



Stephen F. Austin State University
**National Engagement
Survey Report**
Spring 2011

Prepared by
The Office of Institutional Research

Stephen F. Austin State University National Engagement Survey Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>TABLE/PAGE TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Executive Summary	2
Diversity	
Chart 1: NSSE Question 1u. (Students had serious conversations with student of different race.)	10
Chart 2: NSSE Question 1v. (Students had serious conversations with students of different beliefs.)	10
Chart 3: NSSE Question 6f. (Students learned something that changed their understanding of issue.)	10
Chart 4: NSSE Question 10c. (Institution encourages contact among students from different ethnic groups.)	10
Student-Faculty Interaction	
Chart 5: NSSE Question 1n. (Students discussed assignments with an instructor.)	11
Chart 6: NSSE Question 1o. (Students talked about career plans with faculty/advisor.)	11
Chart 7: NSSE Question 1s. (Students worked with faculty on activities other than coursework.)	11
Chart 8: NSSE Question 1q. (Students received prompt feedback from faculty.)	11
Supportive Campus Environment	
Chart 9: NSSE Question 8b. (Students rating of quality of relationships with faculty.)	12
Chart 10: NSSE Question 10b. (Institution emphasizes providing students support to succeed academically.)	12
Chart 11: NSSE Question 8c. (Students rating of quality of relationships with administrative personnel.)	12
Chart 12: NSSE Question 10e. (Institution emphasizes providing students support to thrive socially.)	12
Time Usage	
Chart 13: NSSE Question 9b. (Students spend how many hours per week working on campus?)	13
Chart 14: NSSE Question 9f. (Students spend how many hours per week caring for dependents?)	13
Chart 15: NSSE Question 9c. (Students spend how many hours per week working off campus?)	13
Chart 16: NSSE Question 9g. (Students spend how many hours per week commuting to class?)	13
Miscellaneous Questions	
Chart 17: NSSE Question 9d. (Students spend how many hours per week participating in co-curricular activities?)	14
Chart 18: NSSE Question 10f. (Institution emphasizes attendance at campus events.)	14
Chart 19: NSSE Question 11b. (Students develop knowledge in acquiring job or work-related skills.)	14
Chart 20: NSSE Question 11h. (Students develop knowledge in working effectively with others.)	14
Communication	
Chart 21: NSSE Question 3d. (Papers or reports produced by students between 5 to 19 pages.)	15
Chart 22: NSSE Question 3e. (Papers or reports produced by students of fewer than 5 pages.)	15
Chart 23: NSSE Question 11c. (Students develop knowledge in writing clearly and effectively.)	15
Chart 24: NSSE Question 11d. (Students develop knowledge in speaking clearly and effectively.)	15
FSSE vs. NSSE - Faculty Interaction	
Chart 25: Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.	16
Chart 26: Come to class without completing readings or assignments.	16
Chart 27: Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on academic performance.	16
Chart 28: Worked harder than usual to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.	16
FSSE vs. NSSE - Diversity	
Chart 29: Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than his or her own.	17
Chart 30: Discussed ideas from his or her readings or classes with others outside of class.	17
Chart 31: Had serious conversations with students who are different from him in term of beliefs/opinions/values.	17
Chart 32: Tried to understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from person's perspective.	17
FSSE vs. NSSE - Perceived Student Gains	
Chart 33: Writing clearly and effectively.	18
Chart 34: Speaking clearly and effectively.	18
Chart 35: Thinking critically and analytically.	18
Chart 36: Solving complex real-world problems.	18
FSSE vs. NSSE - Student Work	
Chart 37: Time spent working on campus.	19
Chart 38: Time spent working off campus.	19

Stephen F. Austin State University
National Engagement Survey Report
Spring 2011

Executive Summary

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is focused on student success and strives to determine opportunities for improvement in student learning and personal development. The *SFA Strategic Plan 2013: Preparing for the Future* outlines plans for student success through university-wide collaboration. Additionally, SFA is regionally accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), an organization which emphasizes “foundations for quality enhancement”.

To monitor the progress of its supportive learning environment, SFA adopted a regular assessment schedule for the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a project coordinated through the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. NSSE provides important insight about the quality of undergraduate learning and contributes to national benchmarks of effective educational practice.

SFA additionally scheduled regular participation with the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) as a complementary assessment instrument. FSSE is designed to measure faculty expectations for student engagement in educational practices that are known to be empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. The FSSE information may further assist the identification of institutional strengths, as well as motivating opportunities for improvement.

Methodology

The SFA Office of Institutional Research (OIR) prepared potential student and faculty respondent data in the fall of 2010. The OIR further coordinated with the NSSE Institute to administer the surveys during the 2011 spring semester. Many survey administration aspects were handled by NSSE (drawing random student samples, emailing student surveys, distributing follow-up contacts with non-respondents, and initial data analysis).

For the NSSE administration, random samples of first-year and senior students were selected for participation. The OIR reviewed sample populations and updated enrollment and graduation statuses to help ensure a valid and available survey group. The sampled students were invited by SFA President, Baker Pattillo, to participate in the NSSE survey. Students received four email contacts containing a hyperlink to the web-based version of the survey.

The FSSE paralleled student survey efforts. The OIR selected a faculty sample of full-time lecturers, instructors and professorial ranked individuals who were scheduled to teach during the 2010-11 year. The OIR reviewed potential faculty respondent information in the spring semester prior to survey opening and updated employment statuses as needed to secure a valid survey population. SFA Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Richard Berry, emailed the selected faculty to invite participation in the web-based FSSE administration. Selected faculty were emailed several participation reminders.

NSSE has been collecting data from students at four-year colleges and universities around the country since 2000. SFA participated in the 2011 national administration along with almost two million other first-year and senior students. The 2011 sampled students were randomly selected from data files provided by 751 participating four-year colleges and universities. Approximately 537,000 students from this sample responded.

Stephen F. Austin State University
National Survey of Student Engagement
Spring 2011

Executive Summary

Results

NSSE sampling procedures require sending the survey to an equal number of first-year and senior students with the standard sample size determined by the number of undergraduate students enrolled at the institution. In Spring 2011, students at 25 colleges and universities (3%) had the option of responding via a traditional paper questionnaire. Seventy-nine institutions (11%) opted for Web+ administration which includes multiple email contacts and one paper questionnaire sent to a portion of non-respondents. SFA used the Web-only administration mode where students received all contacts electronically and only completed the online survey. Six-hundred forty-seven schools (86%) opted for the Web-only administration. NSSE reports a continuing trend of institutions moving to more web-based administrations. Overall, about 99% of all NSSE 2011 respondents completed the survey online.

NSSE 2011 schools closely resemble the national profile of four-year colleges and universities with respect to institutional type, size, region, and location. Caveats include the following: Public institutions are overrepresented while very small institutions – those with fewer than 1,000 undergraduates – are underrepresented. Also institutions with very high levels of research activity were also slightly underrepresented.

In each NSSE administration, institutions are offered the opportunity to customize institutional reports by tailoring up to three comparison groups. For 2011, SFA selected all participating Texas public universities, all participating SACS level V public peer institutions, and all NSSE 2011 institutions for comparison purposes.

The NSSE instrument was completed by 577 SFA students (298 first-year; 279 seniors). Overall the SFA response rate was 11% with a slightly larger proportion of senior students responding than first-time freshmen. The SFA response rate was lower than the Texas Public, SACS Public, and NSSE comparison groups. SFA responses by gender differed from comparison groups for first-year students (79% female and 21% male) and senior students (70% female and 30% male). Comparison groups were approximately two-thirds female and one-third male. The ethnic distribution of SFA and comparison group respondents was similar to the SFA student body population with slightly less proportions of Black/African American responses. In comparing the ethnic distribution of the NSSE respondents to the SFA student body, Black/African American first-year students are underrepresented.

To focus student engagement and guide institutional improvement efforts, NSSE sorts response means from the 85 survey questions into five **benchmarks of effective educational practice**:

- *Level of Academic Challenge*
- *Active and Collaborative Learning*
- *Student-Faculty Interaction*
- *Enriching Educational Experiences*
- *Supportive Campus Environment*

Stephen F. Austin State University
National Survey of Student Engagement
Spring 2011

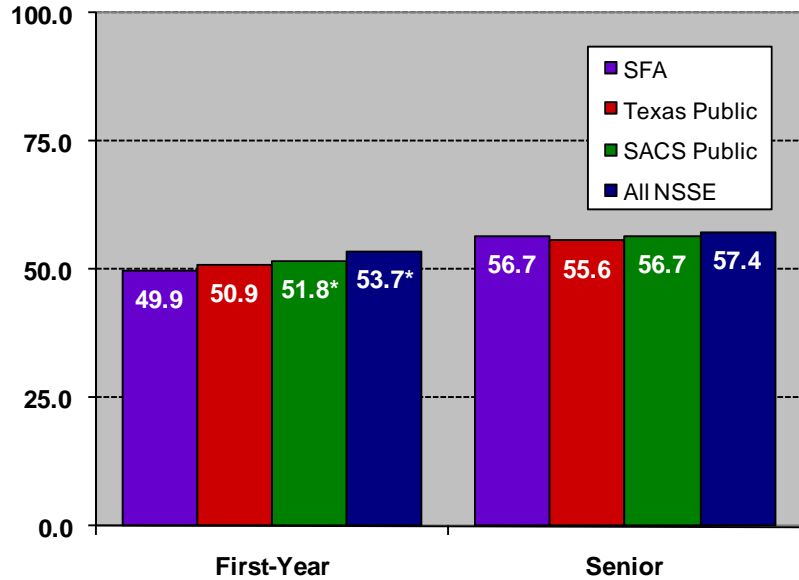
Executive Summary

Results (continued)

**NSSE Benchmark
 Level of Academic Challenge
 (LAC)**

SFA response means were significantly lower than the comparison groups for the *Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)* benchmark for first-year students compared to SACS public institutions and all NSSE institutions.

