

National Survey of Student Engagement - Overview of Results for Freshmen

Introductory facts:

- Evergreen first-year and senior students have participated in NSSE annually since Spring 2000.
- 473 colleges and universities participated in NSSE 2004, 77 of which were Baccalaureate-Liberal Arts Colleges (like Evergreen).
- 121 Evergreen first-year students completed the NSSE 2004; the response rate of the random sample was 38%.
- Evergreen's 2004 survey responses represented 26% of all first-year students.
- The comparison groups presented in the following benchmark charts include "COPLAC" (a consortium of the 9 participating Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges), "Lib Arts" (all 77 of the participating Baccalaureate-Liberal Arts colleges), and "All NSSE" (all 473 participating institutions).

The NSSE assesses student engagement in educational practices that are associated with high levels of learning and development. **NSSE developed five benchmarks of effective educational practice** that are computed based on the results of clusters of individual survey questions: **Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student/Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment.**

First-year Student Benchmark Percentile Scores Comparison

The following table shows the percentage of NSSE Institutions and the percentage of Liberal Arts Institutions with benchmark scores that are at or below Evergreen's benchmark score for first-year students.

In terms of Level of Academic Challenge, Evergreen's benchmark score was at or above 80% of the NSSE Institutions and at or above 50% of the Liberal Arts Institutions. The benchmark for Active and Collaborative Learning was also very strong; Evergreen's first-year students scored at or above 80% of their peers at other colleges. According to the survey items that make up the benchmark for Student Interactions with Faculty, Evergreen's freshmen were in the 60th percentile relative to all NSSE schools and in the 30% compared to Liberal Arts peers. The benchmarks of Enriching Educational Experiences and Supportive Campus Environment benchmarks were weaker compared to the other benchmarks and peer groups.

NSSE First-year Student Benchmarks	2004 Report Percentile compared to All NSSE	2004 Report Percentile compared to Liberal Arts
Level of Academic Challenge	80%	50%
Active and Collaborative Learning	80%	80%
Student Interactions with Faculty	60%	30%
Enriching Educational Experiences	40%	10%
Supportive Campus Environment	40%	10%

**The calculation of this benchmark was changed by NSSE in 2004, which considerably altered the scores for most institutions.*

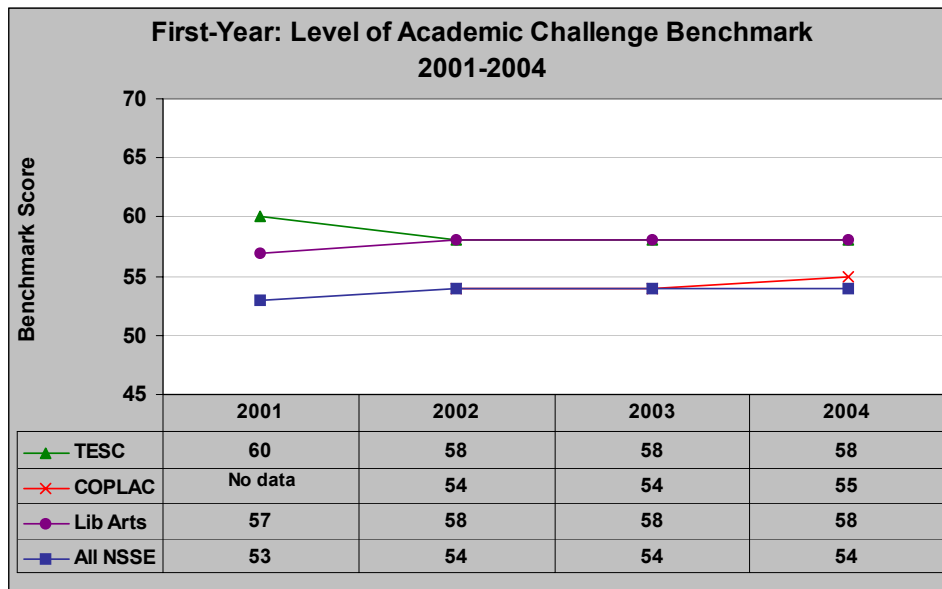
Detail of First-year Student Responses for Each Benchmark

Level of Academic Challenge Benchmark

The NSSE Institutional Benchmark Report describes the Level of Academic Challenge Benchmark in the following terms: "Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance."

