

2005-2006 BEGINNING COLLEGE SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Utah State University participated in a pilot study of the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) by invitation of the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. This survey is a companion survey to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

“The BCSSE measures entering first-year students’ high school academic and extra-curricular involvement, as well as the importance that these students place on their future participation in educationally purposeful activities while in college. To better understand the factors that influence student engagement during college, it is important to know both the behavioral patterns that students have established prior to entering college and the importance that they place on student engagement while in college. This information can then be used to design pre-college orientation and socialization experiences with an eye toward enhancing student engagement and learning during college”.

Just prior to Fall Semester, 2005 the paper version of the BCSSE was administered during the University’s Connections program as a take home assignment which was returned to instructors prior to the completion of Connections. Nine hundred and sixty-two students returned their surveys. The projected entering class was 1500; this represents 64% of our projected entering class. Refer to the body of the report for more detailed findings.

Demographics

- 61% of the respondents were female.
- 93% of the respondents graduated from high school in 2005
- 97% of the respondents graduated from public high schools.
- 82% percent of the respondents were In-state students.
- 67% percent of the respondents had at least one parent or legal guardian who had completed a four-year degree or more.

Course-Taking Patterns in High School

- 94% of the respondents had taken 4 years of English/Language Arts, and 57% had taken 4 years of Math.
- 87% had taken 3 years of Science, and 89% had taken 3 years of History/Social Science.
- 51% of the respondents had taken concurrent enrollment courses in English/Language Arts, 47% had taken concurrent enrollment courses in Math.
- 37% of the respondents had taken Advanced Placement (AP) courses in English/Language Arts, 39% had taken AP courses in Math.

Academic and Extracurricular Involvement in High School

- 56% of the respondents reported asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions often or very often.
- 51% of the respondents reported discussing grades or assignments with a teacher often or very often.
- 65% of the respondents reported going to classes without completing reading or assignments often or very often.
- The extracurricular activities with the highest levels of involvement were Performing or Visual Arts (40%) and Athletic teams (41%).

Class Preparation Time

- The median hours respondents spent in the last year of high school preparing for classes was 6 to 10 hours a week.
- The median hours respondents expected to spend in college preparing for classes is 16 to 20 hours a week.

Adjustment to College

- The areas where respondents expected the most difficulty adjusting to college were: Keeping up with school work, managing their time, and paying for college expenses.

Shaping Student Expectations

- The most influential sources for respondent's expectations of college were: family members, and friends/students in high school.



Selected Results from the 2005-2006 Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement

Utah State University

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement
Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research
1900 East Tenth Street
Eigenmann Hall Suite 419
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512
Phone: 812-856-5824
besse@indiana.edu



Number of BCSSE respondents	962
Projected entering class	1,500
Percent of projected entering class	64%
Mode of administration	
Paper	100%
Web	0%

Percent completing BCSSE	
Before start of classes	99%
After start of classes	1%
Percent completing BCSSE	
Before college orientation	2%
During college orientation	82%
After college orientation	15%
Did not attend orientation	1%

Student Characteristics

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Gender		
Female	579	61%
Male	373	39%
Parents' education		
Four-year degree or more	637	67%
Less than four-year degree	295	31%
Uncertain	18	2%
Residence		
In-state student	783	82%
Out-of-state student	165	17%
International student	3	0%
Expected college major		
Arts and humanities	103	11%
Biological science	48	5%
Business	85	9%
Education	90	10%
Engineering	96	10%
Physical science	21	2%
Professional	79	8%
Social science	52	5%
Other	65	7%
Undecided	308	33%

High School Characteristics

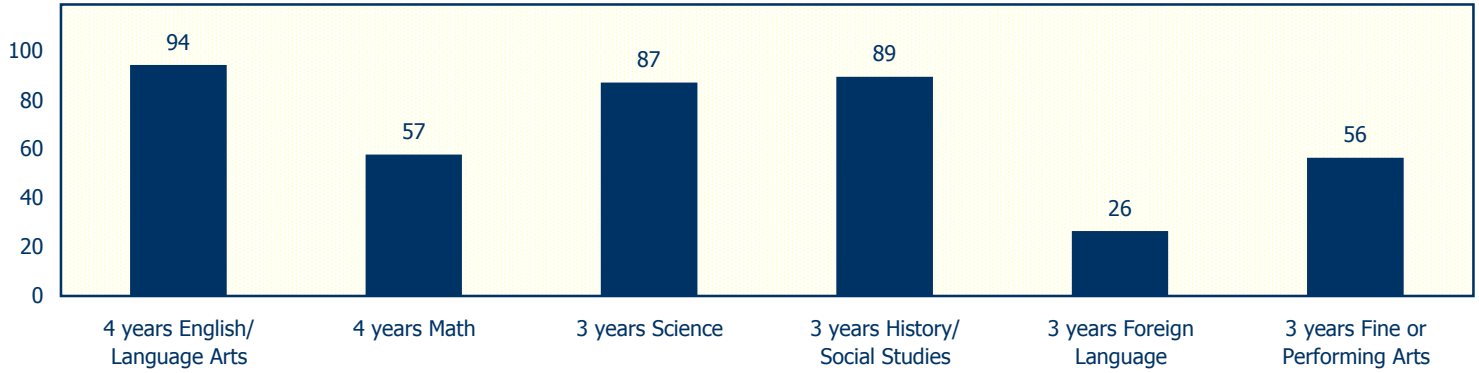
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
High school graduation year		
2005	891	93%
2004	21	2%
2003	10	1%
2002 or earlier	36	4%
High school type		
Public	933	97%
Private, religiously affiliated	8	1%
Private, independent	9	1%
Home school	2	0%
Other	7	1%
High school graduating class size		
Fewer than 25	8	1%
25 to 99	35	4%
100 to 199	70	7%
200 to 299	77	8%
300 to 399	174	18%
400 to 499	224	24%
500 to 599	165	17%
600 or more	198	21%



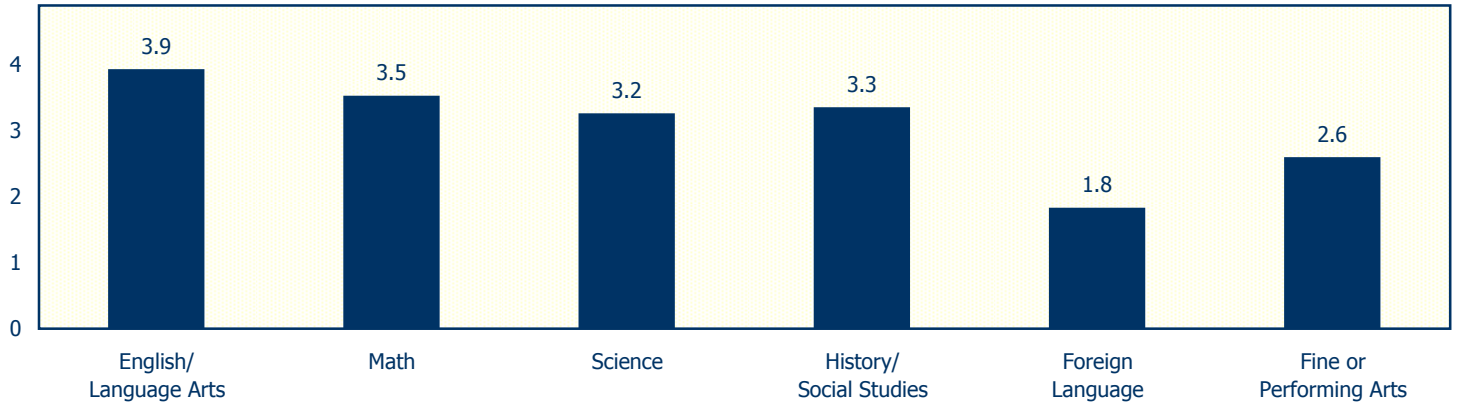
Number of Years of Coursework

Completing a rigorous, challenging curriculum - four years of English and mathematics as well as three years of science and social studies - has been linked to higher entrance exam scores and first-year college grades as well as improved chances for college graduation. The figures below provide descriptive information on the course-taking patterns of your BCSSE respondents.

