

NSSE 2020 Summary Report

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis

Administration Details

A link to the NSSE instrument was emailed to all first year and final year undergraduate students in February 2020. Over a six-week window, a series of four reminders were sent to non-responders. At the survey closing on May 15th, 2,834 students from a possible 5,453 had completed the survey yielding an overall response rate of 52%. This level of response is down from the 2017 rate of 59% but remains higher than previous NSSE administrations (29% in 2014 and 27% in 2011).

A total of fifty-eight students or 2% of respondents (31 first year; 27 final year) responded after the university moved to online-only instruction due to COVID-19. There is no appreciable difference between the responses of students before and after the COVID disruption to classes. Note that the university did not actively recruit non-responders after NSSE's final reminder on March 9th.

The response rate by year of study with margin of error (MoE) and by respondent faculty are shown in the following two tables.

	First year			Final Year		
	#	Response rate	MoE	#	Response rate	MoE
2020	1,546	56%	+/- 1.6%	1,288	48%	+/- 2.0%
2017	1,550	60%	+/- 1.6%	1,677	58%	+/- 1.6%
2014	876	27%	+/- 2.8%	896	32%	+/- 2.7%

Table 2: Response Rate by Faculty, 2020

	First year		Final Year	
	#	Response rate	#	Response rate
FAHSS	620	52%	432	45%
BUS	123	42%	114	40%
ENG	185	63%	212	57%
HK	157	84%	90	54%
NURS	99	80%	167	46%
SCIENC	362	56%	273	49%

As noted in past administrative surveys, females are somewhat over-represented in that 60% of both first year and final year respondents are female compared to the UWindsor population rates of 51% in first year and 54% in final year. Other demographic variables specifically Domestic/Visa, Full-Time/Part-Time, living on campus/not are generally reflective of our student population.

Overall Satisfaction

NSSE asks respondents two summative questions:

- How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?
- If you could start over, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

About three-quarters (76%) of UWindsor first year respondents evaluate their entire educational experience as excellent or good and eight in ten (81%) would attend UWindsor if starting over. UWindsor respondents in their final year continue to report lower levels of overall satisfaction than those in the Ontario comprehensive universities group (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1:

