



America's Brightest **ORANGE**

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Assessment and Testing

2012 National Survey of Student Engagement: Executive
Summary

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Overview

Survey Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to examine the extent to which current Oklahoma State University (OSU) students were engaged in educationally purposeful activities. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a survey that gathers data on the “behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college” (<http://nsse.iub.edu/html/about.cfm>).

The NSSE is part of a comprehensive assessment process at OSU. Since the NSSE gathers data on what first year students and seniors do during their time at OSU, conceptually it fits after entry-level assessment, overlaps with general education assessment, and sits before program student learning outcomes assessment and alumni satisfaction. NSSE created the survey instrument and managed the data collection and analysis process. OSU pays a fee to NSSE in the years the NSSE is administered. OSU participated in the NSSE in four previous years (2000, 2002, 2005, and 2009).

Response Rate

The overall response rate on this survey was 15% (13% for first year students and 17% for seniors). This was substantially lower than the response rate at similar institutions (defined in the next section), which was 22%. The response rate in 2012 was also substantially lower than the response rate in 2009, which was also 22%. Although the response rate is low, since the entire first year and senior populations were sampled, the absolute number of responses was large (485 responses from first year students and 917 responses from seniors).

The low response rate suggests caution in interpreting results, particularly if the characteristics of those students who completed the survey are substantially different from those who did not complete the survey. For example, the proportion of female and male students at OSU is approximately equal (the 2012 Student Profile reported approximately 48% of OSU’s undergraduate students were female). However, 68% of OSU’s first year respondents were female and 57% of OSU’s senior respondents were female (note that this pattern is similar to the results at the comparison institutions). As a result, the key to interpreting results from this survey, as with any other survey, is to look for patterns of responses across multiple assessment instruments and years of administration. In this way the NSSE can still provide an important perspective on our students.



A student works on a project in a campus lab.

Institutional Comparisons

The Assessment and Academic Improvement Council (AAIC) identified three groups of institutions to provide comparisons for OSU’s NSSE results. AAIC examined the complete list of institutions that participated in the 2012 NSSE and identified institutions that were considered to be aspirational, those that were considered to be less competitive, and those that were considered to be similar. The institutions in the comparison groups are shown in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.



Table 1: Aspirational Institutions (Comparison Group 1)

Institution	City	State
Auburn University	Auburn	AL
Clemson University	Clemson	SC
Indiana University Bloomington	Bloomington	IN
Rutgers University-New Brunswick/Piscataway	New Brunswick	NJ
University of Arizona	Tucson	AZ
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Urbana	IL
University of Kentucky	Lexington	KY
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor	MI
University of South Carolina	Columbia	SC
SUNY-Buffalo State College	Buffalo	NY
University of Miami	Coral Gables	FL

Table 2: Less Competitive Institutions (Comparison Group 2)

Institution	City	State
Boise State University	Boise	ID
California State University-Dominguez Hills	Carson	CA
East Carolina University	Greenville	NC
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne	Fort Wayne	IN
Missouri State University	Springfield	MO
Northern Illinois University	Dekalb	IL
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	Carbondale	IL
University of Mississippi	Oxford	MS
University of Texas at Arlington	Arlington	TX
University of Texas at San Antonio	San Antonio	TX
Western Kentucky University	Bowling Green	KY

Table 3: Similar Peer Institutions (Comparison Group 3)

Institution	City	State
Colorado State University	Fort Collins	CO
George Mason University	Fairfax	VA
Texas Tech University	Lubbock	TX
University of Louisville	Louisville	KY
University of Missouri-Columbia	Columbia	MO
University of Oregon	Eugene	OR
Washington State University	Pullman	WA



Benchmark Results

The NSSE benchmarks represent an index of responses to several NSSE questions. The benchmarks serve to summarize students' responses on a range of questions that are all related to the same broad topic. NSSE provided results for the institutional comparisons with the comparison groups described above and multi-year reports comparing OSU's scores in 2012 with its scores in 2002, 2005, and 2009. The five benchmarks are Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. A graphical summary is shown in Table 4 followed by written descriptions.

Table 4: Summary of Benchmark Results

Benchmark	Year	Aspirational	Less competitive	Peer
Level of academic challenge	First year			
	Senior			
Active and collaborative learning	First year			
	Senior			
Student-faculty interaction	First year			
	Senior			
Enriching educational experiences	First year			
	Senior			
Supportive campus environment	First year			
	Senior			

Level of Academic Challenge

First year: Significantly lower than aspirational institutions (effect size of $-.20$), not significantly different from less competitive or peer institutions. The average first year student at an aspirational institution reported a higher level of academic challenge than 58% of first year students at OSU.

