



Expectations  
and  
Engagement

A special report prepared for the  
Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College

**Expectations and Engagement:  
How Liberal Arts College Students Compare  
with Counterparts Elsewhere**

Robert M. Gonyea  
George D. Kuh  
Jillian Kinzie  
Ty Cruce  
Thomas F. Nelson-Laird

National Survey of Student Engagement  
Center for Postsecondary Research  
Indiana University Bloomington  
1900 East Tenth Street  
Eigenmann Hall Suite 419  
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512  
Phone: 812-856-5824

# Contents

---

Introduction	3
Academic Engagement during High School and College	7
Expected and Actual First-Year Time on Task	9
Other First-Year Experiences by Entering Level of Expectation	12
Perceptions of the Campus Environment by Entering Level of Expectation	14
First Year Gains by Entering Level of Preparedness	16
How Do Expectations and Experiences Affect Self-Reported Gains in Desired Outcomes of College?	18
Conclusions and Implications	24
References	27
Appendices	30
Appendix A: Respondent characteristics Table	
Appendix B: Institutional characteristics Table	
Appendix C: Instruments and Methodology	
Appendix D: BCSS student sample and first-year population at pilot institutions	
Appendix E: Beginning College Student Survey 2004 National Survey of Student Engagement 2005	

# Introduction

---

Earning a baccalaureate degree is more important than ever. Some estimates indicate that more than 80% of high school seniors will need some form of postsecondary education to participate in the information-age economy (McCabe, 2000). The message has gotten through, as more than 90% of high school students say they intend to go to college and about two thirds enroll immediately after high school graduation (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003). But getting into college and finishing are two different things. Too many students leave college early and too few who graduate obtain the knowledge, skills, and competencies at levels they need in order to be economically self-sufficient and to participate in meaningful ways in civic life. Indeed, some predict a shortfall of 14 million college-educated workers by 2020 unless students are better prepared during the K–12 years (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003).

These challenges have not gone unnoticed. For nearly three decades, national reports have underscored the need to better prepared students for college-level work. Central to the needed reforms is better alignment between high school courses and the skills and competencies students need to succeed in college (American Diploma Project, 2004; Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2002). Certainly, K-12 schools, families, and communities must do a better job in creating appropriately high educational aspirations and helping students acquire the skills and competencies they must have to survive and thrive in college (*A Shared Agenda*, 2003; McDonough, 2004a). The challenges are complex and multifaceted, involving academic, cultural, social, and financial factors.

But institutions of higher education cannot wait until the pipeline issues are “fixed.” Tens of thousands of students are matriculating annually who are ill prepared to deal with the challenges they will face. Many of these students are from minority, low-income, and first-generation backgrounds (Martinez & Klopott, 2003).

## Expectations Matter

In *Greater Expectations*, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) concluded that we need to raise expectations – those students have for themselves and their college experience, and those we have for students as intentional learners (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2002). Others point out that colleges and universities must do more to assist students successfully navigate the school-to-college transition (Callan & Finney, 2003; Choy, 2002; McDonough, 2004b). These and other interventions are needed because many students come to college with a cumulative deficit in terms of attitudes and study habits in addition to inadequate academic skills. Unabashedly focused on getting credentials for a good job after college, substantial numbers arrive already “disengaged” from the learning process (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2002; Levine & Cureton, 1997; Marchese, 1996, 1998).

For example, first-year students report studying only about five or six hours a week their last year in high school; compared with their counterparts of a decade earlier, they report being more often bored in class and miss more classes due to oversleeping or other obligations (Sax, Lindholm, Astin, Korn,& Mahoney, 2003). Even so, record numbers report B+ or better high school grades and expect to earn at least a B average in college and attend graduate school. In addition, there is evidence that patterns established in elementary and secondary school continue through the college years. At all types of institutions, declines of about 10% occurred in the percentage of students indicating they *often* or *very often* underlined major points in the readings, saw how facts and ideas fit together, or

thought about the practical application of their studies (Kuh, 1999).

While there is general agreement that expectations are important to student learning and the overall quality of the college experience, there are few sources of reliable data on students' expectations for their undergraduate experience and relatively little research on how their expectations influence subsequent campus experiences and important outcomes such as grades, persistence, and educational attainment (Ewell & Jones, 1996; Kuh, 1999; Kuh, Gonyea, & Williams, 2005). Thus, discovering what students expect of and from their college experience is crucial if faculty members are to adjust their instructional approaches accordingly and institutions are to modify policies and practices to respond in educationally effective ways to the current generation of college students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Given concerns about college readiness and the obligation of college and universities to do their part in enhancing student success in college, it would be instructive to know what students *expect* to do in college, their behavioral patterns established *prior to entering college*, and how students' expectations for college and pre-college experiences *affect what they do* during the first year. For example, do students who study more in high school compared with their peers expect to study more in relative terms when they get to college? And do they? What are the factors that seem to be related to students who devote substantially less time to academics when they get to college? And what might the institution do about that? Do students who expect to gain more from college in certain areas report doing so at the end of the first year? If a school has this kind of information, it could – for example – adjust its admissions and marketing materials, orientation programs, and first-year classes and support programs to address student attitudes and beliefs about college that may be inaccurate or inappropriate. If the college requires community service and a capstone seminar, but most students are unaware of or do not expect to do these things, the institution can take steps to clarify its requirements. This information can also be shared with the high schools from which students come, to better articulate what happens in college and what their students need to focus on.

In addition, matching information about what students did in high school in terms of reading, writing, and participating in various educationally sound activities with what students actually do during the first year of college can help determine the nature and degree of impact the institution has on student engagement. That is, net of who students are and what they bring with them to college in terms of preferences and predilections, do some schools create the conditions where students meet or exceed their expectations? In other words, do colleges “add value” by getting students to exceed their expectations and perform above what they did in high school? Or do schools disappoint and present their first-year students with low academic challenge and provide learning environments marked by few experiences with diversity and infrequent interactions with faculty members and peers on substantive topics?

### What is BCSS?

To learn more about the relationships between students' pre-college educational experiences and their expectations for and experiences in the first college year, we turned to data collected via the newly developed *Beginning College Survey of Engagement* (BCSS)<sup>1</sup> and the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE). The BCSS, a companion instrument to the NSSE, measures entering students' expectations for college (with a focus on participating in educationally purposeful

---

<sup>1</sup> The BCSS was renamed the *Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement* (BCSSE) in 2005.

activities). It also collects information about selected high school experiences. The NSSE assesses the extent to which first-year students in college engage in empirically-derived good educational practices and what they gain from their college experience. Thus, we can match entering students' responses to the BCSS with their responses to the NSSE at the end of the first year of college to obtain a more accurate picture of what students are like when they start college and what they expect of themselves and their college or university, and compare these responses to what students actually do during their first year of college.

A better understanding of these phenomena will be instructive for revising pre-college socialization, orientation, and first-year experience initiatives as well as other efforts designed to enhance student learning and improve persistence and graduation rates. Because the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College is committed to exploring various facets of and promoting liberal arts educational practices and ensuring that the nature of liberal arts education is better understood, we concentrate on the expectations and experiences of students at baccalaureate liberal arts colleges compared to students at other types of colleges and universities.

Three central questions guided this analysis:

- (1) What do liberal arts college students expect to do during their first year of study in terms of academic, social and other activities?
- (2) How do the expectations of liberal arts college students compare with their experiences during the first year?
- (3) How do the expectations and experiences of liberal arts college students compare with those of their peers at other types of institutions?

### Data Sources

In the summer of 2004, a select group of institutions that had previously participated in the NSSE survey project were invited to participate in a pilot study of the BCSS. Twenty-seven institutions agreed to participate in the BCSS pilot and the required NSSE administration in 2005. A mix of institutional types was important for the pilot. This report is based on data from four doctoral-extensive universities, three doctoral-intensive universities, nine master's institutions, ten baccalaureate liberal arts colleges, and one baccalaureate general institution. A significant number of liberal arts colleges were recruited so as to examine expectations and engagement at liberal arts institutions. Thirteen of the institutions are private and fourteen are public. Figure 1 shows the institutions that participated in the project.

The students at the participating liberal arts colleges were, as expected, a very traditional college student population. Sixty-one percent were female, 84% were White, virtually 100% were full-time students, 95% lived on campus, and 99% were 19 years of age or younger. The comparison group of students attending other types of colleges and universities is not much different demographically, although this group includes a greater percentage of females (70%) and a smaller percentage of students living on campus (82%). These students are similar to the national profile of first-year students at all four-year colleges and universities in terms of gender. However, White students are slightly over-represented, while African American, Latino, and Asian/Pacific Islander students are under-represented; slightly more full-time students, students 19 years of age or younger, and living on campus, are in this group.

The similarities in demographic characteristics of the students attending the two sets of institutions are due, in part, to the BCSS administration design. As a locally-administered survey that measures the pre-college experiences and expectations of entering college students, BCSS was almost always administered to captive audiences of students who were attending formal orientation programs that are often designed for and attended by traditional-age students.

