

RESEARCH BRIEF

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Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) Benchmark Scores by Student Demographics: Fall 2015

Introduction

What is SENSE?

- The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) is an annual nationwide survey of entering community college students.
- SENSE helps institutions understand students' critical early experiences and improve institutional practices that affect student success in the first college year.

What are Benchmarks?

- SENSE identifies six benchmarks for assessing institutional performance in entering student engagement based on groups of conceptually-related items on the survey:
 - *Early Connections*
 - *High Expectations and Aspirations*
 - *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*
 - *Effective Track to College Readiness*
 - *Engaged Learning*
 - *Academic and Social Support Network*

SENSE 2015 at NOVA

- At NOVA, **963 students** participated in the SENSE in Fall 2015.

In This Research Brief

NOVA Student Demographics

- NOVA's scores on the above mentioned benchmarks are disaggregated by the following respondent demographics:
 - Enrollment Status
 - Gender
 - Age Group
 - Race/Ethnicity

Data Notes

Benchmark Scores

- Each benchmark score was calculated by averaging the scores of items that comprise that benchmark. The scores were then standardized such that the national average is always 50 for all benchmarks.
- With this kind of transformation, the scores of other colleges can be viewed as relative scores; this provides an easy way to assess whether an individual college or a group of colleges are performing above or below the mean (50) on each benchmark.

Highlights

Enrollment Status

- On average, full-time students gave NOVA higher scores than part-time students on five of the six benchmarks of entering student engagement.

Gender

- Overall, female students assigned NOVA higher scores than male students on five of the six benchmarks of entering student engagement.
- In particular, on the *Engaged Learning* and *High Expectations and Aspirations* benchmarks, female students gave NOVA a score that was 5 points higher than that given by male students.

Age Group

- Students of the traditional college age (ages 18-24) gave the highest scores to the *Early Connections*, *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*, and *Effective Track to College Readiness* benchmarks.

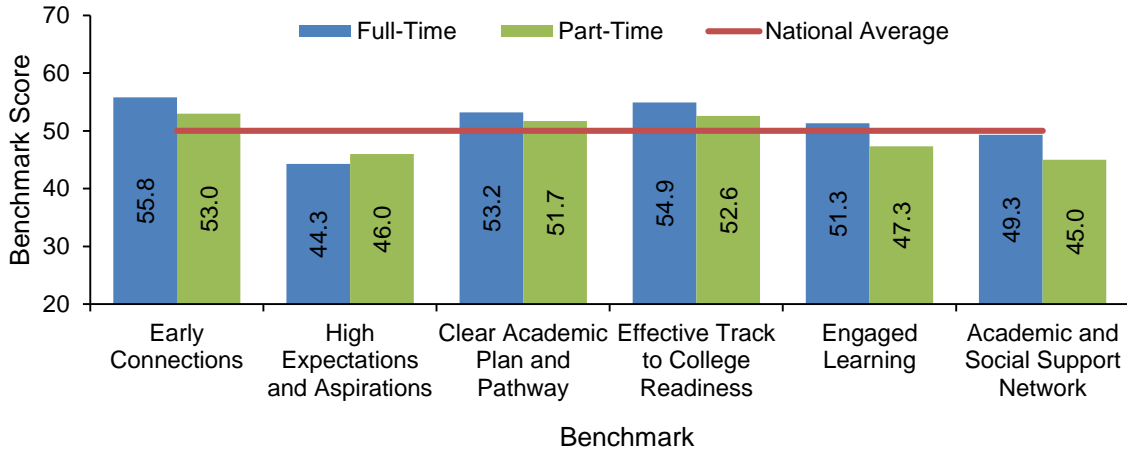
Race/Ethnicity

- Overall, the highest scores for four of the six benchmarks were given by Black students, while the lowest scores for three of the six benchmarks were given by White students.
- Asian students and White students gave *Early Connections* their highest scores.
- Black students and Hispanic students gave their highest scores to *Effective Track to College Readiness*. Black students gave their lowest scores to *Academic and Social Support Network*, while Hispanic students gave their lowest scores to *High Expectations and Aspirations*.

Enrollment Status

On average, full-time students gave NOVA higher scores than part-time students on five of the six benchmarks of entering student engagement. Full-time students, on average, rated four of the six benchmarks above the national average (50.0), and part-time students rated three of the six benchmarks above the national average. The differences between full-time and part-time scores ranged from 1 to 4 points.

