



National Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Snapshot 2008

Western Michigan University

Dear Colleague:

This is a summary of some key findings from your institution's performance on the 2008 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 Western Michigan University.

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

Are All Students at Western Michigan University Equally Engaged?

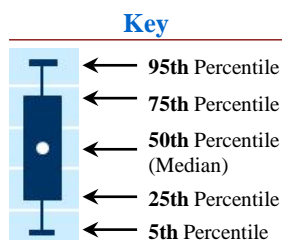
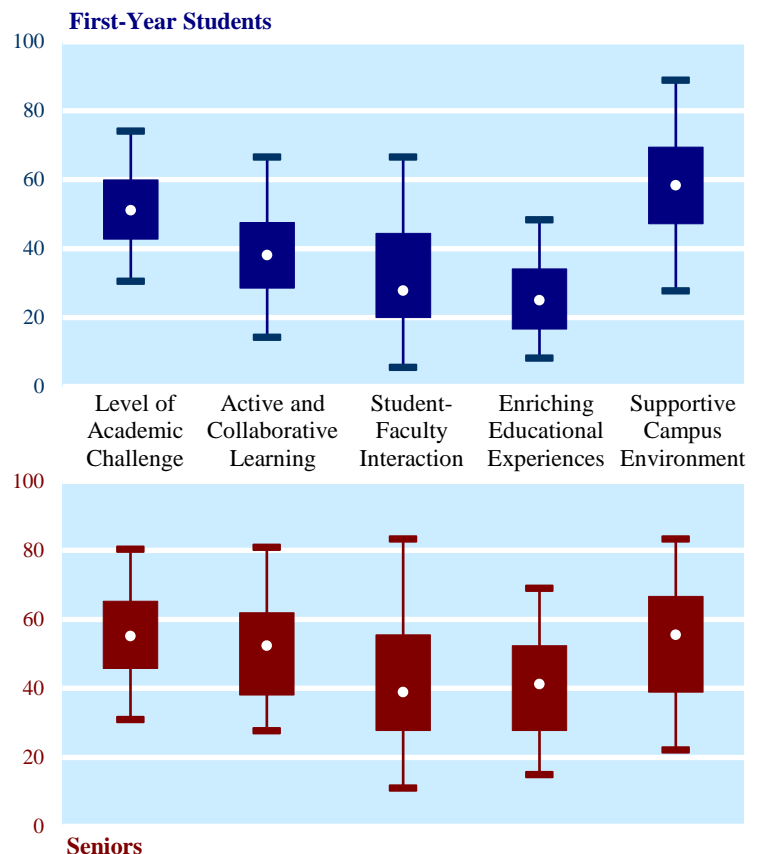
Quality in U.S. higher education is often considered an institutional attribute, as if one college offers a uniformly better or worse education than another. Yet, a robust finding from decades of research on college students holds that student experiences and outcomes are more varied among students *within* institutions than *between* institutions.

In this year's annual report NSSE urges institutions to "look within," calling attention to the need to examine variation in the student experience at your institution. Your (hypothetical) average student does not describe all students and groups on your campus.

The adjacent figures illustrate this phenomenon. We plotted your students' NSSE benchmark scores in a "box and whiskers" chart (see key). Here you can see the range and variation of your scores (whiskers), as well as where the mid-range or normal scores fell (box). Note the dispersion of your scores. The greater the range, the more varied the student experience is at your institution.

Improving the experience of your least engaged students may be the most effective way to raise your benchmark scores and improve your overall institutional quality. Even high-performing institutions have much to learn by examining variation in student engagement – by looking within.

Variation in NSSE Benchmark Scores by Class at Western Michigan University



The dot signifies the median – the score that divides all students' scores into two equal halves (means are reported on page 4). The box shows the middle 50% of your scores (from the 25th to 75th percentiles) and the whiskers show the range of scores excluding outliers (from the 5th to the 95th percentile).

NSSE 2008 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 your first selected comparison group (listed in your *NSSE 2008 Selected Comparison Groups* report).

While these questions were chosen 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 2008* for additional results of particular interest to your campus.

