REPORT ON

NSSE AT UGA, 2014-2015

Audrey Haynes Teaching in Lecture Classroom, UGA Office of Public Affairs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the results of the 2014 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) taken by UGA freshmen and seniors. After explaining the history of the survey at UGA and how we have used it, the opening section discusses significant challenges faced in the 2014 administration: major changes to the survey instrument and low student participation. Next we review the approach taken by the UGA NSSE Steering Committee to review the data and identify important themes of interest. The following section considers one of these, the data on student-faculty interaction, and makes some recommendations. Another section of the report considers data on NSSE items related to experiential learning, again, making some recommendations. The next section of the report considers NSSE data that speaks to academic challenge and discusses why that matters. Finally a brief section reports all recommendations with some comments on their implementation. While we recognize that UGA will continue to administer NSSE because that is a mandate from the Board of Regents, we suggest employing other surveys. We are concerned that the Odyssey program should increase our students' perception that they interact with faculty, but that NSSE suggests students do not think so. We would like to use data from NSSE or other surveys to gain a sense of whether the new experiential learning requirement is making a difference. Finally, we want our students to have a sense of greater academic challenge in their courses.

History of NSSE at UGA

The University of Georgia first administered NSSE in 2003. With the first survey we focused on comparing UGA's results to those of other participating institutions and identified two areas of interest: student writing and service-learning. By mandate of the Board of Regents, all institutions in the University System of Georgia (USG) participated in NSSE again in 2005, and the data from that survey (particularly in comparison to the 2003 survey) were highly relevant to many of the recommendations made by the 2005 Provost's Task Force on General Education and Student Learning, among them the following:

- developing the new General Education Core Curriculum requirements,
- establishing the UGA Writing Fellows and Writing Certificate programs,
- launching the Office of Service-Learning.

UGA participated in regular three-year cycles of NSSE in 2008, and 2011 and most recently, in 2014. Appendix A lists the comparative groups of institutions that also participated in 2014. UGA has also administered NSSE on two occasions in years off of the regular cycle. In 2007 the Vice President for Instruction requested the survey administration for more data to inform the recommendations made by the General Education Task Force. Again in 2012, Vice President for Instruction request a special administration of NSSE for freshmen only as part of a plan of assessment of the First-Year Odyssey Seminar Program launched in the fall of 2011. UGA has also participated in two sister surveys, the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BSSE) in 2010, 2011 and 2012, and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) in 2008.

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Administration of the NSSE survey at UGA is overseen by the NSSE Steering Committee, comprising UGA faculty, students, and administrators. Members of this committee promote the survey to eligible students, oversee administration of the survey, write follow-up reports for the UGA community, and participate in campus conversations to share survey results and guide interpretation of how NSSE data might inform existing or new programs.

The NSSE survey is administered at participating institutions in the spring of the administration year, typically between February and April, and results are returned in the fall. At UGA, the NSSE Steering Committee dedicates the months following the receipt of data survey to studying the results and to planning a campus report.

Students at Peabody Hall, UGA Office of Public Affairs

THE 2014 NSSE SURVEY: CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

New Survey Instrument

An updated NSSE instrument was launched in 2013. Changes to the survey range from minimal to entirely new content and reflect user feedback and recent changes in educational and survey research. Four goals drive the updates to the survey: 1) to develop new measures related to effective teaching and learning; 2) to refine existing measures and scales; 3) to improve the clarity and applicability of survey language; and 4) to update terminology to reflect current educational contexts ("Introducing the Updated NSSE", 2015). Figure 1 demonstrates the types of changes made to the new survey.
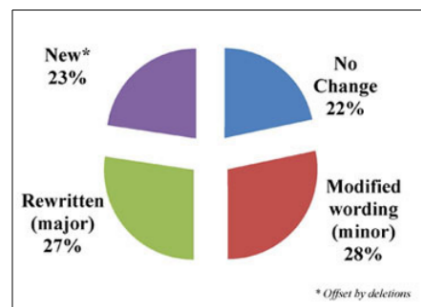

Figure 1. Changes made to NSSE in 2013

A major change to the survey regards the shift in the way survey items are grouped for analysis. Prior to 2013 NSSE grouped questions addressing specific areas by five *Benchmark Areas*. The updated instrument groups items by four *Engagement Indicators* and six *High Impact Practices*, all listed in Table 1. Appendix B1 is a more detailed comparison provided by NSSE.

Table 1. Changes to Grouping of Survey Items in New NSSE Instrument

NSSE Benchmark Areas, Prior to 2013	NSSE Engagement Indicators, 2013
Level of Academic Challenge Active and Collaborative Learning Student-Faculty Interaction Enriching Educational Experiences Supportive Campus Environment	Academic Challenge Learning with Peers Experiences with Faculty Campus Environment
	NSSE High Impact Practices, 2013
	Learning Community Service-Learning or Community-Based Learning Research with Faculty Internship or Field Experience Study Abroad Culminating Senior Experience

The update to the NSSE instrument poses challenges for UGA given its history of using the survey, as the changes make it more difficult to make direct comparison to survey items from previous surveys.

