



# National Survey of Student Engagement

## Executive Snapshot 2008

Washington State 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 Washington State University.

Sincerely,

Alexander C. McCormick

Director, National Survey of Student Engagement

### Are All Students at Washington State University Equally Engaged?

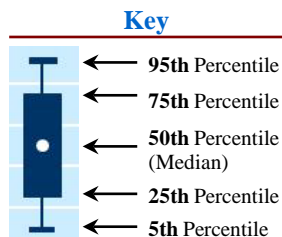
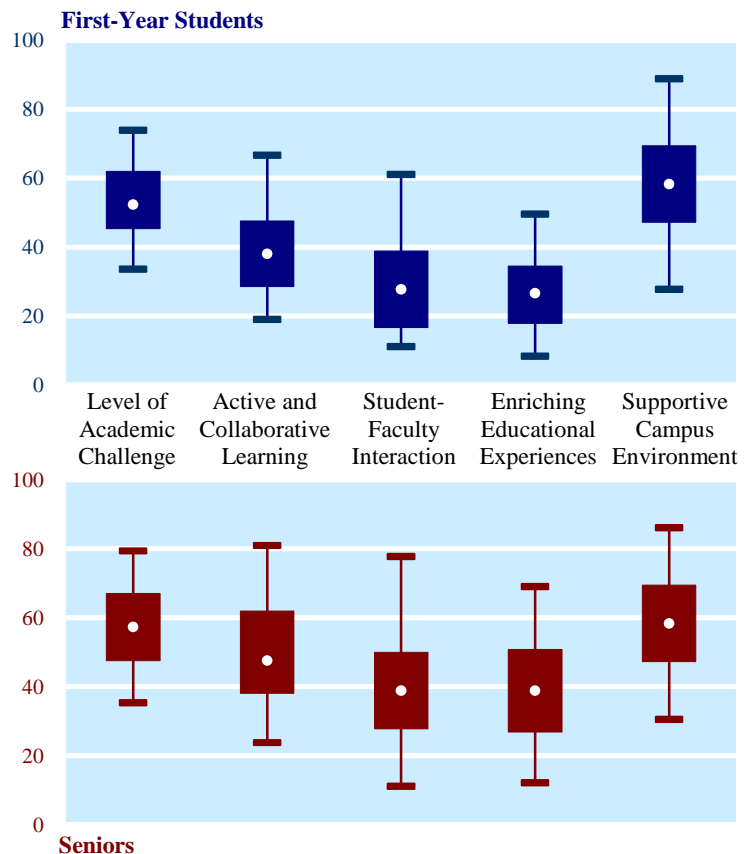
Quality in U.S. higher education is often considered an institutional attribute, as if one college offers a uniformly better or worse education than another. Yet, a robust finding from decades of research on college students holds that student experiences and outcomes are more varied among students *within*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

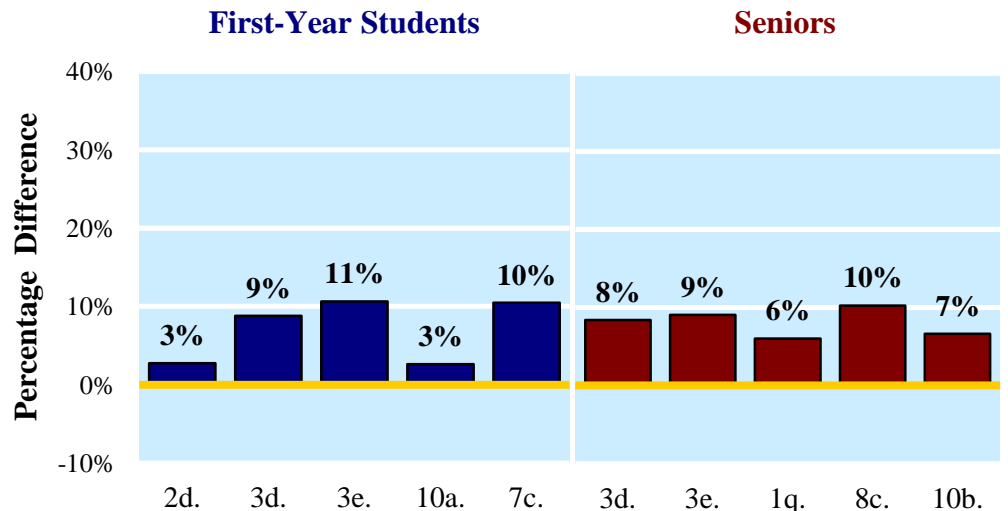
While these questions were chosen to represent the largest differences (in percentage points), they may not be the most important to your institutional mission or current program or policy goals. We encourage you to review your *NSSE Institutional Report 2008* for additional results of particular interest to your campus.