Percent who completed advanced years of coursework



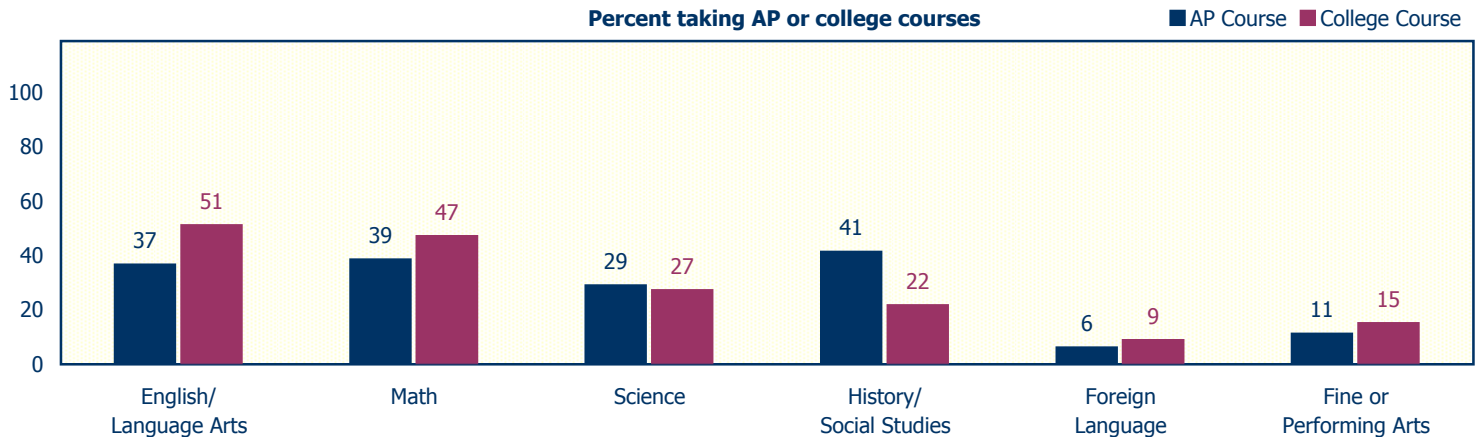
Average number of years completed within subject area



Advanced Placement and College Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment courses provide high school students with opportunities that prepare them for college-level coursework. Successfully completing such courses in high school typically leads to greater academic achievement during the first year of college. The figure below provides the percentage of your BCSSE respondents who reported taking at least one AP or college course within each subject area.

Percent taking AP or college courses

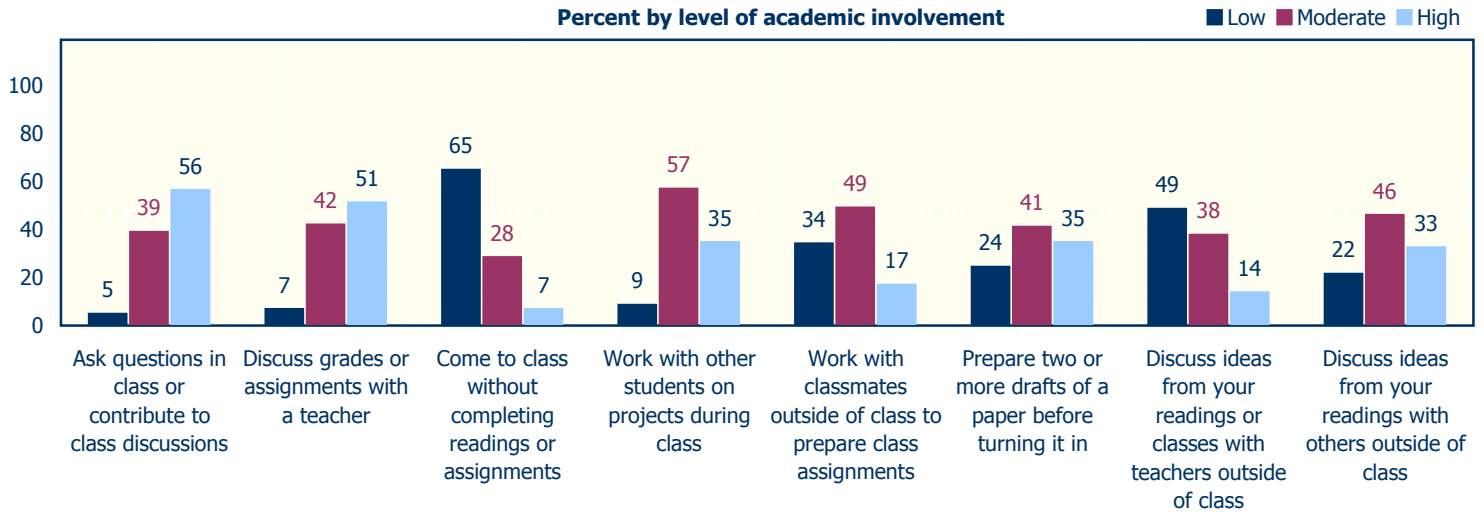




Utah State University Academic and Extracurricular Involvement

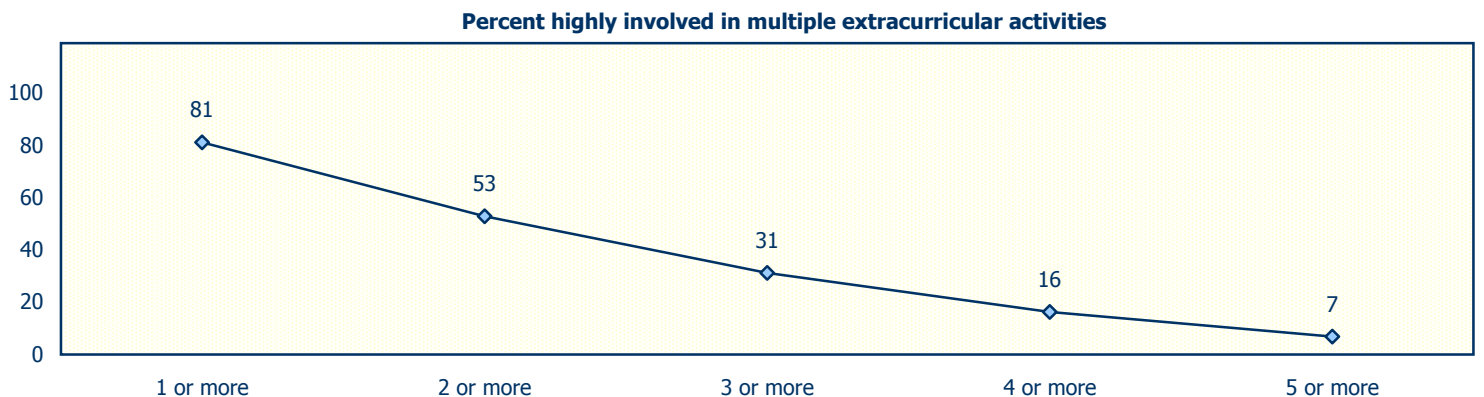
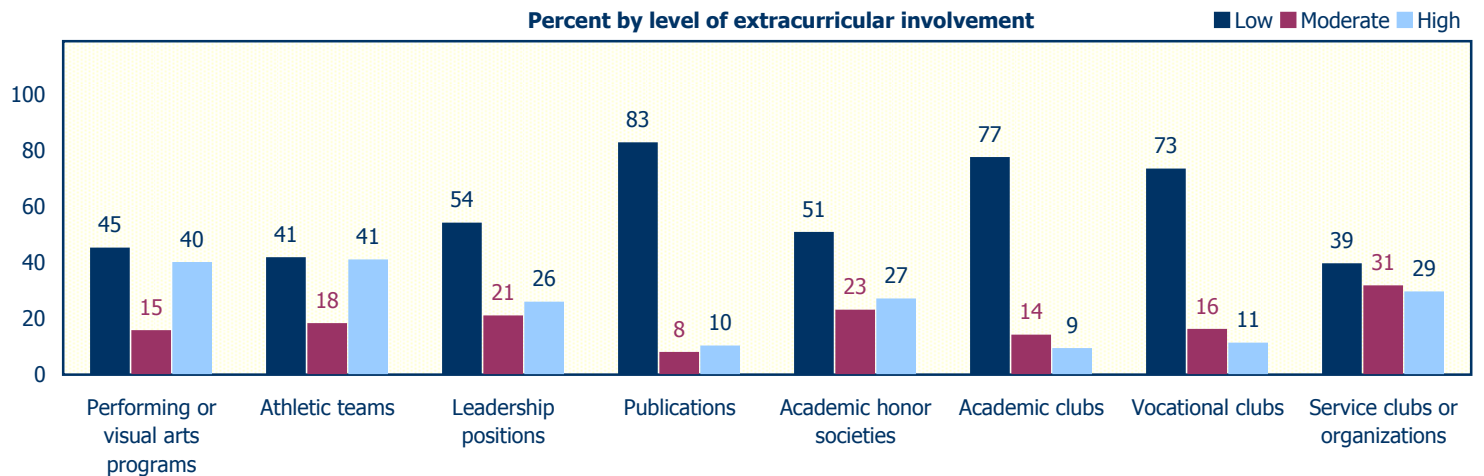
Academic Involvement