Additional information about the BCSS, as well as the data sources and analytical methods used for this study are outlined in the Appendices.

**Figure 1. Schools Where Students Completed Both the BCSS and NSSE**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Carnegie Classification</b>
California Lutheran University	Private	Master's
College of Wooster, The	Private	Bac-LA
Elon University	Private	Master's
Evergreen State College, The	Public	Bac-LA
Goucher College	Private	Bac-LA
Indiana University Bloomington	Public	Doc-Ext
Judson College (AL)	Private	Bac-LA
Miami University	Public	Doc-Int
Mississippi State University	Public	Doc-Ext
Muhlenberg College	Private	Bac-LA
Norfolk State University	Public	Master's
Plymouth State College	Public	Master's
Radford University	Public	Master's
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, The	Public	Bac-LA
Rockford College	Private	Master's
Saint Xavier University	Private	Master's
Southern Connecticut State University	Public	Master's
St. Olaf College	Private	Bac-LA
Susquehanna University	Private	Bac-LA
Towson University	Public	Master's
University of Dayton	Private	Doc-Int
University of Idaho	Public	Doc-Ext
University of Maine at Farmington, The	Public	Bac-Gen
University of Missouri-Kansas City	Public	Doc-Int
University of Nevada, Reno	Public	Doc-Ext
Ursinus College	Private	Bac-LA
Wabash College	Private	Bac-LA

# Academic Engagement during High School and College

---

How does student engagement in the last year of high school compare with that in the first year of college for the liberal arts college students? In general, students at all types of institutions were more actively engaged in classes their last year of high school than they were in their first-year college courses (Table 1). A generous interpretation of these findings is that high school classes usually meet daily whereas many college classes meet only two or three times per week; thus, students have more opportunities to participate in class in high school.

- Fifty five percent of the students reported “very often” participating in class discussions in high school; only 37% did so this often in the first college year.
- Students said they did much more in-class group work in the last year of high school; three fifths did this frequently (“very often” or “often”) as high school seniors while only one third did this frequently in the first year of college. However, students worked more often with classmates outside of class in their first year college than in high school (50% and 33% respectively did so frequently).
- On average, students tended to talk with their college teachers outside of class about as often as they did with their high school teachers.

How do the liberal arts college students in this study compare with those attending other types of colleges and universities in terms of academic engagement?

- Students in both sets of institutions had similar high school experiences participating in classroom discussions, though about 15% of the liberal arts college students reported doing so “very often.”
- Similarly, 12% more students at liberal arts colleges did out-of-class group work with their peers. This was offset, however, by their doing somewhat less in-class group work.
- More liberal arts college students (15%) discussed ideas from coursework with faculty members outside of class at least “sometimes.”

**Table 1: Academic Engagement during High School and College<sup>a</sup>**

	<i>Response Options</i>	<b>Liberal Arts Institutions<sup>b</sup></b>		<b>Comparison Institutions<sup>c</sup></b>	
		Senior Year of High School	First Year of College	Senior Year of High School	First Year of College
		<i>Col. %</i>	<i>Col. %</i>	<i>Col. %</i>	<i>Col. %</i>
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	Never	1%	1%	1%	3%
	Sometimes	15%	25%	19%	38%
	Often	30%	37%	34%	36%
	Very often	55%	37%	46%	22%
Come to class without completing readings or assignments	Never	38%	30%	31%	23%
	Sometimes	56%	58%	60%	59%
	Often	5%	8%	6%	13%
	Very often	2%	4%	2%	5%
Worked with other students on projects during class	Never	1%	13%	1%	9%
	Sometimes	39%	54%	33%	48%
	Often	45%	25%	48%	34%
	Very often	15%	8%	18%	9%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	Never	8%	4%	10%	12%
	Sometimes	59%	45%	54%	49%
	Often	25%	38%	28%	29%
	Very often	8%	12%	8%	10%
Talked with a teacher about college or career plans <sup>d</sup>	Never	6%	19%	6%	22%
	Sometimes	42%	51%	41%	50%
	Often	33%	20%	33%	21%
	Very often	19%	10%	20%	8%
Talked with a guidance counselor about college or career plans <sup>d</sup>	Never	10%	19%	8%	22%
	Sometimes	44%	51%	41%	50%
	Often	28%	20%	31%	20%
	Very often	19%	10%	20%	8%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with a teacher outside of class <sup>e</sup>	Never	24%	30%	32%	45%
	Sometimes	51%	48%	48%	39%
	Often	17%	16%	15%	12%
	Very often	8%	7%	5%	5%
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	Never	18%	13%	20%	17%
	Sometimes	34%	36%	34%	36%
	Often	20%	27%	23%	26%
	Very often	28%	24%	24%	21%
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	Never	8%	4%	11%	9%
	Sometimes	30%	27%	32%	32%
	Often	29%	34%	28%	32%
	Very often	34%	35%	29%	28%

<sup>a</sup> BCSS: “During the last year of high school, about how often did you do each of the following?”

NSSE: “In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?”

<sup>b</sup> Sample size ranges from 1,154 to 1,187<sup>c</sup> Sample size ranges from 4,437 to 4,741<sup>d</sup> BCSS version shown; NSSE version: “Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor”<sup>e</sup> BCSS version shown; NSSE version: “Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class”

# Expected and Actual First-Year Time on Task

---

How many hours per week did liberal arts college students expect to spend on various academic, social, and other tasks compared with actual reported time spent during the first year of college? Table 2 provides some answers.

In general, student expectations of hours spent were greater than actual reported hours. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Kuh, Gonyea, & Williams, 2005; Olsen, Kuh et al., 1997). For example:

- Although a majority of students (54%) expected to study (prepare for class, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work) more than 20 hours per week, only 39% reported doing so in their first year of college.

It is not clear to what activities students devote a substantial amount of their remaining time, as they do not appear to spend it by participating in co-curricular activities, socializing, or working:

- Seven out of ten (72%) students expected to spend more than 5 hours per week in cocurricular activities (student organizations, government, Greek system, or other activities) in college. Less than half (46%) actually did so.
- Somewhat surprising is that students expected to spend a little more time relaxing and socializing than they actually did the first year of college.
- Students also spent less time working for pay than they thought they would. Only about 40% worked on campus though 63% expected to do so.

How do liberal arts college students compare with students attending other types of colleges in terms of spending time on academic-related tasks?

- Students attending the liberal arts colleges expected to spend, and reported spending, more hours per week in academic preparation (studying, reading, writing, etc.) than their counterparts elsewhere. The differences are actually fairly dramatic. Only 34% of the students at comparison institutions expect to spend 21+ hours per week preparing for class versus 54% at liberal arts institutions. Although actual study time drops below the expectations held by both groups of students, the percentage drops by half for students at comparison schools, while the percentage of students that actually study 21+ hours per week at liberal arts college (39%) still exceeds the percentage that expect to study this amount at comparison institutions. In sum, students at liberal arts colleges expect to spend more time studying – and actually do so – than their peers at comparison institutions.
- About 19% more liberal arts students worked on campus during the school year, whereas about 15% fewer worked off campus. Students at both liberal arts and comparison institutions expected to work (including on and off campus jobs) more than they actually reported at the end of first year in college. A very small proportion (less than 10%) of first-year students reported working more than 10 hrs per week in either on or off campus at liberal arts colleges, and only a slightly higher percentage worked at comparison schools.

- Although students from both groups of institutions had similar expectations for participating in co-curricular activities, about one fifth more liberal arts students actually did so during their first college year.

**Table 2: Expected and Actual First-Year Time on Task <sup>a</sup>**

<i>Response Options</i>	<b>Liberal Arts Institutions <sup>b</sup></b>		<b>Comparison Institutions <sup>c</sup></b>		
	Expected First Year	First Year of College	Expected First Year	First Year of College	
	<i>Col. %</i>	<i>Col. %</i>	<i>Col. %</i>	<i>Col. %</i>	
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	0 hours	0%	0%	0%	1%
	1-5 hours	2%	6%	5%	16%
	6-10 hours	8%	16%	16%	27%
	11-15 hours	17%	18%	21%	22%
	16-20 hours	19%	21%	23%	17%
	21-25 hours	23%	17%	17%	9%
	26-30 hours	16%	12%	10%	4%
	30+ hours	15%	10%	7%	4%
Working for pay on campus	0 hours	37%	59%	53%	78%
	1-5 hours	12%	13%	11%	4%
	6-10 hours	26%	21%	17%	9%
	11-15 hours	16%	5%	10%	5%
	16-20 hours	7%	1%	6%	2%
	21-25 hours	1%	0%	2%	1%
	26-30 hours	1%	0%	1%	0%
	30+ hours	0%	0%	0%	0%
Working for pay off campus	0 hours	80%	88%	61%	73%
	1-5 hours	8%	4%	8%	4%
	6-10 hours	4%	4%	9%	5%
	11-15 hours	4%	1%	8%	5%
	16-20 hours	2%	2%	7%	5%
	21-25 hours	1%	0%	4%	4%
	26-30 hours	0%	0%	2%	2%
	30+ hours	0%	1%	1%	2%
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, social fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	0 hours	2%	16%	8%	35%
	1-5 hours	26%	38%	36%	34%
	6-10 hours	29%	20%	27%	14%
	11-15 hours	20%	11%	16%	7%
	16-20 hours	12%	7%	7%	5%
	21-25 hours	7%	4%	3%	2%
	26-30 hours	2%	2%	1%	1%
	30+ hours	2%	2%	1%	2%