### Highest Performing Areas

Ques- tion	Bench- mark <sup>1</sup>	Percent of students who...	Comparison Groups			
			WSU	Land-Grant Peers	Carnegie Class	AAU Public Inst.
<b>First-Year Students</b>						
2d.	LAC	Said courses emphasized <b>making judgments</b> about the value of information <sup>4</sup>	<b>68%</b>	65%	67%	66%
3d.	LAC	Wrote more than 4 papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	<b>36%</b>	27%	34%	35%
3e.	LAC	Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	<b>38%</b>	27%	29%	29%
10a.	LAC	Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work <sup>4</sup>	<b>86%</b>	84%	83%	84%
7c.	EEE	Participated in a learning community	<b>29%</b>	18%	18%	19%
<b>Seniors</b>						
3d.	LAC	Wrote more than 4 papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	<b>52%</b>	43%	47%	47%
3e.	LAC	Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	<b>39%</b>	30%	32%	32%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty <sup>2</sup>	<b>64%</b>	58%	57%	57%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices <sup>3</sup>	<b>60%</b>	49%	48%	49%
10b.	SCE	Said the institution provides substantial support for academic success <sup>4</sup>	<b>74%</b>	67%	67%	67%

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:

Land-Grant Peers





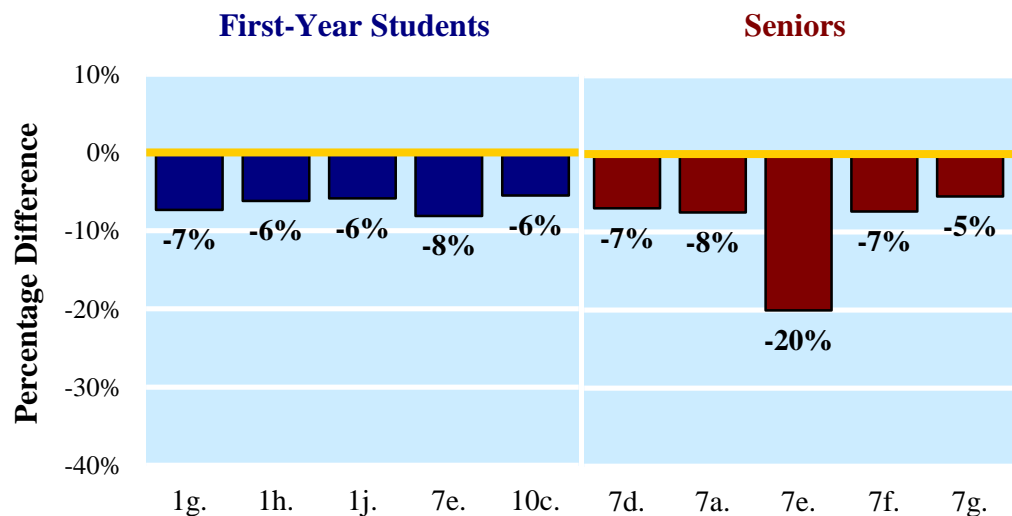
## Lowest Performing Areas

## Comparison Groups

Ques- tion	Bench- mark <sup>1</sup>	Percent of students who...	WSU	Land-Grant Peers	Carnegie Class	AAU Public Inst.
<b>First-Year Students</b>						
1g.	ACL	Worked with other students on projects during class <sup>2</sup>	<b>32%</b>	40%	38%	39%
1h.	ACL	Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments <sup>2</sup>	<b>38%</b>	44%	43%	42%
1j.	ACL	Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary) <sup>2</sup>	<b>12%</b>	18%	18%	18%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	<b>22%</b>	30%	31%	34%
10c.	EEE	Said the institution substantially encourages contacts among diverse peers <sup>4</sup>	<b>52%</b>	58%	59%	61%
<b>Seniors</b>						
7d.	SFI	Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of class	<b>19%</b>	26%	26%	26%
7a.	EEE	Did a practicum, internship, field experience, clinical assignment	<b>50%</b>	57%	59%	60%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	<b>31%</b>	51%	54%	55%
7f.	EEE	Had a study abroad experience	<b>14%</b>	22%	23%	22%
7g.	EEE	Did an independent study or self-designed major	<b>13%</b>	19%	18%	18%

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:

Land-Grant Peers



### Notes

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

<sup>2</sup> Combination of students responding 'very often' or 'often'

<sup>3</sup> Rated at least 5 on a 7-point scale

<sup>4</sup> 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	462	23%	+/-4.2%
Seniors	529	27%	+/-4%

## 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.

		WSU	Comparison Groups		
Class			Land-Grant Peers	Carnegie Class	AAU Public Inst.
<b>Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)</b>					
<i>How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?</i>	First-Year	<b>53</b>			
	Senior	<b>57</b>	+	+	+
<b>Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)</b>					
<i>Are your students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?</i>	First-Year	<b>38</b>	-	-	-
	Senior	<b>50</b>	+	+	+
<b>Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)</b>					
<i>Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?</i>	First-Year	<b>30</b>	-		
	Senior	<b>40</b>			
<b>Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)</b>					
<i>Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?</i>	First-Year	<b>28</b>		-	-
	Senior	<b>39</b>	-	-	-
<b>Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)</b>					
<i>Do your students feel the institution is committed to their success?</i>	First-Year	<b>58</b>			
	Senior	<b>58</b>	+	+	+

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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 Chad Gotch, Student Affairs Research and Assessment. 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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