Students start college with habits of the mind and heart developed during high school and even earlier. The degree to which they were involved in academic activities in high school is an indicator of what they can be expected to do in college. The figure below provides a descriptive summary of the academic involvement of your BCSSE respondents during their senior year of high school.



Extracurricular Involvement

Participation in extracurricular activities in high school is positively linked with being engaged in other productive activities and increases the chances that students will be satisfied and stay in school. Also, those students who took part in high school extracurricular activities are more likely to be so engaged in college. The figure that follows provides summary information about the level of involvement of your BCSSE respondents in various high school extracurricular activities.



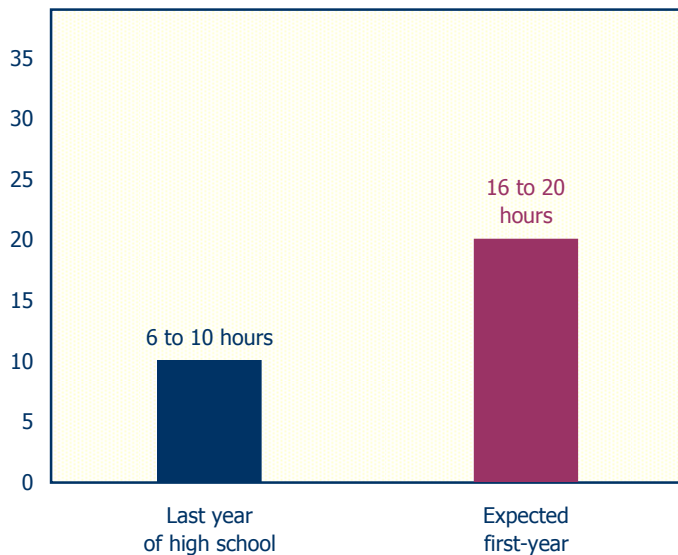


High School and Expected First-Year Time on Task

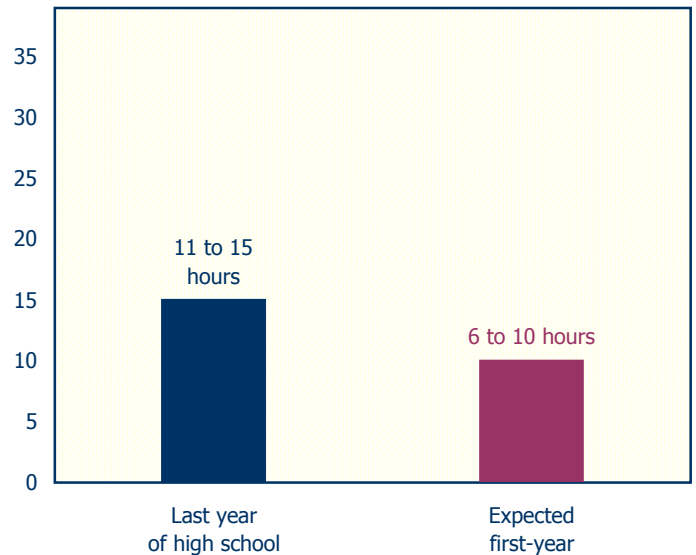
Preparing for Class and Co-curricular Activities

It's a simple, even self-evident proposition: The more time and energy students spend on task - inside and outside the classroom - the more they benefit. That is, they learn more, get better grades, are more satisfied, and are more likely to stay in school. The following figures show for your BCSSE respondents the median time per week spent preparing for class and participating in co-curricular activities during their last year of high school, and the median time per week that they expect to devote to these tasks during their first year of college.

Median hours: Preparing for class



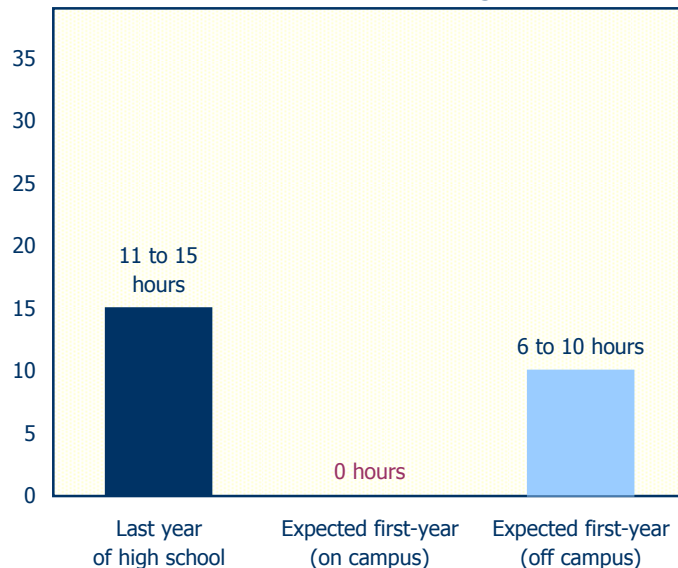
Median hours: Co-curricular activities



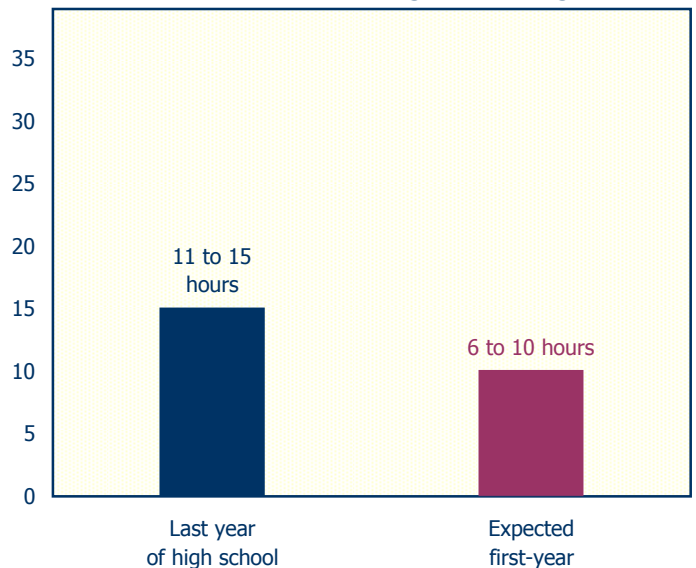
Working and Relaxing or Socializing

As with most matters, striking an appropriate balance across different kinds of activities in college is preferred. This is certainly the case for how students spend their time outside the classroom. Too much or too little time spent socializing or relaxing can be debilitating. The same goes for working for pay. A few hours a week can help students more effectively manage their time; too many hours working - especially off campus - can be counterproductive. The following figures show for your institution's BCSSE respondents the median time per week spent working and relaxing or socializing during their last year of high school and the median time per week that they expect to devote to these tasks during the first college year.

