

RESEARCH NOTE

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What is the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)?

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- CCSSE, an initiative of the Center for Community College Student Engagement, is an assessment tool that provides information on student engagement, a key indicator of learning and, therefore, of the quality of community colleges.
- The survey is comprised of items that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and retention.
- CCSSE asks students about their college experiences — how they spend their time; what they feel they have gained from their classes; how they assess their relationships and interactions with faculty, counselors, and peers; what kinds of work they are challenged to do; how the college supports their learning; and so on.

Why should our college participate in CCSSE?

- Community colleges must respond to the increasing expectations for quality, performance, and accountability set by governing boards, state and federal governments, accrediting organizations, and the public. Key among those expectations is that colleges should emphasize assessment and improvement of student retention and student learning. CCSSE helps colleges meet that need.
- CCSSE's purpose is threefold:
 1. Benchmarking — comparing performance by community and technical colleges to national norms. The Center has established five national benchmarks of effective educational practice for community colleges:
 - Active and Collaborative Learning
 - Student Effort
 - Academic Challenge
 - Student-Faculty Interaction
 - Support for Learners
 2. Diagnosing — identifying areas in which a college can enhance students' educational experiences.
 3. Monitoring — documenting and improving institutional effectiveness over time.

Who participates in CCSSE?

From 2002 through 2015:

- 2.09 million student respondents.
- Administrations have occurred at 910 colleges from 50 states and the District of Columbia, plus Alberta, British Columbia, Bermuda, Marshall Islands, Northern Marianas, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec.
- Colleges that have participated in CCSSE represent over 80% of the nation's public community colleges and about 86% of the national community college student population.
- Member college information can be accessed on the CCSSE website:
<http://www.ccsse.org/aboutccsse/colleges.cfm>.
- Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) has participated in this survey every few years for over a decade.

How is CCSSE administered?

- CCSSE is administered during the Spring academic term (February through May).
- A random sample stratified by class start time is pulled from all Spring for-credit courses.
- The sampling unit is the class that is comprised of students, and the random selection of students is the principle objective.
- CCSSE is administered as a pencil-and-paper survey and is designed to be completed in one 50-minute class period.

Who is included in the sample population?

- Includes
 - For-credit courses in the Spring semester
- Excludes
 - Non-credit courses
 - Dual-enrollment
 - Distance learning
 - Practicums, clinicals, and internships
 - Lowest-level ESL
 - Lab sections associated with a lecture
 - Individual instruction
 - Independent study

Other CCSSE FAQs

- **What are the CCSSE special-focus items?** The special-focus items are a set of items that CCSSE adds to the survey. Each year, a different topic is selected for the special item set. In 2015, the topic was *Promising Practices for Community College Student Success*.
- **Approximately how many classes were included in the College sample?** The average number of classes sampled is based on institution size.
 - Enrollment: 22,000+ students
 - Target sample size: 1,500
 - Average number of classes: 95-100
- **Can students opt out?** CCSSE must be entirely voluntary for students to complete. The survey administration script states that students can opt out of completing the survey, and can stop their survey participation at any time.