



Life Changing

2010 COLLEGE SENIOR SURVEY (CSS) SUMMARY

**MVNU SENIORS' AND NATIONAL COMPARISON GROUPS'
ATTITUDES AND REFLECTIONS ON THEIR COLLEGE
EXPERIENCES**

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College Senior Survey Attitudes and Reflections

Introduction

Mount Vernon Nazarene University participated in the College Senior Survey (CSS) on Junior/Senior Testing Day on February 17, 2011 through the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) of UCLA. One hundred seventy-four graduating seniors responded to the survey, including 64 men and 110 women. HERI provided data analysis comparisons of the results by means, percentages, and some longitudinal data. HERI combined a number of related factors into themes and compared MVNU's CSS results to two Comparison Groups. HERI defines Comparison Group 1(3,991 respondents) as other Religious 4-year Colleges and Comparison Group 2 (11,498 respondents) includes Private/Nonsectarian/Religious 4-Year Colleges. The CIRP Constructs show data by the institution as a whole, as well as by men and women. This summary will show comparisons between how MVNU students and *Comparison Group 1* responded to hundreds of questions.

Constructs combined individual survey questions into themes to show global measures and grouped questions in the following themes: (1) Academic Outcomes, (2) Interaction with Faculty, (3) Academic Enhancement Experiences, (4) Active and Collaborative Learning, (5) Satisfaction with Academic Support and Courses, (6) Satisfaction with Services and Community, (7) Written and Oral Communication, (8) Civic Engagement, (9) Diversity, (10) Health and Wellness, (11) Religious/Spirituality, and (12) Career Planning. This summary highlights each theme within the constructs.

Highlights of Findings

Academic Outcomes—Illustrates changes to academic skills and abilities during college and how students' academic skills compare to their peers.

Students' responses in the Academic Outcomes theme were reflected in the following constructs: (1) Academic Disengagement, (2) Faculty Interaction, (3) Academic Self-Concept, and (4) Civic Awareness. Students' behaviors were measured that might show inconsistencies with academic success, the faculty and student mentoring relationship for support and guidance, students' beliefs and abilities,

and understanding issues that may face their communities. Almost 75% of MVNU seniors reported that they came late or missed class or failed to complete homework on time. Students responded positively to student-faculty interaction. Seventy-seven percent of students believed they received help and guidance in educational and professional goals. Faculty encouraged students to pursue graduate and professional studies, provided emotional support, and an opportunity to work with them outside of class. Only 52% of MVNU students rated themselves average/high in their academic ability and drive to achieve compared to the comparison group of almost 71%.

As part of the Academic Self-Concept Longitudinal construct, students were asked to rate themselves compared to the average person their age. MVNU seniors saw themselves as less academically competitive than their peers in other 4-year religious oriented universities. The average score was slightly less from their personal ratings in The Freshman Survey (TFS) to the CSS. The survey items and estimation weights were:

- * Academic ability (3.11)
- * Self-confidence - intellectual (1.86)
- * Drive to achieve (1.63)
- * Mathematical ability (1.60)

Mount Vernon Nazarene University	Total		Men		Women	
	Your Inst	Comp 1	Your Inst	Comp 1	Your Inst	Comp 1
Total (n)	173	3,988	64	1,349	109	2,639
High Academic Self-Concept	12.7%	25.6%	20.3%	31.9%	8.3%	22.4%
Average Academic Self-Concept	39.3%	45.0%	43.8%	43.7%	36.7%	45.7%
Low Academic Self-Concept	48.0%	29.4%	35.9%	24.4%	55.0%	31.9%

Interaction with Faculty—Relates to the amount of time students spend with faculty and their perceptions of faculty support.