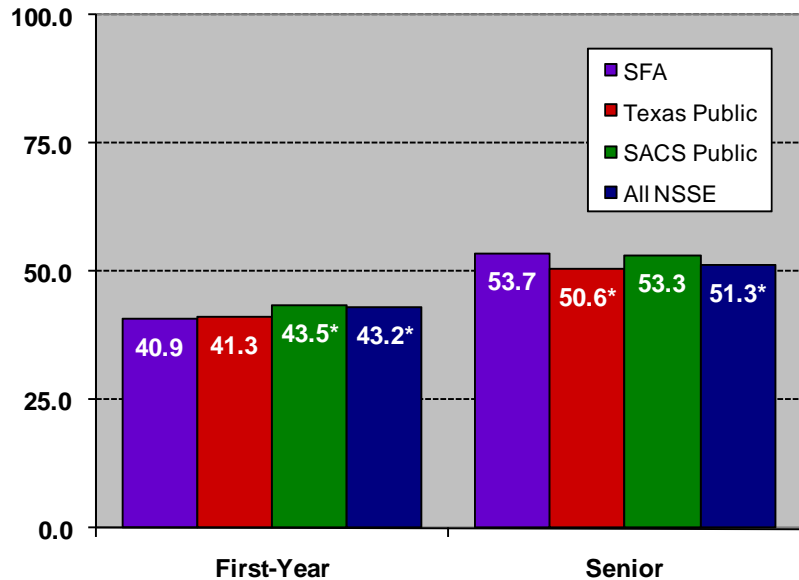
(Comparisons that are statistically significant are denoted with an asterisk.)



**NSSE Benchmark
 Active & Collaborative Learning
 (ACL)**

SFA response means were significantly higher than the comparison groups for the *Active & Collaborative Learning (ACL)* benchmark for senior students compared to Texas public institutions and all NSSE institutions.

(Comparisons that are statistically significant are denoted with an asterisk.)



*SFA's mean is significantly higher or lower at the p<.05 level.
 Prepared by The Office of Institutional Research; SFASU; 1/2012

Stephen F. Austin State University
 National Survey of Student Engagement
 Spring 2011

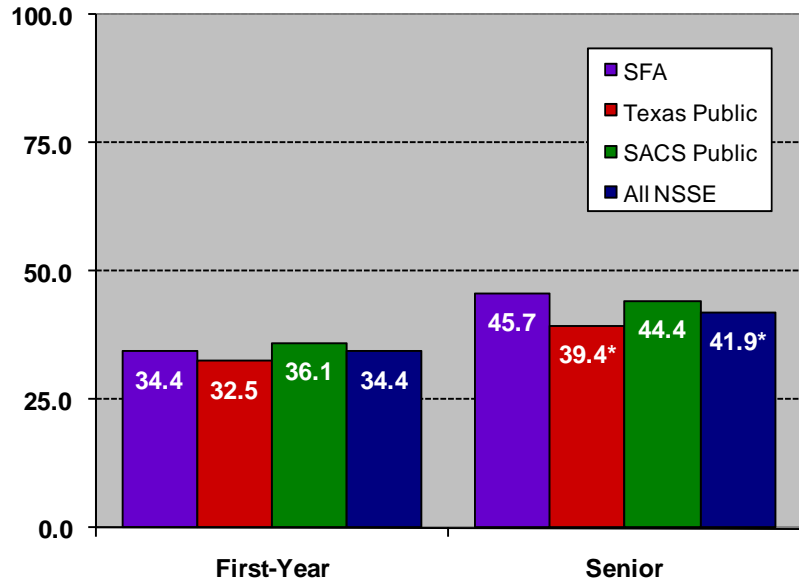
Executive Summary

Results (continued)

**NSSE Benchmark
 Student-Faculty Interaction
 (SFI)**

SFA response means were significantly higher than the comparison groups for the *Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)* benchmark for senior students compared to Texas public institutions and all NSSE institutions.

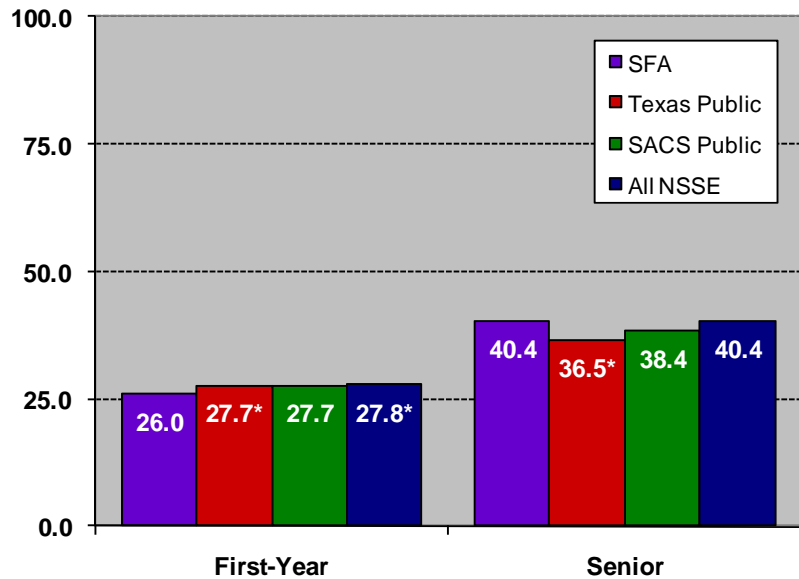
(Comparisons that are statistically significant are denoted with an asterisk.)



**NSSE Benchmark
 Enriching Educational Experiences
 (EEE)**

SFA response means were significantly higher than the comparison groups for the *Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)* benchmark for senior students compared to Texas public institutions.

(Comparisons that are statistically significant are denoted with an asterisk.)



*SFA's mean is significantly higher or lower at the p<.05 level.
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Stephen F. Austin State University
National Survey of Student Engagement
 Spring 2011

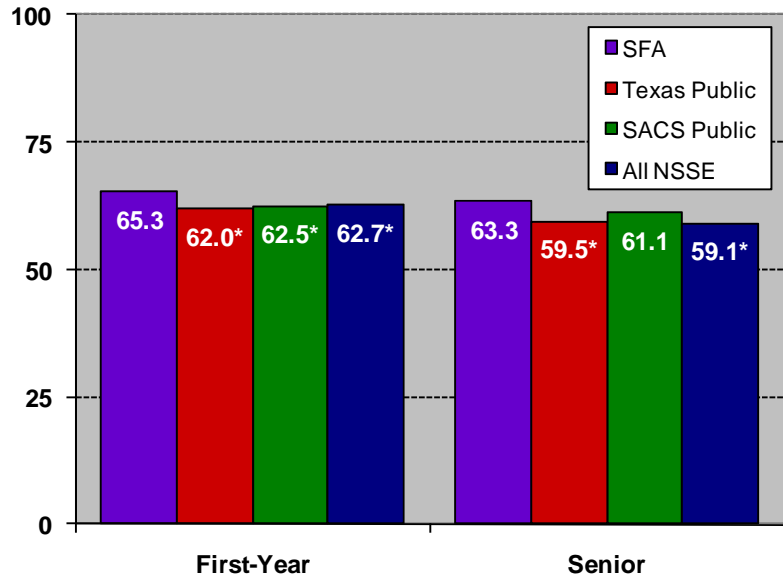
Executive Summary

Results (continued)

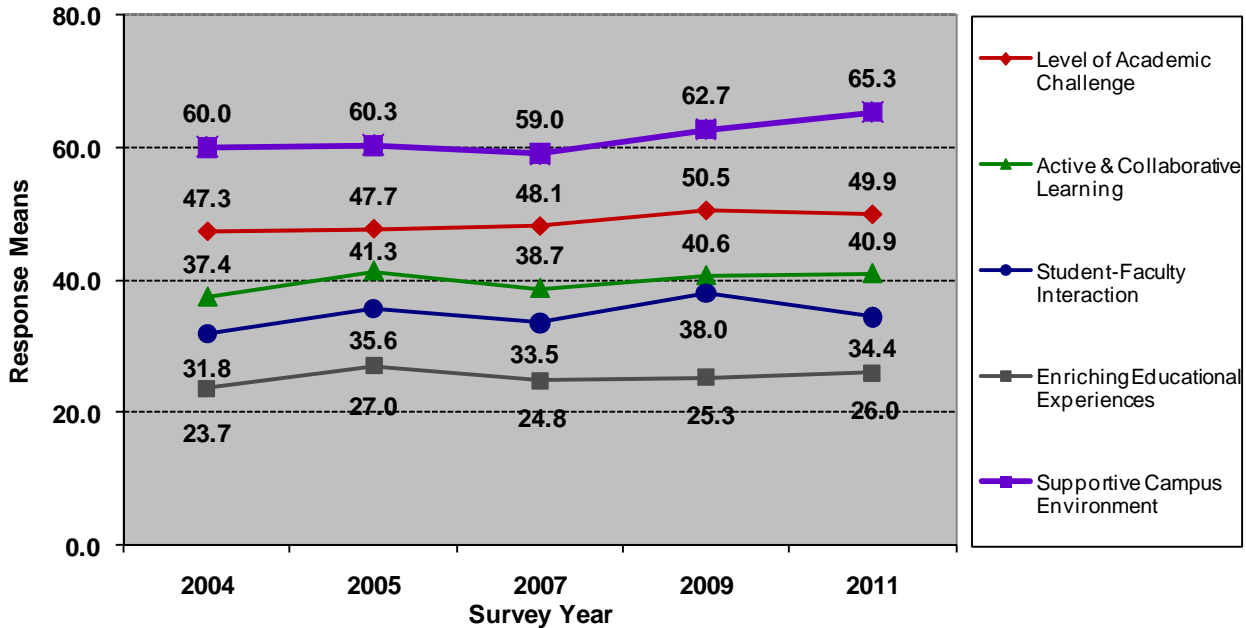
**NSSE Benchmark
 Supportive Campus Environment
 (SCE)**

SFA response means were significantly higher than the comparison groups for the *Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)* benchmark for first year and senior students compared to Texas public institutions, SACS public institutions, and NSSE institutions.

