

# Evaluation of Student Experiences at the University of Delaware Results of the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

## Introduction

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a national data collection conducted annually by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. NSSE has a number of partners including the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The benchmark study is directed at measuring the extent to which students are engaged with faculty, with each other, and with their studies in educationally effective activities. It examines the extent to which they read and write, make use of technology, and engage in a broad range of learning activities. NSSE's guiding premise is that student participation in these activities at reasonable levels is a meaningful proxy for collegiate quality.

NSSE is administered to freshmen and seniors at a college or university to assess differences in level of engagement between first year and fourth year students. The standard sample size is determined by Indiana University based upon the number of undergraduates enrolled at each respective institution. In 2011, 751 institutions in the United States and Canada participated in NSSE with a total of 537,605 respondents. The University of Delaware (UD) has participated in the NSSE every three years since 2005. The most recent survey administration was conducted via an online survey in spring 2011. After multiple e-mail contacts, non-respondents were mailed paper copies of the survey for completion. In the 2011 UD administration, 798 students completed the survey, yielding an overall institutional response rate of 20%.

In developing the data analysis for NSSE, mean scores were calculated for each variable for freshman and senior respondents at the University of Delaware. Those mean scores were then compared to the national benchmark for freshman and senior respondents in three peer groupings:

1. student respondents at universities with the Carnegie Classification RU/VH: Research Universities (Very High Research Activity);
2. student respondents at universities identified as either actual or aspirational peer institutions for the University of Delaware; and
3. student respondents at universities in the Consortium for the Study of Writing in College (CSWC) identified as peer institutions for the University of Delaware.

Within the first peer grouping, i.e., Carnegie Classification, the following 35 institutions were included in the respondent pool:

Florida State University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Georgia State University  
Indiana University at Bloomington  
Iowa State University  
Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge

University of Cincinnati  
University of Connecticut  
University of Georgia  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
University of Houston  
University of Iowa

Mississippi State University  
Montana State University – Bozeman  
North Carolina State University  
North Dakota State University  
Penn State University – University Park  
Stony Brook University  
Texas A&M University  
University at Albany, SUNY  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Tulane University of Louisiana  
University at Buffalo, SUNY  
University of Central Florida

University of Maryland – College Park  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities  
University of New Mexico  
University of South Carolina Columbia  
University of Utah  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington – Seattle  
University of Wisconsin – Madison  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Virginia Polytech Inst & State University

Within the second peer grouping, i.e., actual and aspirational peers, the following 26 institutions were included in the respondent pool:

Binghamton University, SUNY  
Clemson University  
College of William and Mary  
Drexel University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Indiana University at Bloomington  
Iowa State University  
James Madison University  
Miami University – Oxford  
North Carolina State University  
Northeastern University  
Penn State University – University Park  
Stony Brook University

University at Albany, SUNY  
University at Buffalo, SUNY  
University of Connecticut  
University of Georgia  
University of Iowa  
University of Maryland – College Park  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities  
University of South Carolina Columbia  
University of Vermont  
University of Virginia  
University of Wisconsin – Madison  
Virginia Polytech Inst & State University

Within the third peer grouping, i.e., CSWC peers, the following six institutions were included in the respondent pool:

Indiana University Bloomington  
James Madison University  
Miami University – Oxford

North Carolina State University  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
University of Vermont

In comparing University of Delaware scores to each of the three peer groupings, it is fair to ask about the representativeness of the University of Delaware students compared to students in those three peer groupings:

**National Survey of Student Engagement: 2011 Administration at University of Delaware**  
**Representativeness of Respondent Pool**

	UD		Carnegie Classification		Actual/Aspirational Peers		CSWC Peers	
	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors
<b>Response Rate</b>								
Overall	20%		22%		24%		26%	
By Class	22%	18%	22%	22%	24%	24%	25%	28%
NSSE Sample Size	1,997	1,996	151,696	189,714	98,739	114,526	26,272	25,087
<b>Sampling Error</b>								
Overall	3.3%		0.3%		0.4%		0.7%	
By Class	4.4%	4.9%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	1.1%	1.0%
<b>Student Characteristics</b>								
<b>Mode of Completion</b>								
Paper	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Web	97%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Enrollment Status</b>								
Full Time	98%	94%	97%	89%	99%	94%	100%	96%
Part Time	2%	6%	3%	11%	1%	6%	0%	4%
<b>Gender</b>								
Female	70%	71%	61%	58%	60%	58%	64%	60%
Male	30%	29%	39%	42%	40%	42%	36%	40%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>								
American Indian/Native American	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	15%	4%	13%	10%	13%	10%	10%	7%
Black/African American	5%	2%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%
White, Non-Hispanic	70%	81%	67%	69%	71%	75%	76%	79%
Mexican/Mexican-American	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Puerto Rican	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Other Hispanic or Latino	1%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Multiracial	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
I Prefer Not To Respond	5%	6%	4%	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%
<b>International Student</b>	12%	2%	7%	5%	8%	5%	6%	4%
<b>Place of Residence</b>								
On-Campus	84%	19%	79%	13%	89%	19%	92%	16%
<b>Transfer Status</b>								
Transfer Students	4%	15%	4%	34%	3%	24%	2%	19%
<b>Age</b>								
Non-Traditional (24 or Older)	2%	11%	1%	22%	1%	11%	0%	10%
Traditional (Less than 24)	98%	89%	99%	78%	99%	89%	100%	90%

