

National Survey of Student Engagement 2012
Self and Peer Comparison Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the results of George Mason University's participation in the 2012 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE is administered annually to first-year (FY) and graduating senior (SR) students at participating institutions in the United States and Canada. Mason has participated in NSSE every three years since 2000. In 2012, NSSE was administered to all FY and SR students enrolled at Mason. In total, 2,338 Mason students completed the NSSE survey for an institutional response rate of 28%. Among the respondents, 1026 were FY students (response rate = 28%) and 1312 were SR students (response rate = 27%). In addition to the 2012 results, comparisons are made to results from previous administrations of the NSSE at Mason (2006 and 2009) and to results of select peer institutions. Comparisons involving data from the 2000 and 2003 administration are not included in this report due to small sample sizes (for both 2000 and 2003) and item changes in 2004.

Major Findings¹

Self-Comparison (2006 vs. 2012)

Engagement

- Mason FY and SR students reported a significantly higher *level of academic challenge* in 2012 than their 2006 counterparts. Improvement was reflected in working harder to meet expectations, spending more hours to prepare for class, and engaging in challenging mental activities such as analysis, synthesis, and making judgments.
- Significant improvement occurred between 2006 and 2012 in Mason FY students' engagement in *active and collaborative learning*, interactions with faculty, participation in enriching educational experiences, and perceptions of Mason's campus environment.

Growth

- Compared to their 2006 counterparts, 2012 FY students reported significantly more gains in acquiring job-related knowledge and skills, understanding themselves, solving complex real-world problems, developing a personal code of values and ethics, and contributing to the welfare of the community; 2012 SR students also reported significantly more gains in learning effectively on their own.

Peer Comparison (2012)

In this report, mean scores from two comparison groups were used for peer comparison: **Carnegie peers** (45 institutions categorized as "Research Universities with High Research Activity") and **aspirational peers** (21 institutions categorized as "Research Universities with Very High Research Activity").

Engagement

- Mason has made significant improvement in *active and collaborative learning* since 2009, catching up from behind to pass both Carnegie and aspirational peer groups at the FY level and outperforming the aspirational peer group at the SR level. Mason students were significantly more likely than their counterparts at both types of peer institutions to ask questions or contribute to class discussions, make class presentations, discuss ideas from readings and class (FY only), and work with other students during class (SR only).

¹ Italicized references indicate NSSE benchmarks.

- Mason FY students reported a significantly higher level of *student faculty interaction* than their counterparts at aspirational peer institutions, mostly due to receiving prompt feedback on academic performance and discussing grades and assignments with faculty. In contrast, Mason SR students scored significantly lower than their counterparts in both peer groups in *student faculty interaction*, largely due to lower ratings for talking with faculty/advisors about career plans, discussing ideas with faculty outside of class, working with faculty on activities other than coursework, and working on research projects with faculty outside of course or program requirements.
- Compared to both peer groups, Mason FY students reported a significantly higher level of participation in *enriching educational experiences*, whereas Mason SRs scored a significantly lower level of participation, in particular, in activities such as practicum/internship/field experience, community service, learning communities, foreign language coursework, study abroad, and co-curricular activities. Both Mason FY and SR students were more likely to have conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity and were more likely to report that their institution encouraged diversity than their counterparts at peer institutions.
- Mason students reported a similar *level of academic challenge* when compared to both peer groups. This was true in 2009 as well. In 2003, this was true only for SRs.
- Mason students perceived the *campus environment* as significantly less supportive than their counterparts in both peer groups. Specifically, Mason students had a significantly less favorable perception of institutional support to help them succeed academically, of relationships with other students and faculty (SR only), and relationships with administrative personnel (FY only).

Growth

- Compared with both peer groups, a significantly higher percentage of Mason students reported gains in speaking (FY only) and writing (SR only) abilities as a result of their Mason education. While Mason students also reported significantly more gains in understanding people of diverse backgrounds, they lagged behind in other growth areas as measured by NSSE.

OVERVIEW

Each year the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects information from first-year (FY) and graduating senior (SR) students regarding their undergraduate educational experiences. NSSE assesses the extent to which students engage in high-impact practices and their perception of institutional support which are conducive to student learning and development, satisfaction, persistence, and retention (Kuh, 2009). In 2012, the NSSE cohort consisted of 577 institutions (554 US, 23 Canadian) and 321,649 respondents.

Methodology

The NSSE instrument asks students to self report information in five areas: student behaviors, institutional actions and requirements, reactions to college, student background characteristics, and student learning and development (Kuh, 2001). The reliability and validity of the instrument has been extensively examined (Campbell and Cabrera, 2011, Kuh, 2001). For more information on the psychometric properties of the instrument, see http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/conceptual_framework_2003.pdf. For additional information on methodology and a discussion of the limitations of NSSE, see Appendices A and B, respectively.

George Mason has participated in NSSE every three years since 2000 with an increasing sample size with each administration. In the 2012 administration, Mason surveyed the entire FY and SR classes, reaching an all time high of 8,441 students. In total, 2,338 Mason students completed the NSSE survey for an institutional response rate of 28%. This response rate was lower than Mason's response rate for previous NSSE administrations (2003 = 47%; 2006 = 43%; 2009 = 33%); however, as in previous years, it exceeded the average institutional response rates for Mason's peer groups (in 2012, these ranged from 20-22%). Among the respondents, 1,026 were first-year students (response rate = 28%) and 1,312 were seniors (response rate = 27%).

NSSE Benchmarks

To facilitate use of NSSE data for reporting and comparison on student engagement and institutional performance, NSSE establishes five institution-level benchmarks that operationalize effective educational practices. These benchmarks are:

- **Level of academic challenge (LAC).** Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. College and universities promote student learning by engaging students in academically challenging activities and setting high expectations for student performance. This benchmark includes items related to time spent preparing for class, the amount of reading and writing, deep learning (e.g., analyzing, synthesizing, making judgments, and applying), and institutional expectations for academic performance.
- **Active and collaborative learning (ACL).** Students learn better when they are actively involved in the educational process and applying what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in mastering course materials and solving problems promotes student engagement and prepares them to handle real challenges they encounter daily during and after college. ACL includes items related to class participation, working collaboratively with other students inside and outside of class, tutoring, and involvement in community-based projects.
- **Student-faculty interaction (SFI).** Direct and frequent interactions with faculty and staff promote academic and social integrations which, in turn, positively impact student learning, development, and retention. This benchmark includes items related to the frequency with which students talk with faculty members and advisors, discuss ideas from class with faculty members outside of class, get prompt feedback on academic performance, and work with faculty on research projects.
- **Supportive Campus Environment (SCE).** Students perform better and are more likely to be satisfied when colleges are committed to student success and cultivate positive working and social relations among

different groups on campus. SCE includes items related to students' perception of the extent to which the campus helps them succeed academically and socially, assists them in coping with non-academic responsibilities, and promotes supportive relations among students and their peers, faculty members, and administrative personnel.

- **Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE).** Enriching educational experiences make learning more meaningful and useful, and provide opportunities to broaden students' horizon as part of college education. This benchmark includes items related to students' interaction with students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds or with different political opinions or values, and participation in activities such as internships, community service, study abroad, co-curricular activities, and/or a culminating senior experience.

This report examines benchmark scores to determine institutional trends and to make comparisons with peer institutions. The five benchmarks, along with the survey items comprising each benchmark, are available in Appendix G.

Peer Institutions

To facilitate peer comparison, NSSE allows each participating institution to select up to three peer comparison groups for each survey administration. Two peer comparison groups were used for this report. Mason's first peer comparison group consisted of all current-year NSSE institutions that shared Mason's Carnegie Classification of "Research University with High Research Activity" (Carnegie RU/H). This group included 45 institutions. These institutions are referred to in this report as Mason's **Carnegie peers**. Mason's second peer comparison group consisted of all current-year NSSE institutions with a Carnegie Classification of "Research University with Very High Research Activity" (Carnegie RU/VH). This group included 21 institutions. These institutions are referred to in this report as Mason's **aspirational peers**. For a list of the institutions included in each of these groups, see Appendix C.

Student Characteristics

Research suggests that respondent characteristics (i.e., gender, ethnicity, age, enrollment status, place of residence, employment status, etc.) may account for some of the variance in students' level of engagement in academic and non-academic activities (Pike, 2004). Therefore, changes in Mason's student population and differences between Mason's students and those at peer institutions may account for some of the differences in Mason's performance on the NSSE benchmarks over the years. Results in the report should be interpreted within this context.

George Mason has a diverse student population. Appendix D provides an unweighted overview of the demographic characteristics of Mason's respondents over the last six years and the demographic characteristics of respondents at Mason's 2012 peer institutions. Among the 2012 Mason respondents, female and White (non-Hispanic) students were slightly overrepresented when compared to the actual percentage of women and White (non-Hispanic) students at Mason. Part-time SR students were slightly underrepresented when compared to the actual percentage of SR students attending part-time. While residential students accounted for 60% of the FR respondents, they constituted only 10% at the SR level. Six percent of the FR respondents and 10% of the SR respondents identified themselves as international/foreign national students. In order to ensure that respondents accurately reflect the student population(s) of interest, weights were used to adjust for non-response by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size for all subsequent analyses. For more information on how weights were applied, see Appendix A.

Transfer Students

A majority of Mason SR respondents (70%) identified themselves as transfer students, much higher than the range of 35-43% at peer institutions. As shown in the profile comparison between native and transfer students (see Appendix E), Mason's transfer students are more likely than native students to be older, attend part-time, live off campus, and spend more time working off campus. All of these factors contribute to observed differences in patterns of student engagement. Mason native senior students have significantly higher benchmark scores than transfer senior

students in three areas: *active and collaborative learning*, *student-faculty interaction*, and *enriching educational experience*.

Residential Students

Mason has fewer first-year residential students than peer institutions at the FY level. As shown in the profile comparison between residential and non-residential students (see Appendix F), Mason’s residential students are more likely than Mason’s commuting students to be younger, attend full-time, and spend less time working off campus. For both first-year students and seniors, residential students have significant higher benchmark scores than transfer senior students in two areas: Enriching Educational Experience and Supportive Campus Environment.

Working Students

Traditionally a large percent of Mason students work for pay while taking classes. Table 1 shows that, in 2012, when compared to peer institutions, Mason had a significantly larger overall percentage of students who worked for pay and, specifically, a larger percentage of students who worked for pay off campus. In 2012, 36% of Mason FY students worked off campus, compared to an average of 20-26% of FY at Mason’s peer institutions; 72% of Mason SR students worked off campus, compared to 44-52% of SRs at Mason’s peer institutions. The percent of FY Mason students who work on campus has increased over the last six years, so much so that the percentage who work on campus now exceeds that of both peer groups. At the SR level, however, Mason students work on campus at nearly half the rate of peer counterparts.

Table 1. Trends and Peer Comparison of Respondent Employment Status

	Mason 2006	Mason 2009	Mason 2012	Carnegie RU/H	Carnegie RU/VH
Off Campus					
First-year (FY)	50%	35%	36%	26%	20%
Senior (SR)	75%	72%	72%	52%	44%
On Campus					
First-year (FY)	15%	15%	19%	17%	18%
Senior (SR)	15%	16%	15%	27%	33%

Note: Includes only respondents who worked for at least one hour a week.

Of the students who worked for pay off campus in 2012, Mason has a significantly larger proportion of SR students who worked over 20 hours compared to their peers. As shown in Table 2, 59% of Mason SRs worked for pay off campus over 20 hours compared to 40-49% of peers. Compared to peers, Mason SRs are not only working off campus in larger numbers, they are also doing so for longer hours. On the other hand, FY students who work over 20 hours per week are somewhere in-between the two Carnegie peer groups.

Table 2. Trends and Peer Comparison of Hours Working for Pay Off Campus

	Mason 2006	Mason 2009	Mason 2012	Carnegie RU/H	Carnegie RU/VH
FY					
20 or fewer hours/week	62%	77%	72%	69%	78%
Over 20 hours/week	38%	23%	28%	31%	22%
SR					
20 or fewer hours/week	39%	41%	41%	51%	60%
Over 20 hours/week	61%	59%	59%	49%	40%

Note: Includes only respondents who worked for at least one hour a week off campus.

Research suggests that working on campus 20 hours or less is positively related to student engagement especially through interaction with faculty and involvement in active and collaborative learning whereas working for pay in excess of 20 hours per week may reduce student participation in educationally-related activities and have a negative impact on student engagement and achievement (Pike, Kuh, & Massa-McKinley, 2008). Results on time usage and

employment status for Mason students relative to their peers provide a context for understanding findings on Mason students' reported engagement and growth presented in this report.

BENCHMARK SELF-COMPARISON: 2006 VS. 2012

This section summarizes trends in Mason students' performance over the past six years in the five NSSE benchmark areas. Benchmark scores are examined for FY and SR students separately. Where a significant difference is detected between 2006 and 2012, further analysis is conducted at the item level to determine what contributes to the change over time. Items with a significant difference are included in the discussion. See Appendix G for an item-by-item mean comparison of survey questions. To ensure that respondents accurately reflect the student population(s) of interest, weights were used to adjust for non-response by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size where appropriate in analyses.

Benchmark Trend Overview

Table 3. Mason Benchmark Trends

<i>Benchmark</i>	First-Year				Senior			
	2006	2009	2012	Sig. 06 vs. 12	2006	2009	2012	Sig. 06 vs. 12
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)	51.8	53.0	54.0	**	54.9	56.2	57.2	**
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)	42.8	42.2	45.3	**	48.8	48.1	50.0	
Student Faculty Interaction (SFI)	36.2	37.0	40.8	***	41.2	42.5	42.5	
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)	29.1	29.2	32.3	***	37.0	37.5	37.3	
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)	55.6	59.2	59.9	***	55.0	54.5	56.1	

Note: Benchmark scores were calculated on a 100-point scale.

** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ t-test (2-tailed)

First-Year Benchmark Trend

Table 3 provides an overview of the trends in Mason's benchmark scores between 2006 and 2012 for FY and SR. At the freshman level, results show steady improvements over the last six years across the board. Compared to the 2006 counterparts, FY students in 2012 scored significantly higher in all five benchmark areas, with the differences being most noticeable in student faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.

Senior Benchmark Trend

At the senior level, Mason students in 2012 reported a significantly higher level of academic challenge than their peers in 2006 (Table 3). While results also show improvement over time in SR students' participation in active and collaborative learning activities, student and faculty interaction, and supportive campus environment, the increase did not rise to a level of statistical significance. SR students' ratings of enriching educational experiences remained constant over the years.

Benchmark Item Trend Analysis

Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)

The LAC benchmark measures time spent preparing for class, the amount of reading and writing, deep learning, and students' perceptions of institutional expectations for academic performance. As Table 4 shows, over the last six years, the perceived LAC among Mason FY students has increased in several aspects. Compared to their 2006 counterparts, both FR and SR students in 2012 spent significantly more hours preparing for class, worked harder to meet instructors' standards and expectations, and spent significant amounts of time studying and on academic work (SR only); they also reported more challenging mental activities in their educational experiences such as analyzing ideas/experiences/theory, synthesizing ideas/information/experiences, making judgments about the value of

information/ arguments/methods, as well as applying what they have learned in real life (FY only). Similar to the 2009 NSSE data, Mason FYs and SRs in 2012 reported receiving less reading assignments than their 2006 counterparts, with the decrease being significant at the SR level.

Table 4. Mason Trends in LAC: Significant Differences at Item Level

Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)	First-Year			Senior		
	2006	2012	Sig	2006	2012	Sig
Hours spent preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, etc.) ¹	52%	63%	***	55%	63%	*
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings ²	86%	80%		80%	73%	*
Coursework emphasis: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory ³	79%	82%	***	82%	85%	**
Coursework emphasis: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences ³	68%	72%	**	75%	76%	*
Coursework emphasis: Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods ³	68%	71%	**	67%	72%	*
Coursework emphasis: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations ³	71%	74%	**	73%	75%	
Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations ⁴	52%	59%	***	55%	62%	***
Campus emphasis: Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work ³	77%	77%		78%	81%	**

¹ Percentages are for 11 or more hours a week, based on full-time students' self-report.

² Percentages are for 5 or more, based on full-time students' self-report.

³ Percentages are for "quite a bit" and "very much" combined.

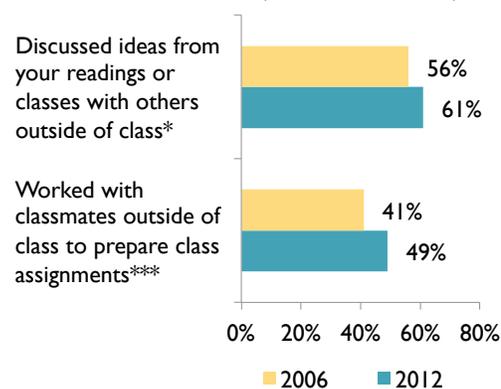
⁴ Percentages are for "often" and "very often" combined.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ t-test (2-tailed)

Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)

The ACL benchmark measures how often students participate in class, work collaboratively with other students inside and outside of class, tutor others, and participate in community-based projects as part of course assignments. As shown in Figure 1, a significant increase in Mason's first-year ACL benchmark score occurred between the 2006 and 2012 cohorts. Specifically, a significantly higher percentage of Mason FYs in 2012 engaged in working with classmates to prepare assignments and discussing ideas from readings or class with others (students, family members, co-workers) outside of class. While increase was also noted in the ACL benchmark score for Mason SRs over the last six years, the difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 1. Mason Trends in ACL: Significant Differences at Item Level (First-Year Students)



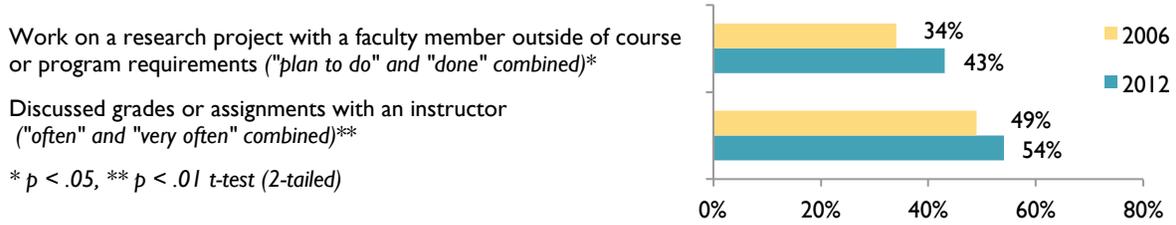
Note: Percentages are for "often" and "very often" combined.

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$ t-test (2-tailed)

Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)

The SFI benchmark measures how often students talk with faculty members and advisors about grades, assignments, and career plans and how often students work with faculty members outside of class on research or other activities. As shown in Figure 2, significant improvements were noted for two of the SFI items between 2006 and 2012. Compared to their 2006 counterparts, a significant increase was noted among 2012 FYs' reported frequency with which they discussed grades or assignments with an instructor; a significantly higher percentage of 2012 FRs worked or planned to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements. This latter finding is consistent with Mason's *Students as Scholars* initiative. No significant differences emerged in the SFI benchmark score for SRs despite improvement over the last six years.

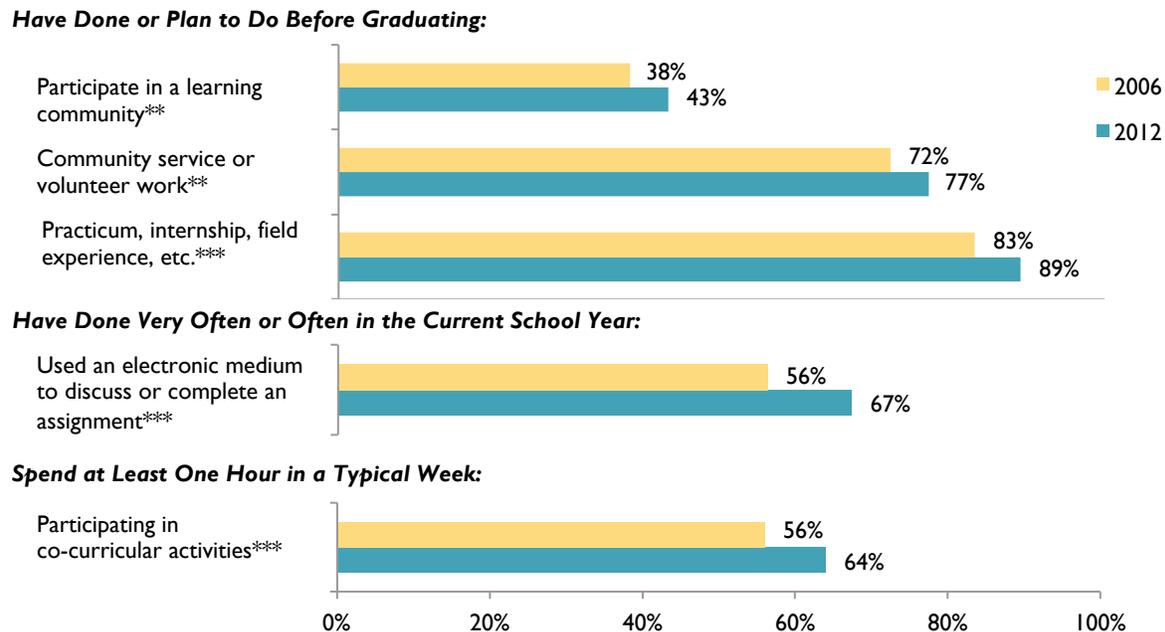
Figure 2. Mason Trends in SFI: Significant Differences at Item Level (First-Year Students)



Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)

The EEE benchmark measures how often students interact with students of different racial or ethnic backgrounds, interact with students of different political opinions or values, use electronic technology, and participate in activities such as internships, community service, study abroad, co-curricular activities, and/or a culminating senior experience. Between 2006 and 2012, a significant increase was noted in Mason FY students' participation in EEE. As shown in Figure 3, a significantly higher percentage of Mason FY students reported using technology for school-related activities; participating or planning to participate in practicum/ internship/field experiences, community service or volunteer work, learning communities; and spending more hours participating in co-curricular activities than their 2006 counterparts. While an increase was also noted for Mason SRs, the difference did not amount to statistical significance.

Figure 3. Mason Trends in EEE: Significant Differences at Item Level (First-Year Students)



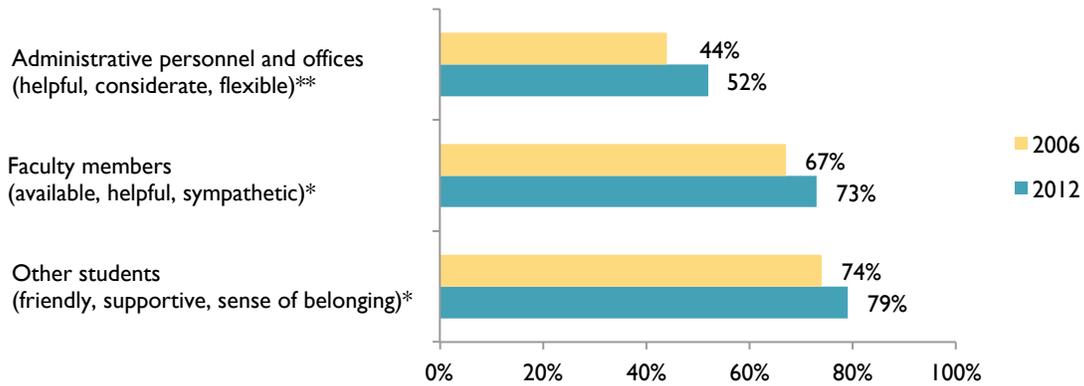
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ t-test (2-tailed)

Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)

The SCE benchmark measures the extent to which students perceive that the institutional environment helps them succeed academically and socially, assists them in coping with non-academic responsibilities, and promotes supportive relations among students and their peers, faculty members, and administrative personnel and offices. As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the overall SCE benchmark scores for FY students increased significantly between 2006 and 2012. This change was due to a significant improvement in FYs' perceived quality of relationships with other students, faculty, and administrative personnel, as well as in their ratings of institutional support for student success in academic and social areas (academic success, coping with non-academic responsibilities, thrive socially). Over the last six years, no significant differences were noted in SCE benchmark scores for Mason SRs.

Figure 4. Mason Trends in SCE – Institutional Relationships: Significant Differences at Item Level (First-Year Students)

Quality of Relationships with People at Your Institution:

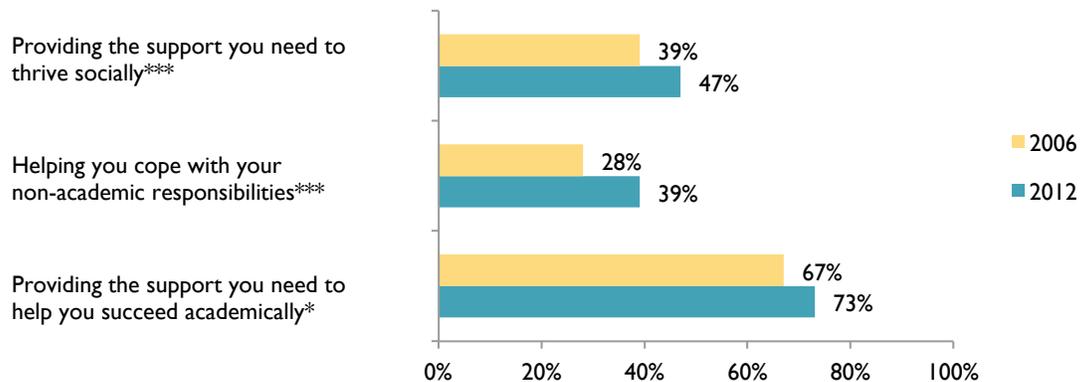


Note: Percentages are for answers 5-7 combined on a 7-point rating scale.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ t-test (2-tailed)

Figure 5. Mason Trends in SCE – Institutional Emphases: Differences at Item Level (First-Year Students)

Extent to which Your Institution Emphasizes:



Note: Percentages are for "quite a bit" and "very much" combined.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ t-test (2-tailed)

BENCHMARK PEER COMPARISON: 2012

This section compares Mason's 2012 scores in the five benchmark areas to the scores of Mason's 2012 Carnegie (RU/H) and aspirational (RU/VH) peer institutions. Where significant differences are found, item-level results are discussed.

Table 5. Mason 2012 Benchmark Peer Comparison: Mean Benchmark Scores

Benchmark	First-Year		Seniors	
	RU/H	RU/VH	RU/H	RU/VH
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)				
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)	+	+		+
Student Faculty Interaction (SFI)		+	-	-
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)	+	+	-	-
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)	-	-	-	-

Notes. Blank box indicates no significant difference between Mason and a peer group. Plus sign indicates a significantly higher score for Mason; minus sign indicates a significantly lower score for Mason. Significance was calculated at the $p < .05$ level using an independent samples *t*-test (2-tailed).

When Mason is compared to its Carnegie and aspirational peer groups, noticeable differences emerge in the benchmark areas of ACL, SFI, EEE, and SCE (Table 5). These four benchmarks are discussed in detail in the following sections.²

Active and Collaborative Learning

Mason made tremendous improvements in ACL since 2009, coming from behind to pass both Carnegie and aspirational peer groups at the FY level and outperform the aspirational peer group at the SR level. Increases were most noticeable in four areas: asking questions or contributing to class discussions, making class presentations, discussing ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class, and working with other students on projects during class.

As shown in Figures 6 and 7, in 2012, compared to their counterparts at peer institutions, a significantly higher percentage of Mason FY and SR students often or very often engaged in ACL by asking questions or contributing to class discussions and by making class presentations. While Mason FY students also discussed ideas from readings or class with their classmates at a significantly higher rate; a significantly higher percentage of Mason's SR students worked with other students on projects during class, both outperforming their counterparts in both peer groups.

