REPORT OF
NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE) 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which has been administered annually since 2000, collects data from random samples of first-year and senior students about the nature of their undergraduate experience. The survey is designed to evaluate the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices empirically linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes, including student satisfaction, persistence, and graduation. St. John’s University participated in NSSE in 2001, 2002, and every other year thereafter.

In Spring 2012, St. John’s first-year and senior students were randomly selected and contacted by email that provided a link for them to complete NSSE online, and four reminders followed. A total of 782 students participated in the 2012 survey, 464 first-year students (14% of student population) and 318 senior students (13%). The survey respondents were quite representative of student population in ethnicity while female students had a higher response rate than male students, 17% vs. 9%.

The survey comprises more than 80 items. In an attempt to make a productive discussion about student engagement and to guide institutional improvement efforts, NSSE created five clusters of related items on the survey, expressed in 100-point scales, as the National Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice. The five benchmarks (Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Relations, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment) are the standardized indicators of student engagement, and they were adopted as institutional success measures in both St. John’s 2004-08 and 2008-13 Strategic Plans.

This report, prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, presents the NSSE 2012 data, and also compares the 2012 results with the 2008 results. Engagement is one of the three areas of critical focus in St. John’s 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, and many initiatives have been implemented in that regard. The NSSE 2012 / 2008 comparison can give us a good sense of the impact of some of those initiatives.

The report consists of three sections, including this section of introduction (Section I). Section II provides a summary of the survey results. Section III presents a more detailed analysis which includes two parts: a) Benchmark level data, including students’ overall evaluation, and b) Survey Item level data. The appendix to this report provides detailed results at both the benchmark and item levels, and for both St. John’s University and Carnegie peer institutions for comparison purposes. Separate reports for each school/college are being developed.
II. SUMMARY

At the benchmark level, for both St. John’s first-year and senior students, engagement has been improved from 2008 to 2012 in Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL) and Enriching Educational Experience (EEE) while there has not been much change in the other three benchmarks. Regarding the goals set in the 2008-2013 strategic plan, the target for EEE has been met for both the first-year and senior students. The target for ACL has also been met for the first-year students.

As compared to the Carnegie peers, the 2012 data indicate that St. John’s first-year students were slightly more engaged in ACL and EEE, slightly less engaged in Supportive Campus Environment (SCE), and similar in Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) and Student-Faculty Interactions (SFI). St. John’s senior students were more engaged in SFI and EEE, and less engaged in LAC and ACL, than Carnegie peers while the engagement level in SCE was similar.

At the survey item level, both St. John’s first-year and senior students became more engaged from 2008 to 2012 in community service or volunteer work and in learning communities. In addition, the first-year students became more engaged in participating in a community-based project as part of a regular course; senior students became more engaged in studying abroad, foreign language coursework, culminating experience, and using an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment.

There are no areas in which St. John’s first-year students were significantly less engaged in 2012 than in 2008. St. John’s senior students became less engaged in such areas as discussing ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class, and the number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings.

As compared to Carnegie peers, both St. John’s first-year and senior students were more engaged in such areas as community service or volunteer work, learning communities, having serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity, and having serious conversations with students who are very different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.

As compared to Carnegie peers, both St. John’s first-year and senior students were less engaged in the hours for preparing for class, asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions, and working with other students on projects during class. In addition, St. John’s seniors were also less engaged in the number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings, the number of assigned papers or reports, class presentation, and getting prompt feedback from faculty on their academic performance.
III. DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

This section consists of two parts: a) Benchmarks and student overall evaluation, and b) Survey Item level data.

1. Benchmarks and Student Overall Evaluation

As explained in the introduction section of this report, benchmarks are aggregated results of related survey items, expressed in 100-point scales. Tables 1 to 5 in the appendix provide benchmark data, and Table 6 presents student overall evaluation.

A. Benchmarks for first-year students

Table 1 below presents the NSSE benchmark scores for the first-year students. As the table reveals, from 2008 to 2012 there has been a sizable upward trend in two of St. John’s five benchmarks: the score for Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL) increased from 45 to 49 and Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE), from 29 to 32. For these two benchmarks, there has been also some improvement for the Carnegie peer institutions, but not as much as at St. John’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>STJ vs. Carnegie Peers</th>
<th>First-year students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student-Faculty Interactions (SFI)</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the other three benchmarks, Level of Academic Challenge (LAC), Student-Faculty Interactions (SFI), and Supportive Campus Environment (SCE), St. John's scores didn’t change much from 2008 to 2012, while there has been some improvement for Carnegie peers.

Regarding the targets set in St. John’s 2008-13 Strategic Plan, the targets for ACL and EEE have been met; and for the other three benchmarks, there are several points short.
B. Benchmarks for senior students

Table 2 provides benchmarks for senior students. As the table indicates, there has been a sizable upward trend for EEE, from 41 in 2008 to 47 in 2012; and some improvement in ACL, from 50 to 52. Carnegie peers experienced a downward trend for EEE, from 42 to 36; and a slight increase for ACL, from 53 to 54.

