

To focus discussions about the importance of student engagement and guide institutional improvement efforts, NSSE created five clusters or "benchmarks" of effective educational practice: (1) Level of academic challenge, (2) Active and collaborative learning, (3) Student-faculty interaction, (4) Enriching educational experiences, and (5) Supportive campus environment. This Benchmark Comparisons Report compares the performance of your institution with your selected peers or consortium, selected Carnegie peers, and all 2006 NSSE institutions.¹ In addition, page 8 provides two other comparisons between your school and above-average U.S. institutions with benchmarks in the top 50% of all U.S. NSSE institutions and high-performing U.S. institutions with benchmarks in the top 10% of all U.S. NSSE institutions. These displays allow you to determine if the engagement of your typical student differs in a statistically significant, meaningful way from the average student in these comparison groups. More detailed information about how benchmarks are created can be found on the NSSE Web site at www.nsse.iub.edu/html/2006_inst_report.htm.

Statistical Significance

Benchmarks with mean differences that are larger than would be expected by chance alone are noted with one, two, or three asterisks, denoting one of three significance levels ($p < .05$, $p < .01$, and $p < .001$). The smaller the significance level, the smaller the likelihood that the difference is due to chance. Please note that statistical significance does not guarantee that the result is substantive or important. Large sample sizes (as with the NSSE project) tend to produce more statistically significant results even though the magnitude of mean differences may be inconsequential.

Effect Size

Effect size indicates the *practical significance* of the mean difference. It is calculated by dividing the mean difference by the standard deviation of the institution is being compared (selected peers, Carnegie peers, or all NSSE 2006 schools). In practice, an effect size of .2 is often considered small, .5 moderate, and .8 large. A positive sign indicates that your institution's mean was greater, thus showing an affirmative result for the institution. A negative sign indicates the institution lags behind the comparison group. Look for patterns of effect sizes that point to areas of student or institutional performance that warrant attention.

Class and Sample

Means are reported for first-year students and seniors (institution reported). All randomly selected students are included in these analyses. Students in targeted or locally administered oversamples are not included.

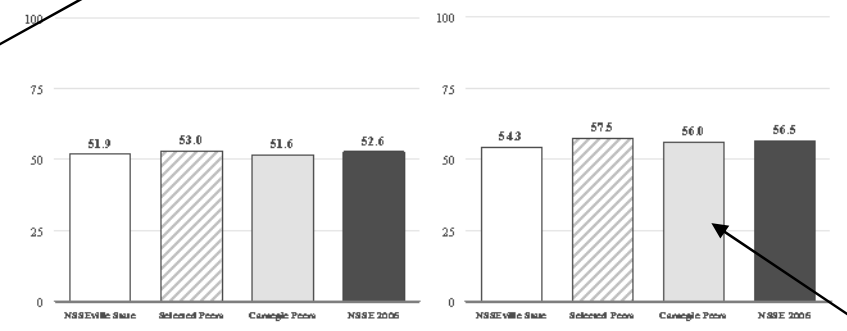
Mean

The mean is the *weighted* arithmetic average of student level benchmark scores. Although institutional benchmark score calculations have not changed from prior years, reference group calculations were revised in 2005.

Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)

Benchmark Mean Comparisons

Class	NSSEville State compared with:			
	NSSEville State	Selected Peers	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2006
	Mean*	Mean**	Mean**	Mean**
First-Year	51.9	53.0	51.6	52.6
Seniors	54.3	57.5	56.0	56.5



Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) Items

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.

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, etc. related to academic program)
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more; number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages; and number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizing analysis of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizing application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work

Benchmark Description & Survey Items

A description of the benchmark and the individual items used in its creation are summarized.

Bar Charts

A visual display of first-year and senior mean benchmark scores for your institution and three reference groups.

¹ U.S. institution reports include U.S. schools only. Canadian institution reports include U.S. and Canadian institutions.