Figure 6. Percentage of FYs Who "Often" or "Very Often" Participated in Class and Collaborative Activities

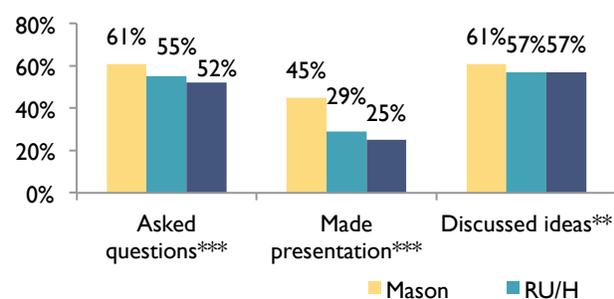
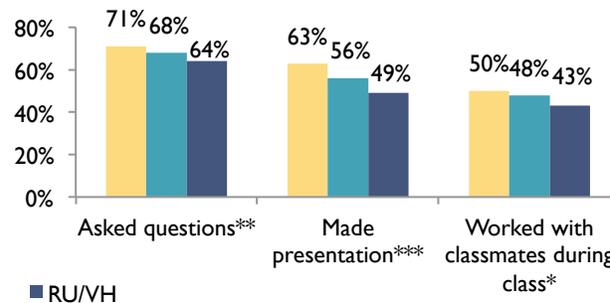


Figure 7. Percentage of SRs Who "Often" or "Very Often" Participated in Class and Collaborative Activities



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ *t*-test (2-tailed)

² Unless otherwise noted, when significance is indicated for an item, a statistically significant difference exists between Mason and both peer groups.

Despite improvement made over the last three years, Mason SRs continued to lag behind their peers in 2012 in several areas of ACL as measured by NSSE: working with classmates outside of class, participating in community-based projects, and tutoring or teaching other students (2%-8% lower for Mason SRs, “Often” and “Very Often” combined, $p < .01$). While the larger proportion of transfer and part-time students may contribute to the low percentages reported by Mason SRS, these are areas deserving more attention by the university community.

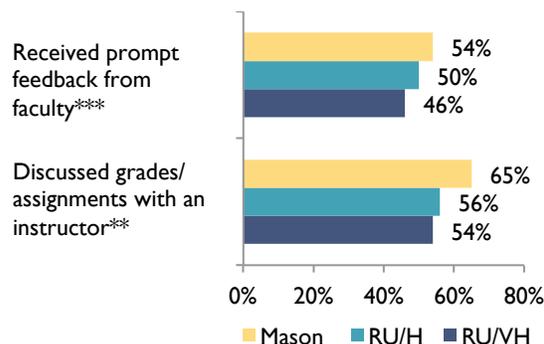
Student-Faculty Interaction

Mason has also made significant improvement in SFI since 2009, moving from behind to outperform the aspirational peer group at the FY level in 2012. However, at the SR level, Mason students continue to lag behind peer institutions in 2012 with a significantly lower level of interactions with faculty. The difference was due to SRs’ limited interactions with faculty on course-related issues, talking with faculty about career plans, discussing ideas from readings or class with faculty outside of class, working with faculty on activities other than coursework, and working on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.

Interaction on Course Related Issues

One highlight for Mason in SFI is prompt feedback from faculty. Figure 8 shows that, when compared to their counterparts at peer institutions, a significantly higher percentage of Mason FYs report receiving prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on academic performance and having discussed grades or assignments with an instructor. These interactions with faculty promote academic and social integration which in turn have a positive impact on freshman retention and achievement (Tinto, 2004).

Figure 8. Percentage of FYs Who “Often” or “Very Often” Interacted with Faculty on Course Related Issues

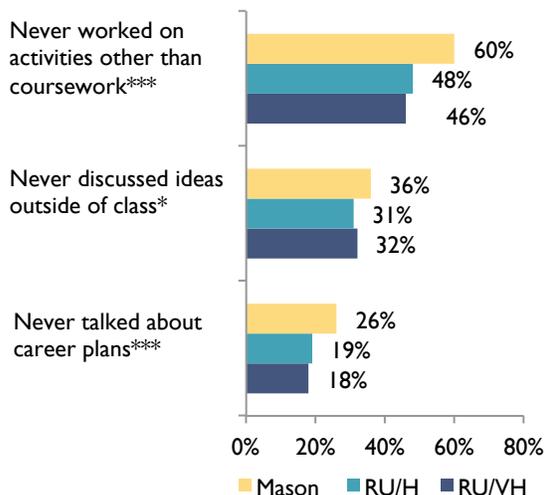


** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, t-test (2-tailed)

Engagement Outside of Class

Mason lags behind in several areas of SFI at the SR level. As shown in Figure 9, one-quarter of Mason SR students have never talked with a faculty member or advisor about their career plans, compared to about one-fifth of SRs in Mason’s peer groups. Nearly two-thirds of Mason’s SR students also never worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.), compared to 46-48% of SRs in Mason’s peer groups. A higher percentage of SRs at Mason, compared to peer group counterparts, never discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members or others outside of class.

Figure 9. Percentage of SRs Who “Never” Engaged with Faculty Outside of Class

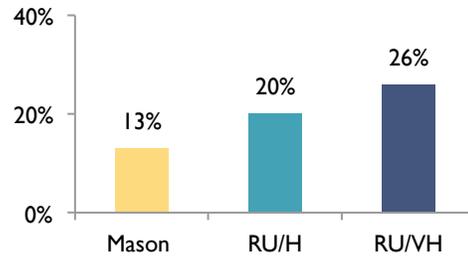


* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$, t-test (2-tailed)

Research Outside of Class

Another indicator of student-faculty interactions is working on research projects outside of class or program requirements. As shown in Figure 10, only 13% of Mason SR students report having done a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements, compared to 20% and 26% of SRs in Carnegie peer and aspirational peer institutions. Looking back over the last six years, this has been a weak area for Mason (12.6% and 12.1% for 2006 and 2009, respectively). This is an area where improvement can be expected as the impact of *Students as Scholars* takes effect.

Figure 10. Percentage of SRs Who Have Worked on a Research Project with Faculty Outside of Course or Program Requirements



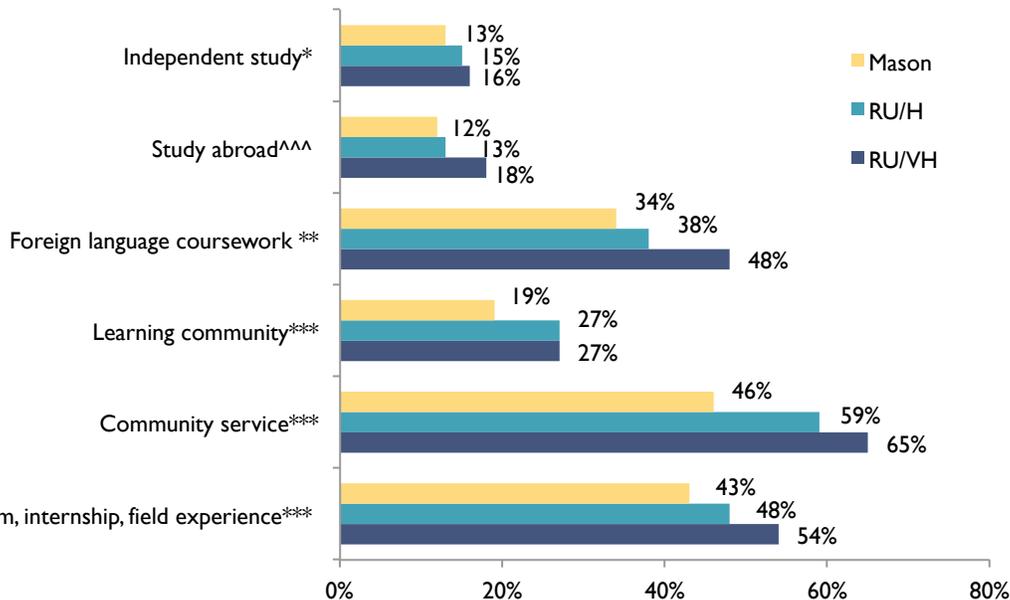
Differences are significant at $p < .001$, t-test (2-tailed)

Enriching Educational Experiences

Participation in Enriching Activities

In 2012, Mason FY students made improvement on the EEE benchmark score by outperforming the aspirational peer group while maintaining a lead over the Carnegie peer group. At the SR level, however, Mason's EEE benchmark score continued to lag significantly behind the scores of peer institutions. As shown in Figure 11, Mason SRs were significantly less likely than their peers to report participation in practicum/internship/field experience/clinical assignment, community services or volunteer work, learning community, foreign language coursework, study abroad, and independent study. Additional analysis of Mason's data reveals that native SRs reported participation in these experiences at a higher rate than transfer SRs, e.g., 59% vs. 37%, respectively, for practicum/internship/field experience/clinical assignment. (See separate analyses of transfer and residential student responses to the NSSE). The fact that Mason has a high percentage of transfer seniors, who are less likely to participate in these activities, may partially account for the overall lower percentages for these experiences at the SR level.

Figure 11. Percentage of Seniors Who Participated in Select Enriching Activities

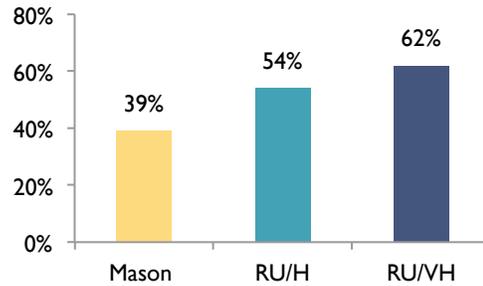


* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; ^^ $p < .001$ (RU/VH only), t-test (2-tailed)

Participation in Co-Curricular Activities

Despite improvement since 2009, Mason SRs continued to lag behind their peers with regard to participation in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.). Figure 12 shows that in 2012, slightly over one-third of Mason SRs report having participated in co-curricular activities (at least one hour per week), compared to 54-62% of peer institutions. Mason’s high rate of transfer and non-residential students who are more likely to work and have less free time likely contribute to this lower percentage.

Figure 12. Percentage of SRs Who Participated in Co-Curricular Activities

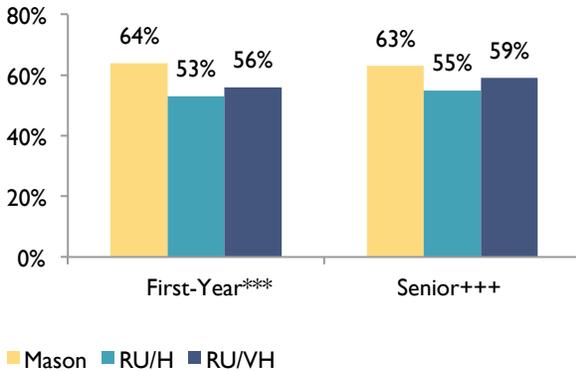


Differences are significant at $p < .001$ t-test (2-tailed)

Diversity Interactions

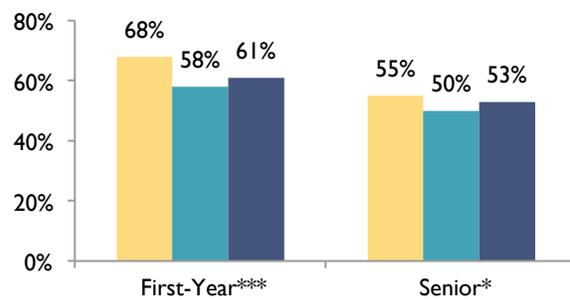
Mason students continued to score significantly higher than their peers on items related to diversity in 2012. Specifically, a significantly higher percentage of Mason students reported having had serious conversations with students of another race or ethnicity and perceiving that the campus environment encourages diversity. Differences are significant when compared with both peer groups at the FY level and when compared with the Carnegie peer group at the SR level (see Figures 13 and 14).

Figure 13. Percentage of Students Who “Often” or “Very Often” Had Serious Conversations with Students of a Different Race or Ethnicity



* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$; +++ $p < .001$ (RU/H only), t-test (2-tailed)

Figure 14. Percentage of Students Reporting that the Institution Encouraged Contact Among Students from Different Backgrounds “Very Much” or “Quite a Bit”

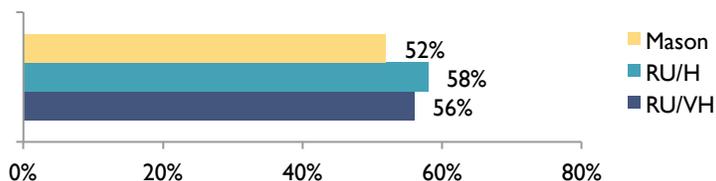


Supportive Campus Environment

Despite an increase since 2009, Mason's SCE benchmark score was still significantly lower than that of peer institutions in 2012. The figures below show specific areas where Mason FY and SR students report a significantly lower perception of a supportive campus environment than their counterparts.

Relationships with Students, Faculty and Administrative Personnel

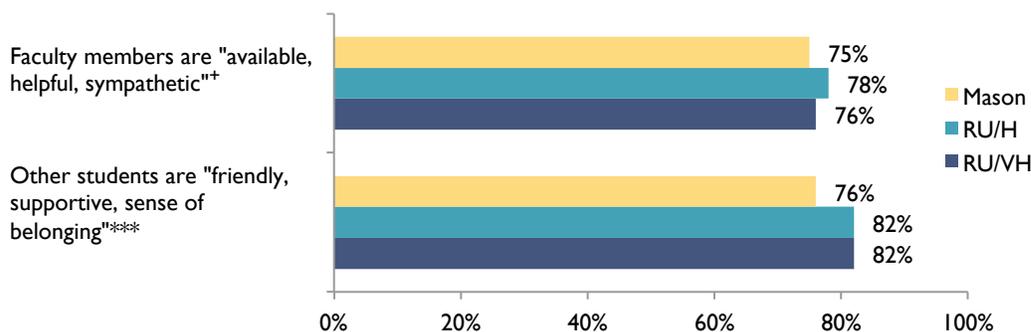
Figure 15. Percentage of FYs Reporting that Administrative Personnel and Offices are "Helpful, Considerate, Flexible"***



Note: Percentages are for answers 5-7 combined on a 7-point rating scale.

