



Wisdom to make a difference.

Office of Institutional Research

2013 CIRP Freshman Survey: Self-Assessed Strengths and Weaknesses

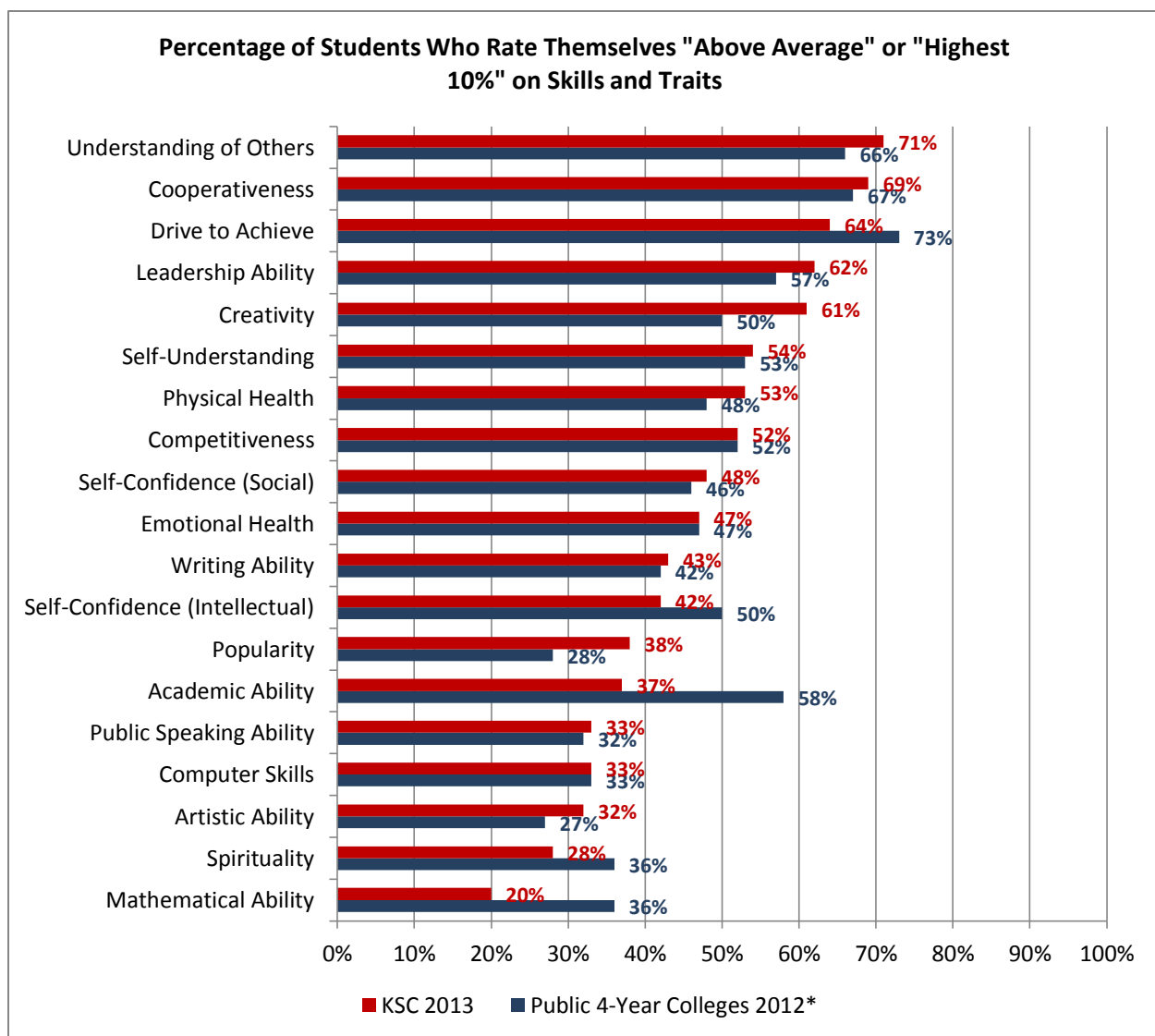
In summer 2013, Keene State College asked incoming students to complete the CIRP Freshman Survey, as one of their orientation tasks before enrolling. Usable responses were received from 794 first-time, full-time first-year students (62% response rate). Results from this survey will be shared in a series of reports on clusters of related survey items (college choice, high school activities, financial issues, need for academic support, future plans, etc.). This report summarizes the CIRP responses that relate to students' self-assessed strengths and weaknesses. National comparison data are not yet available for 2013, so this report compares KSC responses to the most recently available national data, which are from the 2012 CIRP administration.

KEY FINDINGS

- CIRP asks students to rate themselves on a set of skills and traits in comparison to other people their age, using a five-point response scale from *Lowest 10% of People My Age* to *Highest 10% of People My Age*. Like their national peers, KSC students rate themselves highest on non-academic skills and traits, such as understanding of others (71% rating "above average" or "highest 10%"), cooperativeness (69%), drive to achieve (64%), leadership ability (62%), and creativity (61%).
- Also similar to their national peers, KSC students rate themselves lower on academic skills and traits, such as computer skills (33% rating "above average" or "highest 10%"), artistic ability (32%), and mathematical ability (20%). KSC students also rated themselves very low on spirituality (28%). New Hampshire is the second most secular state in the U.S.
- KSC students' self-ratings are substantially higher than their national peers on creativity (11% higher) and popularity (10% higher).
- KSC students' self-ratings are substantially lower than their national peers on academic ability (21% lower), mathematical ability (16% lower), drive to achieve (9% lower), intellectual self-confidence (8% lower), and spirituality (8% lower).
- The 2013 CIRP also asks students to rate a different set of skills and traits without reference to peers, using a five-point response scale from *A Major Weakness* to *A Major Strength*. These questions have not been asked on previous editions of CIRP, so no national data are yet available. KSC students rate themselves highest on diversity skills (ability to get along with diverse others, 85%; ability to work cooperatively with diverse others, 84%; tolerance of others with diverse beliefs, 77%; ability to see the world from someone else's perspective, 74%). Importantly, there is one diversity related item that receives one of the lowest ratings: knowledge of people from different races/cultures (39%). This contrast suggests that KSC students' positive self-ratings of their skills in navigating diversity have not been tested in reality.
- In addition to the diversity related item mentioned in the previous bullet, KSC rated themselves lowest on foreign language ability (19%) and on a trio of knowledge sets that are necessary for citizenship (understanding of global issues, 31%; understanding of national issues, 36%; understanding of problems facing your community, 42%).

DETAILED FINDINGS

The following graph shows the percentage of Keene State College students who rate themselves either “above average” or “highest 10%” compared to other people their age on each trait, using a five-point scale from *Lowest 10%* to *Highest 10%*. These questions have been asked on the CIRP for many years, so national comparisons from 2012 are shown below. Because there are important gender differences nationally in self-ratings on many characteristics, and the percentage of women is much higher in KSC’s respondent pool than in the national data, the national data have been weighted to reflect the same gender distribution as at KSC. As this graph shows, KSC students rate themselves highest on understanding of others and lowest on mathematical ability. KSC students’ self-ratings are substantially above their national peers on popularity (10% higher) and creativity (9% higher). KSC students’ self-ratings are substantially below their national peers on academic ability (21% lower), mathematical ability (16% lower), drive to achieve (9% lower), intellectual self-confidence (8% lower), and spirituality (8% lower). This last point can be understood in terms of the fact that New Hampshire is the second most secular state in the U.S.



*National data have been weighted to reflect the gender distribution in the KSC sample.

In 2013, CIRP also asked students to rate themselves on another set of skills and traits using a different five-point response scale (*A Major Weakness* to *A Major Strength*). These questions have not been asked on prior editions of the CIRP, so there are no national comparative data yet for these items. The following graph displays the percentage of KSC students who rate each trait as “a major strength” or “somewhat strong.” As this graph shows, KSC students rate themselves highest on diversity skills and lowest on foreign language skills and knowledge necessary for citizenship.