First-Year Students and Level of Academic Challenge

The following chart shows trends in Level of Academic Benchmark scores for Evergreen first-year students and comparison groups from 2001-2004. Benchmark scores for Evergreen have remained the same since 2002.



The following tables show first-year student means for the individual questions that make up the Level of Academic Challenge Benchmark scores for 2004. Means that were significantly different (at $p < .01$) appear with an asterisk.

First-Year Students: Academic Challenge <i>Evergreen means significantly higher than one or more comparison group ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other activities related to your academic program) ¹	4.67	4.18*	4.53	4.00*
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length pack or course readings ²	4.06	3.60*	3.79*	3.42*
Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more ²	1.42	1.23*	1.22*	1.25
Number of written papers of fewer than 5 pages ²	3.61	3.35	3.45	3.24*
Coursework emphasized synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships ³	3.32	2.94*	3.06*	2.88*
Coursework emphasized making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how other gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions ³	3.03	2.81*	2.95	2.84
Coursework emphasized analyzing basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components ³	3.34	3.22	3.32	3.13*

¹ 8-point scale: 1=0 hrs/wk, 2= 1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/week, 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

² 5-point scale: 1=None, 2=between 1-4, 3=between 5 and 10, 4=between 11 and 20, 5=more than 20

³ 4-point scale: 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much

First-Year Students: Academic Challenge <i>Evergreen means significantly <u>lower</u> than one or more comparison group ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages ²	2.24	2.51*	2.64*	2.40
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations ⁴	2.40	2.54	2.66*	2.60*
Campus environment emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work ³	2.87	3.18*	3.28*	3.15*

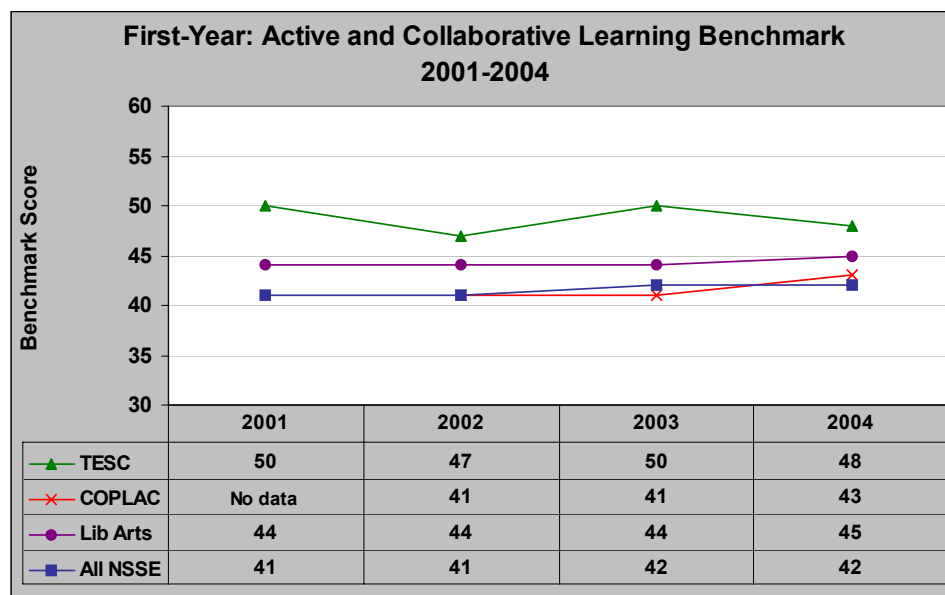
First-Year Students: Academic Challenge <i>No statistically significant differences ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Coursework emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations ³	3.02	2.99	3.12	3.03

Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark

The NSSE Benchmark Report provides the following statement regarding the Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark: “Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.”

First-Year Students and Active and Collaborative Learning

The following chart shows trends in Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark scores for Evergreen first-year students and comparison groups from 2001-2004. Evergreen's first-year students have outpaced the other comparison groups on this benchmark each year.



The following tables provide the average scores for the individual questions that comprise the Active and Collaborative Learning benchmark. Means that were significantly different (at $p < .01$) appear with an asterisks next to them.