There has not been much change in the other three benchmarks for St. John’s while for Carnegie peers, there has been a sizable upward trend in LAC and SCE; and a downward trend in SFI.

Regarding the targets set in St. John’s 2008-13 Strategic Plan, the target for EEE has been met. The other four benchmarks are still several points shy of the targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. NSSE benchmark scores for senior students, 2008 to 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s University vs. Carnegie peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Student-Faculty Interactions (SFI)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Student overall evaluation

In NSSE, students are asked to rate the quality of academic advising and their entire educational experience. Table 3 presents such data. As the table indicates, St. John’s ratings on academic advising dropped slightly for both first-year and senior students: 77% of first-year students rated as Good / Excellent in 2012 vs. 80% in 2008; 66% of senior students did so in 2012 vs. 70% in 2008. There has been an upward trend for Carnegie peers: from 74% to 81% of first-year students, and from 68% to 78% of senior students.

From 2008 to 2012, there has not been much change in student ratings on their entire educational experience for either St. John’s or Carnegie peers while St. John’s ratings remained lower than ratings at Carnegie peers. In 2012, 78% of St. John’s first-year
and 80% of senior students rated their entire educational experience as *Good/Excellent* as compared to 86% and 87% respectively for Carnegie peers.

### Table 3. NSSE Overall Evaluation: St. John’s University vs. Carnegie Peers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Student response</th>
<th>STJ vs. Peer</th>
<th>2008 (%)</th>
<th>2010 (%)</th>
<th>2012 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. How would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?</td>
<td>First-Year Peer</td>
<td>Excellent/Good</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?</td>
<td>First-Year Peer</td>
<td>Excellent/Good</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>STJ</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Summary of Survey Item-level Data

This part presents data at the survey item level. It consists of two sections: Section 1 provides STJ trend data from 2008 to 2012, and Section 2 compares the 2012 data between St. John’s and peer institutions.

1) **St. John’s University: 2012 vs. 2008**

Presented in this section are the items whose 2012 score is at least five points higher or lower than the 2008 score (as highlighted in Tables 1 to 5 of the appendix). The data presented for these items are from Table 7 of the appendix, i.e., the frequency distributions.

A. **Areas in which first-year students became more engaged in 2012 than in 2008**

*Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning*

> The percentage of students, who *Often/Very Often* participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course, increased from 25% to 44% (1k).

*Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences*

> In 2008, 37% of students did community service or volunteer work, and the percentage increased to 59% in 2012 (7b).
The percentage of students, who participated in a learning community or some other formal programs where groups of students take two or more classes together, increased from 20% to 25% (7c).

**B. Areas in which first-year students became less engaged in 2012 than in 2008**

There are no areas in which St. John’s first-year students were significantly less engaged in 2012 than in 2008.

**C. Areas in which senior students became more engaged in 2012 than in 2008**

*Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning*

- In 2008, 64% of students *Often / Very Often* asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions, and the percentage increased to 73% in 2012 (1a).

*Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences*

- The percentage of seniors, who did community service or volunteer work, increased from 58% to 69% (7b).
- The percentage of seniors, who participated in a learning community or some other formal programs where groups of students take two or more classes together, increased from 28% to 34% (7c).
- The percentage of seniors, who had done foreign language coursework, increased from 41% to 57% (7e).
- The percentage of seniors, who had studied abroad, increased from 11% to 21% (7f).
- The percentage of seniors, who had culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive, etc.), increased from 21% to 26% (7h).
- The percentage of seniors, who *Often / Very Often* used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment, increased from 59% to 67% (1l).

**D. Areas in which senior students became less engaged in 2012 than in 2008**

*Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge*

- The number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings has decreased from 10.6 in 2008 to 9.0 in 2012 (3a).

*Benchmark 3: Student Faculty Interactions*

- In 2008, 35% of students *Often / Very Often* discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class, and the percentage decreased to 28% in 2012 (1p).

Presented in this section are the items for which St. John's score in 2012 is at least five points higher or lower than that of the Carnegie peers (as highlighted in Tables 1 to 5 of the appendix). The data presented for these items are from Table 7 of the appendix, i.e., the frequency distributions.

A. Areas in which St. John’s 1st-year students were more engaged than Carnegie peers in 2012

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning

- In 2012, 44% of St. John’s first-year students *Often / Very Often* participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course vs. 18% of Carnegie peers (Survey Item 1k).