Senior: Significantly lower than aspirational institutions (effect size of $-.16$), less competitive institutions (effect size of $-.20$), and peer institutions (effect size of $-.18$). The average senior student at a peer institution reported a higher level of academic challenge than 57% of senior students at OSU.



Sample items: number of written papers of 20 or more pages, between 5 and 19 pages; working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations; number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings; course work emphasizes applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.

Active and Collaborative Learning

First year: Significantly lower than aspirational institutions (effect size of $-.14$), not significantly different from less competitive or peer institutions. The average first year student at an aspirational institution reported a higher level of active and collaborative learning than 56% of first year students at OSU.

Senior: Not significantly different from aspirational, less competitive, or peer institutions.

Sample items: Made a class presentation, worked with other students on projects during class, asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions, tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary).

Student-Faculty Interaction

First year: Significantly higher than peer institutions (effect size of $.14$), not significantly different from aspirational or less competitive institutions. The average first year student at OSU reported a higher level of student-faculty interaction than 56% of students at peer institutions.

Senior: Significantly lower than aspirational institutions (effect size of $-.07$), not significantly different from less competitive or peer institutions. The average senior student at an aspirational institution reported a higher level of student-faculty interaction than 53% of seniors at OSU.

Sample items: Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements, received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance, discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.

Enriching Educational Experiences

First year: Significantly lower than aspirational institutions (effect size of $-.22$) and peer institutions (effect size of $-.15$), not significantly different from less competitive institutions. The average first year student at a peer institution reported a higher level of enriching educational experiences than 56% of first year students at OSU.

Senior: Significantly lower than aspirational institutions (effect size of $-.24$), significantly higher than less competitive institutions (effect size of $.21$), not significantly different from peer institutions. The average senior at an aspirational institution reported a higher level of enriching educational experiences than 59% of seniors at OSU. The average OSU student reported a higher level of enriching educational experiences than 58% of seniors at less competitive institutions.

Sample items: hours spent participating in co-curricular activities, community service or volunteer work, culminating senior experience, serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own.

Supportive Campus Environment

First year: Significantly higher than aspirational institutions (effect size of $.13$), less competitive institutions (effect size of $.17$), and peer institutions (effect size of $.15$). The average first year OSU student reported a more supportive campus environment than 55% of first year students at aspirational



institutions, than 57% of first year students at less competitive institutions, and 56% of first year students at peer institutions.

Senior: Significantly higher than peer institutions (effect size of .08), not significantly different from aspirational or less competitive institutions. The average OSU senior reported a more supportive campus environment than 53% of seniors at peer institutions. The score for OSU seniors in 2012 was significantly higher than the score for seniors in 2009.

Sample items: Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically, quality of relationships with other students, quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices.



Areas where OSU Outperformed Peer Institutions

There were many areas where OSU's scores were significantly higher than the selected peer institutions, including:

First year students

- First year number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages.
- Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.).
- Community service or volunteer work.
- Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.
- Relationships with other students.
- Relationships with faculty members.
- Relationships with administrative personnel and offices.
- Participating in co-curricular activities.
- Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work.
- Developing a deepened sense of spirituality.
- Quality of academic advising at your institution.
- Your entire educational experience at this institution.
- If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

Senior students

- Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.).
- Relationships with other students.
- Relationships with faculty members.
- Relationships with administrative personnel and offices.
- Your entire educational experience at this institution.
- If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

Areas where OSU Underperformed Peer Institutions

There were many areas where OSU's scores were significantly lower than the selected peer institutions, including:

First year students

- Made a class presentation.
- Had serious conversation with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own.
- Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.
- Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance.
- Foreign language coursework.
- Working for pay off campus.
- Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment.

Senior students

- Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages.
- Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course.
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings.
- Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance.



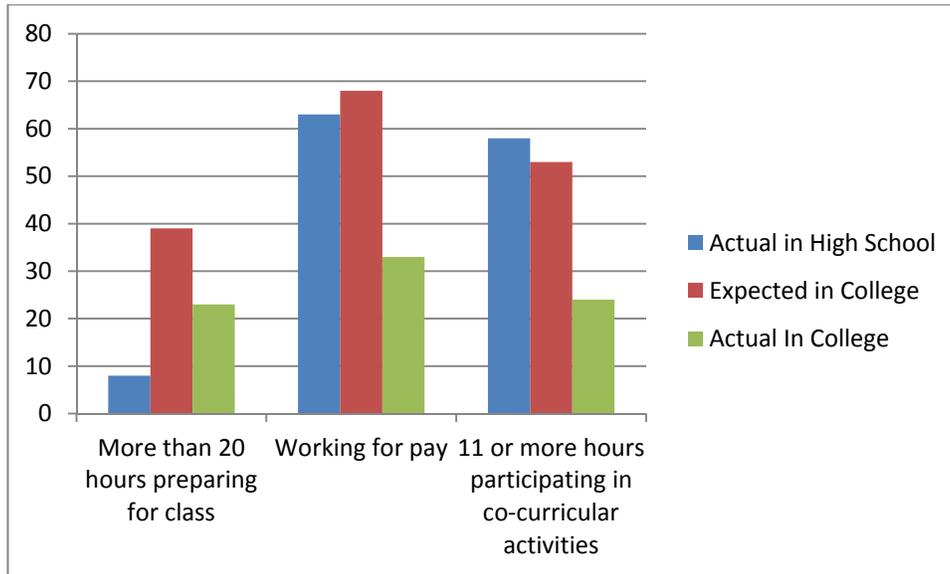
- Foreign language coursework.
- Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment.
- Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments.
- Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.