(Comparisons that are statistically significant are denoted with an asterisk.)



**Multi-Year NSSE Benchmark Scores
 First-Year Students**



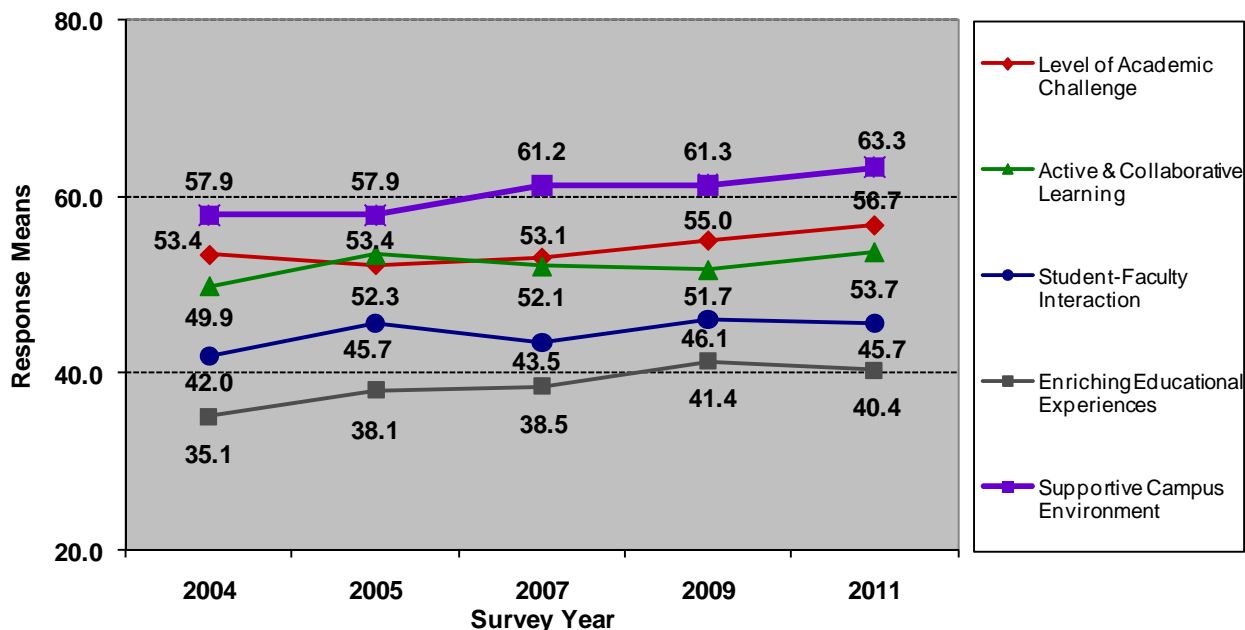
*SFA's mean is significantly higher or lower at the $p < .05$ level.
 Prepared by The Office of Institutional Research; SFASU; 1/2012

Stephen F. Austin State University
 National Survey of Student Engagement
 Spring 2011

Executive Summary

Results (continued)

Multi-Year NSSE Benchmark Scores
 Senior Students



FSSE Summary

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was designed to compliment the NSSE by measuring faculty members' expectations of student engagement and educational practices that are linked to learning and development.

In 2011, almost 20,000 faculty from 157 colleges and universities responded to the FSSE. Faculty members at participating institutions were sent invitation emails and asked to respond to the online survey.

Points to note concerning SFA FSSE respondents include the following:

- 282 of 497 invited faculty responded to the FSSE for a response rate of 57%.
- 75% were of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor rank.
- 80% were tenured or on tenure track.
- 50% were male; 50% were female.
- Respondents participated from each discipline.

Stephen F. Austin State University
National Survey of Student Engagement
Spring 2011

Executive Summary

Conclusion

NSSE responses indicate that SFA students are effectively engaged in several areas.

- SFA students enjoy interacting with individuals different from themselves. (Tables 1-4)
- SFA faculty members excel in engaging with students compared to other Texas Public institutions. (Tables 5-8)
- SFA students enjoy a campus environment that provides them the support they need to succeed. (Tables 9-12)
- SFA senior students are much more likely to work on-campus than all comparison groups. SFA first-year students are much less likely to work off-campus than all comparison groups. (Tables 13 & 15)
- SFA students are more likely to report time spent in co-curricular activities than comparison institutions. (Table 17)
- SFA first-year students indicated that SFA emphasizes attending campus events and activities (more than comparison institutions) and the response mean fell in the “Quite a bit” to “Very much” range. In contrast, the SFA senior student response mean was slightly lower than comparison institutions and fell in the “Some” to “Quite a bit” range, indicating that there is a change of attitude between the two groups. (Table 18)
- SFA students are more likely to report that experiences at SFA contributed to acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills than students at comparison institutions. (Table 19)
- SFA senior students are more likely to report that experiences at SFA contributed to development of skills in working effectively with others than students at comparison institutions. (Table 20)

SFA NSSE responses provide contradictory data in communication skills of students.

- SFA first-year and senior students report fewer written papers or reports (between 5 to 19 pages) than comparison institutions. (Table 21)
- SFA first-year students report fewer written papers or reports (fewer than 5 pages) than comparison institutions. (Table 22)

However,

- SFA first-year and senior students report that experience at SFA contribute to knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing clearly and effectively more often than comparison institutions. (Table 23)
- SFA first-year and senior students report that experience at SFA contribute to knowledge, skills, and personal development in speaking clearly and effectively. (Table 24)

FSSE faculty perceptions and NSSE student responses differ in several areas:

- Number of drafts prepared for written assignments. (Table 25)
- How often students attend classes unprepared. (Table 26)
- How promptly students receive written or oral feedback on academic performance. (Table 27)
- How often students work harder than usual to meet an instructor’s expectations. (Table 28)

Stephen F. Austin State University
National Survey of Student Engagement
Spring 2011

Executive Summary

Conclusion (continued)

FSSE faculty perceptions and NSSE student responses differ in several areas: (Continued)

- How often students interact with peers of a different race or ethnicity. (Table 29)
- How often students discuss ideas from class with others outside of class. (Table 30)
- How often students have conversations with students who are different from him or her in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values. (Table 31)
- Perceived student gains:
 - Writing clearly and effectively (Table 33)
 - Speaking clearly and effectively (Table 34)
 - Thinking critically and analytically (Table 35)
 - Solving complex real-world problems (Table 36)
- How much time students spend in a 7-day week working on-campus. (Table 37)
- How much time students spend in a 7-day week working off-campus. (Table 38)

Student engagement at SFA appears to be strong, and engagement appears to strengthen as students progress to the senior year. Engagement in relation to the ways in which students interact with faculty appears to be a particular strength for SFA, especially in the senior year. However, providing a supportive campus environment (SCE) consistently is the engagement strength for SFA. Not only is it the SCE benchmark where SFA excelled in 2011; it is also the benchmark where SFA historically excels. The SCE benchmark score is consistently higher than comparison institutions and also higher than the other benchmark areas each survey year.

In contrast, an opportunity for improvement seems to exist in the benchmark area “Level of Academic Challenge” (LAC). For first-year SFA students, the response mean was significantly lower than SACS public institutions and NSSE institutions. (All other response means for LAC were not significantly different from comparison institutions.) In comparing SFA to comparison institutions for all other benchmark categories, there was at least one positive comparison. Only the LAC benchmark lacked a positive comparison.

Additionally, there is a disconnect in the perceptions of faculty and students concerning several topics including class preparation, faculty responsiveness, perceived academic gains, and amount of time students work on and off campus. The disconnect in faculty-student perceptions also may provide an opportunity for improvement at SFA.

