

National Survey of Student Engagement

2011-2012

September 2013



Every three years the University of Scranton administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE is a nation-wide survey organized by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. Broadly speaking, the questions focus on how engaged students are in learning while at the University, but the questions also touch on the students' impressions of institutional priorities and their own learning outcomes. The University receives information about three different comparison groups to assist in providing context to our data. For the 2012 survey the three comparison groups are the New American Colleges and Universities (NAC&U) consortium¹, those institutions matching the University of Scranton's Carnegie Class (Master's, larger)², and a group composed of all institutions participating in the 2012 NSSE³.

University students were recruited to participate in the NSSE through an initial email and two follow-up reminder emails. Fliers were also located around campus reminding students about the NSSE and instructing them on how to access the survey online. All seniors and freshmen on campus were invited to participate, but this report deals specifically with the senior student responses to highlight what students think about the University after four years. Of the 972 seniors at the University of Scranton, 266 responded to the survey, a 27 percent response rate. This response rate was slightly lower than average compared to other schools in the NAC&U consortium (34%), but matched the average for all schools participating in the NSSE (27%) and the average for other schools in our Carnegie Class (27%).

Student Demographics

The University of Scranton students that responded most resemble the students in the NAC&U comparison group in regard to enrollment status (Scranton, 94% full-time and NAC&U, 94% full-time), transfer status (Scranton, 8% transfer students and NAC&U, 11%), age (98% under 24 and 91% under 24), and place of residence (82% on-campus and 42% on-campus). Seventy-one percent of the respondents were female, slightly more than the NAC&U comparison group (69%), the Carnegie Class group (67%), and the NSSE group (63%). The University of Scranton respondents were also less diverse than the comparison groups with 86 percent reporting that they were white compared to 79 percent for the NAC&U comparison group and 68 percent for both the Carnegie Class and NSSE 2012 comparison groups. See Appendix 2, below, for a breakdown of student respondents by ethnicity.

NSSE Benchmarks

To help institutions summarize the 95BT/P.6(f)-3.9(%)-6.b6.4(n)1ni8.033 0 Td{s}1.7(u)0pizoD-3.3(a)13.6(6.5.2(0.511 C)-3

human cultures and the physical and natural world, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative and applied learning, correspond well to the University's own goals mentioned above in the themes _____ and _____. The HIEP's further represent methods by which the University can effectively practice _____. Like the key themes, these topics will be referenced in later sections of the report as they connect to different facets of the NSSE results.

