

Support for Drake Mission Outcomes NSSE and Drake Student Survey Data

Indirect assessment data indicate that Drake is achieving its major mission outcomes. As discussed in relation to Criterion 2c, Drake has participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) since its inception, and also has participated in numerous other standardized surveys. Since 1991 the Drake Student Survey (DSS) has provided information about student satisfaction and perceptions of the Drake learning environment and services.

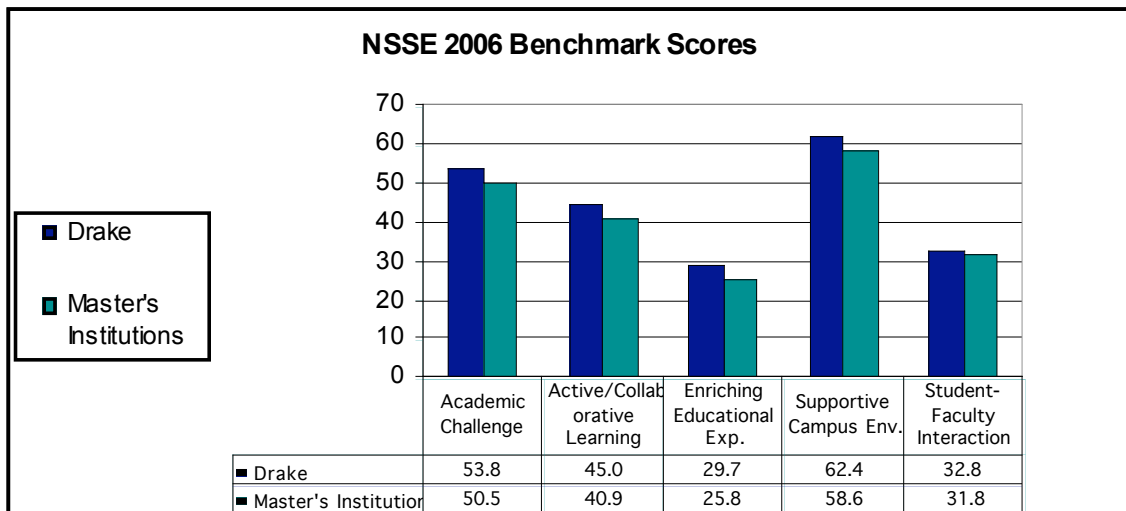
Complete reports of these data are available, but a few observations drawn from the 2006 NSSE results¹ and other internal sources provide evidence about Drake student engagement and learning as related to our mission.

1) The University is providing an Exceptional Learning Environment:

As is shown in Table 1 below, in 2006 first-year Drake students had significantly higher NSSE benchmark scores than did first-year students at our Carnegie Master’s peer institutions in four of the five areas (statistically significant results indicated by *):

- Level of Academic Challenge*
- Active and Collaborative Learning*
- Enriching Educational Experiences*
- Supportive Campus Environment*
- Student-Faculty Interaction

Table 1



¹ Most of the NSSE data in this section are cited by frequencies of students who indicated “quite a bit” or “very much” in response to questions.

- Based on 2006 NSSE results, Drake students,
 - Were more likely than their Carnegie peers to report spending 16 or more hours preparing for class each week.
 - Worked on a project that required them to integrate ideas or information. First-year-80%; Seniors-84%
 - Had coursework that emphasized synthesizing and organizing ideas, information or experiences: First-year-66%; Seniors-71%.
 - Indicated that examinations challenged them to do their best: First-year-86%; Seniors-86%.
 - Believe Drake emphasizes spending a significant amount of time studying: First-year-84%; Seniors-80%.

Data from other sources validate the NSSE results on excellence of the Drake learning environment.

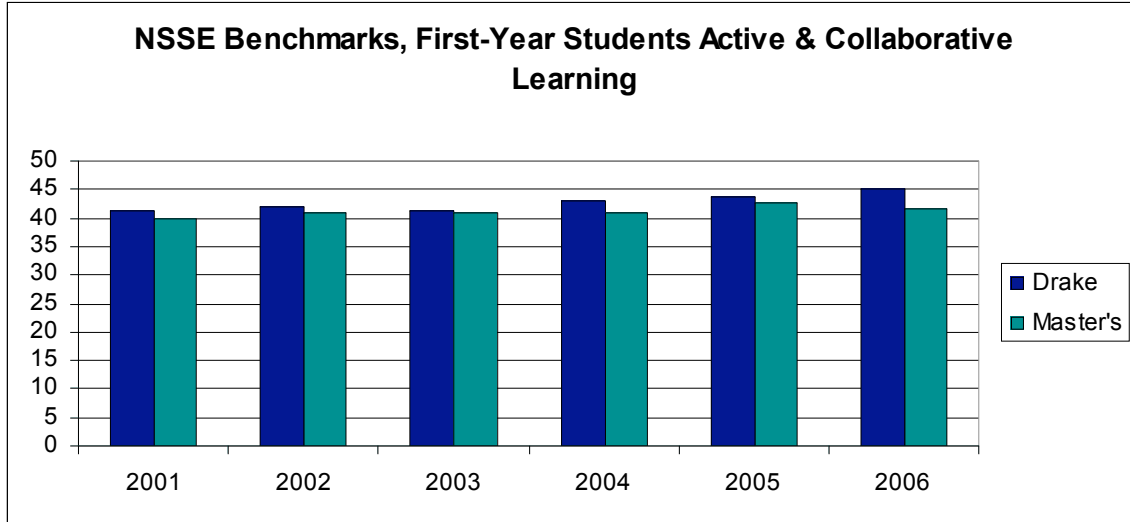
- Drake's entering first-year students maintain a high academic profile. The 2006 entering class averaged a 26 ACT composite score and 68% were in the top quartile of their high school graduating class.
- Retention of students from first to second year has averaged 86.6% for the last three academic years (2005-2007). The three-year span from 1995-1997 had average retention of 81.8%.
- The 2001 cohort of entering first year students achieved a 75.3% five-year graduation rate.
- Ninety-two percent of 2006 Drake graduates found career employment or entered graduate/professional school within six months of receiving their degree.
- More than three-quarters of Drake first-year students in the 2003 *Your First College Year Survey (YFCY)*, and 81% in the 2002 YFCY, indicated that their courses inspired them to think in new ways. They also were significantly more likely than peers at other four-year schools to report that they had become stronger in critical thinking skills and in knowledge of a particular field or discipline.
- Data from the 2007 Drake Student Survey indicate that over 80% of students are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of classes and their experience with faculty members.

2) *Students are achieving the knowledge and skills necessary for Collaborative Learning*

- On NSSE, Drake students report that they work frequently with classmates outside of class: First-year-67%; Senior-69%.
- An even greater number agree that their Drake education has helped them to work effectively with others: First-year-79%; Seniors-76%.
- Fifty-eight percent of first-year students and 63% of seniors (equal to our Carnegie peers) responded that they have tried to better understand someone else's point of view. A goal of the Drake Curriculum is to increase this level.
- Drake University first-year students are more likely than students from other Master's institutions to report working in an active and collaborative manner.

This has been consistently true since 2001, and, as is shown in table 2 below, the gap is widening in 2006.

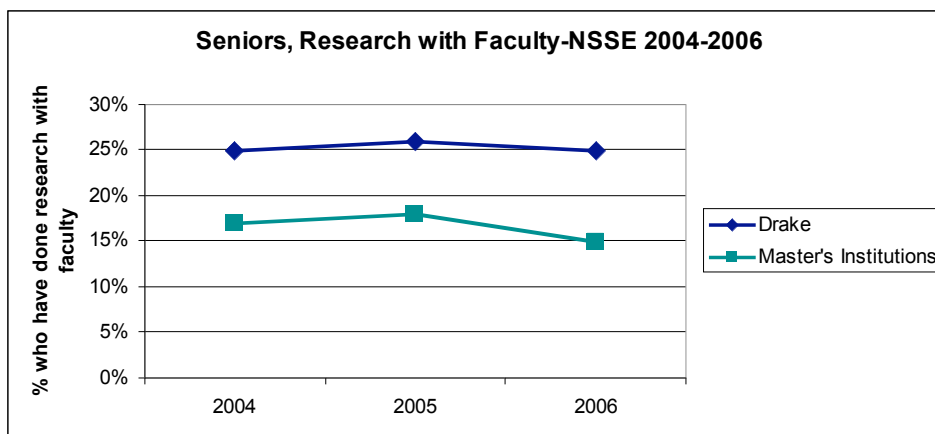
Table 2



Drake University increasingly is emphasizing the importance of undergraduate research to provide students an opportunity to apply knowledge and learn by working collaboratively with faculty members.

Drake seniors have consistently been more likely than students at peer institutions to report working on a research project with a faculty member, and, as is displayed in Table 3, the gap may be widening. In 2004 the gap was 8% and by 2006 the gap was 10%.

Table 3



3) *Students are achieving the knowledge and skills necessary for Meaningful Personal Lives.*

The keys to this outcome are students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning and further develop the principles by which they live.

- Seventy-six percent of first-year students and 73% of seniors reported that Drake has successfully helped them to learn effectively on their own.
- Sixty percent of first-year students and 54% of seniors indicated that Drake has helped them to form a personal code of values and ethics.

While these figures are ahead of or on par with our Carnegie peers, we will explore means of enhancing students' exploration of their personal values during their career at Drake.

4) *Students are achieving the knowledge and skills necessary for Professional Accomplishments.*

- The majority of Drake students indicated that they are learning to write clearly and effectively (first-year-66%, seniors-69%) and to speak clearly and effectively (first-year-68%, seniors-62%). However, in both cases the figures for seniors are below our Carnegie peers.
- In the 2007 Drake Student Survey only 46% reported that their skill in persuasive writing was stronger than when they entered.

Initial analysis indicates a need to improve strategies for teaching good writing techniques across the curriculum. In spite of yearly writing workshops for faculty, relatively few are requiring students to do multiple drafts of papers. Only 34% of seniors reported preparing two or more drafts of a paper; below the 49% at peer institutions.

- Drake students believe that they are learning to think critically and analytically: 83% of first-year students and 87% of seniors reported on NSSE that they believe their skills in these areas have increased "quite a bit" or "very much."
- In the 2007 Drake Student Survey 81.8% of students indicated that their critical thinking skills, and ability to "acquire, analyze, and interpret information," were stronger because of their experience at Drake.

The Drake Curriculum Analysis and Planning Committee (DCAP) is in the process of testing a critical thinking rubric to gather more direct evidence of authentic student achievement in this area.

- Seventy-one percent of Drake seniors reported having participated or planning to participate in a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment; a statistically significant higher effect score than Carnegie peers who report 49%.
- Among seniors, 77% asserted that they have succeeded in acquiring job or work-related skills.

5) *Students are acquiring the skills and knowledge to develop as Responsible Global Citizens.*

Drake programs are succeeding in building the basis of cultural understanding and communication.

- The majority of Drake students indicated on NSSE 2006 that their courses include diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.): First-year-60%; Seniors-52%.
- A majority indicated that they have the opportunity for conversations with students of different beliefs outside of class: First-year-63%; Seniors-56%. Results for Drake first-year students have positive statistical significance in relation to Carnegie peers.
- First-year Drake students were significantly more likely than Carnegie peers to report that Drake encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds; however, we would like to increase opportunities for Drake students to interact in diverse groups.

Drake students seem to have a strong affinity for service, although such activities have not been integrated into coursework. While revisions of the Professional and Career Development Services area have provided more support for service learning and a connection to Campus Compact, it has succeeded more in the area of career development internships.

- Eighty-seven percent of first-year students and 82% of seniors reported having done some community volunteer work or service.
- Only 14% of seniors and 8% of first-year students report participating in a community-based project as part of a regular course.

While Drake clearly addresses skills and knowledge related to responsible global citizenship, there are areas for improvement.

- Based on NSSE data, only 25% of Drake seniors have studied abroad or plan to study abroad. While this is higher than our Carnegie peers (17%), we will seek to increase this percentage as we provide and support more global opportunities in future years.
- Only 43% of first year students and 39% of seniors report that their experience at Drake has contributed to their development in the area of “Contributing to the welfare of your community.”
- Only 24% of first year students and 31% of seniors reported that they felt their Drake experience had helped to prepare them for voting in local, state, and national elections. These findings were iterated in the 2007 Drake Student Survey where only 43.1% indicated that they felt better prepared to participate effectively in democratic processes.

6) *Students are acquiring the skills and knowledge to integrate professional preparation with the liberal arts.*

- On NSSE, 81% of first-year students and 80% of seniors agreed that Drake has helped them acquire a broad general education.
- Seventy-eight percent of Drake first-year students and 81% of seniors reported that their coursework emphasizes applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.

Drake needs to develop more direct measures of student learning to demonstrate the effectiveness of integrating liberal arts and sciences with professional preparation. As part of the curriculum revision passed by the Faculty Senate in 2006 and as part of our participation in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning, Drake will work in 2008 on a revision of our senior capstones to more fully integrate a discussion of the larger goals of ethics and stewardship related to individual disciplines and professions.