

RESEARCH BRIEF

**Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) Spring 2017:
Benchmark Comparisons by Selected Student Characteristics**

Introduction

What is CCSSE?

- The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is an annual nationwide survey of community college students.
- CCSSE helps institutions gauge their performance in different areas of **student engagement**.
- NOVA participates in CCSSE every 2-3 years and has done so for over a decade.

What are CCSSE Benchmarks?

- CCSSE identified five **benchmarks** for assessing institutional performance in student engagement based on groups of conceptually-related items on the survey:
 - *Active and Collaborative Learning*
 - *Student Effort*
 - *Academic Challenge*
 - *Student-Faculty Interaction*
 - *Support for Learners*

CCSSE 2017 at NOVA

- At NOVA, **1,694 students** participated in the CCSSE in Spring 2017.

In This Research Brief

NOVA Student Characteristics

- CCSSE benchmark scores in this Research Brief were examined by the following NOVA student characteristics:
 - Academic Goal
 - Source of Tuition
 - Credit Hours Completed
 - Developmental Course Enrollment
 - Family Support
- Results by student characteristics are provided in the Appendix data tables.

Key Findings

Academic Goal

- Students who indicated that a primary reason/goal for attending NOVA was to **change careers** scored *highest* on all five benchmarks— scores were *lowest* for students who indicated that a primary reason/goal for attending NOVA was to **obtain an Associate's degree**.

Source of Tuition

- Students who indicated that **scholarships** were a major source used to pay their tuition at NOVA had the *highest* scores on all benchmarks. Benchmark scores were typically *lowest* for students who indicated that a major source used to pay their tuition was their **own income/savings, income/savings from family, or active military/veteran benefits**.

Credit Hours Completed

- Students who completed **30 or more credits** at NOVA had *higher* benchmark scores for all five benchmarks when compared to students who only completed **0 to 29 credits**.

Developmental Course Enrollment

- Benchmark scores were *higher* for all five benchmarks for students who **enrolled in at least one developmental course** when compared to students who had **not enrolled in any developmental courses**. Differences in benchmark scores were greatest for the *Student Effort* benchmark.

Family Support

- NOVA students who indicated that their immediate families were **extremely supportive** had the *highest* benchmark scores for all five benchmarks. Conversely, NOVA students who indicated that their immediate family was **not very supportive** had the *lowest* benchmark scores for all five benchmarks.

Data Notes

Benchmark Scores

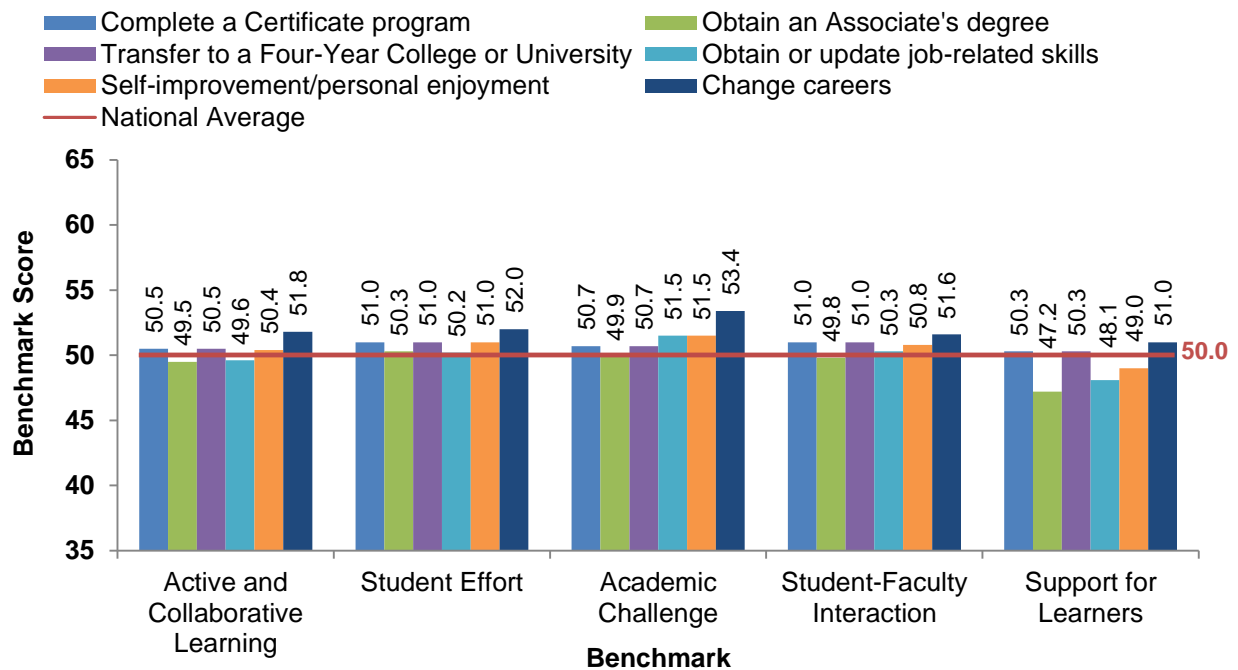
- Each benchmark score was calculated by averaging the scores of items that comprise that benchmark. The scores were then transformed (standardized), such that the national average score was 50 for each benchmark.
- This kind of transformation provides an easy way to assess whether an institution or a group of institutions were performing above or below the mean (50) on each benchmark.
- Benchmark scores were weighted for comparisons with other institutions by adjusting for institutional differences due to full-time and part-time student enrollment.
- Benchmark scores standardization and weighting were done by CCSSE.