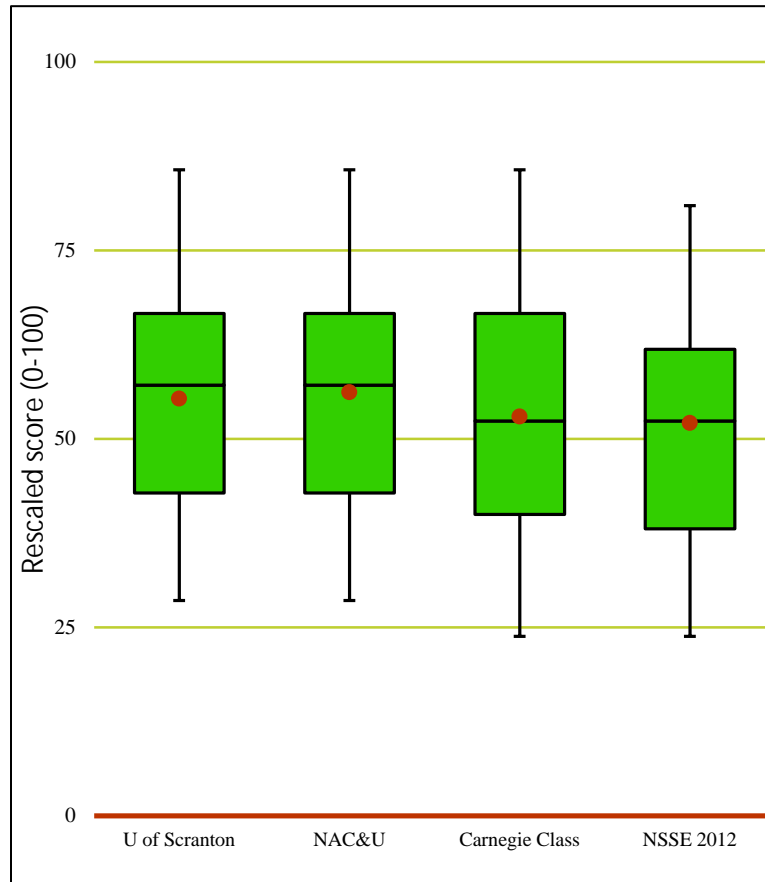
Level of Academic Challenge

The Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) benchmark

The NSSE asks students to what extent their coursework emphasized memorizing, analyzing, synthesizing, making judgments, and applying what they are learning. Analyzing, synthesizing, making judgments, and applying are all considered to be higher order thinking and representative of a higher level of quality. University students did not differ from the comparison groups in regard to how much they thought the University emphasized synthesis, making judgments, and applying in coursework. However, the students did think the University emphasized analyzing (3.44) slightly more than both the Carnegie Class ($M = 3.31$, $p < .01$, $d = .18$) comparison group and the NSSE 2012 ($M = 3.33$, $p < .05$, $d = .16$) comparison group.

The seven academic effort questions ask about the number of hours students spend preparing for class, whether students worked harder than they thought they could to meet expectations, whether students thought that their campus environment emphasized spending significant time studying and on academic work, the number of assigned readings, and the number of papers or reports that the students had to write for class. University students' responses again resembled the responses of students in the NAC&U comparison group. They differed most significantly from the Carnegie Class and NSSE 2012 comparison groups when it came to number of assigned textbooks (Scranton, $M = 3.42$; Carnegie Class, $M = 3.13$, $p < .001$, $d = .28$; and NSSE 2012, $M = 3.16$, $p < .001$, $d = .25$) and number of papers or reports fewer than 5 pages ($M = 3.26$; $M = 3.00$, $p < .001$, $d = .22$; and $M = 3.00$, $p < .001$, $d = .22$). Writing-intensive courses are one of the high-impact educational practices endorsed by LEAP, and the University also differed from the Carnegie Class comparison group on the number of papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages (Scranton, $M = 2.72$ and Carnegie, $M = 2.57$, $p < .05$, $d = .16$).

Figure 2. Distributions of student benchmark scores, ACL



Looking at the individual items, Scranton’s students responded that they had participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course more often than any of the comparison groups, although the difference was less substantial between the University ($t = 2.12$) and the NAC&U ($t = 1.94$, $p < .05$, $d = .19$) comparison group than the University and the Carnegie Class ($t = 1.81$, $p < .001$, $d = .33$) and NSSE 2012 ($t = 1.74$, $p < .001$, $d = .41$) comparison groups. This helps illustrate the University’s use of the high-impact educational practice of community-based learning. This community-based learning coincides with the University’s care for community emphasized in the strategic theme of [Community-Based Learning](#) and the instructive value of service learning emphasized in the theme of [Service Learning](#).

Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)

The interaction of students and faculty is one of the major ways students relate to the University both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. The University’s average student rating for Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI) benchmark was 49.0; the NAC&U average rating was 50.0. The University scored significantly higher than the Carnegie Class ($t = 43.7$, $p < .001$, $d = .25$) and NSSE 2012 ($t = 42.9$, $p < .001$, $d = .28$). The quality of student and faculty relationships at the University helps show the embodiment of [Caring for the Individual](#) at the University as faculty are caring about the individual students.

relationships on campus and three questions specifically about whether the University emphasized a supportive campus environment.

