



National Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Snapshot 2008

McGill University

Dear Colleague:

This is a summary of some key findings from your institution's performance on the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement. We hope you can use this information to stimulate discussion on your campus about how to improve the undergraduate experience at McGill University.

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

Are All Students at McGill University Equally Engaged?

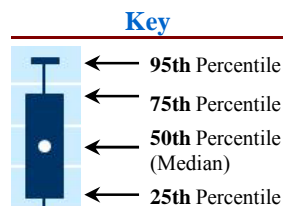
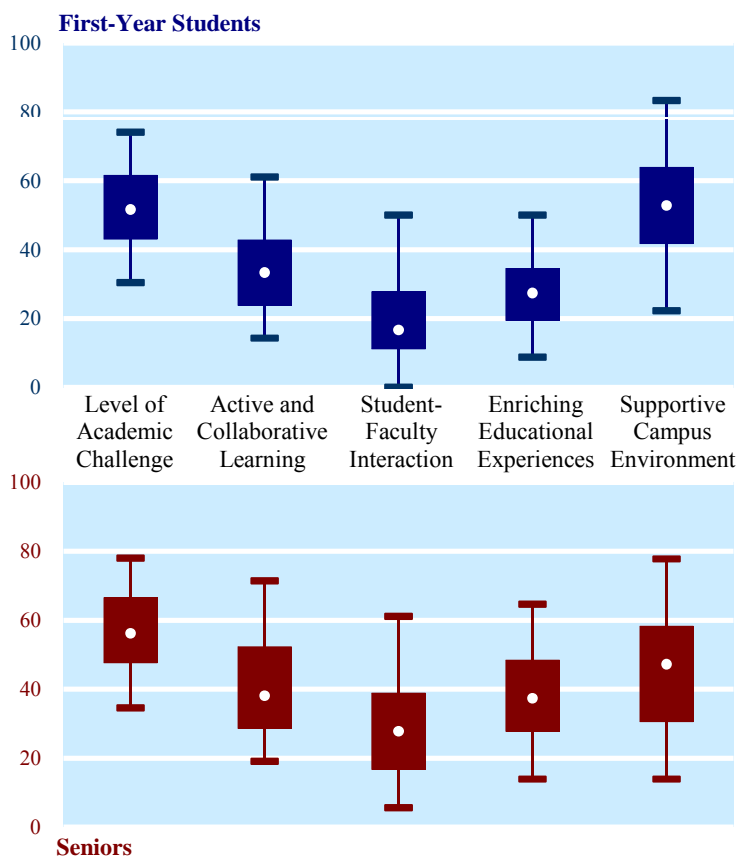
Quality in U.S. higher education is often considered an institutional attribute, as if one college offers a uniformly better or worse education than another. Yet, a robust finding from decades of research on college students holds that student experiences and outcomes are more varied among students *within*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

In this year's annual report NSSE urges institutions to "look within," calling attention to the need to examine variation in the student experience at your institution. Your (hypothetical) average student does not describe all students and groups on your campus.

The adjacent figures illustrate this phenomenon. We plotted your students' NSSE benchmark scores in a "box and whiskers" chart (see key). Here you can see the range and variation of your scores (whiskers), as well as where the mid-range or normal scores fell (box). Note the dispersion of your scores. The greater the range, the more varied the student experience is at your institution.

Improving the experience of your least engaged students may be the most effective way to raise your benchmark scores and improve your overall institutional quality. Even high-performing institutions have much to learn by examining variation in student engagement – by looking within.

Variation in NSSE Benchmark Scores by Class at McGill University



The dot signifies the median – the score that divides all students' scores into two equal halves (means are reported on page 4). The box shows the middle 50% of your scores (from the 25th to 75th percentiles) and the whiskers show the range of scores excluding outliers (from the 5th to the 95th percentile).

NSSE 2008 Question Comparisons

By examining individual NSSE questions, you can better understand what contributes to your institution's overall benchmark scores. This section features the five questions on which your first-year and senior students scored the highest and the five questions on which they scored the lowest, relative to students at your first selected comparison group (listed in your *NSSE 2008 Selected Comparison Groups* report).

