

# Campus Environment

## 2015 National Survey of Student Engagement

In spring 2015, we asked first-year and senior students at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) to participate in the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE). The survey was administered by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research in conjunction with CWRU's Office of Planning and Institutional Research. It is a follow-up to the NSSE which was administered to first-year students and seniors in spring 2012. Of 1,269<sup>1</sup> potential first-year participants, 26% (n=329)<sup>2</sup> submitted responses. Of 840<sup>3</sup> potential senior year participants, 28% (n=232)<sup>4</sup> submitted responses. Their results are compared to students from a comparison group of universities<sup>5</sup>. This report provides information about students' perceptions of support on campus and the quality of their interactions with students, faculty, and staff.



### Engagement Indicators

The NSSE comprises ten Engagement Indicators (EI's). These EI's are summary measures based on sets of NSSE questions examining key dimensions of student engagement. As summary measures, the EI's are scored. Each EI is scored on a 60-point scale. To produce an EI score, the response set for each item is converted to a 60-point scale (e.g., Never = 0; Sometimes = 20; Often = 40; Very often = 60) and the rescaled items are averaged. Thus, a score of zero means that a student responded at the bottom of the scale for every item in the EI, while a score of 60 indicates responses at the top of the scale of every item.

The EI's are organized within four broad themes: Academic Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, and Campus Environment. The *Campus Environment* theme, the focus of this report, comprises two EI's: Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment. Each of these EI's, in turn, comprises five to eight items on the survey instrument. The full distribution for EI's and individual items is available on the IR website at: <http://www.case.edu/ir/reportssurveyresults/>. All significant differences

<sup>1</sup> First-year population n=1,269: Women=575 (45%), Men=694 (55%); Caucasian=628 (50%), Asian=268 (21%), Black=62 (5%), Hispanic=81 (6%), Multiracial=64 (5%), Unknown=20 (2%), International=146 (12%)

<sup>2</sup> Sample n=329: Women=176 (53%), Men=153 (47%); Caucasian=168 (51%), Asian=65 (20%), Black=14 (4%), Hispanic=19 (6%), Multiracial=16 (5%), Unknown=3 (1%), International=44 (13%)

<sup>3</sup> Senior year population n=840: Women=383 (46%), Men=440 (52%); Caucasian=460 (55%), Asian=158 (19%), Black=21 (3%), Hispanic=30 (4%), Multiracial=26 (3%), Unknown=72 (9%), International=55 (7%)

<sup>4</sup> Sample n=232: Women=106 (46%), Men=118 (51%); Caucasian=136 (59%), Asian=36 (16%), Black=3 (1%), Hispanic=6 (3%), Multiracial=10 (4%), Unknown=18 (8%), International=15 (7%)

<sup>5</sup> Association of American Universities (AAU) comparison group: Boston University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Indiana University Bloomington, Rutgers University-New Brunswick/Piscataway, Stony Brook University, University at Buffalo-State University of New York, University of Arizona, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Maryland, University of Missouri-Columbia, University of Oregon, University of Wisconsin-Madison