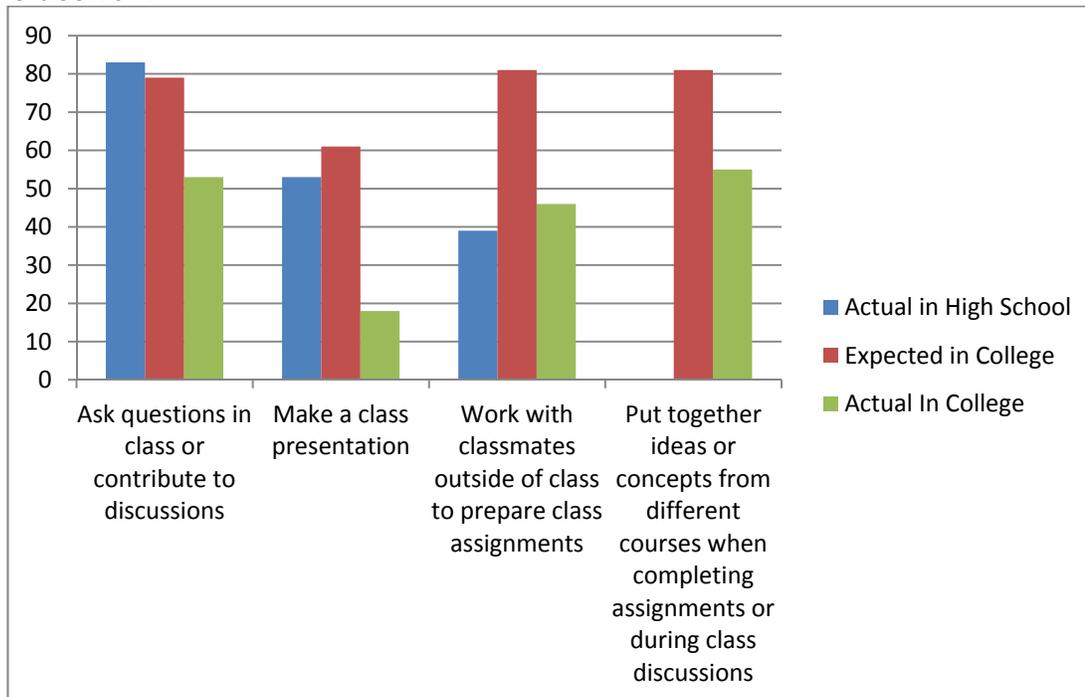
The Expectation Gap

Results from the [2011 Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (BCSSE) were used to provide information on how incoming freshmen expected to engage at OSU. The results from the BCSSE were then compared with the 2012 NSSE results. The results presented here are cross-sectional (all respondents from the BCSSE and first year NSSE are included even if students did not participate in both surveys). In general, students' reported engagement in the activities below was substantially lower than how they had expected to engage.

