



National Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Snapshot 2012

Western Carolina University

Dear Colleague:

This document presents some key findings from your institution's participation in the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement. We hope you can use this information to stimulate discussion on your campus about the undergraduate experience at Western Carolina University.

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

Deep Approaches to Learning

As we approach the launch of an updated NSSE survey, this year's edition of *Annual Results* revisits and replicates a collection of important findings from NSSE's first 13 years.

One notable finding involves Deep Approaches to Learning (DAL) which help students make richer, more lasting connections to material through an emphasis on activities such as higher-order learning, integration, and reflection (see the Director's Message on page 5, and Selected Results on page 10 of *Annual Results*). Replicating an analysis from 2004, we found that students who participated in DAL at higher levels made more purposeful use of their time and were more engaged in other ways.

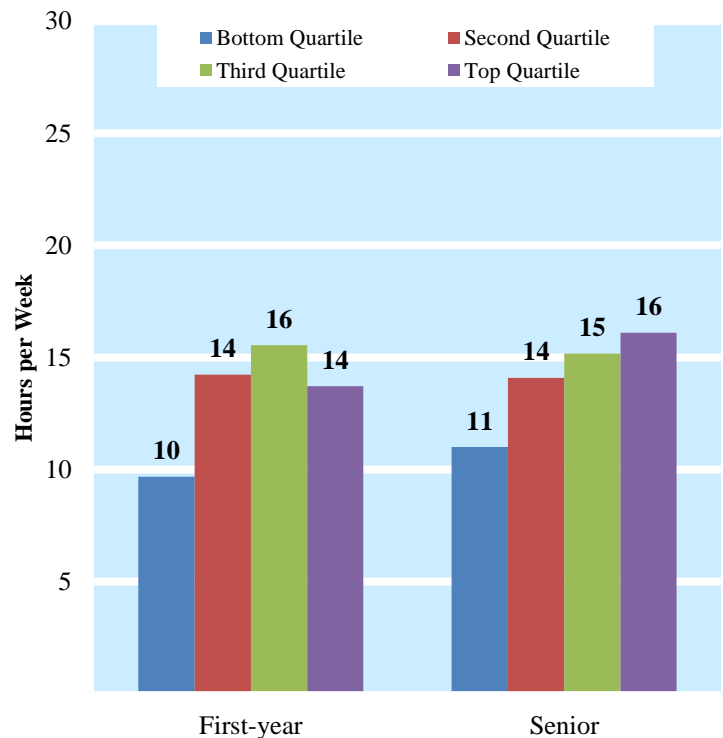
We thought you'd be interested to know *your* students' scores on this important measure. Table 1 at right compares your students' engagement in DAL with those enrolled at your selected NSSE 2012 comparison groups, with an indication of whether your students scored significantly higher (+) or lower (-) than the comparison group. (If no plus or minus sign is shown, the difference is not statistically significant.) Figure 1 illustrates how DAL relates to time spent preparing for class among your first-year students and seniors.

We are pleased to report that the Deep Approaches to Learning scale, including subscales of higher-order learning and reflective and integrative learning, is included in the updated NSSE survey. We hope you find these measures and other changes that have resulted from our research to be welcome additions in 2013.

Table 1. DAL Comparison Results^a

	WCU	Comparison Groups		
		UNC System	Participating Peers	NSSE 2012
First-Year				
mean	63	63	59 **	61
ES		-.01	.24	.12
Senior				
mean	67	68	65	66
ES		-.04	.10	.07

Figure 1. Class Preparation Time^b by DAL Score^c



a. For details on the DAL scale including component items and how it is computed, visit nsse.iub.edu/html/creating_scales.cfm; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001; ES=Cohen's *d* effect size, where .2 is often considered small, .5 moderate, and .8 large.
 b. Adjusted for part-time students (see nsse.iub.edu/html/PT_adjustment.cfm).
 c. Your students were divided into quartiles, four groups of equal size based on their DAL scores.



NSSE 2012 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 2012 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 2012* for additional results of particular interest to your campus.

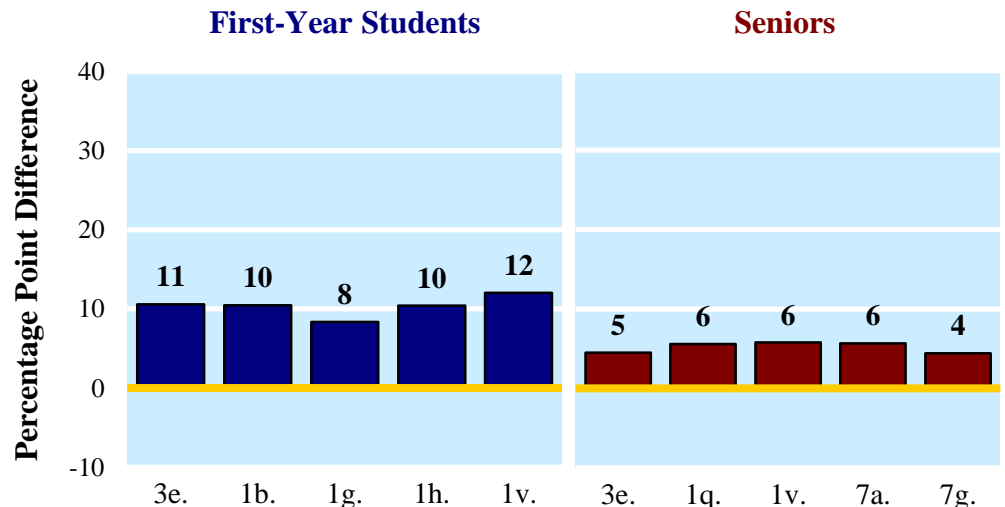
Highest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to UNC System

