

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report provides you with the results of your students' scores on the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE), and the results of the rest of all the students who completed the survey. SCSU has participated in *NSSE* annually since 2005. Our response rates have been consistently higher than the national average, so that we have reasonable confidence in our results. This year, there was a slight drop in participation rate (24%). Analyses of *NSSE* results are completed by academic school, department, and program (when at least 20 students have completed the survey) and trends over time are studied.

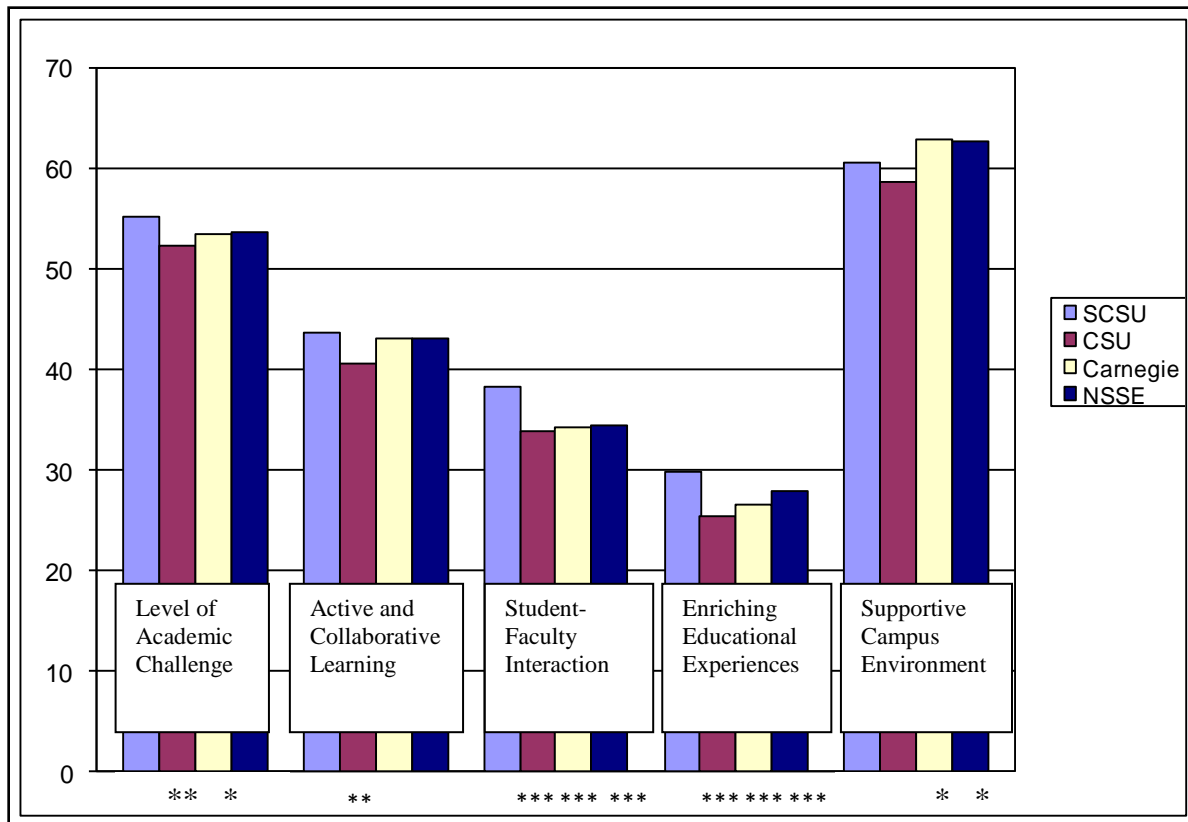
As the university has instituted several major initiatives, most notably the comprehensive First-Year Experience Program in 2007, first-year students' engagement scores have increased in a number of areas. For example, we have noted statistically significant increases in the *NSSE* benchmark areas of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, and student-faculty interaction.

*NSSE* is one source of information that will help the university to evaluate the impact of the new Liberal Education Program (LEP). As SCSU gears up to implement the new LEP, a trend analysis that was conducted since 2005 will serve as baseline data (that is, in years to come *NSSE* data will be compared with the data from today's initial implementation stage).

The following section provides the results for the university. Following this section, the results of your students appear.

### **Overall Results for the University**

The results from this year show that our first-year students had higher scores than our peers on four of the five *NSSE* benchmarks. The only benchmark in which we scored lower was Supportive Campus Environment. It is, therefore, not surprising that the national team which sponsors *NSSE* has asked to conduct an in-depth study of our university (the "*NSSE Learning to Improve: A Study of Evidence-Based Improvement in Higher Education*").



