# OIR

**Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives**

**NOVA**
Northern Virginia
Community College

# RESEARCH BRIEF

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## Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) 2015: Benchmark Scores by Academic Program

## Introduction

### What is CCSSE?
- ➢ 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:
  - o *Active and Collaborative Learning*
  - o *Student Effort*
  - o *Academic Challenge*
  - o *Student-Faculty Interaction*
  - o *Support for Learners*

### CCSSE 2015 at NOVA
- ➢ At NOVA, **1,588 students** participated in the CCSSE in Spring 2015.

## In This Research Brief

### Academic Programs (Majors) of NOVA Students
- ➢ This Research Brief disaggregates NOVA's benchmark scores by academic program, or major, based on students' selection from a list of CCSSE program codes (see Appendix A).
- ➢ Data are presented from the **1,497** NOVA students who identified their program or major on the survey. The data for the **91** students who did not indicate a major on the survey have been omitted.
- ➢ Programs with small sample sizes (10 or fewer respondents) are included in Appendix B but not analyzed, as the small sample size presents issues with reliability.

## Highlights

- Among academic programs with large sample sizes, the *Student-Faculty Interaction* benchmark tended to receive the highest scores for each program, while the *Support for Learners* benchmark was more likely to receive the lowest scores.
- High levels of student engagement were consistently reported by students in the **Allied Health**, **Architecture**, **Education**, **Engineering**, **Psychology**, **Science Technologies**, and **Visual and Performing Arts** programs.
  - In particular, the **Psychology** and **Education** programs received at or above-average scores for all five benchmarks.
- Respondents reported below-average levels of engagement on all five benchmarks for the following programs: **Business Management and Administrative Services**, **Liberal Arts and Sciences/General Studies and Humanities**, and **Technicians and Repairers**.
  - **Undecided** students' scores were also consistently among the lowest for each benchmark, suggesting that NOVA students who have not yet decided on a major are less engaged than many of their peers.

## 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 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.
- This standardization process was done by CCSSE.

# Overall Benchmark Scores

Among academic programs with large sample sizes (more than 10 respondents), the *Student-Faculty Interaction* benchmark tended to receive the highest scores for each program, while the *Support for Learners* benchmark was more likely to receive the lowest scores. The **Psychology** and **Education** programs consistently received at or above-average scores for all five benchmarks. Respondents in **Architecture and Related Programs** gave the highest scores for two of the benchmarks (*Academic Challenge* and *Support for Learners*) while **Law and Legal Studies** had the highest scores for two other benchmarks (*Active and Collaborative Learning* and *Student-Faculty Interaction*). For *Student Effort*, the **Engineering Technologies/ Technicians** program scored the highest. Figure 2 on the following page presents the seven programs that scored above average on four or more benchmarks.

In contrast, **Business Management and Administrative Services**, **Liberal Arts and Sciences/General Studies and Humanities**, **Technicians and Repairers**, and **Undecided** programs received below-average scores for all five benchmarks. **Technicians and Repairers** had the lowest scores on four of the benchmarks, with **Physical Sciences** scoring lowest on the remaining benchmark (*Support for Learners*). Figure 3 on the following page show the seven programs that scored below average on four or more benchmarks.