Stephen F. Austin State University
 National Engagement Survey Report
 Spring 2011

Diversity Related Issues

Chart 1: NSSE Question 1u.
 How often have students had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own? (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often)

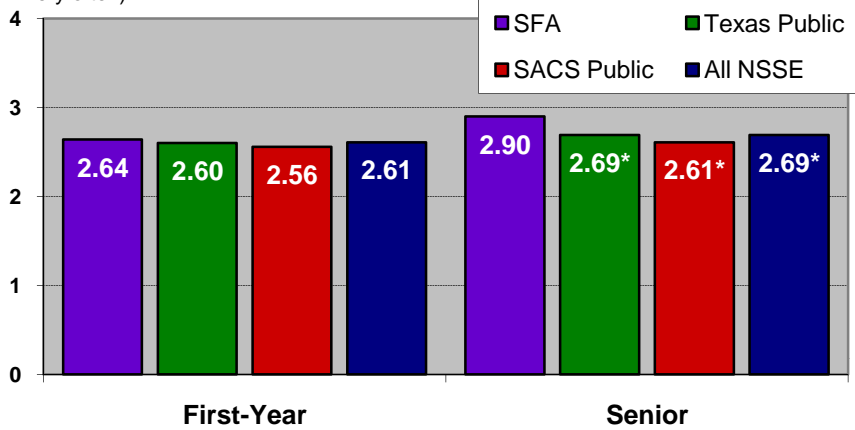


Chart 2: NSSE Question 1v.
 How often have students had serious conversations with students who are very different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values? (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often)

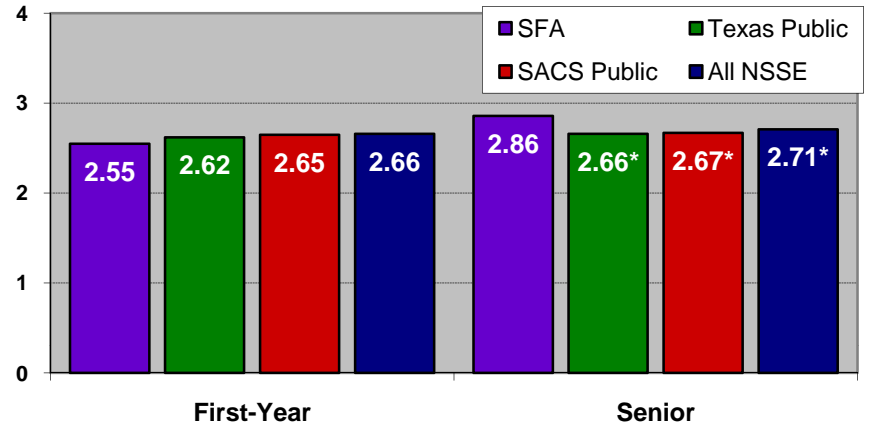


Chart 3: NSSE Question 6f.
 How often have students learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept? (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often)

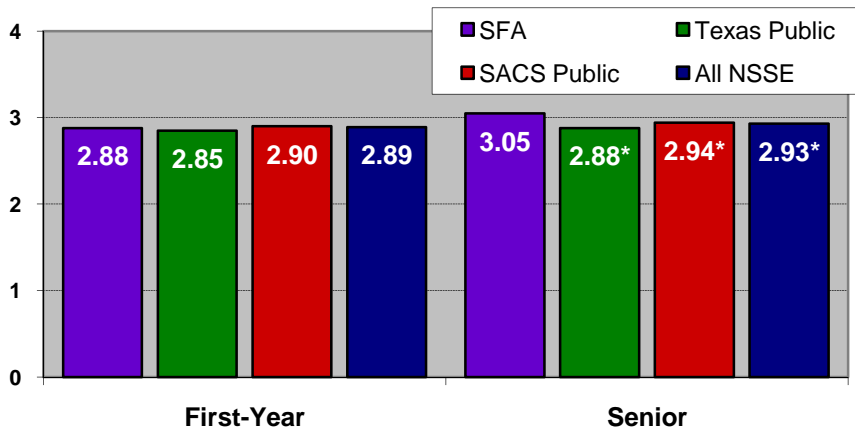
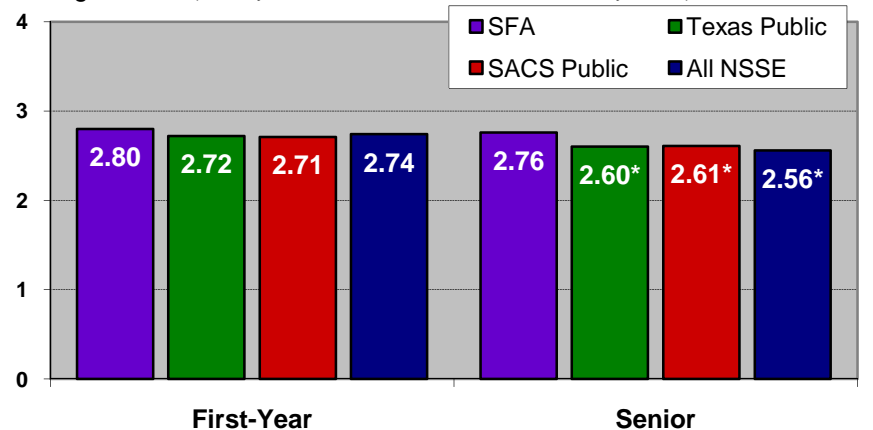


Chart 4: NSSE Question 10c.
 To what extent does the institution emphasize encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds? (1=Very Little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)



Information Source: National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana Center for Postsecondary Research

*SFA's mean is significantly higher or lower at the p<.05 level.
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Stephen F. Austin State University
 National Engagement Survey Report
 Spring 2011

Student-Faculty Interaction

Chart 5: NSSE Question 1n.
 How often have students discussed grades or assignments with an instructor? (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often)

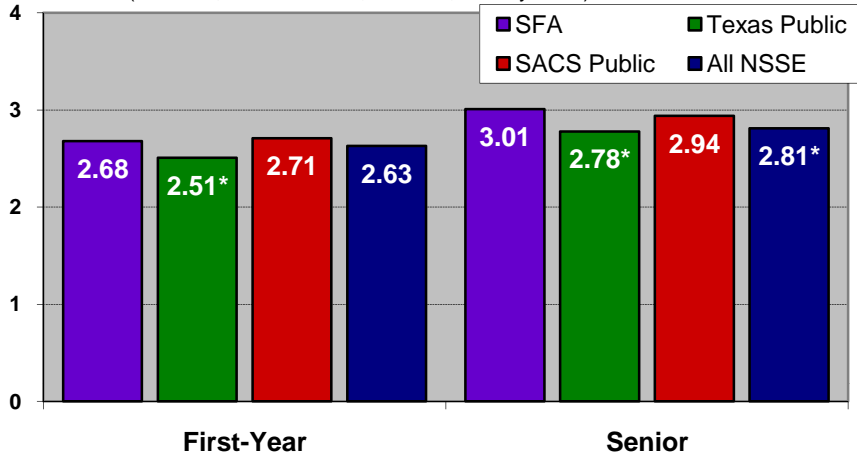


Chart 6: NSSE Question 1o.
 How often have students talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor? (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often)

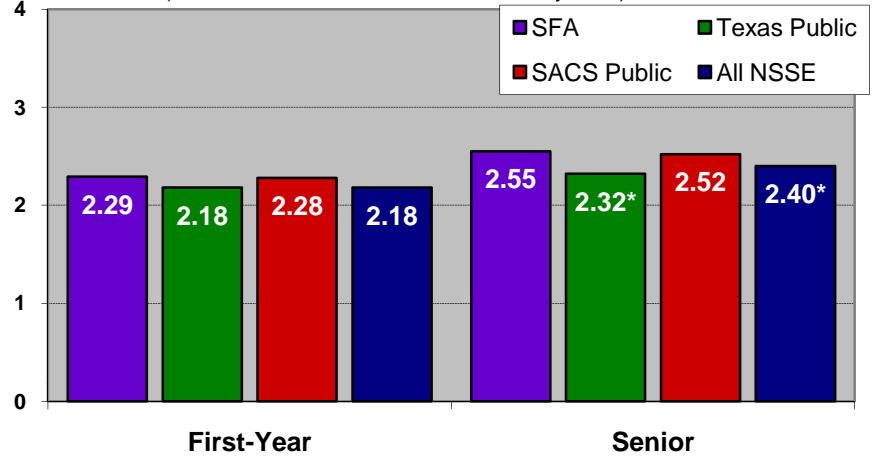


Chart 7: NSSE Question 1s.
 How often have students worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)? (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often)

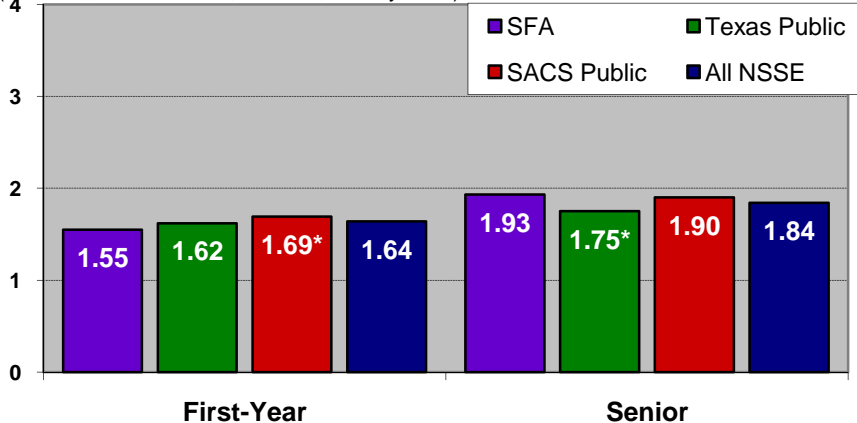
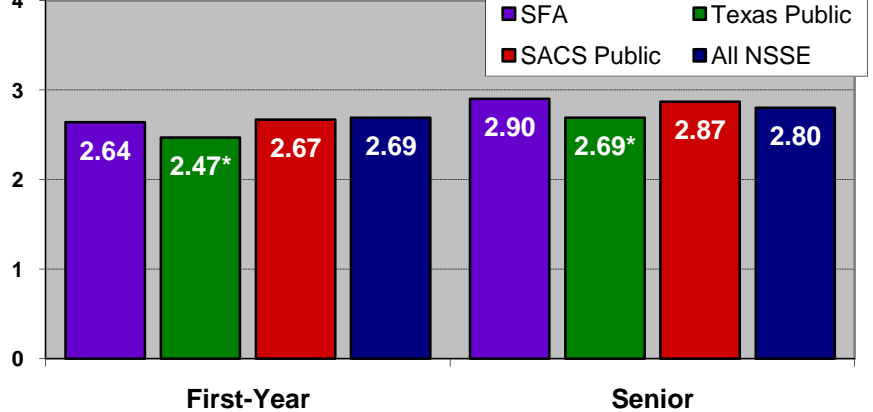


Chart 8: NSSE Question 1q.
 How often have students received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on academic performance? (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often)



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Stephen F. Austin State University
 National Engagement Survey Report
 Spring 2011

Supportive Campus Environment

Chart 9: NSSE Question 8b.