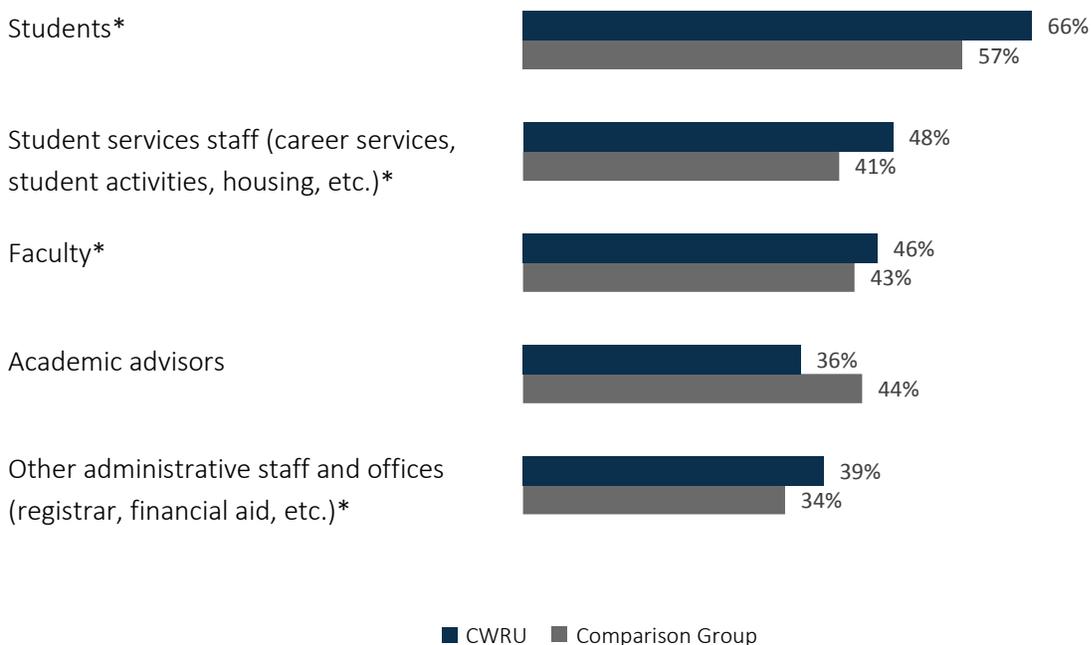
also include a measure of effect size, Cohen’s *d*. Effect size allows us to estimate the size of the differences between two means and indicates the practical importance of an observed difference<sup>6</sup>.

## First-Year Students

### Quality of Interactions - First-Years

The *Quality of Interactions* EI is a measure of students’ perceptions of their interactions with students, faculty, and staff. CWRU first-year students perceived the quality of their interactions as slightly higher than those in the comparison group; ( $M=42, SD=10.0$ ) vs. ( $M=41, SD=11.7$ );  $d=0.15, p<.01$ . Following is a breakdown of the individual items and CWRU’s percentages relative to the comparison group. The percentages represent the frequency with which students indicated a 6 or 7 on a scale from 1 = “Poor” to 7 = “Excellent”.

### Quality of Interactions (First-Years)



\*Slight differences: students ( $d=0.14$ ), student services staff ( $d=0.16$ ), faculty ( $d=0.17$ ), other staff and offices ( $d=0.17$ )

Of the five items in the Quality of Interactions EI, the following four contributed towards meaningful differences:

- Students: 66% vs. 57%; ( $M=5.72, SD=1.17$ ) vs. ( $M=5.54, SD=1.30$ );  $d=0.14, p<.05$

<sup>6</sup> The effect size is the size of the difference between two means. Cohen’s *d* values were interpreted according to the criteria used by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research: small  $\sim .1$ , medium  $\sim .3$ , large  $\sim .5$ , very large  $\sim .7$ . These benchmark criteria were applied unilaterally to both Engagement Indicators and individual items for simplicity.