Between 2003 and 2011, UGA tracked the performance of its students on the five *Benchmark Areas* and conducted several sub-analyses for variables of historical interest to our institution

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(e.g., student writing, student interest in service-learning, advising needs, etc.). For the 2008 and 2011 survey administrations the Steering Committee produced focused campus reports on our students' performance along the *Benchmark Areas* as well as in certain thematic areas, defined by the Steering Committee, of value for assessing UGA: Academic Expectations, Learning Experiences, Campus Connections and Educational Gains.

While NSSE writers acknowledge that the new survey limits multi-year trend analysis, they maintain that an institution can still evaluate longitudinal questions in key areas and gauge performance in relation to comparison groups. Such an approach may help UGA, but only to a slight degree. First, while UGA has certainly tracked student performance in the benchmark areas, we did so with caution in some years, knowing that our years of underperformance may have been the result of the economic downturn that strained institutional resources, not a decline in student engagement, per se. For example, in a time when faculty hiring was at a low, such indicators as student-faculty interaction and student research with faculty may have suffered (2011 Report of the NSSE Steering Committee, p. 10). Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, UGA has historically taken a somewhat customized approach to analysis of NSSE data, defining themed areas of interest and analyzing responses from specific survey items within those themed areas. The fact that 50% of the new survey consists of new items or items with major changes certainly hampers our ability to compare recent results to those from past surveys. That problem is made more difficult because of a decline in response rates.

Declining Response Rates

A persistent challenge over multiple administrations of NSSE at the University of Georgia is the declining response rate. From the first administration to the most recent administration in 2014, response rates have declined from a high of 38% in 2005 to a low of 10% in 2014. This problem is not exclusive to UGA, of course. Information from the National Research Council (2013) points to general declines in survey participation over time, both in the US and abroad. Furthermore, while the results for this administration of the NSSE represent the student body in terms of ethnicity (both for first-year and senior students), they are not representative of gender for either first-year or senior students. NSSE survey writers and researchers suggest that a low response rate does not automatically mean that results are biased, and that "even relatively low response rates provided reliable institution-level estimates, albeit with greater sampling error and less ability to detect statistically significant differences with comparison institutions" (Fosnacht et al., 2013). While these statements are encouraging, the NSSE Steering Committee believes that a cautious approach to the survey results is still in order.

With respect to declining response rates at UGA, the Steering Committee has discussed the matter on several occasions and suggests that, beyond the general trends described above, the delivery method employed for the NSSE survey may also be a problem. UGA has always opted to use an electronic delivery and coordinates with NSSE to email a survey link to the students. NSSE uses the UGA email addresses that we provide in the student population file, and the link to the survey includes the student identifier (CAN number). Students today use their email

accounts less than they did a decade ago, and in addition, are often less responsive to their UGA email accounts than they are to other personal accounts or to other forms of communication (e.g., text messaging). The Steering Committee believes that this delivery method may now be more of a hindrance than a convenience to students. While NSSE has always provided an alternative paper-and-pencil option, this method has not been adopted at UGA because we have assumed both that it would be even less effective than the email survey and that finding a place for students to complete a paper-and-pencil survey—perhaps in their classes—would be too great an intrusion upon faculty, as the survey requires between twenty and thirty minutes to complete.

Promotion methods have remained quite consistent through past survey administrations. We have used traditional visual messaging via fliers, posters, and bus cards. We have also enlisted the help of student members of the Steering Committee, most of whom have been members of the Student Government Association, Greek organizations and various other student organizations, to help us tap into student networks to send peer messaging about the survey. When planning and promotion for the 2017 NSSE survey begins, the Steering Committee intends to engage a wider audience of administrators, faculty and students in searching for ways to address the issues of promotion, survey delivery, and response rates.

In short, we have serious concerns about the data that this administration of the NSSE offers because of low response rates and unrepresentative responses in terms of gender.

Use of 2014 NSSE Data

Due to the changes to the NSSE survey instrument and the very low response rate of only ten percent, the NSSE Steering Committee, after much discussion, has determined that the best approach to using the 2014 data may be to use results for observation, identifying items or themes that will be of interest to the institution in the next regular administration in 2017. The committee believes that the responses of 1,046 students, while low in number, still merit our attention, and this report therefore will take a cautious look at their responses to a number of items. The present report will highlight particular items that might inform current or emerging priorities or initiatives at UGA.

