

2006 National Survey of Student Engagement: Results for the University of Ottawa

Introduction

Institutional Research and Planning is pleased to present the results from the 2006 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

What is NSSE?

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is widely used to assess the quality of the post-secondary educational experience across North America. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending a post-secondary institution. Survey items used on NSSE represent empirically confirmed “good practices” in undergraduate education. That is, they reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of attending a post-secondary institution.

In 2006, 557 colleges and universities across North America participated in the survey, administered by the Indiana University Center for Post-Secondary Research. This is the University of Ottawa’s second year of participation.

The Ontario Consortium

For the 2006 survey an Ontario consortium was formed to share survey results. This permits University of Ottawa to compare itself with the other members of this consortium. The Ontario consortium members are listed in Appendix 1. Note that the 2005 report included comparisons to a Canadian consortium rather than the Ontario Consortium.

The US comparison institutions

A group of US doctoral-extensive universities were also selected as comparison institutions for the University of Ottawa. This comparison group consists of large, research intensive and primarily non-residential American universities which are listed in Appendix 1.

The survey sample

We invited over 2000 first-year students and a similar number of senior-year undergraduate students to complete the online survey in March 2006. The overall response rate for the University of Ottawa was 35 per cent, and for the Ontario Consortium, 41 per cent.

NSSE benchmarks

To present and evaluate the multidimensional nature of student engagement, NSSE developed five benchmarks of effective educational practice. The five key areas are level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.

In this summary, we report on our relative position on NSSE’s benchmarks and on the individual items used to compute our scores.

Complete NSSE results

From 2006, the complete NSSE results for the University of Ottawa and its peer comparison groups are available on our Web site at www.uottawa.ca/services/irp/eng/index.html . If you require additional information, please contact H el ene Lacroix at (613) 562-5954, or via e-mail at hlacroix@uOttawa.ca .

NSSE and the scorecard

At the University of Ottawa, the results from this survey are used to calculate indicator 3.1 *Learning Quality Assessment* of our institutional scorecard. In 2006, we revised indicator 3.1 to reflect our performance in the five benchmarks of institutional practice vis- a-vis our American peers. Some detailed information about the calculation of this key institutional indicator is provided at the end of this report.

Overview of Results

NSSE benchmarks

NSSE calculates separate benchmarks for first- and senior-year undergraduate students. We compared ourselves to the Ontario Consortium and to the selected group of US doctoral-extensive universities. The overall scores indicate that:

- The level of academic challenge reported by both our first- and senior-year students is on par to the level reported by students at our peer institutions in Ontario and the US.
- For all other benchmarks, we mostly appear to lag behind both our Ontario and US peers at both the first- and second-year level. The only exceptions are:
 - when compared to their peers studying at other Ontarian institutions, our first-year students report a similar level of involvement in enriching educational experiences and our senior-year students report a similar level of exposure to active and collaborative learning.

Table 1: University of Ottawa scored higher (>), the same (=) or lower (<) than the Ontario Consortium and US doctoral-extensive institutions

Benchmark	First Year		Senior Year	
	Ontario Consortium	US doctoral-extensive	Ontario Consortium	US doctoral-extensive
Level of Academic Challenge	=	=	=	=
Active and Collaborative Learning	<	<	=	<
Enriching Educational Experiences	=	<	<	<
Student-Faculty Interaction	<	<	<	<
Supportive Campus Environment	<	<	<	<

Overall satisfaction

The relatively lower scores in the NSSE benchmarks are also reflected in the overall level of satisfaction expressed by our students:

- 77% of our first-year students and 67% of our senior-year students believe their overall educational experience was good or excellent. At US doctoral-extensive institutions, 85% of first-year students and 84% of senior-year students provide this rating.
- 81% of our first-year students would attend the University of Ottawa if they could start over again. Disappointingly, only 67% of our senior students share this opinion. At US doctoral-extensive institutions, more than 80% of both first- and senior-year students would attend their current institution again if given the choice.

Interpreting the Benchmark Results

Comparing average students

The benchmarks calculated by NSSE allow us to determine if the engagement of our typical first- and senior-year undergraduate student differs – in a statistically significant, meaningful way – from the average student in our comparison groups: the 2006 Ontario Consortium and the selected US doctoral-extensive universities.

Individual scores have little meaning

Each benchmark is calculated as the overall average across a number of questions. Since each question may have been coded on a different scale (e.g., from one to four, from one to seven) all answers are converted to a 100- point base before calculating the overall score.

However, a benchmark score on its own still cannot be interpreted or explained directly. This value only makes sense when compared to the value obtained by a peer comparison group.