In the Student-Faculty Interaction construct, students were asked whether faculty helped them achieve their professional goals, gave guidance about their educational program, offered emotional support and encouragement, and an opportunity to discuss and work on coursework outside of class. MVNU seniors reported receiving less faculty support than their peers. MVNU women responses were

particularly low in the high student-faculty interaction at almost 27% compared to 43% for the comparison group. The survey items and estimation weights were:

- * Help in achieving your professional goals (3.32)
- * Advice and guidance about your educational program (2.89)
- * Emotional support and encouragement (2.40)
- * An opportunity to discuss coursework outside of class (2.13)
- * Encouragement to pursue graduate/professional study (1.91)
- * Help to improve your study skills (1.84)
- * A letter of recommendation (1.71)
- * An opportunity to work on a research project (1.09)

Mount Vernon Nazarene University	Total		Men		Women	
	Your Inst	Comp 1	Your Inst	Comp 1	Your Inst	Comp 1
Total (n)	171	3,983	63	1,347	108	2,636
High Student-Faculty Interaction	26.9%	40.1%	27.0%	34.6%	26.9%	43.0%
Average Student-Faculty Interaction	50.3%	43.6%	46.0%	47.3%	52.8%	41.7%
Low Student-Faculty Interaction	22.8%	16.2%	27.0%	18.1%	20.4%	15.3%

Academic Enhancement Experiences—Gauges participation in programs and initiatives on campus which related to student learning.

Students’ responses in this theme were reflected in the following: (1) Leadership construct, (2) Active and Collaborative Learning theme, and (3) Academic Outcomes theme. Fewer MVNU students have participated in leading an organization and rated themselves low in training and ability, only 31% with high civic awareness. Of the 173 respondents, only 24% rated themselves with high leadership and public speaking abilities, as well as social self-confidence, compared to the comparison group at 39%. Only 19% of MVNU women alone rated themselves as having high leadership and public speaking abilities, the comparison group 34%.

These same students rated themselves above average for their age in the following categories upon entering MVNU as freshman:

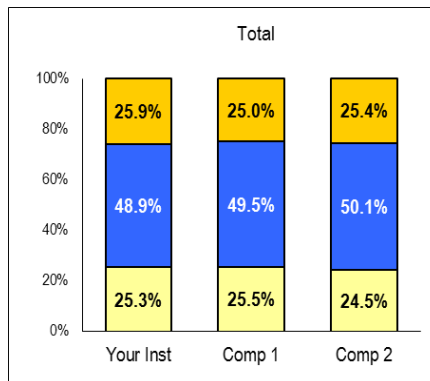
Skills/Ability	TFS Rating
Academic Ability	60
Leadership Ability	60
Public Speaking	32
Self Confidence (social)	46

Active and Collaborative Learning—Extent to which students are furthering their knowledge of course material through interaction with faculty and others.

Students’ responses in the Active and Collaborative Learning theme were reflected in the Student-Faculty Interaction and Academic Disengagement constructs (See Academic Outcomes and Interaction with Faculty themes). MVNU’s student respondents to the Academic Disengagement construct report were very similar to MVNU’s comparison groups. The survey items and weights are listed below.

How often in the past year did you:

- * Came late to class (1.82)
- * Missed class for other reasons (1.76)
- * Failed to complete homework on time (1.26)
- * Fell asleep in class (1.00)



Satisfaction with Academic Support and Courses—Gauges use of and satisfaction with campus academic support structures and types of coursework typically required in general education.

Students’ responses in the Satisfaction with Academic Support and Courses theme were reflected in the Satisfaction with Coursework and Overall Satisfaction constructs and the Satisfaction with Services and Community theme. CIRP construct Satisfaction with Coursework report survey items were as follows:

Please rate your satisfaction with the institution on each of the aspects of college life:

- * Relevance of coursework to future career plans (3.52)
- * Relevance of coursework to everyday life (3.13)
- * Courses in your major field (1.54)
- * General education and core curriculum courses (0.92)

MVNU students were less satisfied with coursework than their peers, especially the women. This will be interesting to compare our 2011 first-time freshman with the senior survey once the new general education core has been taught. Students also rated laboratory and library facilities, as well as computer assistance and tutoring much lower than their peers. Only 15% of women rated their overall college experience high compared to 39% of the comparison group. Overall, almost 70% reported they would probably/definitely still choose MVNU. As freshmen, 83% of the students indicated MVNU was their first choice.

Satisfaction with Services and Community—Gauges satisfaction with campus services and the general campus community.

Students' responses in the Satisfaction with Services and Community theme were reflected in the following constructs: (1) Satisfaction with Coursework, (2) Overall Satisfaction, and (3) Satisfaction with Academic Support and Courses. Only 15% of women had a high sense of belonging to the university and saw themselves as part of the campus community compared to 34% of the peer group. Women also rated psychological services much lower than their peers; however, MVNU men rated the services higher. Overall, students were satisfied/very satisfied with student housing, but not as satisfied with the financial aid package or student health services. The Academic Support and Courses theme explores the other two constructs.