Median hours: Working



Median hours: Relaxing or socializing

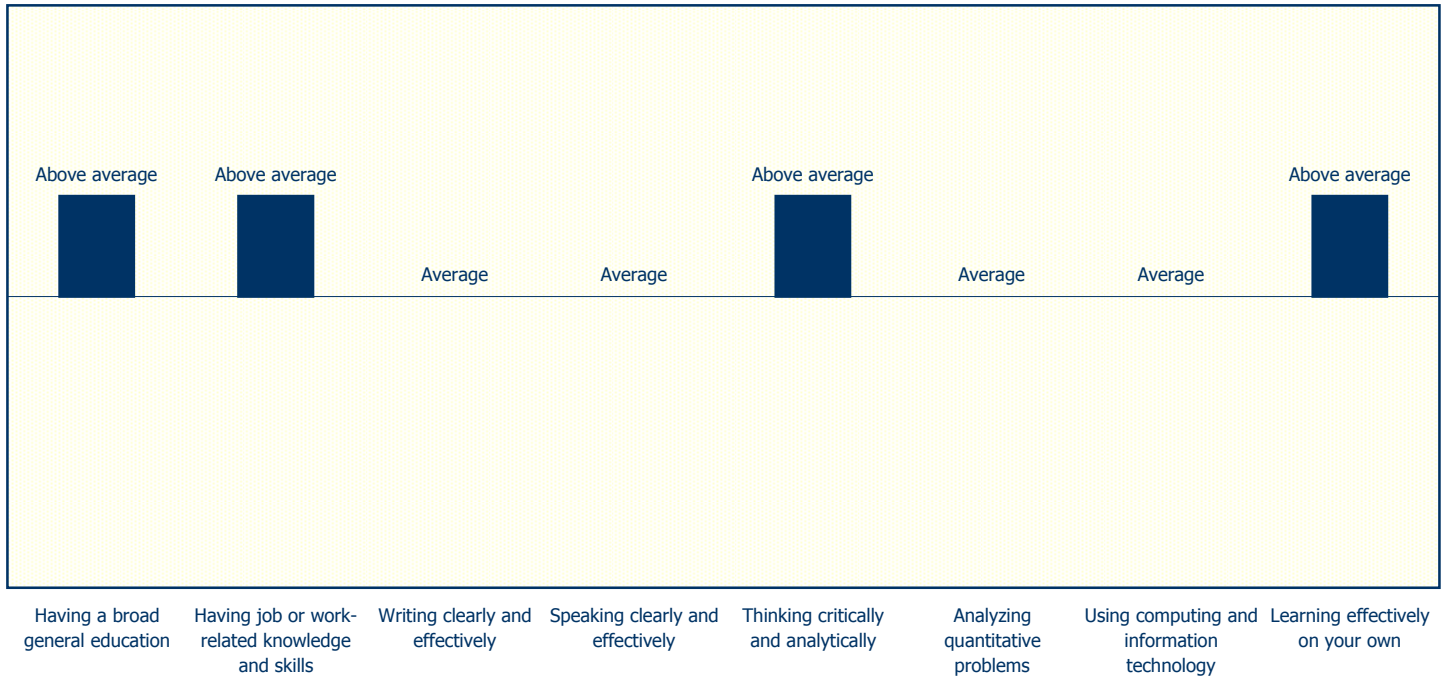




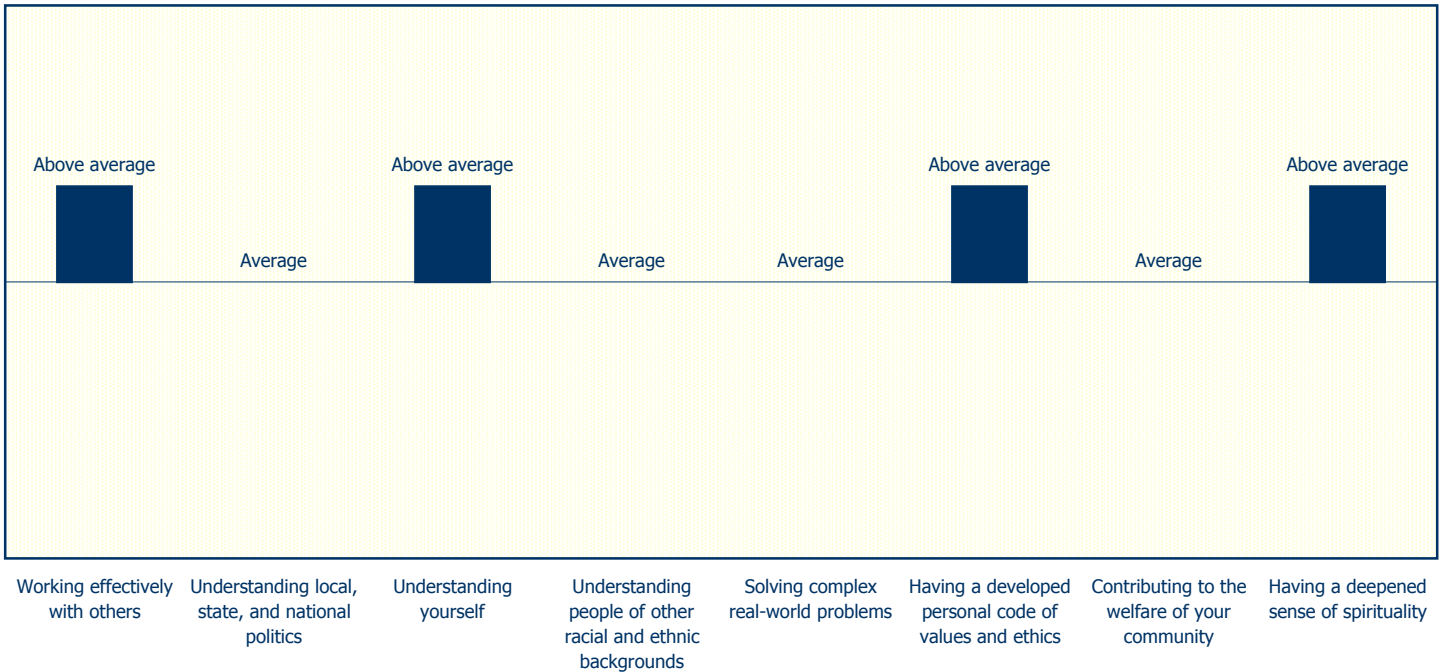
General Educational and Personal Development

Asking students to evaluate their skills and competencies serves two important purposes. First, it provides a baseline against which progress during college can be estimated. Second, asking students to think about their current ability level prompts them to focus on areas of educational and personal performance that need to be further developed during college. The figures below display the median rating that your BCSSE respondents assigned to the respective areas of educational and personal functioning. Responses may range from "Well below average" to "Well above average."