With the exception that the University of Delaware freshman respondents are somewhat more female, white, and international, the University's freshman respondents are generally quite representative in comparison with the freshman respondents of the three peer groupings. With the exception that the University of Delaware senior respondents are somewhat more female, white, and less likely to be a transfer student, the University's senior respondents are generally quite representative in comparison with the senior respondents of the three peer groupings.

The following general observations may be made by taking a look at the statistically significant mean differences for the five NSSE benchmark comparisons of effective educational practice. These benchmark comparisons consist of several survey questions related to level of academic challenge (LAC), active and collaborative learning (ACL), student-faculty interaction (SFI), enriching educational experiences (EEE), and supportive campus environment (SCE).

### **Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)**

Level of Academic Challenge includes items such as hours spent preparing for class, number of assigned books and readings, the emphasis of coursework, meeting instructor's expectations, and the campus environment emphasizing studying and academic work. There were no significant differences among UD's freshman and senior respondents and the three peer groupings. This indicates UD compared favorably well with all three peer groupings for LAC.

### **Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)**

Active and Collaborative Learning includes items such as participating in class, making a class presentation, working with classmates in and outside the classroom, tutoring students, participating in a community-based project, and discussing ideas from classes with others outside the classroom. Both UD's freshmen and seniors compared favorably well with their Carnegie Classification peers for ACL. UD's freshmen were significantly **less** engaged with ACL than their CSWC peers and their actual and aspirational peers. While UD's seniors also compared favorably well with their actual and aspirational peers for ACL, they were significantly **less** engaged with ACL than their CSWC peers.

### **Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)**

Student-Faculty Interaction includes items such as discussing grades or assignments with instructors, talking about career plans with a faculty member or advisor, discussing ideas from classes with faculty outside the classroom, working with faculty on activities not related to coursework, receiving prompt feedback from faculty concerning academic performance, and working on a research project with faculty outside the classroom. UD's freshmen compared favorably well with their Carnegie Classification peers and their actual and aspirational peers for SFI. UD's freshmen were significantly **less** engaged with SFI than their CSWC peers. UD's seniors compared favorably well with their CSWC peers for SFI. Furthermore, UD's seniors were significantly **more** engaged with SFI than their Carnegie Classification peers and their actual and aspirational peers.

### **Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)**

Enriching Educational Experiences includes items such as time spent participating in co-curricular activities, practicums and internships, community service and volunteer work, foreign language coursework and study abroad, independent study or self-designed major, senior capstone experience, experiencing campus diversity, using electronic medium, and learning communities. UD's freshmen were significantly **less** engaged with EEE than all three peer groupings. UD's seniors compared favorably well with their CSWC peers for EEE. Furthermore, UD's seniors were significantly **more** engaged with EEE than their Carnegie Classification peers and their actual and aspirational peers.

## Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)

Supportive Campus Environment (SCE) includes items such as the campus providing a supportive academic and social environment, providing an environment to cope with non-academic responsibilities, and the quality of relationships with students, faculty, and administrative staff. There were no significant differences among UD's freshman and senior respondents and the three peer groupings. This indicates UD compared favorably well with all three peer groupings for SCE.

While comparing UD freshman and senior respondents to the three peer groupings is valuable, it is also important to examine trends in NSSE results over time for UD respondents. This examination provides information to better understand current challenges and opportunities to enhance the student experience at UD.

## UD Freshman and Senior NSSE Benchmark Comparison Trend Analysis

Figure 1 presents an overview of the trends in UD's benchmark scores between 2005 and 2011 for freshman students. Results showed significant **improvement** in freshman students' ratings of the **campus environment** and perceived **level of academic challenge** over the last six years. The 2008 and 2011 cohorts were also **more** engaged in **active and collaborative learning** than the 2005 cohort. However, the 2011 cohort was **less** engaged in **enriching educational experiences** compared with previous cohorts. The level of student and faculty interaction among freshman respondents remained constant over the years.

