

# Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) Overall Benchmark Comparisons Report: Fall 2015

Research Report No. 37-16

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

APRIL 2016

## **NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES**

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives is to conduct analytical studies and provide information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation, and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

When citing data from this report, the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives must be cited as the source.

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Highlights**

- For three of the six benchmarks – *Early Connections*, *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*, and *Effective Track to College Readiness* – NOVA scored above the national average (50.0).
- On the *Early Connections* and *Effective Track to College Readiness* benchmarks, NOVA's scores were also higher than those of extra-large colleges, suburban colleges, SACS colleges, and ATD colleges.

### **Benchmark 1: Early Connections**

- Of the survey items comprising the *Early Connections* benchmark, NOVA students most strongly agreed with the statement, "The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome."
- NOVA students were less likely to agree with the survey item asking whether a college staff member helped determine whether they qualified for financial aid.

### **Benchmark 2: High Expectations and Aspirations**

- NOVA's overall score was lower than the national average and the scores of all peer institution groups.
- NOVA's score on the survey item, "I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college," was lower by a statistically significant margin as compared to all of NOVA's peer groups and the national average.
- NOVA's score for the survey item, "The instructors at this college want me to succeed" was also lower by a statistically significant margin than the scores of both SACS and ATD colleges.

### **Benchmark 3: Clear Academic Plan and Pathway**

- Of the survey items comprising this benchmark, NOVA students most strongly agreed with the statement, "An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester."
- NOVA students were least likely to agree with the survey item asking whether a college staff member talked with them about commitments outside of school.

### **Benchmark 4: Effective Track to College Readiness**

- NOVA's overall score on this benchmark was higher than all of NOVA's peer groups and the national average.
- Although NOVA's scores on each of these benchmark items were lower than those of NOVA's peer groups and the national average, these differences were not statistically significant.
- Of the survey items on this benchmark, "I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.)" was the highest rated response among NOVA students.

***Benchmark 5: Engaged Learning***

- NOVA's overall score on this benchmark was below the national average and all of NOVA's peer groups except institutions in the Extra-Large Colleges group.
- Of the survey items in this benchmark, NOVA students were most likely to report asking questions in class and were least likely to report using face-to-face tutoring.
- NOVA scored higher than all comparison groups on using an electronic tool to communicate with instructors.

***Benchmark 6: Academic and Social Support Network***

- NOVA's overall score on this benchmark was lower than all of NOVA's peer groups and the national average.
- NOVA scored higher than all comparison groups on the item related to instructors clearly explaining the course syllabi.
- All comparison groups reported their lowest scores on instructors explaining available academic and support services.

## Introduction

### **What is SENSE?**

- The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) is an annual nation-wide survey conducted by the Center for Community College Student Engagement that explores institutional practices and new students' experiences in the earliest weeks of college.
- These data can help colleges understand students' critical early experiences and improve institutional practices that affect student success in the first college year.
- SENSE is administered in class during the fourth and fifth weeks of the fall academic term to students in courses randomly selected from those most likely to enroll entering students.

### **What are benchmarks?**

- The SENSE Benchmarks of Effective Practice with Entering Students denote areas that educational research has shown to be important to entering students' college experience and educational outcomes. Each of these benchmarks corresponds to a group 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*

### **In this Report**

- NOVA's results are presented alongside the national average ("2015 Cohort") and the results of the following peer institution groups for each of the six benchmarks.
  - Extra-Large Colleges
  - Suburban Colleges
  - Colleges in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS)
  - Achieving the Dream Colleges (ATD)
- In Fall 2015, **963** NOVA students participated in the survey.

### **Data Notes**

- Benchmark scores are calculated by averaging the scores of items that comprise that benchmark. The scores are then standardized such that the **national average is always 50** for all benchmarks.
- In this way, 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.
- The scores of the comparison groups and national average exclude NOVA's scores.

## Comparison of NOVA with Peer Institution Groups and National Average

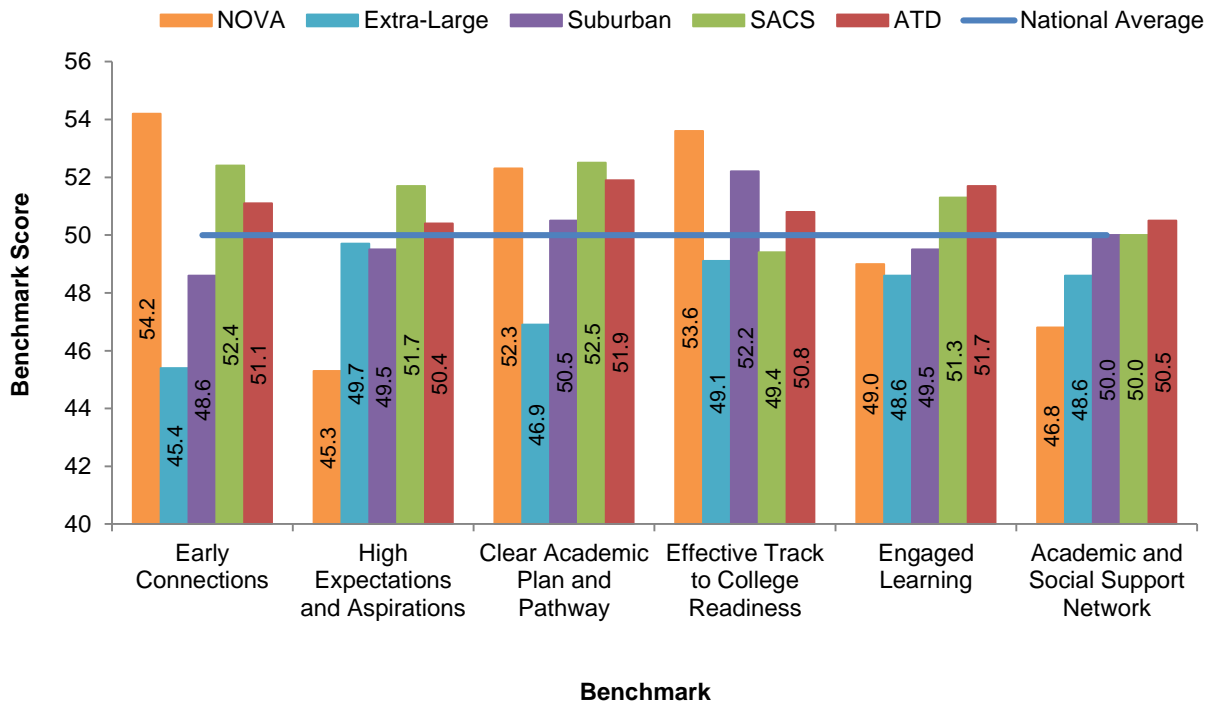
For three of the six benchmarks – *Early Connections*, *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*, and *Effective Track to College Readiness* – NOVA scored above the national average (50.0).

On the *Early Connections* and *Effective Track to College Readiness* benchmarks, NOVA's scores were also higher than those of extra-large colleges, suburban colleges, SACS colleges, and ATD colleges.

**Table 1. SENSE 2015 Benchmark Summary: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups**

Benchmark	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	Suburban Colleges	SACS Colleges	ATD Colleges	National Average
1. Early Connections	54.2	45.4	48.6	52.4	51.1	50.0
2. High Expectations and Aspirations	45.3	49.7	49.5	51.7	50.4	50.0
3. Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	52.3	46.9	50.5	52.5	51.9	50.0
4. Effective Track to College Readiness	53.6	49.1	52.2	49.4	50.8	50.0
5. Engaged Learning	49.0	48.6	49.5	51.3	51.7	50.0
6. Academic and Social Support Network	46.8	48.6	50.0	50.0	50.5	50.0

**Figure 1. SENSE 2015 Benchmark Summary: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups**





## Benchmark 1. *Early Connections*

### About this Benchmark

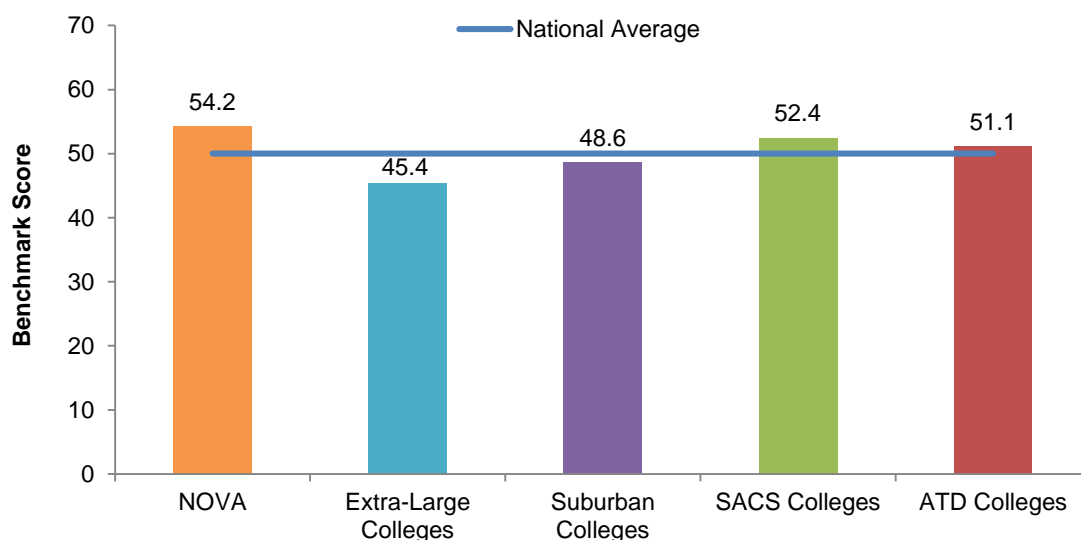
According to SENSE, “When students describe their early college experiences, they typically reflect on occasions when they felt discouraged or thought about dropping out. Their reasons for persisting almost always include one common element: a strong, early connection to someone at the college.”<sup>1</sup>

This benchmark is comprised of five survey items. Four of the survey items used a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Results for these four items are shown in Figure 3. For the fifth survey item, students responded on a dichotomous *yes* or *no* scale: “Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?”<sup>2</sup> As SENSE does not provide means for dichotomous survey items, Figure 4 provides a breakdown of student responses.

### Overall Score

NOVA’s overall score for this benchmark (54.2) was higher than those of NOVA’s peer groups and the national average.

Figure 2. Benchmark Scores for *Early Connections*: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups



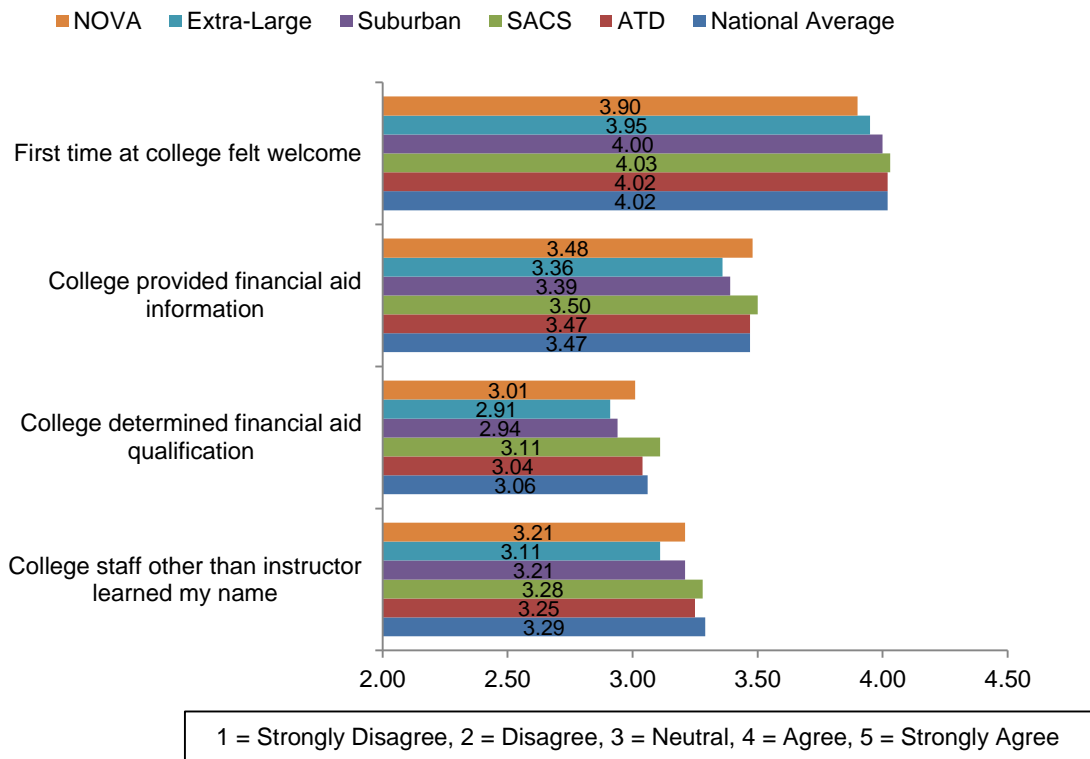
<sup>1</sup> Survey of Entering Student Engagement, “2015 Key Findings.” Available at: <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/survey.cfm>.

<sup>2</sup> When calculating benchmarks for yes/no response items, these items are normally coded as 1 = yes and 2 = no. However, when an item needs to be reverse coded (so that a low score on the item represents a desirable behavior), the item is coded so that no = 0 and yes = 1.

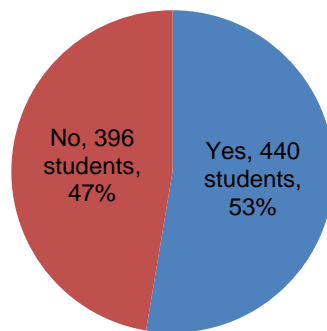
**Individual Benchmark Item Scores**

- For the individual items comprising this benchmark, there was no statistically significant difference between NOVA’s scores and those of NOVA’s peer groups or the national average.<sup>3</sup>
- NOVA students most strongly agreed with the statement, “The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome.”
- NOVA students were least likely to agree with the survey item asking whether a college staff member helped determine whether they qualified for financial aid.

**Figure 3. Early Connections: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**



**Figure 4. Early Connections: Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?**



<sup>3</sup> Thus, differences between NOVA’s scores and those of NOVA’s peer groups are small enough that they may be due to chance.

## Benchmark 2. High Expectations and Aspirations

### About this Benchmark

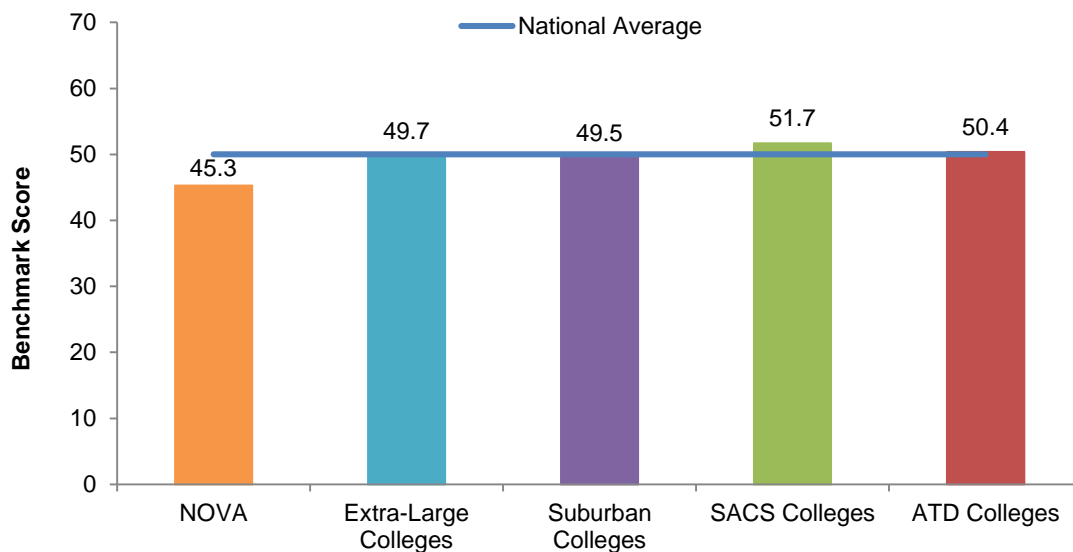
For this benchmark, SENSE notes that, “Nearly all students arrive at their community colleges intending to succeed and believing that they have the motivation to do so. When entering students perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty, they are more likely to understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement. Students then often rise to meet expectations, making it more likely that they will attain their goals. Often, students’ aspirations also climb, and they seek more advanced credentials than they originally envisioned.”<sup>4</sup>

Students responded to three of the seven items in this benchmark using a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Results for these three items are shown in Figure 6. For the remaining four benchmark items, students responded on a four-point scale where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Once*, 3 = *Two or three times*, and 4 = *Four or more times*. These four items were reverse-coded such that a low score represents the desirable behavior; results are shown in Figure 7.