Comparison Groups

Question	Benchmark	Percentage of students who...	WCU	UNC System	Participating Peers	NSSE 2012
First-Year Students						
3e.	LAC	Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	34%	23%	29%	28%
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	47%	36%	40%	35%
1g.	ACL	Worked with other students on projects during class ²	54%	46%	50%	45%
1h.	ACL	Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments ²	57%	47%	42%	46%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ²	69%	57%	52%	54%
Seniors						
3e.	LAC	Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	32%	27%	32%	32%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	76%	70%	69%	66%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ²	66%	60%	56%	56%
7a.	EEE	Did a practicum, internship, field experience, clinical assignment	55%	49%	54%	49%
7g.	EEE	Did an independent study or self-designed major	21%	17%	13%	16%

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:

UNC System





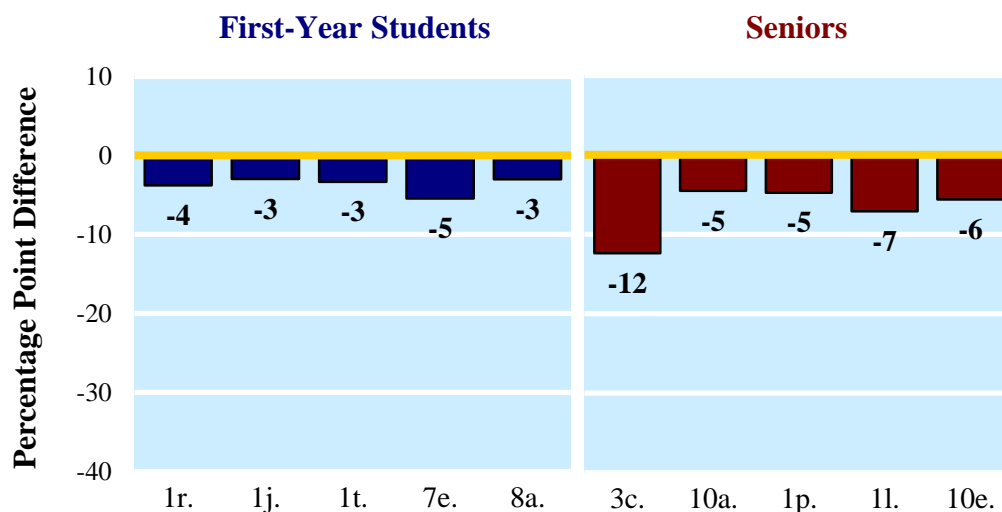
Lowest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to UNC System

Comparison Groups

Ques- tion	Bench- mark ¹	Percentage of students who...	WCU	UNC System	Participating Peers	NSSE 2012
First-Year Students						
1r.	LAC	Worked harder than you expected to meet an instructor's expectations ²	62%	66%	62%	61%
1j.	ACL	Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary) ²	13%	16%	17%	17%
1t.	ACL	Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class ²	58%	61%	56%	59%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	14%	20%	18%	20%
8a.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with other students ³	81%	84%	78%	79%
Seniors						
3c.	LAC	Wrote at least one paper or report of 20 pages or more	37%	50%	41%	50%
10a.	LAC	Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work ⁴	80%	84%	79%	82%
1p.	SFI	Discussed ideas from classes with faculty outside of class ²	29%	34%	33%	29%
1l.	EEE	Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment ²	62%	69%	70%	65%
10e.	SCE	Said the institution provides substantial support for students' social needs ⁴	43%	49%	45%	39%

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:

UNC System



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	179	14%	+/-6.8%
Seniors	263	18%	+/-5.5%



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 2012 Benchmark Comparisons* report.

		Comparison Groups			
		WCU	UNC System	Participating Peers	NSSE 2012
<i>Class</i>					
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)					
<i>How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?</i>	First-Year	56		+	
	Senior	57			
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)					
<i>Are your students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?</i>	First-Year	48	+	+	+
	Senior	54			
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)					
<i>Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?</i>	First-Year	42		+	+
	Senior	48			+
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)					
<i>Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?</i>	First-Year	30		+	
	Senior	42			
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)					
<i>Do your students feel the institution is committed to their success?</i>	First-Year	68		+	+
	Senior	63			+

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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 David Onder, Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. Reports used in this Executive Snapshot included the: NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, Benchmark Comparisons, and Respondent Characteristics.



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