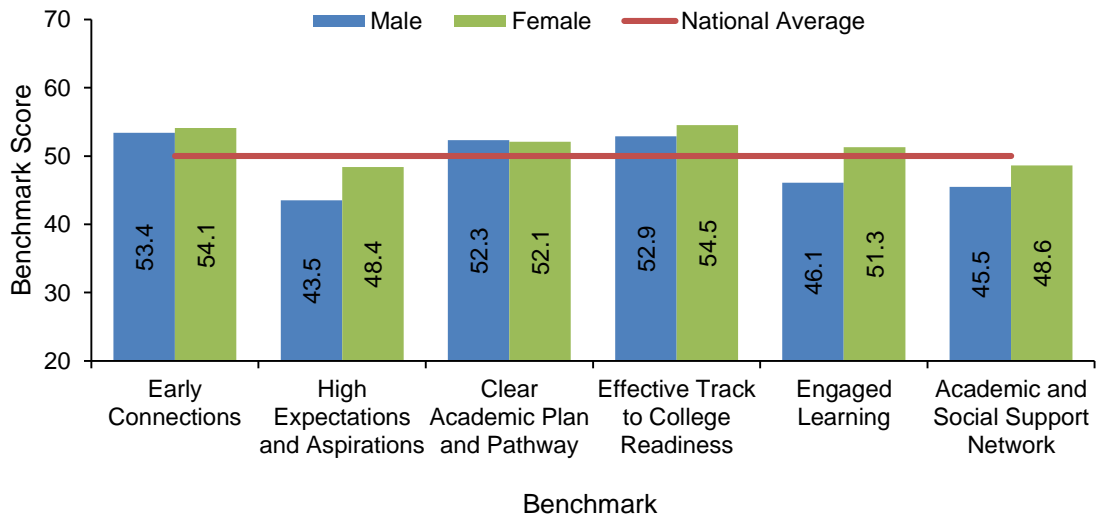
Figure 1. SENSE Benchmark Scores by Enrollment Status: Fall 2015



Gender

Overall, female students assigned NOVA higher scores than male students on five of the six benchmarks of entering student engagement. The largest difference was seen for the *High Expectations and Aspirations* and *Engaged Learning* benchmarks, for which female students gave NOVA a score that was 5 points higher than that given by male students.

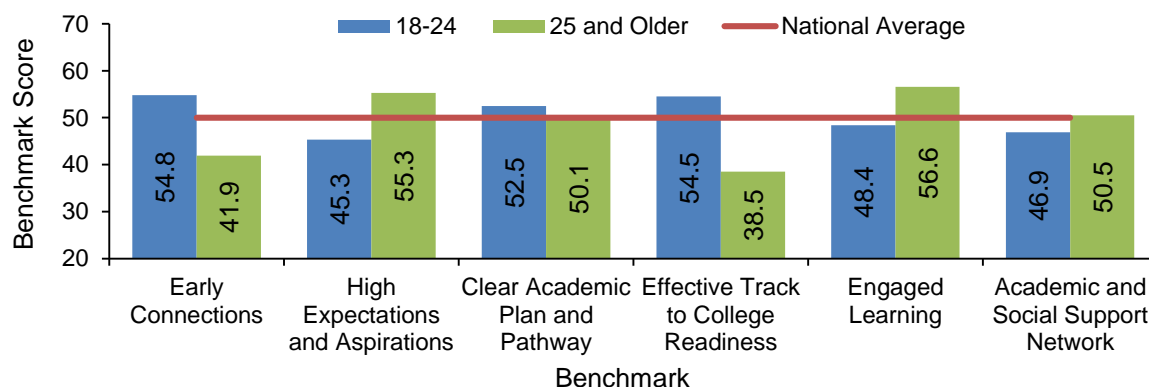
Figure 2. SENSE Benchmark Scores by Gender: Fall 2015



Age Group

Students of the traditional college age (ages 18-24) comprised the overwhelming majority (97 percent). Students ages 18-24 gave the highest scores to the *Early Connections*, *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*, and *Effective Track to College Readiness* benchmarks. Students of the non-traditional college age (ages 25 and older) gave the highest scores to the *High Expectations and Aspirations*, *Engaged Learning*, and *Academic and Social Support Network* benchmarks.

