



Selected Results from the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Case Western Reserve University

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, pronounced “nessie”) was developed to assess the quality of undergraduate learning by asking students to report on their own engagement in classroom learning, in campus activities, and in the community. Research on college outcomes suggests that these types of engagement questions are fairly accurate predictors of student learning and development. A web-based version of NSSE was administered to Case first-year students and seniors in February of 2007. The following report summarizes the NSSE results.

Overall Experience

- The overwhelming majority of students are satisfied with their entire experience at Case (84% of first-years, 84% of seniors), and at least three-quarters of both first-year students and seniors said that, were they starting college again, they would choose to attend Case.
- Case students are engaged in their classes and in the community. More than 90% of first-years and seniors contributed to class discussions or have given class presentations. By senior year, 70% of students have completed an internship, co-op, practicum, or similar experience, and 76% have done volunteer work.
- Case students are engaged with faculty. Nearly 95% of first-years and seniors discuss grades and assignments with faculty members at least occasionally. By senior year, nearly half of all students have worked with faculty on out-of-class research, and more than 88% of students have talked with faculty members about future career plans.
- Case’s curriculum provides students with important skills. The vast majority of students believe that Case has contributed to their ability to write clearly (91% of first-years, 92% of seniors), speak clearly (84% of first-years, 91% of seniors), and

think critically and analytically (96% of first-years, 97% of seniors). Additionally, both first-years and seniors believe that Case has contributed to their acquisition of a broad general education (94% and 95%, respectively).

Case Versus AAU Peers

- Case’s NSSE results were compared with those of other members of the Association of American Universities who also administered the survey in 2007.
- Both first-year and senior students significantly outperformed their AAU peers on NSSE’s benchmark scale for Academic Challenge, which includes such measures as time spent preparing for class, the number of papers written, and the extent to which coursework emphasizes analysis of ideas and not just memorization of facts.
- Seniors (but not first-years) reported significantly higher levels of student-faculty interaction than did their AAU peers. The Student-Faculty Interaction benchmark scale includes the extent to which students discussed grades with an instructor, worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework, received prompt feedback on their performance, and similar measures. Case seniors also reported higher levels of participation in enriching educational experiences (i.e., community service, independent study, etc.) than did their AAU peers.
- Both first-year and senior students scored significantly lower than their AAU peers on NSSE’s measure of Supportive Campus Environment, a scale that includes the extent to which students perceive that the campus provides the support needed to thrive socially.
- Both first-year and senior students are less likely than their AAU peers to work with other students

on projects during class. Likewise, they are less likely than their AAU peers to say that their experience at Case has taught them to work effectively with others.

College Expectations

- In addition to the NSSE, incoming first-year students completed the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) during orientation. By comparing the results of the BCSSE to those of the NSSE, it is possible to determine how accurately students predicted the amount of time they would be spending on various aspects of their college experience. Specifically:
 - Incoming first-years thought they would be spending 21-25 hours per 7-day week preparing for class; however, after one semester at Case, students reported that they spent 16-20 hours preparing for class.
 - Students thought they would be spending approximately 11-15 hours per week participating in co-curricular activities, but actually spent 6-10 hours.
 - Students expected to spend 6-10 hours working on campus for pay per week, but they reported only spending 1-5 hours.

Gains from first-year to senior year

A small number of students (129) completed the NSSE in 2004 as first-year students and again in 2007 as seniors. By comparing scores from these two administrations of the survey, it is possible to measure changes in students' engagement during their time at Case. Results indicated that:

- Students are significantly more likely as seniors than as first-years to ask questions in class, give class presentations, and believe that Case has contributed to their ability to speak clearly and effectively.

- Students are significantly more likely as seniors than as first-years to discuss career plans with faculty members and to discuss ideas from readings or class with faculty outside of regular class time.
- Students' relationships with faculty members, administrative personnel, and their fellow students are significantly lower as seniors than as first-years. Likewise, students' ratings of their entire educational experience are higher when they are first-years than when they are seniors, although 84% of seniors rated their Case experience as good or excellent.

Conclusions

Concerns

- Case first-years and seniors score significantly lower than their AAU peers on NSSE's measure of supportive campus environment. It should be noted that first-year scores on the supportive campus environment scale are highly predictive of overall satisfaction with Case during the senior year.

Findings of encouragement

- Case students are generally satisfied, and are highly engaged in their classes, in the community, and with faculty.
- Both first-year students and seniors believe that their Case experience contributes to a wide variety of abilities and types of knowledge.
- The level of academic challenge at Case is significantly higher than at AAU peers for both seniors and first-years. By senior year, Case students report that they have more faculty interaction and more enriching educational experiences than students at peer institutions.
- From first-year to senior year, students report significant positive change in their in-class engagement, in their speaking ability, and in their interactions with faculty members.