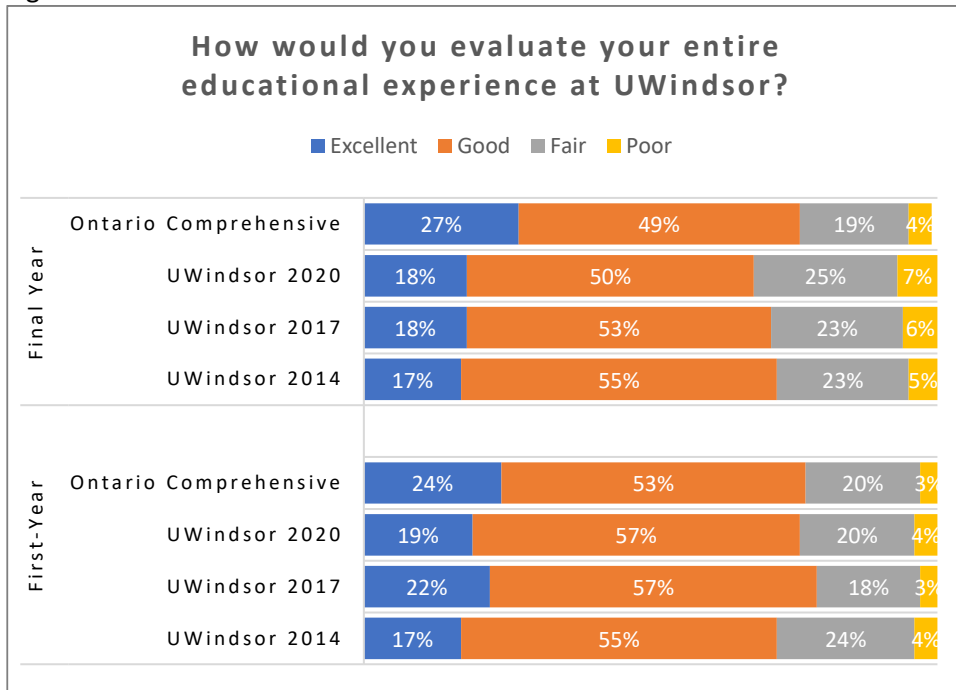
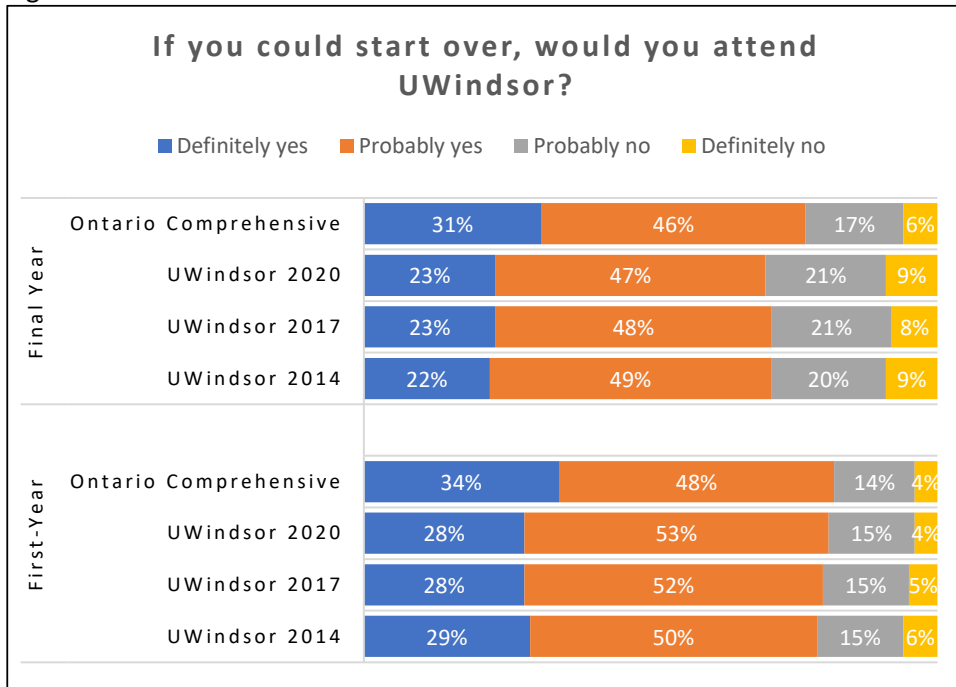


Figure 2:



When asked about their intent to return in the next year, 89% of UWindsor first year respondents plan on returning to UWindsor, the same finding for their counterparts in the Ontario comprehensive universities. Of the 31 first year students who completed NSSE after classes moved to online format, 97% said they were coming back and 3% were unsure.

Although intent to return is high, 26% of first year respondents have seriously considered leaving UWindsor during the current year. The most common reasons given are personal considerations including homesickness, physical or mental health (41%), academic difficulties (34%), financial concerns (33%) and difficulties managing demands of work and school (27%). Seventy-one percent of first year students experienced considerable difficulty managing their time.

Sense of Community

Three new questions in 2020 explore students' sense of belonging at their institution.

Students overwhelmingly report feeling comfortable being themselves at UWindsor (90% of first year and 86% of seniors). About 7 in 10 first year students feel valued by the university and part of a community. Final-year students are not as positive with 56% feeling valued by the university and 61% feeling like part of the community (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3:

