

Supportive Campus Environment

2012 National Survey of Student Engagement

In spring 2012, we asked first-year and senior students at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).¹ The survey collects information about student engagement in educational practices which are known, through research, to enhance learning. This report provides information about the extent to which students see their institution as encouraging and responsive, committed to students' success and to cultivating positive working and social relationships among different groups on campus.

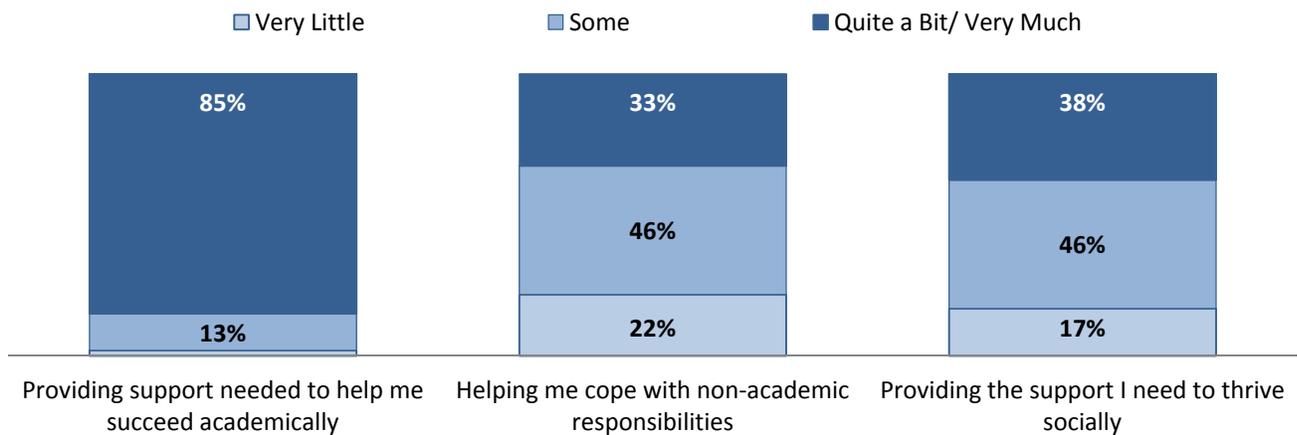


First-Year Students

The majority of first-year students reported having supportive relationships on campus. For example, 82% of students rated their relationships with other students as friendly, supportive, and providing a sense of belonging, and 72% said their faculty members were available, helpful, and sympathetic. The majority of students also rated their relationships with administrative personnel and offices as helpful, considerate, and flexible (64%).²

First-year students were asked to rate the extent to which CWRU emphasizes various aspects of support. The vast majority of students said that CWRU places quite a bit/very much emphasis on providing support to help them succeed academically (85%). Fewer students said CWRU places quite a bit or very much emphasis on helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities or providing the support to thrive socially.

Figure 1. First-Year Students: The Extent to Which CWRU Emphasizes...



¹ Of the 1,824 students who received the survey, 33% (n=608) responded. The sample was made up of 45% of first-year students and 55% of seniors. No statistically significant differences existed in response rates by race/ethnicity, citizenship, or school, but seniors and women responded to the survey at a significantly higher rate.

² Students were asked to rate their relationship on a 7 point scale (1= least supportive and 7 = most supportive). Percentages reflect ratings of 5 and higher.

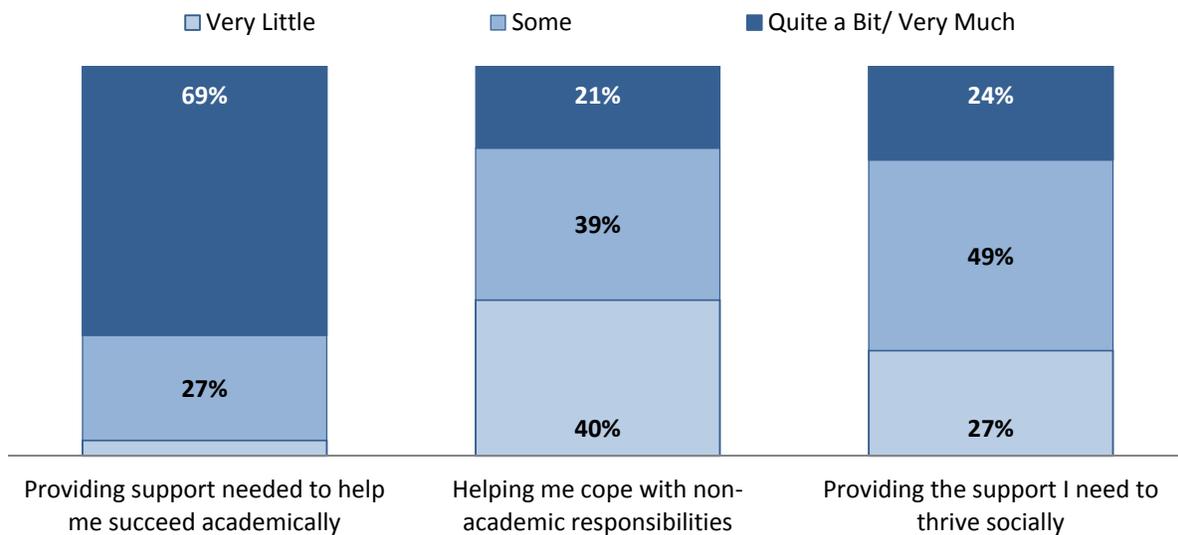
NSSE provides comparison data for each participating school. CWRU’s closest comparison group consists of the other members of the Association of American Universities (AAU) who participated in the NSSE during 2012.³ Compared to first-year students at other AAU schools, CWRU first-years were more likely to say their institution emphasized providing the support they need to help them succeed academically. They were also more likely to rate their relationships with administrative personnel and offices as helpful, considerate, and flexible. Conversely, they were less likely to say their institution emphasized providing the support they need to thrive socially.