Academic Goal

Which are your primary reasons or goals for attending NOVA?

Little variation in benchmark scores occurred across groups of selected reasons or goals for attending NOVA. However, benchmark scores were *highest* for students who indicated that a primary reason or goal for attending NOVA was to **change careers**. The *lowest* benchmark scores occurred among students who indicated that a primary reason or goal for attending NOVA was to **obtain an Associate’s degree**. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. CCSSE 2017 Benchmark Scores by Reasons/Goals for Attending NOVA¹



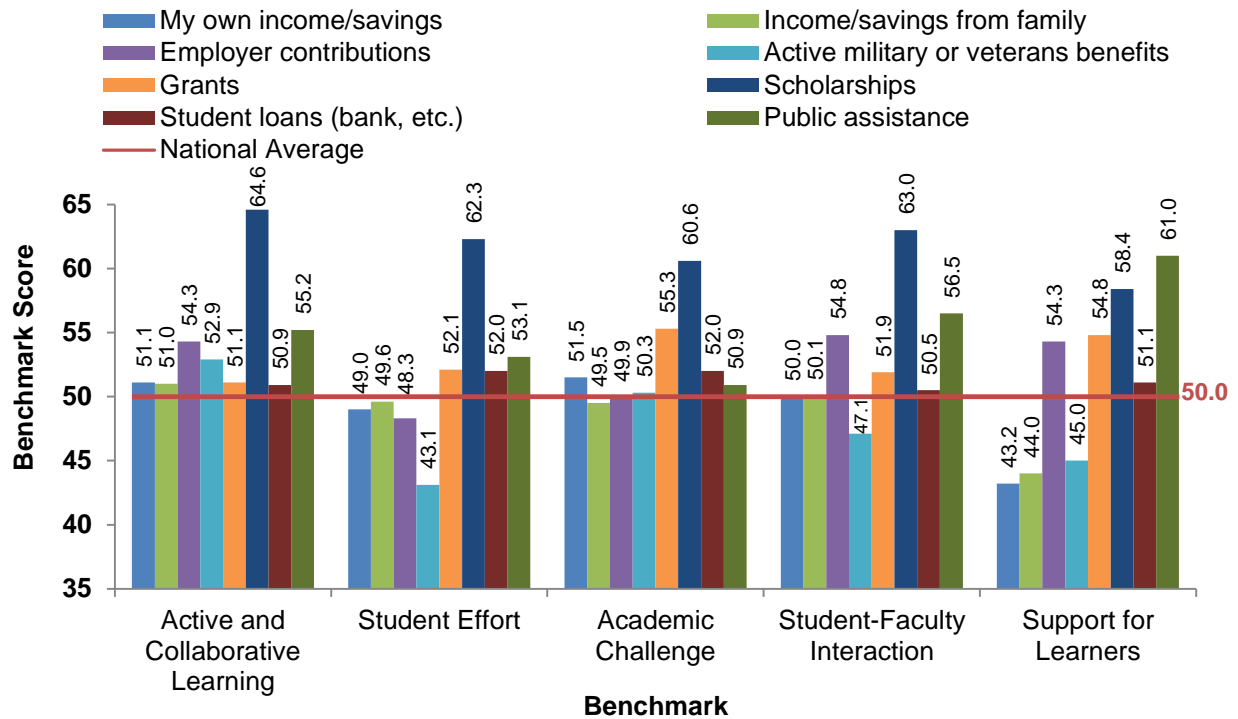
Source of Tuition

Which is a major source you use to pay your tuition at NOVA?

Students who indicated that **scholarships** were a major source of their NOVA tuition payment had the *highest* scores on all benchmarks. Benchmark scores were consistently at or above the national average on all five benchmarks for students who indicated that **grants, student loans, or public assistance** was a major