

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE): Results of Spring 2015 Survey

Research Report No. 76-15

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

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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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Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE): Results of 2015 Survey

Executive Summary

Highlights

- Five benchmarks were examined in the CCSSE survey: *Active and Collaborative Learning*, *Student Effort*, *Academic Challenge*, *Student-Faculty Interaction*, and *Support for Learners*.
- The majority of NOVA's benchmark scores did not reflect a statistically significant difference from the scores of other extra-large colleges or the national average.
- For one item within the *Student-Faculty Interaction* benchmark, NOVA's score reflected a statistically significant difference between those of other extra-large colleges or the national average. For this item – “Used email to communicate with an instructor” – results suggest that NOVA students reported participating in this activity more frequently than students from other extra-large colleges or the national average.

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**.

What are benchmarks?

- CCSSE identifies 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*

In this Report

- NOVA's results are presented alongside national data (“2015 Cohort”) and peer institutions (“extra-large institutions,” or community colleges with 15,000+ credit students).
- In Spring 2015, **1,588** NOVA students participated in the survey.

Data Notes

- Benchmark scores are 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.
- 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.

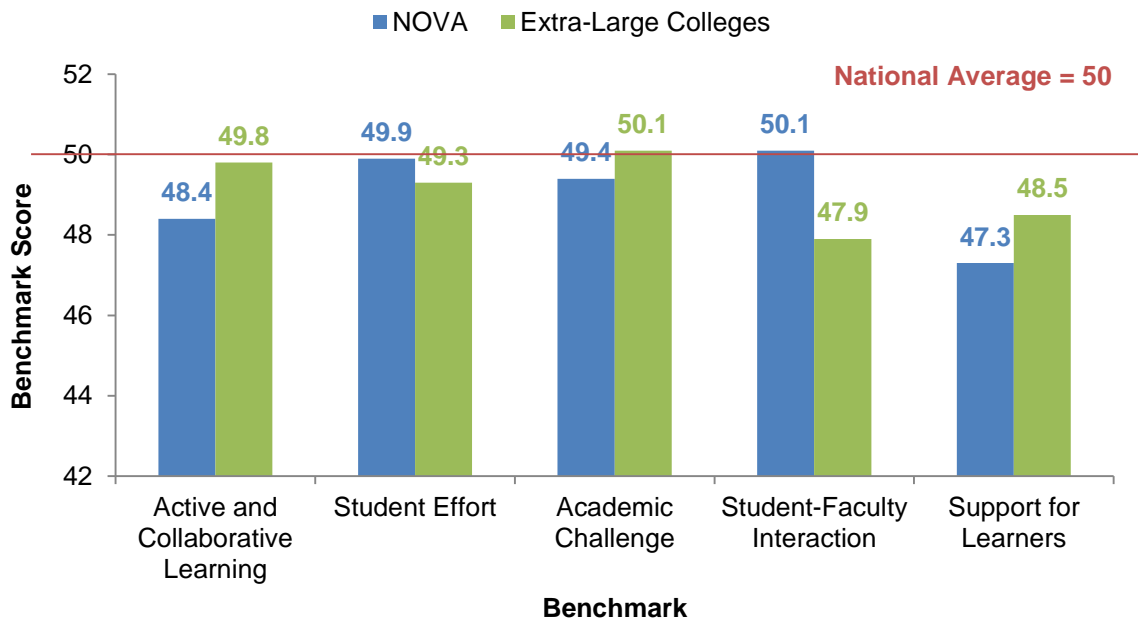
Comparison of NOVA with Peer Colleges and National Data

NOVA's overall scores on each benchmark were within three points of the national average (50) as well as the scores of other extra-large colleges (Table 1). None of these differences in overall benchmark scores were statistically significant. Of the five benchmarks, NOVA scored the highest on *Student-Faculty Interaction* (50.1) and the lowest on *Support for Learners* (47.3).

Table 1. CCSSE 2015 Benchmark Summary: NOVA vs. Extra-Large Colleges and National Average

Benchmark	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	National Average
1. Active and Collaborative Learning	48.4	49.8	50.0
2. Student Effort	49.9	49.3	50.0
3. Academic Challenge	49.4	50.1	50.0
4. Student-Faculty Interaction	50.1	47.9	50.0
5. Support for Learners	47.3	48.5	50.0

Figure 1. CCSSE 2015 Benchmark Summary: NOVA vs. Extra-Large Colleges and National Average



Benchmark 1. Active and Collaborative Learning

What is Active and Collaborative Learning?