Written and Oral Communication—Illustrates to what extent written and oral communication skills change during college and how students' skills compare to their peers.

MVNU students frequently reported they sought feedback and revised papers to improve their writing skills. Students' speaking ability increased only by 1% from TFS to CSS, as well as an increase of 7% in their writing ability. The table below shows how students rated themselves on oral and written communication.

Skills/Ability	MVNU	Comparison Group
10+ page paper required	91	93
Revised papers	93	95
Reported above average writing ability	51	62

Students rated themselves as frequently or occasionally:	MVNU	Comparison Group
Made Oral presentation	100	100
Above average speaking ability	40	50

Civic Engagement—Relates to the levels of engagement and satisfaction with community and volunteer work during college, as well as items that reflect future orientation towards volunteer and community service.

Students’ responses in the Civic Engagement theme were reflected in the Social Agency and Civic Awareness constructs. Students rated themselves high (83%) on the importance of participating in community action and becoming a community leader, as well as influencing social values. Civic awareness was much lower at 67% compared to the comparison group at 79%. MVNU students demonstrated a slight increase in Social Self-Concept and Social Agency from TFS to CSS. However, women scored significantly lower than their peers. Overall, MVNU men indicated participating in a community action program, helping promote racial understanding, and becoming a community leader higher than MVNU women, but still lag behind the comparison group. The survey items and estimation weights are:

Social Self-Concept	Social Agency
Rate yourself on each of the following traits as compared with the average peers on your age: * Leadership ability (2.93) * Public speaking ability (2.66) * Self-confidence – social (2.12)	Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following : * Participating in a community action program (2.72) * Helping to promote racial understanding (2.62) * Becoming a community leader (2.27) * Keeping up to date with political affairs (1.76) * Influencing social values (1.75) * Helping other who are in difficulty (1.61)

Civil Awareness

- Compared with when you entered this college, how would you now describe:
- * Understanding national issues (6.00)
 - * Understanding global issues (3.32)
 - * Understanding of the problems facing you community (2.09)

The tables below show how the respondents rated themselves higher as seniors compared to when they were freshmen.

Topic that respondents improved upon:	Percentage Increase
Understanding of Community, National, and Global Issues	17
Self-confidence (social)	3
Leadership Ability	6
Help promote racial understanding	5

Personally important to respondent:	Percentage Increase
Keeping up to date with political affairs	6
Participation in community action	5
Becoming a community leader	5
Clean up environment	3
Helping others in difficulty	38

Diversity—Relates to social attitudes and experiences with diversity during college.

Students’ responses in the Diversity theme were reflected in the following constructs: Positive Cross-Racial Interaction, Negative Cross-Racial Interaction, and Pluralistic Orientation. The grouped survey items were ranked average/high 59%, 54%, 65% respectfully.

Students rated themselves on the following traits as compared with the average person their age:

Survey Item & Estimation Weight	Percentage Above Average
Tolerance of others with different beliefs (3.35)	62
Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people (3.14)	62
Openness to having my views challenged (2.76)	52
Ability to see the world from someone else’s perspective (2.55)	68
Ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues (2.11)	55

Experiences with students from a racial/ethnic group other than their own:

Survey Item & Estimation Weight	Percentage Often/Very Often
Had intellectual discussions outside of class (3.57)	23
Shared personal feelings and problems (3.52)	25
Dined or shared a meal (2.72)	38
Had tense, somewhat hostile interactions (3.81)	3
Felt insulted or threatened because of your race/ethnicity (2.63)	1
Had guarded interactions (2.10)	4

Students indicated in TFS that 61% attended a mostly white high school and 53% lived in a predominately white neighborhood. Students also indicated on TFS that they wanted to live near home. At the time students took TFS, 10% indicated there was a good chance they would have a roommate of a different race/ethnicity and considered it very important to promote racial understanding.

Health and Wellness—Gauges student behaviors, attitudes, and experiences related to health and wellness issues, and their use of and satisfaction with related campus services.

While MVNU men scored slightly higher about their sense of belonging, MVNU women scored significantly lower than the men and the comparison group. Women felt more depressed and overwhelmed, rated their emotional health lower, 42% compared to MVNU men at 61%. They also rated their physical health lower. Perhaps this has a connection to their low sense of belonging as a member of the university and campus community. Overall, women rated work/life balance at almost 92% (slightly lower than their peers) as essential or very important compared to MVNU men at 89%. Noticeably, women spent less time exercising (7% compared to 14%) compared to MVNU men, which could help them relieve depression and the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Mount Vernon Nazarene University	Total		Men		Women	
	Your Inst	Comp 1	Your Inst	Comp 1	Your Inst	Comp 1
Total (n)	172	3,988	63	1,348	109	2,640
High Sense of Belonging	17.4%	31.9%	22.2%	28.9%	14.7%	33.5%
Average Sense of Belonging	47.7%	42.1%	50.8%	42.3%	45.9%	41.9%
Low Sense of Belonging	34.9%	26.0%	27.0%	28.9%	39.4%	24.6%

Religiosity/Spirituality—Religious and spiritual practices and beliefs.

MVNU seniors reported that their current religious preference is: almost 14% Baptist and over 60% as Other Christian, while 3% marked none. Only 25% spent three or more hours in prayer/meditation, while seniors rated themselves as attending religious services or discussing religion 97% and 94% respectfully. Women's scores were lower than men on the importance of developing a meaningful philosophy of life and integrating spirituality into their life. The impact MVNU had on the students' college experience (page 10) has additional information about faith and practices.

Career Planning—Relates to career plans, preparation for future careers, and students' use of and satisfaction with career services on campus.

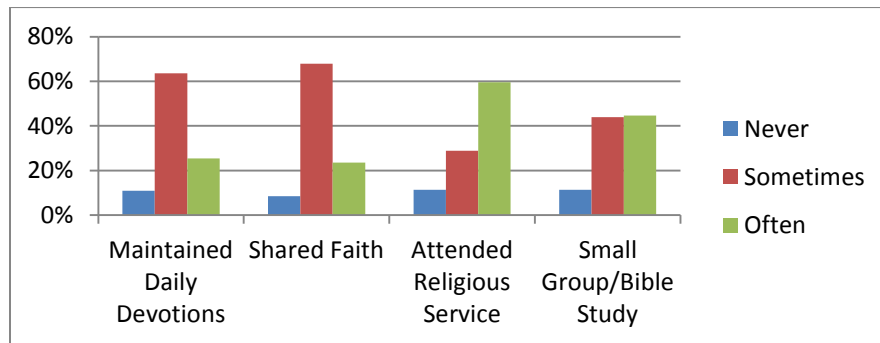
Overall, MVNU's seniors feel prepared for employment or graduate education after college. Seventy-four percent of seniors met with an advisor/counselor about career plans on a frequent or occasional basis, which was significantly lower than their peers. Forty-six percent of students were very satisfied with career counseling and advising, while 34% were satisfied with job placement services.

Some other questions where seniors scored lower than the comparison group are: (1) relevance of coursework to career, (2) importance of becoming an authority in one's field of study, (3) being very well off financially, (4) making a contribution to science, and (5) becoming successful in one's own business. While MVNU students did not desire a high social recognition of status or high income potential, the desire for being able to express personal values and work/life balance were very important (67% and 91%). Almost 81% of students plan to work full-time of which 61% are actively looking for employment. It might prove beneficial for Student Life and the Alumni office to design a mechanism to track career planning to job placement after graduation. MVNU seniors reported spending less time planning than the comparison group. Students also scored lower than the comparison group for being prepared for graduate school.

Responses to supplemental questions identified by the SLT specifically related to the MVNU experience.

MVNU's seniors reported they sometimes/often maintained personal faith/action. Nearly one in every four students maintained daily devotions and shared their faith with others. Almost 60% of the 166 respondents attended religious/church services in addition to MVNU's chapel requirement. Almost 90% of respondents were involved in small group or Bible studies. When they were surveyed as freshmen, 90% reported to be born-again Christians, while approximately half of the students identified themselves as evangelicals.