source of their NOVA tuition payment. Students who indicated that a major source used to pay their NOVA tuition was their **own income/savings, income/savings from family or others, or active military/veteran benefits** tended to have the *lowest* benchmark scores, particularly for the *Support for Learners* benchmark. (Figure 2, next page)

¹ For each of the listed reasons/goals, students were asked to select “Yes” or “No” to indicate whether it was one of their personal reasons or goals for attending NOVA. Students could respond “Yes” to more than one reason/goal.

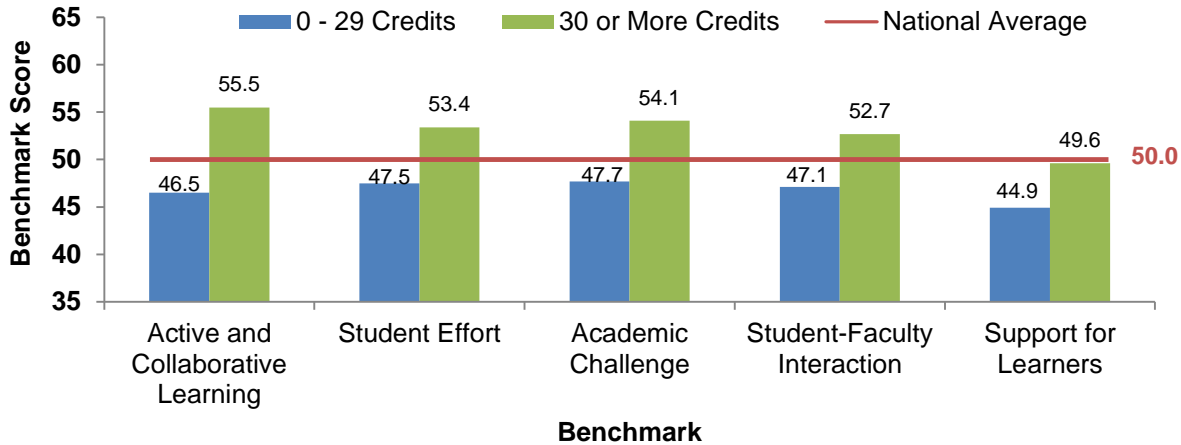
Figure 2. CCSSE 2017 Benchmark Scores by Major Source of Tuition Payment²



Credit Hours Completed

Students who completed **30 or more credit hours** at NOVA had *higher* benchmark scores for all benchmarks when compared to students who only completed **0 to 29 credit hours**. The difference in benchmark scores between the two groups was most pronounced for the *Active and Collaborative Learning* (9 points) benchmark (Figure 3).