Figure 3. SENSE Benchmark Scores by Age Group: Fall 2015



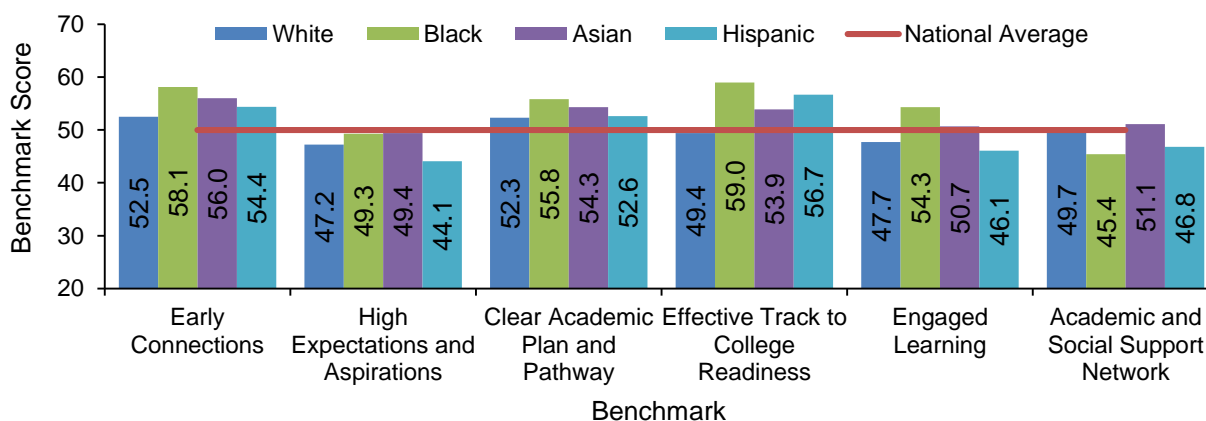
Note: The sample size of the 25 and older age group is small compared to the 18-24 age group; therefore, comparisons should be made with caution.

Race/Ethnicity

Black students reported higher levels of entering student engagement than the other three racial/ethnic groups on four of the six benchmarks. The lowest scores for five of the six benchmarks were given by either White students or Hispanic students.

Black students and Hispanic students both gave their highest scores to *Effective Track to College Readiness*. Black students gave their lowest scores to *Academic and Social Support Network*, while Hispanic students gave their lowest scores to *High Expectations and Aspirations*.

Figure 4. SENSE Benchmark Scores by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2015



Note: Racial/ethnic groups with a sample size smaller than 10 students are excluded from comparisons.

Appendix: SENSE Benchmark Scores by NOVA Student Demographics: Fall 2015

Table A1. SENSE Benchmark Scores by NOVA Student Demographics: Fall 2015

Enrollment Status	N* (%)	Benchmark					
		Early Connections	High Expectations and Aspirations	Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	Effective Track to College Readiness	Engaged Learning	Academic and Social Support Network
Full-Time	716 (74.4%)	55.8	44.3	53.2	54.9	51.3	49.3
Part-Time	247 (25.6%)	53.0	46.0	51.7	52.6	47.3	45.0
Gender	N* (%)	Early Connections	High Expectations and Aspirations	Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	Effective Track to College Readiness	Engaged Learning	Academic and Social Support Network
Male	472 (51.8%)	53.4	43.5	52.3	52.9	46.1	45.5
Female	440 (48.2%)	54.1	48.4	52.1	54.5	51.3	48.6
Age Group	N* (%)	Early Connections	High Expectations and Aspirations	Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	Effective Track to College Readiness	Engaged Learning	Academic and Social Support Network
18-24	903 (96.5%)	54.8	45.3	52.5	54.5	48.4	46.9
25 and Older	33 (3.5%)	41.9	55.3	50.1	38.5	56.6	50.5
Race/Ethnicity	N* (%)	Early Connections	High Expectations and Aspirations	Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	Effective Track to College Readiness	Engaged Learning	Academic and Social Support Network
White, Non-Hispanic	290 (34.1%)	52.5	47.2	52.3	49.4	47.7	49.7
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	112 (13.2%)	58.1	49.3	55.8	59.0	54.3	45.4
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	118 (13.9%)	56.0	49.4	54.3	53.9	50.7	51.1
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish	263 (30.9%)	54.4	44.1	52.6	56.7	46.1	46.8
American Indian or other Native American**	5 (0.6%)	44.6	-0.5	34.4	50.5	29.4	8.8
Native Hawaiian**	2 (0.2%)	26.1	52.4	59.6	82.4	27.1	0.4
Other**	60 (7.1%)	51.3	40.0	45.1	48.9	56.1	41.0

Note: For each benchmark, disaggregated by race/ethnicity data, the lowest score for the benchmark is indicated in **red** and the highest score is indicated in **green**.

* Respondents did not always provide demographic information. As such, totals may differ.

** Due to the small sample size, these racial/ethnic groups are excluded from comparisons in the discussion.