Survey data in the past has been productive for UGA, providing information for a number of internal studies and leading to significant new programs. But unless the data is reliable, we want to proceed with caution. Specifically, we believe that UGA has an interest in student-faculty interaction, opportunities for experiential learning, and degree of academic challenge. The remainder of this report will summarize the results on the survey items that address these areas. Appendix B2 lists the items of interest under each of these themes and reports the counts and percentages of student responses. **The committee recommends that UGA consider expanding the assessment of student engagement beyond NSSE, supplementing it with other instruments or local measures.** Instruments similar to NSSE exist, such as the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey used by at least a dozen major AAU institutions. However, adopting an additional instrument must be considered with caution as long as the USG mandate to use NSSE continues, as administration of two large instruments would be

expensive and labor intensive. A more practical and manageable approach might be to use our own carefully identified, embedded measures to triangulate assessment of student engagement. We also think that the NSSE committee should, with the help of key administrators and faculty, try to think of ways to increase the student response rate in future administrations, to increase the reliability of the results and allow for better comparisons to USG and other comparison institutions.

UGA and Comparator Groups Overview

Discussion of this more general view of 2014 NSSE results needs an overview of our students' responses on some of the new *Engagement Indicators*. The 2014 NSSE report provides an overview of UGA freshmen and senior scores on Engagement Indicators compared to those of students at peer and comparator institutions (Appendix B3). Overall, first-year students at UGA scored significantly lower along several engagement indicators, such as those grouped under the themes "Academic Challenge" and "Experiences with Faculty," than their first-year peers at USG, Carnegie Class, and Comparison Group institutions. These results may suggest that UGA has room to improve when it comes to helping new students assimilate to their new environment. UGA first-year students scored significantly higher than their first-year peers for quality of interactions, however, which may suggest that UGA students are more positive about their interactions with other students, faculty and university staff.

Seniors, on the other hand, scored significantly higher than their senior peers at Carnegie Class and Comparison Group institutions along several engagement indicators under several themes, such as "Academic Challenge," "Learning with Peers," Experiences with Faculty," and "Campus Environment." The difference in scores between first-year and senior students is not surprising; first-year students have less experience to rely on in assessing their engagement with the institution (roughly six months at the time of the survey), whereas seniors have years of experience upon which to draw.

Prof. Kecia Thomas and her students, UGA Office of Public Affairs

<div align="center">**THREE THEMES OF INTEREST**</div>

With a revised survey it is perhaps an appropriate time to focus on the aspects of the NSSE survey that UGA will want to monitor in future years. While the revised NSSE already defines several themes under each indicator, the NSSE Steering Committee finds three specific themes that UGA might want to study in relation to new or ongoing initiatives at our institution. This approach is similar to approaches we have taken with past survey results, described earlier in this report. In particular, we feel it is important to consider the survey items that address the themes of student-faculty interaction, experiential learning opportunities, and academic challenge.

I. Student-Faculty Interaction

For items related to student-faculty interaction, UGA first-year students scored lower than all peers groups across items under this theme, recording significant differences on several items, such as working with faculty on activities other than coursework and discussing ideas or concepts with a faculty member outside of class. These results are particularly disappointing, given UGA's focus on engaging first-year students with faculty through the First-Year Odyssey Seminar (FYOS) program, and suggest the program may not have an immediate impact on student-faculty interaction, as students perceive it. **The committee recommends additional evaluation to determine whether these results reveal weaknesses in the program that should be addressed**. Since female students are oversampled here, additional efforts to understand how female students participate in seminars may yield particular benefits.

Senior students in the sample, who entered UGA prior to the FYOS implementation, fared better in this area, scoring with no significant differences compared to the Carnegie and selected peer groups. If the FYOS program has a longer term impact on increasing students' interactions with faculty, these results should improve in future NSSE administrations. Table 2 presents results of UGA and comparator group students on items measuring student-faculty interaction.

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Table 2. Responses to NSSE Items Measuring Student-Faculty Interaction

FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS				
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"…	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
3a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member	26	32	30	28
3b. Worked with faculty on activities other than coursework	12	19	18	16
3c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	16	25	23	22
3d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	19	31	24	22
SENIOR STUDENTS				
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
3a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member	42	44	39	37
3b. Worked with faculty on activities other than coursework	23	27	26	27
3c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	30	36	31	30
3d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	27	38	28	24

A more detailed report of response counts, percentages and means for these items can be found in Appendix B2.

II. Experiential Learning Opportunities

Several NSSE items relate to participation in experiential learning. Questions of particular note—especially when comparing UGA students with students at USG, Carnegie Class, and Comparison Group institutions—include research with faculty, participation in service-learning, study abroad experiences, and internships or field experiences, among others. A number of key findings are explored in more depth below, but Appendix B4 presents a detailed table with "Overall High Impact Practice" participation for UGA students and students in comparator groups for areas that will be important given the expansion of experiential learning in the coming years at UGA.

Research with faculty is a high impact practice that the NSSE survey examines. Only 5% of UGA first-year students report engaging in research with faculty, a figure slightly lower than

first-year students at USG (6%) and Carnegie group (6%) peers, and this difference is not significant. UGA seniors, however, score significantly lower (24%) than their peers in the Carnegie group (29%) and other comparison group institutions (36%).

More than 50% of senior respondents indicated **service-learning** participation as part of their coursework. In comparison, 35% of first-year students reported participation in service-learning experiences. As previously noted, the 2003 NSSE administration led to the formation of the Office of Service-Learning in 2005. The findings may indicate success in such institutional initiatives designed to bolster student engagement in service-learning. Further efforts may be necessary, however, to increase first-year student participation. Although first-year student participation rates are expected to be lower than those of seniors, UGA first-year students lag significantly behind USG (50%), Carnegie Class (45%), and Comparison Group (45%) students. This result is also confirmed by data collected on service-learning courses by the Office of Service-Learning, which lists fewer lower division service-learning course options available to first-year students.

In contrast, UGA respondents reported higher levels of participation in **study abroad** experiences than their peers at other institutions. Twenty-five percent of UGA seniors reported studying abroad. This participation rate is significantly higher than that reported by senior students at USG (13%) and Carnegie Class (18%) institutions, and similar to that of senior students at Comparison Group institutions (24%). The data supports UGA's long-standing reputation as a national leader in this area.

Senior student participation in **internship or field experiences** is similar across UGA (52%) and USG (49%) and Carnegie Class institutions (55%). However, participation in internship or field experiences at institutions in Comparison Group 3 is significantly higher (63%) than UGA's participation rate. This result may be due to high-ranking programs at Comparison Group institutions in disciplines that require internship or field experiences.

The Experiential Learning graduation requirement that will be implemented university-wide by Fall 2016 provides an opportunity to look more closely at items related to experiential learning in future NSSE administrations. **The NSSE Steering Committee recommends that UGA use the 2014 results as a benchmark for assessing the expansion of opportunities for UGA students in light of this new institutional initiative.** In addition, a worthy area of study could be the factors that positively impact participation in experiential learning opportunities, such as student characteristics, relationships with faculty, financial resources, and many more. Many possibilities exist for research with faculty and students who are external to the NSSE committee, but interested in these and other questions that NSSE data could answer.

III. Academic Challenge

NSSE also surveys students on academic skills and abilities that could be attained and demonstrated in multiple classes or contexts during a regular four-year university career. A number of these items, appearing in different sections of the survey instrument, are particularly relevant to UGA's goals for the general education curriculum. In recent years the Office of Academic Planning has pursued discussions with UGA faculty on the General Education

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Subcommittee of the University Council's Curriculum Committee regarding the need to improve the way in which UGA assesses general education outcomes. The NSSE subcommittee contends that some survey items are worth tracking in future NSSE administrations for the supplemental information they could add to other assessment information. The information combined will provide insight concerning students' general education and the degree of rigor reflected in the undergraduate academic experience overall.

Table 3 reports a summary of scores for some of the NSSE items under the **higher order learning theme**. On the whole, UGA first-year students scored significantly lower than their peers in the USG, Carnegie, and other comparison institutions (the percentage differences found in Table 3 range from 0% to 12%). UGA seniors, however, scored significantly higher than peers at Carnegie and other comparison institutions. A more detailed report of response counts, percentages, and means for these items can be found in Appendix B2.

Table 3. Responses to NSSE Items Measuring Academic Challenge

FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS				
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much coursework emphasized…..	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
4b. Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	72	72	76	78
4c. Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	70	71	72	72
4d. Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	58	70	65	62
SENIOR STUDENTS				
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much coursework emphasized…..	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
4b. Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	79	81	79	79
4c. Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	78	78	75	74
4d. Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	70	71	64	61

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The NSSE survey also examines the degree to which students engage in **reflective and integrative learning**. For the set of seven items included under this theme, results were similar to those described above for higher order learning. UGA first-year students' scores were significantly lower than those of USG peers when all items were considered. UGA seniors' responses, on the other hand, were significantly higher than (or comparable to) their peers' at Carnegie and other comparison institutions.

Table 4 reports a summary of scores for *two items* under the reflective and integrative learning theme. These items are highlighted in this report because they are most likely, in the view of the steering committee, to be skills that students might attain or use in a wide variety of classes while at UGA. A more detailed report of response counts, percentages, and means for these items can be found in Appendix B2.

Table 4. Responses to NSSE Items Measuring Reflective and Integrative Learning

FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS				
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"…	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
2a. Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	48	54	55	55
2g. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	74	75	77	77
SENIOR STUDENTS				
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"…	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
2a. Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	72	73	72	72
2g. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	84	84	83	84

A final grouping of NSSE items that merits mention is the set of questions that measure **quantitative reasoning**. UGA first-year students scored significantly lower than students at USG and comparison institutions. Overall senior scores were not significantly different than peer scores. Table 5 reports a summary of scores for three items under the theme of quantitative reasoning. A more detailed report of response counts, percentages, and means for these items can be found in Appendix B2.

Table 5. Responses to NSSE Items Measuring Quantitative Reasoning

FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS				
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"…	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
6a. Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	43	52	55	54
6b. Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	32	39	40	38
6c. Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	35	37	40	39
SENIOR STUDENTS				
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"…	UGA %	Georgia System %	Carnegie Class %	Comparison Group 3 %
6a. Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	51	57	58	60
6b. Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	47	45	45	46
6c. Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	50	45	48	50

Once again, the NSSE Steering Committee wonders if these results come from student perception or from a real deficit in academic challenge.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2014 NSSE results highlight a number of key areas that can inform institutional planning and opportunities to improve student learning. Based on our analysis of these results, the NSSE Steering Committee presents the following recommendations for consideration:

Response Rate: A declining response rate and email delivery of the NSSE survey will require new approaches to promoting the 2017 NSSE. The Steering Committee recommends engaging a wider audience of administrators, faculty and students to increase the response rate, and investigating strategies at other campuses with higher rates of participation.

Exploring Other Studies: The committee recommends that UGA consider expanding the assessment process beyond NSSE, supplementing it with other studies. We suggest the Office of Academic Planning, Office of the Vice President for Instruction, and Division of Student Affairs investigate alternative instruments or internal measures that would align with what UGA wants to know about the student experience, and make recommendations to the Provost for future directions.

Student-Faculty Interactions: The committee recommends additional evaluation to determine whether these results reveal weaknesses in the UGA experience that should be addressed. Specifically consulting the director of the FYOS Program and the Vice President for Instruction for suggestions would be a starting point, since first-year students had a different response from seniors.

Experiential Learning: Despite the need to provide more opportunities in some of these high impact areas, it should also be noted that 86% of senior respondents reported participating in at least one of these high impact practices during their academic experience, a rate that lags behind Comparison Group 3 (91%), but still may indicate that high impact practices are widespread across campus. The Experiential Learning graduation requirement that will be implemented university-wide by Fall 2016 provides an opportunity to look more closely at these items related to experiential learning in future NSSE administrations. The NSSE Steering Committee recommends that UGA use the 2014 results as a benchmark for assessing the expansion of opportunities for UGA students in light of this new institutional initiative. If we can find ways to increase the response rate in future years, there may also be opportunities to look at these data in other ways, such as by gender or ethnicity, or to see if increased participation has a significant impact on other areas of student engagement.

Academic Challenge: The student perception that courses at UGA are not as rigorous as they might be is one that we need to address. We suggest that both the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Teaching Academy be asked to work with faculty on understanding and solving the problem.

In addition, high impact practices such as service-learning and other forms of experiential learning have been shown to have an impact on critical thinking, reflective and integrative learning, and other items related to academic challenge. The institutional focus on experiential learning could also contribute to the campus discussion on academic rigor as we consider ways to support the expansion of these experiences and faculty teaching with these methods.

We recommend engaging leadership such as the Director for University Experiential Learning, Office of Service-Learning, Center for Undergraduate Research, and Office of International Education to explore ways to increase both the academic rigor of high impact practices and student perception of that rigor.

First-Year Seminar with Prof. Jonathan Evans, UGA Office of Public Affairs

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Appendix A

NSSE Comparison Groups

Group 1 'Georgia System' institutions (N=23)

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (Tifton, GA)
Albany State University (Albany, GA)
Armstrong State University (Savannah, GA)
Clayton State University (Morrow, GA)
College of Coastal Georgia (Brunswick, GA)
Columbus State University (Columbus, GA)
Dalton State College (Dalton, GA)
Fort Valley State University (Fort Valley, GA)
Georgia College & State University (Milledgeville, GA)
Georgia Gwinnett College (Lawrenceville, GA)
Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta, GA)
Georgia Regents University (Augusta, GA)
Georgia Southern University (Statesboro, GA)
Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA)
Gordon State College (Barnesville, GA)
Kennesaw State University (Kennesaw, GA)
Middle Georgia State College (Macon, GA)
Savannah State University (Savannah, GA)
Southern Polytechnic State University (Marietta, GA)
University of North Georgia (Dahlonega, GA)
University of West Georgia (Carrollton, GA)
Valdosta State University (Valdosta, GA)

Group 2 'Carnegie Class' institutions (N=43)

Boston University (Boston, MA)
Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, PA)*
Florida State University (Tallahassee, FL)
Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta, GA)
Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA)
Iowa State University (Ames, IA)*
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College (Baton Rouge, LA)*
Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI)*
Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS)