How do students rate the quality of relationships with faculty?
 (1=Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic to 7=Available, Helpful, Sympathetic)

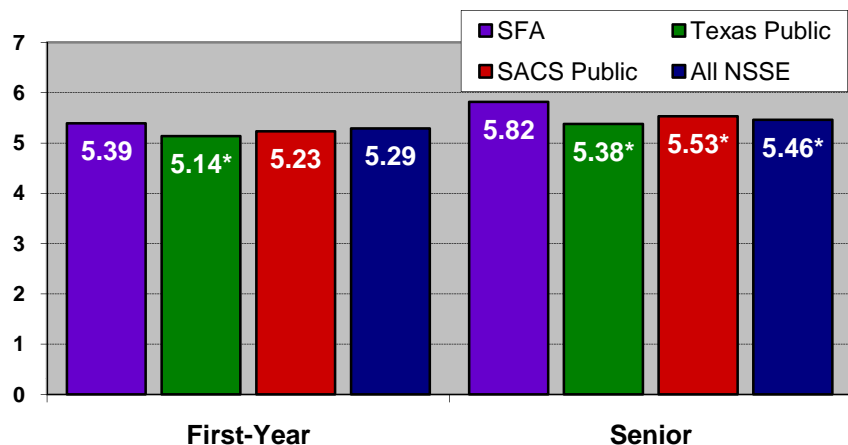


Chart 10: NSSE Question 10b.

To what extent does the institution emphasize providing students the support they need to succeed academically? (1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)

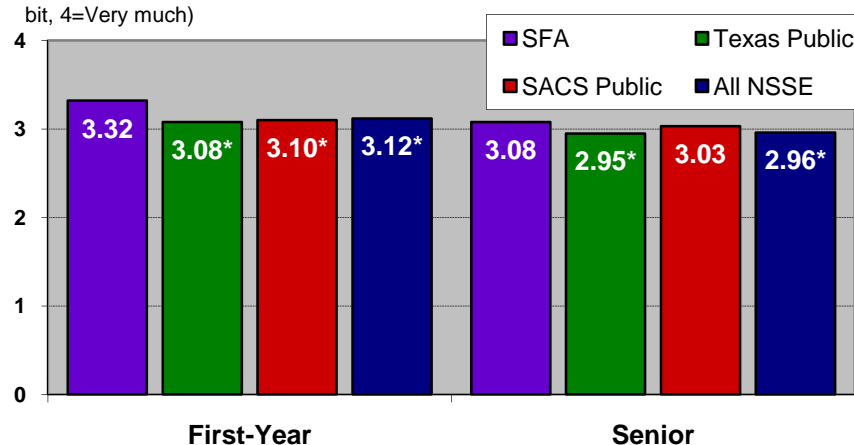


Chart 11: NSSE Question 8c.

How do students rate the quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices? (1=Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid to 7=Helpful, Considerate, Flexible)

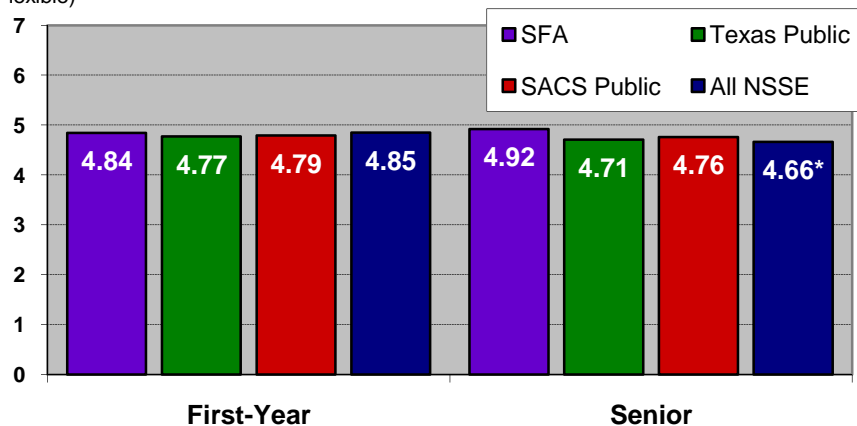
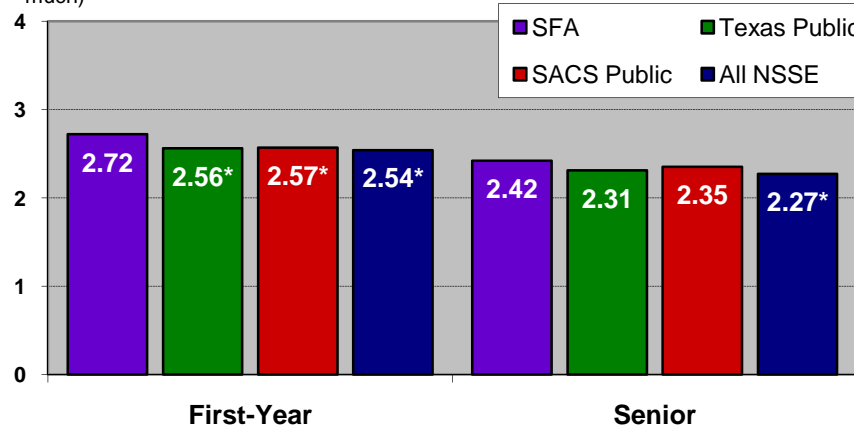


Chart 12: NSSE Question 10e.

To what extent does the institution emphasize providing students the support they need to thrive socially? (1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)



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Stephen F. Austin State University
National Engagement Survey Report
Spring 2011

Time Usage

Chart 13: NSSE 9b.

About how many hours per week do students spend in a typical 7-day week working for pay on campus? (1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=More than 30 hrs/wk)

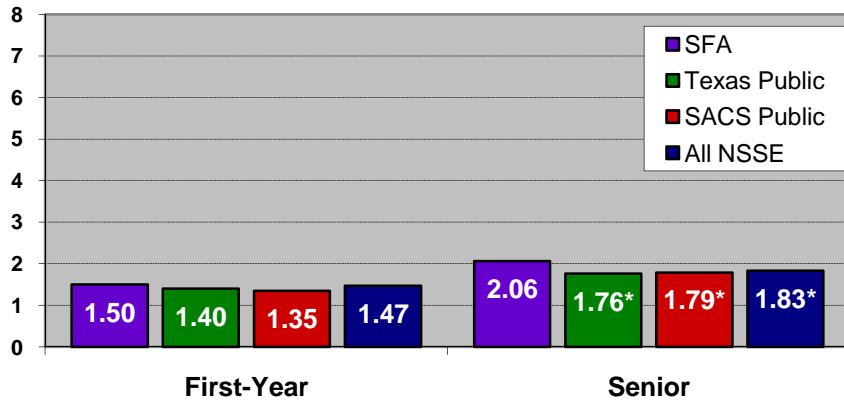


Chart 14: NSSE 9f.

About how many hours per week do students spend in a typical 7-day week providing care for dependents living with them (parents, children, spouses, etc.)? (1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=More than 30 hrs/wk)

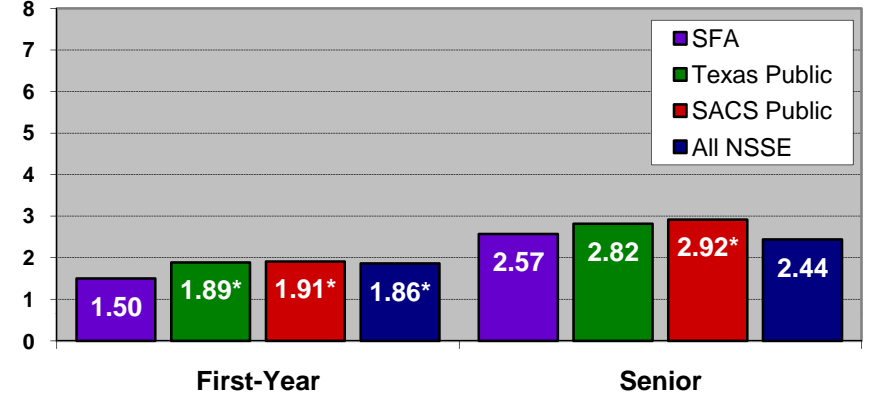


Chart 15: NSSE 9c.

About how many hours per week do students spend in a typical 7-day week working for pay off campus? (1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=More than 30 hrs/wk)

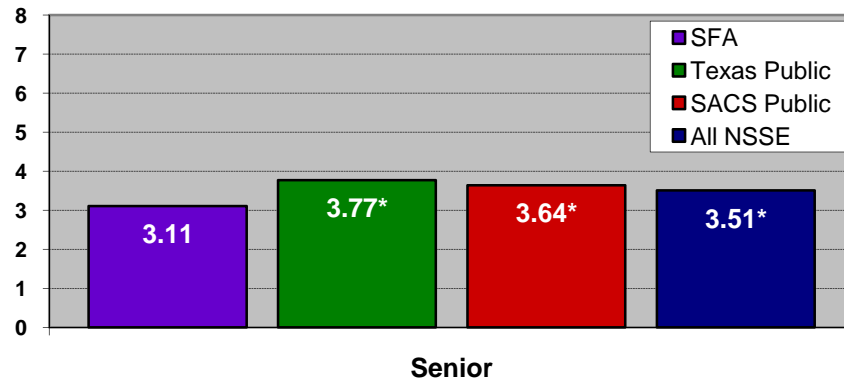
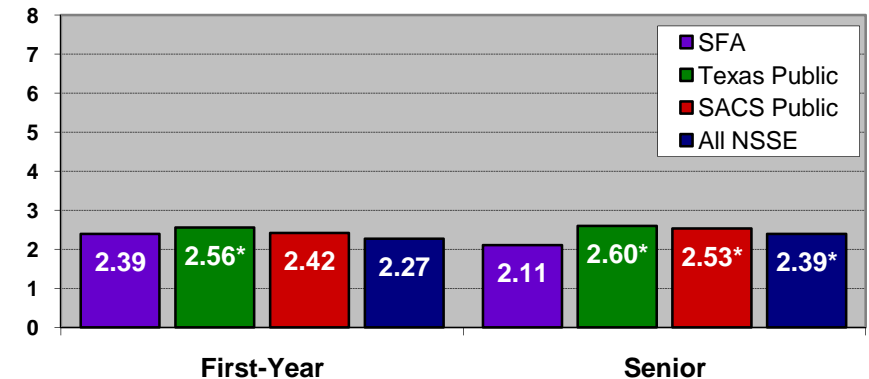


Chart 16: NSSE 9g.