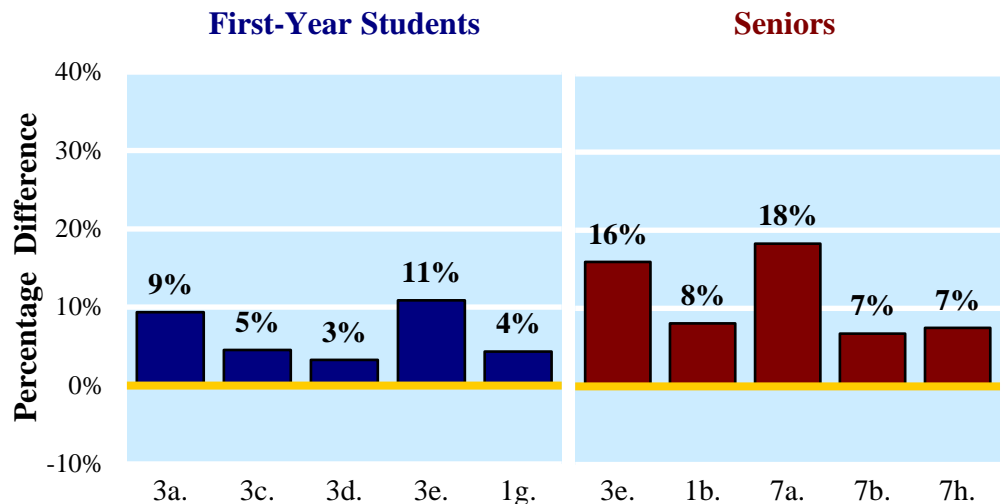
Highest Performing Areas

Comparison Groups

Question	Benchmark	Percent of students who...	WMU	Selected Peers	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2008
First-Year Students						
3a.	LAC	Read more than 10 assigned books or book-length packs of readings	38%	29%	31%	35%
3c.	LAC	Wrote at least one paper or report of 20 pages or more	22%	18%	17%	19%
3d.	LAC	Wrote more than 4 papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	32%	29%	30%	33%
3e.	LAC	Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	39%	28%	30%	31%
1g.	ACL	Worked with other students on projects during class ²	48%	43%	42%	43%
Seniors						
3e.	LAC	Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	44%	29%	30%	32%
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	63%	55%	56%	61%
7a.	EEE	Did a practicum, internship, field experience, clinical assignment	68%	50%	51%	53%
7b.	EEE	Participated in community service or volunteer work	64%	57%	60%	60%
7h.	EEE	Completed a culminating senior experience (capstone, thesis, comp. exam)	36%	28%	30%	32%

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

Selected Peers





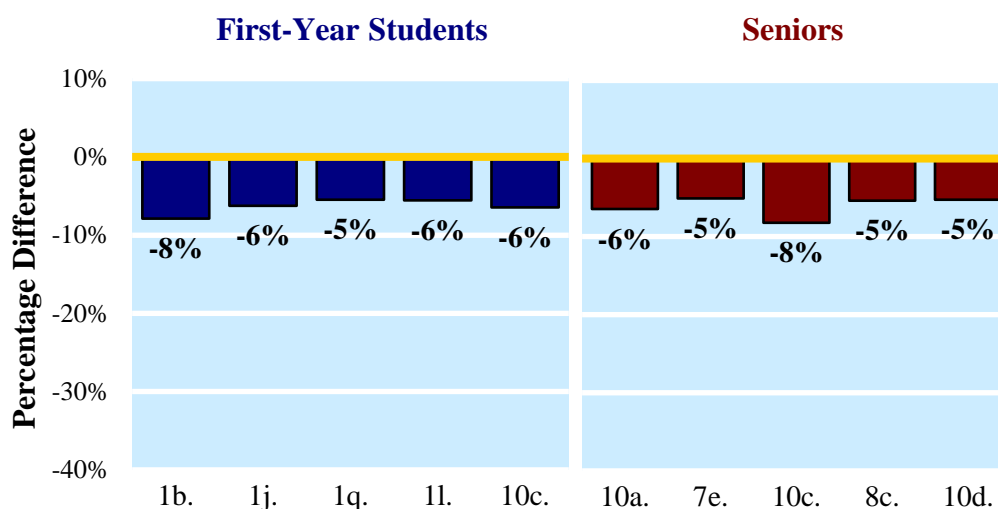
Lowest Performing Areas

Comparison Groups

Ques- tion	Bench- mark ¹	Percent of students who...	WMU	Selected Peers	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2008
First-Year Students						
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	20%	28%	27%	34%
1j.	ACL	Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary) ²	10%	17%	17%	16%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	48%	53%	54%	56%
1l.	EEE	Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment ²	48%	54%	54%	52%
10c.	EEE	Said the institution substantially encourages contacts among diverse peers ⁴	50%	56%	57%	57%
Seniors						
10a.	LAC	Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work ⁴	73%	79%	81%	81%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	36%	41%	43%	41%
10c.	EEE	Said the institution substantially encourages contacts among diverse peers ⁴	38%	47%	46%	48%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices ³	45%	50%	51%	53%
10d.	SCE	Said the institution substantially helps students cope w/ non-acad. matters ⁴	18%	24%	26%	27%

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

Selected Peers



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	907	25%	+/-2.9%
Seniors	593	45%	+/-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 2008 Benchmark Comparisons* report.

		Comparison Groups			
		WMU	Selected Peers	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2008
Class					
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)					
<i>How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?</i>	First-Year	51			-
	Senior	55			-
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)					
<i>Are your students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?</i>	First-Year	39	-	-	-
	Senior	51	+		
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)					
<i>Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?</i>	First-Year	32	-		-
	Senior	41			
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)					
<i>Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?</i>	First-Year	26		-	-
	Senior	41	+		
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)					
<i>Do your students feel the institution is committed to their success?</i>	First-Year	58	-	-	-
	Senior	53	-	-	-

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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 Kristin Lagerquist, Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Reports used in this Executive Snapshot included the: NSSE 2008 Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, Benchmark Comparisons, and Respondent Characteristics.



National Survey of Student Engagement

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