*Interpreting
effect sizes*

We compare our mean to that of peer groups to determine if we are faring better or worse than others. The *effect size*¹ is the key measure used for this comparison, interpreted as follows:

- A positive sign in the effect size indicates that our institution's mean is greater, therefore showing an affirmative result.
- A negative sign indicates our institution lags behind the comparison groups and points to areas that warrant attention.
- To interpret magnitude of the difference, an effect size of .2 is generally considered small, .5 moderate and .8 large.
- The effect size is negligible for items with mean differences that are not statistically significant. Negligible effect sizes are represented by a dash in the present report.

*Frequency
distributions*

Throughout this report, we have also added a few comments regarding the frequency distributions of certain questions. Percentages often help illustrate or better understand the results obtained. In addition, frequency distributions associated to each individual benchmark items are presented in Appendix 2.

¹ The simple calculation of a mean difference could misguide our assessment, since its significance is also determined by other statistical characteristics of each comparison group (e.g., the standard deviation). The effect size, calculated as the mean difference (between uOttawa and a comparison group) divided by the comparison group deviation standard, is a more sophisticated measure.

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge

Why is this measured?

“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.” (NSSE)

Overall benchmark

Table 2: Results for Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge

	uOttawa Mean	Ontario Consortium		US doctoral-extensive	
		Mean	Effect Size	Mean	Effect Size
First Year	49.5	50.6	-.08	50.8	-.10
Senior Year	54.1	55.2	-	54.8	-

Encouraging results

Overall, the level of academic challenge offered by the University of Ottawa is roughly equivalent to the one offered at the other Ontarian and US doctoral-extensive institutions. Although our mean scores are slightly lower than our peer groups’ mean scores, the effect sizes of the mean differences observed are either small or negligible.

Moreover, our scores are equivalent or greater than the ones of our comparative institutions in most items related to the number of papers written and textbooks assigned:

- 43% of our first-year students and 32 % of our senior students are assigned more than 10 textbooks, books or book-length packs of course readings during the academic year.
- Our first- and senior-year students write more long papers (between 5 and 19 pages, and 20 pages and more) than their peers at US doctoral-extensive universities. However, they write fewer short papers (less than 5 pages) than those same peer students.
- Our first-year and senior-year students write at least an equal number of long and short papers than those studying at other Ontarian institutions.

Disappointing results

The University of Ottawa underperforms its Ontarian and American peer institutions regarding the proportion of first-year students who indicate that the following elements are emphasized in their coursework:

- Our first-year students indicate that their coursework emphasizes quite a bit or very much analyzing the basic elements of an idea (73%), synthesizing and organizing ideas and information (59%), making judgments about the value of information, arguments of methods (53%), and applying theories and concepts to practical problems in new situations (68%).
- Although the observed effect sizes are small, a larger proportion of first-year students report those same key elements as being emphasized in their coursework at other Ontarian institutions (respectively 77%, 62%, 61% and 72%), as well as at US doctoral-extensive institutions (respectively 77%, 64%, 63% and 72%).
- On the other hand, the results reported by senior students are more consistent with the ones of other Ontarian and US doctoral-extensive institutions.

Students were also asked whether their institution emphasizes spending a significant amount of time studying and on academic work. At the University of Ottawa, 75% of our senior students report that our university emphasizes this quite a bit or very much. This share is slightly lower than at other Ontarian institutions (80%) and than at US doctoral-extensive universities (79%). We observed a similar pattern for our first-year students.

In general, when compared to the results at peer institutions, our students do not appear to be working as hard as they think they could. About 39% of our first-year students report working as hard as they could often or very often — a percentage smaller than those who report doing so at both Ontarian (43%) and American peer institutions (48%). On the other hand, 48% of our senior students report working harder than they thought possible — a result that is on par with the one reported by their peers at Ontarian institutions, but smaller than the one reported by their peers at US doctoral-extensive institutions (53%).

Other findings

In terms of the amount of time spent studying, 33% of our first-year students report spending more than 15 hours per week preparing for classes as compared to 41% at other Ontarian institutions and 35% at US doctoral-extensive institutions. This proportion increases to 44% for our senior students, on par with the result observed at other Ontarian institutions and larger than the one observed at US doctoral-extensive institutions (38%).

Table 3: Mean results for the components of Benchmark 1, Level of Academic Challenge