<sup>a</sup> BCSS: During the coming school year, about how many hours do you think you will spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

NSSE: About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

<sup>b</sup> Sample size ranges from 1,105 to 1,116

<sup>c</sup> Sample size ranges from 4,160 to 4,183

**Table 2 continued: Expected and Actual First-Year Time on Task <sup>a</sup>**

Relaxing and socializing (watching TV, partying, exercising, etc.)	0 hours	0%	1%	1%	1%
	1-5 hours	17%	23%	19%	21%
	6-10 hours	35%	33%	32%	29%
	11-15 hours	22%	21%	22%	20%
	16-20 hours	14%	11%	14%	13%
	21-25 hours	7%	5%	7%	7%
	26-30 hours	2%	2%	3%	3%
	30+ hours	2%	4%	3%	5%
Providing care for dependents living with you (parents, children, spouse, etc.)	0 hours	89%	94%	80%	85%
	1-5 hours	8%	4%	12%	9%
	6-10 hours	1%	1%	4%	3%
	11-15 hours	1%	1%	2%	1%
	16-20 hours	0%	0%	1%	1%
	21-25 hours	0%	0%	0%	1%
	26-30 hours	0%	0%	0%	0%
	30+ hours	0%	0%	0%	1%
Commuting to class (driving, walking, etc.)	0 hours	24%	28%	11%	13%
	1-5 hours	66%	67%	65%	68%
	6-10 hours	6%	4%	15%	12%
	11-15 hours	2%	1%	4%	4%
	16-20 hours	1%	0%	2%	1%
	21-25 hours	0%	0%	1%	1%
	26-30 hours	1%	0%	1%	0%
	30+ hours	1%	0%	1%	1%

<sup>a</sup> BCSS: “During the coming school year, about how many hours do you think you will spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?”

NSSE: “About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?”

<sup>b</sup> Sample size ranges from 1,105 to 1,116

<sup>c</sup> Sample size ranges from 4,160 to 4,183

## Other First-Year Experiences by Entering Level of Expectation

---

Most students when they start college expect to engage at some level in nearly all the activities NSSE asks about. Table 3 indicates the extent to which these expectations are realized.

- To illustrate the former, 87% expected to frequently work harder than ever before to meet an instructor's standards or expectation. Seven of ten (71%) expected to frequently have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity.

In certain instances, more than a third of all students took part only *infrequently* ("sometimes" or "never") in activities in which they expected to engage in *frequently* ("often" or "very often"). For example:

- Thirty five percent of the liberal arts college students who reported that they expected to frequently work harder than ever before to meet an instructor's standards or expectations did so only infrequently during the first college year.
- More than two fifths 44% expected to participate frequently in a school-sponsored community service project but did so only infrequently.

In a few instances large numbers of students do not start college inclined to take advantage of learning opportunities:

- More than half expected to have little contact with their instructors outside the classroom; sadly, this turned out to be the case.
- Almost half do not expect to participate often in school-sponsored community service projects.

In general, liberal arts college students expect to engage more frequently in educationally purposeful activities and report doing so to a greater degree compared with their counterparts at other institutions. For example, 58% of liberal arts students expect to, and do, interact frequently with students who are very different from them in terms of religious or political views and values compared with only 47% from other institutions.

In a few instances (emailing or discussing grades with an instructor), students at different types of schools are pretty evenly distributed in terms of what they expect and do. When the differences favor students at other types of institutions, the gaps are typically small, four percent or less. The biggest differences tend to be in the "low-low" category, where it appears that large numbers of students at the other institutions have lower expectations to begin with and do not rise above them.

**Table 3: First-Year Experiences by Entering Level of Expectation**

	<i>Institution</i> <sup>c</sup>	<b>Expectation Level - Engagement Level<sup>b</sup></b>			
		<i>High-High</i>	<i>High-Low</i>	<i>Low-High</i>	<i>Low-Low</i>
Use e-mail to communicate with an instructor	Liberal Arts	54%	11%	24%	11%
	Comparison	54%	11%	22%	13%
Discuss grades or assignments with an instructor	Liberal Arts	38%	30%	10%	22%
	Comparison	37%	28%	10%	24%
Talk about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	Liberal Arts	21%	37%	9%	33%
	Comparison	20%	31%	9%	40%
Discuss ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	Liberal Arts	15%	26%	8%	52%
	Comparison	8%	22%	8%	62%
Work harder than ever before to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	Liberal Arts	52%	35%	4%	9%
	Comparison	48%	38%	5%	9%
Have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	Liberal Arts	42%	29%	9%	19%
	Comparison	38%	27%	9%	26%
Have serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	Liberal Arts	58%	20%	11%	11%
	Comparison	47%	21%	12%	20%
Attend an art exhibit, gallery, play, dance, or other theater performance	Liberal Arts	31%	30%	7%	31%
	Comparison	21%	30%	6%	43%
Exercise or participate in physical fitness activities	Liberal Arts	62%	16%	8%	14%
	Comparison	55%	22%	7%	16%
Participate in a school-sponsored community service project <sup>d</sup>	Liberal Arts	7%	44%	3%	46%
	Comparison	7%	36%	3%	54%

<sup>a</sup> BCSS: "During the coming school year, about how often do you expect to each of the following?"

NSSE: "In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?"

<sup>b</sup> Expectation Level: High = 'Very often,' 'Often;' Low = 'Sometimes,' 'Never'

Engagement Level: High = 'Very often,' 'Often;' Low = 'Sometimes,' 'Never'

<sup>c</sup> Liberal Arts sample size ranges from 1,138 to 1,151

Comparison sample size ranges from 4,299 to 4,452

<sup>d</sup> BCSS version shown; NSSE version: "Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course"

# Perceptions of the Campus Environment by Entering Level of Expectation

---

Are students able to accurately predict what their campus environment will be like (Table 4)?

- More than four of every five students expect their institution to place a strong emphasis on academics, academic support, attending campus events, and interacting with students from different backgrounds. Happily, at the end of their first year, most students report that their institutions do emphasize these areas. However, nearly a third of students (32%) report that their institution does not highly emphasize interacting with students from different backgrounds even though they had high expectations that their institutions would.
- About three of every four students expect their school to give substantial emphasis to helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities and providing support for them to thrive socially. However, by the end of the first year a large number – more than half – perceive that their school provides relatively little emphasis on this (combination of “high-low” and “low-low”).

Do liberal arts students differ from their counterparts at other institutions in terms of what they think their campus will be like and what they actually experience?

- While students at all institutions tend to have fairly high expectations for their campus environment, those attending liberal arts institutions have even higher expectations and, on balance, tend to report that their campus emphasizes these areas. The lone exception to this pattern is for using computers in academic work where 82% of students at the comparison schools and 77% of students at liberal arts colleges expected high levels of emphasis and reported high levels of emphasis.

**Table 4: Perceptions of the Campus Environment by Entering Level of Expectation**

		<b>Expectation Level - Emphasis Level <sup>b</sup></b>				
		<i>Institution <sup>c</sup></i>	<i>High-High</i>	<i>High-Low</i>	<i>Low-High</i>	<i>Low-Low</i>
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	Liberal Arts		85%	10%	3%	1%
	Comparison		74%	20%	4%	2%
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	Liberal Arts		86%	10%	3%	1%
	Comparison		71%	21%	5%	4%
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	Liberal Arts		50%	32%	5%	12%
	Comparison		45%	35%	6%	14%
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	Liberal Arts		29%	35%	7%	29%
	Comparison		21%	33%	8%	38%
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	Liberal Arts		47%	31%	7%	15%
	Comparison		34%	32%	10%	23%
Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	Liberal Arts		69%	18%	7%	5%
	Comparison		59%	26%	7%	8%
Using computers in academic work	Liberal Arts		77%	10%	11%	2%
	Comparison		82%	11%	5%	2%

<sup>a</sup> BCSS: "To what extent do you expect this college will emphasize each of the following?"

NSSE: "To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following?"

<sup>b</sup> Expectation Level: High = 'Very much,' 'Quite a bit,' Low = 'Some,' 'Very little'

Emphasis Level: High = 'Very much,' 'Quite a bit,' Low = 'Some,' 'Very little'

<sup>c</sup> Liberal Arts sample size ranges from 1,110 to 1,117

Comparison sample size ranges from 4,158 to 4,171

# First Year Gains by Entering Level of Preparedness

---

How do self-reported levels of academic preparedness compare to self-assessed academic gains in the first year of college for liberal arts college students (Table 5)?

