



National Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Snapshot 2010

Virginia Commonwealth University

Dear Colleague:

This document presents some key findings from your institution's participation in the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement. We hope you can use this information to stimulate discussion on your campus about how to improve the undergraduate experience at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Sincerely,
Alexander C. McCormick
Director, National Survey of Student Engagement

Student Engagement at the Department Level

NSSE and other assessment projects must be about more than simply gathering and reporting data. Campus leaders, faculty, and staff should examine and discuss what they mean, and determine an appropriate action plan. Yet aggregate, institution-wide results may have limited meaning for those closest to teaching and learning. In other words, a dean or department chair may not derive much diagnostic value from knowing the institution-wide benchmark score for student-faculty interaction, but when that information is known for a particular school or department, and it can be compared to other majors on campus, it may get more traction.

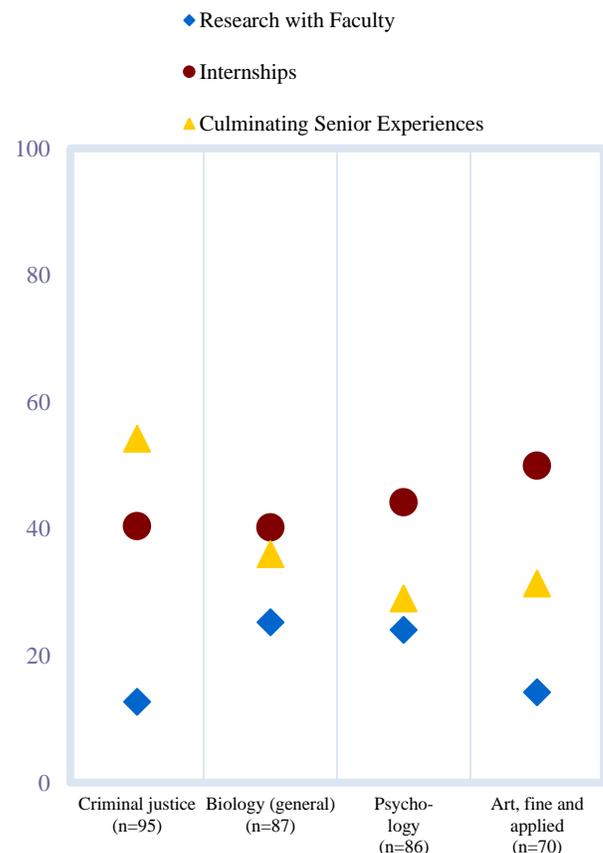
Participation in High-Impact Practices in Selected Fields at VCU

NSSE's *Annual Results 2010* calls attention to distinctive patterns of engagement by major field of study. The adjacent figure compares seniors in up to four of your largest academic majors, charting participation in three *high-impact practices*: research with faculty, internships or field experiences, and culminating senior experiences.^a High-impact practices have positive effects on student learning, retention, and engagement. They typically demand considerable time and effort outside the classroom, require meaningful interaction with faculty and other students, encourage students to interact with diverse individuals and groups, and provide students with frequent and helpful feedback – thus setting up the potential for a life-changing experience.

Major Field Reports are Available

Major Field Reports which display NSSE results by eight categories of related majors – arts and humanities, biological sciences, business, education, engineering, other professions, physical sciences, and social sciences – offer another way to connect results to department level assessment and to improvements in teaching and learning. Your NSSE contact may download these reports from the Institution Interface.

Percent of Seniors Participating in High-Impact Practices for Selected Majors^b at VCU



^a Kuh, G.D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

^b Up to four of your institution's majors were selected based on the number of senior respondents, requiring at least five within each major. If at least two majors did not meet this criterion, results were displayed for the NSSE 2010 cohort. Differences between majors for a given activity may not be statistically significant.



NSSE 2010 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 2010 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 2010* for additional results of particular interest to your campus.

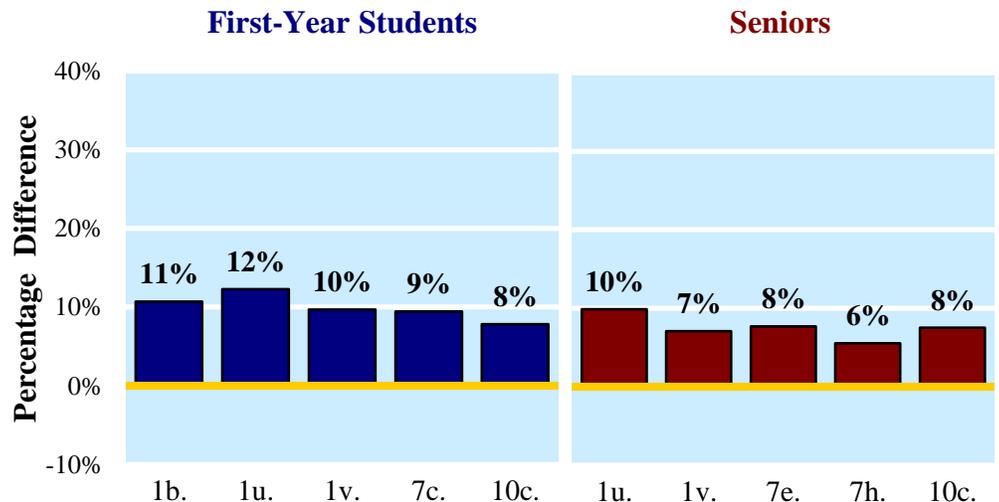
Highest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to Southeast Public

Comparison Groups

Ques- tion	Bench- mark ¹	Percent of students who...	VCU	Southeast Public	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2010
First-Year Students						
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	42%	31%	26%	35%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ²	64%	52%	53%	52%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ²	64%	54%	56%	55%
7c.	EEE	Participated in a learning community	24%	15%	18%	16%
10c.	EEE	Said the institution substantially encourages contacts among diverse peers ⁴	66%	58%	59%	59%
Seniors						
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ²	67%	57%	56%	54%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ²	64%	56%	55%	56%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	48%	41%	41%	40%
7h.	EEE	Completed a culminating senior experience (capstone, thesis, comp. exam)	34%	28%	31%	33%
10c.	EEE	Said the institution substantially encourages contacts among diverse peers ⁴	59%	51%	49%	52%

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

Southeast Public





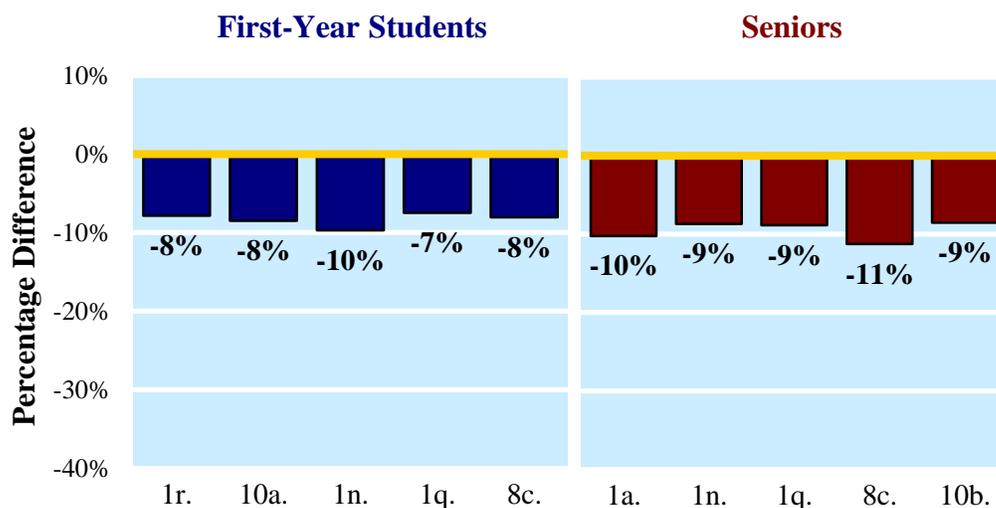
Lowest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to Southeast Public

Comparison Groups

Ques- tion	Bench- mark ¹	Percent of students who...	VCU	Southeast Public	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2010
First-Year Students						
1r.	LAC	Worked harder than you expected to meet an instructor's expectations ²	53%	61%	57%	59%
10a.	LAC	Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work ⁴	73%	82%	83%	82%
1n.	SFI	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ²	46%	56%	50%	53%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	51%	58%	56%	59%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices ³	50%	58%	57%	60%
Seniors						
1a.	ACL	Asked questions/contributed to class discussions ²	62%	72%	68%	73%
1n.	SFI	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ²	55%	64%	59%	61%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	57%	65%	63%	66%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices ³	46%	57%	56%	58%
10b.	SCE	Said the institution provides substantial support for academic success ⁴	63%	71%	71%	73%

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	806	20%	+/-3.1%
Seniors	1,335	26%	+/-2.3%



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. The '+' symbol indicates that your institution's score is higher than the respective comparison group ($p < .05$), the '-' symbol indicates a score lower than the comparison group, and a blank space indicates no significant difference. For additional details, review your *NSSE 2010 Benchmark Comparisons* report.

		VCU	Comparison Groups		
Class			Southeast Public	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2010
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)					
<i>How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?</i>	First-Year	52		-	-
	Senior	56	-	-	-
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)					
<i>Are your students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?</i>	First-Year	44	+	+	
	Senior	49	-	-	-
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)					
<i>Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?</i>	First-Year	33	-		-
	Senior	38	-	-	-
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)					
<i>Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?</i>	First-Year	30	+	+	+
	Senior	41	+	+	
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)					
<i>Do your students feel the institution is committed to their success?</i>	First-Year	59	-	-	-
	Senior	54	-	-	-

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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 2010 Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, Benchmark Comparisons, and Respondent Characteristics.



National Survey of Student Engagement

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