<i>Components of Level of Academic Challenge</i>	First Year			Senior Year		
	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations (<i>1= never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>)	2.34	-.10	-.21	2.49	-	-.14
Number of hours spent preparing for class per week (<i>1= 0 hrs/wk., 2=1-5 hrs/wk., 3=6-10 hrs/wk., 4=11-15 hrs/wk., 5=16-20 hrs/wk., 6=21-25 hrs/wk., 7=26-30 hrs/wk., 8=more than 30 hrs/wk.</i>)	4.01	-.15	-	4.39	-	.12
Campus environment emphasizes spending significant amount of time studying and on academic work (<i>1= very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4= very much</i>)	2.95	-.18	-.13	3.00	-.16	-.11
<i>Coursework emphasizes the following elements (1= very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)</i>						
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	2.99	-.10	-.09	3.17	-	-
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	2.69	-.09	-.13	2.94	-	-
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	2.59	-.16	-.22	2.81	-.10	-
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	2.92	-.09	-	3.04	-	-.12
<i>Number of papers written/textbooks assigned (1= none, 2=between 1 and 4, 3=between 5 and 10, 4=between 11 and 20, 5=more than 20)</i>						
Number of written papers or reports of fewer than five pages	2.70	.26	-.27	2.56	-	-.34
Number of written papers or reports between five and 19 pages	2.57	.23	.44	2.83	-	.37
Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more	1.40	-	.33	1.92	.13	.45
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	3.37	-	.19	3.17	-	-

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning

Why is this measured?

“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.” (NSSE)

NSSE has also corroborated with their research that at institutions where faculty members use effective educational practices more frequently in their classes, students are more engaged overall and gain more from their post-secondary education.

Overall benchmark

Table 4: Results for Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning

	uOttawa Mean	Ontario Consortium		US doctoral-extensive	
		Mean	Effect Size	Mean	Effect Size
First Year	31.1	34.6	-.23	38.8	-.50
Senior Year	41.7	42.9	-	48.0	-.37

Encouraging results

Both first- and senior-year students at the University of Ottawa report working with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments more often than their peers studying at US doctoral-extensive institutions and at least as often as their peers studying at other Ontarian institutions.

- 48% of our first-year students have worked often or very often with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.
- 63% of our senior students have worked often or very often with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.

Disappointing results

The University of Ottawa lags behind its peer institutions in most items related to “in class” learning activities, particularly when compared with US doctoral-extensive universities.

Among our first-year students:

- 30% asked questions or contributed to in-class discussions often or very often as compared to 49% at US doctoral-extensive institutions.
- 8% report making a class presentation often or very often as compared to 20% at US doctoral-extensive institutions.
- 18% worked often or very often with others on projects during class as compared to 40% at US doctoral-extensive universities.

Among our senior students:

- 42% asked questions or contributed to in-class discussions often or very often as compared to 62% at US doctoral-extensive institutions.
- 39% report making a class presentation often or very often as compared to 50% at US doctoral-extensive institutions.
- 26% worked often or very often with others on projects during class as compared to 42% at US doctoral-extensive universities.

In addition, our students are less likely to participate in a community-based project as a part of a regular course or to tutor other students than do their peers at US doctoral-extensive universities. For these activities however, the gap with other Ontarian institutions is narrower in the case of first-year students and null in the case of senior students.

Other findings

59 % of our first-year students and 58% of our senior students have discussed often or very often with others outside of class. These results are generally on par with Ontarian peer institutions. However, we lag behind American institutions in the case of senior students (64%).

Table 5: Mean results for the components of Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning

<i>Components of Active and Collaborative Learning</i> <i>(1= never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)</i>	First Year			Senior Year		
	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive
<i>Learning Outside of Class</i>						
1. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	2.46	-	.15	2.87	.11	.12
2. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (e.g., students, family members, co-workers)	2.74	-	-	2.74	-	-.13
3. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	1.57	-.11	-.14	1.76	-	-.13
4. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	1.18	-.15	-.35	1.35	-	-.30
<i>Learning In Class</i>						
5. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	2.20	-.09	-.49	2.51	-.12	-.44
6. Made a class presentation	1.47	-.44	-.69	2.38	-.18	-.25
7. Worked with other students on projects during class	1.91	-.11	-.54	2.10	-	-.35

Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interaction

Why is this measured?

“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.” (NSSE)

Overall benchmark

Table 6: Results for Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interaction

	uOttawa Mean	Ontario Consortium		US doctoral-extensive	
		Mean	Effect Size	Mean	Effect Size
First Year	19.5	22.2	-.17	29.7	-.59
Senior Year	27.3	31.4	-.22	38.8	-.56

Encouraging results

Although the University of Ottawa underperforms both its Ontarian and US doctoral-extensive peer institutions in most items of student-faculty interaction, our mean scores are often only slightly lower than the ones received at the Ontarian institutions, as shown by the small effect sizes observed.

Disappointing results

Nonetheless, the overall results are generally disappointing. Not only are the scores for each individual item generally low, but also Ontarian institutions significantly underperform US doctoral-extensive institutions in this benchmark.

Among our first-year students:

- 19% discussed often or very often their grades or assignments with instructors, and 9% talked often or very often about career plans with an advisor. We lag far behind the 43% and the 24% reported respectively at US doctoral-extensive universities.
- 12% discussed often or very often ideas from their readings with faculty members outside class, and 7% worked often and very often with faculty members on activities other than coursework. These proportions are smaller than the 17% and the 11% reported at US doctoral-extensive universities.