- Most students at liberal arts colleges say they are well prepared to do some of the academic tasks that colleges will require. For example, 74% (combination of 66% “high-high” and 15% “high-low” in Table 5) considered themselves highly prepared to speak clearly and effectively. More than nine of ten (93%) felt well prepared to work effectively with others.
- Between 15% and 24% of liberal arts students said they were well prepared for their academics, but reported that they did not gain much in these areas during their first year.

Do liberal arts college students differ from their counterparts at other institutions in these areas?

- Only 59% of liberal arts college students reported being highly prepared to use computing and information technology, 13% less than the percentage of students at other types of institutions. However, of the liberal arts college students who did not feel prepared in this area, about 59% felt they gained a good deal in this area during their first year.
- While about 90% of students at all institutions feel highly prepared to learn effectively on their own, 73% of liberal arts students reported gaining a lot in this area compared with only 63% of students at other types of institutions.

**Table 5: First Year Gains by Entering Level of Preparedness**

		<b>Preparedness Level - Gain Level <sup>b</sup></b>				
		<i>Institution <sup>c</sup></i>	<i>High-High</i>	<i>High-Low</i>	<i>Low-High</i>	<i>Low-Low</i>
Write clearly and effectively	Liberal Arts		66%	15%	15%	5%
	Comparison		58%	21%	14%	7%
Speak clearly and effectively	Liberal Arts		50%	24%	14%	13%
	Comparison		47%	28%	12%	14%
Analyze mathematical problems <sup>d</sup>	Liberal Arts		46%	17%	23%	15%
	Comparison		42%	20%	23%	15%
Use computing and information technology	Liberal Arts		41%	18%	24%	17%
	Comparison		55%	17%	18%	9%
Work effectively with others	Liberal Arts		72%	21%	4%	4%
	Comparison		67%	27%	3%	3%
Learn effectively on your own	Liberal Arts		73%	17%	7%	4%
	Comparison		63%	26%	6%	5%

<sup>a</sup> BCSS: "How prepared are you to do the following at this institution?"

NSSE: "To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?"

<sup>b</sup> Preparedness Level: High = 'Very prepared,' 'Quite prepared;' Low = 'Somewhat prepared,' 'Not prepared'

Gain Level: High = 'Very much,' 'Quite a bit;' Low = 'Some,' 'Very little'

<sup>c</sup> Liberal Arts sample size ranges from 1,108 to 1,114

Comparison sample size ranges from 4,115 to 4,156

<sup>d</sup> BCSS version shown; NSSE version: "Analyzing quantitative problems"

# How Do Expectations and Experiences Affect Self-Reported Gains in Desired Outcomes of College?

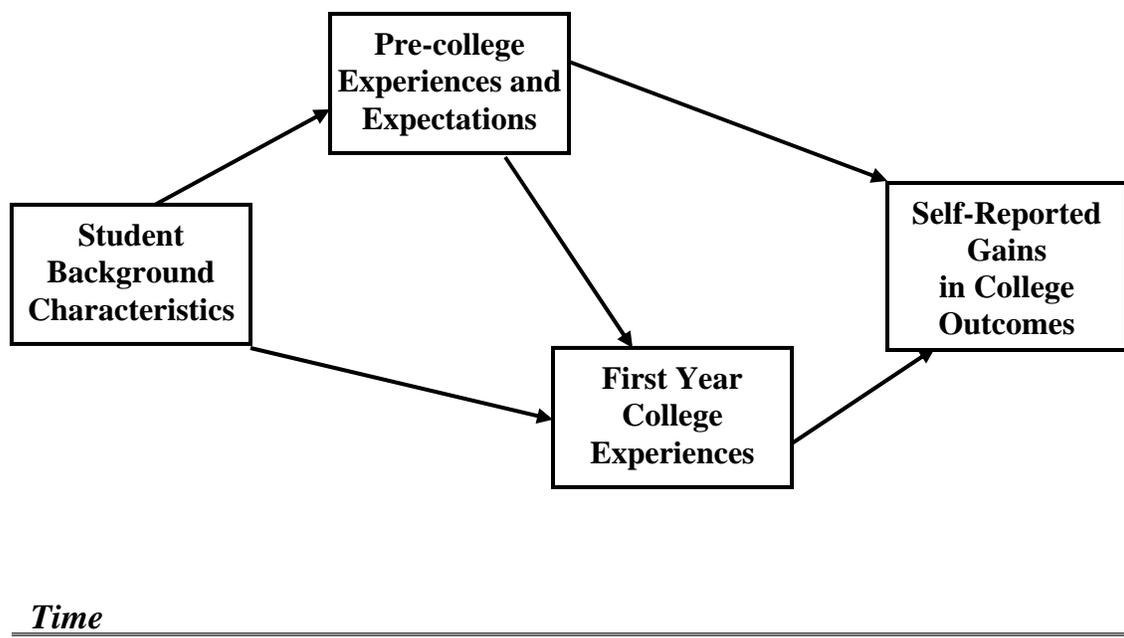
---

To better understand the complex relationships among students' pre-college expectations and experiences, engagement in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year, and gains in key college outcomes, we created a path model to discover the direct and indirect relationships among these variables.

## *Conceptual Model*

Figure 2 below shows the conceptual model for this analysis, drawn from similar models in the higher education literature that hypothesize effects on student outcomes over time (e.g., Astin, 1991; Pascarella, 1985; Tinto, 1993). Student background characteristics are presumed to influence pre-college experiences and expectations, and also their actual experiences during the first year of college. Pre-college experiences and expectations are also believed to have an impact on first year of college experiences, and also on the students' self-reported gains. Finally, college experiences are believed to have a direct influence on gains.

**Figure 2:**  
**Conceptual Model of Relationships between Student Background Characteristics, Pre-college Academic Experiences and Expectations, College Experiences, and Self-Reported Gains in Selected College Outcomes during the First Year of College**



### *Variables*

Student background characteristics in the study were represented by three variables:

- Being female
- Parental education – the combined amount of mother and father’s education levels
- Pre-college ability as measured by high school grades and class rank upon graduation

Pre-college experiences and expectations were represented by three variables:

- High school academic engagement, a scale of various student learning behaviors in the last year of high school
- Self-rated preparation and expected difficulty upon entering college
- Students’ expectations about how academically challenging they believe the college environment will be.

First year of college experiences were represented by four variables, namely four of the five NSSE clusters of effective educational practice:

- Academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Supportive campus environment

The enriching educational experiences cluster was not included because it includes many activities that students have no experience with until well after the first year of college, such as co-curricular research with faculty, study abroad, internships, independent study, and senior culminating experiences.

One institution-level variable was also included – whether or not the institution is a baccalaureate liberal arts institution. This variable is of particular interest because it will help to answer the three research questions established earlier.

Finally, the outcome variable is a scale composed of self-reported gains in selected outcomes of the first college year that are especially important because they create a foundation on which students can build in subsequent years of study. These six gains items from the NSSE survey are:

- Writing clearly and effectively
- Speaking clearly and effectively
- Analyzing quantitative problems
- Using computing and information technology
- Working effectively with others
- Learning effectively on your own

Table 6 describes the new scales that were created for this analysis. All items were standardized before combining into scales.

### *Analysis*

A path model was constructed by running a series of six OLS regression models. The first regressed the gains variable on the pre-college and college experience variables. Next, each variable found to

be significant predictors of gains were regressed on variables that are assumed to temporally precede them. In other words, engagement in effective educational practices represented by the NSSE clusters significant in the gains model are regressed on pre-college experiences and expectations and student background characteristics. Likewise, pre-college variables significant in the gains model are regressed on other pre-college variables and student background characteristics.

All non-dichotomous variables were standardized before entering into models, which allows the unstandardized coefficients (B) to be interpreted as effect sizes.

### *Direct Effects*

Results from the regression models are found in Table 7. Significant predictors in the gains model include the four engagement clusters and the pre-college expectations item labeled ‘expected challenge of the college academic environment.’ Of the NSSE clusters, academic challenge (.27) and supportive environment (.34) showed moderately strong effects, while the other two had small or possibly trivial effects (.06 and .07). The ‘expected challenge’ item had a small nontrivial effect of .11, but the other two pre-college variables were nonsignificant. The variable representing liberal arts institutions (labeled ‘bacla’) was strongly suppressed by engagement. When entered alone, the liberal arts variable had a strong positive effect on gains, but in the presence of engagement variables it was reduced to a nonsignificant effect. For this reason, the variable was removed from the gains model so as not to obfuscate the path relationships.

The next four models regressed the engagement clusters on all the pre-college and student background variables. Of these, the strongest effects are for ‘high school academic engagement’ (.10 to .35) and for liberal arts institutions (.12 to .43). The effect of the variable ‘expected challenging environment’ is small but nontrivial in three of the four models (.10 to .21) and the variable ‘preparation and expected difficulty’ has a small effect (.12) in the ‘supportive campus environment’ model. Being female has a negative effect (i.e., males have higher scores) in three of the four benchmark models, most sizeable for active and collaborative learning (-.16) and student faculty interaction (-.14). The other two student background variables are either nonsignificant, or significant but trivial in magnitude.