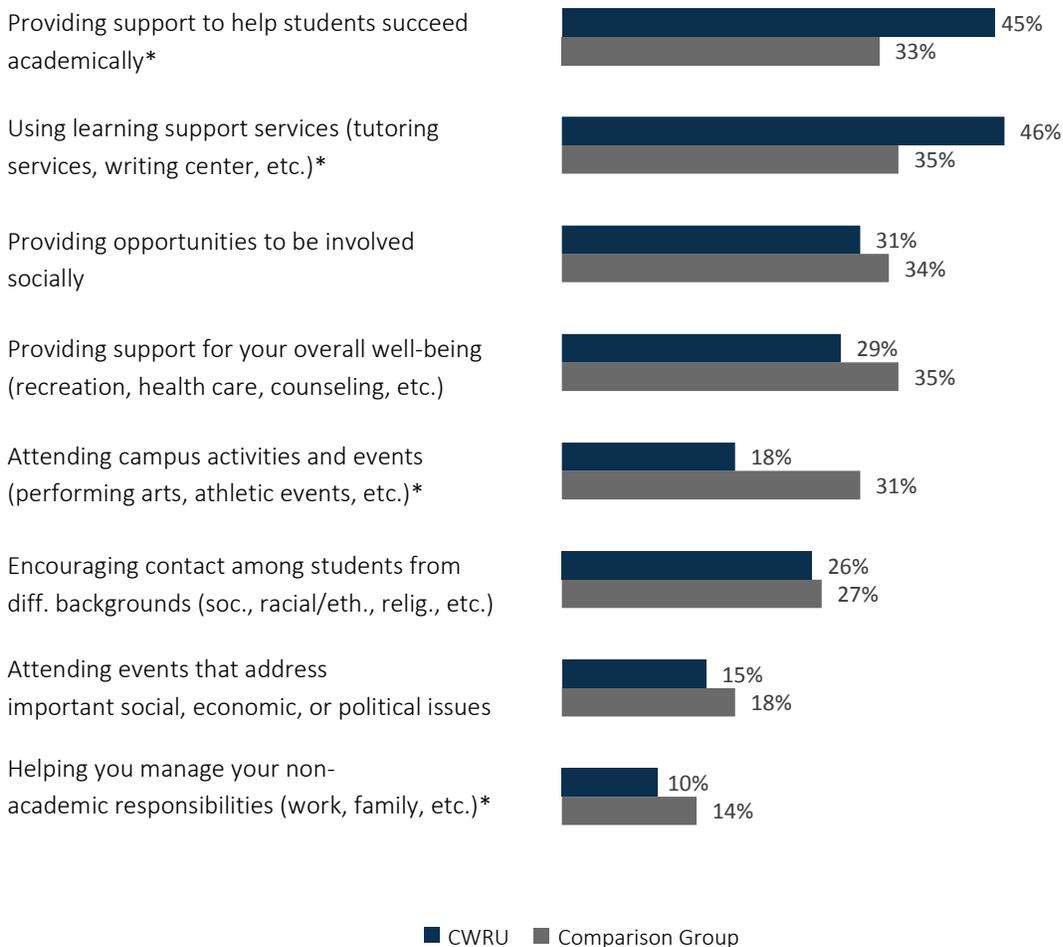
- Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.): 48% vs. 41%; ( $M=5.19$ ,  $SD=1.40$ ) vs. ( $M=4.94$ ,  $SD=1.56$ );  $d=0.16$ ,  $p<.05$
- Faculty: 46% vs. 43%; ( $M=5.34$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ) vs. ( $M=5.09$ ,  $SD=1.40$ );  $d=0.17$ ,  $p<.01$
- Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.): 39% vs. 34%; ( $M=4.95$ ,  $SD=1.50$ ) vs. ( $M=4.68$ ,  $SD=1.63$ );  $d=0.17$ ,  $p<.01$

### Supportive Environment - First-Years

The *Supportive Environment* EI is a measure of students' perceptions of how much an institution emphasizes services and activities that support their learning and development. There was no meaningful difference between CWRU and the comparison group; ( $M=37$ ,  $SD=11.9$ ) vs. ( $M=37$ ,  $SD=13.0$ ). Following is a breakdown of the individual items and CWRU's percentages relative to the comparison group. The percentages represent the frequency with which students responded "very much".

### Supportive Environment (First-Years)

My institution emphasizes:



\*Slight differences: learning support ( $d=0.19$ ), management of non-academic responsibilities ( $d=-0.16$ ); Moderate differences: support to help students succeed academically ( $d=0.32$ ), campus activities/events ( $d=-0.39$ )

While there was no meaningful difference between CWRU and the comparison group in supportive environment, CWRU students gave affirmative responses more often on two of the eight individuals items, as detailed below. The effect sizes were slight to moderate.

- Providing support to help students succeed academically: 45% vs. 33%; ( $M=3.32, SD=0.71$ ) vs. ( $M=3.06, SD=0.81$ );  $d=0.32, p<.001$
- Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.): 46% vs. 35%; ( $M=3.23, SD=0.83$ ) vs. ( $M=3.07, SD=0.85$ );  $d=0.19, p<.01$

Also, CWRU students gave affirmative responses less often on two items, as detailed below. The effect sizes were slight to moderate.