Among our senior students:

- 36% discussed often or very often their grades or assignments with instructors, and 17% talked often or very often about career plans with an advisor. We lag far behind the 55% and the 34% reported respectively at US doctoral-extensive universities.
- 16% of our students discussed often or very often ideas from their readings with faculty members outside class, and 10% worked often and very often with faculty members on activities other than coursework. These proportions are smaller than the 23% and the 17% reported at US doctoral-extensive universities.

Moreover, only 26% of our first-year students and 30% of our senior students report that they often or very often have received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on their academic performance. In both cases, we not only significantly underperform the US doctoral-extensive institutions, but also the other Ontarian institutions.

Other findings

Finally, 15% of our senior students worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements and 24% of our first-year students plan to do so. These results are on par with our Ontarian peer institutions but lag the results obtained at US doctoral-extensive institutions.

Table 7: Mean results for the components of Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interaction

<i>Components of Student-Faculty Interaction</i> <i>(1= never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)</i>	First Year			Senior Year		
	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive
1. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	1.97	-.12	-.57	2.32	-.14	-.46
2. Received prompt feedback from a faculty member on your academic performance (written or oral)	1.96	-.27	-.65	2.07	-.43	-.79
3. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	1.48	-.15	-.62	1.74	-.21	-.56
4. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	1.60	-.09	-.16	1.79	-.09	-.22
5. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (e.g., committees, orientation, student life activities)	1.28	-.11	-.25	1.41	-.15	-.31
6. Worked with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements <i>(mean equals the percentage that responded "done" among all valid respondents)</i>	.02	-	-.11	.14	-	-.17

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences

Why is this measured?

“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.” (NSSE)

Overall benchmark

Table 8: Results for Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences

	uOttawa Mean	Ontario Consortium		US doctoral-extensive	
		Mean	Effect Size	Mean	Effect Size
First Year	23.4	24.4	-.09	27.2	-.30
Senior Year	31.5	33.7	-.14	39.7	-.47

Encouraging results

The level of exposure to enriching educational experiences at the University of Ottawa is roughly equivalent to the one reported at peer Ontarian institutions by both first- and senior-year students as shown by the small effect sizes observed.

Moreover, our results for some components of this benchmark are similar to the results observed at both Ontarian and American peer institutions:

- Our students appear to be relatively technologically-savvy. 60% of our first-year students have used an electronic medium often or very often to discuss assignments with their peers compared to 62% at other Ontarian institutions and 55% at US doctoral-extensive institutions. 65% of our senior students report having used it often or very often compared to 62% doing so at both Ontarian and American peer institutions.
- 62% of our first-year students and 60% of our senior students report having discussions often or very often with students from other ethnicities. Similar proportions of first-year and senior students at peer institutions report having done so.
- 52% of our first-year students and 55% of our senior students have engaged in conversations with students who are very different in terms of beliefs, political opinions or religious beliefs. Similar proportions of first-year and senior students at peer institutions report having done so.

Disappointing results

The degree of participation of our students in campus co-curricular activities such as student government or intramural sports is disappointing. Close to 59% of our first-year students report no participation or involvement as compared to 51% at other Ontarian institutions and 42% at US doctoral-extensive universities. Although we do not lag far behind our peer institutions at the senior-level, the result is still disappointing as 58% of our students do not participate in such activities.

The campus environment is not perceived as encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic background. Only 39% of our first-year students and 26% of our senior students report that the campus environment encourages such contacts quite a bit or very much, a result that lags behind both Ontarian and American peer institutions.

Our institution is on par with other Ontarian institutions, but lags its American peers regarding the level of participation in community service or volunteer work:

- 24% of our first-year students and 47% of our senior students participate in such activities compared to 37% and 60% respectively at US doctoral-extensive institutions.

Regarding the degree of participation in other educational experiences, our results at the first-year level are mostly on par with our peers. However, at the senior level, our institution underperforms its American peers:

- Despite our co-op program, only 42% of our senior students report having some kind of field experience or practicum as compared to 52% at US doctoral-extensive institutions.
- 6% of our senior students report having studied abroad, a smaller proportion than their counterparts at US doctoral-extensive institutions (15%).
- 7% of our senior students have been involved in independent study as compared to 17% at US doctoral extensive universities.
- 18% of our senior students report having participated in a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.) lagging behind 27% reporting doing so at US doctoral-extensive institutions.

Finally, only 14% of our first-year students and 22% of our senior students report undertaking foreign language course as compared to 26% of first-year students and 49% of senior students reporting doing so at US doctoral-extensive institutions. This is a surprising result that might reflect on the ambiguity of the expression “foreign language coursework” for our students. We suspect our students may have refrained from reporting coursework in their second official language under this question.

Table 9: Mean results for the components of Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences

<i>Components of Enriching Educational Experiences</i>	First Year			Senior Year		
	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive
1. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own (<i>1= never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>)	2.63	-	-	2.77	-	.09
2. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values (<i>1= never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>)	2.63	-	-	2.72	-	-
3. Number of hours spent participating in co-curricular activities (e.g., organizations, campus publications, student government, intercollegiate or intramural sports) (<i>1= 0 hrs/wk., 2=1-5 hrs/wk., 3=6-10 hrs/wk., 4=11-15 hrs/wk., 5=16-20 hrs/wk., 6=21-25 hrs/wk., 7=26-30 hrs/wk., 8=more than 30 hrs/wk.</i>)	1.71	-	-.29	1.72	-.16	-.19
4. Campus environment encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds (<i>1= very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>)	2.23	-.20	-.30	1.96	-.23	-.35
5. Used an electronic medium (e.g., listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging) to discuss or complete an assignment (<i>1= never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>)	2.79	-	.11	2.92	-	-

<i>Participated in educational experiences (mean equals the percentage that responded "done" among all valid respondents)</i>						
6. Foreign language coursework	.14	.11	-.27	.22	.10	-.53
7. Study abroad	.06	.10	.20	.06	-	-.23
8. Independent study or self-designed major	.03	-	-	.07	-.22	-.28
9. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	.06	-	-	.42	-	-.20
10. Culminating senior experience (e.g., capstone course, thesis, project, comprehensive exam)	.01	-	-	.18	-	-.21
11. Community service or volunteer work	.24	-	-.26	.47	-.12	-.25

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment

Why is this measured?

“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.” (NSSE)

Overall benchmark

Table 10: Results for Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment

	uOttawa Mean	Ontario Consortium		US doctoral-extensive	
		Mean	Effect Size	Mean	Effect Size
First Year	52.0	55.5	-.19	57.0	-.28
Senior Year	44.6	50.8	-.34	54.3	-.51

Disappointing results

In 2006, the results for this benchmark are mostly disappointing. Although the lag behind our Ontario peers is generally small as shown by small effect sizes, the problem is exacerbated when analyzing senior level results and our performance relative to our American peers.

Among our senior students:

- 36% provided top marks (5, 6 or 7) to the quality of their relationship with administrative personnel, a much smaller share than the one reported at Ontarian institutions (47%) and at US doctoral-extensive institutions (49%).
- 57% provided top marks to the availability and helpfulness of faculty members as compared to 68% reported by our Ontarian counterparts and 73% by our American counterparts.

On the other hand, 67% of our first-year students and 75% of our senior students provided top marks (5,6 or 7) on a scale of 1 to 7 to the quality of their relationship with other students. In this case, our scores are only slightly lower than ones reported at other Ontarian and American peer institutions as shown by the small effect sizes observed.

In general, across all institutions, students do not find their universities to be supportive of their needs to thrive socially or to provide them with the help needed to cope with non-academic responsibilities. Nonetheless, for those items, the University of Ottawa not only lags behind its Ontarian counterparts, but the gap widens when compared to its American counterparts:

- Only 34% of our first-year students and 18% of our senior students report being quite a bit or very much supported in their need to thrive socially as compared to 43% of first-year students and 32% of senior students at US doctoral-extensive institutions
- Only 22% of our first-year students and 10% of our senior students believe that they have received quite a bit or very much support to cope with non-academic responsibilities such as family and work. At US doctoral-extensive institutions this share increases to 28% for first-year students and 21% for senior students.

Regarding the level of support received to succeed academically, 45% of our senior students report receiving quite a bit or very much of such support compared to 54% at the other Ontarian institutions and 64% at US doctoral-extensive universities.

Table 11: Mean results for the components of Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment

<i>Components of a Supportive Campus Environment</i>	First Year			Senior Year		
	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa Mean	Effect Size w.r.t. Ontario Consortium	Effect Size w.r.t. US doctoral-extensive
<i>Quality of relationships with</i>						
1. Other students (1=unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation, to 7=available, helpful, sympathetic)	5.17	-.16	-.16	5.25	-.11	-.19
2. Faculty members (1=unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic, to 7=available, helpful, sympathetic)	4.64	-.14	-.24	4.59	-.27	-.42
3. Administrative personnel and offices (1=unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid to, 7=available, helpful, sympathetic)	4.30	-.11	-.10	3.74	-.29	-.38
<i>Institution that emphasizes (1= very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)</i>						
4. Providing the support that is needed to help succeed academically	2.76	-.12	-.22	2.39	-.23	-.44
5. Providing the support that is needed to thrive socially	2.17	-.08	-.21	1.80	-.19	-.36
6. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g., work, family)	1.87	-.16	-.20	1.54	-.26	-.32

Scorecard's Learning Quality Assessment

Definition

Indicator 3.1, *Learning Quality Assessment*, reflects the quality of the student learning experience as described by NSSE's benchmarks. For each benchmark, the University of Ottawa's score from the NSSE survey of the previous year (A) is compared to the 2006 score of the peer group of US doctoral-extensive institutions (B). Note that the comparison is solely based on the scores obtained at the senior level.