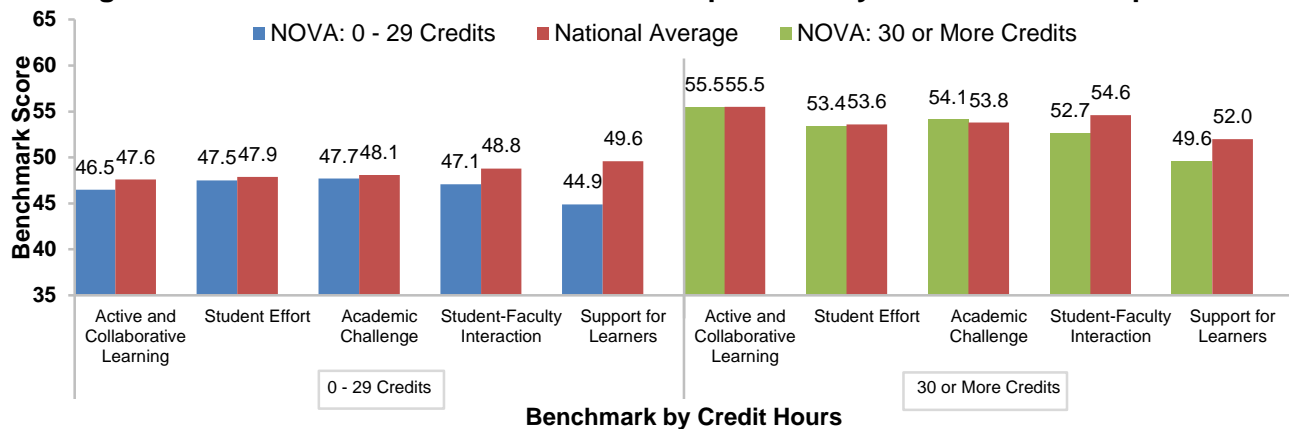
Figure 3. CCSSE 2017 NOVA Benchmark Scores by Credit Hours Completed



² For each of the listed sources of tuition payment, students were asked to indicate whether each one was a “Major source”, a “Minor source”, or “Not a source” of their tuition payment. This graph details average benchmark scores for students who selected “Major source” for each source of tuition payment.

Benchmark scores were disaggregated such that scores for NOVA students with 0 to 29 credit hours were compared with national average scores for students with 0 to 29 credit hours, and scores for NOVA students with 30 or more credits hours were compared with national average scores for students with 30 or more credit hours. These comparisons showed that benchmark scores among NOVA students with 0 to 29 credit hours trended slightly below national average scores for students with 0 to 29 credit hours with the largest differences occurring for the *Support for Learners* benchmark (44.9 versus 49.6). Benchmark scores among NOVA students with 30 or more credit hours did not vary greatly from national average scores, however, NOVA scores were lower for the Student-Faculty Interaction (52.7 compared to 54.6) and Support for Learners (49.6 compared to 52.0) benchmarks. (Figure 4)

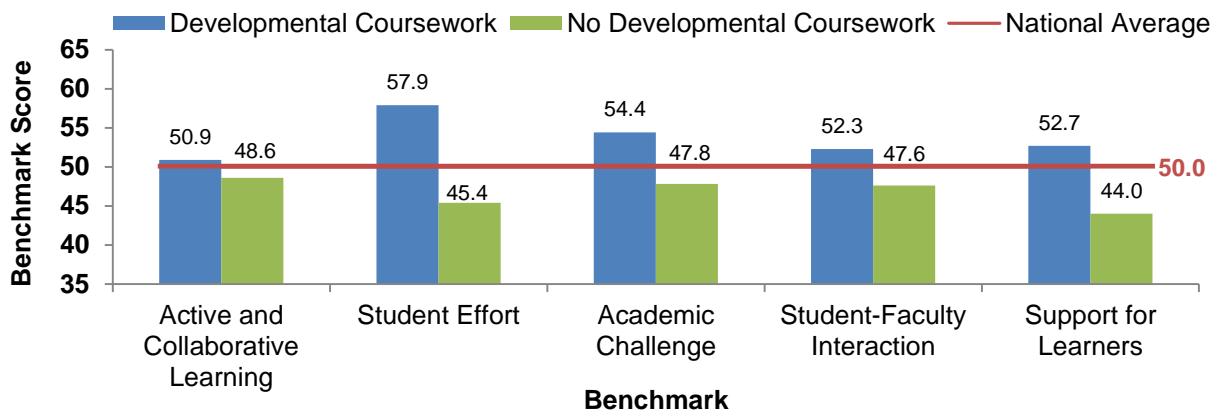
Figure 4. CCSSE 2017 Benchmark Score Comparisons by Credit Hours Completed