Median rating: General educational development



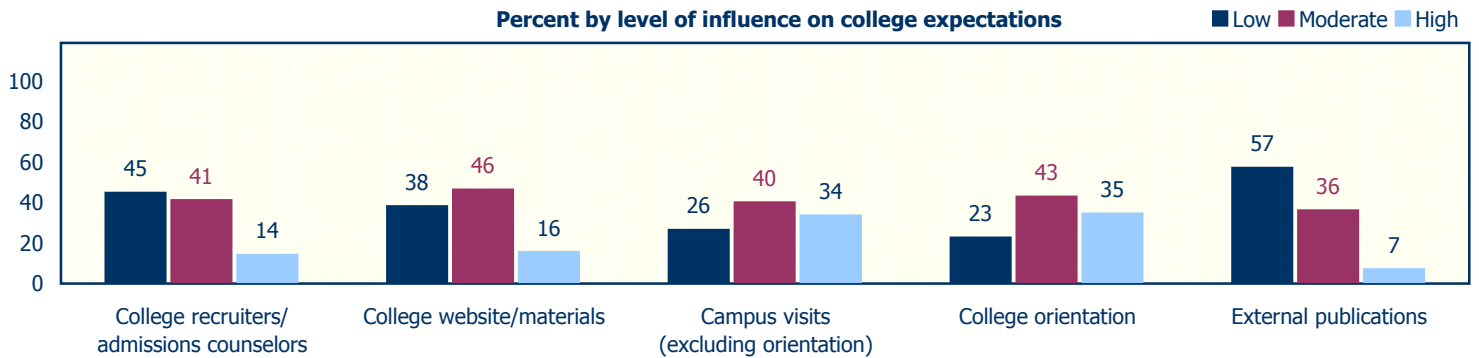
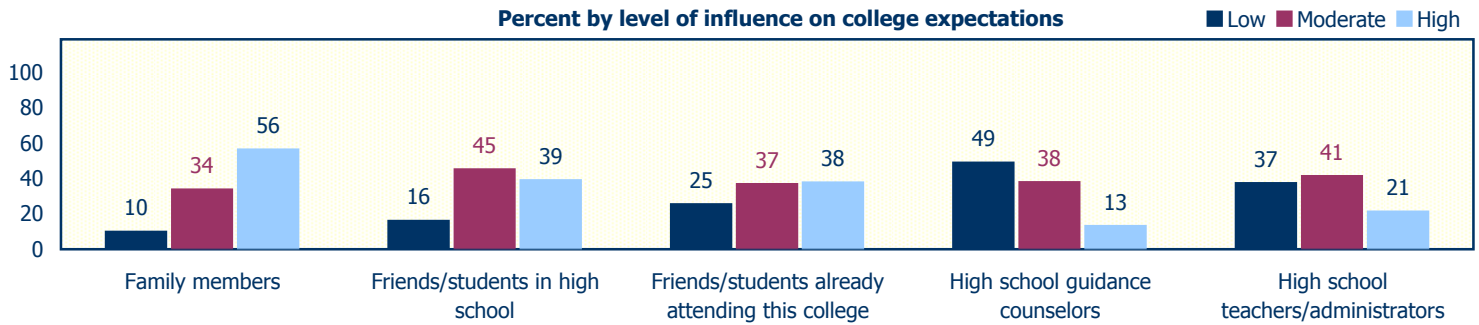
Median rating: Personal development



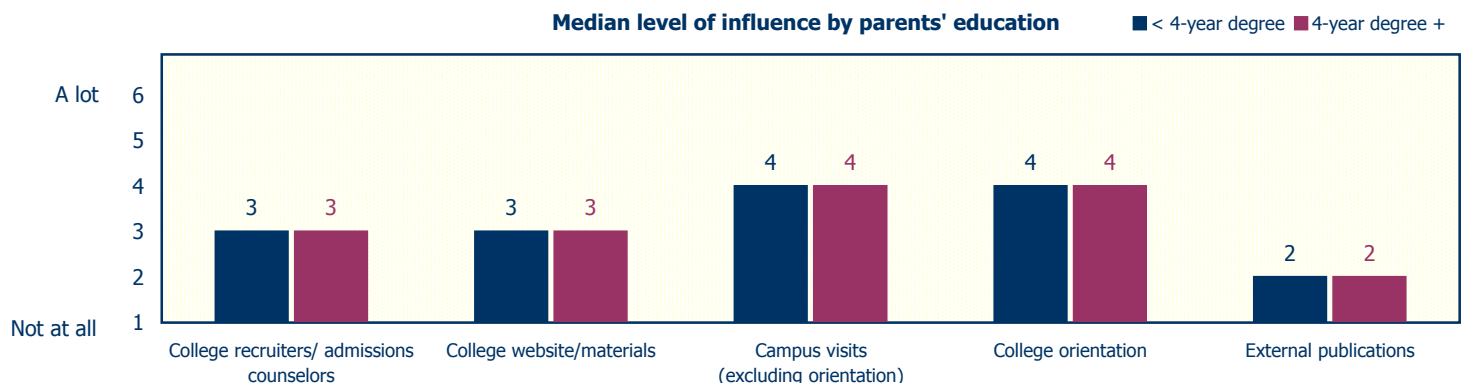
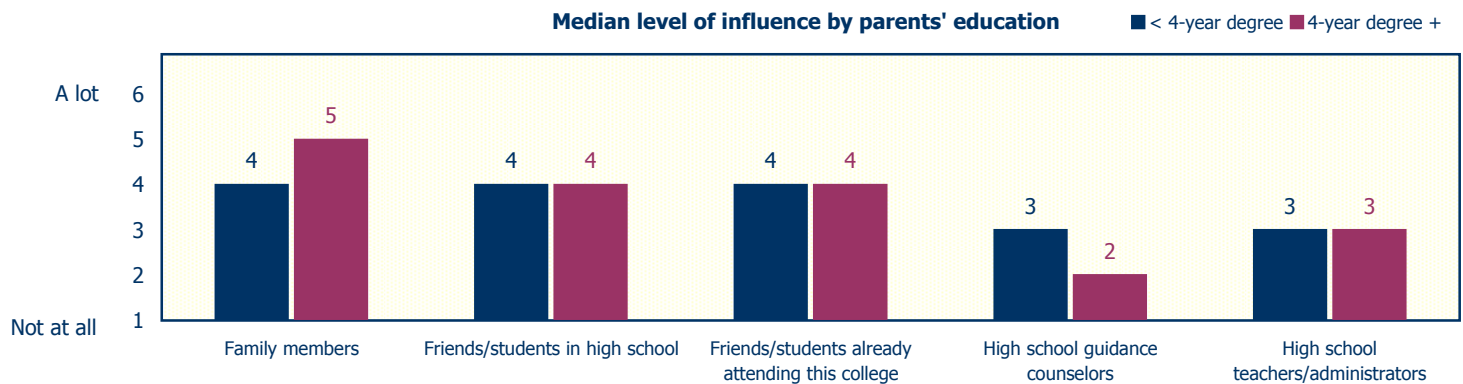


Sources of Influence

Expectations matter because they affect what students are predisposed to do and how they interpret their experiences. Also, by knowing what students think they may do during the first year of college, institutions can modify orientation and other early socialization activities to more clearly communicate and emphasize activities in which students should engage in order to succeed in college. The following figures show the extent to which various sources influence the college expectations of your BCSSE respondents.