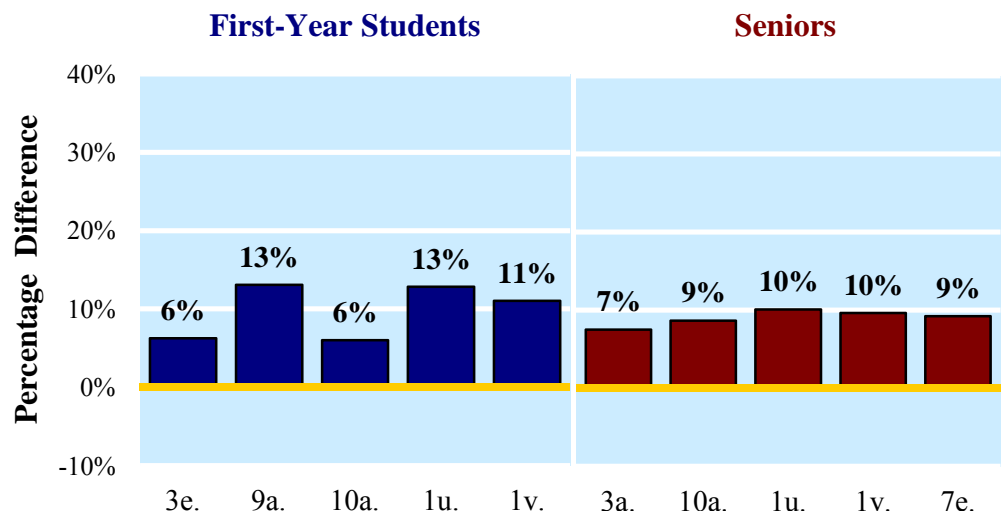
While these questions were chosen to represent the largest differences (in percentage points), they may not be the most important to your institutional mission or current program or policy goals. We encourage you to review your *NSSE Institutional Report 2008* for additional results of particular interest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

Highest Performing Areas

| Ques- tion | Bench- mark ¹ | Percent of students who... | Comparison Groups | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------|-----|-------------|--------|
| | | | McGill | G13 | AAU Publics | Quebec |
| First-Year Students | | | | | | |
| 3e. | LAC | Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages | 22% | 16% | 31% | 17% |
| 9a. | LAC | Spent more than 10 hours/week preparing for class (studying, etc.) | 76% | 63% | 68% | 54% |
| 10a. | LAC | Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work ⁴ | 89% | 83% | 84% | 81% |
| 1u. | EEE | Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ² | 70% | 57% | 55% | 48% |
| 1v. | EEE | Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ² | 65% | 54% | 59% | 44% |
| Seniors | | | | | | |
| 3a. | LAC | Read more than 10 assigned books or book-length packs of readings | 40% | 32% | 33% | 31% |
| 10a. | LAC | Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work ⁴ | 92% | 83% | 79% | 78% |
| 1u. | EEE | Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ² | 70% | 60% | 56% | 49% |
| 1v. | EEE | Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values ² | 66% | 56% | 58% | 45% |
| 7e. | EEE | Completed foreign language coursework | 35% | 26% | 52% | 31% |