About how many hours per week do students spend in a typical 7-day week commuting to class? (1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=More than 30 hrs/wk)



Stephen F. Austin State University
National Engagement Survey Report
Spring 2011

Miscellaneous Questions

Chart 17: NSSE 9d.

About how many hours per week do students spend in a typical 7-day week participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)? (1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=More than 30 hrs/wk)

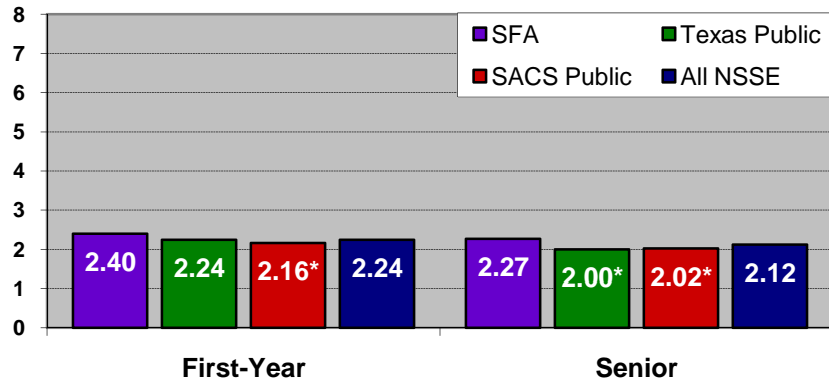


Chart 18: NSSE Question 10f.

To what extent does the institution emphasize attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)? (1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)

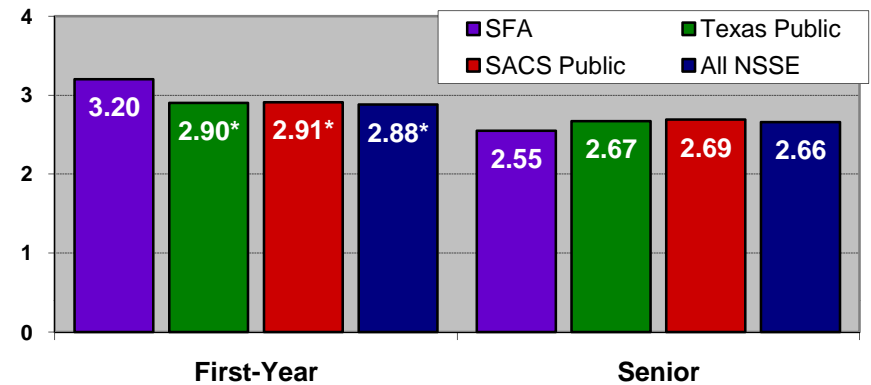


Chart 19: NSSE 11b.

To what extent do students report that experiences at this institution contributed to knowledge, skills, and personal development in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills? (1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)

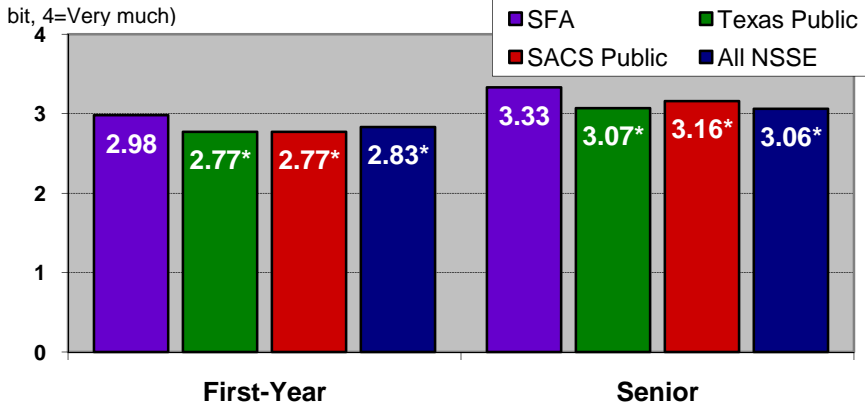
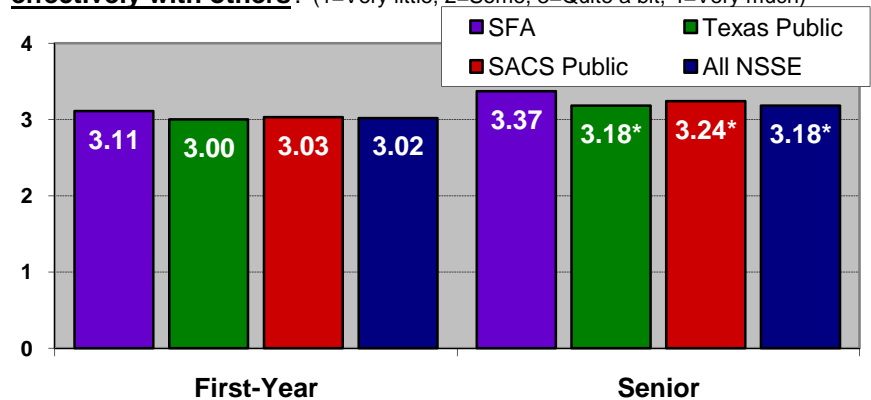


Chart 20: NSSE 11h.

To what extent do students report that experiences at this institution contributed to knowledge, skills, and personal development in working effectively with others? (1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)



Stephen F. Austin State University
 National Engagement Survey Report
 Spring 2011

Communication Skills

Chart 21: NSSE 3d.

During a given school year, about how many written papers or reports do students produce between 5 to 19 pages? (1=None, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=More than 20)

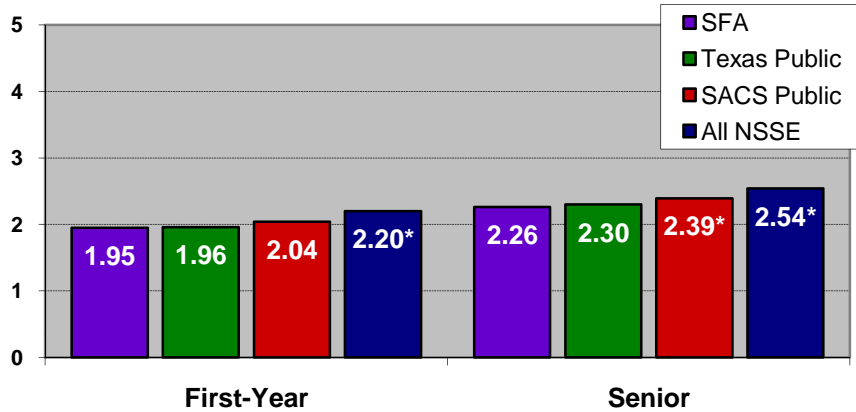


Chart 22: NSSE 3e.

During a given school year, about how many written papers or reports do students produce of fewer than 5 pages? (1=None, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=More than 20)

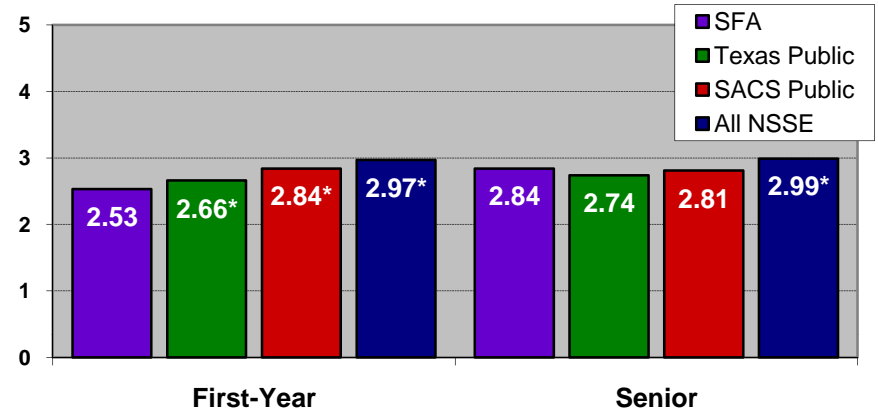


Chart 23: NSSE 11c.