** $p < .01$, t-test (2-tailed)

Figure 16. Senior Students' Reporting on Select Institutional Relationships



Note: Percentages are for answers 5-7 combined on a 7-point rating scale.

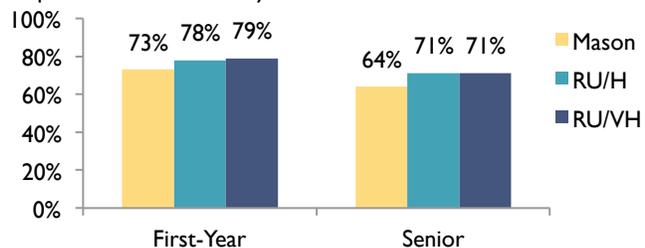
*** $p < .001$, † $p < .05$ (RU/H only), t-test (2-tailed)

At both FY and SR levels, Mason students score significantly lower than their peers on item(s) addressing relationships. As shown in Figure 15, 52% of Mason FYs describe administrative personnel as being "helpful, considerate, flexible" compared to 56-58% of their peers. At the SR level, while over two-thirds of Mason SRs gave favorable ratings on relationships with other students and faculty, they still lag behind peer group(s) by a statistically significant margin (Figure 16).

Support for Academic Success

Results in Figure 17 show that a significantly smaller percentage of Mason students report that the institution provides the support they need to help them succeed academically compared to their counterparts at peer institutions. Across class levels, Mason's SRs rate this item lower than Mason's FYs. This is an area needing further study to better understand student perceptions.

Figure 17. Percentage of Students Reporting that the Institution Provides "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit" of the Support Needed to Help Succeed Academically



Differences are significant at $p < .001$, t-test (2-tailed)

GROWTH

NSSE contains items addressing educational-professional and personal-social growth as an extent of students' experiences at their institution. This section summarizes self-report growth within Mason and compared to peers in 2012.

Self-Comparison: 2006 vs. 2012

NSSE measures growth by asking students to report on the extent that the experience at their institution has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in select areas (4-point scale ranging from *very little* to *very much*). Based on a factor analysis, 15 items on growth are classified into two areas: educational-professional growth and personal-social growth. Discussion on growth is conducted for items with significant differences between 2006 and 2012 within each growth area.

Educational-Professional Growth

Items addressing educational-professional growth cover thinking, writing, speaking, quantitative analysis, using information technology, job or work-related knowledge and skills, acquiring a broad general education, and working effectively with others. Figure 18 shows that Mason 2012 FY students reported significantly more gains in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills as a result of their experiences at Mason: 63% compared to 55% for their 2006 counterparts. Seniors have been fairly consistent on this item with 68% in 2006 and 65% in 2012 saying they acquired job or work-related knowledge and skills as a result of their Mason experiences. On the other hand, significantly less growth was reported by 2012 FYs and SRs in Mason's contribution in using computing and information technology compared to their 2006 counterparts (Figures 18 and 19). Nonetheless, these percentages remain high at 70% for FYs and 76% for SRs.

Figure 18. Experiences at Mason Contributed “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Educational-Professional Growth of First-Year Students

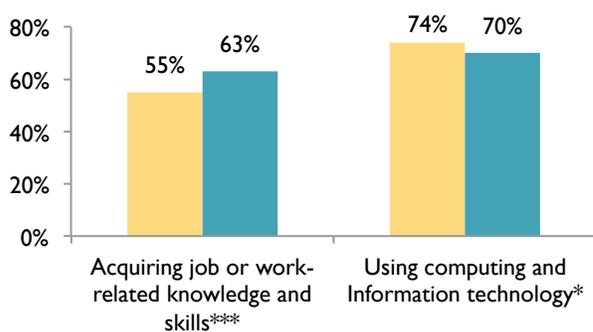
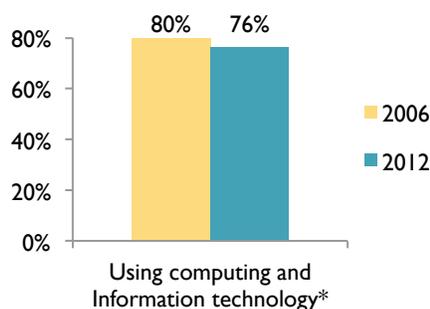


Figure 19. Experiences at Mason Contributed “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Educational-Professional Growth of Seniors



* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$, *t*-test (2-tailed)

Personal-Social Growth

Items describing personal-social growth range from understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds to developing a deepened sense of spirituality. Figure 20 shows that Mason FYs in 2012 reported a significantly higher level of growth than their 2006 peers in their experiences at Mason contributing to understanding themselves; solving complex real-world problems; developing a personal code of values and ethics; and contributing to the welfare of the community. As shown in Figure 21, while 2012 SRs reported a significant increase in learning

effectively on their own compared to their peers in 2006, there was a significant decrease among 2012 SRs in their experiences at Mason influencing voting in local, state, or national elections.

Figure 20. Experiences at Mason Contributed “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Personal-Social Growth of First-Year Students

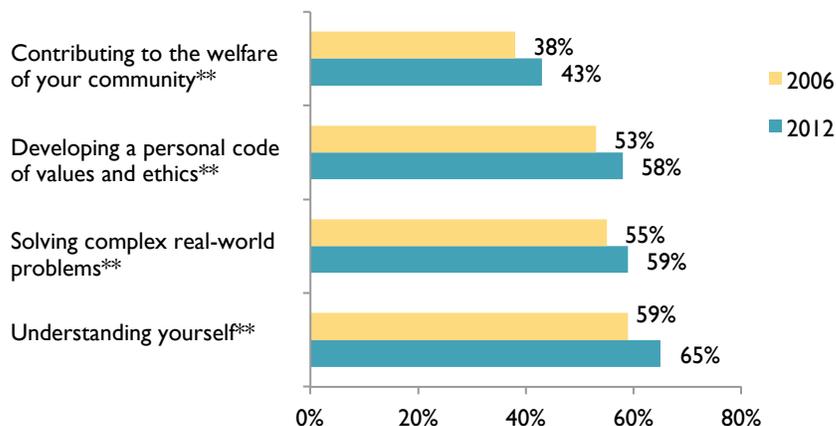
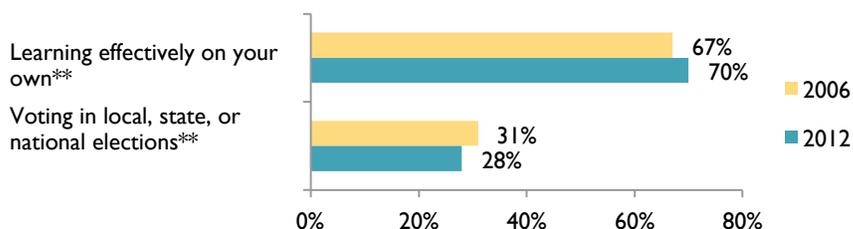


Figure 21. Experiences at Mason Contributed “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Personal-Social Growth of Seniors



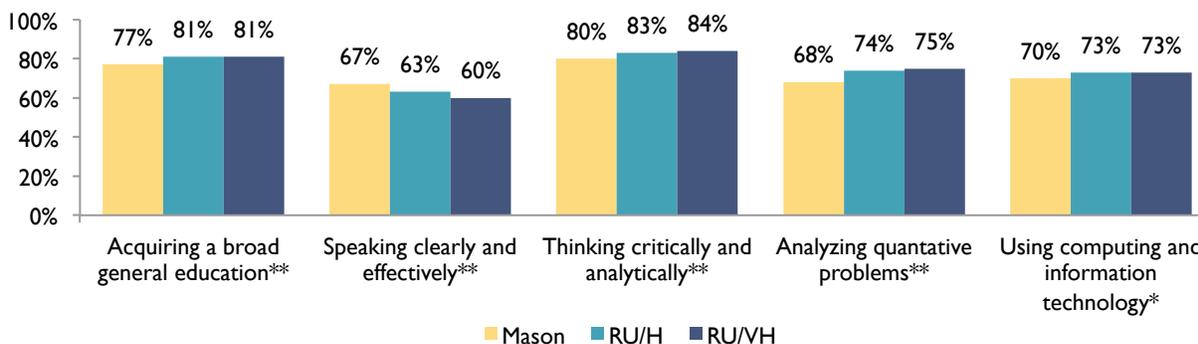
** $p < .01$, t -test (2-tailed)

Peer Comparison: 2012

Figures 22-25 show comparisons between Mason students and peers on items with significant differences between Mason students and two peer groups in terms of educational-professional growth and personal-social growth.

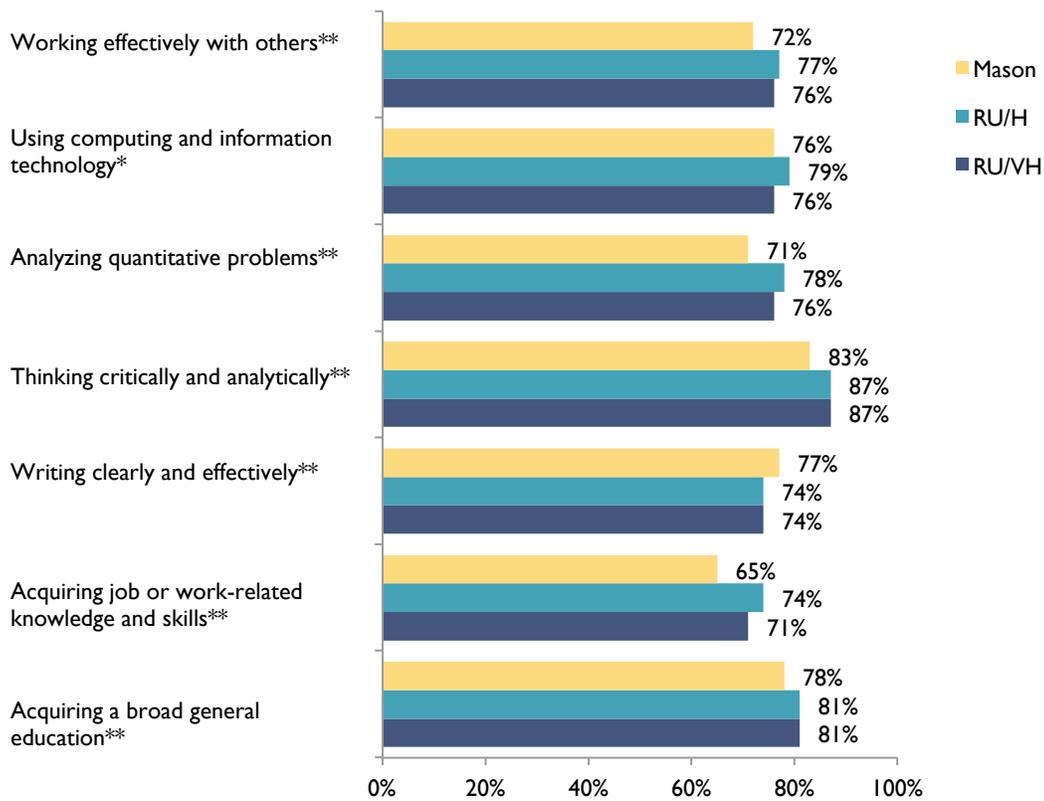
Educational-Professional Growth

Figure 22. Peer Comparison of Experiences at Institution Contributing “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Educational-Professional Growth of First-Year Students.



*Sig. difference with one peer group at $p < .05$, **sig. difference with both peer groups at $p < .05$, t -test (2-tailed)

Figure 23. Peer Comparison of Experiences at Institution Contributing “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Educational-Professional Growth of Seniors

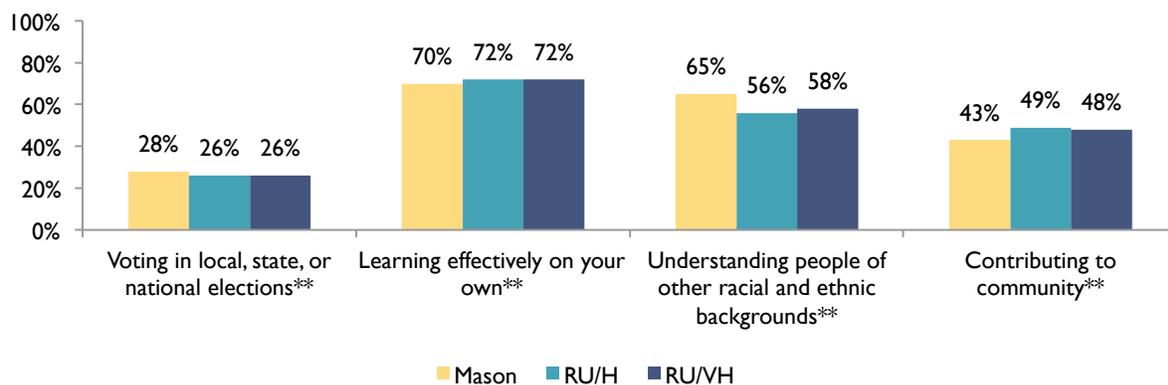


*Sig. difference with one peer group at $p < .05$; **sig. difference with both peer groups at $p < .05$; t-test (2-tailed)

In 2012, Mason students reported significantly more gains in communication skills based on Mason contributions compared to their counterparts at peer institutions. This is evidenced in student reports on institutional experiences resulting in significantly more growth in speaking clearly and effectively reported by Mason FYs and in writing clearly and effectively reported by Mason SRs. However, Mason lags significantly behind its peer institutions in other areas of educational-professional gains such as acquiring a broad general education, thinking critically and analytically, and analyzing quantitative problems (see Figures 22 and 23).

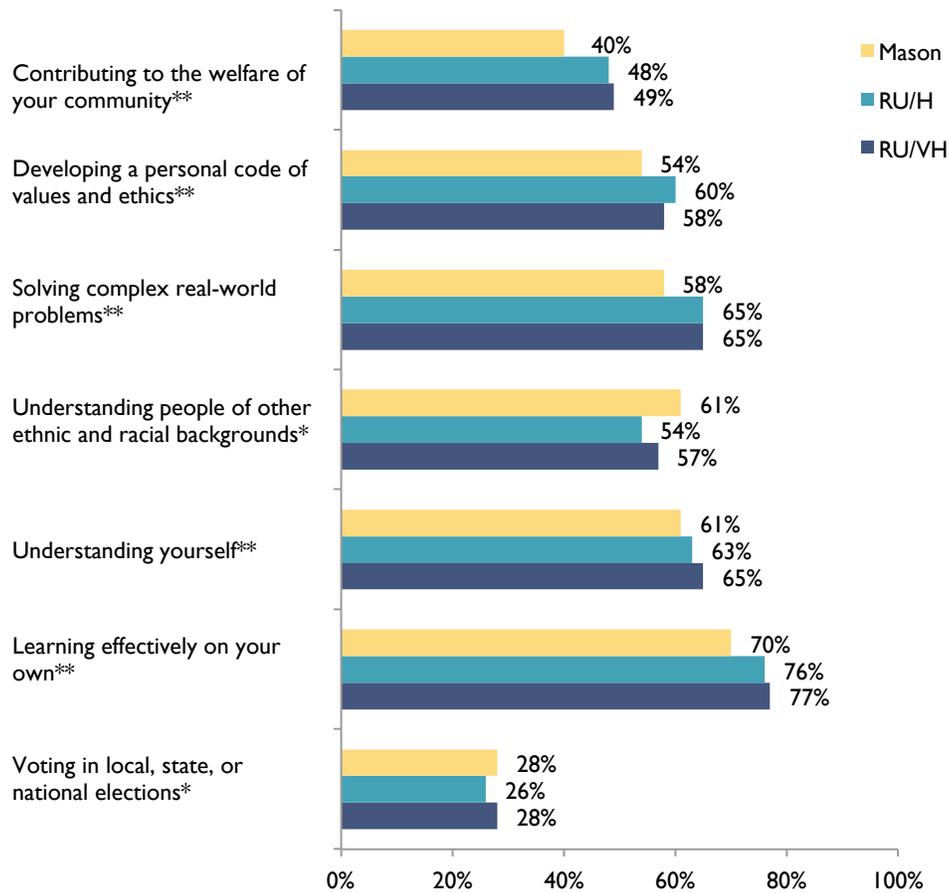
Personal Growth

Figure 24. Peer Comparison of Experiences at Institution Contributing “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Personal-Social Growth of First-Year Students



*Sig. difference with one peer group at $p < .05$; **sig. difference with both peer groups at $p < .05$; t-test (2-tailed)

Figure 25. Peer Comparison of Experiences at Institution Contributing “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Personal-Social Growth for Seniors



*Sig. difference with one peer group at $p < .05$, **sig. difference with both peer groups at $p < .05$, t-test (2-tailed)

Figures 24 and 25 show that, in terms of personal growth, both Mason FYs and SRs in 2012 scored significantly higher than their respective peers in attributing institutional contributions to understanding people of other race and ethnic backgrounds and voting in elections. On the other hand, Mason lagged significantly behind peer institutions in several areas of personal growth, particularly at the SR level (e.g., learning effectively on your own, solving complex real-world problems).

Looking across self comparisons and peer comparisons, it is worth noting that Mason students still lag significantly behind their peers in several areas even though improvements have been reported since 2006 (e.g., FY and SR: thinking critically and analytically, analyzing quantitative problems; SR: learning effectively on your own).

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Satisfaction with Educational Experiences

NSSE measures educational satisfaction by asking students to rank the overall quality of their educational experience on a scale ranging from *poor* to *excellent*. Figures 26 and 27 show that, within Mason, while FY students' satisfaction with their overall Mason educational experience has remained relatively stable over the last six years, satisfaction among SR students was significantly lower in 2012 compared to the level reported in 2006. In 2012, satisfaction among Mason FY students was comparable to the level reported by Mason's peer institutions (Figure 26); Mason SR students reported a significantly lower level of satisfaction than their counterparts in both peer groups (Figure 27).

Figure 26. First-Year Students' Evaluation of Overall Educational Experience

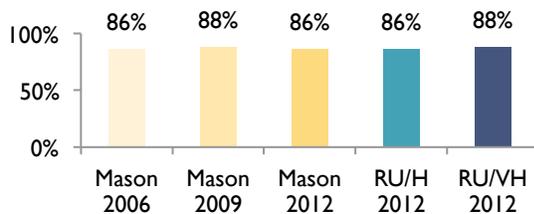
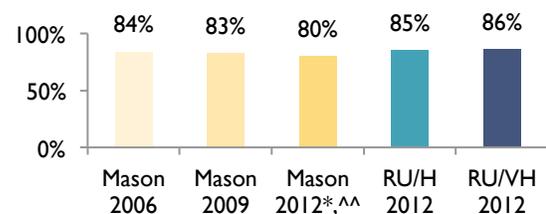


Figure 27. Senior Students' Evaluation of Overall Educational Experience



Note: Percentages are for "good" and "excellent" combined.

*Significant difference from Mason 2006 at $p < .05$, ^^ significant difference from both peer groups at $p < .05$, proportion test

Satisfaction with Academic Advising

NSSE also asks students to rate the overall quality of the academic advising they have received on a scale ranging from *poor* to *excellent*. Figures 28 and Figure 29 show that satisfaction with academic advising at Mason has improved over the last six years among students, with the improvement level being significant at the SR level. Nevertheless, in 2012, satisfaction with academic advising among Mason's FY and SR students was significantly lower than satisfaction levels reported by their respective counterparts at Mason's peer institutions.

Figure 28. First-Year Students' Satisfaction with Academic Advising

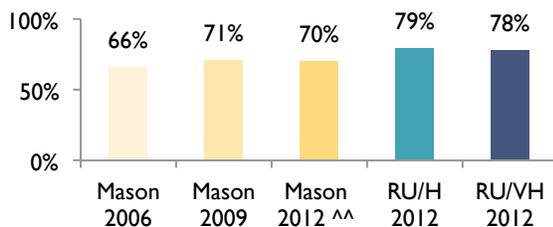
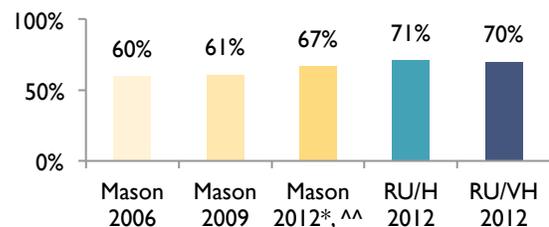


Figure 29. Senior Students' Satisfaction with Academic Advising



Note: Percentages are for "good" and "excellent" combined.

*Significant difference from Mason 2006 at $p < .05$, ^^ significant difference from both peer groups at $p < .05$, proportion test

In 2012, there was a moderately strong positive relationship between perceptions of advising quality and ratings of educational satisfaction among Mason FY ($r = 0.52$, $p < .001$) and SR ($r = 0.547$, $p < .001$) students. There were no significant differences in advising satisfaction based on gender, race/ethnicity, transfer status, or place of residence.

Would you Re-enroll?

Another way NSSE measures student satisfaction is by asking students to report whether they would choose to go to the same institution if they could start over again. Figures 30 and Figure 31 show that over the last six years, the percentage of Mason students reporting re-enrollment if starting over again has reached 84% among FY students while decreasing slightly to 79% at the SR level. While the percentages are relatively high, they are significantly lower than the numbers reported by Mason’s aspirational peer institutions (RU/VH) at the FY level, and significantly lower than the numbers reported by both peer groups at the SR level.

Figure 30. First-Year Students Who Would Re-Enroll

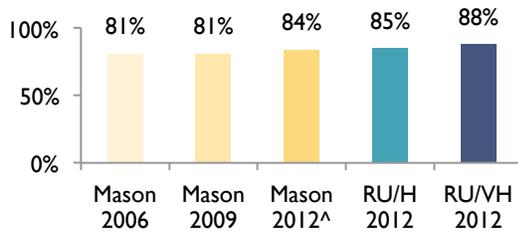
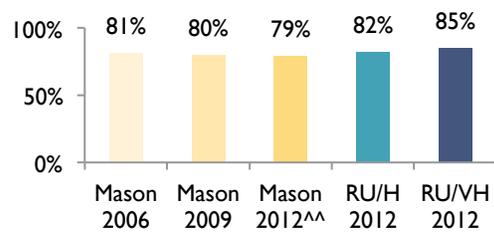


Figure 31. Senior Students Who Would Re-Enroll



Note: Percentages are for “definitely yes” and “probably yes” combined.

[^]Significant difference from RU/VH at $p < .05$, ^{^^} significant difference from both peer groups at $p < .05$, proportion test

OBSERVATIONS

Mason's participation in NSSE allows us not only to examine our own performance over the years but also to examine our performance relative to our Carnegie (RU/H) and aspirational (RU/VH) peers.

From the 2012 analyses, the following observations can be made:

1. Between 2006 and 2012, Mason students reported significant improvement in *level of academic challenge* at both FY and SR levels. The change was reflected in working hard to meet instructors' standards or expectations, spending more hours preparing for class, and engaging in complex mental activities such as analysis, synthesis, and making judgments.
2. Between 2006 and 2012, Mason FY 2012 students made significant improvement in all five benchmark areas. The change was due to improved ratings on specific items such as hours spent preparing for class (LAC), working or discussing ideas with classmates outside of class (ACL), discussing grades or assignments with faculty (SFI), participating in co-curricular activities (EEE), and institutional environment providing the support needed to thrive socially (SCE).
3. Improvement over the last six years among Mason FY students allows Mason to compare favorably with peer institutions in 2012. Mason FY 2012 students scored significantly higher than their counterparts at peer institutions in three benchmark areas: ACL, SFI (aspirational peers only), and EEE. The difference was largely due to higher ratings on specific items such as asking questions or contributing to class discussions, making class presentations, or discussing ideas from readings or class with others (ACL); receiving prompt feedback or discussing grades/assignment with an instructor (SFI); having serious conversations with students different from themselves, and an institutional emphasis on contact among students of diverse backgrounds (EEE).
4. Between 2006 and 2012, Mason SR students did not report significant improvement in four of the five benchmark areas: ACL, SFI, EEE, and SCE. Lack of improvement was also reflected in Mason SRs' lower performance when compared with their counterparts in peer institutions. In 2012, Mason SR students continued to lag significantly behind their counterparts in both peer groups in SFI, EEE, and SCE. Of some concern is the finding that, compared to their peers, a significantly lower percentage of Mason SRs discussed their career plans or ideas from readings/class with faculty, or have worked on research projects with faculty outside of class or program requirements (SFI); have participated in enriching activities such as practicum/internship/field experience, community services, learning communities, or foreign language coursework (EEE).
5. Despite improvement since 2006 at the FY level, Mason still lags significantly behind Carnegie and aspirational peers with regard to supportive campus environment. Two areas of concern are perceived quality of relationships and institutional support for academic success. Between 2006 and 2012, Mason FY students' perceived relationships with administrative personnel and institutional support for academic success improved significantly, but was still lower compared to peers. At the SR level, Mason students in 2012 continued to report a significantly lower level of supportive campus environment than their counterparts in both peer groups, largely due to their significantly lower ratings on three items (relationships with other students, relationships with faculty, and institutional support needed to succeed academically).
6. Between 2006 and 2012, Mason students reported significant gains resulting from institutional experiences in areas of personal-social growth (FY: understanding self, solving complex real-world problems, developing a personal code of values and ethics, and contributing to the welfare of the community; SR: learning effectively on their own) than in areas of educational-professional growth (FY: acquiring job-related knowledge and skills).
7. In 2012, compared to peer institutions, Mason contributed to a significantly higher level of growth in communication skills (FY: speaking clearly and effectively; SR: writing clearly and effectively) and understanding those of other backgrounds.

8. Mason's SR population consists of a large proportion of transfer and part-time students. These students tend to work and, compared to peers, are more likely to work off campus and for longer hours. When compared to native and/or full-time counterparts, these students tend to have less student faculty interaction and are less likely to participate in enriching educational experiences. These students represent a challenge for Mason as we continue to emphasize student success.

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APPENDIX A: METHOD FOR APPLYING WEIGHTS AND COMPUTING BENCHMARK SCORES

Using Weights

Beginning in 2006, NSSE began applying weights in analysis and reporting (i.e., Frequency Distributions, Mean Comparisons, and Benchmark Comparisons), in response to an observation that males and part-time students have lower response rates than women and full-time students and that engagement patterns can also differ based on institutional size. The weighting scheme employed by NSSE is intended to minimize non-response bias and ensure the representation of survey respondents to the larger population, and ultimately to allow for comparisons within and across institutions of varying sizes. To be consistent with the recommended practice, weighting was applied in the analysis of Mason data for this report, with minimal effects reflected in decimals.

Computing Benchmark Scores

Benchmark scores are calculated on a 100-point scale for each respondent. For each benchmark, NSSE calculates a benchmark score for each student, and an average benchmark score for each institution. While the standard deviation for benchmark scores at the student level may vary noticeably (e.g., between 13-20 points, the differences between institutions at the institution level are much narrower. Depending on the sample size, a difference of 2 points or larger can be statistically significant. NSSE does not report institutional level variances, but it does provide effect size as a context for understanding statistical significance.