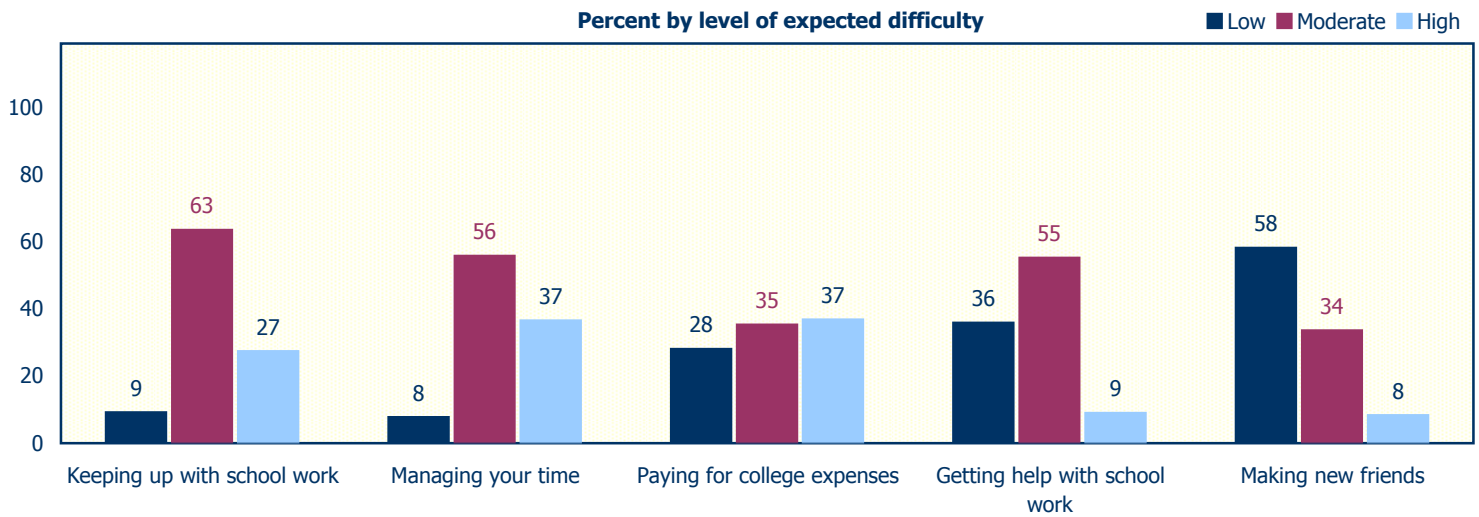
A Closer Look





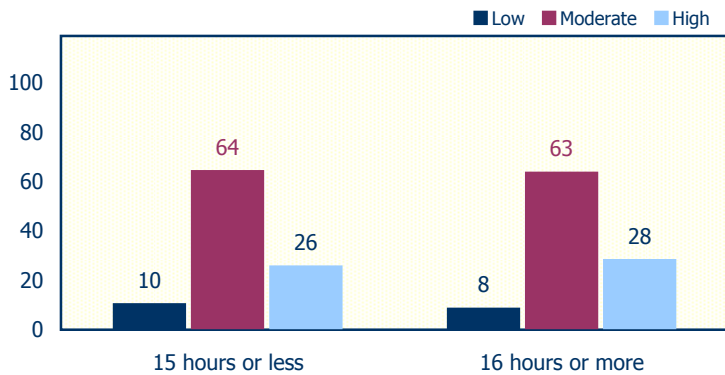
Expected Difficulties

College life can be challenging and stressful for different reasons. Many students are on their own for the first time and must learn how to responsibly manage their time, studies, and social life without the guidance and support of family members. Knowing the areas in which students anticipate having problems can alert the institution to areas where programs and other interventions may be helpful in smoothing the transition to college. The following figure shows the extent to which your BCSSE respondents expect to have difficulty adjusting to college.

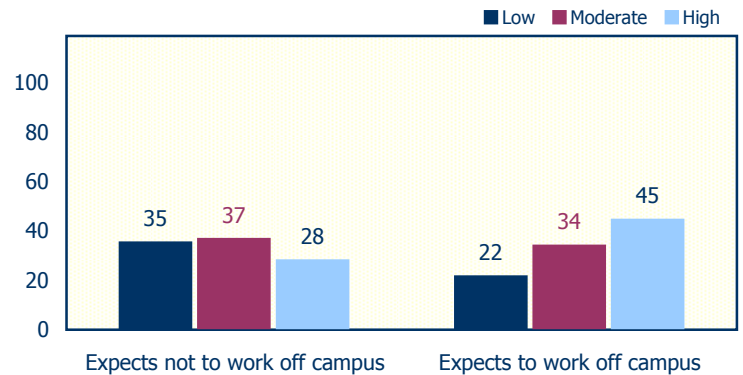


A Closer Look

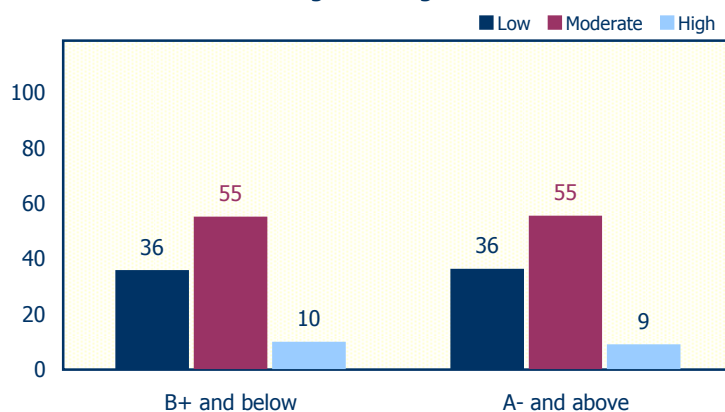
Expected difficulty keeping up with school work by expected time preparing for class



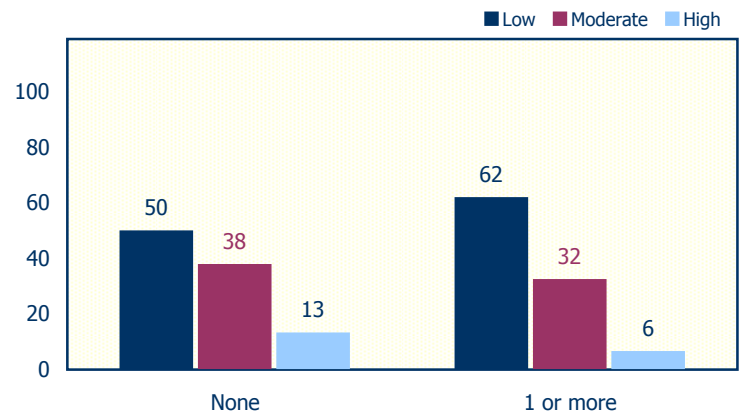
Expected difficulty paying for college expenses by expectation of working for pay off campus



Expected difficulty getting help with school work by high school grades



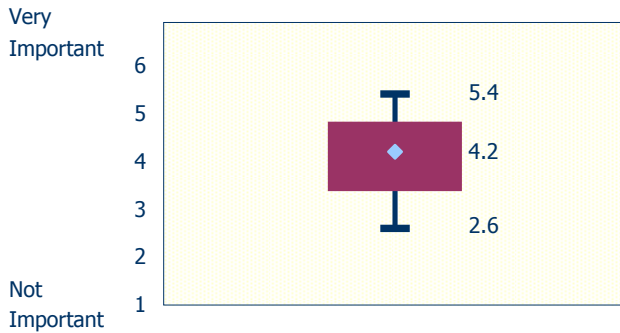
Expected difficulty making new friends by number of close friends attending college





Importance of Academic Effort

Academic success in college is a function of the time and effort students spend on academic activities. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance. The figure below provides descriptive information for an index of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their future academic effort. This index was created by summing student responses to the items that make up the index. The items that comprise this index are also provided below.