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

G13





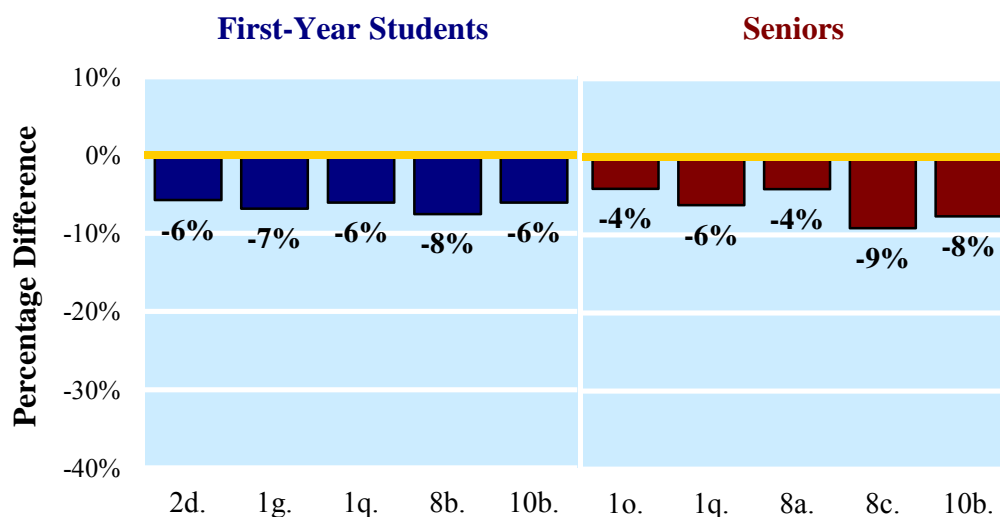
Lowest Performing Areas

Comparison Groups

| Ques- tion | Bench- mark ¹ | Percent of students who... | McGill | G13 | AAU Publics | Quebec |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------|-----|-------------|--------|
| First-Year Students | | | | | | |
| 2d. | LAC | Said courses emphasized making judgments about the value of information ⁴ | 52% | 58% | 68% | 51% |
| 1g. | ACL | Worked with other students on projects during class ² | 19% | 26% | 41% | 43% |
| 1q. | SFI | Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ² | 27% | 33% | 50% | 26% |
| 8b. | SCE | Positively rated their relationships with faculty members ³ | 52% | 59% | 65% | 69% |
| 10b. | SCE | Said the institution provides substantial support for academic success ⁴ | 62% | 68% | 76% | 69% |
| Seniors | | | | | | |
| 1o. | SFI | Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor ² | 17% | 21% | 35% | 18% |
| 1q. | SFI | Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ² | 34% | 40% | 56% | 35% |
| 8a. | SCE | Positively rated their relationships with other students ³ | 68% | 72% | 79% | 71% |
| 8c. | SCE | Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices ³ | 35% | 44% | 48% | 53% |
| 10b. | SCE | Said the institution provides substantial support for academic success ⁴ | 45% | 53% | 66% | 61% |

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

G13



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 | 794 | 32% | +/-3.2% |
| Seniors | 663 | 31% | +/-3.6% |

Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

To represent the multi-dimensional nature of student engagement, NSSE developed five indicators of effective educational practice. These "benchmarks" are created from clusters of NSSE questions that best represent these practices.

The table below summarizes key benchmark results for your institution and institutions in your selected comparison groups. The '+' symbol indicates that your institution's score is higher than the respective comparison group ($p < .05$), the '-' symbol indicates a score lower than the comparison group, and a blank space indicates no significant difference. For additional details, review your *NSSE 2008 Benchmark Comparisons* report.

| | | Comparison Groups | | | |
|---|------------|-------------------|-----|-------------|--------|
| | | <i>McGill</i> | G13 | AAU Publics | Quebec |
| <i>Class</i> | | | | | |
| Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) | | | | | |
| <i>How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?</i> | First-Year | 52 | + | - | + |
| | Senior | 57 | + | + | + |
| Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL) | | | | | |
| <i>Are your students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?</i> | First-Year | 33 | - | - | - |
| | Senior | 41 | | - | - |
| Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI) | | | | | |
| <i>Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?</i> | First-Year | 21 | | - | |
| | Senior | 30 | | - | + |
| Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE) | | | | | |
| <i>Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?</i> | First-Year | 28 | + | - | + |
| | Senior | 38 | + | - | + |
| Supportive Campus Environment (SCE) | | | | | |
| <i>Do your students feel the institution is committed to their success?</i> | First-Year | 53 | - | - | - |
| | Senior | 46 | - | - | - |

PSIS: 24002000

For More Information

A comprehensive summary of all results is contained in your institutional report, which we sent in August to Lina Di Genova, Planning & Institutional Analysis. Reports used in this Executive Snapshot included the: NSSE 2008 Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, Benchmark Comparisons, and Respondent Characteristics.



National Survey of Student Engagement

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