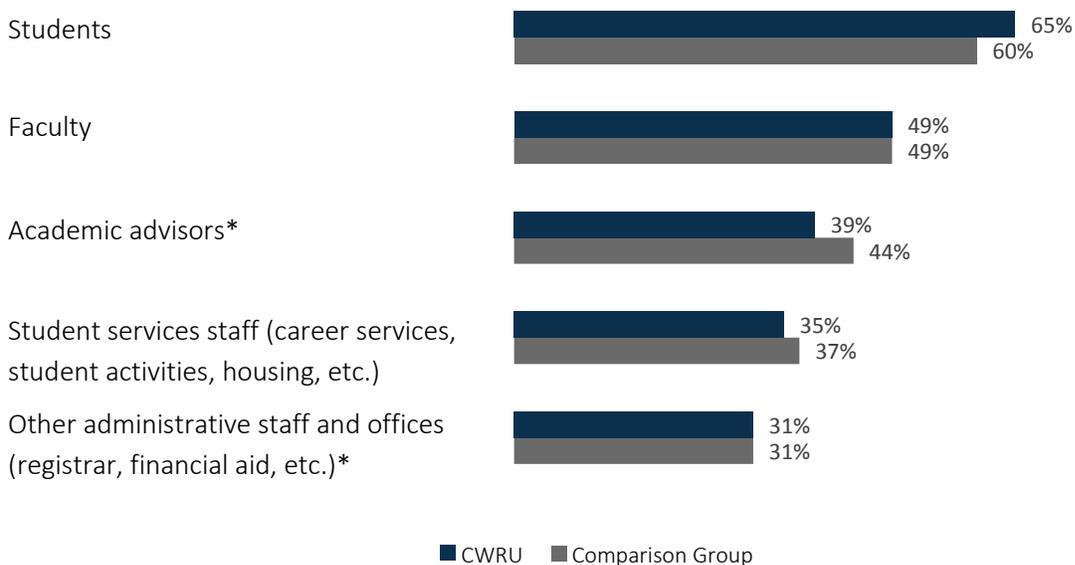
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.): 18% vs. 31%; ( $M=2.65, SD=0.88$ ) vs. ( $M=2.98, SD=0.85$ );  $d=-0.39, p<.001$
- Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.): 10% vs. 14%; ( $M=2.22, SD=0.88$ ) vs. ( $M=2.37, SD=0.96$ );  $d=-0.16, p<.01$

## Seniors

### Quality of Interactions - Seniors

Unlike the case with first-year students, there was no meaningful difference between CWRU senior students and those in the comparison group on the Quality of Interactions EI; ( $M=41, SD=10.8$ ) vs. ( $M=40, SD=11.3$ ). Following is a breakdown of the individual items and CWRU's percentages relative to the comparison institutions. The percentages represent the frequency with which students indicated a 6 or 7 on a scale from 1 = "Poor" to 7 = "Excellent".

### Quality of Interactions (Seniors)



\*Slight differences: other staff and offices ( $d=0.13$ ), academic advisors ( $d=-0.11$ )

Though there was no meaningful difference between CWRU and the comparison group on quality of interactions, CWRU students indicated slightly more positive interactions from:

- Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.): 31% vs. 31%; ( $M=4.76$ ,  $SD=1.53$ ) vs. ( $M=4.54$ ,  $SD=1.67$ );  $d=0.13$

Also, CWRU students indicated positive interactions slightly less often from:

