

National Survey of Student Engagement

Keene State College

**The Student College Report
2004**



Office of Institutional Research

March 12, 2002

National Survey of Student Engagement

The research is unequivocal: students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the college experience than those who are not so involved.

Ernest T. Pascarella & Terenzini, How College Affects Students

Keene State College Mission

It is the mission of Keene State College to provide and maintain an intellectual environment grounded in the liberal arts that fosters both the personal and professional growth of our students. In support of this mission the College promotes and sustains strong relationships among students, faculty, and staff that emphasize creative and critical thinking, scholarship and research, and a passion for learning. Through a mature commitment to learning and service, students will be able to integrate different forms of knowledge and will graduate with substantive knowledge in a chosen field of study. Through retaining and supporting a caring staff and a faculty of effective teachers and active scholars, the College prepares students for success in a complex, interdependent world.

From Santa Cruz report

Excellence in undergraduate education is explicit in the mission of KSC. Indeed, quality undergraduate education historically has been, and remains a distinguishing hallmark of this campus. But how exactly is quality defined?

Perhaps a better indicator of educational quality is the extent to which institutions contribute to student learning and personal development. Research within the field of education clearly indicates that the best predictor of positive student outcomes in such areas as critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and responsible citizenship, is the time and energy that students devote to educationally purposeful activities. Those institutions that provide quality undergraduate education then, are those that most fully engage students in appropriate activities and provide them with meaningful learning experiences. Institutional practices associated with high levels of student engagement include those that encourage high student effort, faculty-student interaction, active learning and peer cooperation.

In 1998 The Pew Charitable Trusts convened a group of leaders in higher education to discuss issues of educational quality and assessment. The result was a large-scale data collection initiative, now known as the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE). Its purpose is to provide information about the extent to which colleges and universities exhibit characteristics and commitments that are empirically associated with good educational practice. To that extent, the College Student Report (CSR) was designed to directly survey undergraduates about those behaviors and educational experiences that are highly correlated with important learning and developmental outcomes of college.

NSSE also established a set of national benchmarks of good educational practice against which KSC can be compared.

From what we're: Student benchmarks

Student Engagement...the time and energy that students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside the classroom and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities.

The engagement premise is deceptively simple, even self-evident. The more students study a subject, the more they learn about it. Likewise, the more students practice and get feedback on their writing, analyzing, or problem solving, the more adept they become.

NSSE 2003

About 348,000 first-year and senior students were included in the NSSE 2003 sample. These students were randomly selected from data files provided by 437 participating 4-year colleges and universities. NSSE sampling procedures call for sending the survey to an equal number of first-year and senior students with the standard sample size determined by the number of undergraduate students enrolled at the institution.

Background

The National Survey of Student Engagement is co-sponsored by the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and is directed by George Kuh at Indiana University. Its purpose is to assess the extent to which students are engaged in their education and the extent to which four-year colleges engage in good educational practices. The survey given to first-year and senior students and asks about their experiences in college: the extent to which they are involved, what they have gained, the quality of their interactions, and other indicators that research has shown are related to positive student outcomes. First implemented in 2000, the 2001 report analyzes data from both years for more than 105,000 seniors and first-year students from 470 four-year institutions.

NSSE looks at the contributions to the quality of college experience from two perspectives: (1) how much time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally related activities, (2) and how the institution distributes its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to encourage student participation in activities that research has shown are important to student learning.

After the first implementation of the survey, NSSE clustered the 41 questions into 5 key benchmark areas:

- level of academic challenge,
- active and collaborative learning,
- student interactions with faculty members,
- enriching educational experiences,
- supportive campus environment.

Research studies have shown that these five areas are important for providing a supportive environment for student engagement and have a positive impact on college outcomes. Benchmarks are calculated for each of these areas for the institution, for their comparative Carnegie classification institutions, and for all NSSE participants.

NSSE results are reported separately for first-year and senior students. Benchmark scores are provided for the comparable Carnegie classification group, which for Keene State is Master's, and for all institutions participating in the NSSE survey (National or NSSE group). Benchmarks are derived from the means of student responses to questions, combined within a key area, and transformed to a 100-point scale to facilitate comparisons. For a view that is less highly summarized, percentages are provided for student responses to selected questions.

Keene State College Participation

Keene State participated in the 2001 survey and is participating in the 2002 survey this spring. Response rate for Keene State was 35%. Equal numbers of first-year students and seniors were randomly selected, with 93 first-year students and 140 seniors responding. Females and seniors were over-represented among the respondents from KSC, as was the case in both the Master's and National groups. Students were given the option of responding to the mailed or web surveys. Of KSC's first-year students responding, 36% responded via the web; of the seniors, 7% responded likewise.