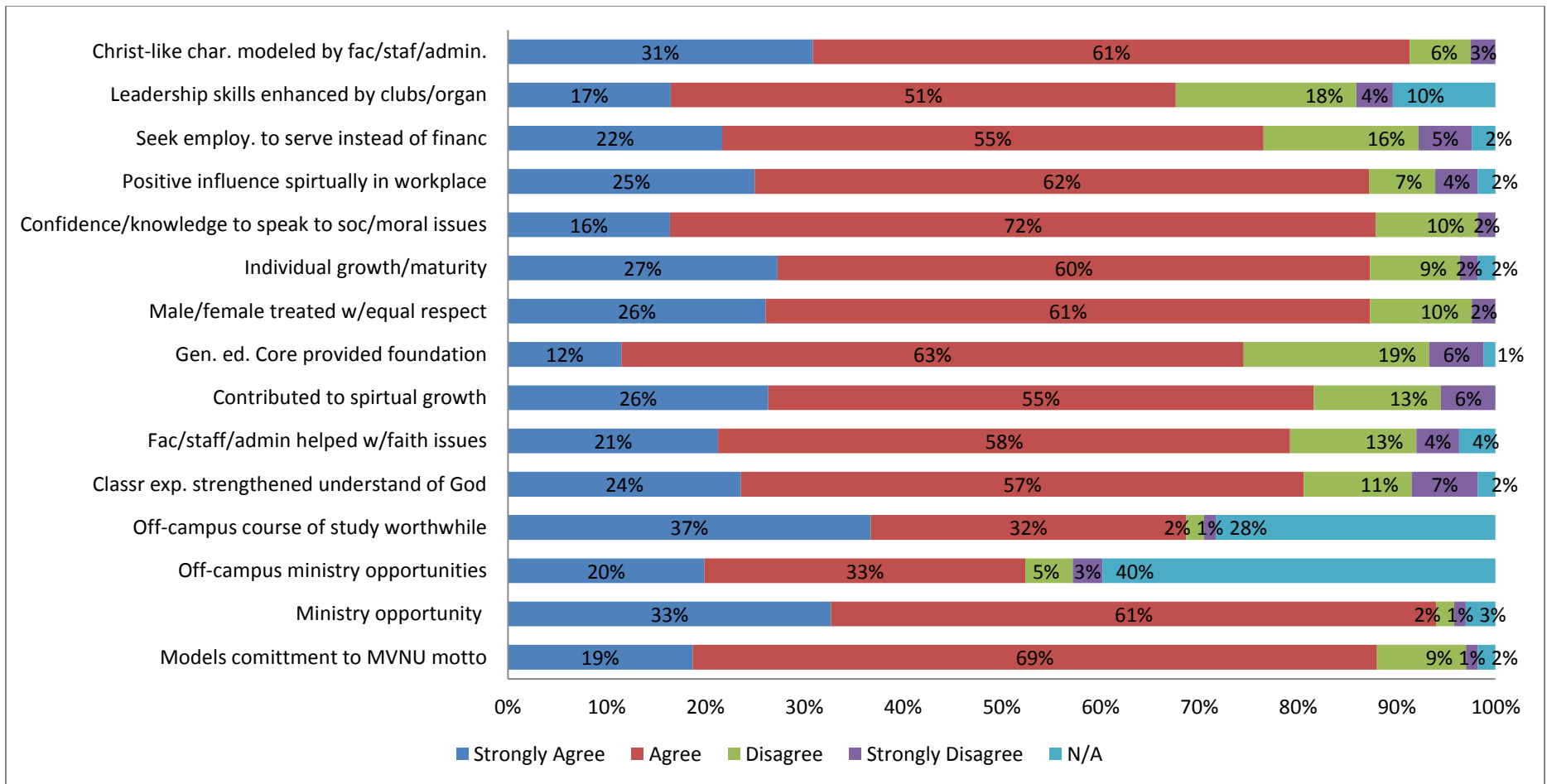
MVNU's Impact on Personal Faith



MVNU's Impact on the College Experience

The following chart shares how students reported the impact MVNU had on their college experience. Eighty-eight percent of students strongly agreed/agreed that MVNU models its commitment to its motto "To seek to learn is to seek to serve". This commitment was also reflected in students' rating that MVNU contributed to their spiritual growth and that Christ-like character is modeled by faculty, staff, and administrators.

MVNU seniors reported their leadership skills were enhanced by club/organization participation only slightly higher than when they were freshmen, 68% compared to 60%. The peer group reported an improvement in leadership skills of 15% in the same timeframe.