Figure 1. UD NSSE Benchmark Comparison Trends: Freshman Students

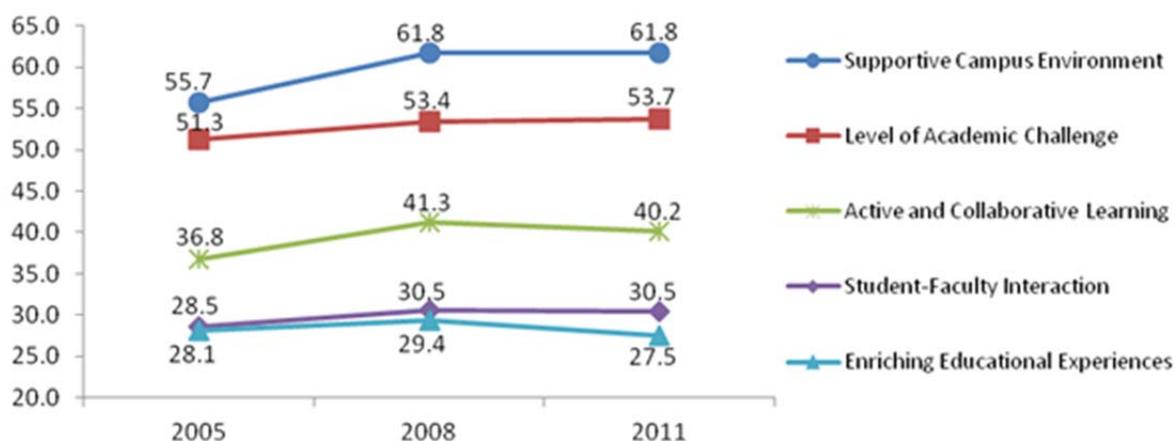
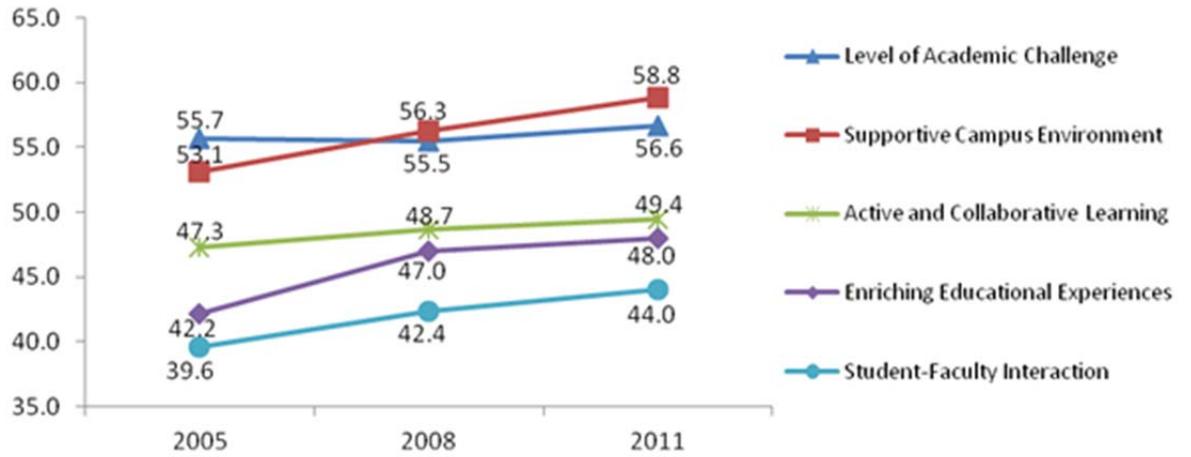


Figure 2 provides an overview of the trends in UD's benchmark scores between 2005 and 2011 for senior students. Results show a continuous significant **improvement** in senior students' rating of the **campus environment**. The 2008 and 2011 cohorts were **more** engaged in **interactions with faculty** and **enriching educational experiences** than the 2005 cohort. Senior students' perceived level of academic challenge and participation in active and collaborative learning remained constant over the years.

Figure 2. UD NSSE Benchmark Comparison Trends: Senior Students



An additional detailed multi-year report has been developed that summarizes the intra-institutional mean comparison analyses for the NSSE survey questions and benchmarks. The multi-year mean scores are provided for overall student responses, as well as by gender, race/ethnicity, and college.

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More information regarding the NSSE analysis may be obtained by contacting the Office of Institutional Research via email [irp@udel.edu](mailto:irp@udel.edu) or phone 302.831.2021.