Prior to 2005, NSSE only calculated benchmark scores at the institutional level. Over the years, researchers at NSSE found that the largest differences in student engagement occur among students as opposed to between institutions. The addition of student-level benchmark scores since then has allowed researchers to examine whether the average benchmark scores of any institution's respondents are statistically different from those of their counterparts at peer institutions, as well as to conduct subgroup analyses within an institution.

Changes in Benchmarks

Over the years, changes were made to a few NSSE survey items which made it impossible to compare the scores of 2012 with those of 2003 and earlier for two of the NSSE benchmarks: Student Faculty Interaction (SFI) and Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE). For the SFI benchmark, a major change involved the addition of a new variable, RESRCH04, in 2004 which asked students to report whether they have not, have, plan to, or have not decided to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements. To account for this change NSSE created a comparable SFI benchmark variable (SFc) by re-computing the SFI benchmark without the RESRCH04 variable. This new benchmark variable (SFc) was used to make comparisons between 2006, 2009 and 2012 Mason data in light of the 2003 data. For the EEE benchmark, the response set for multiple items used in the creation of the benchmark was changed significantly in 2004. This change was too significant to overcome. Therefore, comparisons between the EEE scores were limited to data collected in 2006 and beyond.

APPENDIX B: LIMITATIONS

As outlined below, NSSE has some limitations:

First, NSSE relies on students' self-reported data, which may be limited by individual students' perceptions of their experiences and institutional conditions, as well as by their interpretations of the survey questions. Furthermore, the data generated provides a measure of student engagement, not student learning. NSSE data can be used to inform the development of student learning outcomes but should not be interpreted as a direct measure of outcomes themselves.

Second, peer comparisons are limited in number and scope. For each administration, NSSE allows participating institutions to select up to three peer comparison groups which include only current-year NSSE institutions organized into broad categories. Mason always uses two of these groups for peer comparisons: Carnegie classified research universities with high research activity (RU/H) and Carnegie classified research universities with very high research activity (RU/VH). However, as the institutions that participate in NSSE change each year, the composition of each peer comparison group also changes. As a result, peer comparison analysis can only be conducted using data from the current year. The changing composition of these peer groups also limits the meaningfulness of comparisons drawn between groups.

Third, the NSSE instrument is designed and administered by NSSE. Mason was not able to provide input or make changes to the survey design or administration process. The NSSE survey questions are standard and are based on Likert-type scales. Additionally, while students were allowed to make general comments about the quality of their educational experience, they were not allowed to provide comment on their responses to specific survey questions. All together, these restrictions limit the type of data and information that is available.

Fourth, the 2012 results presented in this report are based on an institutional response rate of 28%, significantly lower than the response rate achieved by Mason students during previous administrations. Findings would be strengthened if the institutional response rate were higher.

APPENDIX C: PEER INSTITUTIONS 2012

Carnegie Peers—Carnegie Class RU/H

1	Auburn University	24	Polytechnic Institute of NYU
2	Ball State University	25	Rutgers University-Newark
3	Baylor University	26	South Dakota State University
4	Brigham Young University	27	Southern Illinois University Carbondale
5	Catholic University of America, The	28	Stevens Institute of Technology
6	Clarkson University	29	Syracuse University
7	Clemson University	30	Texas Tech University
8	Cleveland State University	31	University of Akron, The
9	Colorado School of Mines	32	University of Denver
10	Drexel University	33	University of Louisiana at Lafayette
11	Florida International University	34	U of Maryland, Baltimore County
12	Howard University	35	University of Massachusetts Lowell
13	Illinois Institute of Technology	36	University of Mississippi
14	Indiana U - Purdue University Indianapolis	37	University of Missouri-Kansas City
15	Lehigh University	38	University of Nevada-Las Vegas
16	Louisiana Tech University	39	University of New Orleans, The
17	Loyola University Chicago	40	University of South Dakota
18	Michigan Technological University	41	University of Texas at Arlington, The
19	New Jersey Institute of Technology	42	University of Texas at Dallas, The
20	Northern Arizona University	43	University of Texas at El Paso, The
21	Northern Illinois University	44	University of Texas at San Antonio, The
22	Oklahoma State University	45	University of Wyoming
23	Old Dominion University		

Aspirational Peers—Carnegie Class RU/VH

1	Case Western Reserve University	12	University of Kentucky
2	Colorado State University	13	University of Louisville
3	Emory University	14	University of Miami
4	Indiana University Bloomington	15	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
5	Mississippi State University	16	University of Missouri-Columbia
6	Rutgers University-New Brunswick/Piscataway	17	University of Oregon
7	University of Alabama at Birmingham	18	University of South Carolina Columbia
8	University of Alabama in Huntsville	19	Washington State University
9	University of Arizona	20	Wayne State University
10	University of Houston	21	Yeshiva University
11	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign		

APPENDIX D: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS 2006 TO 2012

	Mason (2006)		Mason (2009)		Mason (2012)		Aspiration: RU/VH		Carnegie: RU/H	
	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR
Response Rate										
Overall	43%		33%		28%		20%		22%	
By class	39%	47%	32%	35%	28%	27%	19%	20%	19%	24%
NSSE sample size	1,802	1,820	2,370	2,320	3,603	4,838	77,095	90,199	98,041	128,616
Sampling Error ^a										
Overall	2.2%		2.2%		1.7%		0.5%		0.4%	
By class	3.3%	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	2.6%	2.3%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%
Number of respondents	708	858	753	818	1,026	1,312	14,354	18,483	19,033	30,714
Total population	3,839	3,912	2,557	4,523	3,603	4,838	86,325	100,739	111,826	142,613
Student Characteristics ^b										
Gender ^c										
Female	58%	59%	60%	62%	59%	61%	63%	59%	62%	57%
Race/Ethnicity										
Am. Indian/Native American	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian/Asian Am./Pacific Isl.	18%	16%	19%	16%	15%	17%	12%	9%	8%	6%
Black/African American	7%	8%	7%	7%	9%	7%	7%	7%	9%	7%
White (non-Hispanic)	51%	52%	52%	53%	53%	53%	64%	68%	63%	68%
Mexican/Mexican American	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Puerto Rican	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	7%	3%	2%	4%	3%
Multiracial	3%	3%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Other	5%	6%	2%	5%	4%	4%	1%	2%	2%	1%
I prefer not to respond	9%	7%	6%	7%	8%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%
Enrollment Status ^c										
Part-time	4%	30%	4%	29%	6%	27%	2%	14%	3%	15%
International Student	9%	16%	7%	10%	6%	10%	7%	6%	6%	5%
Place of Residence										
On-campus ^d	50%	11%	64%	11%	60%	10%	77%	11%	68%	10%
Transfer Status										
Transfer students	11%	64%	4%	60%	16%	70%	6%	35%	8%	43%
Age										
Under 24	96%	49%	99%	49%	96%	50%	98%	75%	97%	65%

^a Sampling error is an estimate of the margin by which the true score on a given item could differ from the reported score. To interpret the sampling error, assume that 60% of students reply “very often” to a particular item. If the sampling error is +/- 5%, then the true population value is most likely between 55% and 65%..

^b Percent of total respondents within each category; results are not weighted

^c Institution-reported data; information used to weigh the Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, and Benchmark Comparisons

^d Students who identified their residence as “dormitory or other campus housing” or “fraternity or sorority house”

APPENDIX E: TRANSFER VS. NATIVE STUDENT PROFILE

	First-Year Students		Seniors	
	Native	Transfer	Native	Transfer
Student Characteristics ^{a, b}				
Female	51%	57%	58%	51%
Race/Ethnicity				
Am. Indian/Native Am	0%	2%	1%	1%
Asian/Asian Am./Pacific Isl.	16%	15%	20%	16%
Black/African American	8%	9%	6%	7%
White (non-Hispanic)	55%	43%	53%	53%
Mexican/Mexican American	0%	2%	2%	0%
Puerto Rican	1%	2%	1%	1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	5%	7%	5%	8%
Multiracial	4%	4%	4%	4%
Other	3%	8%	3%	4%
I prefer not to respond	8%	10%	6%	7%
Part-time student	2%	28%	16%	37%
International Students	5%	11%	6%	12%
Traditional Age (< 24)	99%	80%	81%	34%
On-Campus Resident ^c	67%	20%	26%	3%
Work for Pay				
On campus				
0 hours/week	80%	91%	75%	90%
1-20 hours/week	17%	7%	21%	8%
21 or more hours/week	3%	2%	4%	2%
Off Campus				
0 hours/week	68%	38%	36%	26%
1-20 hours/week	25%	29%	33%	25%
21 or more hours/week	6%	33%	31%	49%
Benchmark Scores ^{b, d, e}				
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)	54.0	54.2	57.4	57.0
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)	45.2	44.0	51.1*	48.9
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)	34.7	35.2	42.2***	35.5
Enriching Educational Experience (EEE)	32.3	30.8	44.9***	34.5
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)	60.6**	55.7	57.2	55.7

^a Percent of total respondents within each category

^b Data were weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size

^c Students who identified their residence as “dormitory or other campus housing” or “fraternity or sorority house”

^d Mean benchmark score

^e Independent-Samples T-tests were used to compare the mean differences by student’s type (native vs. transfer) for FY and SR students separately.

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

APPENDIX F: RESIDENTIAL VS. NON-RESIDENTIAL STUDENT PROFILE

	First-Year Students		Seniors	
	Residential ^c	Non-Residential	Residential	Non-Residential
Students Characteristics ^{a, b}				
Female	54%	49%	68%	52%
Race/Ethnicity				
Am. Indian/Native Am	0%	1%	3%	1%
Asian/Asian Am./Pacific Isl.	8%	27%	14%	9%
Black/African American	10%	5%	10%	10%
White (non-Hispanic)	65%	36%	60%	64%
Mexican/Mexican American	1%	1%		1%
Puerto Rican	1%	1%	2%	1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	4%	7%	3%	4%
Multiracial	4%	3%	3%	4%
Other	1%	9%	2%	1%
I prefer not to respond	7%	10%	5%	7%
Part-time student	2%	13%	1%	34%
International Students	4%	11%	7%	10%
Traditional Age (< 24)	100%	91%	96%	42%
Transfer Students	5%	31%	21%	76%
Work for Pay				
On campus				
0 hours/week	78%	87%	60%	88%
1-20 hours/week	19%	10%	36%	9%
21 or more hours/week	3%	3%	5%	3%
Off Campus				
0 hours/week	78%	42%	59%	26%
1-20 hours/week	18%	37%	32%	27%
21 or more hours /week	3%	21%	9%	48%
Benchmark Scores ^{b, d, e}				
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)	54.4	53.6	56.4	57.2
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)	46.2*	43.4	50.7	49.3
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)	35.5	33.8	43.4**	36.7
Enriching Educational Experience (EEE)	34.0***	29.1	48.5***	36.3
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)	62.0***	56.6	60.4*	55.6

^a Percent of total respondents within each category

^b Data were weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size

^c Students who identified their residence as “dormitory or other campus housing” or “fraternity or sorority house”

^d Mean benchmark score

^e Independent-Samples T-tests were used to compare the mean differences by residential status for FY and SR students separately.

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



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012		Aspiration: RU/VH			Carnegie: RU/H			Mason 2009		Mason 2006
			Mean ^a		Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>													
1. Academic and Intellectual Experiences													
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	CLQUEST	ACL	FY	2.81	2.68	***	.16	2.71	***	.12	2.74	2.81	
			SR	3.08	2.93	***	.17	3.01	**	.08	3.06	3.04	
b. Made a class presentation	CLPRESEN	ACL	FY	2.51	2.10	***	.52	2.18	***	.41	2.41	2.45	
			SR	2.87	2.58	***	.33	2.70	***	.19	2.75	2.85	
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	REWROPAP		FY	2.40	2.57	***	-.16	2.64	***	-.24	2.52	2.42	
			SR	2.65	2.34	***	.32	2.46	***	.19	2.56	2.62	
d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	INTEGRAT		FY	3.21	3.05	***	.19	3.08	***	.16	3.06	3.09	
			SR	3.42	3.26	***	.21	3.28	***	.19	3.40	3.34	
e. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	DIVCLASS		FY	2.91	2.74	***	.18	2.76	***	.16	2.89	2.85	
			SR	2.94	2.74	***	.20	2.74	***	.20	2.90	2.87	
f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	CLUNPREP		FY	2.16	2.10	*	.07	2.04	***	.15	2.04	2.11	
			SR	2.09	2.23	***	-.17	2.10		-.02	2.07	2.07	
g. Worked with other students on projects during class	CLASSGRP	ACL	FY	2.48	2.37	***	.12	2.43		.05	2.41	2.43	
			SR	2.59	2.44	***	.16	2.54	*	.06	2.47	2.49	
h. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	OCCGRP	ACL	FY	2.56	2.51		.06	2.50	*	.07	2.43	2.42	
			SR	2.75	2.82	**	-.08	2.82	**	-.08	2.70	2.75	
i. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	INTIDEAS		FY	2.78	2.64	***	.17	2.66	***	.15	2.67	2.65	
			SR	2.99	2.96		.03	2.97		.03	2.93	2.92	
j. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	TUTOR	ACL	FY	1.74	1.79		-.06	1.78		-.05	1.66	1.66	
			SR	1.71	1.94	***	-.23	1.91	***	-.21	1.67	1.76	
k. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	COMMPROJ	ACL	FY	1.52	1.54		-.03	1.60	**	-.10	1.45	1.48	
			SR	1.54	1.65	***	-.12	1.69	***	-.16	1.48	1.52	