Figure 4. Distributions of student benchmark scores, SCE

On the three quality of relationships questions students rated the University significantly higher than the Carnegie Class and NSSE 2012 comparison groups however the difference in quality of their relationships with other students (Scranton, $M = 5.91$; Carnegie Class, $M = 5.69$, $t < .01$, $d = .17$; and NSSE 2012, $M = 5.68$, $t < .01$, $d = .18$) and administration ($M = 5.02$; $M = 4.79$, $t < .05$, $d = .14$; and $M = 4.81$, $t < .05$, $d = .13$) was smaller than the difference in the quality of their relationships with faculty between the University ($M = 5.95$) and the comparison groups (Carnegie, $M = 5.59$, $t < .001$, $d = .27$ and NSSE, $M = 5.53$, $t < .001$, $d = .31$). The University of Scranton did not differ from the NAC&U comparison group except for in the ratings of the students' relationships with the administration (Scranton, $M = 5.02$ and NAC&U, $M = 4.78$, $t < .05$, $d = .15$).

Students rated the University very highly when asked about whether their institution emphasized

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= .28), Carnegie Class (academic, $M = 3.00$, $p < .001$, $d = .44$; social, $M = 2.31$, $p < .001$, $d = .33$; and non-academic, $M = 2.08$, $p < .001$, $d = .37$), and NSSE 2012 (academic, $M = 3.01$, $p < .001$, $d = .44$; social, $M = 2.30$, $p < .001$, $d = .34$; and non-academic, $M = 2.07$, $p < .001$, $d = .39$) comparison groups. While differences with the NAC&U were smaller, the differences with the other two comparison groups on academic support were sizable with effect sizes of 0.44.

Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)

The Enriching Education Experiences (EEE) benchmark focuses on a variety of educational practices that NSSE's research indicates are beneficial for student learning outcomes. Many of these experiences correspond to similar high-impact educational practices endorsed by LEAP. Students rated the University an average of 44.7 which was significantly lower than the NAC&U comparison group ($M = 50.3$, $p < .001$, $d = -.32$). However, the University was still rated higher than either the Carnegie Class ($M = 39.6$,

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their peers at any of the three comparison groups in almost every category shown in Table 2, below. The only categories that were not rated significantly higher (highlighted in red) were, “Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills,” “Analyzing quantitative problems,” “Using computing and information technology,” “Voting in local, state, or national elections,” “Learning effectively on your own,” and “Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.”

The University’s contributions were most highly rated compared to our comparison groups when it came to aspects of our Jesuit mission (highlighted in green): “Acquiring a broad general education,” “Developing a personal code of values and ethics,” “Contributing to the welfare of your community,” “Developing a deepened sense of spirituality.” Scranton students also reported significantly higher University contributions to writing, speaking, and thinking skills as well as their ability to understand themselves.

Table 2: Mean perceived learning outcomes⁴

Question: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	U of Scranton	NACU	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2012
Acquiring a broad general education	3.62	3.35***	3.26^	3.27^

related to the University's lower percentage of non-white students, diversity and global learning represent important high-impact educational practices. Increased campus diversity and expanded opportunities for multicultural experiences are specifically mentioned as goals in the University of Scranton's 2010-2015 strategic plan. Scranton students were also less likely than NAC&U comparison group students to report study abroad participation or foreign language coursework suggesting that this could be one area that the University could emphasize to increase global learning and multicultural opportunities.

While this marks one area where the University could create improvements, overall 641

Appendix 1: NSSE benchmark scores from the four most recent administrations

Appendix 2. Race/ethnicity of respondents.

Race/Ethnicity	U of Scranton	NACU	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2012
Am. Indian/Native American	0%	0%	1%	1%
Asian/Asian Am./Pacific Isl.	5%	3%	4%	5%
Black/African American	1%	3%	9%	9%
White (non-Hispanic)	86%	79%	68%	68%
Mexican/Mexican American	0%	1%	4%	3%
Puerto Rican	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	1%	1%	3%	3%
Multiracial	0%	3%	3%	3%
Other	0%	1%	1%	1%
I prefer not to respond	5%	6%	6%	6%

Appendix 3: NAC&U Institutions participating in the NSSE 2012.

Institution Name	City	State
Belmont University	Nashville	TN
Butler University	Indianapolis	IN
Hamline University	Saint Paul	MN
Ithaca College	Ithaca	NY
Nazareth College	Rochester	NY
North Central College	Naperville	

Appendix 4: Carnegie Class (Master's Larger) institutions participating in the NSSE 2012.

Abilene Christian University

