

Executive Summary

Results from the 2013 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Office of Institutional Analysis, November 2013

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a national survey of freshmen and seniors designed to measure the extent to which those students are engaged in educationally effective practices. Significant changes to the survey beginning in 2013 make direct comparisons between 2013 and prior data invalid, so this report focuses on peer comparisons rather than trends.

The table below identifies areas of significant difference between GVSU students and their peers at [the NSSE schools that are most similar to GVSU](#). The symbols indicate the significance and direction of the difference for the overall measure. For the measures that comprise multiple responses, individual component questions are listed if GVSU responses differed significantly from peers. Item text and symbols are hyperlinked to more detailed data.



... GVSU average > peers



... GVSU average < peers



... No significant difference

	First-Year Students	Seniors
Academic Challenge		
Higher-Order Learning	--	--
Reflective & Integrative Learning	-- <i>How often have you...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge 	↑ <i>How often have you...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments Connected your learning to societal problems or issues Included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge
Learning Strategies	-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How often have you identified key information from reading assignments? 	-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How often have you identified key information from reading assignments?
Quantitative Reasoning	↓ <i>How often have you...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information 	--
Learning with Peers		
Collaborative Learning	↑ <i>How often have you...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked another student to help you understand course material Explained course material to one or more students Worked with other students on course projects or assignments 	↑ <i>How often have you...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked another student to help you understand course material Explained course material to one or more students Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

	First-Year Students	Seniors
Discussions with Diverse Others	 <i>How often have you had discussions with...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of a race or ethnicity other than your own 	 <i>How often have you had discussions with...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of a race or ethnicity other than your own • People from an economic background other than your own • People with religious beliefs other than your own
Experiences with Faculty		
Student-Faculty Interaction	 <i>How often have you...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talked about career plans with a faculty member • Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework • Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member 	 <i>How often have you...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework • Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class • Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member
Effective Teaching Practices	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have your instructors provided feedback on a draft or work in progress? 	
Campus Environment		
Quality of Interactions	 <i>Indicate the quality of your interactions with...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic advisors • Faculty • Other administrative staff and offices 	 <i>Indicate the quality of your interactions with...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic advisors • Student services staff • Other administrative staff and offices
Supportive Environment	 <i>How much does your institution emphasize...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support to help students succeed academically • Using learning support services • Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds • Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities • Attending campus activities and events 	 <i>How much does your institution emphasize...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support to help students succeed academically • Using learning support services • Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities • Attending campus activities and events • Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues
High Impact Practices		
1+ 2+	  <i>Have you already or do you plan to...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together • Work with a faculty member on a research project 	  <i>Have you already or do you plan to...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in an internship, co-op, field exp., student teaching, or clinical placement • Participate in a learning community, etc. • Participate in a study abroad program • Work with a faculty member on a research project • Complete a culminating senior experience

	First-Year Students	Seniors
Self-reported Gain		
Writing clearly and effectively	--	↑
Speaking clearly and effectively	↓	--
Thinking critically and analytically	↑	↑
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	--	--
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	↓	--
Working effectively with others	--	--
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	↓	--
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	↓	--
Solving complex real-world problems	--	--
Being an informed and active citizen	--	--
Summary Judgments		
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	↑	↑
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	↑	↑

GVSU also participated in two supplemental NSSE modules in 2013. Please note that the comparison groups for the supplemental questions are the result of voluntary selection – many schools in the comparison groups may be very different from GVSU.

[Responses to the “Development of Transferable Skills” questionnaire](#) show mixed results for our first-year students. They reported above-average activity in discussing important issues and high usage of information from diverse sources, but they also reported below-average activity in the areas of speech, creativity, and discussions of ethics. GVSU seniors’ responses were more positive. They reported above-average levels of activity in use of diverse information sources, assessing conclusions of published works, interdisciplinary integration, and ethical discussion.

[Responses to the “Learning with Technology” module](#) indicate considerable gaps in GVSU students’ effective use of contemporary technology. Both first-year and senior students indicated significantly less benefit from or development in nearly every aspect of technology covered by the questionnaire. They also perceived less institutional emphasis on teaching with and about technology. GVSU students indicated greater levels of distraction with technology and higher levels of inter-student communication. It seems likely that schools’ voluntary participation in the module leads to sample that is biased toward schools that are more keenly focused on use of technology. Nevertheless, the findings are not encouraging.