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

	Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012	Aspiration: RU/VH			Carnegie: RU/H			Mason 2009	Mason 2006
				Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b
l.	Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	ITACADEM	EEE	FY	2.95	2.79 ***	.16	2.72 ***	.23	2.71 ***	2.76 ***	
				SR	2.94	2.93	.01	2.90	.04	2.84 *	2.91	
m.	Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	EMAIL		FY	3.39	3.15 ***	.29	3.20 ***	.24	3.25 ***	3.22 ***	
				SR	3.47	3.40 ***	.10	3.43	.05	3.51	3.44	
n.	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	FACGRADE	SFI	FY	2.69	2.53 ***	.18	2.60 **	.10	2.58 *	2.57 **	
				SR	2.78	2.71 **	.09	2.80	-.02	2.76	2.76	
o.	Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	FACPLANS	SFI	FY	2.06	2.17 ***	-.12	2.17 ***	-.13	1.93	1.98	
				SR	2.18	2.37 ***	-.20	2.37 ***	-.19	2.20	2.18	
p.	Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	FACIDEAS	SFI	FY	1.86	1.85	.01	1.86	.00	1.79	1.79 *	
				SR	1.97	2.03 *	-.06	2.05 **	-.09	1.99	1.99	
q.	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance	FACFEED	SFI	FY	2.79	2.61 ***	.22	2.64 ***	.17	2.72	2.55 ***	
				SR	2.78	2.71 **	.09	2.75	.04	2.76	2.64 ***	
r.	Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	WORKHARD	LAC	FY	2.73	2.67 *	.08	2.72	.02	2.63 *	2.56 ***	
				SR	2.80	2.69 ***	.13	2.79	.01	2.82	2.65 ***	
s.	Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	FACOTHER	SFI	FY	1.73	1.62 ***	.13	1.65 *	.08	1.52 ***	1.54 ***	
				SR	1.65	1.86 ***	-.21	1.84 ***	-.19	1.65	1.61	
t.	Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	OOCIDEAS	ACL	FY	2.81	2.72 **	.10	2.73 **	.09	2.70 *	2.71 *	
				SR	2.87	2.86	.01	2.89	-.02	2.94	2.81	
u.	Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	DIVRSTUD	EEE	FY	2.87	2.71 ***	.16	2.64 ***	.23	2.89	2.85	
				SR	2.82	2.79	.03	2.69 ***	.13	2.91	2.80	
v.	Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	DIFFSTU2	EEE	FY	2.86	2.75 ***	.11	2.69 ***	.17	2.91	2.88	
				SR	2.72	2.80 *	-.08	2.68	.04	2.84 *	2.73	

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012		Aspiration: RU/VH			Carnegie: RU/H			Mason 2009		Mason 2006
			Mean ^a		Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	
<i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities? 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much</i>													
2. Mental Activities													
a. Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	MEMORIZE	FY	2.94		2.99		-0.06	3.00 *	-0.08		2.87		2.89
			2.82		2.86		-0.04	2.84	-0.02		2.80		2.74 *
b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	ANALYZE	LAC	3.24		3.24		.01	3.19 *	.07		3.16 *		3.08 ***
			3.30		3.32		-0.03	3.32	-0.03		3.29		3.20 **
c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	SYNTHESZ	LAC	3.00		2.99		.01	2.97	.04		2.93		2.87 **
			3.10		3.10		-0.01	3.11	-0.02		3.07		3.02 *
d. Making judgments about the value of info., arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	EVALUATE	LAC	2.99		2.92 *		.08	2.95	.05		2.93		2.85 **
			3.01		3.01		.01	3.05	-0.04		2.95		2.92 *
e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	APPLYING	LAC	3.08		3.13		-0.06	3.11	-0.04		3.05		2.96 **
			3.13		3.24 ***		-0.13	3.28 ***	-0.18		3.12		3.06
<i>During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done? 1=None, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=More than 20</i>													
3. Reading and Writing													
a. Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	READASGN	LAC	3.25		3.21		.04	3.13 ***	.13		3.33		3.35 *
			3.16		3.08 **		.08	3.05 ***	.11		3.23		3.14
b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	READOWN	FY	2.11		1.99 ***		.13	2.02 **	.10		2.13		2.09
			2.22		2.16		.06	2.17	.05		2.27		2.23
c. Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more	WRITEMOR	LAC	1.30		1.26		.06	1.24 *	.08		1.26		1.29
			1.66		1.58 ***		.11	1.60 *	.08		1.58 *		1.64
d. Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	WRITEMID	LAC	2.29		2.28		.01	2.18 ***	.14		2.24		2.31
			2.57		2.50 *		.07	2.44 ***	.14		2.56		2.59

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

	Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012	Aspiration: RU/VH		Carnegie: RU/H		Mason 2009	Mason 2006
				Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
e. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	WRITESML	LAC	FY	2.94	2.92	.02	2.92	.01	3.05 *	3.03
			SR	2.97	2.96	.01	2.90	.06	2.79 ***	2.88
4. Problem Sets				<i>In a typical week, how many homework problem sets do you complete? 1=None, 2=1-2, 3=3-4, 4=5-6, 5=More than 6</i>						
a. Number of problem sets that take you more than an hour to complete	PROBSETA		FY	2.68	2.85 ***	-.15	2.85 ***	-.14	2.72	2.67
			SR	2.82	2.66 ***	.13	2.79	.03	2.64 **	2.72
b. Number of problem sets that take you less than an hour to complete	PROBSETB		FY	2.58	2.78 ***	-.16	2.84 ***	-.21	2.68	2.67
			SR	2.41	2.30 **	.10	2.41	.01	2.25 **	2.37
5. Examinations				<i>1=Very little to 7=Very much</i>						
Select the circle that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work.	EXAMS		FY	5.35	5.55 ***	-.18	5.52 ***	-.15	5.30	5.25
			SR	5.45	5.45	.00	5.54 *	-.07	5.51	5.37
6. Additional Collegiate Experiences				<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>						
a. Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	ATDART07		FY	2.19	2.05 ***	.16	2.09 **	.11	2.18	2.18
			SR	1.90	1.99 ***	-.10	1.93	-.03	2.03	2.04
b. Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	EXRCSE05		FY	2.81	2.90 **	-.09	2.84	-.03	2.84	2.54
			SR	2.57	2.84 ***	-.26	2.73 ***	-.16	2.56	2.54
c. Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	WORSH05		FY	1.96	1.95	.00	2.13 ***	-.15	1.93	1.95
			SR	1.89	2.00 **	-.09	2.19 ***	-.25	1.99	2.10
d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	OWNVIEW		FY	2.73	2.59 ***	.16	2.61 ***	.13	2.62 *	2.61
			SR	2.64	2.71 **	-.09	2.71 **	-.08	2.66	2.66
e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	OTHRVIEW		FY	2.94	2.77 ***	.19	2.79 ***	.17	2.86	2.81
			SR	2.88	2.88	.00	2.86	.02	2.87	2.85
f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	CHNGVIEW		FY	2.96	2.87 **	.10	2.89 **	.09	2.85 *	2.80
			SR	2.89	2.92	-.04	2.91	-.03	2.89	2.87

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

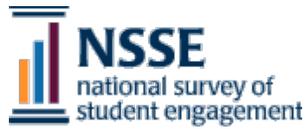
Mason compared with:

Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012		Aspiration: RU/VH			Carnegie: RU/H			Mason 2009		Mason 2006
			Mean ^a		Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	
<i>Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution? (Recorded: 0=Have not decided, Do not plan to do, Plan to do; 1=Done. Thus, the mean is the proportion responding "Done" among all valid respondents.)</i>													
7. Enriching Educational Experiences													
a. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	INTERN04	EEE	FY	.15	.07 ***	.29	.07 ***	.31	.06 ***	.07 ***			
			SR	.43	.54 ***	-.23	.48 ***	-.10	.43	.44			
b. Community service or volunteer work	VOLNTR04	EEE	FY	.35	.41 **	-.11	.41 ***	-.12	.32	.30 *			
			SR	.46	.65 ***	-.38	.59 ***	-.25	.48	.41 **			
c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	LRNCOM04	EEE	FY	.24	.19 ***	.12	.22	.04	.21	.19 *			
			SR	.19	.27 ***	-.16	.27 ***	-.17	.20	.20			
d. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	RESRCH04	SFI	FY	.06	.06	-.01	.06	.00	.04 **	.05			
			SR	.13	.26 ***	-.29	.20 ***	-.17	.12	.13			
e. Foreign language coursework	FORLNG04	EEE	FY	.27	.29	-.03	.19 ***	.20	.19 ***	.23 *			
			SR	.34	.48 ***	-.29	.38 **	-.09	.35	.35			
f. Study abroad	STDABR04	EEE	FY	.05	.03 *	.10	.03 **	.14	.02 **	.03 *			
			SR	.12	.18 ***	-.17	.13	-.03	.12	.12			
g. Independent study or self-designed major	INDSTD04	EEE	FY	.04	.03	.05	.03	.04	.02 *	.03			
			SR	.13	.16 *	-.07	.15 *	-.06	.14	.15			
h. Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)	SNRX04	EEE	FY	.03	.02	.02	.02	.03	.01 ***	.02			
			SR	.31	.31	-.01	.31	-.01	.26	.30			
<i>Select the circle that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution. 1=Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of alienation to 7=Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging</i>													
8. Quality of Relationships													
a. Relationships with other students	ENVSTU	SCE	FY	5.48	5.49	-.01	5.48	.00	5.42	5.31 *			
			SR	5.40	5.60 ***	-.15	5.63 ***	-.18	5.37	5.39			

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012		Aspiration: RU/VH			Carnegie: RU/H			Mason 2009		Mason 2006
			Mean ^a		Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	
<i>I=Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic to 7=Available, Helpful, Sympathetic</i>													
b. Relationships with faculty members	ENVFAC	SCE	FY	5.17	5.12	.04	5.19	-.01		5.14		5.04 *	
			SR	5.29	5.29	.00	5.40 *	-.08		5.18		5.24	
<i>I=Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid to 7=Helpful, Considerate, Flexible</i>													
c. Relationships with administrative personnel and offices	ENVADM	SCE	FY	4.52	4.69 **	-.12	4.74 ***	-.14		4.50		4.28 **	
			SR	4.59	4.62	-.02	4.67	-.05		4.36 **		4.50	
<i>About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following? 1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=More than 30 hrs/wk</i>													
9. Time Usage													
a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	ACADPR01	LAC	FY	4.26	4.57 ***	-.19	4.39 *	-.07		4.11		3.87 ***	
			SR	4.20	4.48 ***	-.16	4.45 ***	-.14		4.11		3.92 ***	
b. Working for pay on campus	WORKON01		FY	1.58	1.49	.08	1.49	.07		1.38 **		1.44 *	
			SR	1.47	2.02 ***	-.32	1.87 ***	-.25		1.56		1.54	
c. Working for pay off campus	WORKOF01		FY	2.31	1.66 ***	.42	1.97 ***	.18		2.14		3.04 ***	
			SR	4.61	2.77 ***	.76	3.46 ***	.41		4.65		4.85	
d. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	COCURR01	EEE	FY	2.51	2.44	.05	2.33 **	.12		2.45		2.21 ***	
			SR	1.82	2.36 ***	-.34	2.11 ***	-.19		1.77		1.75	
e. Relaxing and socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.)	SOCIAL05		FY	3.80	3.78	.01	3.75	.03		4.07 **		3.73	
			SR	3.36	3.64 ***	-.18	3.45 *	-.06		3.38		3.30	
f. Providing care for dependents living with you (parents, children, spouse, etc.)	CAREDE01		FY	1.60	1.42 ***	.15	1.59	.00		1.68		1.82 **	
			SR	2.72	1.88 ***	.45	2.43 ***	.13		2.64		2.65	
g. Commuting to class (driving, walking, etc.)	COMMUTE		FY	2.21	2.36 ***	-.15	2.33 **	-.11		2.35 *		2.43 ***	
			SR	2.76	2.40 ***	.37	2.42 ***	.32		2.66		2.62 *	

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012		Aspiration: RU/VH			Carnegie: RU/H			Mason 2009		Mason 2006
			Mean ^a		Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	
10. Institutional Environment													
<i>To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following? 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much</i>													
a.	Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	ENVSCHOL	LAC	FY	3.03	3.23	***	-.28	3.21	***	-.24	3.02	2.99
				SR	3.15	3.18	-.03	3.21	*	-.07	3.10	3.05	**
b.	Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	ENVSUPRT	SCE	FY	2.97	3.11	***	-.17	3.10	***	-.16	3.00	2.86
				SR	2.82	2.92	***	-.13	2.94	***	-.15	2.80	2.84
c.	Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	ENVDIVRS	EEE	FY	2.90	2.78	***	.12	2.71	***	.19	2.88	2.81
				SR	2.65	2.58	*	.06	2.52	***	.13	2.67	2.67
d.	Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	ENVNACAD	SCE	FY	2.26	2.25	.02		2.28	-.02		2.21	2.04
				SR	1.96	1.97	-.02	1.99	-.04	1.92	1.87		
e.	Providing the support you need to thrive socially	ENVSOCAL	SCE	FY	2.44	2.53	**	-.10	2.54	**	-.10	2.41	2.27
				SR	2.18	2.28	***	-.11	2.26	**	-.08	2.12	2.12
f.	Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	ENVEVENT	SCE	FY	2.87	2.95	*	-.09	2.90	-.03		2.83	2.67
				SR	2.57	2.78	***	-.23	2.66	**	-.09	2.59	2.47
g.	Using computers in academic work	ENVCOMPT	SCE	FY	3.30	3.34	-.05		3.32	-.02		3.29	3.39
				SR	3.38	3.46	**	-.11	3.44	*	-.08	3.46	3.46
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much</i>													
11. Educational and Personal Growth													
a.	Acquiring a broad general education	GNGENLED	SCE	FY	3.09	3.16	**	-.10	3.16	**	-.10	3.19	3.12
				SR	3.15	3.22	**	-.09	3.22	**	-.09	3.11	3.20
b.	Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	GNWORK	SCE	FY	2.81	2.81	.00		2.84	-.02		2.65	2.63
				SR	2.88	3.02	***	-.15	3.09	***	-.23	2.98	2.95
c.	Writing clearly and effectively	GNWRITE	SCE	FY	2.98	2.95	.04		2.97	.01		2.90	2.98
				SR	3.14	3.06	**	.09	3.07	**	.08	3.11	3.08
d.	Speaking clearly and effectively	GNSPEAK	SCE	FY	2.88	2.75	***	.13	2.81	*	.07	2.91	2.87
				SR	2.96	2.93	.03	2.97	-.01	2.94	2.95		

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

	Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012	Aspiration: RU/VH		Carnegie: RU/H		Mason 2009	Mason 2006
				Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
e. Thinking critically and analytically	GNANALY		FY	3.19	3.26 **	-10	3.25 *	-.08	3.13	3.14
			SR	3.30	3.37 **	-10	3.37 **	-.09	3.25	3.25
f. Analyzing quantitative problems	GNQUANT		FY	2.92	3.04 ***	-15	3.05 ***	-.15	2.85	2.87
			SR	3.00	3.13 ***	-14	3.16 ***	-.18	2.98	2.99
g. Using computing and information technology	GNCMPTS		FY	2.98	3.01	-.04	3.05 *	-.08	3.01	3.07
			SR	3.14	3.15	-.01	3.21 *	-.07	3.16	3.23 *
h. Working effectively with others	GNOTHERS		FY	3.00	2.96	.05	2.97	.03	2.92	2.95
			SR	3.06	3.13 **	-.08	3.16 ***	-.11	3.06	3.05
i. Voting in local, state, or national elections	GNCITIZN		FY	1.98	1.91 *	.07	1.91 *	.07	2.78 ***	2.21 ***
			SR	1.90	2.00 **	-.09	1.92	-.02	2.35 ***	2.06 **
j. Learning effectively on your own	GNINQ		FY	2.90	2.97 *	-.08	2.97 *	-.08	2.99 *	2.86
			SR	2.95	3.08 ***	-15	3.07 ***	-.13	2.93	2.84 **
k. Understanding yourself	GNSELF		FY	2.80	2.80	.00	2.81	-.01	2.76	2.69 *
			SR	2.74	2.85 ***	-.11	2.82 *	-.08	2.66	2.67
l. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	GNDIVERS		FY	2.85	2.69 ***	.17	2.64 ***	.22	2.86	2.82
			SR	2.76	2.70	.06	2.62 ***	.13	2.78	2.76
m. Solving complex real-world problems	GNPROBSV		FY	2.71	2.72	-.01	2.72	-.01	2.67	2.59 *
			SR	2.68	2.85 ***	-.19	2.85 ***	-.17	2.70	2.67
n. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	GNETHICS		FY	2.70	2.68	.03	2.73	-.03	2.67	2.57 *
			SR	2.63	2.70 *	-.07	2.76 ***	-.12	2.61	2.55
o. Contributing to the welfare of your community	GNCOMMUN		FY	2.35	2.47 ***	-.12	2.49 ***	-.13	2.37	2.23 *
			SR	2.25	2.49 ***	-.24	2.49 ***	-.23	2.31	2.27
p. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	GNSPIRIT		FY	1.96	1.97	-.01	2.16 ***	-.18	2.08 *	1.92
			SR	1.81	1.80	.02	1.97 ***	-.14	1.79	1.80

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



NSSE 2012 Mean Comparisons George Mason University

Mason compared with:

Variable	Bench- mark	Class	Mason 2012			Aspiration: RU/VH			Carnegie: RU/H			Mason 2009		Mason 2006	
			Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	
12. Academic Advising			<i>1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent</i>												
Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?	ADVISE	FY	2.89	3.05 ***	-.19	3.08 ***	-.23		2.88		2.73 ***				
		SR	2.81	2.92 ***	-.11	2.93 ***	-.12		2.69 **		2.68 **				
13. Satisfaction			<i>1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent</i>												
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	ENTIREXP	FY	3.17	3.26 ***	-.12	3.23 *	-.08		3.18		3.12				
		SR	3.10	3.26 ***	-.21	3.22 ***	-.16		3.09		3.12				
14.			<i>1=Definitely no, 2=Probably no, 3=Probably yes, 4=Definitely yes</i>												
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	SAMECOLL	FY	3.19	3.34 ***	-.19	3.27 **	-.09		3.14		3.11 *				
		SR	3.12	3.30 ***	-.22	3.23 ***	-.13		3.09		3.11				

a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and inst. size for comparisons)

b * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001 (2-tailed)

c Mean diff. divided by pooled SD



National Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Snapshot 2012

George Mason University

Dear Colleague:

This document presents some key findings from your institution's participation in the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement. We hope you can use this information to stimulate discussion on your campus about the undergraduate experience at George Mason University.

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

Deep Approaches to Learning

As we approach the launch of an updated NSSE survey, this year's edition of *Annual Results* revisits and replicates a collection of important findings from NSSE's first 13 years.

One notable finding involves Deep Approaches to Learning (DAL) which help students make richer, more lasting connections to material through an emphasis on activities such as higher-order learning, integration, and reflection (see the Director's Message on page 5, and Selected Results on page 10 of *Annual Results*). Replicating an analysis from 2004, we found that students who participated in DAL at higher levels made more purposeful use of their time and were more engaged in other ways.

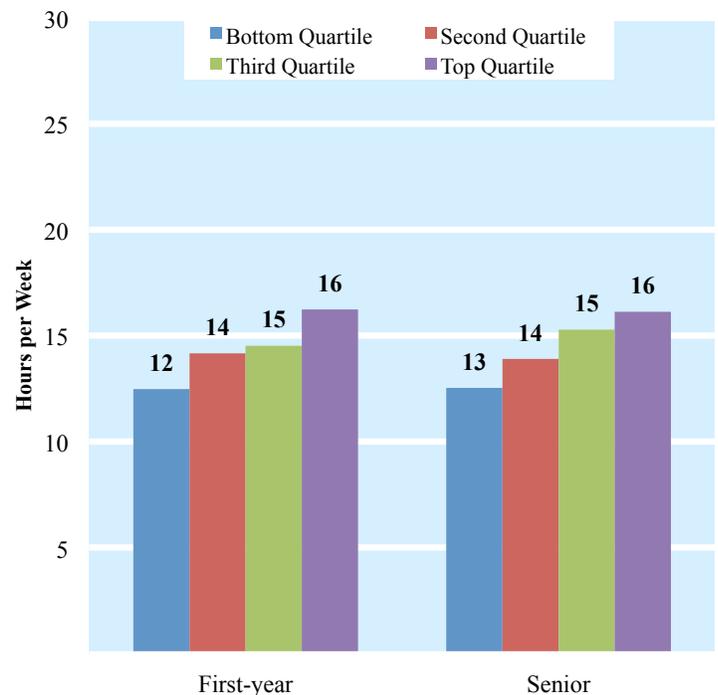
We thought you'd be interested to know *your* students' scores on this important measure. Table 1 at right compares your students' engagement in DAL with those enrolled at your selected NSSE 2012 comparison groups, with an indication of whether your students scored significantly higher (+) or lower (-) than the comparison group. (If no plus or minus sign is shown, the difference is not statistically significant.) Figure 1 illustrates how DAL relates to time spent preparing for class among your first-year students and seniors.

We are pleased to report that the Deep Approaches to Learning scale, including subscales of higher-order learning and reflective and integrative learning, is included in the updated NSSE survey. We hope you find these measures and other changes that have resulted from our research to be welcome additions in 2013.

Table 1. DAL Comparison Results^a

	Mason	Comparison Groups		
		Aspiration: RU/VH	Carnegie: RU/H	NSSE 2012
First-Year		+	+	+
mean	63	60 ***	60 ***	61 **
ES		.16	.14	.09
Senior				-
mean	64	64	64	66 **
ES		.01	-.01	-.09

Figure 1. Class Preparation Time^b by DAL Score^c



a. For details on the DAL scale including component items and how it is computed, visit nsse.iub.edu/html/creating_scales.cfm; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001; ES=Cohen's *d* effect size, where .2 is often considered small, .5 moderate, and .8 large.
 b. Adjusted for part-time students (see nsse.iub.edu/html/PT_adjustment.cfm).
 c. Your students were divided into quartiles, four groups of equal size based on their DAL scores.



NSSE 2012 Question Comparisons

By examining individual NSSE questions, you can better understand what contributes to your institution's overall benchmark scores. This section features the five questions on which your first-year and senior students scored the highest and the five questions on which they scored the lowest, relative to students at the indicated comparison group (the group's members are listed in your *NSSE 2012 Selected Comparison Groups* report).

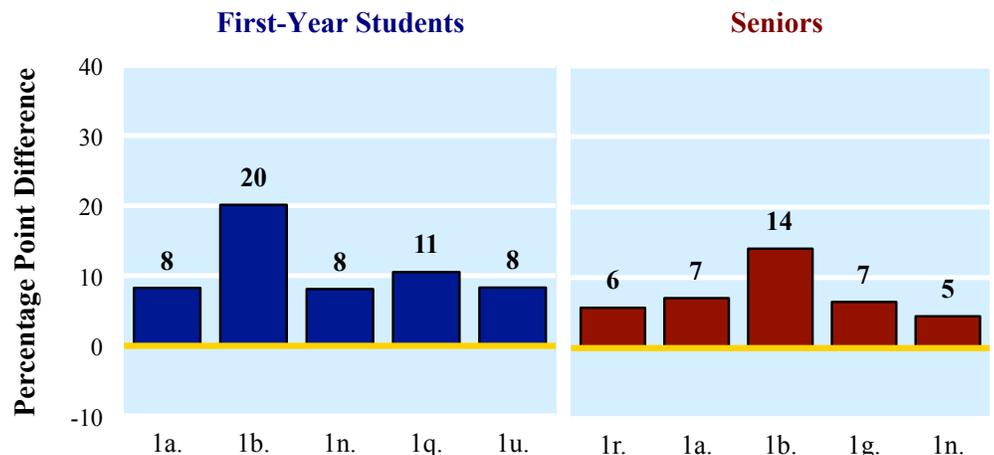
While we chose these questions to represent the largest differences (in percentage points), they may not be the most important to your institutional mission or current program or policy goals. We encourage you to review your *NSSE Institutional Report 2012* for additional results of particular interest to your campus.

Highest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to Aspiration: RU/VH

Ques- tion	Bench- mark ¹	Percentage of students who...	Comparison Groups			
			Mason	Aspiration: RU/VH	Carnegie: RU/H	NSSE 2012
First-Year Students						
1a.	ACL	Asked questions/contributed to class discussions ²	61%	52%	54%	62%
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	45%	25%	29%	36%
1n.	SFI	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ²	54%	46%	50%	53%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	65%	54%	56%	61%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ²	64%	56%	53%	53%
Seniors						
1r.	LAC	Worked harder than you expected to meet an instructor's expectations ²	63%	57%	62%	64%
1a.	ACL	Asked questions/contributed to class discussions ²	71%	64%	68%	75%
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	63%	49%	56%	62%
1g.	ACL	Worked with other students on projects during class ²	49%	43%	48%	51%
1n.	SFI	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ²	59%	54%	59%	60%

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

Aspiration: RU/VH





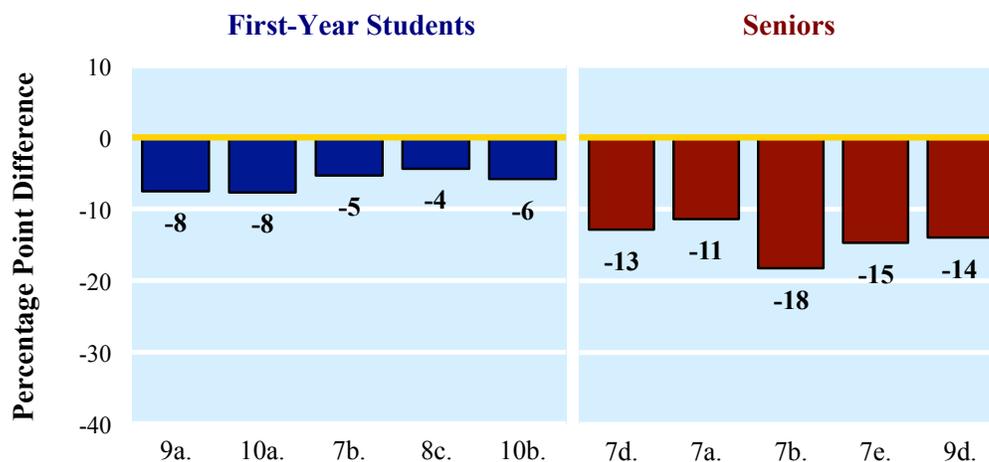
Lowest Performing Benchmark Items Relative to Aspiration: RU/VH

Comparison Groups

Ques- tion	Bench- mark ¹	Percentage of students who...	Mason	Aspiration: RU/VH	Carnegie: RU/H	NSSE 2012
First-Year Students						
9a.	LAC	Spent more than 10 hours/week preparing for class (studying, etc.)	63%	71%	65%	63%
10a.	LAC	Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work ⁴	77%	85%	83%	83%
7b.	EEE	Participated in community service or volunteer work	35%	41%	41%	40%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices ³	52%	56%	58%	62%
10b.	SCE	Said the institution provides substantial support for academic success ⁴	73%	79%	78%	79%
Seniors						
7d.	SFI	Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of class	13%	26%	20%	20%
7a.	EEE	Did a practicum, internship, field experience, clinical assignment	43%	54%	48%	49%
7b.	EEE	Participated in community service or volunteer work	46%	65%	59%	59%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	34%	48%	38%	38%
9d.	EEE	Spent more than 5 hours/week participating in co-curricular activities	20%	34%	26%	26%

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

Aspiration: RU/VH



Notes

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

² Combination of students responding "Very often" or "Often"

³ Rated at least 5 on a 7-point scale

⁴ Combination of students responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit"

Respondent Characteristics

The adjacent table displays your number of respondents, response rate, and sampling error by class. Sampling error is an estimate of the margin by which the true percentage of your students may differ from the reported percentage on a given item (because not all of your students completed surveys).

	N	Resp. Rate	Sampling Error
First-Year Students	1,026	28%	+/-2.6%
Seniors	1,312	27%	+/-2.3%

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