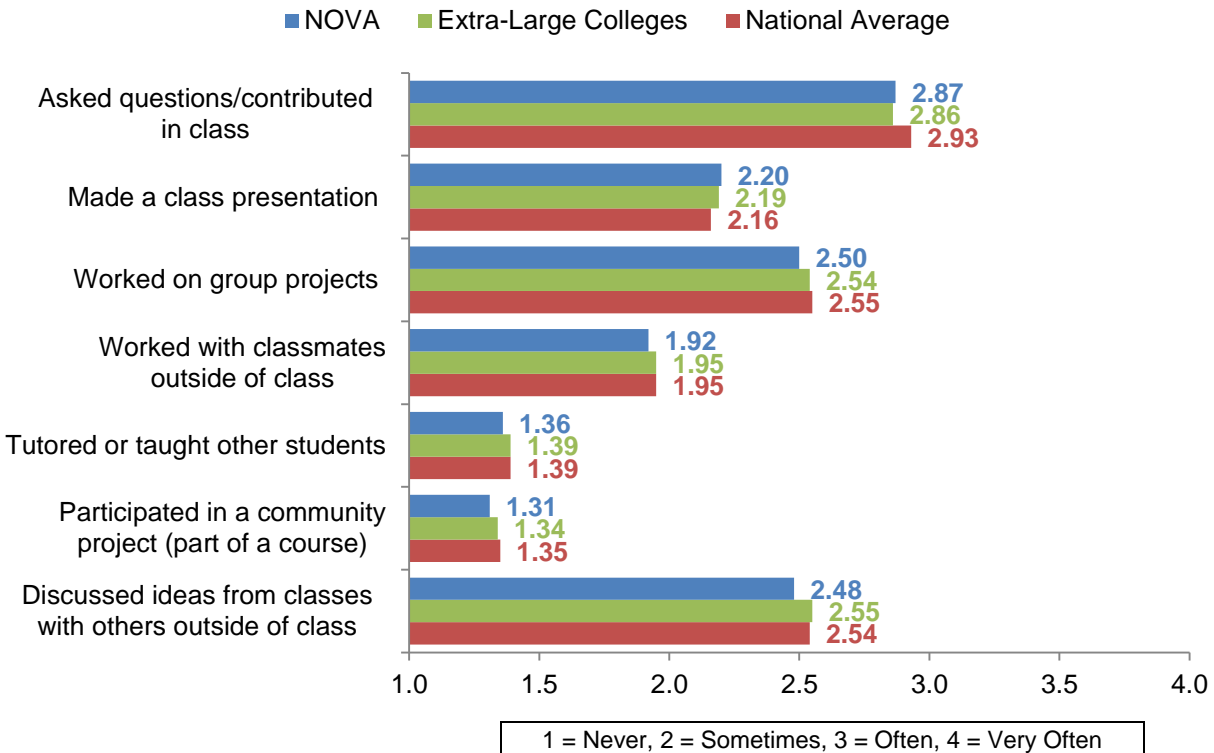
According to CCSSE, “Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaborating with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with real-life situations and problems.”¹

This benchmark is comprised of seven survey items. Survey items that contribute to the *Active and Collaborative Learning* benchmark address topics such as making class presentations and asking questions in class, working with other students on class projects, and participating in community-based projects. The maximum possible score for each of the items that comprise this benchmark is 4.

How did NOVA Score?

- There was no statistically significant difference between NOVA’s scores and those of other extra-large colleges or the national average for any of the items comprising this benchmark.
- Similar to the scores of extra-large colleges and the national average, NOVA’s lowest score (1.31) was on the item related to participating in community-based projects, while NOVA’s highest score (2.87) was on the item related to asking questions in class.

Figure 2. Active and Collaborative Learning: Means for Individual Benchmark Items



¹ Community College Survey of Student Engagement, “2015 Cohort Key Findings.” Available at: <http://ccsse.org/survey/survey.cfm>.

Benchmark 2. Student Effort

What is Student Effort?