Benchmark 3: Student Faculty Interactions

- 22% of St. John’s first-year students worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) vs. 19% of Carnegie peers. (1s)

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences

- 59% of St. John’s first-year students had done community service or volunteer work vs. 42% of Carnegie peers (7b).
- 24% of St. John’s first-year students had participated in a learning community or some other formal programs where groups of students take two or more classes together vs. 17% of Carnegie peers (7c).
- 65% of St. John’s first-year students *Often / Very Often* had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity vs. 54% of Carnegie peers (1u).
- 63% of St. John’s first-year students *Often/Very Often* had serious conversations with students who are very different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values vs. 55% of Carnegie peers (1v).
- 70% of St. John’s first-year students *Quite a Bit/Very Much* experienced a campus environment that encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds vs. 64% of Carnegie peers (10c).

B. Areas in which St. John’s 1st-year students were less engaged than Carnegie peers

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge

- In 2012, St. John’s first-year students spent an average of 12.1 hours a week preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework, rehearsing, and other academic activities), vs. 14.7 hours for Carnegie peers. (9a)

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning

- In 2012, 66% of St. John’s first-year students *Often / Very Often* asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions, vs. 73% of Carnegie peers (1a).
46% of St. John’s first-year students Often/Very Often worked with other students on projects during class, vs. 52% of Carnegie peers (1g).

C. Areas in which St. John’s senior students were more engaged than Carnegie peers

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
- In 2012, 26% of St. John’s seniors Often/Very Often tutored or taught other students vs. 15% of Carnegie peers. (1j)
- In 2012, 30% of St. John’s seniors Often/Very Often participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course vs. 16% of Carnegie peers (1k).

Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions
- 28% of St. John’s seniors Often/Very Often discussed ideas from their readings or classes with faculty members outside of class vs. 24% of Carnegie peers (1p).
- 30% of St. John’s seniors Often/Very Often worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) vs. 17% of Carnegie peers (1s).
- 18% of St. John’s seniors had done work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements vs. 13% of Carnegie peers (7d).

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences
- In 2012, St. John’s seniors spent an average of 6.2 hours participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.) vs. 2.8 hours by Carnegie peers (9d).
- 72% of St. John’s seniors had done community service or volunteer work vs. 50% of Carnegie peers (7b).
- 36% of St. John’s seniors participated in a learning community or some other formal programs where groups of students take two or more classes together vs. 24% of Carnegie peers (7c).
- 59% of St. John’s seniors had done foreign language coursework vs. 22% of Carnegie peers (7e).
- 22% of St. John’s seniors studied abroad vs. 9% of Carnegie peers (7f).
- 70% of St. John’s seniors Often/Very Often had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity vs. 56% of Carnegie peers (1u).
- 65% of St. John’s seniors Often/Very Often had serious conversations with students who were very different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values, vs. 55% of Carnegie peers (1v).

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment
- In 2012, 40% of St. John’s seniors Quite a Bit/Very Much experienced a campus environment that helps students cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) vs. 34% of Carnegie peers (10d).
- 55% of St. John’s seniors Quite a Bit/Very Much experienced a campus environment that provides the support needed to thrive socially vs. 39% of Carnegie peers (10e).
D. Areas in which St. John’s senior students were less engaged than Carnegie peers

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge

? In 2012, St. John’s seniors spent an average of 12.2 hours preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework, rehearsing, and other academic activities) vs. 15.5 hours for Carnegie peers (9a).

? In 2012, St. John’s seniors were assigned an average of 9 textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings, vs. 12 for Carnegie peers (3a).

? St. John’s seniors wrote an average of 2.1 papers or reports that were 20 pages or more vs. 3.1 for Carnegie peers (3c).

? St. John’s seniors wrote an average of 5.7 papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages vs. 9.7 for Carnegie peers (3d).

? St. John’s seniors written an average of 8.5 papers or reports fewer than 5 pages vs. 9.9 for Carnegie peers (3e).

? 65% of St. John’s seniors worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations vs. 70% of Carnegie peers (1r).

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning

? In 2012, 73% of St. John’s seniors Often/ Very Often asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions vs. 87% of Carnegie peers (1a)

? 58% of St. John’s seniors Often/ Very Often made a class presentation vs. 68 % of Carnegie peers (1b).

? 44% of St. John’s seniors Often/ Very Often worked with other students on projects during class vs. 66% of Carnegie peers (1g).

? 48 % of St. John’s seniors Often/ Very Often worked with other students on projects outside of class vs. 54% of Carnegie peers (1h).

Benchmark 4: Student-Faculty Interactions

? 66% of St. John’s seniors Often/ Very Often received prompt feedback from faculty on their academic performance vs. 76% of Carnegie peers (1q).

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment

? 71% of St. John’s seniors perceived that the campus environment provided the support they need to help them succeed academically vs. 76% of Carnegie peers. (10b)

The results of the NSSE survey results are the perceptions of students about their engagement status in curricular and extracurricular activities. The data are very useful, and can be used with other data for action plans. Please share any initiatives you develop to respond to these results, with Dr. Yuxiang Liu, Director of Institutional Assessment, in the Office of Institutional Research at LiuY@stjohns.edu.