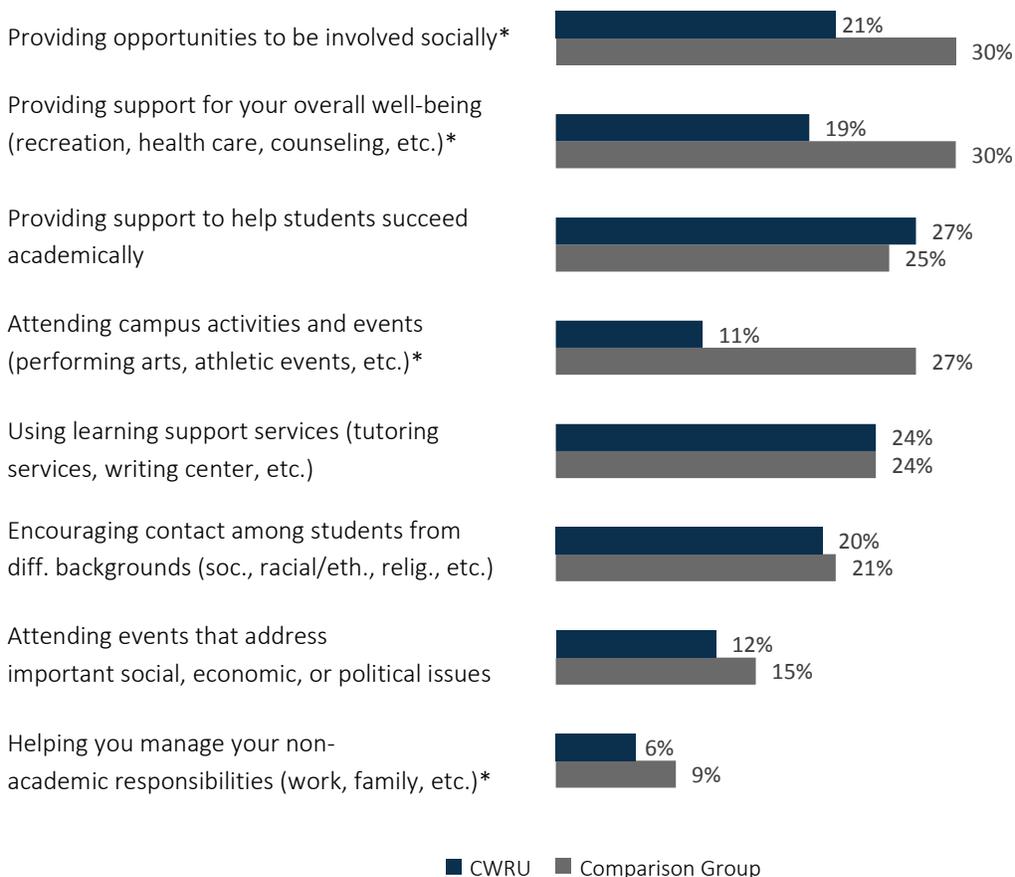
- Academic advisors: 39% vs. 44%; ( $M=4.71$ ,  $SD=1.81$ ) vs. ( $M=4.92$ ,  $SD=1.77$ );  $d=-0.11$

### Supportive Environment - Seniors

Unlike the case with first-year students, CWRU senior students perceived their environment as slightly less supportive than those in the comparison group on the Supportive Environment EI; ( $M=31$ ,  $SD=13.2$ ) vs. ( $M=34$ ,  $SD=13.4$ );  $d=-0.21$ ,  $p<.01$ . Following is a breakdown of the individual items and CWRU’s scores relative to the comparison group. The percentages represent the frequency with which students indicated “very much”.

### Supportive Environment

My institution emphasizes:



\*Slight differences: providing social opportunities ( $d=-0.13$ ), management of non-academic responsibilities ( $d=-0.19$ ); Moderate difference: support for well-being ( $d=-0.32$ ); Large difference: attending campus activities/events ( $d=-0.50$ )

While CWRU students perceived their environment as less supportive than those in the comparison group, four individual items are of particular note for meaningful differences, as detailed below.

- Providing opportunities to be involved socially; 21% vs. 30%; ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=0.84$ ) vs. ( $M=2.93$ ,  $SD=0.88$ );  $d=-0.13$
- Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.); 19% vs. 30%; ( $M=2.64$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ) vs. ( $M=2.92$ ,  $SD=0.90$ );  $d=-0.32$ ,  $p<.001$
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.); 11% vs. 27%; ( $M=2.41$ ,  $SD=0.90$ ) vs. ( $M=2.86$ ,  $SD=0.90$ );  $d=-0.50$ ,  $p<.001$
- Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.); 6% vs. 9%; ( $M=1.89$ ,  $SD=0.90$ ) vs. ( $M=2.07$ ,  $SD=0.95$ );  $d=-0.19$ ,  $p<.05$

*Prepared by Johnny Sams [jas32@cwru.edu](mailto:jas32@cwru.edu) 216.368.6119*

*<http://www.case.edu/ir/>*