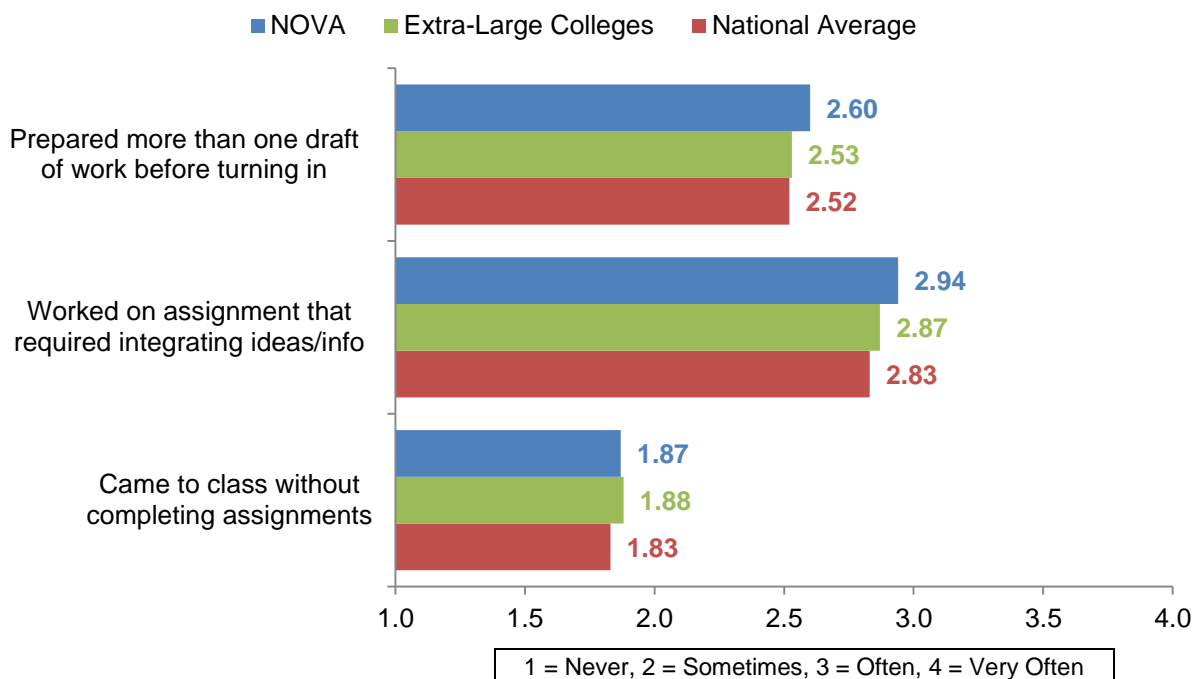
This benchmark is comprised of eight items, with varying scales and maximum scores ranging from 3 to 5. For this benchmark, CCSSE notes that, “Students’ own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and to the likelihood that they will successfully attain their educational goals.”²

Survey items that contribute to the *Student Effort* benchmark address topics such as preparing for class, preparing multiple drafts of a paper, and the frequency of use of tutoring or labs. In addition to course-related activities, this benchmark also encompasses co-curricular undertakings such as leisure reading or peer tutoring.

How did NOVA Score?

- For the individual items in this benchmark, none of the differences in scores were statistically significant.
- NOVA’s highest score (2.94) was for item 4d: “Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources,” while the lowest score (1.43) was for item 13.1d, related to the frequency of peer or other tutoring.

Figure 3. *Student Effort*: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 1)



² Ibid.

Figure 4. Student Effort: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 2)

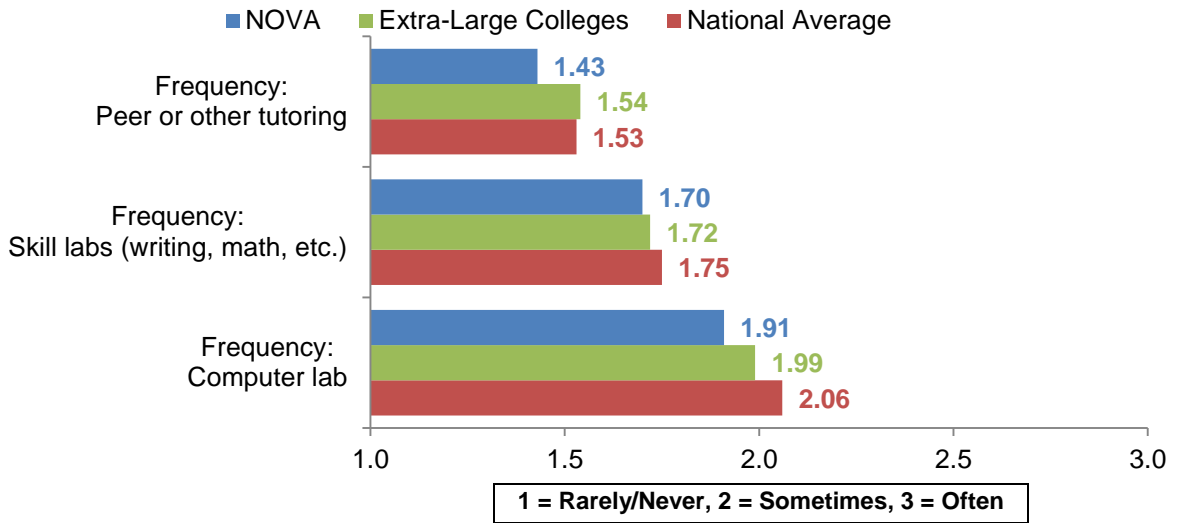


Figure 5. Student Effort: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 3)

