Spring 2008 Summary: St. John’s College

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 St. John’s College (SJC), 110 first-year students (9% of student population) 68 seniors (13%) completed the survey. Respondents fairly resembled the profile of the SJC 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 St. John’s College (SJC). It consists of two parts: 1) Summary at the Benchmark Level, including student overall evaluation and 2) Summary at the Survey Item Level (SJC 2008 data are compared with St. John’s University (STJ) for both first-year and senior students). Highlighted are the benchmarks or survey items with a difference of five points either between SJC 2008 and 2006 or between SJC and STJ. The appendix provides detailed data for each survey item for 2008, together with the 2004 and 2006 data.

Part 1. Summary at the Benchmark Level

From 2006 to 2008, SJC first-year students made a sizable progress in Active and Collaborative Learning (from 39 to 46) and Student-Faculty Interactions (from 31 to 40).
SJC seniors were more engaged than STJ seniors in Enriching Educational Experiences (46 for SJC vs. 41 for STJ).

For SJC first-year students, the overall evaluation of their entire educational experience improved from 2006 to 2008: 80% rated it as EXCELLENT or GOOD in 2008 compared to 73% in 2006, while the ratings by SJC seniors dropped from 82% in 2008 to 75% in 2006.

SJC seniors' ratings on the quality of academic advising also dropped: 54% rated it as EXCELLENT or GOOD in 2008 as compared to 73% in 2006. For STJ, the figure was 70% in 2008 vs. 73% in 2006.

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 SJC trend data from 2006 to 2008, and Section 2 compares SJC with STJ.

Section 1: St. John's College 2008 versus 2006

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

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more (10 for 2008 vs. 5 for 2006)
- Number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages (44 vs. 33)
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organization of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships (65 vs. 60)
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods (67 vs. 59)
- Coursework emphasizing application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations (68 vs. 63)

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning (overall-46 for 2008 vs. 39 for 2006)
- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (62 vs. 56)
- Made a class presentation (51 vs. 44)
- Worked with other students on projects during class (50 vs. 41)
- Worked with other students on projects outside of class (45 vs. 37)
- Tutored or taught other students (27 vs. 19)
- Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course (31 vs. 22)
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.) (56 vs. 51)

Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions (overall-40 for 2008 vs. 31 for 2006)
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor (58 vs. 50)
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor (47 vs. 41)
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class (36 vs. 26)
• Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc) (29 vs. 17)
• Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance (57 vs. 47)
• Worked or planned to work with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements (10 vs. 4)

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences
• Community service or volunteer (47 vs. 38)
• Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together (27 vs. 15)
• Foreign language coursework (24 vs. 19)

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment
• Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc) (50 vs. 44)
• Quality of relationships with faculty members (67 vs. 62)
• Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices (63 vs. 56)

SJC first-year students didn’t become less engaged in any areas.

SJC senior students became more engaged in the following areas:

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
• Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages (50 for 2008 vs. 41 for 2006)

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences
• Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc) (25 vs. 20)
• Foreign language coursework (77 vs. 71)

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment
• Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc) (45 vs. 34)

SJC senior students became less engaged in the following areas:

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
• Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods (67 for 2008 vs. 72 for 2006)

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
• Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (68 vs. 73)
• Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course (31 vs. 39)
• Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.) (59 vs. 65)

**Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences**
• Community service or volunteer (56 vs. 73)
• Using electronic technology (listserv, chat group, internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment (57 vs. 62)

**Section 2: St. John’s College (SJC) versus St. John’s University (STJ):**

SJC first-year students were more engaged than STJ overall in the following areas:

**Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences**
• Community service or volunteer (47 for SJC vs. 37 for STJ)
• Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together (27 vs. 20)
• Foreign Language Coursework (24 vs. 16)

SJC senior students were more engaged than STJ overall in the following areas:

**Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge**
• Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages (50 for SJC vs. 44 for STJ)

**Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning**
• Tutored or taught other students (38 vs. 28)

**Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions**
• Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) (37 vs. 31)
• Worked or planned to work with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements (23 vs. 18)

**Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences (overall-46 for SJC vs. 41 for STJ)**
• Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.) (25 vs. 19)
• Foreign language coursework (77 vs. 41)
• Study Abroad (23 vs. 11)
• Independent study or self-designed major (24 vs. 14)
• Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive, etc) (26 vs. 21)
• Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity (67 vs. 62)
• Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values (65 vs. 60)

SJC senior students were less engaged than STJ overall in the following areas:
Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge
- Coursework emphasizing application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations (70 for SJC vs. 75 for STJ)
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work (63 for SJC vs. 71 for STJ)

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning
- Worked with other students on projects during class (48 vs. 53)
- Worked with other students on projects outside of class (49 vs. 54)

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences (overall-46 for SJC vs. 41 for STJ)
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment (48 vs. 55)

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment
- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically (60 vs. 65)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to survive socially (45 vs. 52)
- Quality of relationships with other students (72 vs. 77)
- Quality of relationships with administrative and offices (54 vs. 62)