Seniors

Do CWRU seniors also find their campus environment supportive? The majority of students rated their relationships with other students as friendly, supportive, and providing a sense of belonging (80%). Seventy-two percent (72%) said their faculty members were available, helpful, and sympathetic, and over half of seniors rated their relationships with administrative personnel and offices as helpful, considerate, and flexible (53%).⁴

When asked about the extent to which CWRU emphasizes various aspects of support, 69% of seniors said CWRU placed quite a bit or very much emphasis on providing support for them to succeed academically. As with first-year students, fewer seniors said CWRU placed quite a bit or very much emphasis on helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities or providing the support they need to thrive socially.

Figure 2. Seniors: The Extent to Which CWRU Emphasizes...



Compared to seniors at other AAU schools, CWRU seniors differed significantly on one question. They were less likely to say that their institution placed an emphasis on providing the support they need to thrive socially.

³2012 AAU NSSE participants were Rutgers University (New Brunswick/Piscataway), Syracuse University, and the universities of Arizona, Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Michigan (Ann Arbor), Missouri (Columbia), and Oregon.

⁴ Students were asked to rate their relationship on a 7 point scale (1= least supportive and 7 = most supportive). Percentages reflect ratings of 5 and higher.

Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark Scores

Using a combination of the items listed above, the researchers at NSSE developed benchmark scores for supportive campus environment. Benchmark scores consist of a weighted average of student responses calculated on a scale of 0 to 100. Please note, the score should not be converted into a percentage or be compared across different benchmarks (e.g., enriching educational practices vs. student-faculty interaction); however, benchmark scores may be used to compare first-year students and seniors.

CWRU’s 2012 supportive campus environment score is the highest it has ever been for first-year students (61) and is significantly higher than previous years, with the exception of 2004 and 2009 (see figure 3). However, CWRU’s score was not significantly different from other AAU and Carnegie schools and was lower than the score for other 2012 NSSE schools.⁵ The top 10% of schools for the first-year supportive campus environment benchmark had a score of 71 in 2012.

CWRU’s 2012 supportive campus environment score for seniors is also the highest it has ever been for seniors (55) and is significantly higher than all of the previous year scores, with the exception of 2007 (see figure 4). That said, CWRU’s 2012 senior score was significantly lower than the other AAU, Carnegie, and NSSE 2012 schools.⁶ Schools that scored in the top 10% on the senior supportive campus environment benchmark had an average score of 69 for 2012.

Figure 3. Supportive Campus Environment for First-Year Students

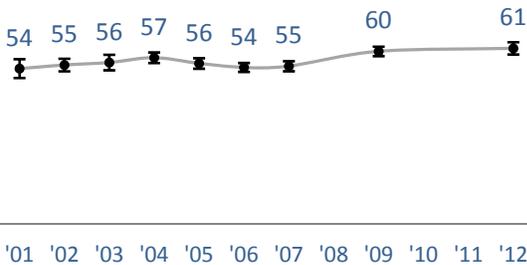


Figure 4. Supportive Campus Environment for Seniors

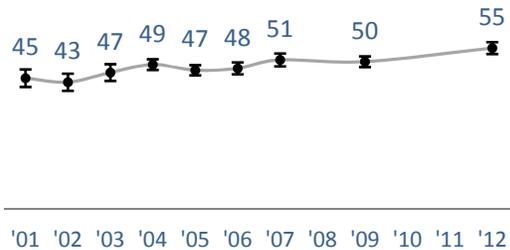
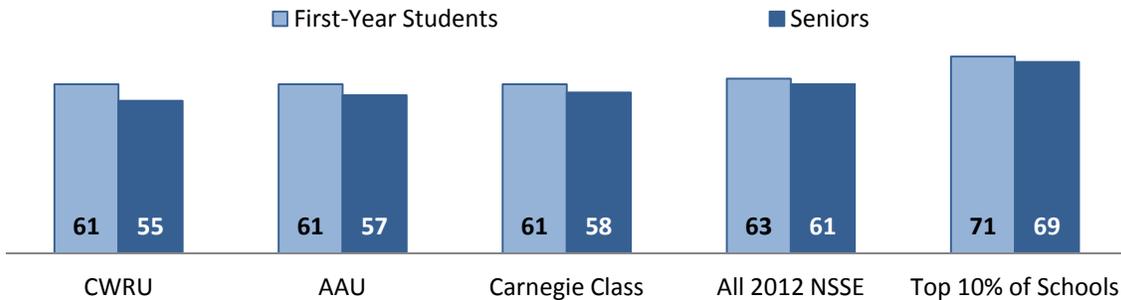


Figure 5. 2012 Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark Scores



⁵ The effect sizes for first-year students was small: NSSE 2012 (-.14)

⁶ The effect sizes for seniors were also small: AAU (-.13), Carnegie Class (-.17), and 2012 NSSE (-.28)

Additional Information

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