An \* indicates a nonchance, statistically significant difference

In terms of our seniors, we scored higher on the Level of Academic Challenge than the other CSU campuses and all the other universities that participated in *NSSE* this year. On the other side of the equation, our seniors scores lower than our peers on the *NSSE* benchmark known as Supportive Campus Environment.

Over the years, SCSU has tended to have the lowest scores on Supportive Campus Environment. The students who leave the university tend to have lower scores on the *NSSE* items that measure the quality of relationships with other students, faculty, and administrative personnel and offices.

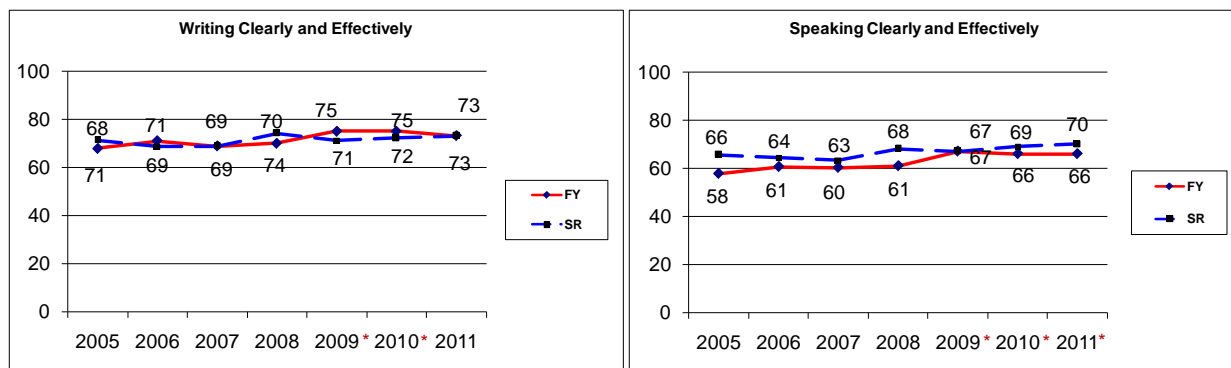
NSSE Items	Mean (SD) Returning Students	Mean (SD) Non-Returning Students	Sig.
Quality of relationships with other students	5.33(1.38)	4.67(1.53)	.006
Quality of relationships with faculty members	5.07(1.17)	4.46(1.14)	.002
Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices	4.38(1.35)	3.54(1.68)	.005

In terms of the nature and quality of interactions between students and faculty, positive change occurred for the first-year students last year. Overall, improvement on this metric has been seen since the baseline year of 2005 for both first-year students and seniors.

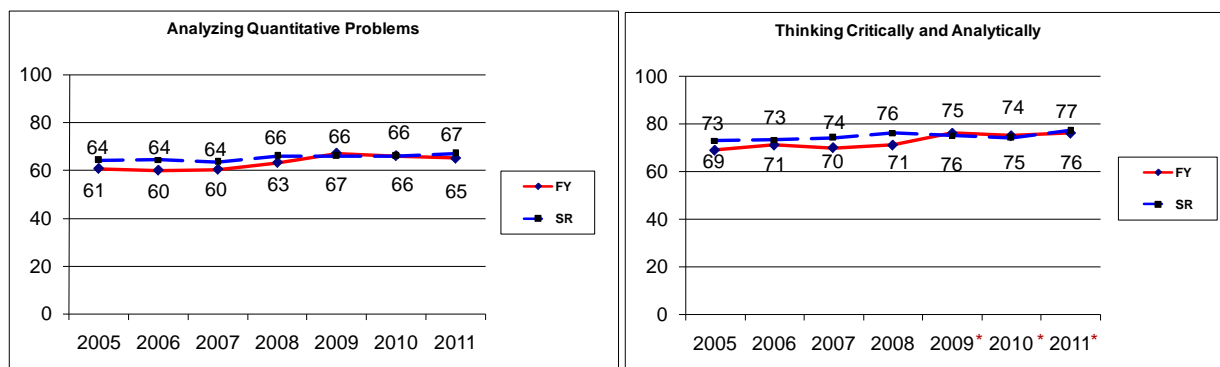
### Measuring Liberal Education Program (LEP) Impact

To measure LEP impact, a trend analyses has been conducted since 2005. This trend analysis currently covers seven years (2005-2011). Several examples are provided in this section<sup>1</sup>.

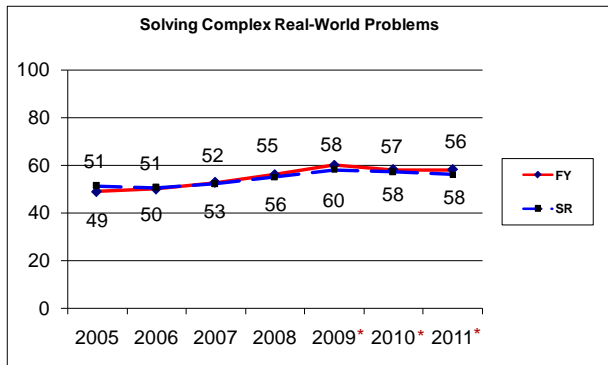
For example, *NSSE* asks students to indicate the extent to which their experiences at SCSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing and speaking clearly and effectively. Over the last 7 years, the scores of the first-year students have risen since 2005, and the improvements are not due to chance. However, the scores of the seniors have remained essentially unchanged. Thus, one indicator of the impact of the new liberal education program will be seniors' improvement in writing and speaking clearly and effectively.



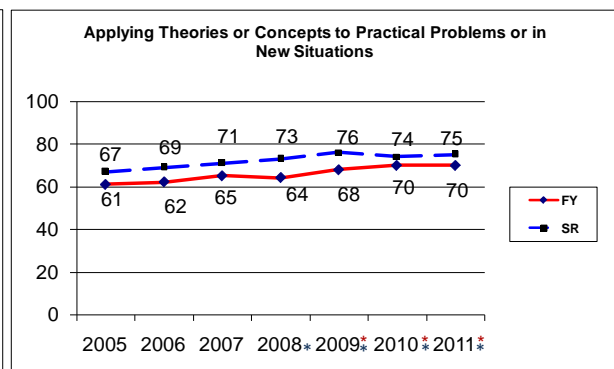
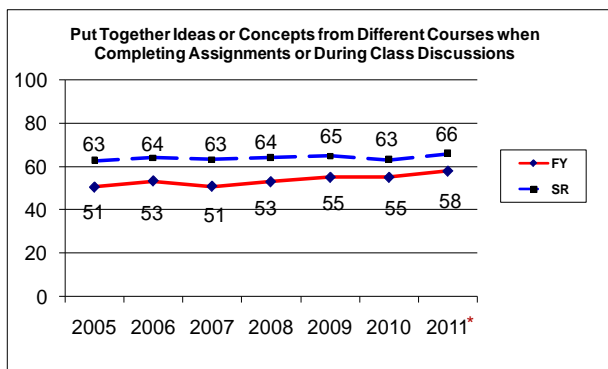
*NSSE* also asked students to indicate the extent to which SCSU contributed to their knowledge and skills to think critically and analytically, analyze quantitative problems, and solve complex real-world problems. While the scores of the first-year students significantly improved over the last seven years in thinking critically and analyzing quantitative problems, the scores of the seniors have remained stable. A noteworthy finding is that the first-year students had significantly higher scores in 2011 than in 2005 for SCSU's impact on their knowledge and skills to solve complex real-world problems.



<sup>1</sup> For ease of use and uniformity in scales, mean scores were converted to a 1-100 point scale. An asterisk (\*) next to the current year on the bottom of the chart indicates there was a statistically significant (“nonchance”) difference between the scores of the freshmen and seniors from the baseline (2005).



The new LEP underscores the importance of students’ forming connections among knowledge learned in the different tiers. Over the last 7 years, the scores of the first-year students and seniors have remained stable in terms of how often they have put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions. An interesting finding is that both the first-year students and seniors experienced growth in how often they applied theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.



This year, our first-year students had higher scores than the other CSUS campuses on writing clearly and effectively, speaking clearly and effectively, working effectively with others, learning effectively on your own, understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds, and developing a personal code of values and ethics. The question is whether our students’ higher scores in these areas will persist through senior year.

Also in terms of discerning LEP impact, the university will consider the students’ responses to items on a scale that measures knowledge, skills, and personal development areas that are targeted by LEP. Since 2005, the scores on these items have remained relatively stable. Thus, an important jump in scores would provide valuable information.

The table below is a summary of seniors’ responses from 2005-2011 to the *NSSE* item “To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?” A score of “substantial impact” was computed by combining the responses of “quite a bit” and “very much.”

Salient differences include an increase in the percentage of students agreeing that SCSU impacted their ability to learn effectively on their own (from 67% in 2005 to 72% in 2011), solving complex real-world programs (from 52% to 60%), and contributing to the welfare of the community (from 33% to 45%).

Learning Outcome Area		% Senior Rating SCSU Impact as Substantial						
		2005 (N=369)	2006 (N=618)	2007 (N=446)	2008 (N=497)	2009 (N=513)	2010 (N=532)	2011 (N=538)
1	Thinking critically and analytically	81%	79%	83%	85%	84%	83%	85%
2	Acquiring a broad general education	84%	80%	81%	84%	83%	81%	80%
3	Writing clearly and effectively	82%	76%	75%	83%	81%	82%	81%
4	Using computing and information technology	76%	74%	75%	78%	77%	78%	76%
6	Speaking clearly and effectively	73%	69%	69%	75%	74%	76%	77%
5	Working effectively with others	73%	70%	73%	74%	77%	72%	76%
7	Acquiring job or work related knowledge and skills	70%	66%	67%	72%	72%	72%	72%
8	Learning effectively on your own	67%	62%	67%	71%	72%	74%	72%
9	Analyzing quantitative problems	69%	69%	67%	69%	72%	71%	73%
10	Understanding yourself	58%	56%	60%	64%	63%	62%	65%
11	Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	53%	51%	57%	55%	61%	58%	62%
12	Solving complex real-world problems	52%	51%	52%	54%	60%	58%	60%
13	Developing a personal code of values and ethics	52%	49%	53%	54%	57%	57%	58%
14	Contributing to the welfare of your community	33%	37%	38%	39%	47%	45%	45%
15	Voting in local, state, or national elections	33%	26%	29%	28%	40%	29%	32%
16	Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	20%	23%	22%	25%	28%	26%	27%

### ***Co-Curricular Impact: Comparison with other CSUS Campuses***

In 2011, SCSU participated in the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) Consortium for the fourth year. By participating in the consortium, students were asked to respond to additional questions that dealt with academic progress, out-of-classroom experiences, advising, and future plans.

While the responses of SCSU students to these additional items were generally similar to those of students at the other CSUS institutions, there were several key differences, especially in terms of the impact of participation in co-curricular activities. The following tables present only those instances in which a nonchance, statistically significant difference was observed. For example, SCSU's first-year students tended to have noticeably higher scores than other CSUS first-year students in many of the categories regarding the impact of co-curricular activities in their development, including intellectual growth, leadership skills, social responsibility, appreciation of diversity, and educational goals.

In the following tables, one asterisk (\*) represents a nonchance difference between SCSU and CSUS students at the conventional threshold of statistical significance ( $p \leq .05$ ), two asterisks (\*\*) indicate an increase in the confidence level that a real difference has been found ( $p \leq .01$ ), and three asterisks (\*\*\*) indicate that there is the greatest amount of confidence that a real difference has been found ( $p \leq .001$ ).

		SCSU	CSUS
To what extent has your participation in co-curricular activities at this institution contributed to your development in the following areas?			
Intellectual growth	FY	2.81	*2.65
	SR	2.75	2.74
Leadership skills	FY	2.85	**2.63
	SR	2.89	2.93
Social responsibility	FY	3.07	***2.78
	SR	2.92	2.89
Appreciation of diversity	FY	2.99	***2.65
	SR	2.78	2.71
Educational goals	FY	2.97	*2.78
	SR	2.86	2.91

Two subsequent items explored the availability of courses: SCSU students had significantly lower scores than students at other CSUS institutions on the items regarding timely availability of both general education courses and courses in the major.

Item		Southern	CSUS
Courses in my major are offered in such a way that I can complete my degree in a timely manner.	FY	2.68	***2.96
	SR	2.63	**2.78
General education courses at this university are offered in such in a way that I can complete my degree in a timely manner.	FY	2.62	***2.95
	SR	2.58	***2.90

### *A few additional interesting results*

#### **Are students satisfied with their overall educational experience?**

84% of first-year students reported a favorable image of this institution; 72% of seniors would have chosen this school again if they could start their college career over.

#### **How well do students get along with administrators and staff?**

27% of first-year students found the administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible.

#### **How much time do students spend on homework each week?**

32% of first-year students spent more than 15 hours per week preparing for class. 18% spent 5 hours or less.

#### **Do exams require students to do their best work?**

44% of first-year students reported that their exams strongly challenged them to do their best work.

#### **How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?**

By their senior year, 47% of students participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

#### **How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?**

81% of seniors at least occasionally discussed career plans with faculty. 19% never talked with faculty members about career plans.

#### **What percentages of students participate in community service?**

By the time they were seniors, 50% of students had participated in community service or volunteer work.