Percentages are rounded to next whole number; therefore, category may not equal exactly 100%.

Conclusion

MVNU students consistently scored themselves lower than their peers in all themes. They felt less academically competitive and their scores did not increase from TFS to the CSS. Overall, it showed that fewer students discussed coursework outside of class or studied more than 10 hours a week. Students were satisfied with tutoring and academic assistance, academic advising, and quality of instruction. About half the students reported they were happy with faculty and staff interaction.

Students believe it is important to participate in community action, become a community leader, and influence others with their social values. They also believe it is important to have a work/life balance. Fifty-eight percent occasionally performed community service as part of a class, while almost 22% participated in a study abroad program.

MVNU senior women's scores were significantly lower than those of Comparison Group 1, as well as MVNU men. They rated themselves low in leadership and public speaking ability. They were less satisfied with coursework and felt it was not relevant to their career paths. They rated their overall college experience low, with their sense of belonging significantly lower. Although students indicated that they spent three or more hours a week in prayer, MVNU women's scores were lower than men on the importance of spirituality in their lives.

Although they feel less prepared for graduate school, 70% indicated they would probably still choose MVNU. Students' opinions should be explored so that the college experience will better prepare MVNU graduates for their future and improve the overall MVNU experience. More detailed information on specific themes and constructs can be provided to those interested in learning more about students' needs and wants. After reviewing the data, it might prove beneficial to have focus groups, especially to explore how to empower women and give them a sense of belonging to MVNU. Focus groups could also be formed to look at Academic Outcomes and why the scores are degrading across time, as well as a group to focus on improving Interaction with Faculty.

1. Group Learning Experiences	
Discussed course content with students outside of class	
Frequently	70.7%
Occasionally	29.3%
Studied with other students	
Frequently	37.4%
Occasionally	60.3%
Hours per week in student clubs/groups	
Over 20 hours	0.6%
16 to 20 hours	0.6%
11 to 15 hours	0.6%
6 to 10 hours	3.5%

2. Active Learning Environment	
Hours per week studying/homework	
Over 20 hours	12.2%
16 to 20 hours	5.8%
11 to 15 hours	19.2%
6 to 10 hours	29.7%
Challenged a professor's idea in class	
Frequently	8.0%
Occasionally	54.0%
An opportunity to work on a research project	
Frequently	15.2%
Occasionally	40.4%
Had an opportunity to apply classroom learning to "real life" issues	
Frequently	39.4%
Occasionally	54.7%
Performed community service as part of a class	
Frequently	9.8%
Occasionally	58.0%
Participated in a study-abroad program	
Yes	21.6%
Worked on independent study project	
Frequently	32.8%
Occasionally	44.8%
Participated in an internship program	
Yes	36.4%

3. Institutional Commitment to Student Learning and Success	
Tutoring or other academic assistance	
Very satisfied	9.4%
Satisfied	39.1%
Academic advising	
Very satisfied	15.9%
Satisfied	41.5%
Career counseling and advising	
Very satisfied	9.7%
Satisfied	36.1%

4. Student Satisfaction	
Overall quality of instruction	
Very satisfied	20.7%
Satisfied	56.3%
Would you still choose to enroll at your current college?	
Definitely yes	22.5%
Probably yes	47.4%
Overall sense of community among students	
Very satisfied	25.3%
Satisfied	50.6%
Overall college experience	
Very satisfied	25.3%
Satisfied	52.9%

5. Student Interaction with Campus Faculty and Staff	
Amount of contact with faculty	
Very satisfied	40.8%
Satisfied	44.8%
Ability to find a faculty or staff mentor	
Very satisfied	19.0%
Satisfied	54.6%
An opportunity to discuss coursework outside of class	
Frequently	38.5%
Occasionally	56.8%

6. Experiences with Diverse Groups of People and Ideas	
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	
Very often	8.8%
Often	18.1%
Sometimes	28.7%
Had meaningful and honest discussions about race/ethnic relations outside of class	
Very often	4.6%
Often	18.5%
Sometimes	32.4%
Knowledge of people from different races/cultures	
Much stronger	16.2%
Stronger	52.0%
Ability to get along with people of different races/cultures	
Much stronger	16.8%
Stronger	30.6%