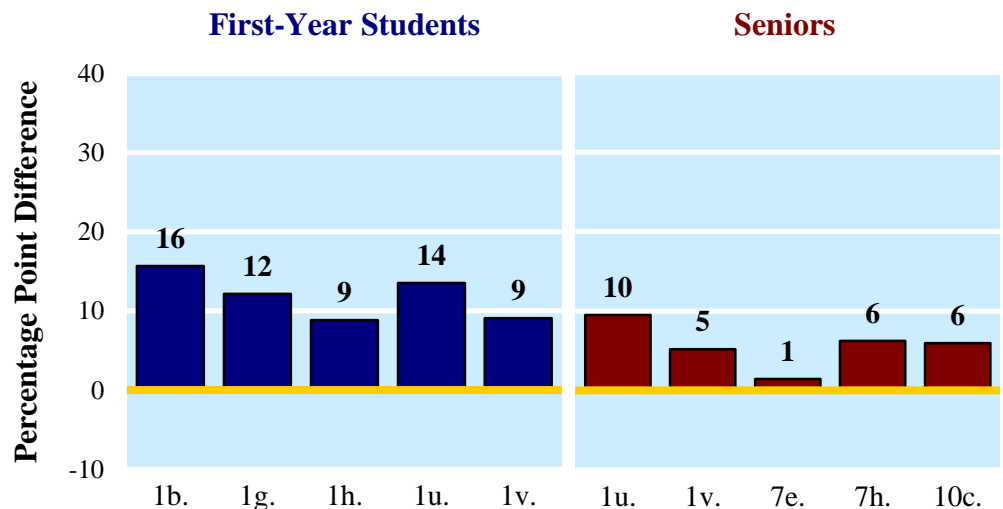
Highest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to Southeast Public

Comparison Groups

Question	Benchmark	Percentage of students who...	VCU	Southeast Public	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2011
First-Year Students						
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	47%	31%	22%	33%
1g.	ACL	Worked with other students on projects during class ²	56%	44%	41%	45%
1h.	ACL	Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments ²	54%	45%	46%	45%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ²	68%	55%	55%	52%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ²	66%	56%	57%	54%
Seniors						
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ²	68%	58%	57%	55%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ²	64%	59%	58%	56%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	44%	43%	48%	40%
7h.	EEE	Completed a culminating senior experience (capstone, thesis, comp. exam)	36%	30%	29%	32%
10c.	EEE	Said the institution substantially encourages contacts among diverse peers ⁴	58%	52%	48%	51%

The adjacent figure, based on the table above, displays the questions on which your students compared most favorably with those in your selected comparison group named:

Southeast Public





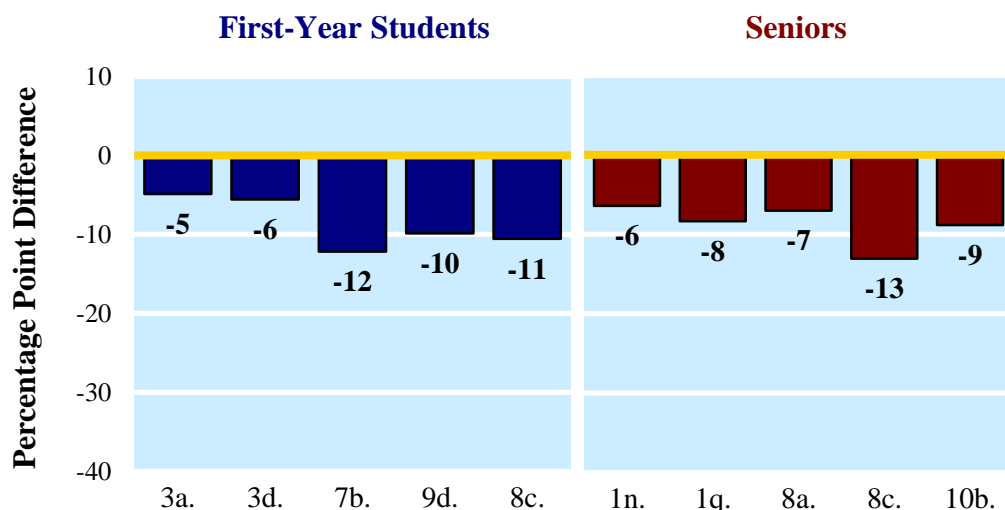
Lowest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to Southeast Public

Comparison Groups

Ques- tion	Bench- mark ¹	Percentage of students who...	VCU	Southeast Public	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2011
First-Year Students						
3a.	LAC	Read more than 10 assigned books or book-length packs of readings	23%	27%	32%	32%
3d.	LAC	Wrote more than 4 papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	19%	25%	26%	29%
7b.	EEE	Participated in community service or volunteer work	29%	41%	42%	39%
9d.	EEE	Spent more than 5 hours/week participating in co-curricular activities	22%	32%	36%	30%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices ³	48%	58%	56%	60%
Seniors						
1n.	SFI	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ²	56%	63%	53%	60%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	57%	65%	58%	64%
8a.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with other students ³	77%	84%	81%	82%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices ³	44%	57%	53%	57%
10b.	SCE	Said the institution provides substantial support for academic success ⁴	64%	73%	68%	72%

The adjacent figure, based on the table above, displays the questions on which your students compared least favorably with those in your selected comparison group named:

Southeast Public



Notes

¹ LAC=Level of Academic Challenge; ACL=Active and Collaborative Learning; SFI=Student-Faculty Interaction; EEE=Enriching Educational Experiences; SCE=Supportive Campus Environment

² Combination of students responding "Very often" or "Often"

³ Rated at least 5 on a 7-point scale

⁴ Combination of students responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit"

Respondent Characteristics

The adjacent table displays your number of respondents, response rate, and sampling error by class. Sampling error is an estimate of the margin by which the true percentage of your students may differ from the reported percentage on a given item (because not all of your students completed surveys).

	N	Resp. Rate	Sampling Error
First-Year Students	1,415	38%	+/-2%
Seniors	2,109	38%	+/-1.7%



Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

To represent the multi-dimensional nature of student engagement, NSSE developed five indicators of effective educational practice. These "benchmarks" are created from clusters of NSSE questions that best represent these practices.

The table below summarizes key benchmark results for your institution and institutions in your selected comparison groups. A '+' symbol indicates that your institution's score is higher than the comparison group and a '-' symbol indicates a lower score ($p < .05$). A blank space indicates no significant difference. For additional details, review your *NSSE 2011 Benchmark Comparisons* report.

		VCU	Comparison Groups		
Class			Southeast Public	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2011
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)					
<i>How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?</i>	First-Year	53			-
	Senior	55	-	-	-
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)					
<i>Are your students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?</i>	First-Year	46	+	+	+
	Senior	50	-	+	-
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)					
<i>Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?</i>	First-Year	35		+	
	Senior	39	-		-
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)					
<i>Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?</i>	First-Year	29			+
	Senior	41			+
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)					
<i>Do your students feel the institution is committed to their success?</i>	First-Year	60	-		-
	Senior	55	-	-	-

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For More Information

A comprehensive summary of all results is contained in your institutional report, which we sent in August to Kelli Parmley, Center for Institutional Effectiveness. Reports used in this Executive Snapshot included the: NSSE 2011 Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, Benchmark Comparisons, and Respondent Characteristics.



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Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research
1900 East Tenth Street, Suite 419
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512

Phone: 812-856-5824
E-mail: nsse@indiana.edu
Web: nsse.iub.edu