



Following up the 2006 Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) with student responses to the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE or “nessie”) was given to students during the spring of their first year at Case. This instrument assesses students’ engagement both in and outside of the classroom. Because BCSSE and NSSE are companion instruments, responses on the NSSE survey can be compared to those on the BCSSE, which was given during first-year orientation. At Case, 294 students took both surveys in academic year 2006-2007, allowing us to examine how students’ high school experiences and expectations for college affected first-year outcomes.

The Importance of Involvement in Extracurricular Activities

- Results of a predictive analysis revealed that the more extracurricular activities students reported being very involved in during high school, the more likely they were to ask questions in class, talk with faculty about career plans, discuss ideas from classes with faculty members outside of class, and work with faculty members outside of class on activities other than coursework. Additionally, the more extracurricular activities students reported being very involved in during high school, the higher the quality of their relationships with other students.
- Although high school grades are also related to these aspects of student engagement, when examined simultaneously with involvement in extracurricular activities during high school, a student’s involvement was more important in predicting outcomes than were high school grades.
- High school grades were highly predictive of first semester grades, however, whereas participation in extracurricular activities during high school was unrelated.

Students’ Concerns About the Transition to College

- Incoming first-years were most concerned about their ability to manage their time and their ability to keep up with schoolwork. Neither of these concerns were related to first semester grades, nor were they related to the amount of time spent preparing for class.
- Our analysis did, however, reveal one finding of concern: the more worried incoming first-years were with their ability to make friends, the less likely they were to report having high quality relationships with their peers.

Time Management

- Incoming first-years thought they would be spending 21-25 hours per 7-day week preparing for class; however, after one semester at Case, students reported that they spent 16-20 hours preparing for class.
- The vast majority of incoming students (97%) believed that coming to class prepared would be important for them while in college. By the time they took the NSSE in the spring of their first year, however, 85% of students reported that they occasionally came to class unprepared.
- Students thought they would be spending approximately 11-15 hours per week participating in co-curricular activities, but actually spent 6-10 hours.
- Students expected to spend 6-10 hours working on campus for pay per week, but they reported only spending 1-5 hours.

Importance of Social and Academic Support

- The majority of incoming students (95%) thought that it would be important¹ for Case to provide support to help them succeed academically. After one semester at Case, 81% of students reported that Case provided “quite a bit” or “very much” of the support they needed to succeed academically.
- The majority of incoming students (62%) believed that it would be important for Case to provide support to help them thrive socially. After one semester at Case, only 25% of students reported that Case provided “quite a bit” or “very much” of the support they needed to thrive socially.

¹ “4,” “5,” or “6” on a 6-point scale where 6 = “very important.”

Correlates to First-Year Satisfaction

- A number of items on the BCSSE were correlated with students’ satisfaction with their entire experience at Case during their first semester. For instance, the higher a student’s high school grades and the more they felt that asking questions in class and coming to class prepared was important, the more satisfied they were with their entire experience at Case and the more likely they were to say they would choose to attend Case again if given the choice.