### Overall Score

On this benchmark, NOVA’s score (45.3) was lower than the national average and the scores of all peer institution groups. Among NOVA’s peer groups, colleges in the SACS region earned the highest score on this benchmark (51.7).

Figure 5. Benchmark Scores for High Expectations and Aspirations: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups

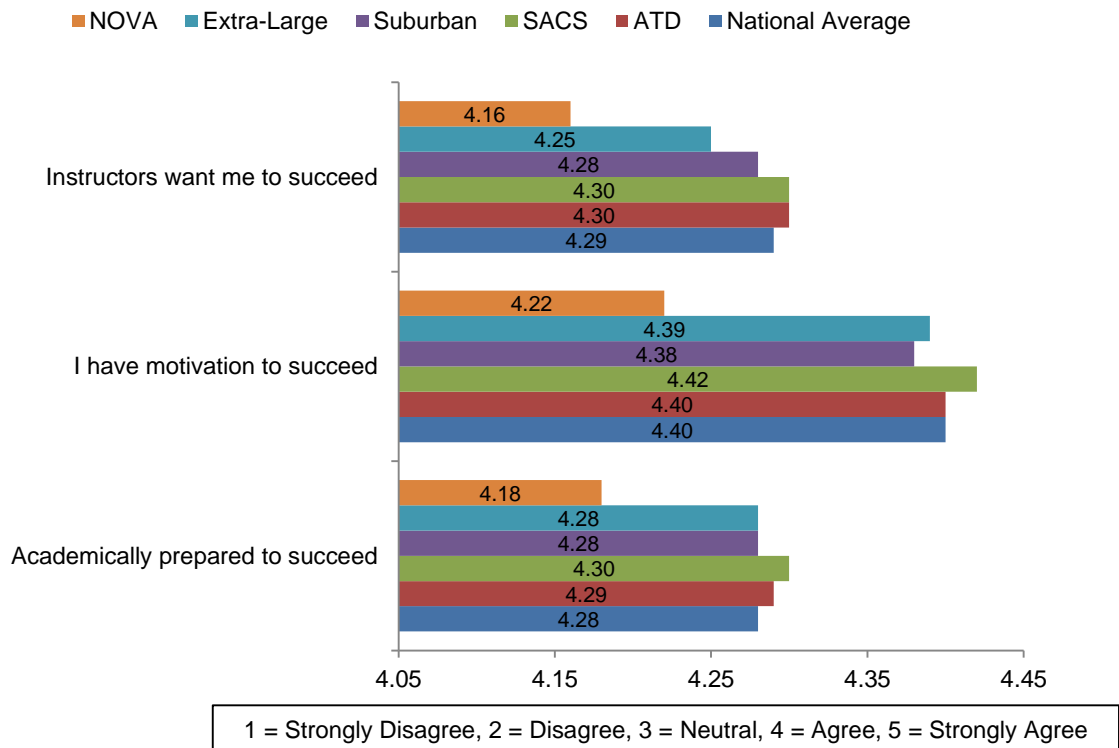


<sup>4</sup> Survey of Entering Student Engagement, “2015 Key Findings.” Available at: <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/survey.cfm>.

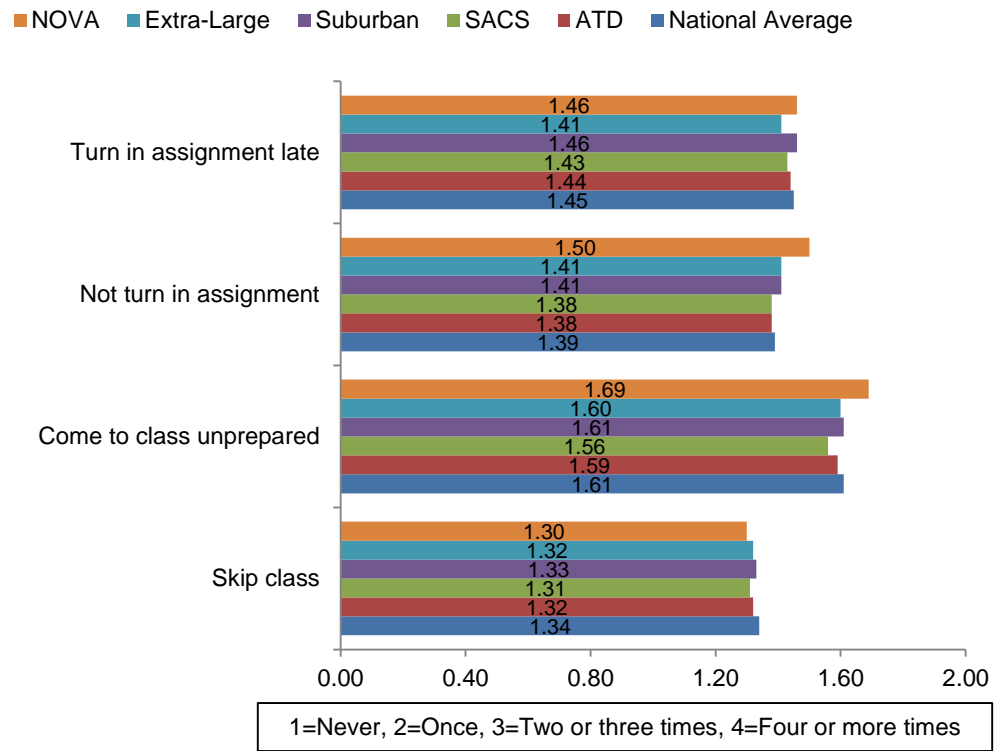
**Individual Benchmark Item Scores**

- For this benchmark, there were two survey items for which there was a statistically significant difference in NOVA’s scores compared to some or all of the comparison groups. This means that the differences in scores are most likely not due to random chance.
- There was a statistically significant difference in NOVA’s score (4.22) compared to all of NOVA’s peer groups and the national average on the item, “I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college.”
- NOVA’s score (4.16) for the item, “The instructors at this college want me to succeed” was also lower by a statistically significant margin than the scores of both SACS and ATD colleges (each 4.30).
- For the remaining survey items, there were no statistically significant differences between NOVA’s scores and those of their peer groups or the national average.

**Figure 6. High Expectations and Aspirations: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (1 of 2)**



**Figure 7. High Expectations and Aspirations: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (2 of 2)**



### **Benchmark 3. Clear Academic Plan and Pathway**

#### **About this Benchmark**

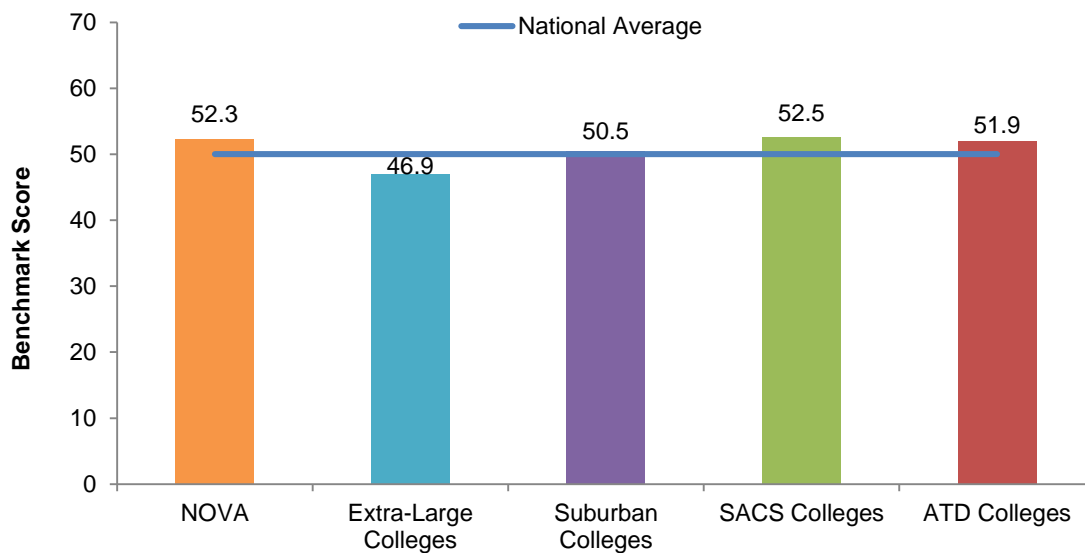
In describing this benchmark, SENSE notes that, “When a student, with knowledgeable assistance, creates a road map—one that shows where he or she is headed, what academic path to follow, and how long it will take to reach the end goal—that student has a critical tool for staying on track. Students are more likely to persist if they not only are advised about what courses to take, but also are helped to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them.”<sup>5</sup>

The five survey items that contribute to this benchmark used a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Results for these five items are shown in Figure 9 (next page).