Notable Results

Keene State's student responses are most divergent from the Master's and National groups in the area of diversity. For all of the following KSC students had significantly ($p=.01$) lower responses than the Master's group: *fewer conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own; less understanding of people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds; and were less likely to be encouraged by the college to have contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.*

Survey items where there are meaningful differences between KSC and the Master's comparator group:

KSC's responses significantly (.01) **higher**:

- Participating in community-based project as part of a regular course (seniors)
- Received prompt feedback from professors (seniors)
- Relationship with faculty members (available, helpful, sympathetic) (seniors)
- Plan to or have: Independent study or self-designed major (seniors)

Areas where KSC students exceeded (5% to 10%) the Master's group, although not with a statistically significant difference:

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor (seniors)
- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (seniors)
- Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (first-year)
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (seniors)
- Relationship with administrative personnel and office (helpful, considerate, flexible) (first-year)
- Institution helps you cope with non-academic responsibilities (first-year)
- Institution provides the support you need to thrive socially (first-year)

KSC responses significantly (.01) **lower**:

- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own (first-year, seniors)
- Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds (first-year, seniors)
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments (seniors)
- Institution experience contributed to: Writing clearly and effectively (seniors)
- Institution experience contributed to: Analyzing quantitative problems (first-year, seniors)
- Institution experience contributed to: Using computing and information technology (seniors)
- Institution emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying (first-year, seniors)
- Institution encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds (seniors)
- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary) (first-year)
- Memorized facts, ideas, or methods from your courses (seniors)

Areas where KSC responses were **lower** (5% - 10%) than the Master's group, although not statistically significant:

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (first-year)
- Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas of information from various sources (first-year)
- Came to class without completing readings or assignments (first-year)
- Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment (seniors)
- Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor (seniors)
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor (first-year)
- Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values (first-year, seniors)
- Have or will take a foreign language (first-year)
- Institution experience contributed to: Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills (first-year)
- Institution experience contributed to: Speaking clearly and effectively (first-year, seniors)
- Institution experience contributed to: Analyzing quantitative problems (first-year)
- Institution experience contributed to: Developing a personal code of values and ethics (first-year, seniors)
- Institution experience contributed to: Contributing to the welfare of the community (first-year)
- Institution encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds (first-year)

For responses to all of the questions in the NSSE survey, please refer to a separate document, available on the web on the IR home page, or request a hard copy from the IR office.

Analysis of Five Benchmark Areas

For each of the five benchmark areas, percentiles were computed for both the first-years students and seniors. A percentile is the point at or below which a percentage of institutions fall in the distribution of scores. The following table shows where Keene State College's percentiles fall in the distribution of Master's and National group scores. On the following pages, each key area will be analyzed individually.

First-Year Students

Keene State College Percentiles

	Master's	National
Level of Academic Challenge	50%	40%
Active & Collaborative Learning	30%	30%
Student Interactions with Faculty	40%	40%
Enriching Educational Experiences	30%	20%
Supportive Campus Environment	60%	60%

Seniors

Keene State College Percentiles

	Master's	National
Level of Academic Challenge	60%	50%
Active & Collaborative Learning	70%	70%
Student Interactions with Faculty	70%	70%
Enriching Educational Experiences	50%	40%
Supportive Campus Environment	50%	50%

KSC first-year students scored lower in the *Active & Collaborative Learning* area than the Master's and National groups. Within this area their percentages of "Often" and "Very Often" responses to "Asked Questions in Class or Contributed to Class Discussions" were lower than both groups (49% vs. 58%), along with the responses to "Tutored or Taught Other Student" (5% vs. 12%, 13%). However, on two of the other five questions included in this area, first-year students had higher percentages than both groups: "Worked with Other Students on Projects During Class" and "Made a Class Presentation" (see graphs on pg. 6).

First-year students also had lower benchmark scores in the *Enriching Educational Experiences* area. Questions in this area include interactions with students of a different race or ethnicity, for which students at KSC do not have sufficient opportunity. Other questions in this area focus on using electronic technology, participating in internships, community services, study abroad, co-curricular activities, and a culminating senior experience. KSC first-year students did have a higher percentage of participation in community services and volunteer work than the Master's group (see graphs pg. 10 and frequency distributions in appendix).

KSC senior benchmarks ranged from the 40th to the 70th percentile. Their highest percentile scores were in the areas of *Active & Collaborative Learning* and *Student Interactions with Faculty*. These areas include participation in class and interaction with faculty members in and out of the classroom.

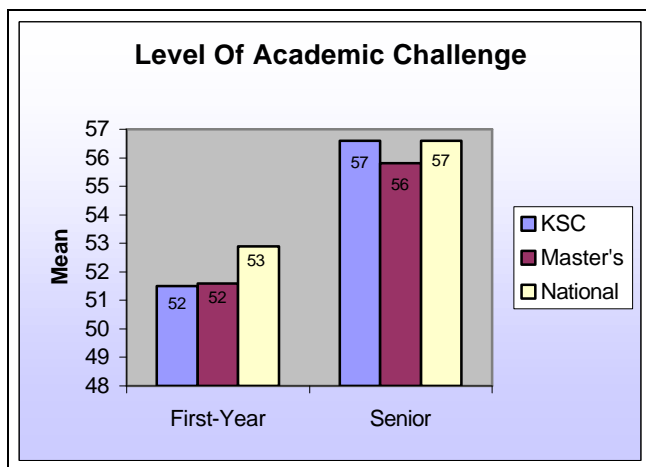
Seniors' lowest percentile was in the area of *Enriching Educational Experiences*, due again to the lack of opportunity for interaction with students of a different race or ethnicity. In other questions in this area they exceeded other Master's institutions (fieldwork, community service, see graphs pg. 10).

I. Level of Academic Challenge

Survey questions were clustered into five areas that impact educational outcomes. Benchmarks were calculated for each of these areas, using a 100-point scale to make comparisons easier. The first area, *Level of Academic Challenge*, looks at the time students spend preparing for class, reading and writing, and the institution's expectations for student academic effort. **KSC seniors** scored higher than first-year students in this area. Seniors scored at the 60th percentile in the Master's and the 50th in the National group, while the **first-year students'** benchmark was at the 50th percentile in the Master's group and the 40th in the National group.

Survey Questions Included in Level of Academic Challenge:

Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other related activities)
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length pack of course readings.
Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more
Number of written papers or reports of between 4 and 19 pages
Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
Coursework emphasizes: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
Coursework emphasizes: Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
Coursework emphasizes: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
Campus environment emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work



First-year students at KSC have a mean score (benchmark) for all academic items that correspond closely with the benchmark mean for other Master's institutions (51.5 vs. 51.6) and is only slightly lower than the National benchmark (52.9). KSC first-year student responses exceeded 50% of the Master's institutions and 40% of the national scores.

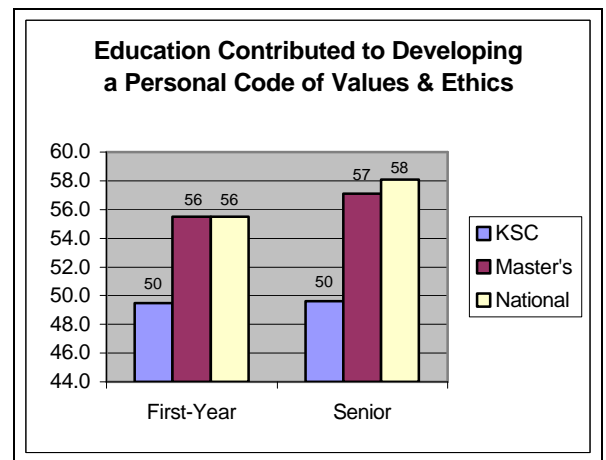
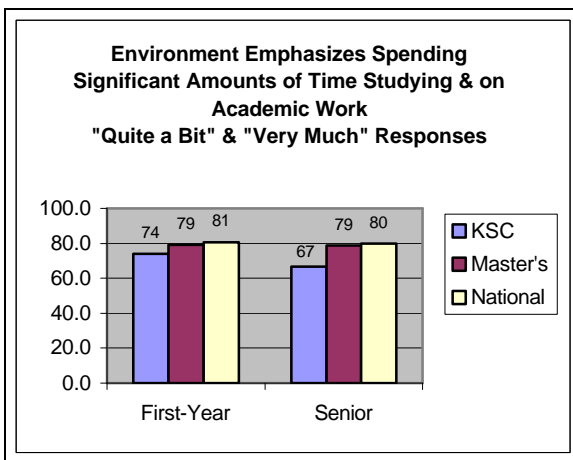
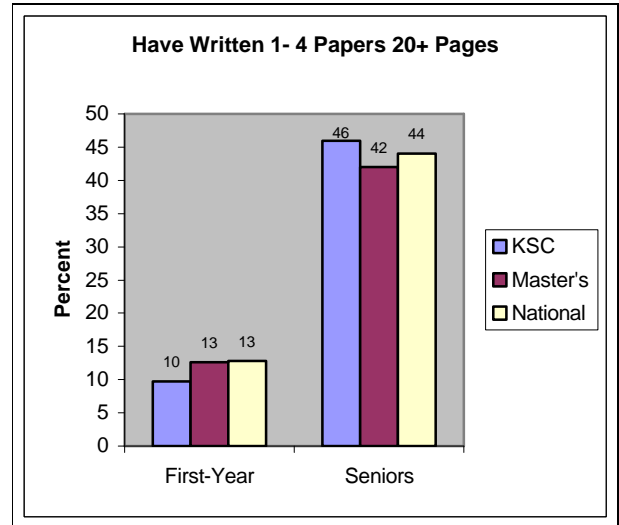
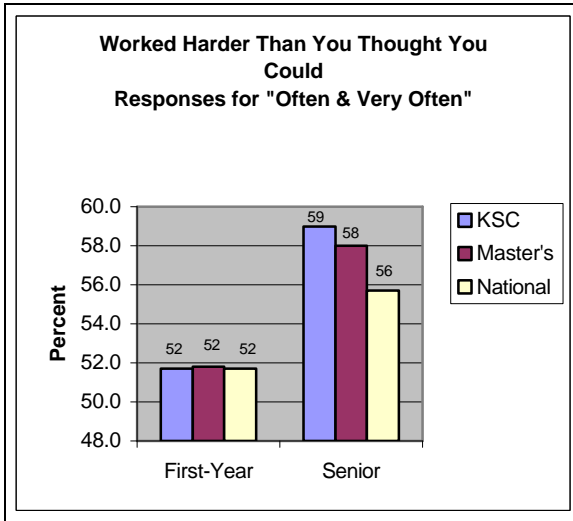
In order to determine whether the institution is doing better or worse than expected, student and institutional characteristics from the Department of Education IPEDS reports were used to determine actual versus predicted benchmark scores. KSC first-year students exceeded the predicted score by .6. This residual (difference) is equal to or greater than 60 percent of all participating institutions' scores.

Seniors at KSC scored slightly higher than other Master's institutions (56.6 vs. 55.8), and equaled the National mean score. As a result, KSC seniors fall at the 60th percentile for Master's institutions, and at the 50th for National institutions. Actual versus predicted scores for KSC seniors had a residual of 1.1, which is equal to or better than 65% of all NSSE institutions.

Frequency Distributions for Selected Questions

Level of Academic Challenge

For all institutions, NSSE found a sizeable gap between the amount of time faculty expect students to spend on educational activities and the actual time students spend. Students spend only half as much time as is expected. Twenty-two percent of students frequently go to class unprepared. Seniors across institutions feel that they have worked harder on academics than first-year students report; whereas both seniors and first-year students report about the same institutional expectations.

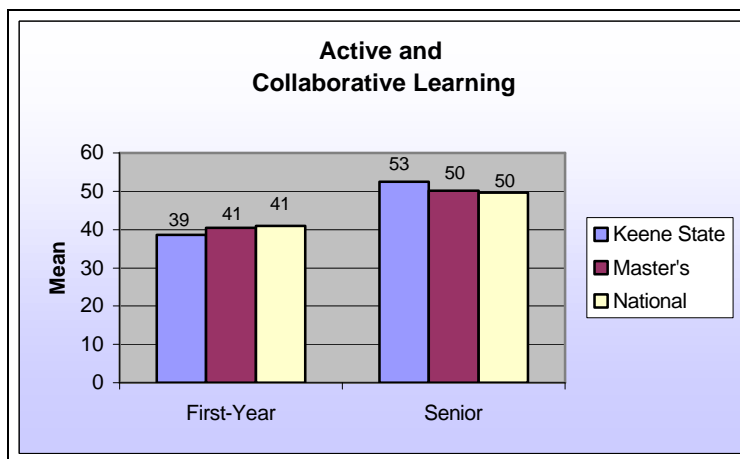


II. Active and Collaborative Learning

The second cluster of questions in the benchmark area is called *Active and Collaborative Learning*. This area focuses on participation in class, working with other students inside and out of the classroom, and tutoring. First-year students had lower scores in this area than in *level of academic challenge*. They scored equal or better than 30% of Master's and National institutions. Seniors, on the other hand, did very well compared to other institutions, scoring at the 70th percentile of Masters and National institutions.

Survey Questions Included in Active and Collaborative Learning

Asked Questions in class or contributed to class discussions
Made a class presentation
Worked with other students on projects during class
Tutored or taught other students
Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.)



First-year KSC students have a benchmark lower than the Master's and National comparator groups (38.6 vs. 40.5 and 40.9). In terms of percentiles, 30% of the Master's and National institutions are at, or below, KSC's first-year benchmark.

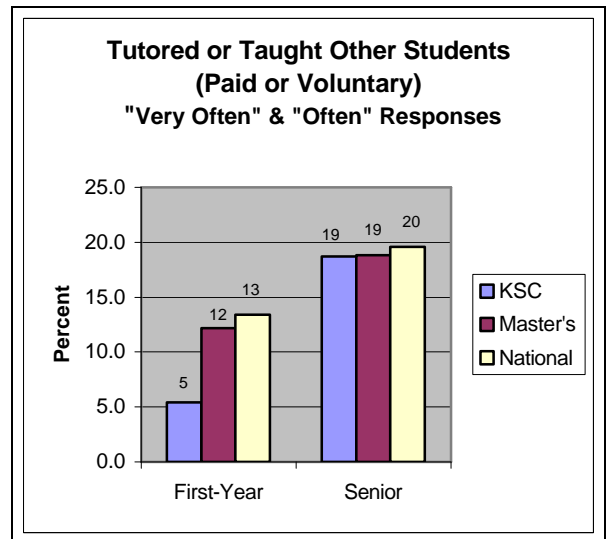
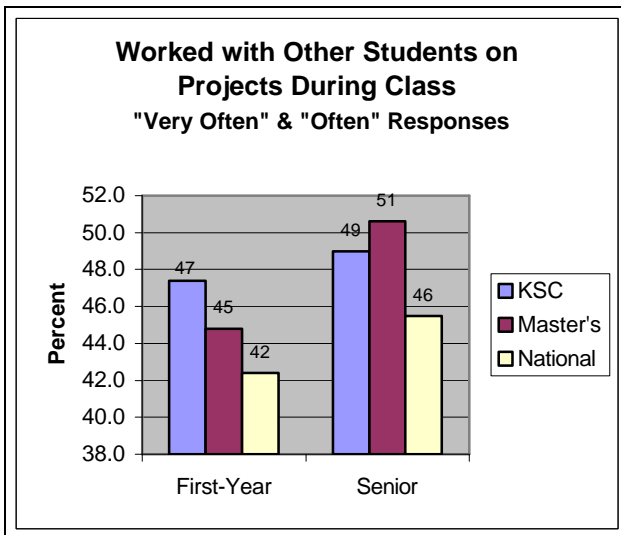
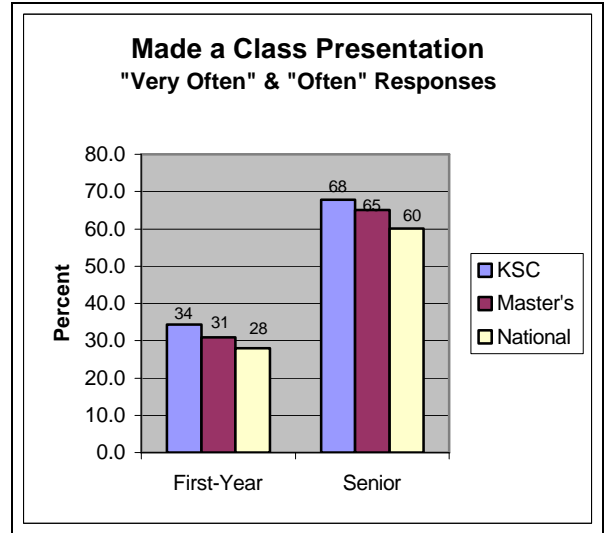
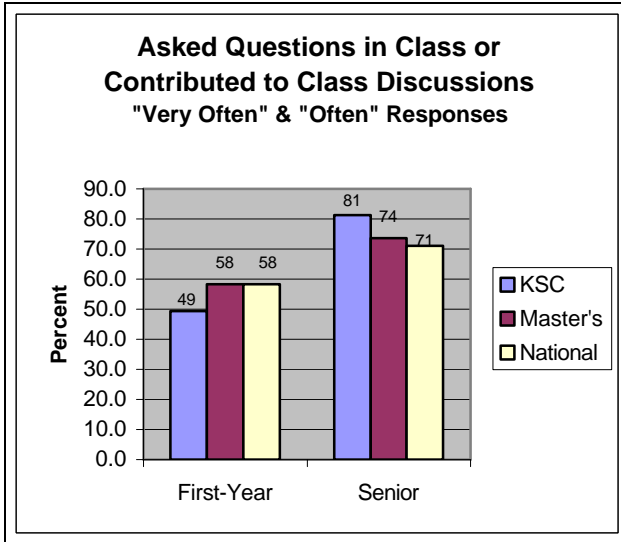
The predicted benchmark for KSC first-year students is higher than the actual score, which places them at the 25th percentile of NSSE institutions for expected versus actual scores in this benchmark area.

KSC **senior's** benchmark score is higher than both the Master's and National comparator groups, exceeding between 70% and 80% of both comparator groups.

KSC senior's predicted versus actual score is at the 60th percentile for NSSE institutions.

Frequency Distributions of Selected Questions

Active and Collaborative Learning

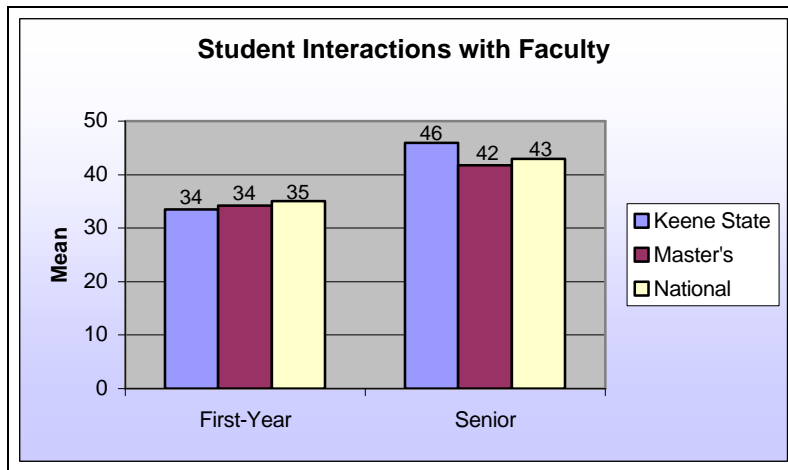


III. Student Interactions with Faculty Members

The third benchmark area focuses on student interactions with faculty, in and out of the classroom, feedback from faculty, and working with faculty on research projects. KSC first-year students scored slightly below comparator benchmarks, while KSC seniors scored at the 70th percentile.

Survey Questions Included in Student Interactions with Faculty Members:

- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)
- Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
- Worked or planned to work with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements.



First-year students at KSC have a benchmark score for questions included in the interactions with faculty area just slightly below other Master's institutions (33.5 vs. 34.2) and National institutions (33.5 vs. 35.1). KSC falls on the 40th percentile within both of these groups.

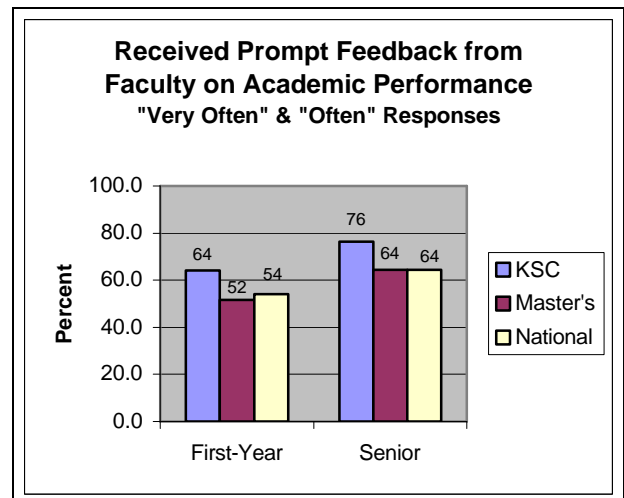
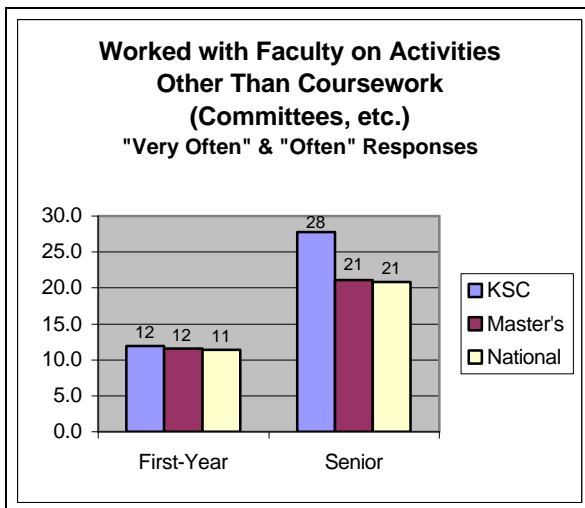
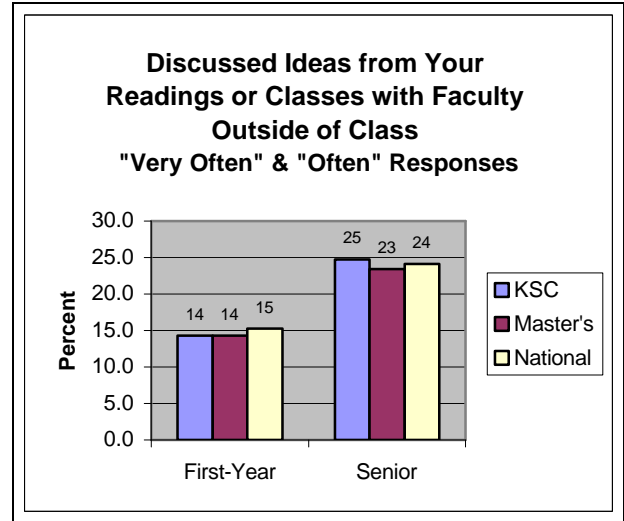
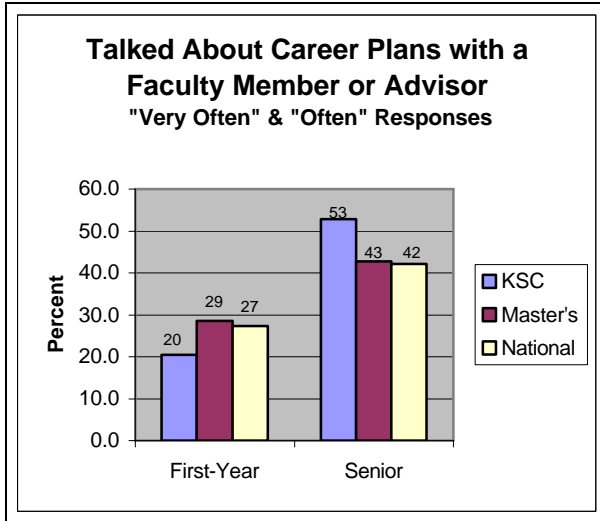
For expected versus actual scores, KSC first-year students' actual score was lower than predicted, placing them at the 31st percentile for NSSE institutions.

Seniors at KSC scored higher than other Master's institutions (45.9 vs. 41.7) and the National group (45.9 vs. 42.9), putting them at the 70th percentile for both Master's and National institutions.

Actual versus predicted scores on this benchmark yielded a positive residual, putting KSC seniors at the 75th percentile of all NSSE institutions.

Frequency Distributions of Selected Questions

Student Interactions with Faculty

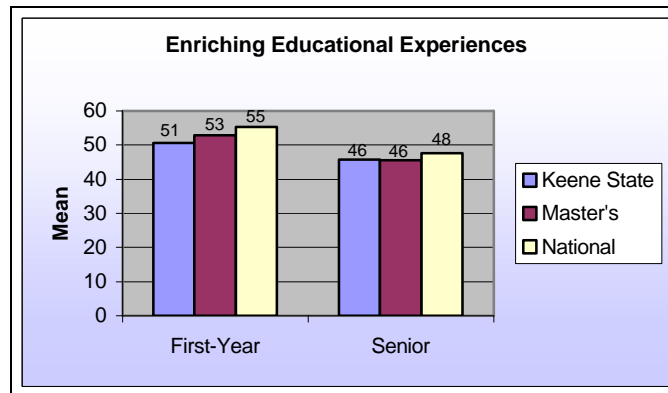


IV. Enriching Educational Experiences

The fourth benchmark area focuses on student interaction with student of different racial or ethnic backgrounds, or with different political opinions or values, using technology, and participating in community service, volunteering, internships, study broad, co-curricular activities or culminating senior project. KSC students did not do as well in this area do to the lack of opportunity to interact with students of a different race or ethnicity. First-years students scored at the 30th percentile for Master's and seniors at the 50th percentile.

Questions Included in Enriching Educational Experiences:

- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.)
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- Community service or volunteer work
- Foreign language coursework & study abroad
- Independent study or self-designed major
- Culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.)
- Had serious conversations with students that have different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Used electronic technology (list-serve chat group, internet, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment
- Campus environment encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds



First-year students at KSC have a lower mean score than the Master's group (50.6 vs. 52.9) and the National group (50.6 vs. 55.4), putting them at the 30% in the Master's group and at the 20% in the National group.

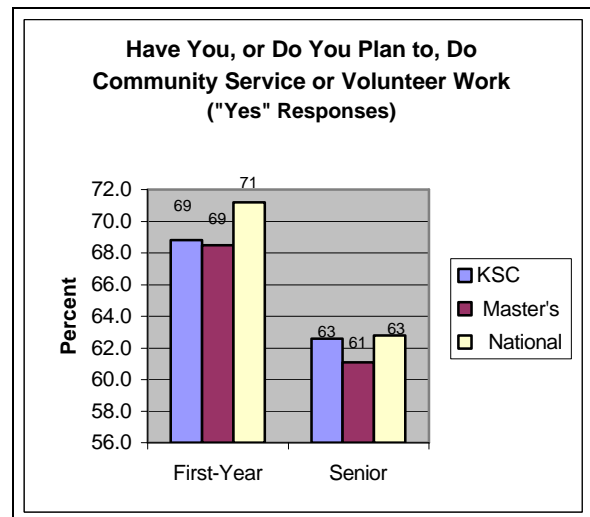
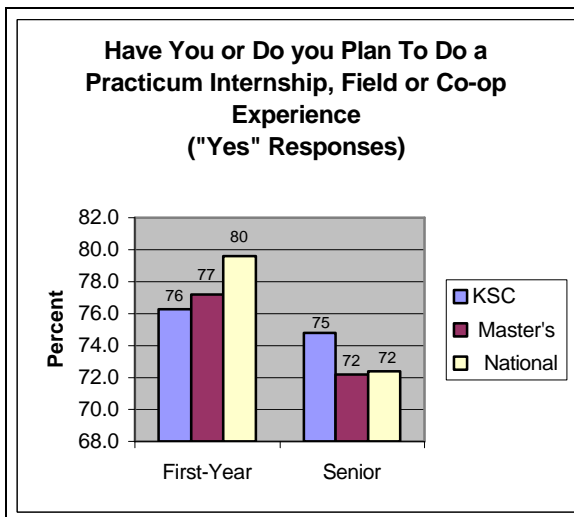
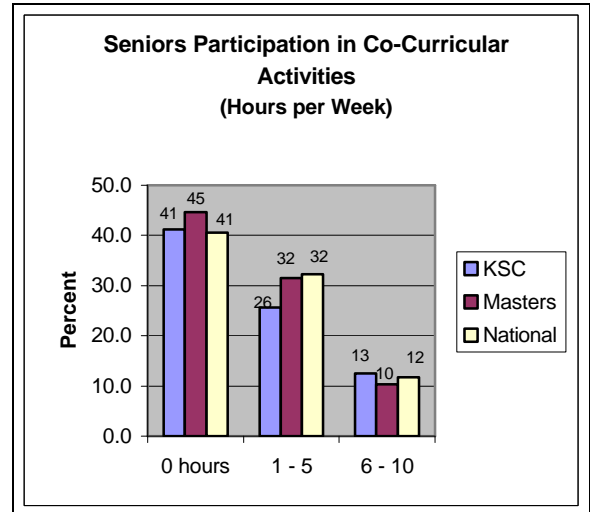
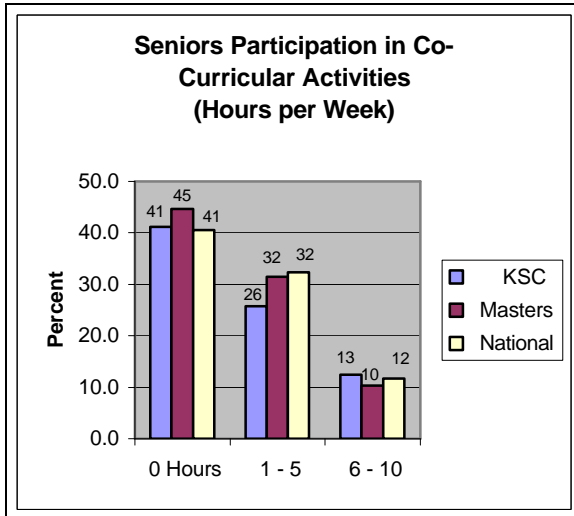
Actual versus predicted scores have a residual of -1.4 , which means that 7% of all of NSSE institutions are at or below KSC first-year students.

Seniors at KSC have a mean score slightly above the Master's (45.7 vs. 45.5) and lower than the National group (45.7 vs. 47.6). This puts them at the 50th percentile in the Master's group and at the 40th percentile in the National group.

Actual versus predicted scores for seniors have a residual of -0.1 , putting them at the 50th percentile for all NSSE institutions.

Frequency Distributions of Selected Questions

Enriching Educational Experiences

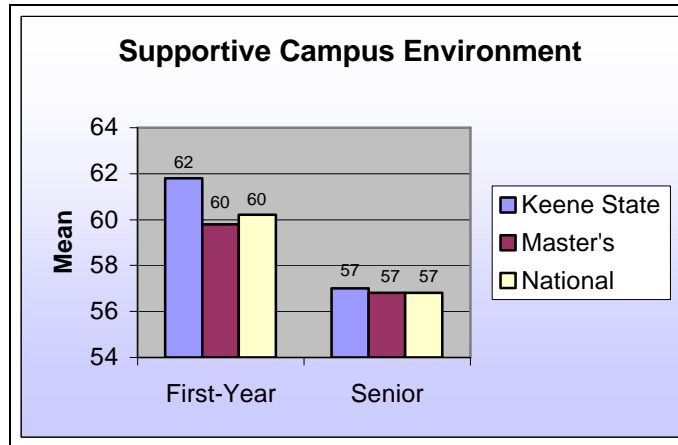


V. Supportive Campus Environment

The fifth benchmark area focuses on student perceptions of how much the campus helps them succeed academically and socially, helps them cope with non-academic responsibilities, and emphasizes supportive relationships among students, faculty members, and administration. KSC first-year students scored higher than Master's and National groups, falling at the 60th percentile in both groups. Seniors in all groups scored lower in this area than first-year students. KSC seniors scored at the 50th percentile.

Survey Questions Included in Benchmark for Supportive Campus Environment

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your nonacademic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices



First-year students at KSC have a benchmark score above both Master's and the National group (61.8 versus 59.8 and 60.2). This score puts KSC at the 60th percentile within both comparator groups. This is the highest percentile score for KSC first-year students (of all the benchmark areas).

Actual scores for KSC first-year students were higher than their predicted score, which places them at the 60th percentile for all NSSE institutions.

Seniors at KSC scored slightly higher than the Master's and National groups for this benchmark area, placing them at the 50th percentile within both comparator groups.

Seniors' actual score at KSC was slightly lower than predicted, resulting in a 40th percentile placement in this category among all NSSE institutions.

Frequency Distributions of Selected Questions

Supportive Campus Environment