² 5-point scale: 1=None, 2=between 1-4, 3=between 5 and 10, 4=between 11 and 20, 5=more than 20

³ 4-point scale: 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much

⁴ 4-point scale: 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

First-Year Students: Active and Collaborative Learning <i>Evergreen means significantly higher than means of one or more comparison group ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions ⁵	3.24	2.91*	3.07	2.84*
Worked with other students on projects during class ⁵	2.76	2.27*	2.23*	2.33*
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class ⁵	3.32	2.87*	2.91*	2.73*

First-Year Students: Active and Collaborative Learning <i>Evergreen mean significantly lower than means of Liberal Arts Institutions and NSSE Institutions ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary) ⁵	1.47	1.58	1.73*	1.67*

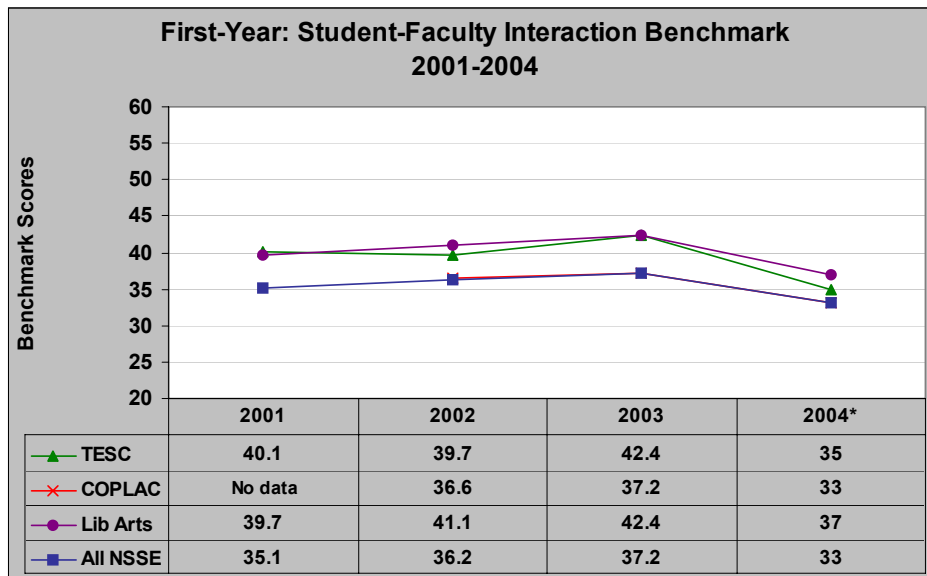
First-Year Students: Active and Collaborative Learning <i>No statistically significant differences at $p < .01$</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Made a class presentation ⁵	2.31	2.24	2.28	2.24
Worked with other students outside of class to prepare assignments ⁵	2.50	2.50	2.58	2.39
Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course ⁵	1.55	1.47	1.61	1.56

Student-Faculty Interactions Benchmark

The NSSE Benchmark Report describes the Student-Faculty Interactions Benchmark as follows: “Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.”

First-Year Students and the Student-Faculty Interactions Benchmark

The following chart shows trends in Student-Faculty Interaction Benchmark scores for Evergreen first-year students and comparison groups from 2001-2004. Note that in 2004, the benchmark scores for all groups dropped due to a change in one of the questions included in the benchmark.



*The format of one question in the student-faculty interaction benchmark was altered in 2004, which resulted in lower scores for most institutions on this benchmark.

⁵ 4-point scale: 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

The following tables show means for the individual questions that make up the benchmark scores. Means that were significantly different (at $p < .01$) appear with an asterisk next to them. There were two items for which Evergreen's first-year students had significantly higher mean responses than first-year students in one or more of the comparison groups.

First-Year Students: Student-Faculty Interaction <i>Evergreen means significantly <u>higher</u> than means of one or more comparison group ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with faculty members outside of class ⁶	2.04	1.81*	2.00	1.81*
Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance ⁶	3.02	2.71*	2.83*	2.63*

First-Year Students: Student-Faculty Interaction <i>Evergreen means significantly <u>lower</u> than means of one or more comparison group ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor ⁶	2.02	2.12	2.21*	2.15
Worked with faculty on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student activities, etc.) ⁶	1.41	1.57	1.73*	1.57

