The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which has been administered annually since 1999, obtains information 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 such as student satisfaction, persistence, and graduation. St. John’s University has participated in the survey five times (2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008).

In Spring 2008, St. John’s first-year and senior students were randomly selected and they were initially contacted by email that provided a link for them to complete NSSE online, and two reminders followed. Then, the non-respondents were randomly selected and a hardcopy was sent to them, and the remaining non-respondents were contacted by email again. A total of 664 students participated in the 2008 survey. Of them, 357 were first-year students (9%) and 307 were seniors (12%).

For School of Education (EDU), 12 first-year students (8% of student population) 24 seniors (15%) completed the survey. Respondents fairly resembled the profile of the EDU first-year and senior students in ethnicity, while the proportion of female is a little higher than that of male students. The survey data, however, were weighted by gender.

There are more than 80 items in the survey, and in an attempt to support efforts to talk about student engagement and the importance to student learning, collegiate quality and institutional improvement, NSSE created five clusters of related groups of items on the survey, expressed in 100-point scales, as the National Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice. These 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 St. John’s Strategic Plan 2004-08 and continued in the 2008-13 Plan.

This report summarizes the 2008 NSSE survey results for School of Education (EDU). It consists of two parts: 1) Summary at the Benchmark Level, including student overall evaluation and 2) Summary at the Survey Item Level (EDU 2008 data are compared with St. John’s University (STJ) for both first-year and senior students). The appendix provides detailed data for each survey item for 2008, together with the 2006 data.

Part 1. Summary at the Benchmark Level

In 2008, the EDU first-year students were more engaged in every benchmark than they were in 2006, and they were more engaged in every benchmark than STJ first-year students.

EDU seniors had lower Level of Academic Challenge in 2008 than they did in 2006 (53 vs. 58).
Compared to STJ seniors, EDU seniors were more engaged in Active and Collaborative Learning (56 vs. 50), Student-Faculty Interactions (49 vs. 43), and Enriching Educational Experiences (46 vs. 41).

The overall evaluation ratings by EDU students were higher than by STJ students: 100% of EDU first-year students rated the entire educational experience as EXCELLENT or GOOD compared to 79% of the STJ first-year students, and for seniors, it is 90% vs. 82%; 100% of the EDU first-year students rated the quality of academic advising as EXCELLENT or GOOD compared to 80% of STJ first-year students, and for seniors, it is 81% vs. 70%.

Part 2. Summary at the Survey Item Level

Part 2 presents data at survey item level and it consists of two sections. Section 1 illustrates EDU trend data from 2006 to 2008, and Section 2 compares EDU with STJ. Highlighted are the survey items with a difference of ten points either between EDU 2008 and 2006 or between EDU and STJ.

Section 1: School of Education: 2008 versus 2006

EDU first-year students became more engaged in the following areas:

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework, rehearsing, and other academic activities) (43 for 2008 vs. 32 for 2006)
- Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages (68 vs. 58)
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organization of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships. (79 vs. 67)
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods (88 vs. 56)
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations (73 vs. 50)
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work (73 vs. 57)

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
- Worked with other students on projects outside of class (56 vs. 33)
- Tutored or taught other students (36 vs. 24)
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.) (76 vs. 65)

Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor (61 vs. 40)
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class (39 vs. 25)
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) (42 vs. 15)
- Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance (67 vs. 50)
Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences
- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.) (34 vs. 12)
- Community service or volunteer. (80 vs. 17)
- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together (60 vs. 6)
- Using electronic technology (listserv, chat group, internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment (83 vs. 67)

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) (55 vs. 33)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially (61 vs. 39)
- Quality of relationships with other students (82 vs. 56)
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices (74 vs. 56)

EDU first-year students became less engaged in the following areas:

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
- Worked with other students on projects during class (44 for 2008 vs. 54 for 2006)

EDU senior students became less engaged in the following areas:

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings (39 vs. 53)
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods (65 vs. 75)

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
- Tutored or taught other students (27 vs. 54)

Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor (58 vs. 68)

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment (76 vs. 93)

Section 2: School of Education (EDU) versus St. John’s University (STJ)

EDU first-year students were more engaged than STJ (overall) in the following areas:
Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
- Number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages (57 for EDU vs. 41 for STJ)
- Number of written papers of reports of fewer than 5 pages (68 vs. 52)
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organization of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships (79 vs. 65)
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods (88 vs. 67)
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations (73 vs. 56)

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
- Worked with other students on projects outside of class (56 vs. 45)
- Tutored or taught other students (36 vs. 25)
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc) (76 vs. 54)

Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor (61 vs. 45)
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) (42 vs. 28)
- Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance (67 vs. 57)

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences
- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.) (34 vs.18)
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment (30 vs. 9)
- Community service or volunteer (80 vs.37)
- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together (60 vs. 20)
- Foreign language coursework (30 vs.16)
- Using electronic technology (listserv, chat group, internet, instant messaging, etc) to discuss or complete an assignment (83 vs. 60)
- Campus environment encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds (76 vs. 63)

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment
- Quality of relationships with other students (82 vs. 72)

EDU senior students were more engaged than STJ (overall) in the following areas:

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
- Worked with other students on projects during class (67 vs. 53)
- Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course (49 vs. 28)
Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions
  • Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance (70 vs. 58)

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences
  • Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment (76 vs. 55)
  • Community service or volunteer (71 vs. 58)
  • Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together (40 vs. 28)

EDU senior students were less engaged than STJ (overall) in the following areas:

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
  • Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings (39 vs. 57)