



**National Survey
of Student Engagement**

Western Carolina University

Multi-Year Benchmark Report

August 2009



Interpreting the Multi-Year Benchmark Report

For institutions that have participated in multiple NSSE administrations, this *Multi-Year Benchmark Report* presents recalculated and comparable benchmark scores by year so that patterns of change or stability are discernible. It also provides statistics such as *number of respondents*, *standard deviation*, and *standard error* so that shorthand mean comparison tests can be calculated. This report is necessary because improvements and modifications have been made over time to NSSE survey items, the construction of benchmarks, and the production of institutional reports, making multi-year analysis of NSSE data more complex. Specifically, the following issues are relevant:

- All items in question 7 were rescaled in 2004, making it untenable to compare newer results on these items with those of 2003 and earlier. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the 2004–2009 Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark with prior years (2001–2003). An alternate version of the Student-Faculty Interaction benchmark – labeled ‘SFC’ – is also provided with the ‘research with faculty’ item removed, allowing this benchmark to be compared with prior years (2001–2003).
- In 2004 NSSE changed the way benchmarks were calculated, requiring that benchmarks prior to 2004 be recalculated to more accurately compare institutional performance across years.
- Scores from NSSE 2000 are not included because several significant changes were made to the survey instrument and benchmarks beginning in 2001, making year-to-year comparisons unsuitable.
- The samples used to develop institutional estimates have been refined in recent years, making direct comparisons of reported benchmarks over the years potentially less stable.

This report has three main parts: (a) a table of *data quality indicators* (p. 3), which provides a quick reference to important statistics for each year’s participation, (b) *multi-year charts*, and (c) *detailed statistics*. Key terms and features of (b) and (c) are described below using data from the fictional “NSSEville State University.”

For more information and recommendations for analyzing NSSE data over time, consult the *Multi-Year Data Analysis Guide*: [www.nsse.iub.edu/pdf/NSSE Multi-Year Data Analysis Guide.pdf](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/pdf/NSSE%20Multi-Year%20Data%20Analysis%20Guide.pdf).

Key Terms and Features in this Report

Y-Axis

Benchmarks are computed on a 0 to 100 scale, however nearly all institutional scores are between the y-axis values of 15 and 85.

Benchmark Score

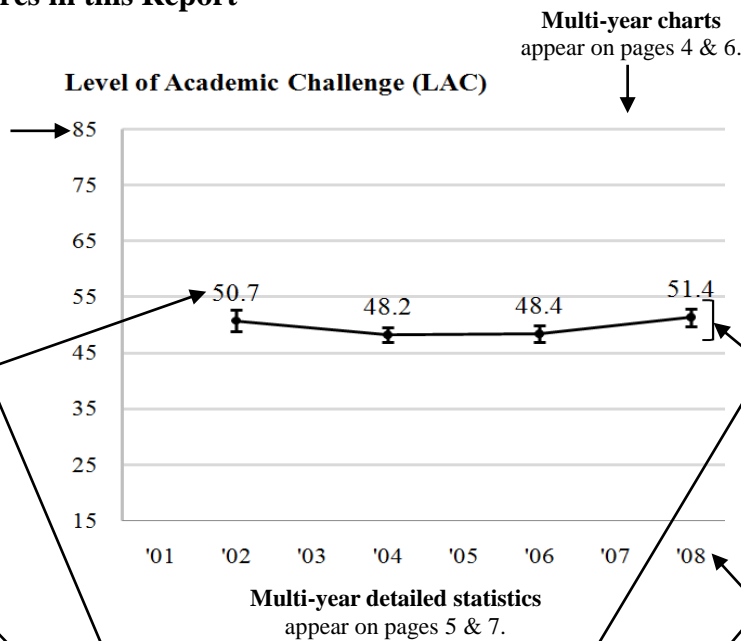
The benchmark score is the weighted average of the student-level scores, using only randomly sampled students from each year’s data.

n

Unweighted number of respondents represented in the data.

SEM

Standard error of the mean is how much a score based on a sample may differ from the true population score. *SEM* is used to compute confidence intervals.