To what extent do students report that experiences at this institution contributed to knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing clearly and effectively? (1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)

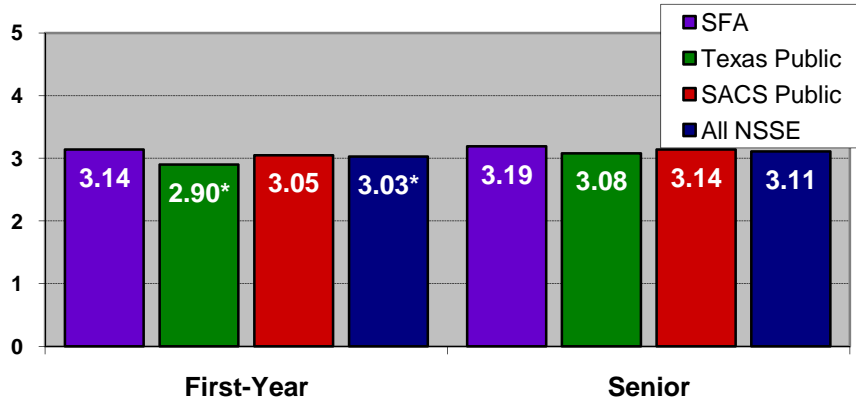
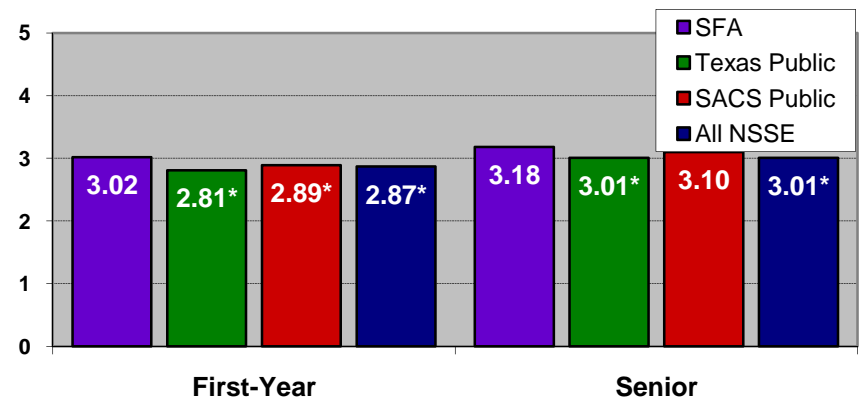


Chart 24: NSSE 11d.

To what extent do students report that experiences at this institution contributed to knowledge, skills, and personal development in speaking clearly and effectively? (1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much)



*SFA's mean is significantly higher or lower at the p<.05 level.
 Prepared by The Office of Institutional Research; SFASU; 1/2012.

**Stephen F. Austin State University
National Engagement Survey Report
Spring 2011**

FSSE vs. NSSE - Faculty Interaction

Chart 25:
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.

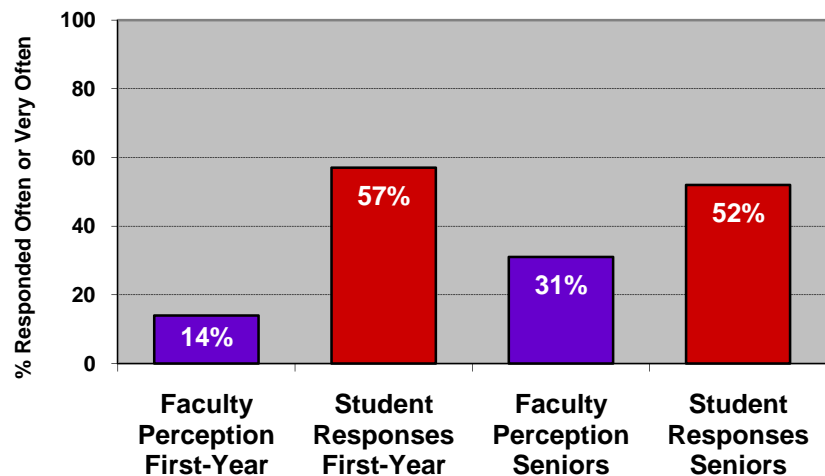


Chart 26:
Come to class without completing readings or assignments.

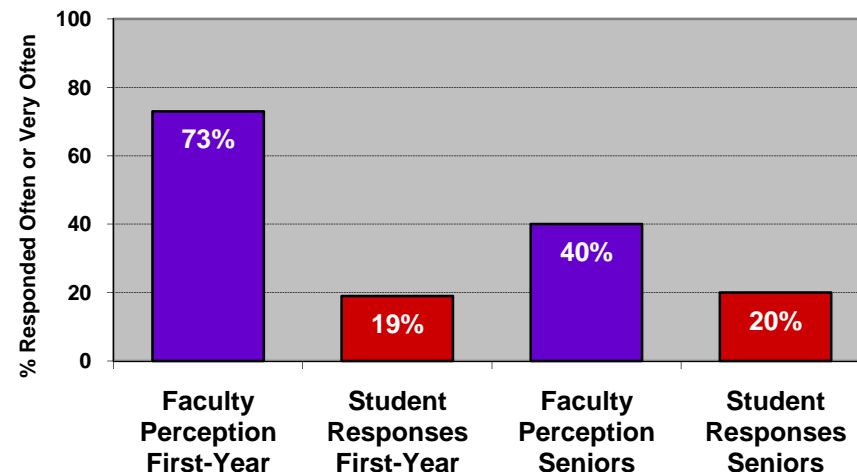


Chart 27:
Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on his or her academic performance.

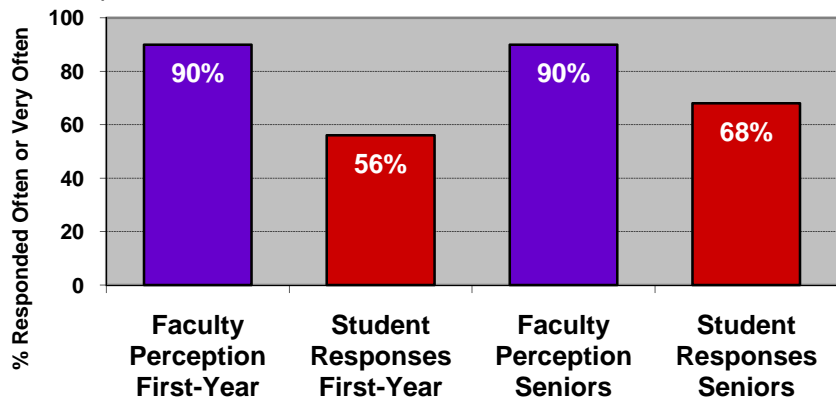
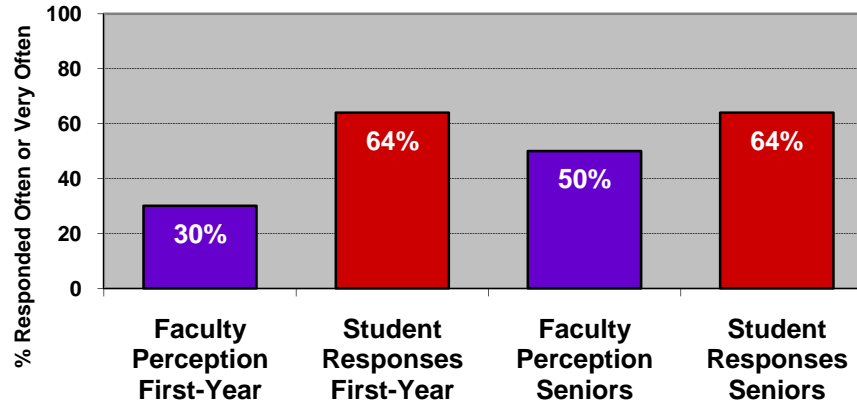


Chart 28:
Worked harder than usual to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.



*SFA's mean is significantly higher or lower at the p<.05 level.
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National Engagement Survey Report
Spring 2011

FSSE vs. NSSE - Diversity

Chart 29:

Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than his or her own.

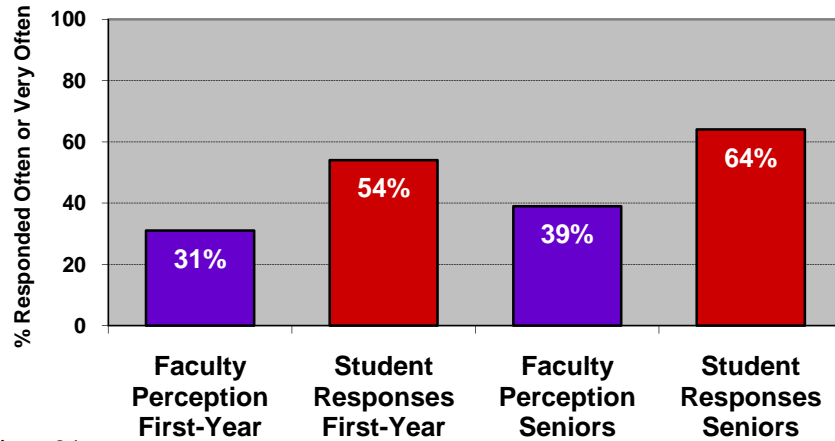


Chart 30:

Discussed ideas from his or her readings or classes with others outside of class (other students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

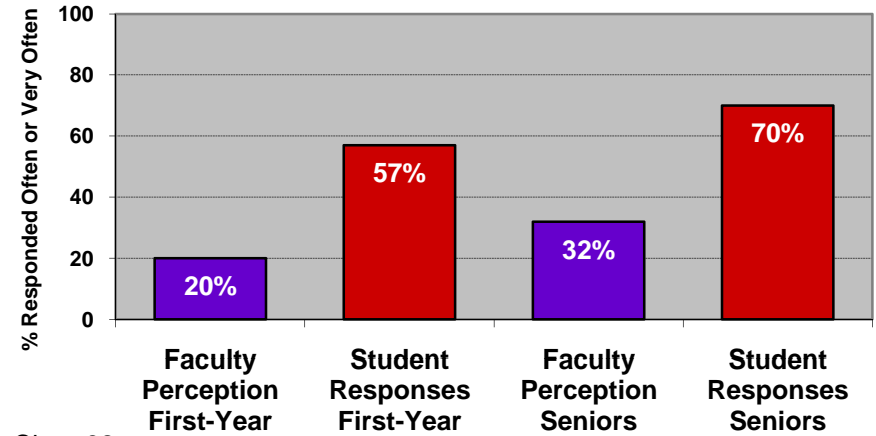


Chart 31:

Had serious conversations with students who are very different from him or her in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.