#### **Overall Benchmark Score**

NOVA received a score of 52.3 for the *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway* benchmark. This score was higher than the national average and all of NOVA’s peer institution groups except SACS colleges, which scored 52.5 on this benchmark.

**Figure 8. Benchmark Scores for Clear Academic Plan and Pathway: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups**



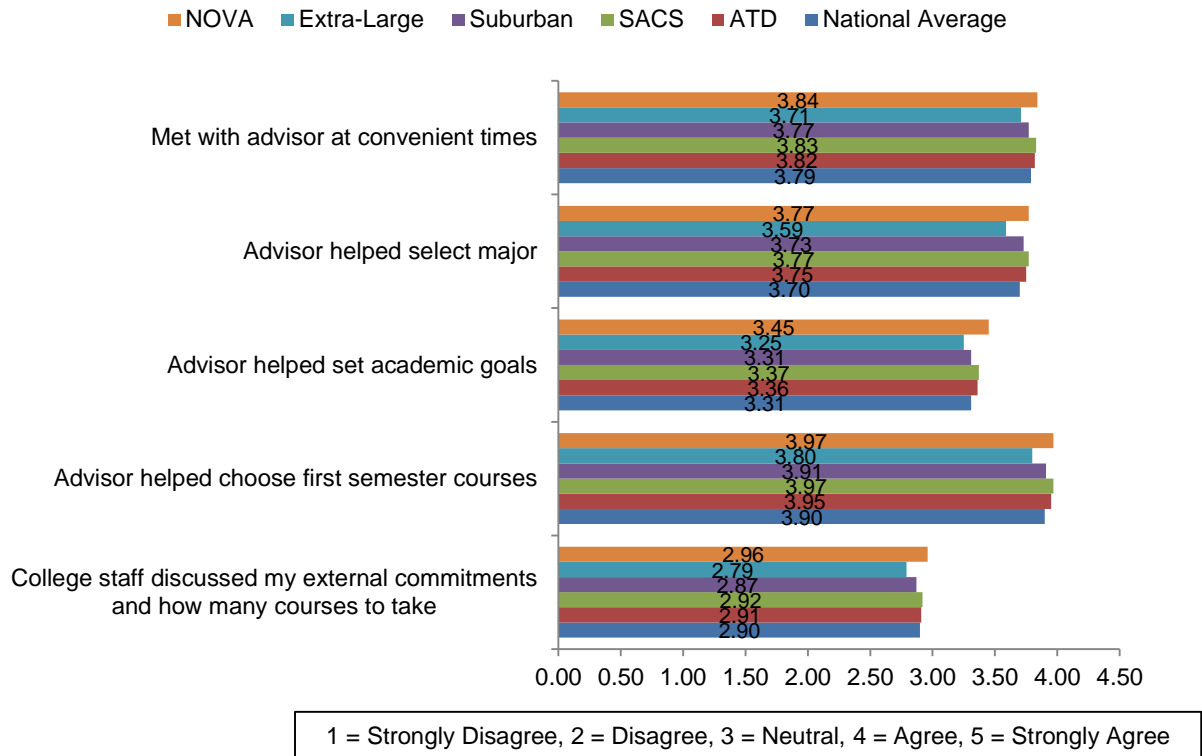
#### **Individual Benchmark Item Scores**

- For the individual items comprising this benchmark, there was no statistically significant difference between NOVA’s scores and those of NOVA’s peer groups or the national average.

<sup>5</sup> Survey of Entering Student Engagement, “2015 Key Findings.” Available at: <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/survey.cfm>.

- Of the survey items comprising this benchmark, NOVA students most strongly agreed with the statement, “An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester.”
- NOVA students were less likely to agree with the survey item asking whether a college staff member talked with them about commitments outside of school. This was also the lowest-scoring item for all of NOVA’s peer groups.

**Figure 9. Clear Academic Plan and Pathway: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**



## Benchmark 4. *Effective Track to College Readiness*

### About this Benchmark

SENSE reports that nationally, more than six in ten entering community college students are underprepared for college-level work.<sup>6</sup> This benchmark addresses students' experiences related to assessment, placement into appropriate courses, and strategies to help students build academic skills and receive needed support.

For three of the six items that contribute to this benchmark, students responded on a dichotomous *yes* or *no* scale. As SENSE does not provide means for dichotomous survey items, Figures 12, 13, and 14 provide a breakdown of student responses for these items.

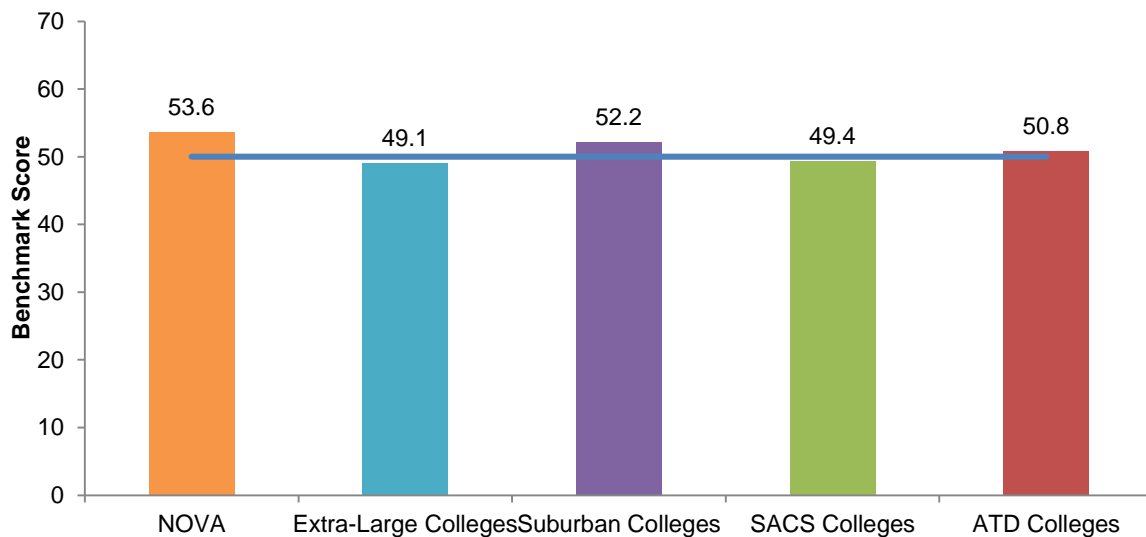
- Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math.
- I took a placement test.
- This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester.

For the remaining three survey items, students responded using a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Results for these three items are shown in Figure 11.

### Overall Benchmark Score

NOVA's score on this benchmark (53.6) was higher than all of NOVA's peer groups and the national average. Suburban colleges and ATD colleges also scored above the national average (52.2 and 50.8, respectively), while institutions in the extra-large colleges and SACS colleges groups both scored slightly below the national average (49.1 and 49.4, respectively).

Figure 10. Benchmark Scores for *Effective Track to College Readiness*: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups



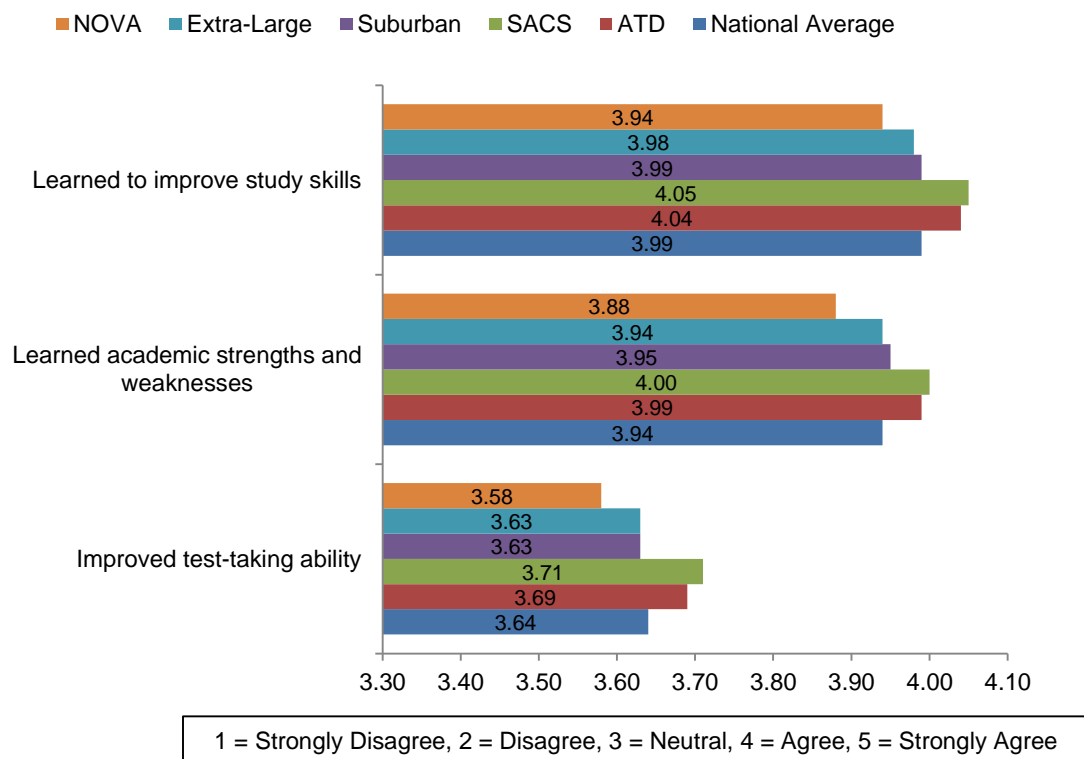
<sup>6</sup> Survey of Entering Student Engagement, "2015 Key Findings." Available at: <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/survey.cfm>.