Error Bars/Confidence Intervals

Error bars around each benchmark score show the upper and lower bounds of the 95% confidence interval (mean \pm 1.96 * *SEM*), a range of values 95% likely to contain the true population score. "Upper" and "Lower" limits are reported in the detailed statistics tables. Where confidence intervals do not overlap between years, a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) is likely to be present.

Year

All NSSE administration years are listed regardless of participation.

SD

Standard deviation, the average amount by which students' scores differ from the mean.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
LAC	50.7	48.2	48.4	48.2	48.4	48.4	48.4	51.4
n	179	405		303		307		307
SD	12.3	12.1		12.3		11.8		11.8
SEM	.92	.60		.71		.67		.67
Upper	52.5	49.4		49.8		52.7		52.7
Lower	48.9	47.0		47.0		50.1		50.1



Some NSSE administrations at an institution may yield more precise population estimates than others. The values in this table were drawn from the *Respondent Characteristics* reports for each NSSE administration. An important early step in conducting a multi-year analysis is to review the quality of your data for both first-year and senior respondents in each year.

Year ^a	Mode ^b	Response Rate ^c		Sampling Error ^d		Number of Respondents ^e	
		FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR
2001	Web	31%		5.2%	5.8%	272	216
2002							
2003							
2004	Paper	21%	23%	10.9%	11.9%	77	62
2005							
2006	Web+	27%	27%	4.5%	4.4%	385	371
2007	Web	34%	38%	3.2%	3.3%	617	529
2008	Web	20%	29%	6.0%	3.6%	217	537
2009	Web	21%	24%	5.5%	4.7%	252	360

^a All NSSE administration years since 2001 are listed regardless of participation.

^b Modes include *Paper* (students receive a paper survey and the option of completing a Web version), *Web* (students receive all correspondence by e-mail and complete the Web version), and *Web+* (students initially invited to participate via e-mail; a subgroup of nonrespondents receive paper surveys).

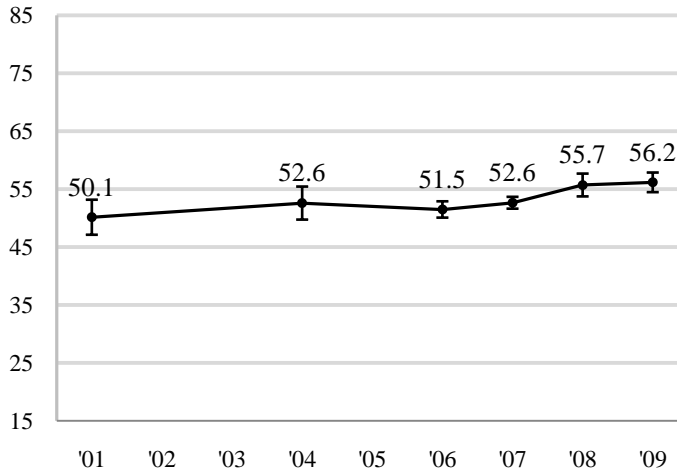
^c Response rates (number of respondents divided by sample size) were adjusted for ineligibility, nondeliverable mailing addresses, and students who were unavailable during the survey administration. Before 2003, response rates were not calculated separately by class so overall response rates are reported.

^d Sampling error gauges the precision of estimates based on a sample survey. It is an estimate of how much survey item percentages for your respondents could differ from those of the entire population of students at your institution. Data with larger sampling errors (such as +/-10%) need not be dismissed out of hand, but any results using them should be interpreted more conservatively.