Indicator 3.1 of the 2006 scorecard is therefore based on 2005 NSSE results for the University of Ottawa and 2006 NSSE results for our American peers. Our performance is assessed at 84%.

For more detailed information on our institutional scorecard, visit our Web site at <http://web5.uottawa.ca/vision2010/scorecard.html>

Calculating average from US doctoral-extensive institutions (senior year only)						
	<i>Level of Academic Challenge</i>	<i>Active and Collaborative Learning</i>	<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	<i>Enriching Educational Experience</i>	<i>Supportive Campus Environment</i>	<i>Total</i>
2005 uOttawa (A)	52.2	40.6	28.1	31.6	45.3	39.6
2006 US doctoral-extensive (B)	54.8	48.0	38.8	39.7	54.3	47.1
uOttawa shortfall vs US (C)	-2.6	-7.4	-10.7	-8.1	-9.0	-7.6
% shortfall (D)	-4.7%	-15.4%	-27.6%	-20.4%	-16.6%	-16.0%
% from 2006 US doctoral-extensive (E)	95%	85%	72%	80%	83%	84%

Score differences between the two groups are calculated for each benchmark (C= A - B). The percentage shortfall is obtained by dividing these score differences by the US peer group's scores (D = C/B). The University of Ottawa's scores are expressed as percentages relative to the results of the US peer group (E = A/B, equivalent to E = 1+D).

Appendix 1

List of the Ontario consortium members

In 2006, the Ontario consortium members were:

Brock University	University of Guelph
Carleton University	University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Lakehead University	University of Ottawa
Laurentian University	University of Toronto
McMaster University	University of Waterloo
Nipissing University	University of Western Ontario
Ontario College of Art & Design	University of Windsor
Queen's University	Wilfrid Laurier University
Ryerson University	York University
Trent University	

List of the US comparison institutions

In 2006, our selected US peer institutions consisting of a group of large, research intensive, urban American universities, as per the Carnegie Foundation definitions were:

Arizona State University	University of Memphis
Auburn University	University of Oregon
Brigham Young University	University of Toledo
Old Dominion University	University of Wisconsin-Madison
The University of Alabama	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
The University of Arizona	Utah State University
The University of Texas at Arlington	Virginia Commonwealth University
The University of Texas at Austin	Wayne State University
University of Alabama at Birmingham	Western Michigan University
University of Colorado at Boulder	