Developmental Course Enrollment

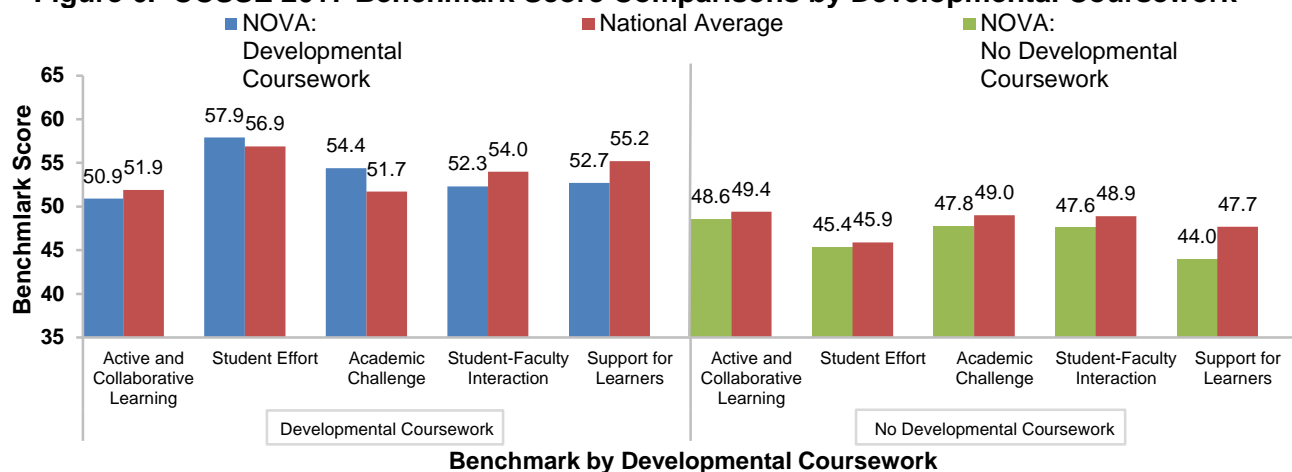
Benchmark scores were *higher* for all benchmarks for students who **enrolled in at least one developmental course** when compared to students who **had not enrolled in any developmental courses**. Differences in these benchmark scores ranged from 2 to 13 points between the two groups and were most pronounced for the *Student Effort* (13 points) benchmark. (Figure 5)

Figure 5. CCSSE 2017 Benchmark Scores by Developmental Coursework



Benchmark scores were disaggregated such that scores for NOVA students who enrolled in at least one developmental course were compared with national average scores for students who enrolled in at least one developmental course, and scores for NOVA students who had not enrolled in any developmental courses were compared with national average scores for students who had not enrolled in any developmental courses. These comparisons showed that benchmark scores among NOVA students who enrolled in at least one developmental course were *slightly above* national average scores for the *Student Effort* and *Academic Challenge* benchmarks but *slightly below* national average benchmark scores for the *Active and Collaborative Learning*, *Student-Faculty Interaction*, and *Support for Learners*. Benchmark scores among NOVA students who had not enrolled in developmental courses trended slightly below national average scores for students who had not enrolled in developmental courses. (Figure 6)