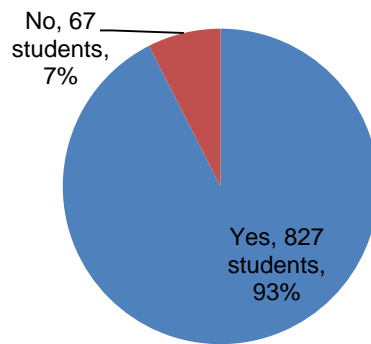
### Individual Benchmark Item Scores

- Although NOVA’s scores on each of these benchmark items were lower than those of NOVA’s peer groups and the national average, these differences were not statistically significant.
- “I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.)” was the highest rated response among NOVA students (3.94 on a 5-point scale).
- All comparison groups reported their lowest scores on the item: “I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability.”
- For the dichotomous (yes/no) benchmark items, the majority of NOVA students reported that they were required to take placement tests before registering for classes (93 percent), that they took a placement test (90 percent), and that the college required them to enroll in classes indicated by the placement test in their first semester (75 percent).

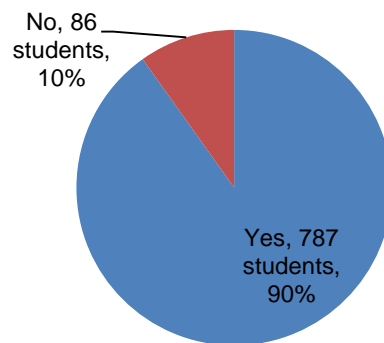
**Figure 11. Effective Track to College Readiness: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**



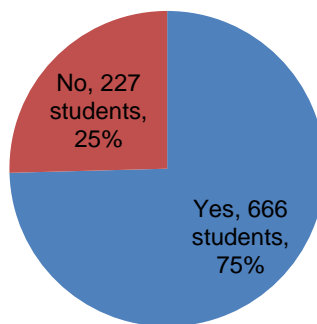
**Figure 12. *Effective Track to College Readiness*: Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math.**



**Figure 13. *Effective Track to College Readiness*: I took a placement test.**



**Figure 14. *Effective Track to College Readiness*: This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester.**



## Benchmark 5. Engaged Learning

### About this Benchmark

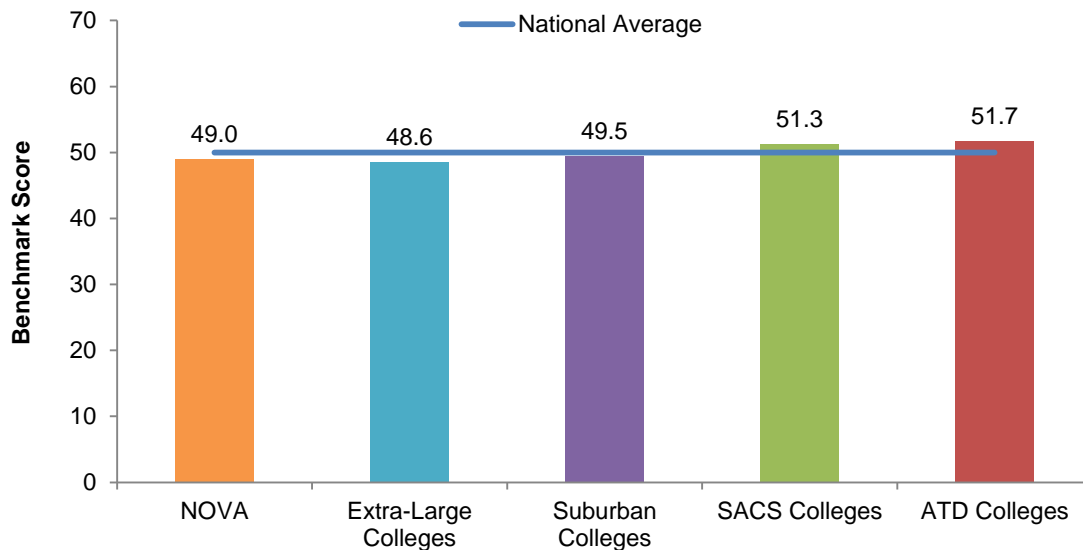
*Engaged Learning* examines student behaviors related to engagement. This is particularly important for part-time students, who comprise the majority of community college students, because these students tend to spend less time on campus than students at four-year institutions. These students are also more likely to need to balance their academic commitments with job and/or family responsibilities, which may impede opportunities to fully engage in the learning process.

For the sixteen items that comprise this benchmark, students responded on a four-point scale where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Once*, 3 = *Two or three times*, and 4 = *Four or more times*. Results for these sixteen items are shown in Figures 16 through 19 (four items per figure).

### Overall Benchmark Score

NOVA's score on this benchmark (49.0) was below the national average and all of NOVA's peer groups except institutions in the Extra-Large Colleges group (48.6). Among the comparison groups, ATD colleges received the highest score on this benchmark (51.7)

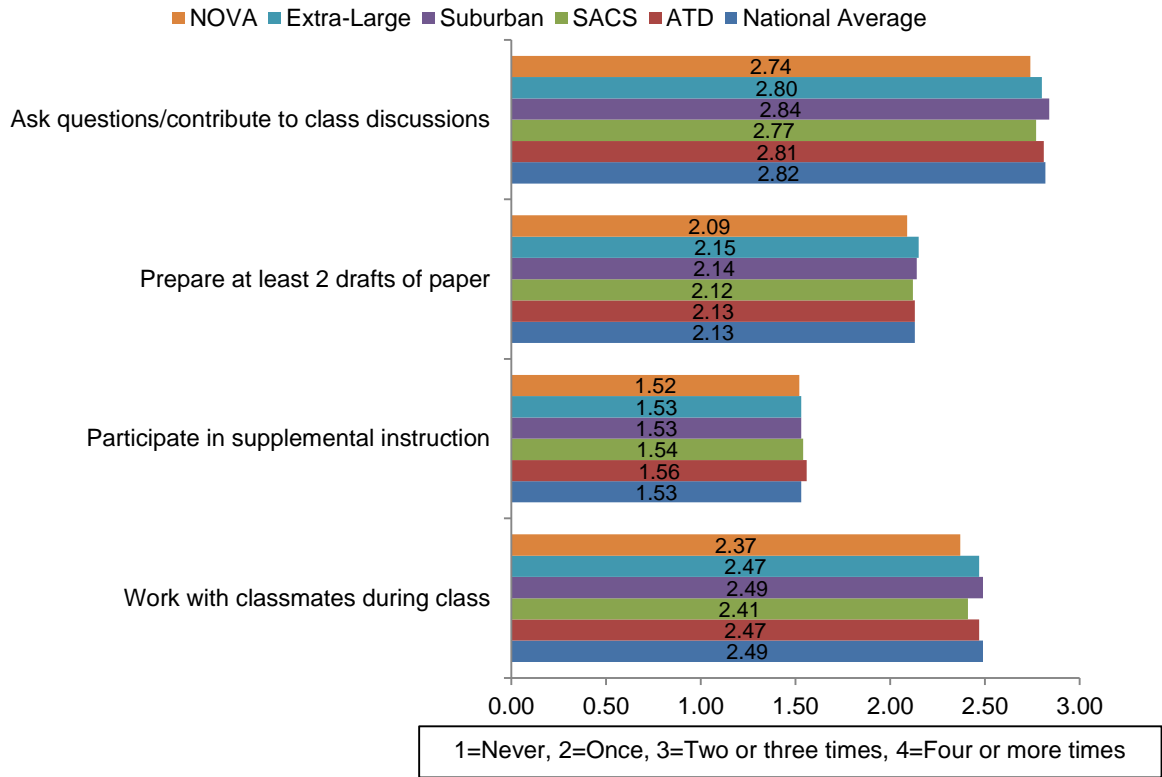
Figure 15. Benchmark Scores for *Engaged Learning*: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups



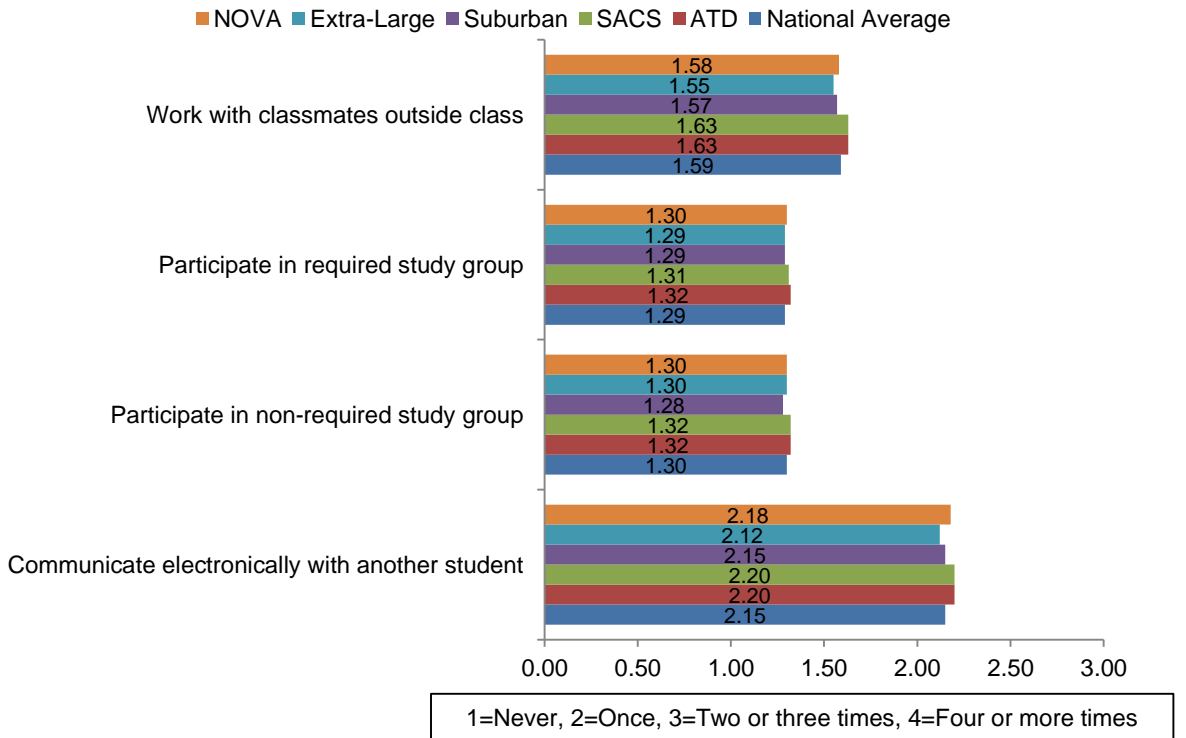
### Individual Benchmark Item Scores

- For the individual items comprising this benchmark, there was no statistically significant difference between NOVA's scores and those of NOVA's peer groups or the national average.
- NOVA students were most likely to report asking questions in class and were least likely to report using face-to-face tutoring.
- NOVA scored higher than all comparison groups on using an electronic tool to communicate with instructors.

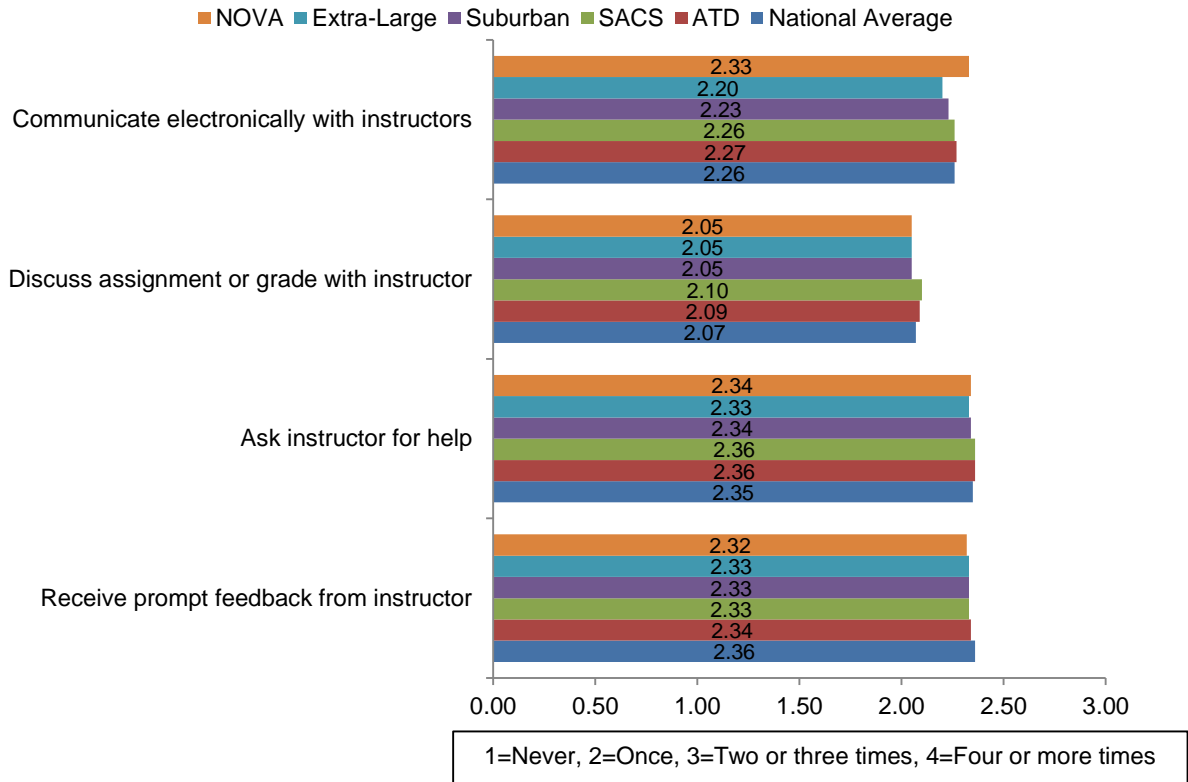
**Figure 16. Engaged Learning: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (1 of 4)**



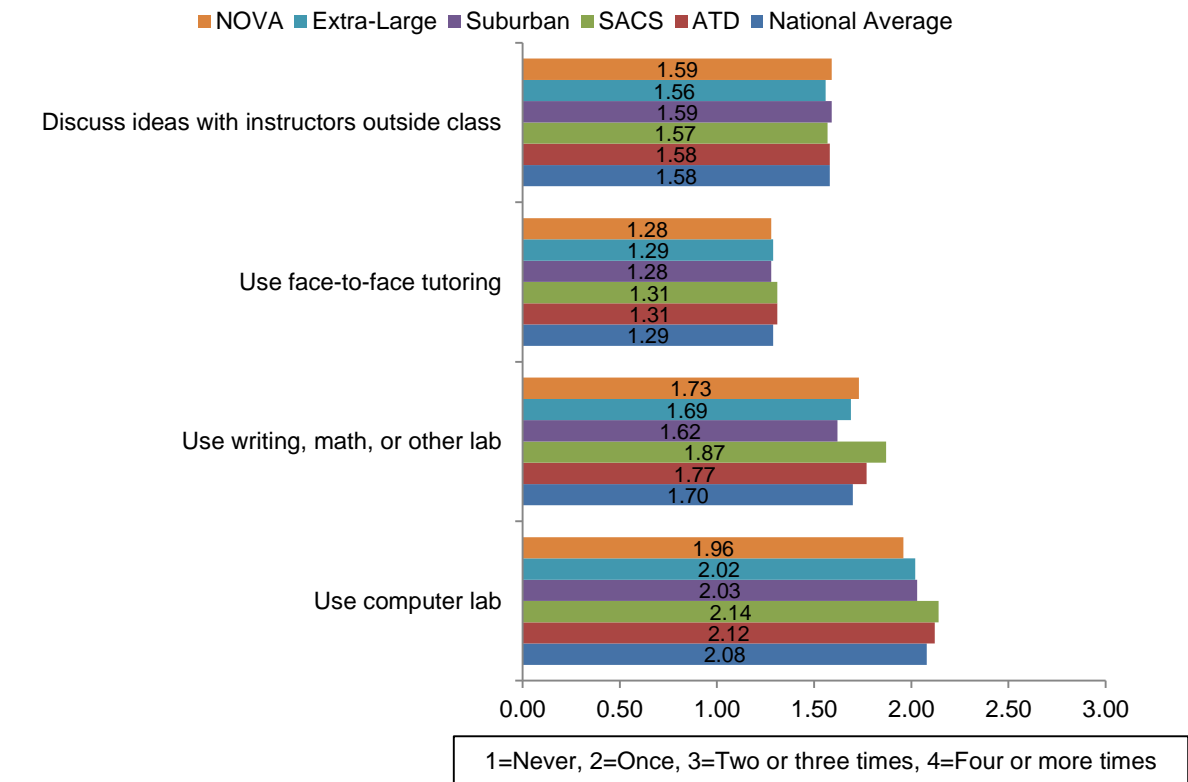
**Figure 17. Engaged Learning: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (2 of 4)**