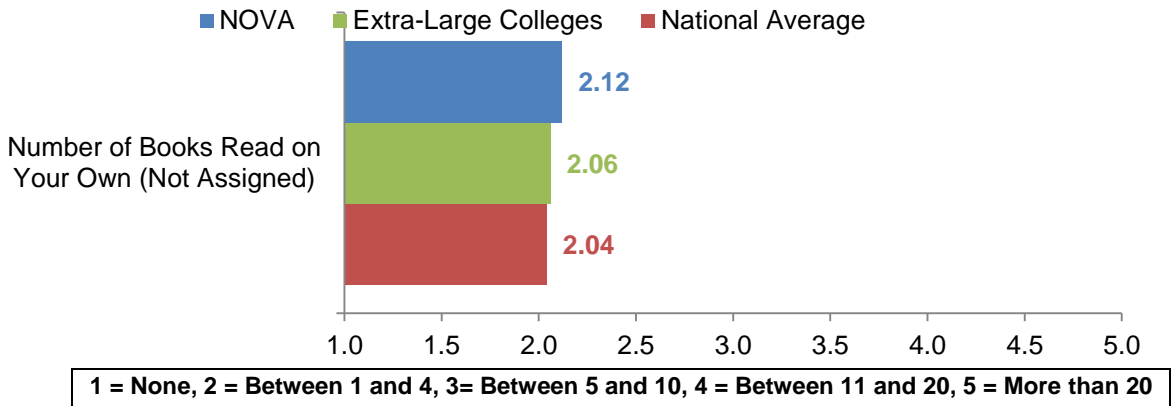
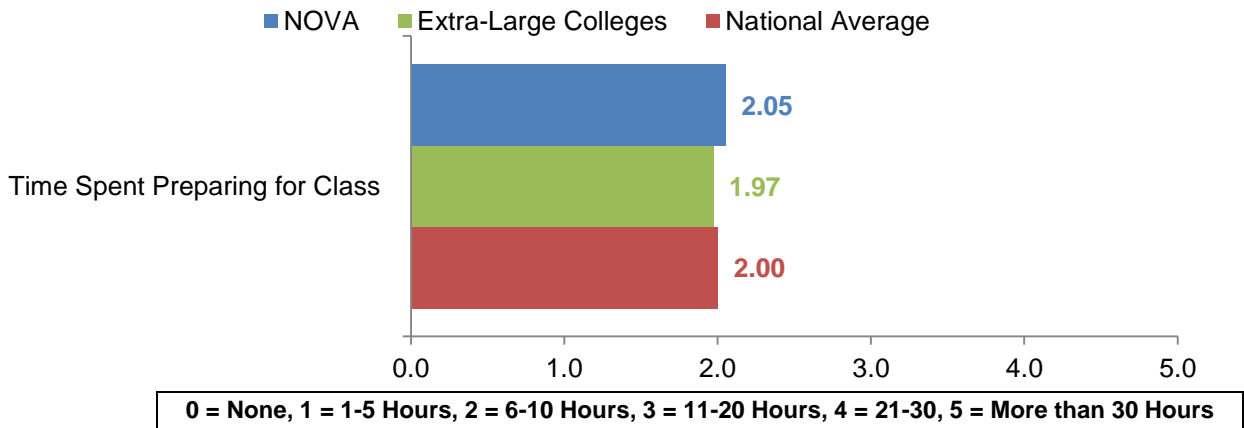


Figure 6. Student Effort: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 4)



Benchmark 3. Academic Challenge

What is Academic Challenge?

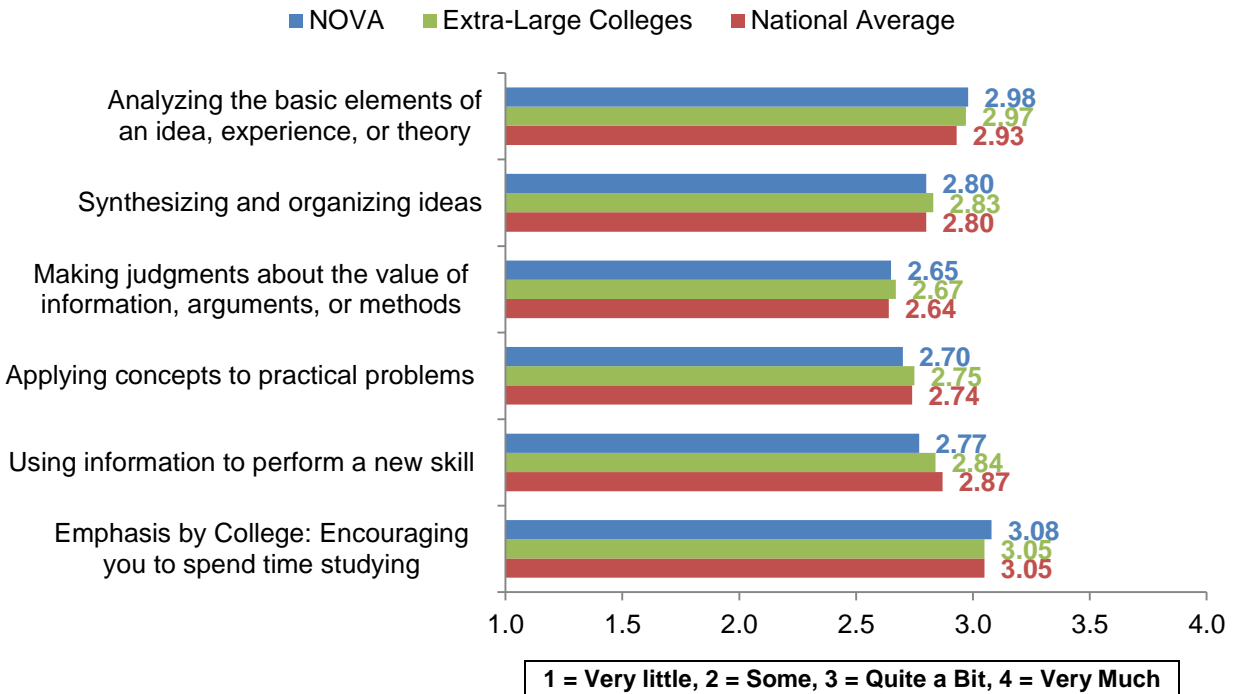
In describing the *Academic Challenge* benchmark, CCSSE notes that, “Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. These survey items address the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the rigor of examinations used to evaluate student performance.”³