Figure 6. CCSSE 2017 Benchmark Score Comparisons by Developmental Coursework

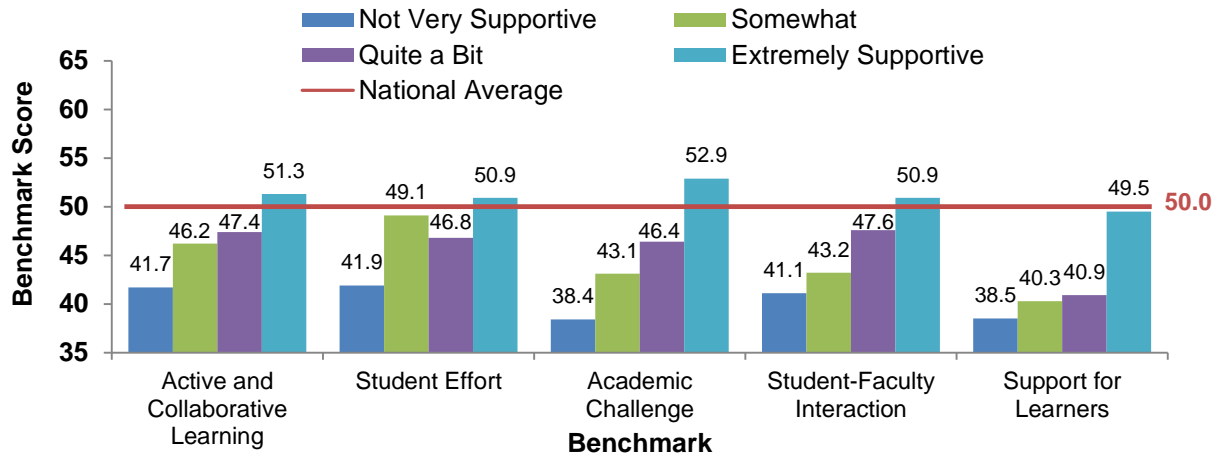


Family Support

How supportive is your immediate family of your attending NOVA?

Students were asked how supportive their immediate families were of their attending NOVA. The vast majority (85 percent) indicated that their families were *extremely supportive* (64 percent) or *quite a bit supportive* (21 percent), while the remaining felt that their families were either *somewhat support* (11 percent) or *not very supportive* (5 percent). NOVA students who indicated that their immediate families were **extremely supportive** had the *highest* benchmark scores for all five benchmarks. The *lowest* benchmark scores occurred for students who indicated that their families were **not very supportive**. Differences between the highest and lowest scores were most pronounced for the *Academic Challenge* (15 points) and *Support for Learners* (11 points) benchmarks. (Figure 7, next page)

Figure 7. CCSSE 2017 Benchmark Scores by Level of Family Support³



³ Students were asked to answer the survey question, “How supportive is your immediate family of your attending NOVA?” on a scale of “Extremely”, “Quite a bit”, “Somewhat”, or “Not very.”

Appendix: CCSSE 2017 Benchmark Scores by NOVA Student Characteristics

Table A1. Benchmark Scores by Student Characteristics: Spring 2017

Survey Question	Benchmark				
	Active and Collaborative Learning	Student Effort	Academic Challenge	Student-Faculty Interaction	Support for Learners
Which is Your Primary Goal for Attending NOVA?					
Complete a certificate program	50.5	51.0	50.7	51.0	50.3
Obtain an Associate's degree	49.5	50.3	49.9	49.8	47.2
Transfer to a 4-year college or university	50.5	51.0	50.7	51.0	50.3
Obtain or update job-related skills	49.6	50.2	51.5	50.3	48.1
Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	50.4	51.0	51.5	50.8	49.0
Change careers	51.8	52.0	53.4	51.6	51.0
Which is a Major Source You Use to Pay Your Tuition at NOVA?					
My own income/savings	51.1	49.0	51.5	50.0	43.2
Income/savings from family	51.0	49.6	49.5	50.1	44.0
Employer contributions	54.3	48.3	49.9	54.8	54.3
Active military or veterans benefits	52.9	43.1	50.3	47.1	45.0
Grants	51.1	52.1	55.3	51.9	54.8
Scholarships	64.6	62.3	60.6	63.0	58.4
Student loans (bank, etc.)	50.9	52.0	52.0	50.5	51.1
Public assistance	55.2	53.1	50.9	56.5	61.0
Credit Hours Completed					
Students with 0-29 Credits at NOVA	46.5	47.5	47.7	47.1	44.9
Students with 30 or More Credits at NOVA	55.5	53.4	54.1	52.7	49.6
Developmental Course Enrollment					
No Developmental Course Enrollment	48.6	45.4	47.8	47.6	44.0
Enrolled in Developmental Courses(s)	50.9	57.9	54.4	52.3	52.7
How Supportive is Your Immediate Family of Your Attending NOVA?					
Not very supportive	41.7	41.9	38.4	41.1	38.5
Somewhat supportive	46.2	49.1	43.1	43.2	40.3
Quite a bit supportive	47.4	46.8	46.4	47.6	40.9
Extremely supportive	51.3	50.9	52.9	50.9	49.5

Note: Benchmark scores were weighted to adjust for institutional differences in full-time and part-time student enrollment.