Montana State University-Bozeman (Bozeman, MT)
North Carolina State University (Raleigh, NC)
North Dakota State University (Fargo, ND)*
Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR)*
Stony Brook University (Stony Brook, NY)
The Ohio State University (Columbus, OH)*
The University at Albany, SUNY (Albany, NY)
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (Knoxville, TN)
Tulane University of Louisiana (New Orleans, LA)*
University at Buffalo, State University of New York (Buffalo, NY)
University of Alabama at Birmingham (Birmingham, AL)
University of Alabama in Huntsville (Huntsville, AL)
University of Arkansas (Fayetteville, AR)*
University of Central Florida (Orlando, FL)
University of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)*
University of Colorado Boulder (Boulder, CO)*
University of Connecticut (Storrs, CT)*
University of Delaware (Newark, DE)
University of Houston (Houston, TX)
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Urbana, IL)
University of Kansas (Lawrence, KS)*
University of Maryland (College Park, MD)
University of Massachusetts Amherst (Amherst, MA)
University of Nebraska at Lincoln (Lincoln, NE)*
University of Oklahoma (Norman, OK)*
University of South Carolina Columbia (Columbia, SC)

Group 3 'Other' Institutions (N=6)

Iowa State University (Ames, IA)*
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College (Baton Rouge, LA)*
North Carolina State University (Raleigh, NC)
University of Maryland (College Park, MD)
University of Washington-Seattle (Seattle, WA)*
University of Wisconsin-Madison (Madison, WI)

NSSE
national survey of
student engagement

From Benchmarks to Engagement Indicators and High-Impact Practices

Sets of related survey items are now organized into ten *Engagement Indicators,* which are grouped within four themes adapted from NSSE's former Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice. Forty-seven survey items are included in the Engagement Indicators (see reverse side). In addition, six items from the former Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark are now reported separately as *High-Impact Practices.*

NSSE Benchmarks 2000 - 2012	Key Changes	Engagement Indicators
Level of Academic Challenge	Expanded to focus on distinct dimensions of academic effort, including new topics of interest. In addition, key items on reading, writing, and study time will be reported in this theme.	**Higher-Order Learning** **Reflective & Integrative Learning** **Learning Strategies** **Quantitative Reasoning** *Theme: Academic Challenge*
Active and Collaborative Learning	Modified to emphasize student-to-student collaboration. Updated diversity items from Enriching Educational Experiences have been moved here.	**Collaborative Learning** **Discussions with Diverse Others** *Theme: Learning with Peers*
Student-Faculty Interaction	The updated Student-Faculty Interaction indicator is joined by a second measure about effective teaching practices.	**Student-Faculty Interaction** **Effective Teaching Practices** *Theme: Experiences with Faculty*
Supportive Campus Environment	Expanded to focus separately on interactions with key people at the institution and perceptions of the institution's learning environment.	**Quality of Interactions** **Supportive Environment** *Theme: Campus Environment*

High-Impact Practices

Enriching Educational Experiences	Selected items are reported separately as *High-Impact Practices.* Items measuring discussions with diverse others were moved to the Learning with Peers theme.	♦ **Learning Community** ♦ **Internship or Field Experience** ♦ **Service-Learning** ♦ **Study Abroad** ♦ **Research with a Faculty Member** ♦ **Culminating Senior Experience**

Engagement Indicators and Items

Academic Challenge

Higher-Order Learning

During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following:

- Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
- Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source
- Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information

Reflective & Integrative Learning

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
- Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
- Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
- Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

Learning Strategies

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Identified key information from reading assignments
- Reviewed your notes after class
- Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials

Quantitative Reasoning

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
- Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
- Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information

Learning with Peers

Collaborative Learning

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Asked another student to help you understand course material
- Explained course material to one or more students
- Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

Discussions with Diverse Others

During the current school year, how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups:

- People from a race or ethnicity other than your own
- People from an economic background other than your own
- People with religious beliefs other than your own
- People with political views other than your own

Experiences with Faculty

Student-Faculty Interaction

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member
- Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
- Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member

Effective Teaching Practices

During the current school year, to what extent have your instructors done the following:

- Clearly explained course goals and requirements
- Taught course sessions in an organized way
- Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points
- Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress
- Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments

Campus Environment

Quality of Interactions

Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution:

- Students
- Academic advisors
- Faculty
- Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)
- Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

Supportive Environment

How much does your institution emphasize the following:

- Providing support to help students succeed academically
- Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)
- Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)
- Providing opportunities to be involved socially
- Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)
- Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)
- Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues

High-Impact Practice Items

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?

- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together
- Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement
- Participate in a study abroad program
- Work with a faculty member on a research project
- Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)

- *About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?*

Appendix B2
UGA Themes of Interest

Student-Faculty Interaction							
NSSE Survey Item		**First-Years**			**Seniors**		
During the current school year, how often have you done the following?	**Response[1]**	**Count**	**%**	**Mean**	**Count**	**%**	**Mean**
3a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member	Often	64	18	2.1	142	26	2.4
	Very Often	28	8		89	16	
3b. Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework	Often	26	8	1.6	85	15	1.9
	Very Often	16	4		46	8	
3c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	Often	35	10	1.8	124	23	2.1
	Very Often	22	6		41	7	
3d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	Often	50	14	1.9	105	19	2.1
	Very Often	17	5		40	8	

Experiential Learning							
NSSE Survey Item		**First-Years**			**Seniors**		
Which of the following have you done or plan to do before you graduate?	**Response[1]**	**Count**	**%**	**Mean**	**Count**	**%**	**Mean**
11a. Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	Plan to do	256	83	9%	141	30	52%
	Done or In Progress	27	9		264	52	
11c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	Plan to do	36	12	7%	29	6	21%
	Done or In Progress	22	7		108	21	
11d. Participate in a study abroad program	Plan to do	206	66	5%	45	9	25%
	Done or In Progress	15	5		125	25	
11e. Work with a faculty member on a research project	Plan to do	97	33	5%	54	12	24%
	Done or In Progress	16	5		118	24	

How much does your institution emphasize the following?	Response[1]	Count	%	Mean*	Count	%	Mean*
14h. Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)	Quite a bit	111	39	3.3	165	38	3.1
	Very Much	131	44		163	36	
14i. Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	Quite a bit	95	34	2.6	156	35	2.5
	Very Much	59	20		67	15	

Academic Challenge							
NSSE Survey Item			**First-Years**			**Seniors**	
During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?	Response[1]	Count	%	Mean*	Count	%	Mean*
2a. Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	Often	114	31	2.6	207	36	3.1
	Very Often	65	17		203	36	
2g. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	Often	154	44	3	243	45	3.2
	Very Often	110	30		218	39	
During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?	Response[1]	Count	%	Mean*	Count	%	Mean*
4b. Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	Quite a bit	158	45	2.9	246	46	3.1
	Very Much	98	27		179	33	
4c. Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	Quite a bit	142	41	2.9	227	43	3.1
	Very much	105	29		189	35	
4d. Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	Quite a bit	131	36	2.7	222	42	2.9
	Very much	77	22		156	29	
During the school year, about how often have you done the following?	Response[1]	Count	%	Mean*	Count	%	Mean*
6a. Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerial information	Often	101	29	2.4	171	32	2.6
	Very often	47	14		97	19	

	Response[1]	Count	%	Mean	Count	%	Mean
6b. Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue	Often	76	22	2.2	155	30	2.4
	Very often	36	10		90	18	
6c. Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information		89	26	2.2	158	30	2.5
	Very Often	33	10		102	20	
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	**Response[1]**	**Count**	**%**	**Mean**	**Count**	**%**	**Mean**
17c. Thinking critically and analytically	Quite a bit	125	44	3	160	35	3.3
	Very Much	93	32		220	49	
17d. Analyzing numerical and statistical information	Quite a bit	88	31	2.5	113	26	2.9
	Very Much	49	17		153	35	
17e. Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	Quite a bit	82	29	2.4	123	28	2.9
	Very Much	44	16		152	34	
17j. Being an informed and active citizen	Quite a bit	84	30	2.5	153	35	2.7
	Very Much	55	19		112	25	

NSSE 2014 Engagement Indicators

Overview

University of Georgia

Engagement Indicators: Overview

Engagement Indicators are summary measures based on sets of NSSE questions examining key dimensions of student engagement. The ten indicators are organized within four themes: Academic Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, and Campus Environment. The tables below compare average scores for your students with those in your comparison groups.

Use the following key:

▲ **Your students' average** was significantly higher (p<.05) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

△ **Your students' average** was significantly higher (p<.05) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.

–– No significant difference.

▽ **Your students' average** was significantly lower (p<.05) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.

▼ **Your students' average** was significantly lower (p<.05) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

First-Year Students

Theme	Engagement Indicator	Your first-year students compared with Georgia System	Your first-year students compared with Carnegie Class	Your first-year students compared with Comparison Group 3
Academic Challenge	Higher-Order Learning	▽	▽	▽
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	▽	––	––
	Learning Strategies	▽	––	––
	Quantitative Reasoning	▽	▽	▽
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning	––	▽	▽
	Discussions with Diverse Others	––	––	––
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction	▽	▽	––
	Effective Teaching Practices	▽	––	––
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions	△	△	△
	Supportive Environment	––	––	––

Seniors

Theme	Engagement Indicator	Your seniors compared with Georgia System	Your seniors compared with Carnegie Class	Your seniors compared with Comparison Group 3
Academic Challenge	Higher-Order Learning	▽	––	––
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	––	△	△
	Learning Strategies	▽	––	△
	Quantitative Reasoning	––	––	––
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning	––	––	▽
	Discussions with Diverse Others	––	△	△
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction	▽	––	––
	Effective Teaching Practices	––	△	△
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions	––	△	△
	Supportive Environment	––	△	––

NSSE 2014 High-Impact Practices
Participation Comparisons
University of Georgia

NSSE national survey of student engagement

Overall HIP Participation

The figures below display the percentage of students who participated in High-Impact Practices. Both figures include participation in a learning community, service-learning, and research with faculty. The Senior figure also includes participation in an internship or field experience, study abroad, and culminating senior experience. The first segment in each bar shows the percentage of students who participated in at least two HIPs, and the full bar (both colors) represents the percentage who participated in at least one.

