National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

**Spring 2008 Summary: St. John’s University**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which has been administered annually since the spring of 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 has participated in the NSSE survey five times (2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008) since its beginning.

In Spring 2008, two groups comprising St. John’s first-year students and seniors were randomly selected and initially contacted by email messages that provided a link for them to complete NSSE online; two reminders followed. Following this, a subset of non-responding students was randomly selected and sent a hardcopy of the survey. The remaining students 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%). First-year survey respondents differed from the profile of St. John’s freshmen in ethnicity; most notably, among Asians (26% respondents vs. 16% STJ Freshmen). The proportion of black first-year students also differed: 10% respondents vs. 16% STJ Freshmen. However, the ethnicity of senior respondents was comparable to that of St. John’s seniors.

The proportions of both females and males were notably different between respondents and St. John’s student population for both first-year students and seniors; however, the survey was weighted by gender.

The survey comprises more than 80 items. NSSE created five benchmarks containing related survey items, each of which is expressed in a 100-point scale. By creating the benchmarks, NSSE intended to emphasize student engagement and its importance to student learning, collegiate quality, and institutional improvement. 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 have been adopted as institutional success measures in St. John’s Strategic Plans for both 2004-08 and 2008-13.

This report summarizes the 2008 NSSE survey results for St. John’s University (STJ) and consists of two parts: 1) Benchmark Level Summary, including Students’ Overall Evaluation, and 2) Survey Item Level Summary. St. John’s 2008 data are compared to its 2006 data and to its Carnegie peer institutions for both first-year students and seniors. The Appendix provides detailed data for each survey item.
Part 1. Benchmark Level Summary

In 2004, NSSE regrouped items in the five benchmarks; subsequently, the benchmark scores were recalculated. The following are some highlights of St. John’s data since 2004, with comparisons to the Carnegie peer institutions.

First-year Students

All of the first-year student scores for the five benchmarks increased from 2004 to 2008. Of them, Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions score increased the most, from 30 to 38 (8 points), followed by Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning, which increased from 38 to 45 (7 points); Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences, from 25 to 29 (4 points); Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment, from 60 to 63 (3 points); and Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge, from 54 to 55 (1 point).

Compared to their Carnegie peers, St. John’s benchmark scores were all slightly higher (by 1 or 2 points) in 2008.

Seniors

The score for Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge remained unchanged from 2004 to 2008 at 56, while the scores for the other four benchmarks all increased: Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment, from 57 to 62 (5 points); Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions, from 39 to 43 (4 points); Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences, from 37 to 41 (4 points); and Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning, from 47 to 50 (3 points).

As compared to their Carnegie Peers in 2008, St. John’s score was higher by 3 points (62 vs. 59) for Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment, but lower by 3 points (50 vs. 53) for Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning, and lower by 1 point for the other three benchmarks.

St. John’s Students’ Overall Evaluation

First-year students

- First-year students who rated their entire educational experience as EXCELLENT or GOOD decreased somewhat from 78% in 2004 to 77% in 2006 but increased slightly to 79% in 2008.

- The quality of academic advising rating (as EXCELLENT or GOOD), which declined from 80% in 2004 to 75% in 2006, rebounded back to 80% in 2008.

- First-year student ratings (EXCELLENT or GOOD) on whether students would go to the same institution if they could start over again had declined from 75% in 2004 to 70% in 2006 but increased significantly to 77% in 2008.
Seniors

- In 2008, 82% of seniors rated their entire educational experience as EXCELLENT or GOOD, as compared to 83% in 2006 and 78% in 2004.

- Seniors who rated the quality of academic advising rating as EXCELLENT or GOOD increased from 66% in 2004 to 73% in 2006 but decreased to 70% in 2008.

- Senior ratings (EXCELLENT or GOOD) on whether students would go to the same institution if they could start over again increased from 75% in 2004 to 77% in 2006 but declined slightly to 76% in 2008.

Part 2. Survey Item Level Summary

Part 2 presents data at the survey item level and comprises two sections: Section I illustrates STJ trend data from 2006 to 2008, and Section II compares STJ with peer institutions. Scores are highlighted for survey items differing by a minimum of five points for both STJ between 2008 and 2006 and for STJ and peers in 2008. For the scores of each survey item and the overall evaluation, please refer to the Appendix.

Section I: St. John’s University 2008 versus 2006

First-year Students

Student engagement increased among St. John’s first-year students in the following areas:

**Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge**
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more (12 vs. 7)
- Number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages (41 vs. 36)
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods (67 vs. 61)

**Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning**
- Worked with other students on projects during class (49 vs. 43)
- Worked with other students on projects outside of class (45 vs. 36)
- Tutored or taught other students (25 vs. 20)
- Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course (30 vs. 22)

**Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions**
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor (56 vs. 49)
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor (45 vs. 40)
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class (35 vs. 27)
• Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) (28 vs. 19)
• Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance (57 vs. 49)

**Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment**
• Campus environment helps students cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) (50 vs. 43)
• Campus environment provides the support needed to thrive socially (53 vs. 48)
• Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices (67 vs. 58)

There were no areas in which St. John’s first-year students became significantly less engaged from 2006 to 2008.

**Seniors**

Student engagement increased among St. John’s seniors in the following areas:

**Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment**
• Campus environment helps students cope with non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, etc.) (47 vs. 40)
• Campus environment provides the support needed to thrive socially (52 vs. 44)

There were no areas in which St. John’s seniors became significantly less engaged from 2006 to 2008.

**Section II: St. John’s University versus Carnegie Peers**

**First-year Students**

St. John’s first-year students were more engaged than their Carnegie peers in the following areas:

**Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge**
• Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more (12 for STJ vs. 7 for Peers)
• Number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages (41 vs. 36)

**Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning**
• Made a class presentation (51 for STJ vs. 44 for Peers)
• Participation in a community-based project as a part of a regular course (30 vs. 23)

Prepared by: Institutional Research (mm)  12/5/2008
**Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions**
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) (28 for STJ vs. 22 for Peers)

**Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences**
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity (61 for STJ vs. 54 for Peers)
- Using electronic technology (listserv, chat group, internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment (60 vs. 54)
- Campus environment encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds (63 vs. 57)

**Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment**
- Campus environment helps students cope with non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, etc.) (50 for STJ vs. 43 for Peers)
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices (67 vs. 60)

St. John’s first-year students were less engaged than their Carnegie peers in the following area:

**Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experience**
- Foreign language coursework (16 for STJ vs. 22 for Peers)

**Seniors**

St. John’s seniors were more engaged than their Carnegie peers in the following areas:

**Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences**
- Campus environment encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds (59 for STJ vs. 54 for Peers)

**Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment**
- Campus environment helps students cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) (47 for STJ vs. 35 for Peers)
- Campus environment provides the support needed to thrive socially (52 vs. 42)

St. John’s senior students were less engaged than Carnegie peers in the following areas:

**Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge**
- Number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages (36 for STJ vs. 41 for Peers)
- Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages (44 vs. 52)
**Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning**
- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (64 for STJ vs. 72 for Peers)
- Worked with other students on projects outside of class (54 vs. 60)

**Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interactions**
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor (57 for STJ vs. 63 for Peers)

**Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences**
- Community service or volunteer (58 for STJ vs. 64 for Peers)
- Study Abroad (11 vs. 16)
- Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive, etc.) (21 vs. 35)