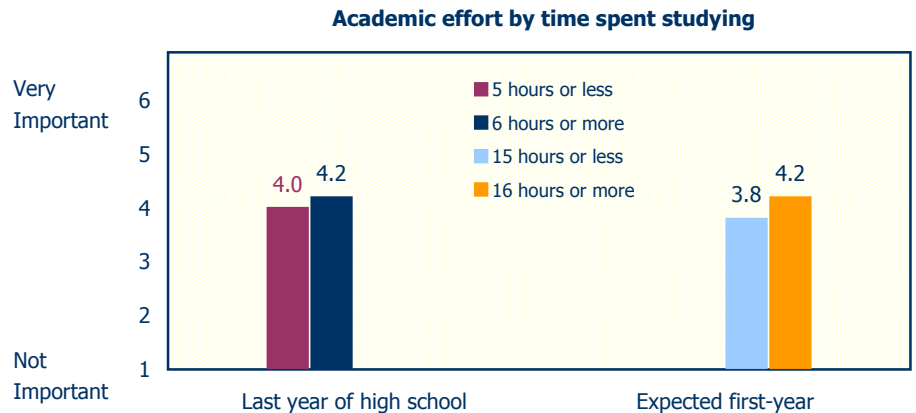
This box and whiskers plot provides the distribution of your BCSSE respondents' scores on the importance of academic effort index. While the diamond represents the median level of importance for the distribution, the top and bottom edges of the box represent the 75th and 25th percentiles, respectively, and the horizontal lines at the end of the top and bottom tails or "whiskers" represent the 95th and 5th percentiles, respectively

Items that measure the importance of academic effort

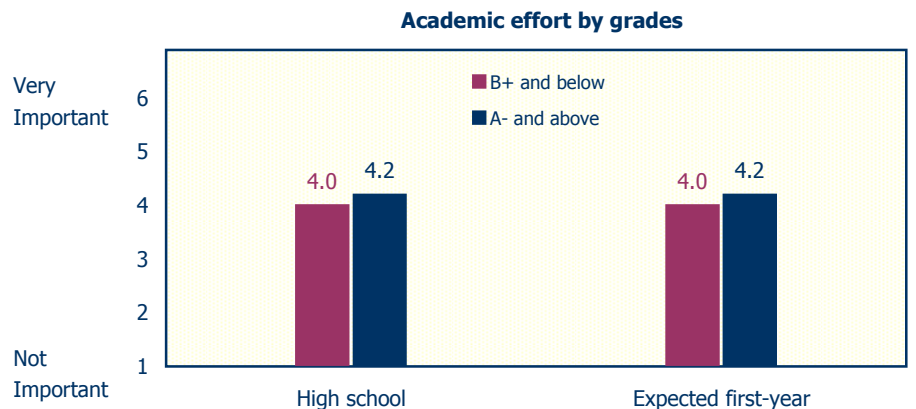
- Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions
- Make a class presentation
- Prepare two or more drafts of a paper before turning it in
- Work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Put together ideas or concepts from difference courses when completing assignments or during class discussions

A Closer Look

This figure provides the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their first-year academic effort by the number of hours per 7-day week that they spent studying during their last year of high school and that they expected to study during their first year of college.



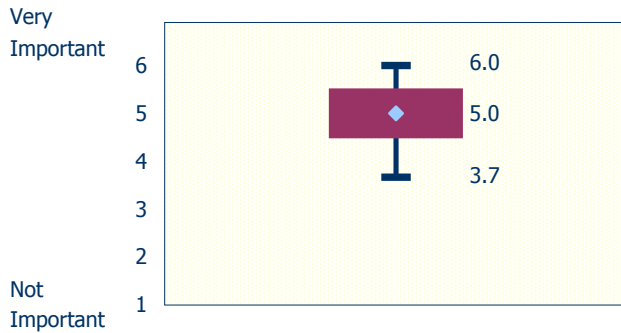
This figure provides the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their first-year academic effort by the students' high school grades and expected first year of college grades.





Importance of Faculty Interaction

Students learn firsthand how to think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty inside and outside of classrooms. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for lifelong learning. The figure below provides descriptive information for an index of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their future interaction with faculty on your campus. This index was created by summing student responses to the items that make up the index. The items that comprise this index are also provided below.



This box and whiskers plot provides the distribution of your BCSSE students' scores on the importance of faculty interaction index. While the diamond represents the median level of importance for the distribution, the top and bottom edges of the box represent the 75th and 25th percentiles, respectively, and the horizontal lines at the end of the top and bottom tails or "whiskers" represent the 95th and 5th percentiles, respectively.

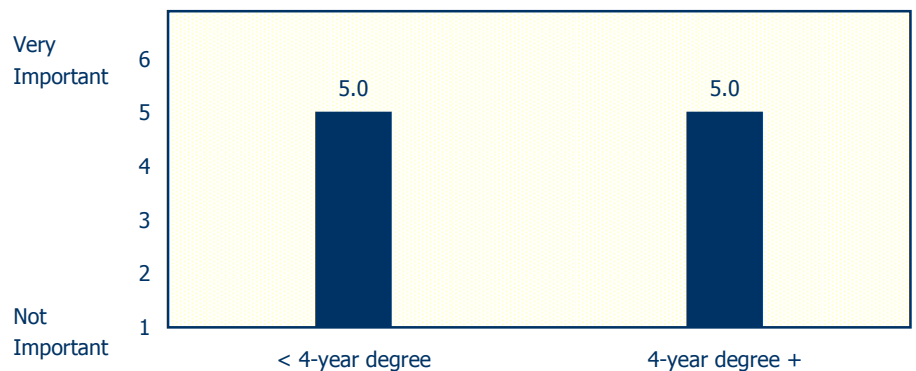
Items that measure the importance of faculty interaction

- Use email to communicate with an instructor
- Discuss grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talk about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Receive prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
- Work harder than you think you can to meet an instructor's standards or expectations

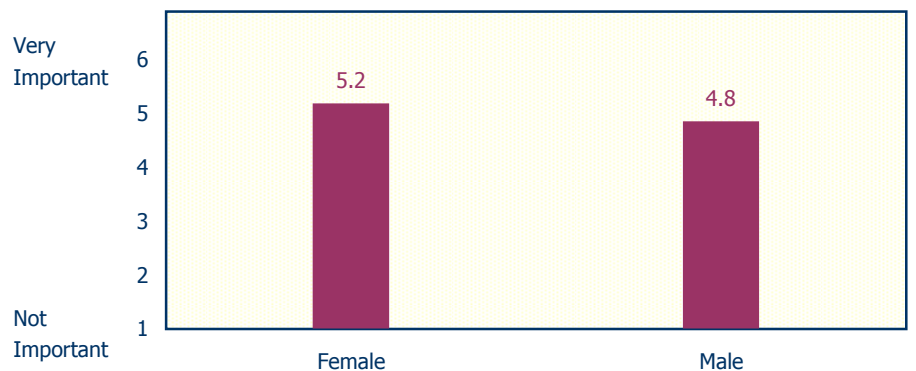
A Closer Look

This figure shows the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their interaction with faculty by whether or not one or more of the students' parents received at least a bachelor's degree.

Faculty interaction by parents' education



Faculty interaction by gender

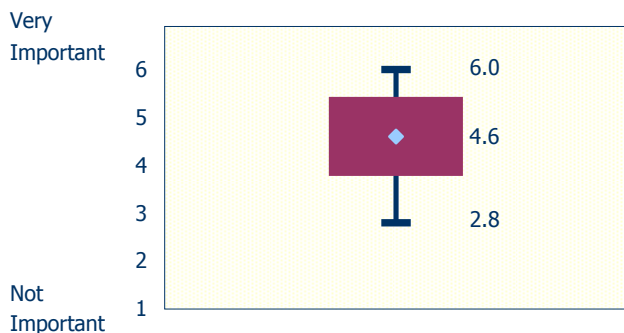


This figure shows the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their interaction with faculty by the students' gender



Importance of Diverse Perspectives

Experiencing diversity teaches students valuable things about themselves and other cultures. It also prepares them to work effectively with people from different backgrounds, a personal competency that is increasingly important. The figures below provide descriptive information for an index of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their future diverse learning experiences. This index was created by summing student responses to the items that make up the index. The items that comprise this index are also provided below.