**Figure 18. Engaged Learning: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (3 of 4)**



**Figure 19. Engaged Learning: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (4 of 4)**



## Benchmark 6. Academic and Social Support Network

### About this Benchmark

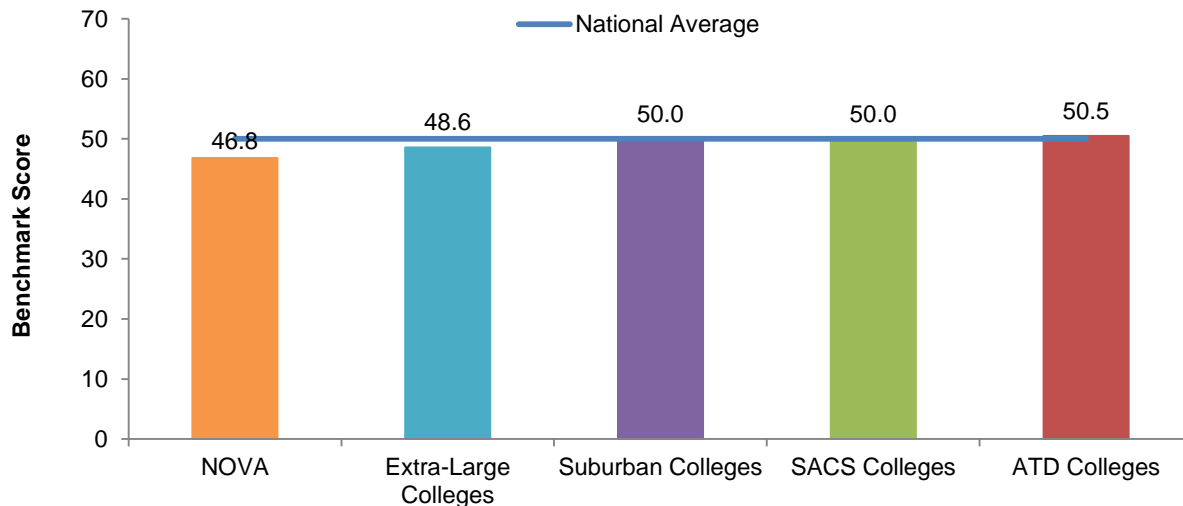
The *Academic and Social Support Network* benchmark explores how colleges perform in terms of communicating information to students and facilitating student networking opportunities. This is important because “Students benefit from having a personal network that enables them to obtain information about college services, along with the academic and social support critical to student success. Because entering students often don’t know what they don’t know, colleges must purposefully create those networks.”<sup>7</sup>

For the seven items comprising this benchmark, students responded using a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Results for these seven items are shown in Figures 21 and 22.

### Overall Benchmark Score

NOVA’s score on this benchmark (46.8) was lower than all of NOVA’s peer groups and the national average.

Figure 20. Benchmark Scores for *Academic and Social Support Network*: NOVA vs. Peer Institution Groups