Appendix 2

NSSE 2006 Engagement Item Frequency Distributions

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge							
	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
<i>Component of Level of Academic Challenge</i>							
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	Never	14%	13%	11%	10%	9%	8%
	Sometimes	48%	43%	41%	42%	40%	39%
	Often	30%	32%	35%	36%	36%	36%
	Very often	9%	11%	13%	12%	14%	17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of hours spent preparing for class per week (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	0 hr/wk	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
	1-5 hr/wk	20%	16%	17%	18%	16%	17%
	6-10 hr/wk	25%	23%	26%	20%	21%	26%
	11-15 hr/wk	20%	19%	22%	17%	18%	19%
	16-20 hr/wk	14%	16%	16%	15%	17%	16%
	21-25 hr/wk	8%	11%	10%	12%	11%	9%
	26-30 hr/wk	5%	7%	5%	7%	7%	6%
	30+ hr/wk	6%	7%	4%	10%	10%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Campus environment emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	Very little	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%
	Some	24%	18%	20%	21%	18%	20%
	Quite a bit	50%	47%	46%	46%	45%	46%
	Very much	24%	33%	31%	29%	35%	33%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Coursework emphasizes the following element</i>							
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its component	Very little	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
	Some	25%	20%	20%	16%	16%	16%
	Quite a bit	45%	45%	45%	43%	41%	44%
	Very much	28%	32%	32%	38%	41%	39%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	Very little	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%
	Some	35%	33%	31%	26%	25%	25%
	Quite a bit	41%	40%	41%	38%	39%	40%
	Very much	18%	22%	23%	30%	31%	31%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	Very little	11%	9%	7%	9%	7%	6%
	Some	36%	31%	31%	29%	26%	27%
	Quite a bit	37%	39%	41%	35%	38%	38%
	Very much	16%	22%	22%	28%	30%	29%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	Very little	7%	6%	4%	6%	5%	4%
	Some	25%	23%	24%	20%	21%	19%
	Quite a bit	38%	37%	40%	36%	36%	36%
	Very much	30%	35%	32%	38%	38%	41%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Number of papers written/textbooks assigned</i>							
Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	None	5%	13%	4%	16%	15%	7%
	Between 1-4	47%	49%	34%	41%	46%	35%
	Between 5-10	29%	24%	34%	24%	23%	26%
	Between 11-20	12%	9%	19%	11%	10%	17%
	More than 20	7%	5%	10%	9%	7%	14%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	None	6%	11%	17%	5%	5%	11%
	Between 1-4	44%	50%	53%	35%	37%	46%
	Between 5-10	38%	30%	23%	37%	38%	30%
	Between 11-20	9%	7%	5%	18%	15%	10%
	More than 20	2%	2%	1%	5%	5%	3%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more	None	68%	73%	85%	31%	38%	52%
	Between 1-4	27%	21%	12%	52%	48%	40%
	Between 5-10	3%	4%	2%	13%	10%	5%
	Between 11-20	1%	2%	1%	3%	3%	1%
	More than 20	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	None	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Between 1-4	14%	15%	20%	25%	24%	27%
	Between 5-10	42%	46%	46%	41%	38%	40%
	Between 11-20	33%	28%	24%	20%	22%	20%
	More than 20	10%	11%	9%	12%	14%	12%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Benchmark 2 : Active and Collaborative Learning							
	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
<i>Components of Active and Collaborative Learning</i>							
<i>Learning Outside of Class</i>							
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	Never	17%	17%	17%	8%	10%	7%
	Sometimes	36%	36%	45%	29%	31%	36%
	Often	32%	29%	27%	30%	31%	32%
	Very often	16%	18%	11%	33%	28%	26%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	Never	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%	4%
	Sometimes	34%	34%	37%	37%	33%	32%
	Often	38%	36%	35%	35%	37%	38%
	Very often	21%	23%	21%	23%	25%	26%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	Never	58%	53%	51%	48%	47%	42%
	Sometimes	30%	32%	34%	33%	34%	37%
	Often	10%	10%	10%	12%	12%	12%
	Very often	2%	4%	4%	6%	7%	9%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course	Never	87%	80%	68%	78%	75%	59%
	Sometimes	9%	14%	21%	13%	16%	26%
	Often	2%	4%	8%	6%	6%	9%
	Very often	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	6%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Learning in Class</i>							
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	Never	18%	16%	5%	10%	9%	3%
	Sometimes	52%	50%	46%	48%	43%	35%
	Often	23%	23%	33%	24%	27%	32%
	Very often	7%	11%	16%	18%	22%	30%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Made a class presentation	Never	62%	39%	25%	13%	10%	7%
	Sometimes	30%	45%	55%	48%	42%	43%
	Often	7%	12%	16%	26%	30%	32%
	Very often	1%	4%	4%	13%	18%	18%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Worked with other students on projects during class	Never	33%	33%	14%	24%	29%	13%
	Sometimes	49%	40%	46%	50%	44%	45%
	Often	13%	20%	30%	17%	19%	28%
	Very often	5%	7%	10%	9%	8%	14%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Benchmark 3: Student-Faculty Interaction							
	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
<i>Component of Student-Faculty Interaction</i>							
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	Never	28%	27%	11%	14%	12%	5%
	Sometimes	53%	47%	46%	51%	48%	40%
	Often	13%	18%	28%	25%	25%	32%
	Very often	6%	8%	15%	11%	15%	23%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Received prompt feedback from a faculty member on your academic performance (written or oral)	Never	34%	23%	10%	28%	13%	6%
	Sometimes	39%	42%	41%	42%	42%	35%
	Often	21%	27%	37%	25%	35%	44%
	Very often	5%	8%	12%	5%	10%	16%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	Never	64%	56%	29%	46%	36%	21%