Finally, three of the predictors of ‘expected challenging environment’ have an effect. Students who were more engaged in high school academics were more likely (.27) to expect college to be academically challenging as well. Students expecting to attend liberal arts institutions (.12) and females (.12) were somewhat more likely to believe their college-level work would be more challenging, though these effects may be small in observable experience.

### *Indirect and Total Effects*

Table 8 shows how the six regression models were combined in the path model based on the conceptual model portrayed in Figure 2. Columns show which variables have direct, indirect and total effects on the ‘gains’ variable. Direct effects are identical to those in the ‘gains’ model reported in Table 7. The shaded columns summarize possible indirect effects on the items (i.e., mediating variables) that have direct effects on ‘gains.’ The *indirect effect* is the product of the two coefficients in the path – the effect of the variable on a mediating variable *times* the effect of the mediating variable on ‘gains.’ Total effects are the sum of all direct and indirect effects.

The path model shows that five variables have nontrivial total effects on ‘gains.’ Two clusters of effective educational practices have relatively strong direct effects on gains: supportive campus environment (.34) and academic challenge (.27). Two pre-college variables have total effects that are

sizeable by the accumulation of indirect effects. These are ‘expected challenging environment’ (.24) and ‘high school academic engagement’ (.17). In fact, the latter’s total effect is entirely due to its influence on mediating variables. Finally, attending a liberal arts institution has a sizeable total effect (.26) entirely due to indirect effects. Recall that this variable was removed from the ‘gains’ model due to suppressor effects from the engagement measures. Nonetheless, the strength of the relationship between attending a liberal arts institution is still evident.

**Table 6:**  
**Scales and Reliability Coefficients**

High School Academic Engagement		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
hclquest	Last yr. of h.s.: Asked questions in class/contributed to class discussions	3.28	.78
hfacidea	Last yr. of h.s.: Discussed ideas from reads/classes w/ teacher outside of class	1.96	.83
hclassgr	Last yr. of h.s.: Worked w/ other students on projects during class	2.81	.73
hocgrp	Last yr. of h.s.: Worked w/ classmates outside class to prepare class assign.	2.33	.76
hfacplan	Last yr. of h.s.: Talked w/ a teacher about college/career plans	2.66	.86
hfacpla2	Last yr. of h.s.: Talked w/ a guidance counselor about college/career plans	2.62	.89
<i>Cronbach's Alpha:</i>		<i>.68</i>	
Self-Rated Preparation and Expected Difficulty upon Entering College			
xgnwrite	How well prepared: Write clearly & effectively	3.07	.72
xgnspeak	How well prepared: Speak clearly & effectively	3.01	.78
xgnquant	How well prepared: Analyze mathematical problems	2.77	.80
xgncmpts	How well prepared: Use computing & information technology	2.93	.80
xgnother	How well prepared: Work effectively w/ others	3.49	.62
xgninq	How well prepared: Learn effectively on your own	3.35	.68
Rxswork	Expected difficulty: Keeping up w/ school work (reverse coded)	3.97	1.36
Rxtmngmt	Expected difficulty: Managing time (reverse coded)	3.72	1.48
Rxhelpswk	Expected difficulty: Getting help w/ school work (reverse coded)	5.05	1.31
<i>Cronbach's Alpha:</i>		<i>.70</i>	
Expected Challenge of the College Academic Environment			
xenvscho	Expected instit. emphasis: Spending sig. amounts of time studying/acad. work	3.33	.59
xenvsupr	Expected instit. emphasis: Providing support you need to succeed academically	3.37	.63
xenvcom	Expected instit. emphasis: Using computers in academic work	3.43	.64
xworkhar	Expect to do: Work harder than ever before to meet instructor's stds/expects	3.27	.70
<i>Cronbach's Alpha:</i>		<i>.60</i>	
Pre-college Ability			
hgrades	What were most of your high school grades?	6.56	1.29
hrank	What was your high school class rank?	4.36	1.07
<i>Cronbach's Alpha:</i>		<i>.79</i>	
Self-Reported Gains in Selected Outcomes of the First College Year			
gnwrite	Institutional contribution: Writing clearly & effectively	3.02	.84
gnspeak	Institutional contribution: Speaking clearly & effectively	2.74	.91
gnquant	Institutional contribution: Analyzing quantitative problems	2.84	.87
gncmpts	Institutional contribution: Using computing & information technology	3.01	.88
gnothers	Institutional contribution: Working effectively w/ others	2.97	.85
gninq	Institutional contribution: Learning effectively on your own	2.94	.83
<i>Cronbach's Alpha:</i>		<i>.85</i>	

**Table 7: Path Model Direct Effects**

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>											
	Gains		Academic Challenge		Active & Collab. Learning		Student-Faculty Interactn		Support. Campus Envirmt.		Expected Challeng. Envirmt.	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Female			.05		-.16***		-.14***		-.06*			.12***
Parental Education			.08***		.07***		.03*		.03*			.00
Pre-college Ability			.08***		.08***		-.01		.02			.06***
Baccalaureate Liberal Arts			.31***		.12***		.15***		.43***			.12***
High School Academic Engagement	.00		.22***		.35***		.33***		.10***			.27***
Preparation And Expected Difficulty	.00		.06***		.06***		.03*		.12***			
Expected Challenging Environment	.11***		.21***		.06***		.10***		.18***			
Academic Challenge	.27***											
Active And Collaborative Learning	.07***											
Student-Faculty Interaction	.06***											
Supportive Campus Environment	.34***											
	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.39		.18		.18		.15		.12		.08

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 8: Path Model of Effects on Self-Reported Gains in Selected College Outcomes**

Independent Variable	Variable Name	Direct Effect on Gains	Indirect Effect			Total Effect
			Mediating Variable	Effect on Mediating Variable	Indirect Effect <sup>a</sup>	
Female	female		ac	.05	.01	-.01
			acl	-.16***	-.01**	
			sfi	-.14***	-.01***	
			sce	-.06*	-.02*	
			xchalenv	.12***	.01***	
Parental Education	pared		ac	.08***	.02***	.04
			acl	.07***	.00**	
			sfi	.03*	.00*	
			sce	.03*	.01**	
			xchalenv	.00	.00	
Pre-college Ability	pcability		ac	.08***	.02***	.04
			acl	.08***	.01***	
			sfi	-.01	.00	
			sce	.02	.01	
			xchalenv	.06***	.01***	
Baccalaureate Liberal Arts	bacla		ac	.31***	.08***	.26
			acl	.12***	.01**	
			sfi	.15***	.01***	
			sce	.43***	.15***	
			xchalenv	.12***	.01**	
High School Academic Engagement	hsaceng	.00	ac	.22***	.06***	.17
			acl	.35***	.03***	
			sfi	.33***	.02***	
			sce	.10***	.03***	
			xchalenv	.27***	.03***	
Preparation and Expected Difficulty	xprepdiff	.00	ac	.06***	.01***	.07
			acl	.06***	.00**	
			sfi	.03*	.00**	
			sce	.12***	.04***	
Expected Challenging Environment	xchalenv	.11***	ac	.21***	.06***	.24
			acl	.06***	.00**	
			sfi	.10***	.01***	
			sce	.18***	.06***	
Academic Challenge	ac	.27***			.27	
Active & Collab. Learning	acl	.07***			.07	
Student-Faculty Interaction	sfi	.06***			.06	
Supportive Campus Eenvt.	sce	.34***			.34	

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

<sup>a</sup> Significance of indirect effects calculated using the Sobel Test (Sobel, 1982).

## Conclusions and Implications

---

The results of this study generally comport with other research matching student expectations for college and their experiences during the first college year. For example, consistent with previous reports, there is some evidence that many students expect more will be demanded of them academically than what they encounter during the first year of college (Kuh, 2005; Kuh, Gonyea, & Williams, 2005). That is, students typically study less, write less, and read less than they come to college expecting to do. The gap between expectations and experiences also extends to life beyond the classroom. While most expect to become involved in co-curricular activities, which offer many potentially rich opportunities for learning and personal development (Kuh, 1993, 1995), relatively few do so. This phenomenon has been noted previously (Levine & Cureton, 1998), with the most common explanation being that this generation of students prefers to self-organize in more spontaneous fashion as contrasted with participating in established groups activities. What remains puzzling is why so many students say they expect to get involved in organizations and other co-curricular activities when they start college, but they do not. Equally problematic is the absence of concrete suggestions for how colleges can respond effectively.

Low expectations and low levels of engagement go together. Both students and institutions bear their share of the responsibility for students failing to realize the relatively high expectations students have when they start college. “Expect more and you will get more,” Chickering and Gamson (1987, p. 5) opine. We agree with Schilling and Schilling (2005, p. 117): “If faculty and staff understand the expectations that entering first-year students bring to campus, if they work consistently to support and heighten these expectations, and if they clearly and consistently state their own expectations for students, then student performance likely will be enhanced.”