**Table 1. Overall Benchmark Scores for Academic Programs with Large Sample Sizes: Spring 2015**

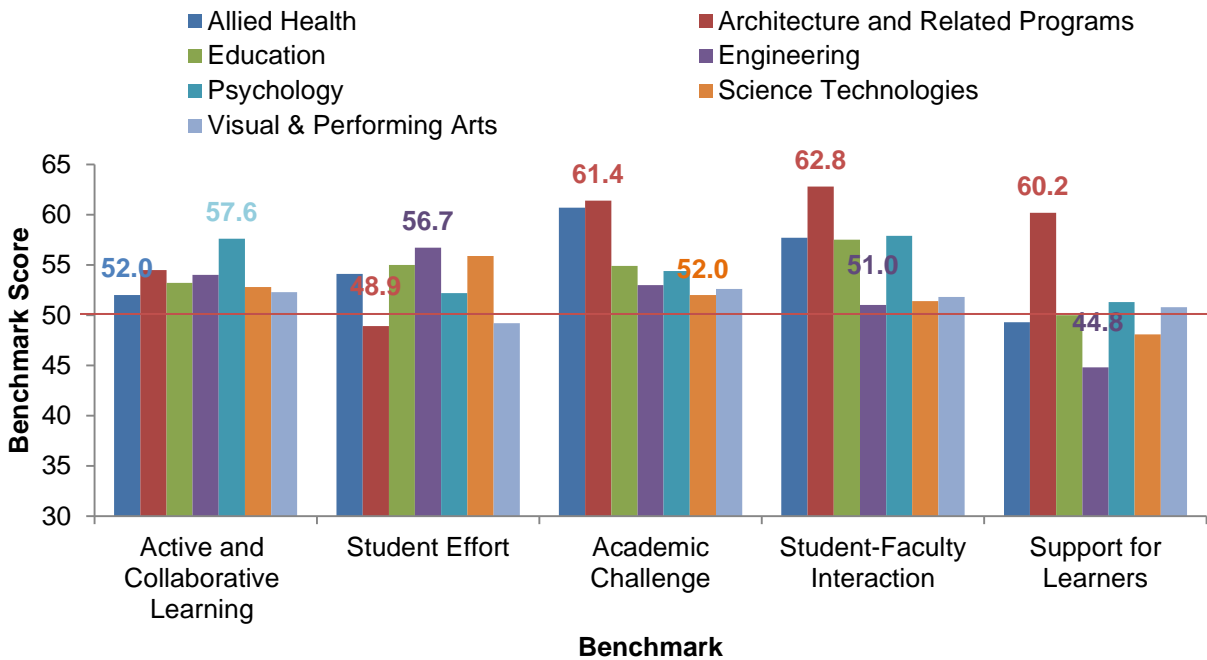| Academic Program[2] | N | Benchmark[1] | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Active and Collaborative Learning | Student Effort | Academic Challenge | Student-Faculty Interaction | Support for Learners |
| Allied Health Professions & Sciences | 203 | 52.0 | 54.1 | 60.7 | 57.7 | 49.3 |
| Architecture & Related Programs | 13 | 54.5 | 48.9 | **61.4** | 62.8 | **60.2** |
| Biological Sciences/Life Sciences | 94 | 48.0 | 50.8 | 52.1 | 51.1 | 49.2 |
| Business Management & Admin Services | 266 | 44.4 | 46.5 | 47.6 | 46.5 | 46.0 |
| Communications | 17 | 55.3 | 40.6 | 49.3 | 47.2 | 42.5 |
| Computer & Information Sciences | 128 | 46.1 | 49.7 | 46.2 | 50.1 | 49.2 |
| Education | 28 | 53.2 | 55.0 | 54.9 | 57.5 | 50.0 |
| Engineering Technologies/Technicians | 92 | 54.0 | **56.7** | 53.0 | 51.0 | 44.8 |
| Law & Legal Studies | 23 | **59.5** | 55.8 | 49.1 | **65.4** | 49.2 |
| Liberal Arts & Sciences/General Studies & Humanities | 109 | 43.6 | 46.4 | 44.8 | 47.1 | 41.1 |
| Physical Sciences | 33 | 49.0 | 49.4 | 45.1 | 50.9 | 37.9 |
| Protective Services | 12 | 47.8 | 45.3 | 60.6 | 63.1 | 54.7 |
| Psychology | 51 | 57.6 | 52.2 | 54.4 | 57.9 | 51.3 |
| Science Technologies | 18 | 52.8 | 55.9 | 52.0 | 51.4 | 48.1 |
| Social Sciences & History | 46 | 45.9 | 52.1 | 52.5 | 48.9 | 53.4 |
| Technicians & Repairers | 26 | 40.3 | 36.4 | 34.7 | 37.2 | 41.6 |
| Visual & Performing Arts | 43 | 52.3 | 49.2 | 52.6 | 51.8 | 50.8 |
| Undecided[3] | 56 | 42.4 | 41.3 | 41.6 | 42.9 | 43.4 |

Note: Table only includes academic programs with a sample size greater than 10 students. See Appendix B for academic programs with fewer than 10 respondents.