	Sometimes	27%	31%	46%	37%	42%	45%
	Often	5%	9%	17%	13%	15%	21%
	Very often	4%	3%	7%	4%	7%	13%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	Never	56%	51%	47%	42%	39%	32%
	Sometimes	32%	33%	36%	42%	41%	45%
	Often	9%	11%	12%	11%	14%	15%
	Very often	3%	4%	5%	5%	6%	8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	Never	80%	75%	67%	71%	63%	54%
	Sometimes	13%	18%	23%	19%	24%	29%
	Often	6%	6%	8%	7%	9%	11%
	Very often	1%	2%	3%	3%	4%	6%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	Have not decided	43%	41%	40%	19%	18%	15%
	Do not plan to do	31%	26%	25%	55%	55%	52%
	Plan to do	24%	30%	31%	12%	12%	13%
	Done	2%	3%	4%	14%	15%	20%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Benchmark 4: Enriching Educational Experiences							
	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
<i>Component of Enriching Educational Experiences</i>							
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	Never	13%	15%	15%	11%	11%	12%
	Sometimes	35%	30%	34%	29%	29%	35%
	Often	29%	27%	27%	33%	28%	27%
	Very often	23%	27%	24%	27%	32%	26%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	Never	12%	14%	11%	9%	10%	11%
	Sometimes	36%	31%	34%	35%	32%	35%
	Often	28%	28%	28%	29%	29%	29%
	Very often	24%	27%	26%	26%	29%	26%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc)	0 hr/wk	59%	51%	42%	58%	50%	47%
	1-5 hr/wk	24%	31%	32%	28%	30%	31%
	6-10 hr/wk	10%	9%	12%	7%	10%	10%
	11-15 hr/wk	4%	4%	6%	3%	5%	5%
	16-20 hr/wk	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%
	21-25 hr/wk	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
	26-30 hr/wk	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
	30+ hr/wk	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Campus environment encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	Very little	26%	20%	15%	37%	28%	23%
	Some	35%	34%	35%	36%	37%	38%
	Quite a bit	29%	30%	31%	19%	23%	25%
	Very much	10%	17%	18%	7%	11%	14%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	Never	10%	11%	15%	10%	10%	11%
	Sometimes	30%	28%	30%	26%	28%	27%
	Often	30%	30%	28%	28%	27%	27%
	Very often	30%	32%	27%	37%	35%	35%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Participated in educational experiences</i>							
Foreign language coursework	Have not decided	20%	26%	18%	15%	14%	7%
	Do not plan to do	22%	31%	26%	43%	50%	37%
	Plan to do	43%	32%	30%	20%	18%	8%
	Done	14%	11%	26%	22%	18%	49%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Study abroad	Have not decided	33%	33%	30%	20%	19%	13%
	Do not plan to do	27%	25%	27%	60%	57%	64%
	Plan to do	35%	38%	40%	14%	15%	9%
	Done	6%	4%	3%	6%	8%	15%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
Independent study or self-designed major	Have not decided	43%	40%	34%	20%	16%	11%
	Do not plan to do	39%	39%	48%	63%	57%	64%
	Plan to do	16%	17%	14%	10%	12%	8%
	Done	3%	4%	3%	7%	14%	17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	Have not decided	24%	24%	15%	14%	13%	7%
	Do not plan to do	11%	9%	4%	31%	32%	17%
	Plan to do	59%	60%	74%	13%	16%	24%
	Done	6%	7%	7%	42%	39%	52%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)	Have not decided	47%	49%	44%	18%	17%	11%
	Do not plan to do	24%	22%	13%	46%	46%	33%
	Plan to do	28%	27%	42%	18%	17%	29%
	Done	1%	1%	1%	18%	20%	27%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Community service or volunteer work	Have not decided	20%	19%	15%	12%	11%	9%
	Do not plan to do	10%	10%	8%	25%	20%	17%
	Plan to do	46%	45%	40%	16%	15%	14%
	Done	24%	26%	37%	47%	53%	60%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment							
	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
<i>Components of a Supportive Campus Environment</i>							
Quality of relationships with the other students	1 Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	2	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%
	3	8%	6%	5%	7%	6%	5%
	4	19%	12%	13%	13%	13%	12%
	5	20%	22%	22%	26%	21%	21%
	6	27%	30%	31%	30%	30%	31%
	7 Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging	20%	26%	24%	19%	25%	28%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Quality of relationships with faculty members	1 Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%
	2	4%	5%	4%	6%	5%	4%
	3	11%	10%	9%	12%	9%	7%
	4	28%	21%	21%	22%	18%	15%
	5	30%	27%	29%	28%	27%	28%
	6	18%	24%	24%	21%	27%	28%
	7 Available, Helpful, Sympathetic	8%	11%	12%	8%	14%	17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices	1 Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid	6%	4%	4%	14%	8%	6%
	2	8%	8%	7%	15%	11%	10%
	3	14%	12%	14%	16%	13%	12%
	4	28%	24%	26%	18%	21%	23%
	5	23%	23%	23%	18%	22%	21%
	6	15%	18%	17%	12%	16%	17%
	7 Helpful, Considerate, Flexible	8%	10%	10%	6%	9%	11%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Institution that emphasizes</i>							
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	Very little	5%	5%	3%	14%	10%	7%
	Some	31%	27%	25%	42%	35%	29%
	Quite a bit	47%	43%	46%	36%	40%	43%
	Very much	17%	24%	25%	9%	14%	21%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Response Options	First Year			Senior Year		
		uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive	uOttawa	Ontario	US doctoral-extensive
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	Very little	24%	24%	19%	42%	34%	28%
	Some	42%	38%	38%	39%	41%	40%
	Quite a bit	26%	28%	30%	15%	20%	23%
	Very much	8%	10%	13%	3%	5%	9%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	Very little	40%	34%	31%	58%	46%	44%
	Some	37%	39%	40%	33%	35%	35%
	Quite a bit	18%	20%	20%	8%	14%	15%
	Very much	4%	7%	8%	2%	4%	6%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%