The ten survey items that contribute to this benchmark address topics such as synthesizing and organizing ideas in new ways, applying theories or concepts to practical problems, and number of written papers or reports. The maximum possible score for each item ranges between 4 and 7.

How did NOVA Score?

- Among the items that comprise the benchmark *Academic Challenge*, none of the differences in scores between NOVA and extra-large colleges or the national average were statistically significant.
- Among items with a maximum score of 4, NOVA’s highest score (2.98) was for item 5b, “Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory,” suggesting that NOVA students felt they spent quite a bit of time on that activity relative to other aspects of learning.

Figure 7. Academic Challenge: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 1)



³ Ibid.

Figure 8. Academic Challenge: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 2)

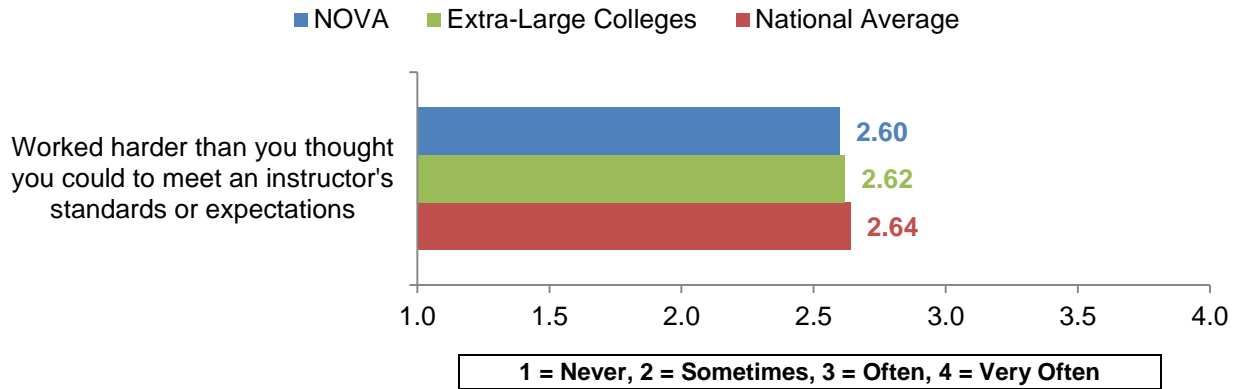


Figure 9. Academic Challenge: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 3)