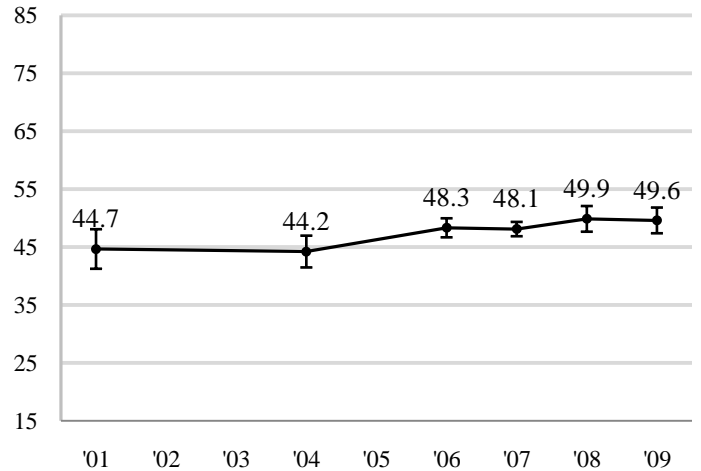
^e This is the original count used to calculate response rates and sampling errors for each administration's *Respondent Characteristics* report. This number includes all randomly sampled students. From 2001 to 2005 it may also include targeted oversamples. For this reason, the counts for 2001 to 2005 may not match those given in the detailed statistics on pages 5 and 7.

First-Year Students

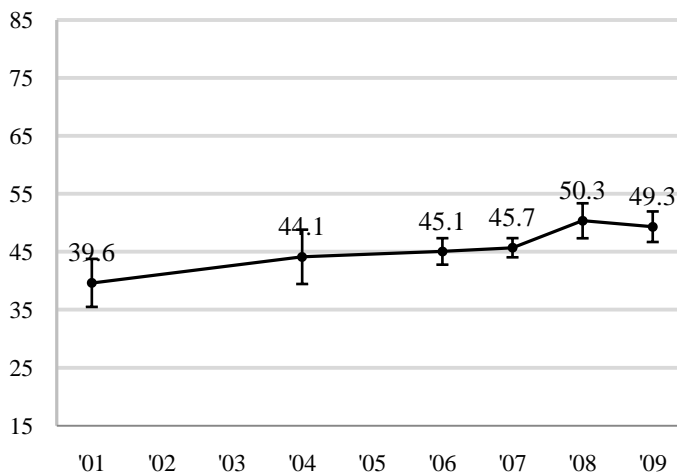
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)



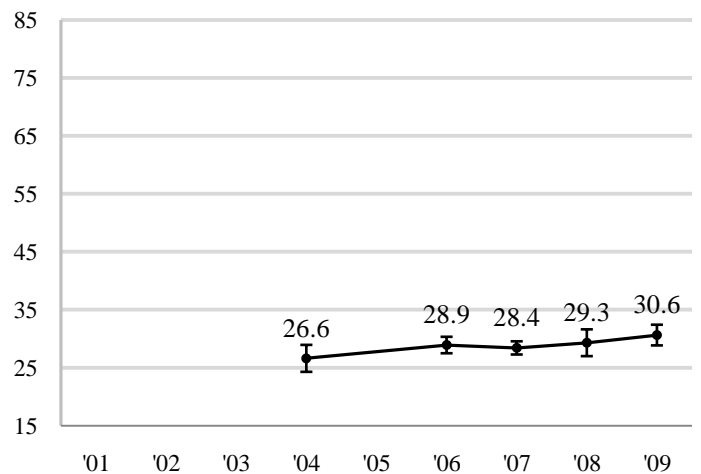
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)



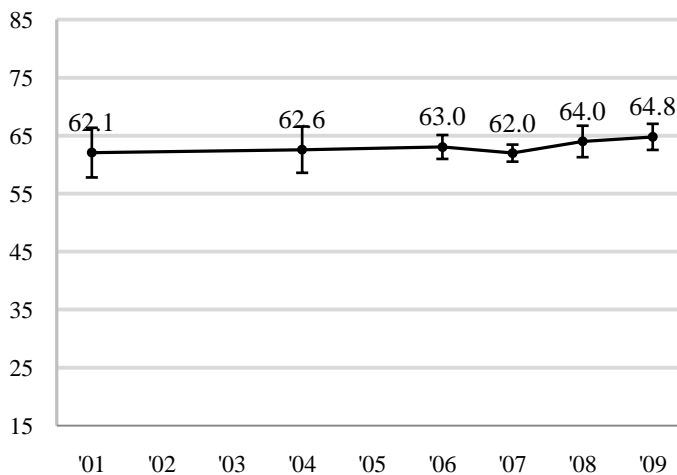
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFC)^b



Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)^c



Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)



Notes:

- a. Recalculated benchmark scores are charted for all years of participation since 2001. See page 5 for detailed statistics. For more information and recommendations for analyzing multi-year NSSE data, consult the *Multi-Year Data Analysis Guide*: www.nsse.iub.edu/pdf/NSSE_Multi-Year_Data_Analysis_Guide.pdf.
- b. For institutions with 2001-2003 data, due to a change to the 'research with faculty' item in 2004, 'SFC' (a version of 'SFI' that does not include that item) is charted on this page. Statistics for both versions are provided on page 5.
- c. 2001-2003 'EEE' scores are not provided because these scores are not comparable with those of later years; response options for several 'EEE' items were altered in 2004.



First-Year Students

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Level of Academic Challenge	LAC	50.1			52.6		51.5	52.6	55.7	56.2	
	n	70			74		341	567	188	220	
	SD	12.9			12.5		13.3	12.4	13.8	12.8	
	SEM	1.54			1.45		.72	.52	1.00	.86	
	Upper	53.2			55.4		52.9	53.7	57.7	57.9	
	Lower	47.1			49.7		50.1	51.6	53.7	54.5	
Active and Collaborative Learning	ACL	44.7			44.2		48.3	48.1	49.9	49.6	
	n	70			74		384	616	217	251	
	SD	14.6			12.0		16.4	15.7	16.6	17.9	
	SEM	1.74			1.40		.84	.63	1.13	1.13	
	Upper	48.1			47.0		50.0	49.3	52.1	51.8	
	Lower	41.2			41.5		46.7	46.9	47.6	47.4	
Student Faculty Interaction^b	SFC	39.6			44.1		45.1	45.7	50.3	49.3	
	n	70			74		352	585	192	231	
	SD	17.7			20.5		21.9	20.4	21.4	20.5	
	SEM	2.11			2.39		1.16	.84	1.54	1.34	
	Upper	43.8			48.8		47.3	47.4	53.4	52.0	
	Lower	35.5			39.4		42.8	44.0	47.3	46.7	
	SFI	-			36.9		39.0	40.2	43.6	42.9	
	n	-			74		345	576	189	224	
	SD	-			17.5		20.3	18.7	20.0	19.0	
	SEM	-			2.03		1.09	.78	1.45	1.27	
	Upper	-			40.9		41.1	41.7	46.4	45.4	
	Lower	-			32.9		36.9	38.7	40.7	40.4	
	Enriching Educational Experiences^c	EEE	-			26.6		28.9	28.4	29.3	30.6
		n	-			74		326	547	181	213
SD		-			10.2		13.1	13.6	15.9	13.3	
SEM		-			1.19		.72	.58	1.18	.91	
Upper		-			28.9		30.3	29.6	31.6	32.4	
Lower		-			24.3		27.5	27.3	27.0	28.8	
Supportive Campus Environment	SCE	62.1			62.6		63.0	62.0	64.0	64.8	
	n	70			74		322	530	176	210	
	SD	18.3			17.5		18.9	17.3	18.4	16.6	
	SEM	2.18			2.04		1.05	.75	1.38	1.15	
	Upper	66.4			66.6		65.1	63.5	66.7	67.0	
	Lower	57.8			58.6		61.0	60.5	61.3	62.5	

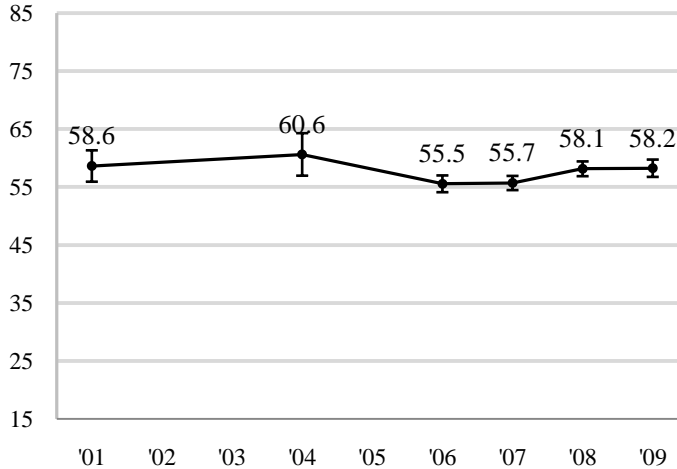
^a n=number of respondents; SD=standard deviation; SEM=standard error of the mean; Upper/Lower=95% confidence interval limits

^b Due to a change to the 'research with faculty' item in 2004, statistics for 'SFC' (the alternate version of 'SFI' that does not include that item) are reported along with 'SFI' beginning with 2004.

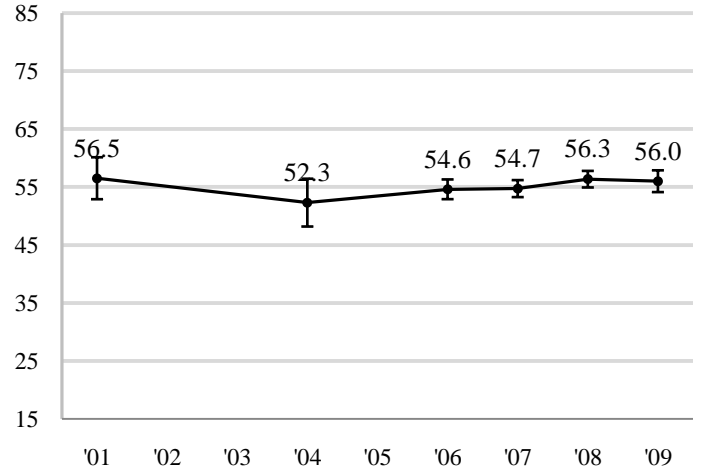
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Seniors

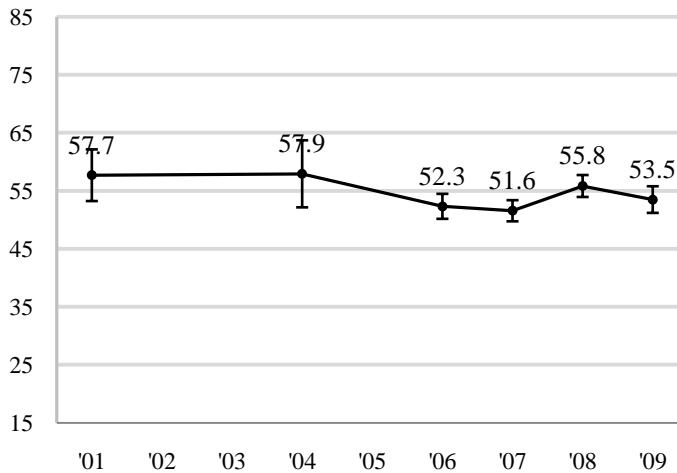
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)



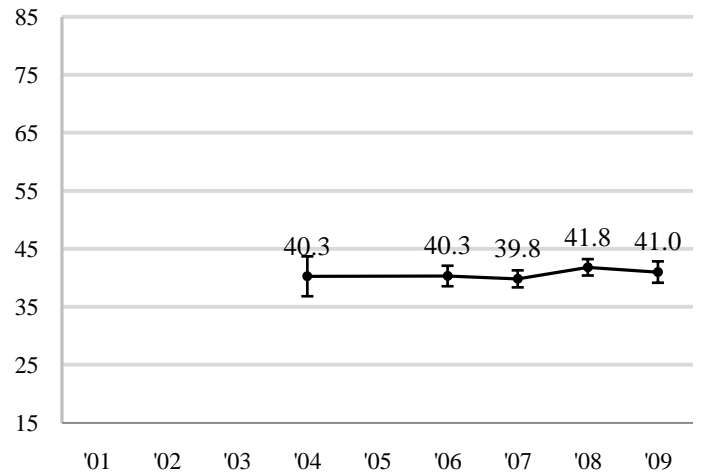
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)



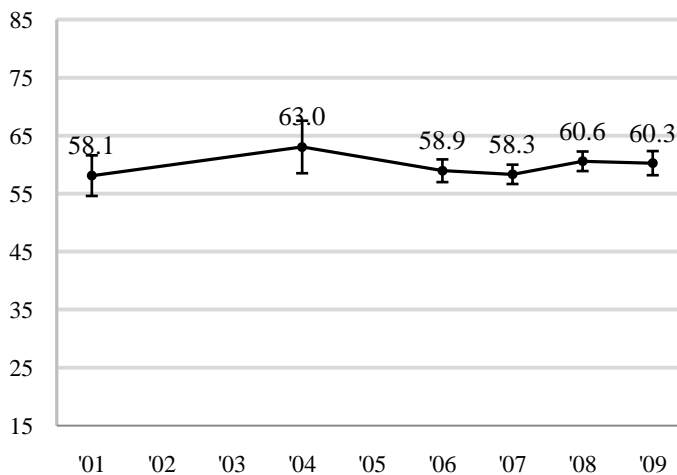
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFC)^b



Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)^c



Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)



Notes:

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NSSE 2009 Multi-Year Benchmark Report

Detailed Statistics^a

Western Carolina University

		Seniors									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Level of Academic Challenge	LAC	58.6			60.6		55.5	55.7	58.1	58.2	
	n	81			61		356	502	514	339	
	SD	12.5			14.6		13.9	14.0	14.7	14.0	
	SEM	1.38			1.87		.74	.62	.65	.76	
	Upper	61.3			64.3		57.0	56.9	59.4	59.7	
	Lower	55.9			57.0		54.1	54.5	56.9	56.7	
Active and Collaborative Learning	ACL	56.5			52.3		54.6	54.7	56.3	56.0	
	n	81			61		371	529	530	359	
	SD	16.6			16.4		16.7	17.2	16.8	18.1	
	SEM	1.84			2.10		.87	.75	.73	.96	
	Upper	60.1			56.4		56.3	56.2	57.8	57.9	
	Lower	52.9			48.2		52.9	53.3	54.9	54.1	
Student Faculty Interaction^b	SFC	57.7			57.9		52.3	51.6	55.8	53.5	
	n	81			61		364	518	515	348	
	SD	20.5			23.0		21.0	21.2	21.9	21.9	
	SEM	2.27			2.95		1.10	.93	.97	1.17	
	Upper	62.1			63.7		54.5	53.4	57.7	55.8	
	Lower	53.2			52.2		50.2	49.7	53.9	51.2	
	SFI	-			51.2		47.8	46.7	50.0	49.2	
	n	-			61		360	508	511	345	
	SD	-			21.7		20.7	21.0	21.3	21.2	
	SEM	-			2.78		1.09	.93	.94	1.14	
	Upper	-			56.6		49.9	48.5	51.9	51.5	
	Lower	-			45.7		45.6	44.8	48.2	47.0	
	Enriching Educational Experiences^c	EEE	-			40.3		40.3	39.8	41.8	41.0
		n	-			61		350	489	510	330
SD		-			13.7		16.9	16.6	16.2	17.1	
SEM		-			1.76		.90	.75	.72	.94	
Upper		-			43.7		42.1	41.3	43.2	42.8	
Lower		-			36.8		38.5	38.3	40.4	39.1	
Supportive Campus Environment	SCE	58.1			63.0		58.9	58.3	60.6	60.3	
	n	81			61		345	477	497	324	
	SD	16.1			18.0		18.6	18.6	19.2	19.1	
	SEM	1.79			2.31		1.00	.85	.86	1.06	
	Upper	61.6			67.6		60.9	60.0	62.3	62.3	
	Lower	54.6			58.5		57.0	56.7	58.9	58.2	

^a n=number of respondents; SD=standard deviation; SEM=standard error of the mean; Upper/Lower=95% confidence interval limits

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