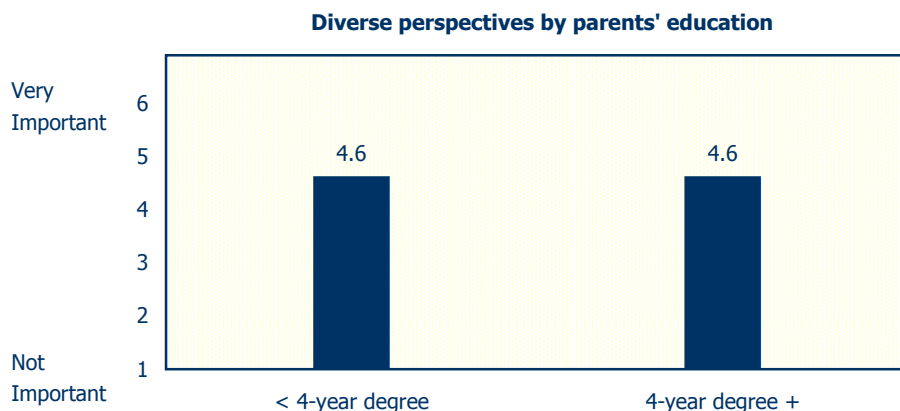
This box and whiskers plot provides the distribution of your BCSSE respondents' scores on the importance of diverse perspectives index. While the diamond represents the median level of importance for the distribution, the top and bottom edges of the box represent the 75th and 25th percentiles, respectively, and the horizontal lines at the end of the top and bottom tails or "whiskers" represent the 95th and 5th percentiles, respectively

Items that measure the importance of diverse perspectives

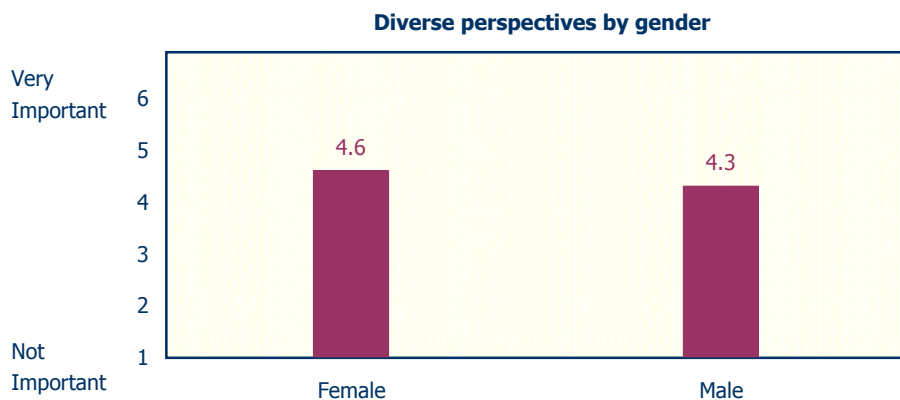
- Have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own
- Have serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, and personal values
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
- Try to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from is or her perspective
- Learn something that changes the way you understand an issue or concept

A Closer Look

This figure shows the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their exposure to and learning from diverse perspectives by whether or not one or more of the students' parents received at least a bachelor's degree.



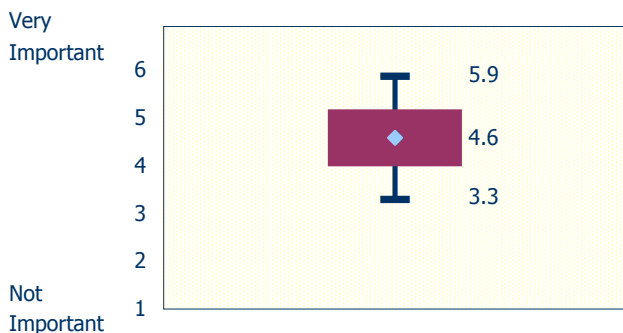
This figure shows the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their exposure to and learning from diverse perspectives by the students' gender





Importance of Academic and Social Support

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and that encourage positive working and social relations among different groups on campus. The figure below provides descriptive information for an index of the degree to which your BCSSE respondents believe it is important for the institution to provide academic and social support. This index was created by summing student responses to the items that make up the index. The items that comprise this index are also provided below.



This box and whiskers plot provides the distribution of your BCSSE respondents' scores on the importance of academic and social support index. While the diamond represents the median level of importance for the distribution, the top and bottom edges of the box represent the 75th and 25th percentiles, respectively, and the horizontal lines at the end of the top and bottom tails or "whiskers" represent the 95th and 5th percentiles, respectively.

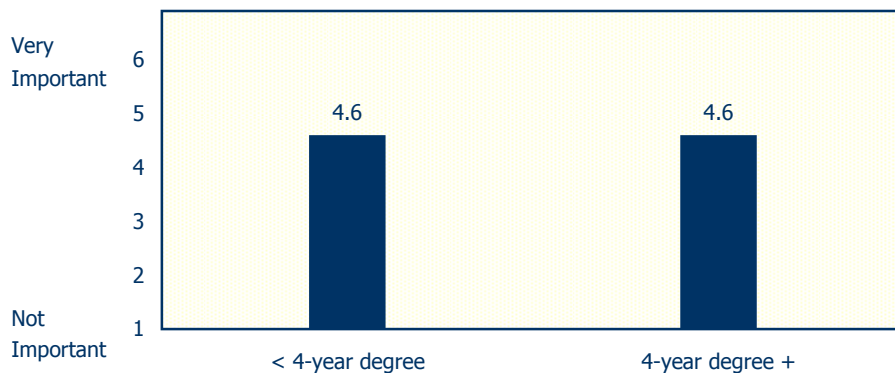
Items that measure the importance of academic and social support

- Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work
- Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities
- Providing the support you need to thrive socially
- Attending campus events and activities
- Using computers in academic work

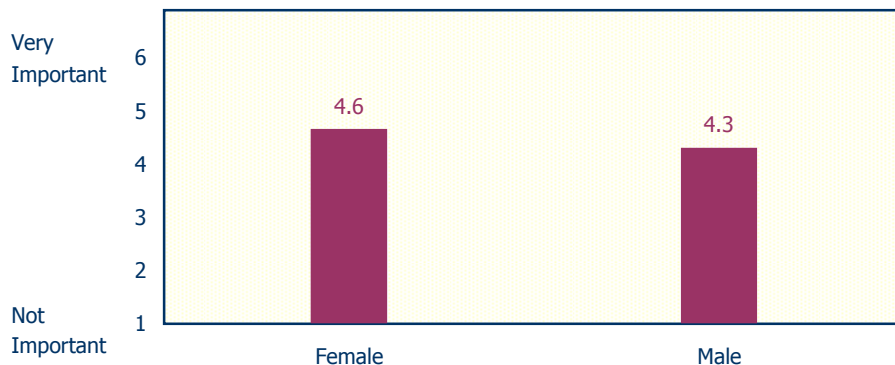
A Closer Look

This figure shows the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their opportunities to receive academic and social support from your campus by whether or not one or more of the students' parents received at least a bachelor's degree.

Academic and social support by parents' education



Academic and social support by gender



This figure shows the median level of the importance that your BCSSE respondents place on their opportunities to receive academic and social support from your campus by the students' gender