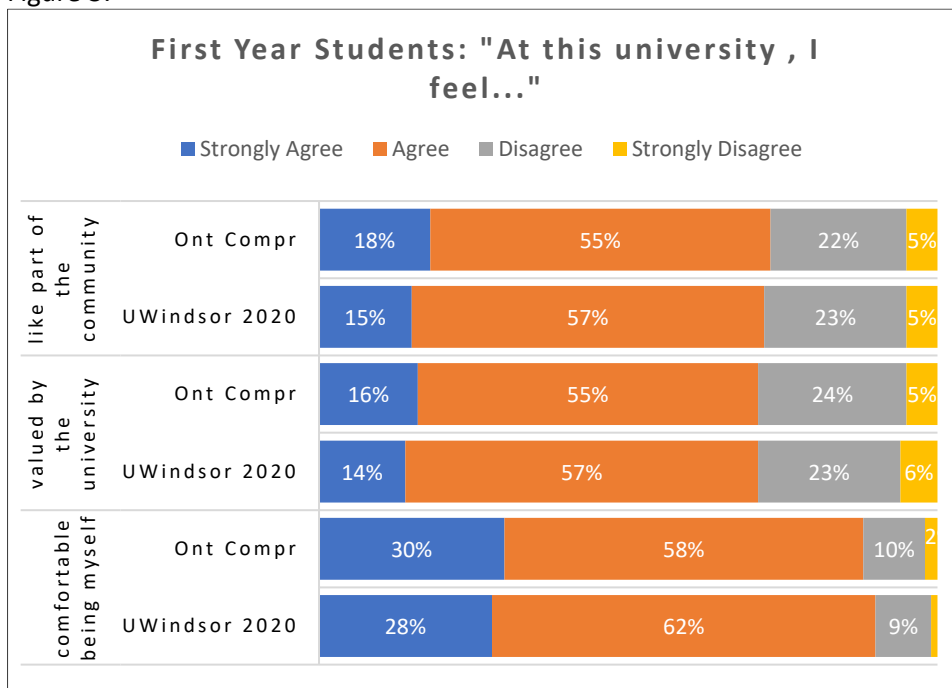
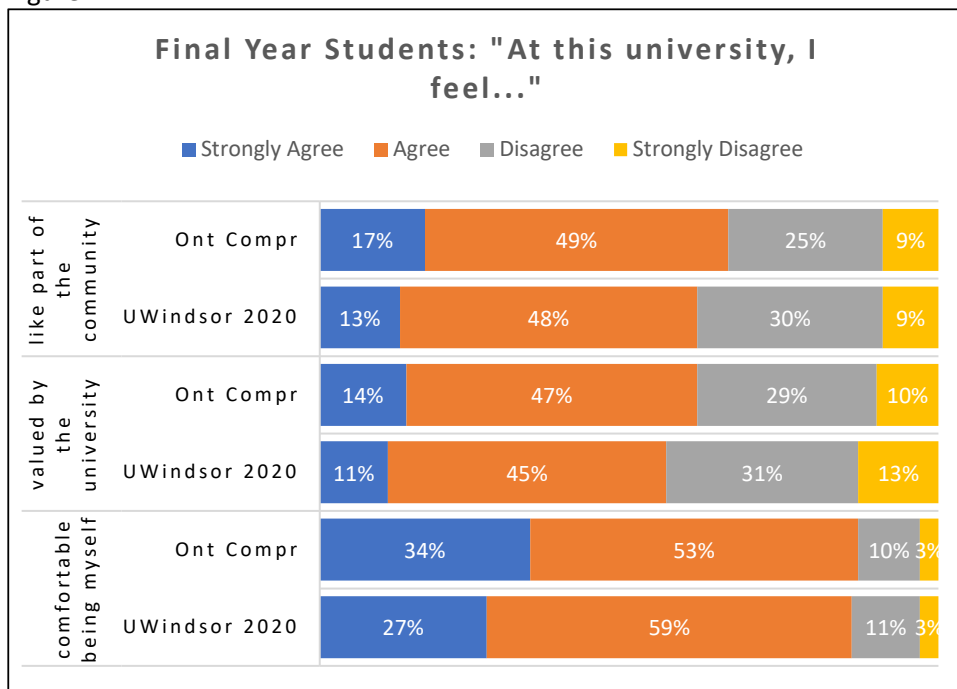


Figure 4:



According to both first year and senior students surveyed, feeling like part of the community and overall satisfaction are significantly related. More than eight in ten respondents (87% of first year and 82% final year) who feel like part of the community rate their educational experience as excellent or good compared to less than half who did not feel a community connection (49% of first year and 46% of final year). Table 3 shows a similar result when asked if they were likely to start over at UWindsor.

Table 3:

First year: I feel like part of the community	Educational Experience % Excellent/Good	Start over at UWindsor % Definitely/Probably
Strongly agree/agree	87%	87%
Disagree/Strongly disagree	49%	66%

Final Year: I feel like part of the community	Educational Experience % Excellent/Good	Start over at UWindsor % Definitely/Probably
Strongly agree/agree	82%	82%
Disagree/Strongly disagree	46%	51%

Most commonly students experience a sense of community on campus (described as part of a group that shares common interests, goals, values, and experiences) in a class (47%), an academic program (35%) and in a study group (29%). There is no difference in the reported sense of community for those living in residence and commuters except for in a recreation or athletics program where 18% of those living on campus felt a sense of community compared to 8% of commuters.