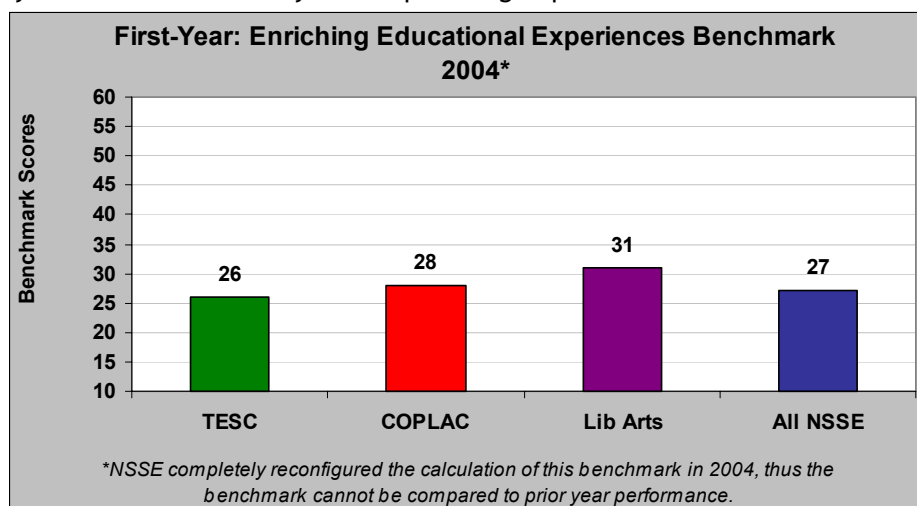
First-Year Students: Student-Faculty Interaction <i>Items with no statistically significant differences ($p < .01$)</i>	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ⁶	2.69	2.57	2.72	2.59
Have you worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements? <i>% of students who replied "Yes"</i>	6%	4%	3%	3%

Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark

The NSSE Benchmark Report provides the following statement to describe the Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark: "Complementary learning opportunities in and out of class augment academic programs. Diversity experiences teach students valuable things about themselves and others. Technology facilitates collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge."

First-Year Students and Enriching Educational Experiences

The chart below shows the overall benchmark score on Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark for Evergreen first-year students and first-year comparison groups in 2004.



⁶ 4-point scale: 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

The following tables show means for the individual questions that make up the benchmark scores. Means that were significantly different (at $p < .01$) appear with an asterisk next to them. **Survey items presented as percentages represent the percent of students who replied “yes” to participation in the experience.**

Not surprisingly, Evergreen first-years were significantly more likely to report participating in a learning community compared to first-year students in all other comparison groups. This question was new to the benchmark calculation this year.

First-Year Students: Enriching Educational Experiences Evergreen mean significantly higher than means of all three comparison groups ($p < .01$)	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Participated in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	24%	6%*	9%*	12%*

First-Year Students: Enriching Educational Experiences Evergreen means significantly lower than means of one or more comparison group ($p < .01$)	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, social fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.) ⁷	1.73	2.26*	2.70*	2.22*
Have done culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.)	0%	1%	1%	1%*
Have done community service or volunteer work	32%	35%	44%*	37%
Have done foreign language coursework	10%	37%*	42%*	23%*
Have done study abroad	0%	1%*	2%*	2%*
Used an electronic medium (list-serv, chat group, Internet, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment ⁸	2.37	2.60	2.71*	2.63*

First-Year Students: Enriching Educational Experiences <i>No statistically significant differences</i> ($p < .01$)	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Have done practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	12%	6%	6%	6%
Have done independent study or self-designed major	9%	7%	2%	2%
Serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values ⁸	2.80	2.96	2.97	2.74
Serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity ⁸	2.63	2.57	2.70	2.56
Campus environment encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds ⁹	2.71	2.66	2.73	2.60

Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark

The NSSE Benchmark Report explains the Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark as follows: “Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.”

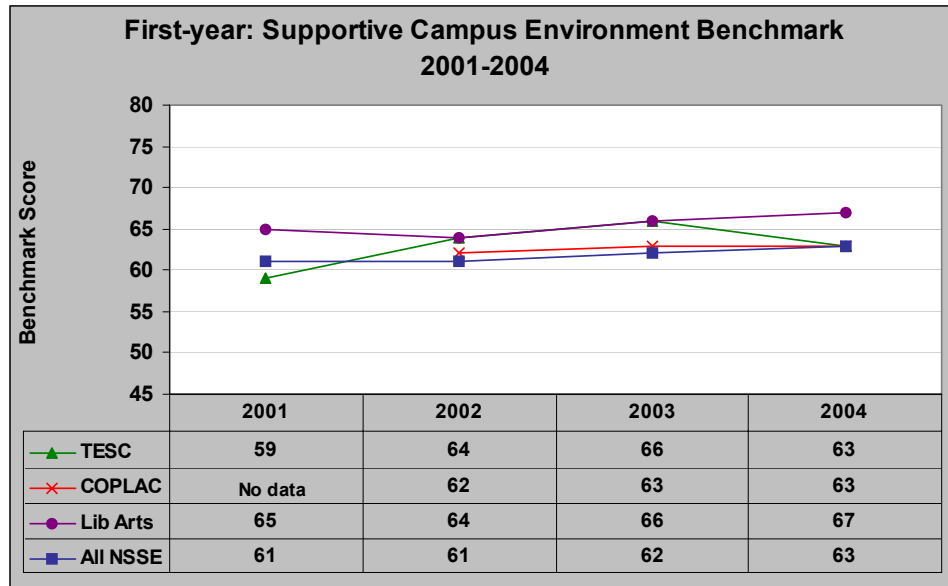
⁷ 8-point scale: 1=0 hrs/wk, 2= 1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/week, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=more than 30 hrs/wk

⁸ 4-point scale: 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

⁹ 4-point scale: 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much

First-Year Students and the Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark

The following chart shows trends for the Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark for Evergreen first-year students from 2001-2004. This trend line shows a slight drop in Evergreen's benchmark score for first-year students from a peak in 2003; however, the recent status of this benchmark remains above its low point in 2001.



The following tables provide mean ratings for the individual questions that make up the benchmark scores. Means that were significantly different (at $p < .01$) appear with an asterisk next to them.

First-Year Students: Support Campus Environment Evergreen mean significantly higher than mean of NSSE Institutions ($p < .01$)	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Quality of relationships with faculty members ¹⁰	5.88	5.66	5.90	5.58*

First-Year Students: Support Campus Environment Evergreen mean significantly lower than mean of Liberal Arts Institutions ($p < .01$)	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially ¹¹	2.21	2.37	2.50*	2.36

First-Year Students: Support Campus Environment No significant differences ($p < .01$)	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
Quality of relationships with other students ¹²	5.66	5.70	5.79	5.68
Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices ¹³	5.10	5.12	5.31	5.13
Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically ¹¹	3.21	3.15	3.31	3.10
Campus environment helps you cope with your non- academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) ¹¹	2.06	2.10	2.27	2.15

¹⁰ 7-point scale: 1=unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic to 7=available, helpful, sympathetic

¹¹ 4-point scale: 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much

¹² 7-point scale: 1=unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation to 7=friendly, supportive, sense of belonging

¹³ 7-point scale: 1=unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid to 7=helpful, considerate, flexible

Overall Satisfaction Questions

Overall Satisfaction Questions First-year student responses	Evergreen	COPLAC	All Liberal Arts	All NSSE Institutions
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution? ¹⁴	3.40	3.27	3.39	3.22*
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending? ¹⁵	3.46	3.28	3.30	3.23*
Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution? ¹⁴	3.04	2.97	3.14	3.02

* Item showed significant difference for Evergreen vs. this comparison group of institutions at $p < .01$.

Selected Additional NSSE Questions

Primary Source of Academic Advising

What has been your primary source of academic advising during the current academic year?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years	Evergreen Seniors	COPLAC Seniors
Institutions publications/Institution website	9%	2%	12%	5%
Friends or family	38%	32%	23%	14%
An instructor or staff member not assigned as your advisor	19%	10%	37%	22%
An advisor in the Advising Center/MSR, or other advising Center	19%	3%	25%	2%
My officially assigned advisor	15%	53%	3%	57%

Difficulty with Academic Progress

If you are having difficulty making progress with your studies, which one of the following factors has been most responsible for this difficulty?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years	Evergreen Seniors	COPLAC Seniors
External Pressures (family, health, or work obligations, etc)	16%	11%	18%	17%
Motivation	20%	24%	9%	17%
Time management or study skills	30%	27%	12%	13%
Academic preparation for college	1%	4%	7%	4%
Not applicable - I am satisfied with my academic progress	33%	33%	53%	48%

Paid employment

About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following... working for pay on campus?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years	BAC-LA First-Years	NSSE First-Years
No time spent working on campus	82%	76%	62%	73%
Time spent working on campus	18%	24%	38%	27%

¹⁴ 4-point scale: 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent

¹⁵ 4-point scale: 1=definitely no, 2=probably no, 3=probably yes, 4=definitely yes

About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following... working for pay off campus?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years	BAC-LA First-Years	NSSE First-Years
No time spent working off campus	72%	82%	84%	67%
Time spent working off campus	28%	18%	16%	33%

Employment - On and/or Off Campus (collapsed variable)

	Evergreen First-Years
No time spent working on or off campus	55%
Spends time working on and/or off campus	45%

17% work 1-10 hrs/wk
 14% work 11-20 hrs/wk
 6% work 21-30 hrs/wk
 7% work over 30 hrs/wk

Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities

In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following... Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years	BAC-LA First-Years	NSSE First-Years
Never	17%	9%	8%	17%
Sometimes	32%	26%	25%	27%
Often	30%	28%	24%	23%
Very Often	21%	37%	43%	33%

Participated in activities to enhance spirituality

In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following... Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years	BAC-LA First-Years	NSSE First-Years
Never	51%	43%	38%	42%
Sometimes	32%	30%	31%	27%
Often	9%	11%	14%	14%
Very Often	8%	15%	17%	18%

Attended art, dance, theater performance

In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following... Attended an art exhibit, gallery, play dance, or other theater performance?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years	BAC-LA First-Years	NSSE First-Years
Never	10%	14%	13%	26%
Sometimes	53%	48%	47%	47%
Often	23%	25%	25%	18%
Very Often	14%	13%	14%	10%

Sense of Community

During this academic year, to what extent have you experienced a sense of community at this institution (That is, being part of a group who share common interests, goals, values, and experiences)?

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years
Not at All	7%	8%
Somewhat	38%	30%
Strongly	22%	35%
Very Strongly	27%	24%
No Opinion	6%	3%

Learning Styles

How much do you agree with the following: Overall, your instructors show respect for the diverse talents and learning styles of students by using a variety of instructional methods.

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years
Strongly disagree	1%	2%
Disagree	3%	11%
Agree	39%	63%
Strongly agree	56%	17%
No opinion	2%	6%

95% of Evergreen first-years agree or strongly agree that their instructors show respect for the diverse talents and learning styles of their students, compared to 80% of first-year students at the COPLAC institutions. The Evergreen first-year student mean rating was 3.53, which was significantly higher than the mean of 3.02 for COPLAC first-years ($p < .001$).

Future Plans

- Forty-percent of Evergreen first-year students were undecided as to whether they planned to transfer to another institution prior to completing their undergraduate Education. Thirty-five percent the first-year respondents at COPLAC institutions reported being undecided. Eleven percent of both Evergreen and COPLAC first-years reported that they definitely planned to transfer.

If you plan on transferring, which one of the following factors has had the greatest impact on this decision? (Choose only one.)

	Evergreen First-Years	COPLAC First-Years
Other personal issues	23%	32%
Financial issues	9%	7%
Academic issues	39%	22%
Desired major not available	20%	31%
Always planned to transfer	9%	8%

First-year Learning Progress

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)

	Evergreen	COPLAC	LIB ARTS	ALL NSSE
Thinking critically and analytically	3.46	3.20*	3.34	3.17*
Learning effectively on your own	3.26	2.97*	3.02*	2.91*
Writing clearly and effectively	3.18	2.96*	3.14	2.97*
Working effectively with others	3.05	2.73*	2.89	2.85
Understanding yourself	3.04	2.70*	2.87	2.74*
Acquiring a broad general education	3.02	3.22*	3.35*	3.16
Speaking clearly and effectively	2.83	2.67	2.77	2.73
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.76	2.49*	2.73	2.60
Solving complex real-world problems	2.72	2.43*	2.56	2.50*
Contributing to the welfare of your community	2.64	2.32*	2.52	2.32*
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.61	2.43	2.57	2.53
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.29	2.45	2.64*	2.67*
Voting in local, state, or national elections	2.26	2.05	1.96*	1.88*
Using computing and information technology	2.21	2.68*	2.77*	2.85*
Analyzing quantitative problems	2.03	2.57*	2.66*	2.64*
Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	1.91	1.84	2.08	2.10

* indicates significant difference $p < .0$. The top three means for each group are presented in blue font; the lowest three are in red font.