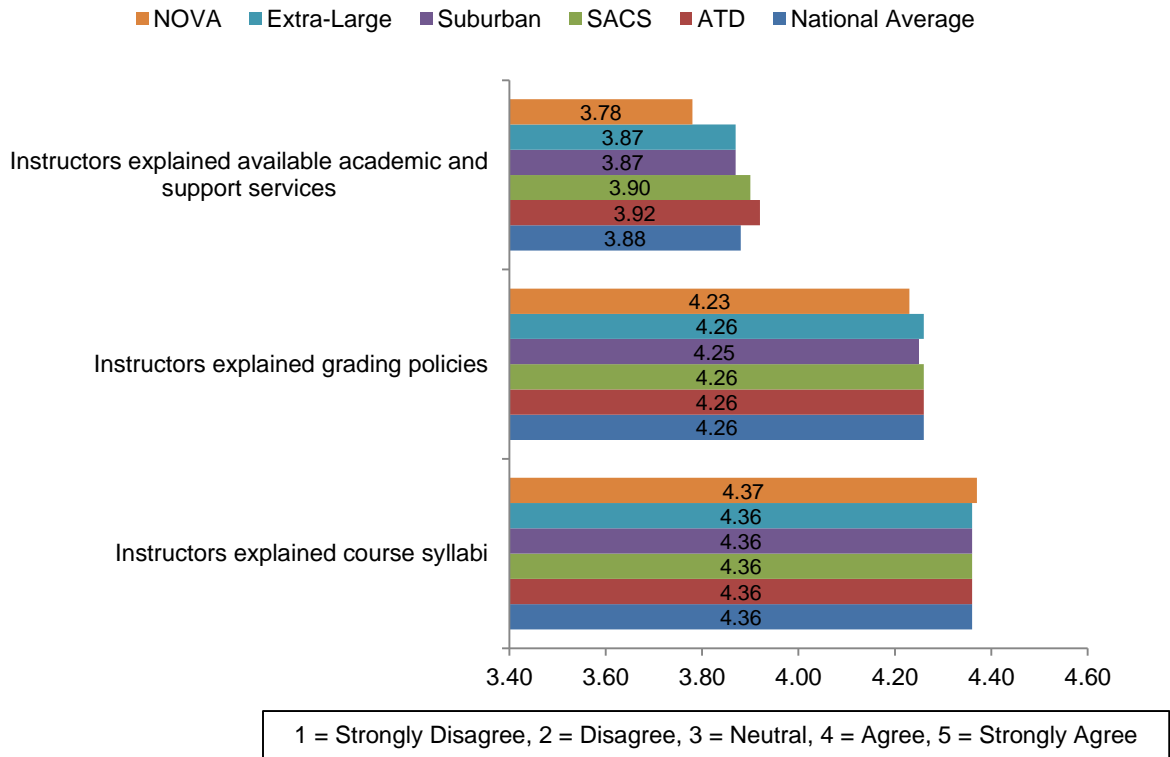


### Individual Benchmark Item Scores

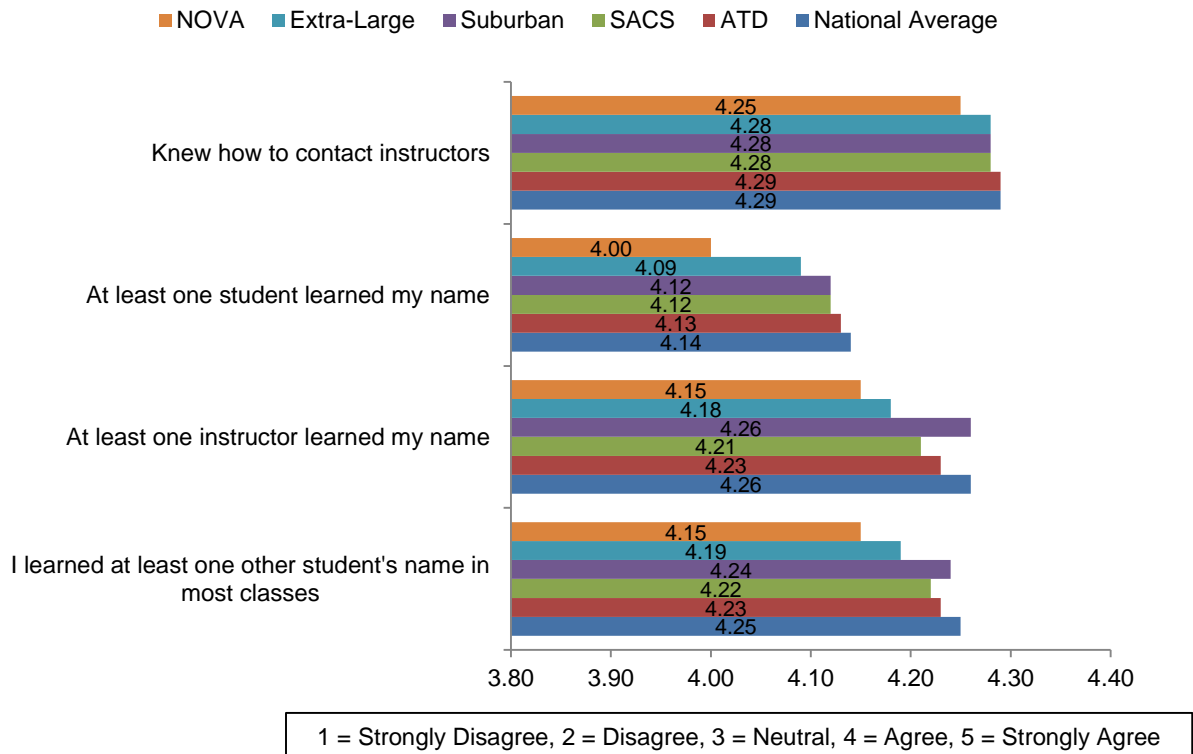
- For the individual items comprising this benchmark, there was no statistically significant difference between NOVA’s scores and those of NOVA’s peer groups or the national average.
- All comparison groups reported their lowest scores on the item: “All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college.”
- NOVA scored slightly higher than all comparison groups on the item related to instructors clearly explaining the course syllabi.

<sup>7</sup> Survey of Entering Student Engagement, “2015 Key Findings.” Available at: <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/survey.cfm>.

**Figure 21. Academic and Social Support Network: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (1 of 2)**



**Figure 22. Academic and Social Support Network: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (2 of 2)**



## Appendix: Data Tables

**Table A1. Early Connections: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**

Benchmark Item	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	Suburban Colleges	SACS Colleges	ATD Colleges	National Average
<b>1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree</b>						
18a. The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome.	3.90	3.95	4.00	4.03	4.02	4.02
18i. The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.).	3.48	3.36	3.39	3.50	3.47	3.47
18j. A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance.	3.01	2.91	2.94	3.11	3.04	3.06
18p. At least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name.	3.21	3.11	3.21	3.28	3.25	3.29

**Table A2. High Expectations and Aspirations: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**

Benchmark Item	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	Suburban Colleges	SACS Colleges	ATD Colleges	National Average
<b>1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree</b>						
18b. The instructors at this college want me to succeed.	4.16	4.25	4.28	4.30	4.30	4.29
18t. I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college.	4.22	4.39	4.38	4.42	4.40	4.40
18u. I am prepared academically to succeed in college.	4.18	4.28	4.28	4.30	4.29	4.28
<b>During the first three weeks of your first semester at this college, how often did you: 1 = Never, 2 = Once, 3 = Two or three times, 4 = Four or more times</b>						
19c. Turn in an assignment late.	1.46	1.41	1.46	1.43	1.44	1.45
19d. Not turn in an assignment.	1.50	1.41	1.41	1.38	1.38	1.39
19f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments.	1.69	1.60	1.61	1.56	1.59	1.61
19s. Skip class.	1.30	1.32	1.33	1.31	1.32	1.34

Note: Scores with a statistically significant difference from NOVA's scores are shaded.



**Table A3. Clear Academic Plan and Pathway: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**

Benchmark Item	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	Suburban Colleges	SACS Colleges	ATD Colleges	National Average
<b>1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree</b>						
18d. I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me.	3.84	3.71	3.77	3.83	3.82	3.79
18e. An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major.	3.77	3.59	3.73	3.77	3.75	3.70
18f. An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them.	3.45	3.25	3.31	3.37	3.36	3.31
18g. An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester.	3.97	3.80	3.91	3.97	3.95	3.90
18h. A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school (work, children, dependents, etc.) to help me figure out how many courses to take.	2.96	2.79	2.87	2.92	2.91	2.90

**Table A4. Effective Track to College Readiness: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**

Benchmark Item	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	Suburban Colleges	SACS Colleges	ATD Colleges	National Average
<b>1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree</b>						
21a. I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.).	3.94	3.98	3.99	4.05	4.04	3.99
21b. I learned to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses.	3.88	3.94	3.95	4.00	3.99	3.94
21c. I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability.	3.58	3.63	3.63	3.71	3.69	3.64

**Table A5. Engaged Learning: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**

Benchmark Item	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	Suburban Colleges	SACS Colleges	ATD Colleges	National Average
<b>During the first three weeks of your first semester at this college, how often did you: 1 = Never, 2 = Once, 3 = Two or three times, 4 = Four or more times</b>						
19a. Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions.	2.74	2.80	2.84	2.77	2.81	2.82
19b. Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.	2.09	2.15	2.14	2.12	2.13	2.13
19e. Participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student).	1.52	1.53	1.53	1.54	1.56	1.53
19g. Work with other students on a project or assignment during class.	2.37	2.47	2.49	2.41	2.47	2.49
19h. Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments.	1.58	1.55	1.57	1.63	1.63	1.59
19i. Participate in a required study group outside of class.	1.30	1.29	1.29	1.31	1.32	1.29
19j. Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class.	1.30	1.30	1.28	1.32	1.32	1.30
19k. Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class website, etc.) to communicate with another student about coursework.	2.18	2.12	2.15	2.20	2.20	2.15
19l. Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class website, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework.	2.33	2.20	2.23	2.26	2.27	2.26
19m. Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor.	2.05	2.05	2.05	2.10	2.09	2.07
19n. Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class.	2.34	2.33	2.34	2.36	2.36	2.35
19o. Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance.	2.32	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.34	2.36
19q. Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class.	1.59	1.56	1.59	1.57	1.58	1.58
20.2d. Use face-to-face tutoring.	1.28	1.29	1.28	1.31	1.31	1.29
20.2f. Use writing, math, or other skill lab.	1.73	1.69	1.62	1.87	1.77	1.70
20.2h. Use computer lab.	1.96	2.02	2.03	2.14	2.12	2.08

**Table A6. Academic and Social Support Network: Means for Individual Benchmark Items**

Benchmark Item	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	Suburban Colleges	SACS Colleges	ATD Colleges	National Average
<i>1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree</i>						
18l. All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college.	3.78	3.87	3.87	3.90	3.92	3.88
18m. All instructors clearly explained course grading policies.	4.23	4.26	4.25	4.26	4.26	4.26
18n. All instructors clearly explained course syllabi.	4.37	4.36	4.36	4.36	4.36	4.36
18o. I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class.	4.25	4.28	4.28	4.28	4.29	4.29
18q. At least one other student whom I didn't previously know learned my name.	4.00	4.09	4.12	4.12	4.13	4.14
18r. At least one instructor learned my name.	4.15	4.18	4.26	4.21	4.23	4.26
18s. I learned the name of at least one other student in most of my classes.	4.15	4.19	4.24	4.22	4.23	4.25

## ***NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals***

### **Mission**

With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

### **Strategic Goals**

- I. **STUDENT SUCCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will move into the top tier of community colleges with respect to the college readiness, developmental course completion, retention, graduation, transfer, and career placement of its students.
- II. **ACCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase the number and diversity of students being served to mirror the population growth of the region.
- III. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – Northern Virginia Community College will focus on student success by creating an environment of world-class teaching and learning.
- IV. **EXCELLENCE** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop ten focal points of excellence in its educational programs and services that will be benchmarked to the best in the nation and strategic to building the College's overall reputation for quality.
- V. **LEADERSHIP** – Northern Virginia Community College will serve as a catalyst and a leader in developing educational and economic opportunities for all Northern Virginians and in maintaining the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.
- VI. **PARTNERSHIPS** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop strategic partnerships to create gateways of opportunity and an integrated educational system for Northern Virginians who are pursuing the American Dream.
- VII. **RESOURCES** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase its annual funding by \$100 million and expand its physical facilities by more than one million square feet in new and renovated space. This includes the establishment of two additional campuses at epicenters of the region's population growth, as well as additional education and training facilities in or near established population centers.
- VIII. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS** – Northern Virginia Community College will be recognized as a leader among institutions of higher education in Virginia for its development and testing of emergency response and continuity of operation plans.

# NOVA

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