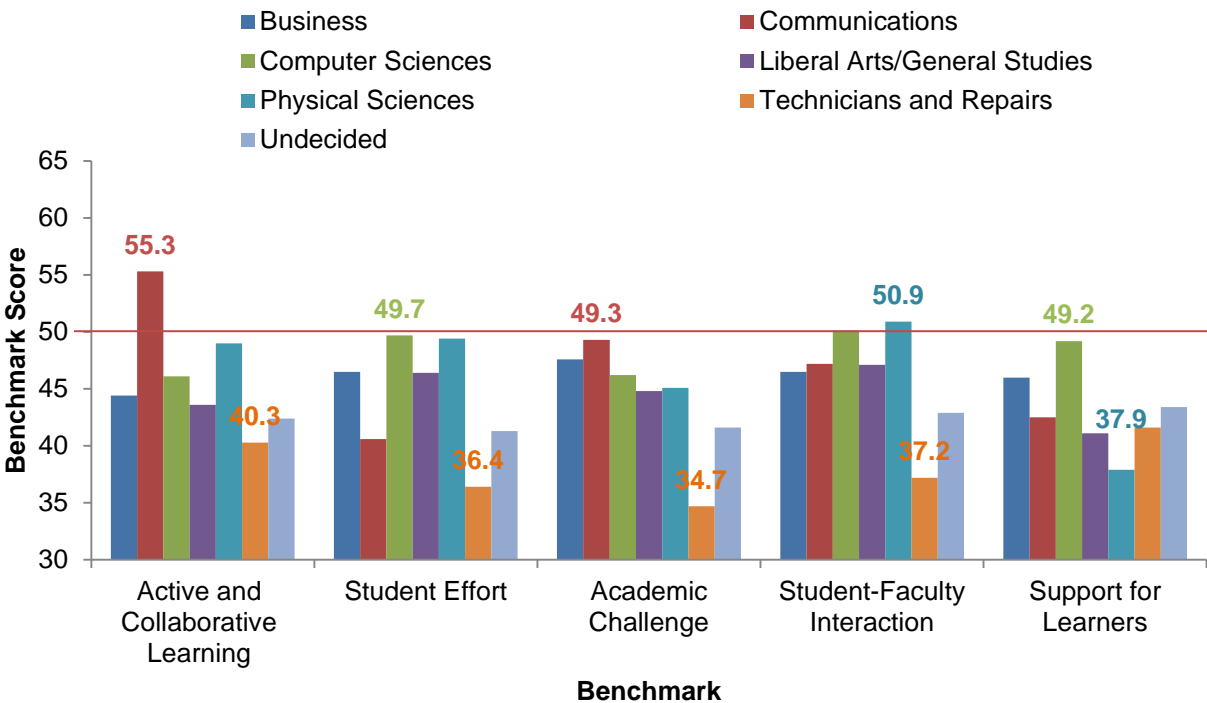[1] Scores that were above-average are shaded green, while the highest score for each benchmark is in bold.

[2] A total of 143 students chose the options of Not Applicable, Other, or University Transfer on the CCSSE Program Code list (Appendix A) or were in unknown programs. Because inferences regarding these categories would be weak due to various respondent interpretations, scores for these respondents were not included.

[3] Undecided students are those who have not decided on a major yet. These students may or may not be program placed.

**Figure 2. Programs that Scored Above Average on Four or More Benchmarks: Spring 2015**

Legend:
- Allied Health
- Architecture and Related Programs
- Education
- Engineering
- Psychology
- Science Technologies
- Visual & Performing Arts



**Figure 3. Programs that Scored Below Average on Four or More Benchmarks: Spring 2015**

Legend:
- Business
- Communications
- Computer Sciences
- Liberal Arts/General Studies
- Physical Sciences
- Technicians and Repairs
- Undecided



Note: In both of the above figures, the highest and lowest scores for each benchmark are provided.

# APPENDIX A: CCSSE Program Codes

Table 2 displays the list of CCSSE-identified academic programs and codes.[1] This list was provided to students completing the survey. Students filled in the code number that best fit the description of their program or major.

**Table 2. CCSSE's Academic Programs with Codes**

| Code | Academic Program |
|---|---|
| 1 | Agriculture |
| 2 | Allied Health Professions & Related Sciences (nursing, physical therapy, dental, EMT, veterinary, etc.) |
| 3 | Architecture & Related Programs (city/urban, community/regional planning, etc.) |
| 4 | Biological Sciences/Life Sciences (biology, biochemistry, botany, zoology, etc.) |
| 5 | Business Management & Administrative Services (accounting, business admin., marketing, management, real estate, etc.) |
| 6 | Communications (advertising, journalism, television/radio, etc.) |
| 7 | Computer & Information Sciences |
| 8 | Conservation & Renewable Natural Resources (fishing, forestry, wildlife, etc.) |
| 9 | Construction Trades (masonry, carpentry, plumbing & pipe fitters, etc.) |
| 10 | Education |
| 11 | Engineering Technologies/Technicians |
| 12 | English Language & Literature/Letters (composition, creative writing, etc.) |
| 13 | Foreign Languages & Literatures (French, Spanish, etc.) |
| 14 | History |
| 15 | Law & Legal Studies |
| 16 | Liberal Arts & Sciences, General Studies & Humanities |
| 17 | Mathematics |
| 18 | Technicians & Repairers (A/C, heating & refrigeration, auto body, electrical/electronic equipment, etc.) |
| 19 | Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies (international relations, ecology, environmental studies, etc.) |
| 20 | Parks, Recreation, Leisure & Fitness Studies |
| 21 | Personal & Miscellaneous Services (gaming & sports, cosmetic, culinary, etc.) |
| 22 | Physical Sciences (astronomy, chemistry, geology, physics, etc.) |
| 23 | Precision Production Trades (drafting, graphic, precious metal worker, etc.) |
| 24 | Protective Services (criminal justice & corrections, fire protection, etc.) |
| 25 | Psychology |
| 26 | Public Administration & Services (public policy, social work, etc.) |
| 27 | Science Technologies (biological technology, nuclear & industrial radiological technology, etc.) |
| 28 | Social Sciences & History (anthropology, archeology, economics, geography, history, political science, sociology, etc.) |
| 29 | Transportation & Materials Moving Workers (air, vehicle, & water workers, etc.) |
| 30 | Visual & Performing Arts (art, music, theater, dance, etc.) |
| 31 | Vocational Home Economics (child care/guidance worker & manager, clothing, apparel, & textile worker, housekeeping, etc.) |
| 32 | University transfer |
| 33 | Undecided |
| 34 | Other |
| 35 | Not applicable |

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[1] Although CCSSE's classification of programs differs somewhat from the programs offered at NOVA, the list encompasses most of NOVA's programs because some programs in CCSSE's list include several areas of study in one category. For example, CCSSE's 'Allied Health Professions' category includes nursing, physical therapy, dental, emergency medical technicians, veterinary, etc.

# APPENDIX B: Data Table for Smaller Programs

**Table 3. CCSSE Benchmark Scores for Academic Programs with Sample Sizes ≤ 10: Spring 2015**

| Academic Program | N | Benchmark | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Active and Collaborative Learning | Student Effort | Academic Challenge | Student-Faculty Interaction | Support for Learners |
| Agriculture | 1 | 93.4 | 29.1 | 33.1 | 80.3 | 73.4 |
| Conservation & Renewable Natural Resources | 4 | 42.0 | 48.1 | 69.1 | 48.3 | 59.6 |
| Construction Trades | 1 | 8.3 | 11.5 | 27.0 | 16.3 | 5.0 |
| English Language and Literature/Letters | 5 | 61.6 | 52.3 | 47.8 | 52.3 | 47.2 |
| Foreign Languages and Literatures | 3 | 48.6 | 49.7 | 52.2 | 43.9 | 34.5 |
| History | 5 | 67.9 | 44.6 | 65.8 | 54.7 | 71.6 |
| Mathematics | 8 | 54.2 | 44.8 | 36.8 | 39.5 | 25.2 |
| Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies | 2 | 33.1 | 54.7 | 50.8 | 48.3 | 28.2 |
| Parks, Recreation, Leisure & Fitness Studies | 2 | 54.4 | 41.4 | 45.3 | 41.2 | 49.6 |
| Personal & Miscellaneous Services | 3 | 89.7 | 62.2 | 42.0 | 83.3 | 57.3 |
| Public Administration & Services | 5 | 43.8 | 32.6 | 47.7 | 50.4 | 38.9 |
| Transportation & Materials Moving Workers | 3 | 41.5 | 49.1 | 30.4 | 47.0 | 38.7 |
| Vocational Home Economics | 1 | 8.3 | 30.4 | 17.3 | 30.5 | 84.4 |