### The Liberal Arts College Advantage

The good news is that students who choose to attend liberal arts colleges not only expect to engage more frequently in almost all the activities measured by the NSSE survey, they also do so at higher levels than their counterparts elsewhere. This is, perhaps, to be expected. After all, self-selection is at work, with liberal arts college students being over-represented among those who were actively involved in high school. But there appears to be more going on to explain why liberal arts students actually do – more of the time – realize their expectations. As Kuh (2005, p. 122) put it, liberal arts colleges are “built to engage.” That is, they create distinctive, developmentally powerful learning conditions that result in a practical as well as liberating educational experience (Condliffe-Lagemann, 2003; Schneider, 2003).

According to Richard Hersh (1999, p. 192):

Residential liberal arts colleges—by virtue of their primary focus on teaching, their small size, residential nature, quest for genuine community, engagement of students in active learning, concern for a general and coherent education, and emphasis on the development of the whole person—provide the most important kind of undergraduate education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century... They are *sui generis*, themselves a special kind of pedagogy.

The path model in this study provides additional evidence of this relationship. Attending a liberal arts institution is among the strongest influences on gains in the first year of college. Yet, this relationship is not estimated directly, but rather through the clusters of engagement in effective

educational activities which serve as mediating variables. Because liberal arts institutions create more challenging, supportive, and engaging environments, students report greater learning and development outcomes.

Despite the fact that liberal arts colleges are more likely to have in place the conditions that encourage high levels of student engagement, gaps still exist between what students expect in their college experience compared to what they actually do. Liberal arts colleges could focus more on reducing these differences and elevate expectations and levels of engagement so as to further enrich the quality of first-year student experience. For example, this report indicates that a significant disparity exists around students' expectations for diversity experiences. To address this gap, liberal arts colleges should consider additional approaches to acknowledge students' expectations and create more in and out of class opportunities for these educationally productive interactions. This is especially important in the first college year because students' experiences with diversity tend to decrease later in college (Kuh, 2005).

By identifying the gaps between entering students' expectations and their level of engagement in the first year of college, institutions can target their efforts to create educationally effective programs for new students. The nine liberal arts colleges featured in *Student Success in College* (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2005) offer examples of practices, policies and programs that liberal arts institutions may want to emulate. For instance, practices related to increasing students' expectations for high levels of academic challenge and active learning experiences can help address differences between new students' perceptions about what college will be like and their first year experiences.

At Macalester College, students apply to the institution expecting to be challenged, and no time is wasted in reinforcing these perceptions since the first class requirement in the required First Year Course is to read an assigned book over the summer and discuss it on the first day of class. Students credit the First Year Course for helping them prepare for academic life, for shaping their educational experience, and fostering a climate of support.

Wheaton College infused the curriculum with subject matter related to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, as well as writing and technology to bring concepts important to the College into the course structure. First-year students at Wheaton indicated that the institution highly emphasized diversity experiences, and was open to talking about differences. The formal infusion of diversity experiences into the first year curriculum sent clear signals to new students about their levels of engagement with diverse peers and ideas.

Ursinus College revamped its first year curriculum to create the Common Intellectual Experience, wherein all first-year students take an integrated set of courses specially designed by faculty from different disciplines. To maximize the impact of this intentionally coherent learning approach, the institution restructured housing assignments so that all first-year students live in close proximity, which makes it easier for them to talk about class assignments.

At Wabash College, "The Gentleman's Rule" underscores the importance of students taking responsibility for their learning and behavior, inside and outside the classroom. In this sense, the Gentleman's Rule is part and parcel of the liberal arts educational experience in that students are expected to critically examine situations and make thoughtful, well-informed decisions. New students hear about it long before they matriculate.

Wofford College and the University of the South try to meet student expectations for academic challenge and close student-faculty interaction in the first-year seminar. Faculty who teach this course also serve as students' academic advisor until students declare their major and are assigned a departmental advisor.

These are just a few of the ways high-performing colleges and universities foster student success and, equally important, maximize educational gains during the critical first college year. Common to these institutions is understanding their incoming students' expectations and pre-college experiences, setting clear academic goals, establishing and holding students to high expectations, and designing interventions to increase student engagement. Liberal arts colleges perform generally well in this regard. However, as the AAC&U (2002) campaign for liberal learning makes clear, institutions can do more to create effective approaches for helping new students become intentional learners and environments that support intentional learning.

### Implications

Several volumes have appeared in the past few years that contain a variety of helpful suggestions for what colleges can do to set high, yet reasonable expectations for their students and what institutions can do to hold all involved accountable to make this happen (Kuh, 1999; Miller, Bender, Schuh, & Associates, 2005; Miller, Kuh, Paine, & Associates, 2006). One action that these observers recommend is that institutions should monitor areas where students expected to become involved but do not and determine whether worthwhile interventions can be developed to address the gap between what students say they want and actually get from their first college year. We developed the BCSS precisely for this reason — to help colleges and universities obtain a more accurate sense of what their students are like when they start college and what they expect of themselves and their school. When student responses to the BCSS are matched with their answers to the NSSE at the end of the first year of college and even later to NSSE results at the end of the senior year, we will also be able to provide better estimates of what institutions and students contribute to student learning and related aspects of student success.

We look forward to working with our colleagues at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College and elsewhere to discover ways these and related assessment measures can be used to enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience and institutional effectiveness.

## References

---

American Diploma Project. (2004). *Ready or not: Creating a high school diploma that counts*. Executive summary. Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc.

Association of American Colleges & Universities. (2002). *Greater expectations: A new vision for learning as a nation goes to college*. Washington DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities

Astin, A. W. (1991). *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education*. Washington/New York: American Council on Education and Macmillan Publishing Co.

Callan, P. M. & J.E.. Finney. (2003). *Multiple pathways and state policy: Toward education and training beyond high school*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future.

Carnevale, A. & D. Desrochers. (2003). *Standards for what? The economic roots of K-16 reform*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Choy, S. (2002). *Access and persistence: Findings from 10 years of longitudinal research on students*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Kazis, R., H. Pennington, & K. Conklin. (2003). *Ready for tomorrow: Helping all students achieve secondary and postsecondary success*. Washington, DC: Jobs for the Future & National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) Report.

Kuh, G. D. (1999). Setting the bar high to promote student learning. In G.S. Blimling, E.J. Whitt and Associates, *Good practice in student affairs: Principles to foster student learning* (pp. 67-90). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G.D. (2005). Student engagement in the first year of college. In Upcraft, L.M., Gardner, J.N., & Barefoot, B.O. (Eds.), *Challenging and supporting the first-year student*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G.D. (2005). Built to engage: Liberal arts colleges and effective educational practice. In F. Oakely (Ed.), *Liberal arts colleges in American higher education: Challenges and opportunities, ACLS Occasional Paper, No. 59* (pp. 122-150). New York: American Council of Learned Societies.

Kuh, G.D., Gonyea, R.M., Williams, J.M. (2005). What students expect from college and what they get. In T. Miller, B. Bender, J. Schuh and Associates, *Promoting reasonable expectations: Aligning student and institutional thinking about the college experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H, Whitt, E.J., & Associates. (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Levine, A., & Cureton, J.S. (May/June 1998). Collegiate life: An obituary. *Change*, 12-17, 51.

Levine, A., & Nidiffer, J. (1996). *Beating the odds: How the poor get to college*. San

Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Marchese, T. (1998, May/June). Disengaged students II. *Change*, 4.

Martinez, M. & S. Klopott. (2003). *Improving college access for minority, low-income, and first-generation students*. Boston, MA: Pathways to College Network.

McDonough, P. M. (2004a). Counseling matters: Knowledge, assistance, and organizational commitment in college preparation. In W. G. Tierney, Z. B. Corwin, & J. E. Colyar (eds.), *Preparing for college: Nine elements of effective outreach*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

McDonough, P.M. (2004b). *The school to college transition: Challenges and prospects*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Miller, T., Bender, B. Schuh, J.H., and Associates (2005). *Promoting reasonable expectations: Aligning student and institutional thinking about the college experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Miller, T., Kuh, G.D., Paine, D., & Associates (2006). *Taking student expectations seriously: A guide for campus applications*. Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Olsen, D., Kuh, G. D., Schilling, K.M., Schilling, K., Connolly, M., Simmons, A., et al. (November 1998). *Great expectations: What students expect from college and what they get*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Miami, FL.

Pascarella, E. T. (1985). Students' affective development within the college environment. *Journal of Higher Education*, 56(6), 640-663.

Pathways to College Network. (2003). *A shared agenda: A leadership challenge to improve college access and success*. Boston, MA: The Education Resources Institute.

Sax, L. J., Astin, A. W., Lindholm, J. A., Korn, W. S., Saenz, V. B., & Mahoney, K. M. (2003). *The American freshman: National norms for fall 2003*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

Schilling, K.M. & Schilling, K.L. (2005). Expectations and performance. In Upcraft, L.M., Gardner, J.N., & Barefoot, B.O. (Eds.), *Challenging and supporting the first-year student: A handbook for improving the first year of college* (pp. 108-120). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sobel, M. E. (1982). Asymptotic intervals for indirect effects in structural equations models. In S. Leinhardt (Ed.), *Sociological methodology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *The condition of education 2004*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office (NCES 2004-077).