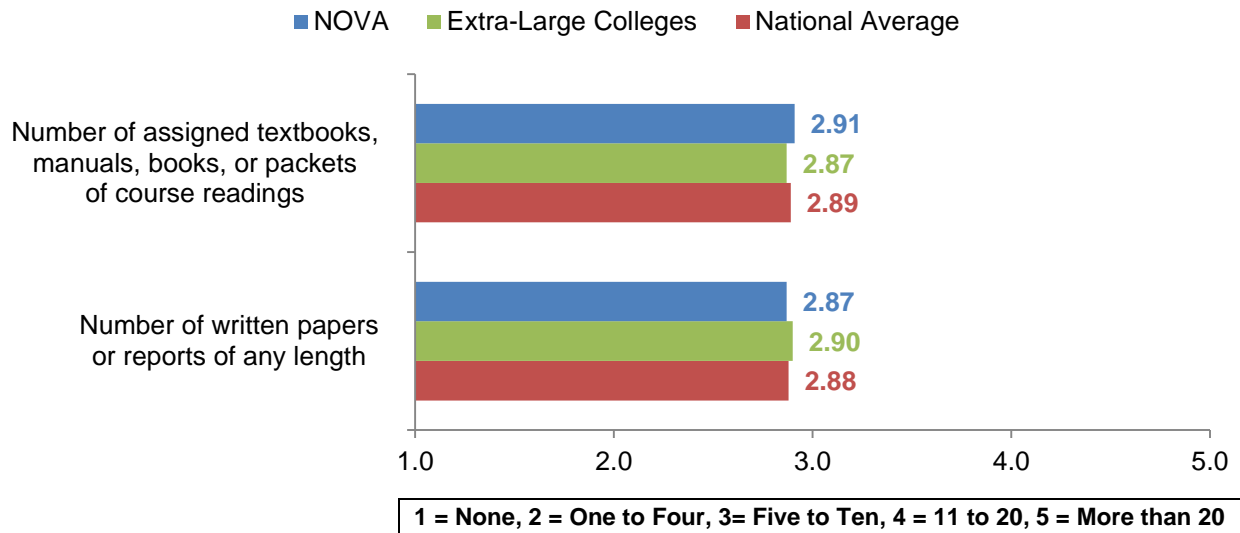
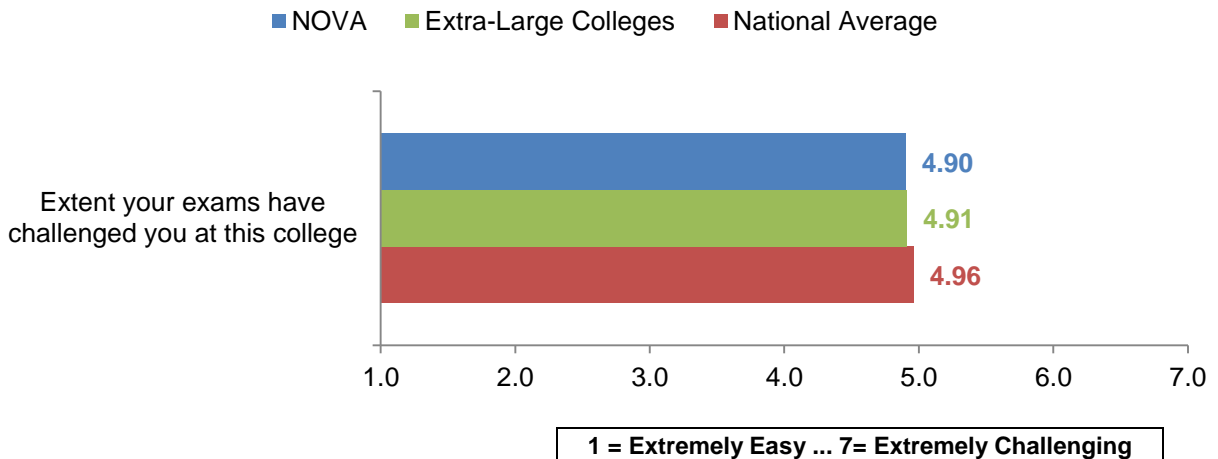


Figure 10. Academic Challenge: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 4)



Benchmark 4. *Student-Faculty Interaction*

What is Student-Faculty Interaction?

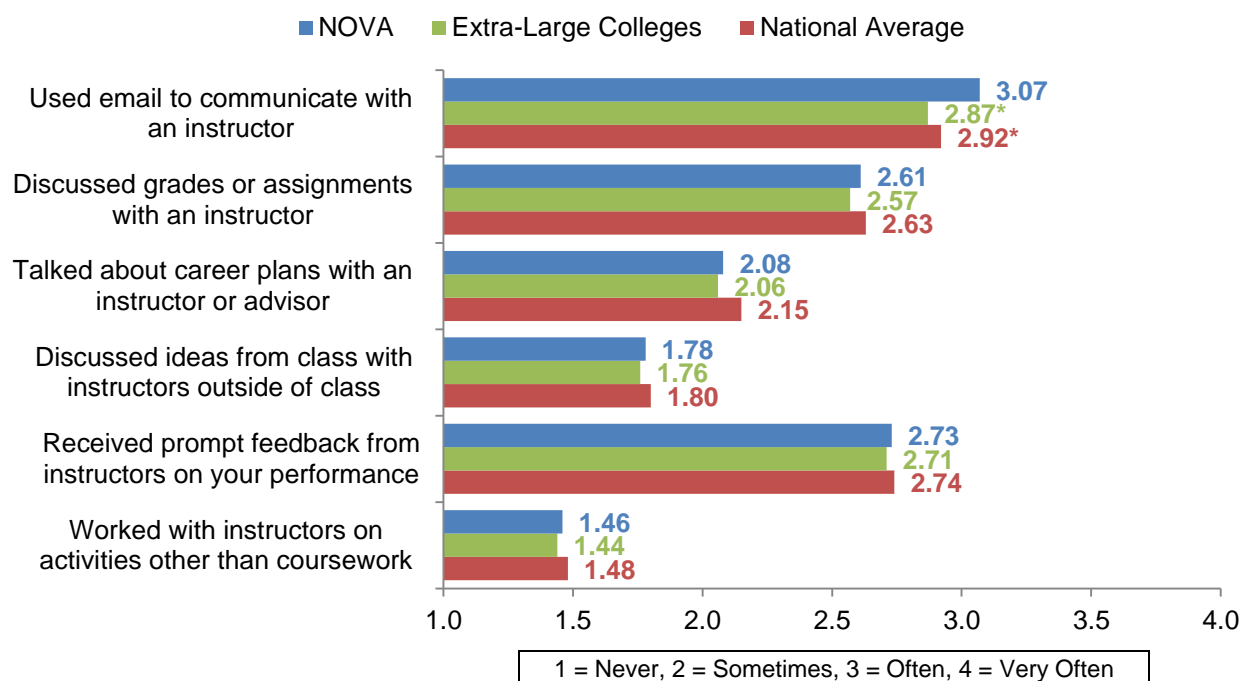
According to CCSSE, “In general, the more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.”⁴