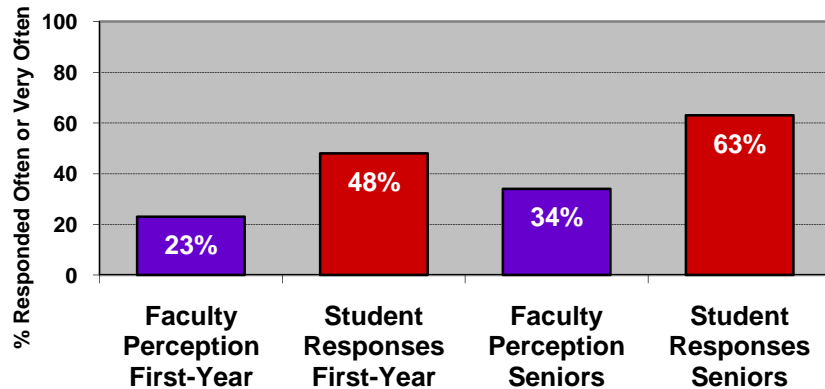
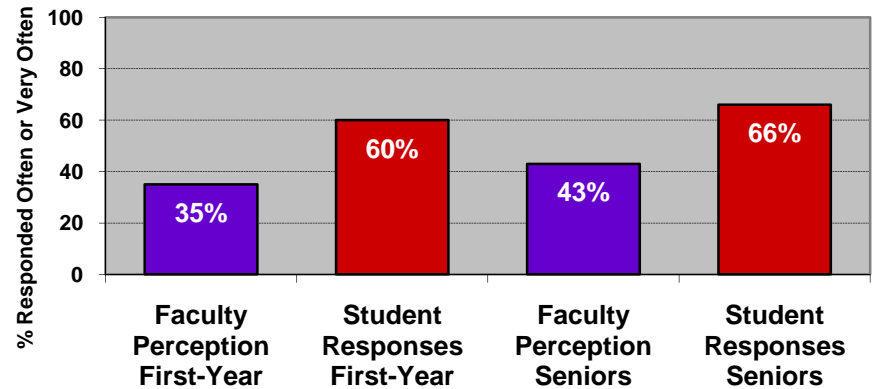


Chart 32:

Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from that person's perspective.



**Stephen F. Austin State University
National Engagement Survey Report
Spring 2011**

FSSE vs. NSSE - Perceived Student Gains

Chart 33:
Perceived student gain: Writing clearly and effectively.

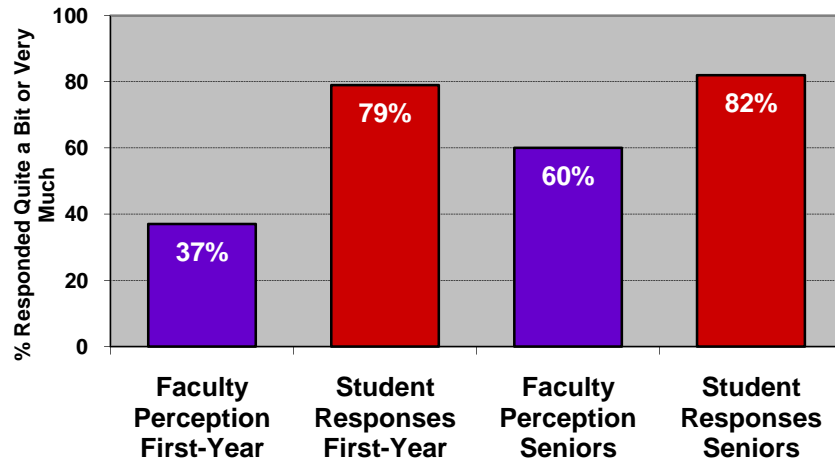


Chart 34:
Perceived student gain: Speaking clearly and effectively.

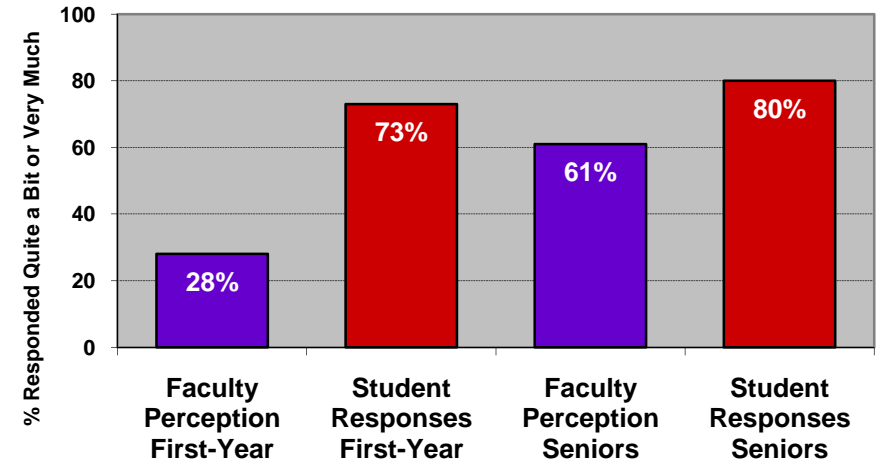


Chart 35:
Perceived student gain: Thinking critically and analytically.

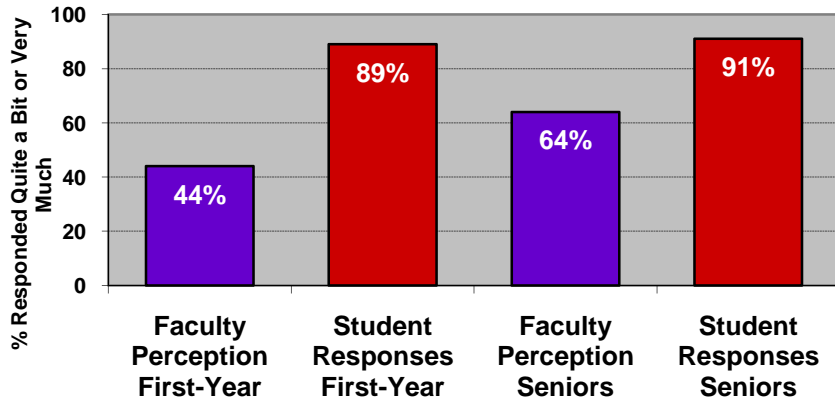
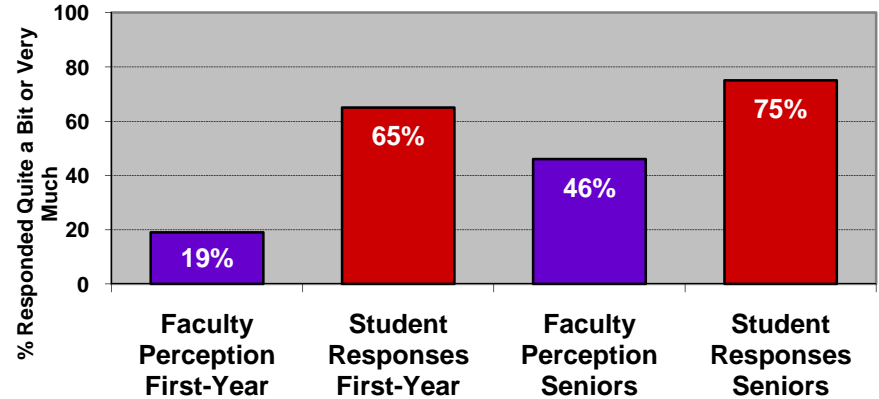


Chart 36:
Perceived student gain: Solving complex real-world problems.



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National Engagement Survey Report
Spring 2011

FSSE vs. NSSE - Student Work

Chart 37:

In a typical 7-day week, time spent working for pay on campus.

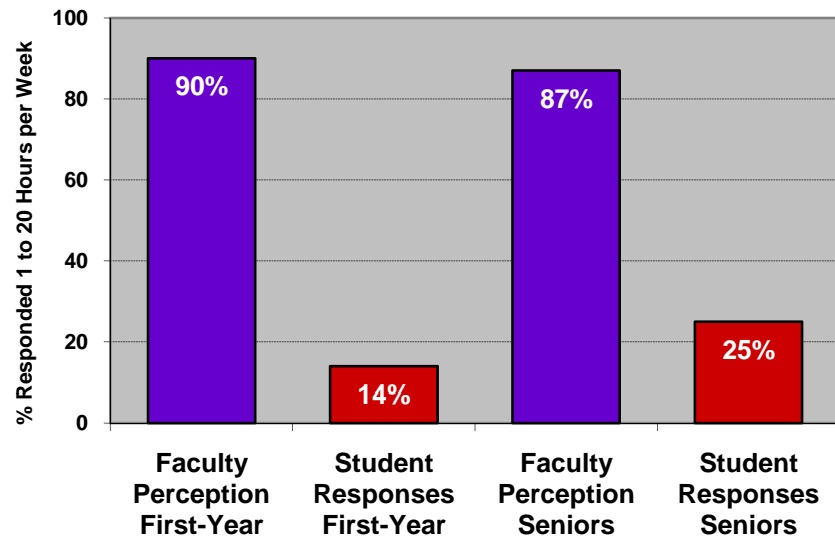


Chart 38:

In a typical 7-day week, time spent working for pay off campus.

