

# 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?

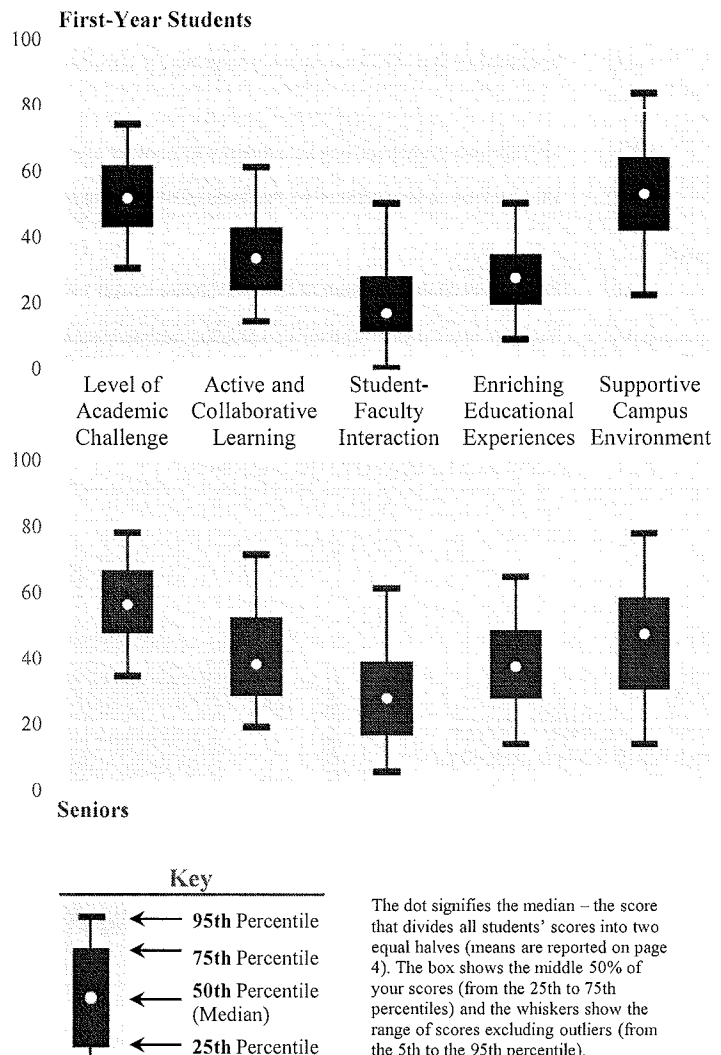
Quality in U.S. higher education is often considered an institutional attribute, as if one college offers a uniformly better or worse education than another. Yet, a robust finding from decades of research on college students holds that student experiences and outcomes are more varied among students *within*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





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## 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.

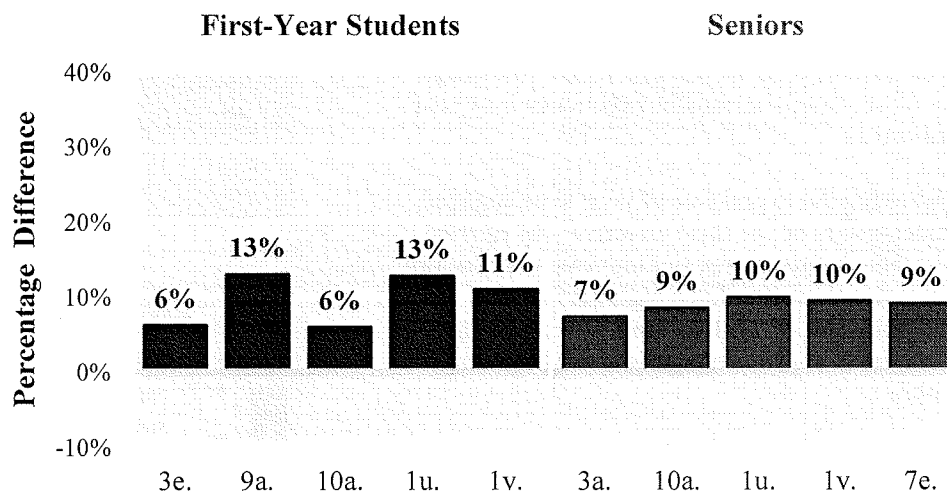
### Highest Performing Areas

### Comparison Groups

Question	Benchmark <sup>1</sup>	Percent of students who...	McGill	G13	AAU Publics	Quebec
<b>First-Year Students</b>						
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 <sup>4</sup>	89%	83%	84%	81%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity <sup>2</sup>	70%	57%	55%	48%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values <sup>2</sup>	65%	54%	59%	44%
<b>Seniors</b>						
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 <sup>4</sup>	92%	83%	79%	78%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity <sup>2</sup>	70%	60%	56%	49%
1v.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of other relig./politics/values <sup>2</sup>	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





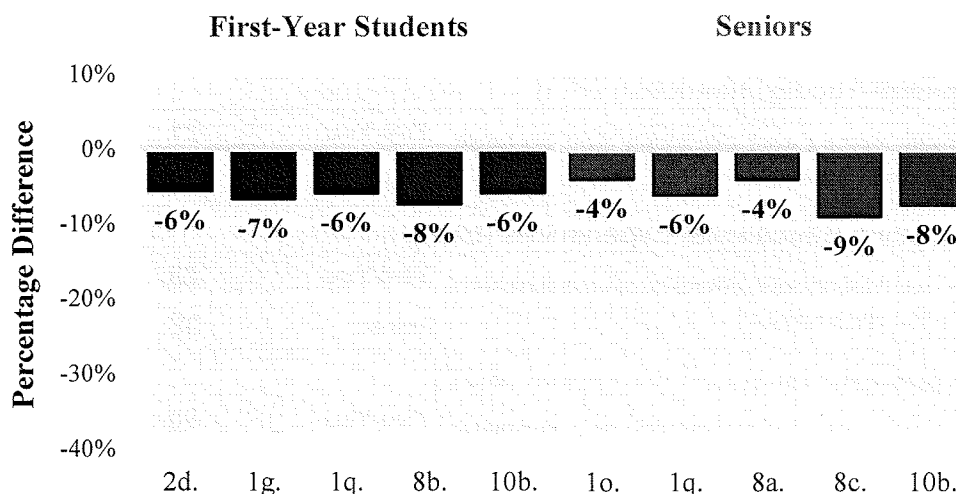
## Lowest Performing Areas

## Comparison Groups

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

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Combination of students responding 'very much' or 'quite a bit'

## Respondent Characteristics

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

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

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  
Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research  
1900 East Tenth Street, Suite 419  
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512

Phone: 812-856-5824  
E-mail: [nsse@indiana.edu](mailto:nsse@indiana.edu)  
Web: [www.nsse.iub.edu](http://www.nsse.iub.edu)