Survey items that contribute to the *Student-Faculty Interaction* benchmark address topics such as using email to communicate with an instructor, talking about career plans with an instructor or advisor, and receiving prompt feedback from instructors on performance. The maximum possible score for each of the six items in this benchmark is 4.

How did NOVA Score?

- This benchmark includes the only item on the survey on which the difference in NOVA’s average score (3.07) and those of other extra-large colleges (2.87) and the national average (2.92) was statistically significant.
- This suggests that for this item – “Used email to communicate with an instructor” – NOVA students participated in this activity more frequently than students from other extra-large colleges or the national cohort.
- NOVA’s lowest score in this benchmark (1.46) was for the item related to working with instructors on activities other than coursework.

Figure 11. *Student-Faculty Interaction*: Means for Individual Benchmark Items



*These scores are statistically different from NOVA’s score on that particular item. That is, the difference observed is unlikely to be the result of chance variations.

⁴ Ibid.

Benchmark 5. Support for Learners

What is Support for Learners?

CCSSE notes that, “Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that provide important support services, cultivate positive relationships among groups on campus, and demonstrate commitment to their success.”⁵ The seven survey items that contribute to the *Support for Learners* benchmark have a maximum score of either 3 or 4 and address topics such as encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds, helping students cope with non-academic responsibilities, and providing the financial support students need.

How did NOVA Score?

- None of the differences in scores for the *Support for Learners* benchmark were statistically significant.
- However, among NOVA’s scores, the highest score for items with a maximum score of 4 was given to item 9b, “Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college,” and the lowest score was given to item 9d, “Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)”

Figure 12. *Support for Learners*: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 1)

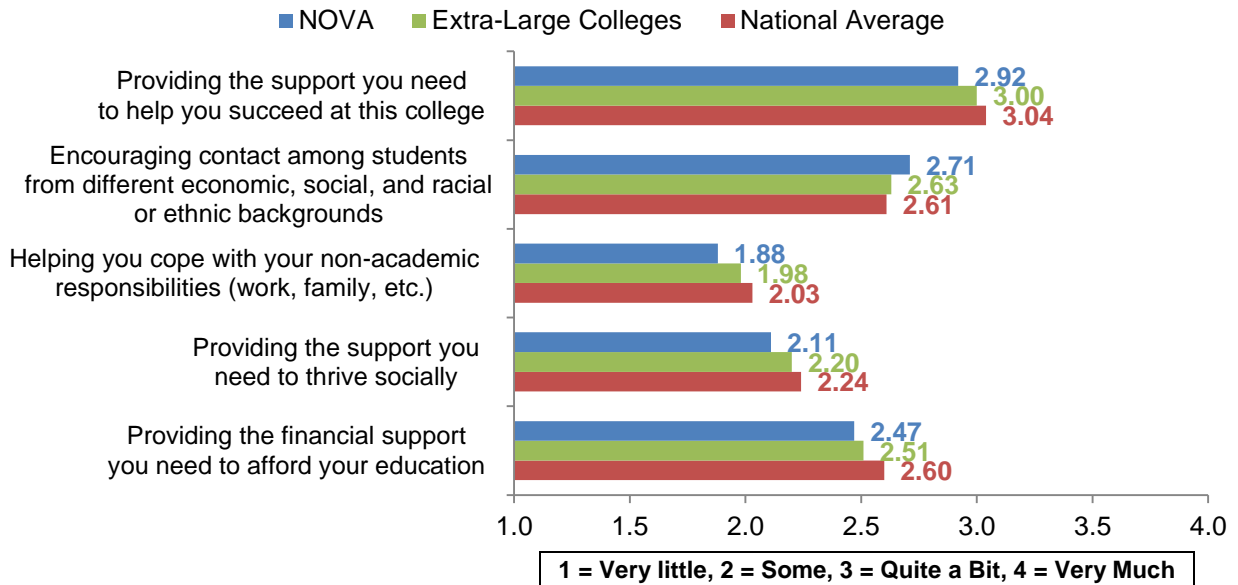
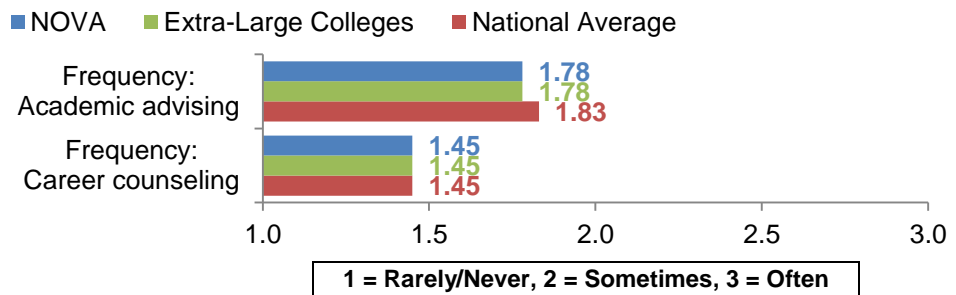


Figure 13. *Support for Learners*: Means for Individual Benchmark Items (Part 2)



⁵ Ibid.

APPENDIX: Data Tables – CCSSE 2015 Benchmark Comparison of NOVA with Peer Colleges and National Average

Table 2. Active and Collaborative Learning: Means for Individual Benchmark Items

Benchmark 1: Active and Collaborative Learning	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	National Average
1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often			
4a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	2.87	2.86	2.93
4b. Made a class presentation	2.20	2.19	2.16
4f. Worked with other students on projects during class	2.50	2.54	2.55
4g. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	1.92	1.95	1.95
4h. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	1.36	1.39	1.39
4i. Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	1.31	1.34	1.35
4r. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	2.48	2.55	2.54

Table 3. Student Effort: Means for Individual Benchmark Items

Benchmark 2: Student Effort	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	National Average
1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often			
4c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	2.60	2.53	2.52
4d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	2.94	2.87	2.83
4e. Came to class without completing readings or assignments	1.87	1.88	1.83
1 = None, 2 = Between 1 and 4, 3 = Between 5 and 10, 4 = Between 11 and 20, 5 = More than 20			
6b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	2.12	2.06	2.04
0 = None, 1 = 1-5 Hours, 2 = 6-10 Hours, 3 = 11-20 Hours, 5 = More than 30 Hours			
10a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to your program)	2.05	1.97	2.00
1 = Rarely/Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often			
13.1d. Frequency: Peer or other tutoring	1.43	1.54	1.53
13.1e. Frequency: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	1.70	1.72	1.75
13.1h. Frequency: Computer lab	1.91	1.99	2.06

Table 4. Academic Challenge: Means for Individual Benchmark Items

Benchmark 3: Academic Challenge	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	National Average
1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often			
4p. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	2.60	2.62	2.64
1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a Bit, 4 = Very Much			
5b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	2.98	2.97	2.93
5c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways	2.80	2.83	2.80
5d. Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	2.65	2.67	2.64
5e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	2.70	2.75	2.74
5f. Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill	2.77	2.84	2.87
1 = None, 2 = Between 1 and 4, 3= Between 5 and 10, 4 = Between 11 and 20, 5 = More than 20			
6a. Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packs of course readings	2.91	2.87	2.89
6c. Number of written papers or reports of any length	2.87	2.90	2.88
1 = Extremely Easy... 7= Extremely Challenging			
7. The extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college	4.90	4.91	4.96
1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a Bit, 4 = Very Much			
9a. Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying	3.08	3.05	3.05

Table 5. Student-Faculty Interaction: Means for Individual Benchmark Items

Benchmark 4: Student-Faculty Interaction	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	National Average
1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often			
4k. Used email to communicate with an instructor	3.07	2.87*	2.92*
4l. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	2.61	2.57	2.63
4m. Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor	2.08	2.06	2.15
4n. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	1.78	1.76	1.80
4o. Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance	2.73	2.71	2.74
4q. Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework	1.46	1.44	1.48

*These scores are statistically different from NOVA's score on that particular item. That is, the difference observed is unlikely to be the result of chance variations.

Table 6. Support for Learners: Means for Individual Benchmark Items

Benchmark 5: Support for Learners	NOVA	Extra-Large Colleges	National Average
1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a Bit, 4 = Very Much			
9b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	2.92	3.00	3.04
9c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	2.71	2.63	2.61
9d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	1.88	1.98	2.03
9e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially	2.11	2.20	2.24
9f. Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	2.47	2.51	2.60
1 = Rarely/Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often			
13.1a. Frequency: Academic advising/planning	1.78	1.78	1.83
13.1b. Frequency: Career counseling	1.45	1.45	1.45

NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals: 2005 – 2015

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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