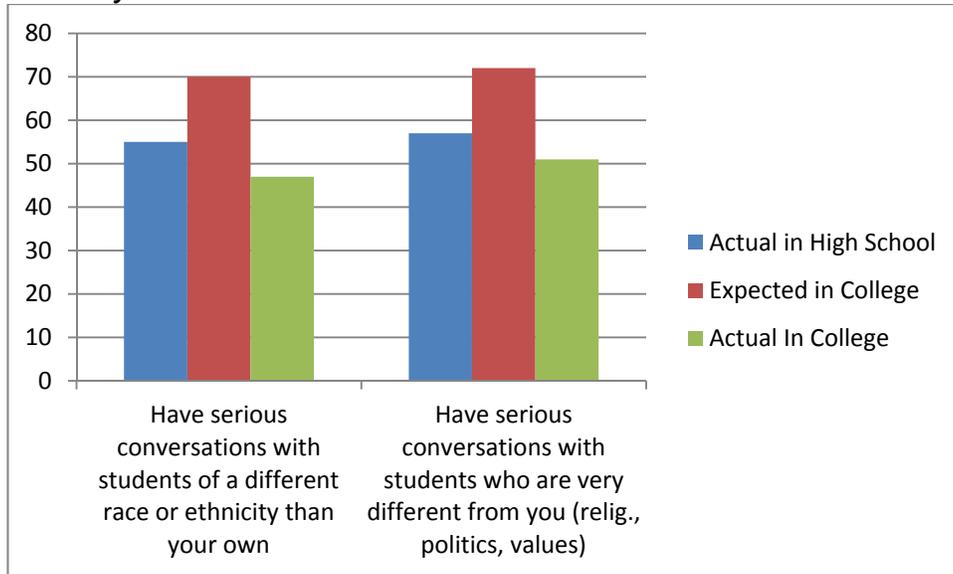
Use of Time



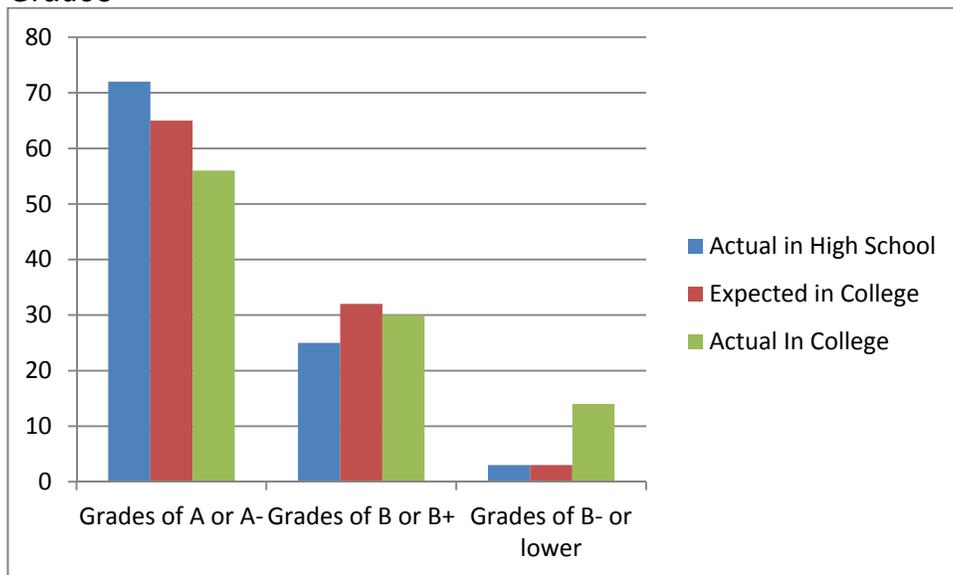
Classwork



Diversity



Grades



Recommendations and Discussion

First, OSU's senior students reported a lower level of academic challenge than seniors at the aspirational, less competitive, and peer institutions. This area was also a concern for seniors in 2009 (scoring significantly below selected peers, doctoral extensive participants, and the total 2009 NSSE population), in 2005 (scoring significantly below selected peers, doctoral extensive participants, and the total 2005 NSSE population), and in 2002 (scoring below doctoral extensive and the national pool). (In 2000 this benchmark calculation was not performed.) One strategy that may be helpful in addressing the perceived low level of academic challenge is to see that a larger portion of students participate in high-impacted practices (<http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>). This includes experiences in undergraduate research, learning communities, service learning, writing-intensive courses, and capstone courses and projects. Participation in such experiences should be strongly encouraged or required where possible. Other strategies include incorporating more opportunities for class presentations, encouraging the use of technology to increase collaboration between students in large classes, and modifying the general education program to support increases in the level of academic challenge of the program and to use deep and rich curricula.

Second, both seniors and first year students reported a more supportive campus environment than our peer institutions. This is an improvement from 2009 where there was no significant difference between OSU and our peer institutions. This may reflect new initiatives on campus to support students such as the LASSO Center, changes to advising, or improvements to other support services.

Third, OSU continues to be lower than peer institutions on two questions related to diversity: 1) Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own, and 2) had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values. However, the gap is small (effect sizes from $-.15$ and $-.09$).

Finally, future administrations of the NSSE must take additional steps to ensure a better response rate. Although NSSE has limits on what recruitment procedures are permitted, alternate strategies (such as using phone calls, working with orientation classes, offering cash incentives, etc.) should be explored prior to the survey administration process.



Glossary

First year students: All students who are classified as first-year by credit hour, regardless of whether or not the student is a “first-time” student. OSU defines “freshman” as 0-27 credit hours. This definition also includes transfer, part time, distance, and returning students if their cumulative credit hours are below 27. The credit count does not include Advanced Placement credits or other college credits earned prior to completing high school.

NSSE: National Survey of Student Engagement.

Seniors: All students who are classified as senior and within 12-24 credit hours of graduation. OSU defines “senior” as 94 or greater credit hours.