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2004). BLS Releases 2002-12 Employment Projections. Retrieved from the worldwide web (April 12, 2004), <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>.

Venezia, A, Kirst, M. W., & Antonio, A. L. (2002). *Betraying the college dream: How disconnected K-12 and postsecondary education systems undermine student aspirations*. Final Report from Stanford University's Bridge Project. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University.

# Appendices

---

Appendix A: Respondent characteristics Table

Appendix B: Institutional characteristics Table

Appendix C: Instruments and Methodology

Appendix D: BCSS student sample and first-year population at pilot institutions

Appendix E: Beginning College Student Survey 2004  
National Survey of Student Engagement 2005

## Appendix A: Respondent Characteristics Table

### Sampling and Response Rate

<i>Institution</i>	Students who completed BCSS 2004	BCSS 2004 respondents who were sampled for NSSE 2005 <sup>a</sup>	2004 follow-up sample who responded to NSSE 2005
Liberal Arts Institutions	2,633	2,316 88%	1,188 51%
Comparison Institutions	13,257	10,970 83%	4,757 43%

### BCSS - NSSE Student Characteristics

	Liberal Arts Institutions		Comparison Institutions	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	683	61%	2912	70%
Male	438	39%	1253	30%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Am. Indian/Native American	5	0%	22	1%
Asian Am./Pacific Islander	33	3%	128	3%
Black/African American	17	2%	244	6%
White (non-Hispanic)	943	84%	3316	80%
Mexican/Mexican-American	3	0%	51	1%
Puerto Rican	3	0%	21	1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	7	1%	40	1%
Multiracial	22	2%	66	2%
Other Hispanic or Latino	10	1%	54	1%
I prefer not to respond	76	7%	214	5%
<b>International Student</b>	30	3%	129	3%
<b>Enrollment Status</b>				
Full-time	1114	100%	4118	99%
Less than full-time	5	0%	34	1%
<b>Place of Residence</b>				
Dormitory or campus housing	1014	91%	3310	80%
Residence in walking distance	20	2%	163	4%
Residence in driving distance	34	3%	606	15%
Fraternity or sorority house	50	4%	70	2%
<b>Transfer Status</b>				
Started here	1098	98%	4011	97%
Started elsewhere	22	2%	145	3%
<b>Age</b>				
19 or younger	1103	99%	4078	98%
20-23	14	1%	71	2%
24-29	2	0%	11	0%
30-39	0	0%	2	0%
40-55	0	0%	4	0%
Over 55	0	0%	0	0%

## Appendix B: Institutional Characteristics Table

<b>BCSS 2004 - NSSE 2005 Participating Institutions</b>	<b>Descriptive Statistics for Participating Institutions</b>
<i>Liberal Arts Institutions</i>	
The College of Wooster	Doctoral-Extensive 4
The Evergreen State College	Doctoral-Intensive 3
Goucher College	Master's I & II 9
Judson College (AL)	Baccalaureate-Liberal Arts 10
Muhlenberg College	Baccalaureate-General 1
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey	
Saint Olaf College	
Susquehanna University	
Ursinus College	
Wabash College	
<i>Comparison Institutions</i>	
California Lutheran University	
Elon University	
Indiana University-Bloomington	
Miami University-Oxford	
Mississippi State University	
Norfolk State University	
Plymouth State University	
Radford University	
Rockford College	
Saint Xavier University	
Southern Connecticut State University	
Towson University	
University of Dayton	
University of Idaho	
University of Maine at Farmington	
University of Missouri-Kansas City	
University of Nevada-Reno	
<i>Carnegie</i>	
	Doctoral-Extensive 4
	Doctoral-Intensive 3
	Master's I & II 9
	Baccalaureate-Liberal Arts 10
	Baccalaureate-General 1
<i>Control</i>	
	Public 14
	Private 13
<i>Barron's Selectivity Index</i>	
	Less Competitive 3
	Competitive 8
	Competitive + 1
	Very Competitive 10
	Highly Competitive 5
<i>Region</i>	
	New England 3
	Mid East 6
	Great Lakes 7
	Plains 2
	Southeast 5
	Southwest 0
	Rocky Mountains 1
	Far West 3
<i>Urbanicity</i>	
	Large City 3
	Mid-size city 7
	Urban fringe of large city 6
	Urban fringe of mid-size city 1
	Small town 9
	Rural 1

N = 27

## Appendix C: Methodology

This study used two instruments housed at the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (see <http://www.education.indiana.edu/pprcenter.html> for more information).

### *National Survey of Student Engagement*

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has become one of the most widely used instruments to estimate the quality of undergraduate education. More than 620,000 students from 850 different four-year colleges and universities have completed the NSSE survey which assesses the extent to which students engage in empirically derived good educational practices and what they gain from their college experience. Among the keys to NSSE's widespread use are its explicit links to prevailing theory and research on student learning and institutional effectiveness and the quality of the data generated by its survey instrument, *The College Student Report*. The survey was designed by experts to tap student behaviors and institutional conditions that the voluminous research regarding the impact of college on students indicates are related to student learning and personal development. Decades of research show that the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development and other dimensions of student success, such as persistence and satisfaction.

### *Beginning College Student Survey (BCSS)*

To better understand the factors that influence student engagement and relationships between engagement and student development during college, it is important to know both students' expectations for college as well as their behavioral patterns established *prior to entering college*. The *Beginning College Student Survey* (BCSS) was designed as a companion instrument for NSSE to accomplish this task. The BCSS measures entering first-year students' expectations for college (with a focus on participating in educationally purposeful activities) and gathers information about selected high school experiences. Through BCSS colleges and universities can obtain a more accurate sense of what their students are like when they start college and what they expect of themselves and their institution. By comparing first-year students' incoming characteristics and expectations as obtained through BCSS responses with their reported first-year experiences as recorded through the NSSE survey, it is possible to more precisely estimate first-year students' gains and engagement.

The data for this study come from the 2004 pilot administration of the Beginning College Student Survey (BCSS). As a pre-college companion to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the BCSS collects information regarding entering first-year college students' high school academic and extracurricular involvement and their expectations about their participation in various educational activities during their first year of college. The 2004 pilot administration of the BCSS, offered at no cost to participating institutions, was locally-administered in either paper or online format. Administrations were conducted in one of three ways: a) during summer orientation or welcome week programs, b) mailing the instrument directly to students or contacting students via email to complete the online version, or c) in classrooms during the first week of courses. All institutions attempted to survey their entire class of entering first-year students in order to follow up with as many of these students as possible during the 2005 NSSE administration the following spring.

The 2004 pilot administration of the BCSS was completed by 15,890 first-year students at 28 four-year colleges and universities. Because the BCSS was a locally administered survey, we can not

guarantee that respondents are an unbiased representation of the institutions' populations of entering first-year students. Although all institutions attempted to survey their entire entering student population, some institutions were more successful than others. Based on the population files submitted to us by these institutions for NSSE 2005, however, we can say that the study sample is considerably representative of the first-year population at these institutions by full-/part-time enrollment status, gender, race, and mean college entrance exam score (See Appendix D).

All institutions but one participated in NSSE during the following spring. Each of these institutions provided to NSSE a student population data file of all first-year and senior students from which we selected a random sample. Students participating in the 2004 pilot administration of the BCSS who were not randomly sampled for NSSE 2005 were targeted for an over-sample at no additional cost. In February to March, students who were sampled by NSSE received either a paper copy of the survey and a postage-paid reply envelope, or a mailed announcement followed by an electronic invitation to complete the Web version of NSSE. Non-respondents received a postcard or e-mail follow-up, then a second survey with a personalized letter, or an e-mail message with a link to the survey and log-in information, followed by additional e-mail reminders to complete the survey. NSSE also granted all students at paper institutions the ability to complete the survey on-line, and NSSE encouraged institutions to use local incentives to increase response rates.

The 2005 NSSE follow-up was completed by 5,945 students for an adjusted response rate of .45. Response rates were adjusted for potential respondents who were not eligible students, who were unavailable during the survey period, or who had undeliverable mailing addresses.

Descriptive statistics presented in this report were calculated for only those students who had non-missing information for both the BCSS and NSSE versions of a particular item.

## Appendix D: BCSS Student Sample and First-Year Population at Pilot Institutions

Variable	Sample	Population
<i>Enrollment</i> <sup>b</sup>		
Full-time	99%	96%
Part-time	1%	4%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	40%	45%
Female	60%	55%
<i>Race</i>		
African American	8%	10%
American Indian	<1%	1%
Asian	3%	3%
White	79%	75%
Hispanic	3%	3%
Other	5%	6%
Foreign national	3%	1%
<i>Mean college entrance exam score</i> <sup>c</sup>	24.3	23.4

<sup>a</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the results provided in both columns of this table are based on data from 27 of the 28 BCSS pilot institutions.

<sup>b</sup> Enrollment data in the sample column is based on the students' expected enrollment status.

<sup>c</sup> The results provided in both columns are based on data from 25 BCSS pilot institutions.