Apart from those students living in residence, 42% of first year and 45% of seniors spend five hours or less on campus in a typical week, outside of time spent in class and labs.

High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

NSSE asks students about their participation in six HIPs. These practices are opportunities provided by universities which are positively associated with student learning and retention. The NSSE Institute recommends that students participate in at least two HIPs during their undergraduate studies - one in their first year and one that is connected to their major (NSSE, 2007). The six practices are participation in:

- Formal learning community where students take 2 or more courses together
- Courses that included a community-based project or service-learning
- Work with a faculty member on a research project
- Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching or clinical placement
- Study abroad
- Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project, thesis, portfolio etc.)

Note that first year respondents are only asked about their experiences in the first three HIPs while final year respondents are asked about all six opportunities.

In 2020, 48% of first year and 82% of final year students said they participated in at least one HIP during their undergraduate program of study. This measure of participation is similar to the NSSE 2017 finding of 50% of first year and 80% of final year respondents.

Nearly half the final year respondents (49%) report having participated in a work-integrated learning experience including an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching or clinical placement compared to 43% in NSSE 2017 and 2014.

Table 4: HIP Participation (% Done or In Progress)

	First year			Final Year		
	2020	2017	2014	2020	2017	2014
Service-learning	44%	47%	39%	56%	58%	52%
Learning community	7%	9%	10%	17%	19%	17%
Research with faculty	4%	4%	5%	23%	22%	22%
Internship or field experience	-	-	-	49%	43%	43%
Study abroad	-	-	-	6%	6%	6%
Culminating senior experience	-	-	-	33%	30%	30%
<i>Participated in at least one</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>82%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>78%</i>
<i>Participated in two or more</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>50%</i>

First year students were asked whether they *planned* to participate in the three upper-division HIPs before they graduated. Sixty percent plan to participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching or clinical placement, 32% plan to take part in a study abroad program and 36% hope to complete a culminating senior experience such as a senior project, capstone course or thesis.

Engagement Indicators (EIs)

NSSE uses ten EIs to summarize different aspects of student engagement with each EI based on three to eight related survey items. The EI scores are produced by converting each component item to a 60-

point scale (0=Never, 20= Sometimes, 40=Often, 60=Very often) and then calculating an average of the rescaled components. Thus, higher EI scores indicate greater levels of student engagement.

A detailed description of the ten EIs are included at the end of the report.

Table 5 shows the multi-year change in UWindsor mean EI scores since 2014. Apart from three EIs, there has been no meaningful change between 2017 and 2020.

After increasing in 2017, first year students in 2020 on average report having significantly fewer *Discussions with Diverse Others* (i.e. people of other races/ethnicities, religions, political views or economic backgrounds). Related to this, 46% of first year respondents in 2020 say the university provides opportunities and encourages contact among students of different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.) compared to 56% in the 2017 NSSE.

More positively, NSSE 2020 first year respondents score significantly higher than in 2017 on the *Quality of Interactions* EI which measures their interactions with faculty, academic advisors, student services, other administrative staff and students.

Senior students rate *Effective Teaching Practices* significantly lower in 2020 than in 2017. NSSE describes the *Effective Teaching Practices* EI as a measure of organized instruction, clear explanations, illustrative examples and effective feedback on student work (see page 10 for a detailed description).

Table 6 shows the UWindsor mean EI scores compared to those of the Ontario comprehensive group of universities. In keeping with previous NSSE findings, first year and final year UWindsor students have higher mean scores on the *Student-Faculty Interaction* EI than the Ontario comprehensive group of universities, significantly so for seniors. There is no significant difference between UWindsor and the Ontario Comprehensive universities for first year students on five EIs and on six for final year students.

Table 5: EI Mean Scores 2020, 2017 and 2014

Theme	EI	First year			Final Year				
		Sig	2020	2017	2014	Sig	2020	2017	2014
Academic Challenge	Higher-Order Learning		35.3	36.4	36.2		36.5	37.0	37.2
	Reflective & Integrative Learning		33.0	33.5	33.9		34.4	35.5	36.6
	Learning Strategies		36.8	36.9	38.0		34.8	34.9	36.1
	Quantitative Reasoning		24.4	25.3	22.9		26.6	25.6	26.3
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning		34.7	34.6	32.1		34.2	33.5	31.0
	Discussions with Diverse Others	↓	37.9	39.5	38.9		39.5	38.9	40.7
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction		16.0	16.1	15.4		20.8	22.1	21.1
	Effective Teaching Practices		34.0	34.9	34.4	↓	32.4	34.5	35.0
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions	↑	38.5	36.5	37.4		36.4	36.3	39.0
	Supportive Environment		31.0	31.9	30.5		26.2	26.9	27.2

↑: 2020 EI significantly higher than 2017, p<.05

↓: 2020 EI significantly lower than 2017, p<.05

Table 6: NSSE 2020 EI Mean Scores for UWindsor & Ontario Comprehensive Universities Group

Theme	EI	First year			Final Year		
		UWindsor	Ont. Compr.	Sig	UWindsor	Ont. Compr.	Sig
Academic Challenge	Higher-Order Learning	35.3	36.8	↓	36.5	37.6	
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	33.0	34.3	↓	34.4	36.3	↓
	Learning Strategies	36.8	35.4	↑	34.8	34.0	
	Quantitative Reasoning	24.4	26.4	↓	26.6	27.9	
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning	34.7	33.8		34.2	34.0	
	Discussions with Diverse Others	37.9	39.7	↓	39.5	40.8	
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction	16.0	14.9		20.8	18.2	↑
	Effective Teaching Practices	34.0	34.3		32.4	34.8	↓
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions	38.5	39.6		36.4	39.5	↓
	Supportive Environment	31.0	31.5		26.2	27.1	

↑: 2020 UWindsor EI significantly higher than Ontario Comprehensive Universities, $p < .001$

↓: 2020 UWindsor EI significantly lower than Ontario Comprehensive Universities, $p < .001$

Student Experiences

The most frequently cited obstacles to academic progress are financial pressures or work obligations (77% for first year and 85% for final year) and academic performance (73% for first year and 71% for final year). Nine in ten (91%) first year students surveyed have experienced some degree of difficulty managing their time, including 40% for whom this is a major challenge. Lack of good academic advising continues to be highlighted as an obstacle, particularly for seniors (44% for first year and 61% for final year).

When summarizing the responses of those who work either on or off campus, 59% of first year and 76% of final year UWindsor students are employed. In a typical week, first year students work on average 17 hours and seniors work 17.9 hours. Due to limitations of the Ontario Comprehensive universities reported data, comparison of the employment situation is only possible for those working off campus. While the average number of weekly hours worked off campus by UWindsor students is estimated to be the same as in the Ontario comprehensive group (14.7 for first year and 16.7 for final year), UWindsor students are more likely to work; 56% of UWindsor first year students and 64% of final year UWindsor students work for pay off campus compared with 41% and 53% respectively. Additionally, 45% of UWindsor respondents do some form of weekly volunteer or community service work that is unrelated to their program compared to 37% of the Ontario Comprehensive group.

Nearly 9 in 10 (86%) students in their first year have experienced at least some difficulty learning course material although 20% say they never asked instructors for help when they were struggling. Instead, most first year respondents either asked friends or other students for help (95%) and half used learning support services (tutoring, writing centre, success office, etc.). In their first year, about three-quarters (74%) had difficulty getting useful help with coursework.

Nearing completion of their degree, 87% of final year students credit the courses in their major for preparing them for their post-graduations plans with 81% intending to work in a field related to their major. In the current year, 74% of seniors and 59% of first year respondents have talked about career plans with a faculty member. Thirty-one percent final year respondents have immediate plans to attend graduate or professional school. Of those whose immediate plan is to work, 36% have already secured employment. Almost 9 in 10 seniors are confident in their ability to analyze arguments and information (87%) and problem solve (88%). Eighty percent are confident that they can write clearly and effectively and 70% are confident managing technology. The skills they are least confident of are entrepreneurial (31%) and financial (41%).

During the current year, 55% of final year and 38% of first year students surveyed have worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.). Nearly one-quarter (23%) of senior students have worked with a faculty member on a research project with an additional 16% saying they still plan to before they graduate. Most final year respondents (96%) have at least some confidence in their research skills including 32% who are very confident.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents say their instructors generally give very clear details about course goals and associated learning outcomes. Nearly all (94%) say their professors are mostly organized in their teaching with 70% frequently using examples or illustrations to explain difficult points. Less than half (45%) of UWindsor respondents regularly receive prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments, a drop from 57% in NSSE 2017. In the current academic year, 42% of first year and 32% of final year students have never discussed their academic performance with a faculty member. About 9 in 10 students surveyed (93% of first year and 88% of seniors) say their courses generally have challenged them to do their best work.

Ontario Comprehensive Universities (N=7)

Brock University
Carleton University
Ryerson University
University of Guelph
University of Waterloo
Wilfrid Laurier University
York University

Engagement Indicator Descriptions and Component Items

Theme: Academic Challenge

Higher-Order Learning

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by calling on students to engage in complex cognitive tasks requiring more than mere memorization of facts. This Engagement Indicator captures how much students' coursework emphasizes challenging cognitive tasks such as application, analysis, judgment, and synthesis. Items include:

During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following:

- Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
- Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source
- Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information

Reflective & Integrative Learning

Personally connecting with course material requires students to relate their understandings and experiences to the content at hand. Instructors emphasizing reflective and integrative learning motivate students to make connections between their learning and the world around them, reexamining their own beliefs and considering issues and ideas from others' perspectives. Items include:

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
- Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
- Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
- Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

Learning Strategies

College students enhance their learning and retention by actively engaging with and analyzing course material rather than approaching learning as absorption. Examples of effective learning strategies include identifying key information in readings, reviewing notes after class, and summarizing course material. Knowledge about the prevalence of effective learning strategies helps colleges and universities target interventions to promote student learning and success. Items include:

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Identified key information from reading assignments
- Reviewed your notes after class
- Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials

Quantitative Reasoning

Quantitative literacy—the ability to use and understand numerical and statistical information in everyday life—is an increasingly important outcome of higher education. All students, regardless of major, should have ample opportunities to develop their ability to reason quantitatively—to evaluate, support, and critique arguments using numerical and statistical information. Items include:

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
- Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
- Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information

Theme: Learning with Peers

Collaborative Learning

Collaborating with peers in solving problems or mastering difficult material deepens understanding and prepares students to deal with the messy, unscripted problems they encounter during and after college. Working on group projects, asking others for help with difficult material or explaining it to others, and working through course material in preparation for exams all represent collaborative learning activities. Items include:

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Asked another student to help you understand course material
- Explained course material to one or more students
- Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

Discussions with Diverse Others

Colleges and universities afford students new opportunities to interact with and learn from others with different backgrounds and life experiences. Interactions across difference, both inside and outside the classroom, confer educational benefits and prepare students for personal and civic participation in a diverse and interdependent world. Items include:

During the current school year, how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups:

- People from a race or ethnicity other than your own
- People from an economic background other than your own
- People with religious beliefs other than your own
- People with political views other than your own

Theme: Experiences with Faculty

Student-Faculty Interaction

Interactions with faculty can positively influence the cognitive growth, development, and persistence of college students. Through their formal and informal roles as teachers, advisors, and mentors, faculty members model intellectual work, promote mastery of knowledge and skills, and help students make connections between their studies and their future plans. Items include:

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member
- Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
- Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member

Effective Teaching Practices

Student learning is heavily dependent on effective teaching. Organized instruction, clear explanations, illustrative examples, and effective feedback on student work all represent aspects of teaching effectiveness that promote student comprehension and learning. Items include:

During the current school year, to what extent have your instructors done the following:

- Clearly explained course goals and requirements
- Taught course sessions in an organized way
- Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points
- Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress
- Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments

Theme: Campus Environment

Quality of Interactions

College environments characterized by positive interpersonal relations promote student learning and success. Students who enjoy supportive relationships with peers, advisors, faculty, and staff are better able to find assistance when needed, and to learn from and with those around them. Items include:

Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution:

- Students
- Academic advisors
- Faculty

Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)

Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

Supportive Environment

Institutions that are committed to student success provide support and involvement across a variety of domains, including the cognitive, social, and physical. These commitments foster higher levels of student performance and satisfaction. This Engagement Indicator summarizes students' perceptions of how much an institution emphasizes services and activities that support their learning and development. Items include:

How much does your institution emphasize the following:

Providing support to help students succeed academically

Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)

Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)

Providing opportunities to be involved socially

Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)

Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)

Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)

Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues