

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), a companion survey to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), was launched in 2007. Since then, more than 741,000 entering first-year students at 464 institutions across the US and Canada have participated.

BCSSE collects data about entering college students' high school academic and co-curricular experiences, as well as their expectations for participating in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year.

BCSSE administration usually takes place prior to the start of fall classes and is designed to be paired with a NSSE administration in the spring to provide an in-depth understanding of first-year student engagement. Faculty, advisors, administrators, researchers, and others can use BCSSE data independently or in combination with NSSE data for program development, institutional assessment and improvement, and related purposes.

In fall 2016, 129 U.S. institutions participated in BCSSE. Of those, 95 (74%) also administered NSSE in spring 2017, allowing comparisons of incoming students' prior experiences and expectations with their actual experiences at the end of the first year.

Survey Administration and Respondents

BCSSE is administered locally by campus officials who distribute the paper survey or facilitate the online administration. In 2016, 51 institutions (40%) utilized paper surveys, 77 institutions (60%) chose the online survey, and one institution used a combination of the two. Nearly 76,000 entering first-year students completed BCSSE, representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as other areas. In addition, BCSSE was completed by students at two Canadian institutions.

Wondering how to use your BCSSE data? See *Using Your BCSSE Data for excellent recent examples:*
bcsse.indiana.edu/usingBCSSEdata.cfm

BCSSE Participating Institutions

Many different types of U.S. institutions participated in BCSSE. Among them, more than one in three (38%) were classified as baccalaureate colleges, nearly 50% as master's colleges and universities, and 15% as doctorate-granting universities (Table 1).

Table 1
Profile of BCSSE 2016 U.S. Institutions and Bachelor's-Granting U.S. Institutions

Institution Characteristics	BCSSE 2016 (%)	U.S. ^a (%)
Carnegie Basic Classification^b		
Doc/Highest: Doctoral Universities (Highest Research Activity)	3	7
Doc/Higher: Doctoral Universities (Higher Research Activity)	6	6
Doc/Moderate: Doctoral Universities (Moderate Research Activity)	6	7
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	25	24
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	15	13
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	7	9
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences Focus	24	15
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields	14	19
Control		
Public	31	35
Private	69	65
Undergraduate Enrollment		
Fewer than 1,000	16	21
1,000–2,499	39	33
2,500–4,999	20	17
5,000–9,999	11	14
10,000–19,999	10	9
20,000 or more	4	6

Notes: Percentages are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award baccalaureate degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie classifications in the table. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

a. U.S. percentages are based on the 2015 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics data.

b. For information on the Carnegie Foundation's 2015 Basic Classification, see carnegieclassifications.iu.edu.

BCSSE institutions generally reflect the diversity of bachelor's-granting institutions with respect to Carnegie Classification, public or private control, and undergraduate enrollment (Table 1).

BCSSE U.S. Respondents

BCSSE is locally administered, so sampling schemes and data collection methods vary across the participating institutions, but most institutions sample their entire incoming first-year population and typically collect data from 50% to nearly 100% of their students. Thus, BCSSE 2016 respondents, profiled in Table 2, likely provide institutions accurate estimates of those incoming first-year classes.

Table 2
Profile of BCSSE 2016 Respondents: Demographic Characteristics

	Percentage of Respondents
Gender Identity	
Man	41
Woman	58
Another gender identity	<1
Prefer not to respond	<1
Race/Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaska native	<1
Asian	6
Black or African American	9
Hispanic or Latino	10
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	<1
White	63
Multiracial	10
Other	1
I prefer not to respond	1
International Student	4
High School Graduation Year	
2013 or earlier	1
2014	2
2015	4
2016	94
First-Generation Student^a	48
Financial Aid Recipient^b	87

Note: Includes respondents from U.S. and Canadian institutions. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

a. Neither parent (or guardian) holds a bachelor's degree.

b. Received any scholarship, grant, or student loan.

Most BCSSE respondents graduated from a public high school, with more than half reporting they typically earned grades of A or A- (Table 3). Also, while most students attend an institution that is relatively close to home, about 27% must travel four or more hours to campus.

Table 3
Profile of BCSSE 2016 Respondents: School Experience Characteristics

	Percentage of Respondents
High School Type	
Public	82
Private, religiously affiliated	11
Private, not religiously affiliated	4
Home school	1
Other	1
High School Grades (Typical)	
A	32
A-	24
B+	20
B	17
B-	4
C+ or lower	3
Driving Time from Home to Institution	
Less than 1 hour	33
At least 1, less than 2 hours	19
At least 2, less than 4 hours	22
At least 4, less than 6 hours	10
At least 6, less than 8 hours	5
8 hours or more	12

Notes: Includes respondents from U.S. and Canadian institutions. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.