Appendix E:

Beginning College Student Survey 2004

National Survey of Student Engagement 2005

# Beginning College Student Survey: 2004-05

## National Survey of Student Engagement

You have not yet experienced life as a student here. But you have some ideas about how you will spend your time this year, what you will be doing, and so forth. We are interested in these ideas as well as some aspects of your high school experience. The information you provide will help your institution improve the conditions that contribute to your learning and development during college. Thank you for your responses. Write or mark your answers in the boxes. Examples:  or

### High School Experiences

**1 Please write in the year you graduated from high school (e.g., 2004):**

--	--	--	--

**2 During the last year of high school, how much reading and writing did you do?**

	A great deal ▼	Quite a bit ▼	Some ▼	Very little ▼
a. Assigned reading (textbooks or other course materials)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Personal reading (books, magazines, newspapers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Personal reading online/Web	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Writing short papers or reports (5 or fewer pages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Writing long papers or reports (more than 5 pages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**3 Please check all years of high school in which you participated in the following activities:**

	Fresh- man ▼	Sopho- more ▼	Junior ▼	Senior ▼	Did not partici- pate ▼
a. Band, choir, theater, or other performing or fine arts programs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. Student government	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. Athletic team (varsity, junior varsity, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d. Academic club (debate, forensics, science, foreign languages, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. Student newspaper, yearbook, or other publications	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f. National Honor Society or other academic honor society	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g. Co-op, internship, or work-study program	<input type="checkbox"/>				
h. Study or travel outside the U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**4 During the last year of high school, about how often did you do each of the following?**

	Very often ▼	Often ▼	Some- times ▼	Never ▼
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Worked with other students on projects <b>during class</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Worked with classmates <b>outside of class</b> to prepare class assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Talked with a teacher about college or career plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Talked with a guidance counselor about college or career plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with a teacher outside of class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Volunteered or did community service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Missed a class or was absent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5 What were most of your high school grades? (Mark one box only.)**

- |                             |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A  | <input type="checkbox"/> B  | <input type="checkbox"/> C               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A- | <input type="checkbox"/> B- | <input type="checkbox"/> C- or lower     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B+ | <input type="checkbox"/> C+ | <input type="checkbox"/> Grades not used |

**6 What was your high school class rank? If rank was not used in your high school, give your best estimate. (Mark one box only.)**

- Top five percent (95-100%)  
 Top ten percent (90-100%)  
 Top quarter (75-100%)  
 Second quarter (50-75%)  
 Third quarter (25-50%)  
 Bottom quarter (0-25%)  
 Do not know





**22** Write in your expected primary major field:

**23** How many of your close friends attend, or are planning to attend, this institution? Write a number below:

**24** What do you expect most of your grades will be this coming year? (Mark one box only.)

- A             B             C  
 A-            B-            C- or lower  
 B+            C+            Grades not used

**25** Do you intend to graduate from this college?

- Yes  
 No  
 Uncertain

**26** What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain at this *or any* institution? (Mark one box only.)

- Vocational certificate  
 Associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)  
 Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)  
 Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)  
 Doctoral degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)  
 Health/Medical doctorate (M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.V.M., etc.)  
 Law degree (J.D.)  
 Uncertain  
 Other, specify:

### Additional Information

**27** Write in your year of birth:

**28** Your sex:

- Male  
 Female

**29** Are you an international student or foreign national?

- Yes  
 No

**30** Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- Yes  
 No

**31** Is your racial or ethnic identification:

- |   | Yes<br>▼                 | No<br>▼                  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. American Indian or other Native American | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Asian American or Pacific Islander       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Black or African American                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. White                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Other, specify:                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**32** What is the highest level of education that your parent(s) completed? (Mark one box per column.)

- |                          | Father<br>▼              | Mother<br>▼              |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did not finish high school                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Graduated from high school                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attended college but did not complete degree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed an associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed a bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed a master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do not know   |

**33** Write in the ZIP code of your home during your last year of high school:

**34** Please print your student ID number in the boxes below, and fill in the corresponding circles beneath the boxes completely.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR VIEWS!**



# National Survey of Student Engagement 2005

## The College Student Report

**1 In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? Mark your answers in the boxes. Examples: ☒ or ☒**

	Very often ▼	Often ▼	Some- times ▼	Never ▼
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Made a class presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Worked with other students on projects <b>during class</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Worked with classmates <b>outside of class</b> to prepare class assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Very often ▼	Often ▼	Some- times ▼	Never ▼
r. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2 During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?**

	Very much ▼	Quite a bit ▼	Some ▼	Very little ▼
a. <b>Memorizing</b> facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. <b>Analyzing</b> the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. <b>Synthesizing</b> and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. <b>Making judgments</b> about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. <b>Applying</b> theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**3 During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?**

	None	Between 1 and 4	Between 5 and 10	Between 11 and 20	More than 20
a. Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. Number of written papers or reports of <b>20 pages or more</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d. Number of written papers or reports <b>between 5 and 19 pages</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. Number of written papers or reports of <b>fewer than 5 pages</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**4 In a typical week, how many homework problem sets do you complete?**

	None	1-2	3-4	5-6	More than 6
a. Number of problem sets that take you <b>more</b> than an hour to complete	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. Number of problem sets that take you <b>less</b> than an hour to complete	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**5 Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work.**

Very little						Very much
<input type="checkbox"/>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**6 During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?**

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
a. Attended an art exhibit, gallery, play, dance, or other theater performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7 Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?**

	Done	Plan to do	Do not plan to do	Have not decided
a. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Community service or volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Foreign language coursework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Study abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Independent study or self-designed major	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Culminating senior experience (capstone course, thesis, project, comprehensive exam, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8 Mark the box that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution.**

Relationships with:			
a. Other Students	b. Faculty Members	c. Administrative Personnel and Offices	
Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging	Available, Helpful, Sympathetic	Helpful, Considerate, Flexible	
7 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	
6 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	
5 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
4 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	
3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
2 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation	Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic	Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid	

**9 About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?**

# of hours per week	More than 30							
	26-30	21-25	16-20	11-15	6-10	1-5	0	
a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>							
b. Working for pay <b>on campus</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
c. Working for pay <b>off campus</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
d. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, social fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>							
e. Relaxing and socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>							
f. Providing care for dependents living with you (parents, children, spouse, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>							
g. Commuting to class (driving, walking, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>							

**10 To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following?**

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Using computers in academic work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**11 To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?**

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Acquiring a broad general education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Writing clearly and effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Speaking clearly and effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Thinking critically and analytically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Analyzing quantitative problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Using computing and information technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Working effectively with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Voting in local, state, or national elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Learning effectively on your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Understanding yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Solving complex real-world problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Contributing to the welfare of your community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**12 Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

**13 How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

**14 If you could start over again, would you go to the *same institution* you are now attending?**

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably no
- Definitely no

15 Write in your year of birth:

16 Your sex  
 Male  Female

17 Are you an international student or foreign national?  
 Yes  No

18 What is your racial or ethnic identification? (Mark only one.)  
 American Indian or other Native American  
 Asian American or Pacific Islander  
 Black or African American  
 White (non-Hispanic)  
 Mexican or Mexican American  
 Puerto Rican  
 Other Hispanic or Latino  
 Multiracial  
 Other  
 I prefer not to respond

19 What is your current classification in college?  
 Freshman/first-year  Senior  
 Sophomore  Unclassified  
 Junior

20 Did you begin college at your current institution or elsewhere?  
 Started here  Started elsewhere

21 Since graduating from high school, which of the following types of schools have you attended other than the one you are attending now? (Mark all that apply.)  
 Vocational or technical school  
 Community or junior college  
 4-year college other than this one  
 None  
 Other, specify:

22 Thinking about this current academic term, how would you characterize your enrollment?  
 Full-time  Less than full-time

23 Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?  
 Yes  No

24 Are you a student-athlete on a team sponsored by your institution's athletics department?  
 Yes  No (Go to question 25.)

↓  
On what team(s) are you an athlete (e.g., football, swimming)? Please answer below:

25 What have most of your grades been up to now at this institution?  
 A  B+  C+  
 A-  B  C  
 B-  C- or lower

26 Which of the following best describes where you are living now while attending college?  
 Dormitory or other campus housing (not fraternity/sorority house)  
 Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within walking distance of the institution  
 Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within driving distance  
 Fraternity or sorority house

27 What is the highest level of education that your parent(s) completed? (Mark one box per column.)

Father	Mother	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not finish high school
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Graduated from high school
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended college but did not complete degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed an associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed a bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed a master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

28 Please print your primary major or your expected primary major.

29 If applicable, please print your second major or your expected second major (not minor, concentration, etc.).

## THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR VIEWS!

After completing the survey, please put it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and deposit it in any U.S. Postal Service mailbox. Questions or comments? Contact the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University, 1900 East Tenth Street, Eigenmann Hall Suite 419, Bloomington IN 47406-7512 or nsse@indiana.edu or www.iub.edu/~nsse. Copyright © 2004 Indiana University.