First-year

	Participated in two or more HIPs	Participated in one HIP
UGA	7%	31%
Georgia System	14%	43%
Carnegie Class	14%	41%
Comparison Group 3	19%	40%

Senior

	Participated in two or more HIPs	Participated in one HIP
UGA	60%	26%
Georgia System	62%	24%
Carnegie Class	64%	23%
Comparison Group 3	71%	20%
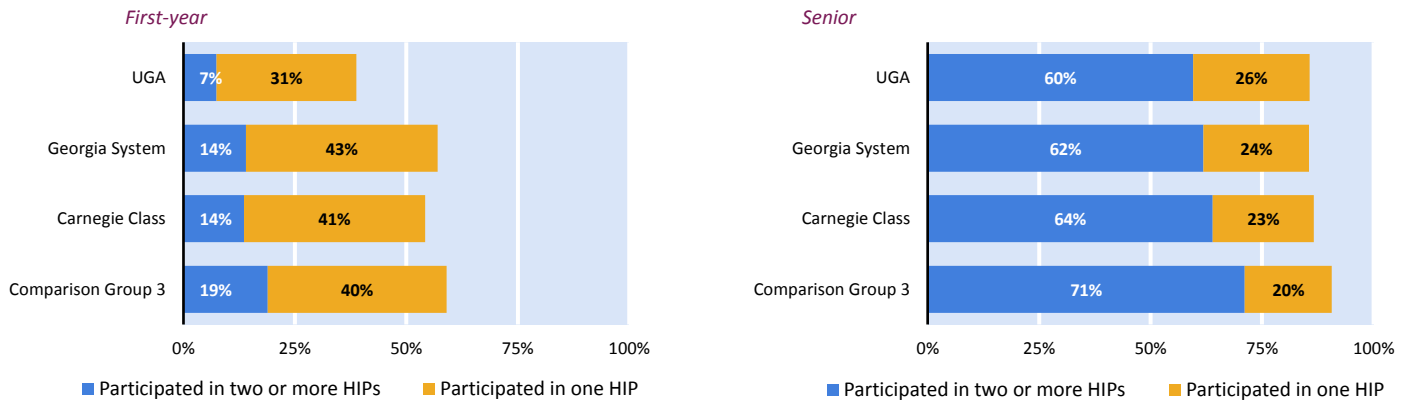
Statistical Comparisons

The table below compares the percentage of your students who participated in a High-Impact Practice, including the percentage who participated overall (at least one, two or more), with those at institutions in your comparison groups.

	UGA	Georgia System		Carnegie Class		Comparison Group 3	
First-year	*%*	*%*	*Effect size[a]*	*%*	*Effect size[a]*	*%*	*Effect size[a]*
11c. **Learning Community**	7	18 ***	-.34	20 ***	-.37	29 ***	-.59
12. **Service-Learning**	35	50 ***	-.30	45 ***	-.21	45 ***	-.21
11e. **Research with Faculty**	5	6	-.03	6	-.03	7	-.07
Participated in at least one	39	57 ***	-.37	54 ***	-.31	59 ***	-.41
Participated in two or more	7	14 **	-.22	14 **	-.20	19 ***	-.35
Senior							
11c. **Learning Community**	21	26 *	-.10	26 *	-.10	32 ***	-.24
12. **Service-Learning**	52	59 **	-.13	52	.01	49	.07
11e. **Research with Faculty**	24	25	-.03	29 *	-.12	36 ***	-.28
11a. **Internship or Field Exp.**	52	49	.06	55	-.06	63 ***	-.22
11d. **Study Abroad**	25	13 ***	.32	18 ***	.19	24	.03
11f. **Culminating Senior Exp.**	24	47 ***	-.48	44 ***	-.42	46 ***	-.46
Participated in at least one	86	86	.00	87	-.03	91 ***	-.16
Participated in two or more	60	62	-.05	64 *	-.09	71 ***	-.24

Note. Percentage of students who responded "Done or in progress" except for service-learning which is the percentage who responded that at least "Some" courses included a community-based project.

a. Cohen's *h:* The standardized difference between two proportions. Effect size indicates the practical importance of an observed difference. An effect size of .2 is generally considered small, .5 medium, and .8 large.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (z-test comparing participation rates).

Note. All results weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups).