

Experiences with Faculty

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 1,269¹ potential first-year participants, 26% (n=329)² submitted responses. Of 840³ potential senior year participants, 28% (n=232)⁴ submitted responses. Their results are compared to students from a comparison group of universities⁵. This report provides information about students' experiences interacting with faculty.



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 *Experiences with Faculty* theme, the focus of this report, comprises two EI's: Student-Faculty Interaction and Effective Teaching Practices. Each of these EI's, in turn, comprises four to five 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

¹ 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%)

² 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%)

³ 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%)

⁴ 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%)

⁵ 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

differences 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 difference⁶.

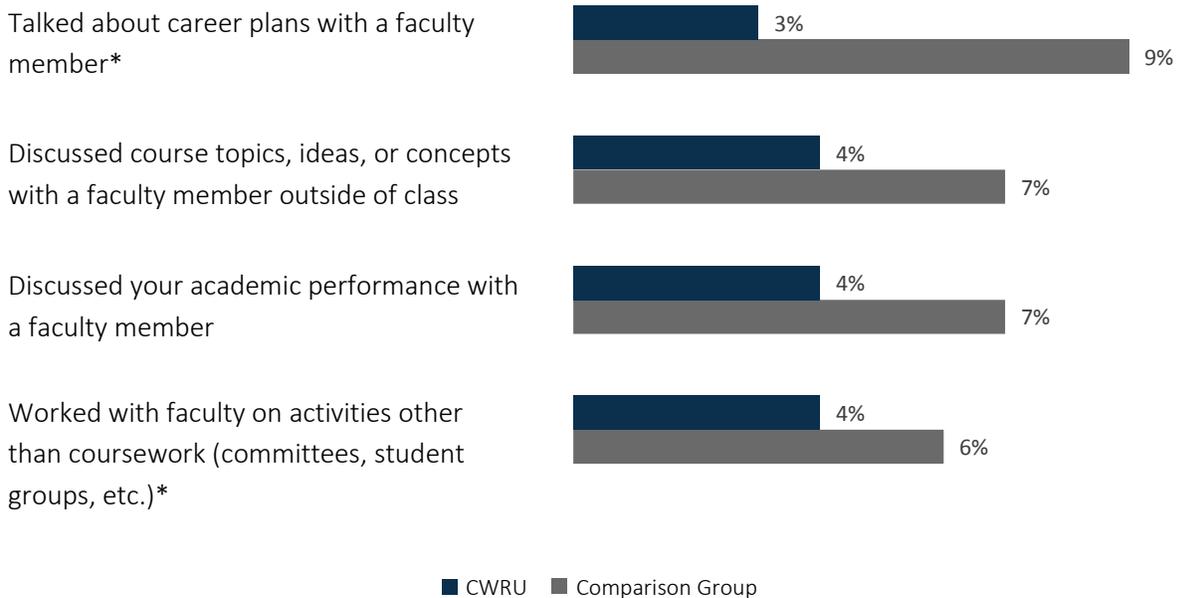
First-Year Students

Student-Faculty Interaction - First-Years

The *Student-Faculty Interaction* EI is a measure of students’ interactions with faculty inside and outside the classroom. CWRU first-year students indicated student-faculty interaction slightly lower than those in the comparison group; ($M=18, SD=11.5$) vs. ($M=19, SD=14.4$); $d=-0.13, p<.01$. Following is a breakdown of the individual items and CWRU’s responses relative to the comparison group. The percentages represent the frequency with which students indicated “very often”.

Student-Faculty Interaction (First-Years)

Very often:



*Slight differences: talked about career plans ($d=-0.16$), activities other than coursework ($d=-0.10$)

While CWRU students perceived student-faculty interaction as slightly lower, only two of the four items indicated a slight difference:

⁶ 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.

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member: 3% vs. 9%; ($M=2.00$, $SD=0.70$) vs. ($M=2.14$, $SD=0.88$); $d=-0.16$, $p<.01$
- Worked with faculty on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.): 4% vs. 6%; ($M=1.65$, $SD=0.82$) vs. ($M=1.74$, $SD=0.90$); $d=-0.10$

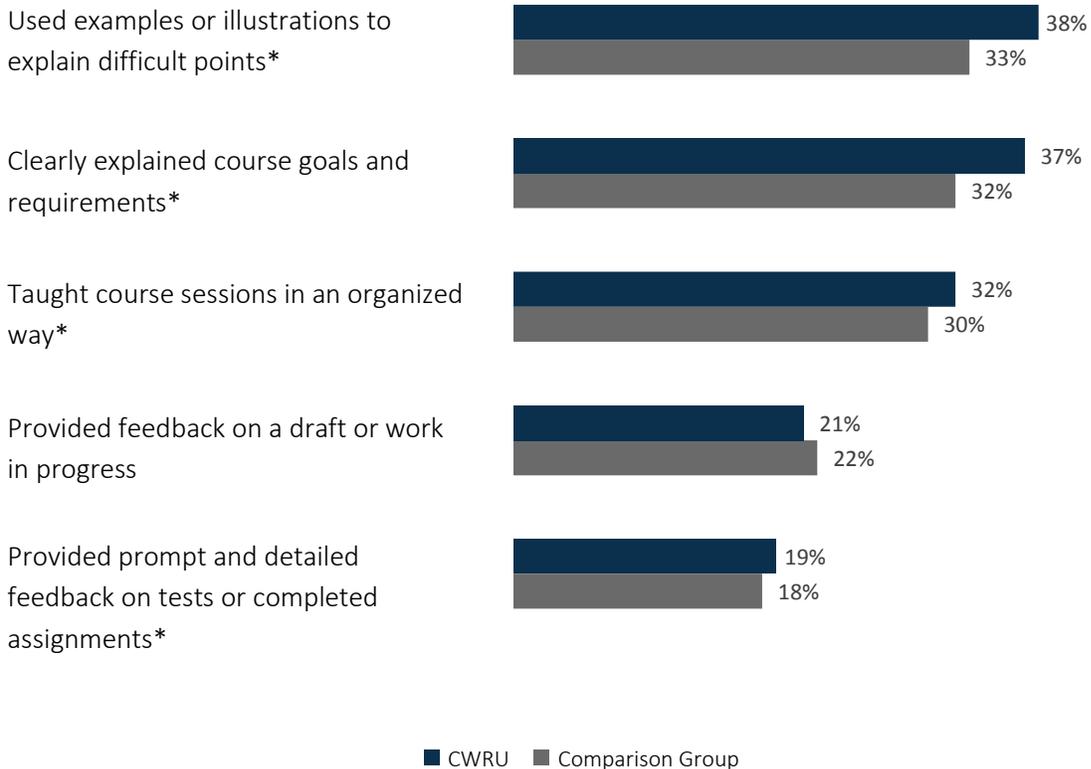
Effective Teaching Practices - First-Years

The *Effective Teaching Practices* EI is a measure of the extent to which instructors engage in teaching practices that promote student comprehension and learning. CWRU first-year students indicated effective teaching practices as slightly better than the comparison group; ($M=40$, $SD=10.7$) vs. ($M=38$, $SD=12.4$); $d=0.16$, $p<.01$.

Following is a breakdown of the individual items and CWRU’s responses relative to the comparison group. The percentages represent the frequency with which students indicated “very much”.

Effective Teaching Practices (First-Year)

My instructors:



*Slight differences: examples or illustrations ($d=0.17$), explained course goals ($d=0.10$), organized teaching style ($d=0.15$), prompt and detailed feedback ($d=0.14$)

Following are details of the items for which there was at least a slight difference:

- Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points: 38% vs. 33%; ($M=3.21, SD=0.73$) vs. ($M=3.08, SD=0.79$); $d=0.17, p<.01$
- Clearly explained course goals and requirements: 37% vs. 32%; ($M=3.17, SD=0.75$) vs. ($M=3.10, SD=0.76$); $d=0.10$
- Taught course sessions in an organized way: 32% vs. 30%; ($M=3.18, SD=0.65$) vs. ($M=3.07, SD=0.76$); $d=0.15, p<.05$
- Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments: 19% vs. 18%; ($M=2.76, SD=0.82$) vs. ($M=2.63, SD=0.89$); $d=0.14, p<.05$

Seniors

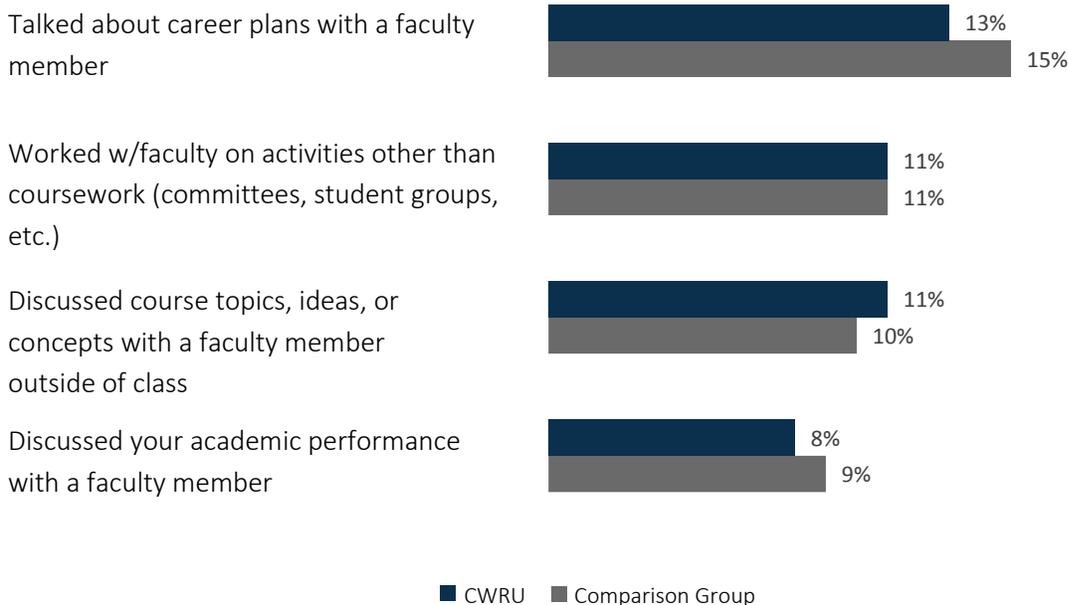
Student-Faculty Interaction - Seniors

Unlike the case with first-year students, there was no meaningful difference between CWRU seniors and students in the comparison group on the Student-Faculty Interaction EI; ($M=24, SD=13.9$) vs. ($M=23, SD=15.5$).

Following is a breakdown of the individual items and CWRU's responses relative to the comparison institutions. The percentages represent the frequency with which students responded "very often".

Student-Faculty Interaction (Seniors)

Very often:



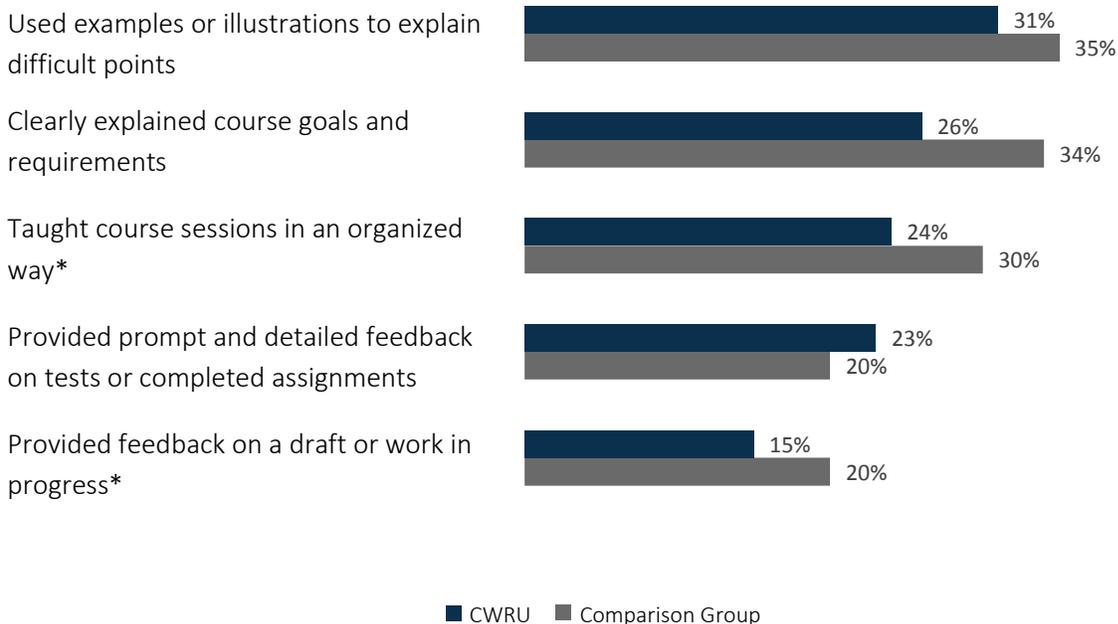
Effective Teaching Practices - Seniors

Again, unlike the case with first-year students, there was no meaningful difference between CWRU seniors and the comparison group on the Effective Teaching Practices EI; ($M=37, SD=12.3$) vs. ($M=38, SD=12.8$).

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".

Effective Teaching Practices (Seniors)

My instructors:



*Slight differences: organized teaching style ($d=-0.10$), provided feedback on a draft or work in progress ($d=-0.11$)

Though there was no meaningful difference between CWRU and the comparison group, two items indicated slight differences, as detailed below.

- Taught course sessions in an organized way; 24% vs. 30%; ($M=3.01, SD=0.72$) vs. ($M=3.08, SD=0.75$); $d=-0.10$
- Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress; 15% vs. 20%; ($M=2.46, SD=0.93$) vs. ($M=2.57, SD=0.96$); $d=-0.11$

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