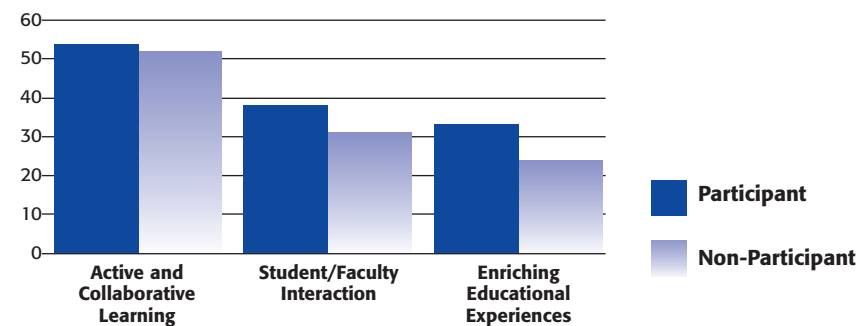


Assessment of Extra- and Co-Curricular Experiences

Student participation in co-curricular activities has increased steadily over the past three years. Students who participated in the FYE pilot had significantly higher rates of participation in co-curricular activities than students who did not. The participating students also tended to have statistically significantly higher scores on the series of items on the 2008 NSSE that measured Active and Collaborating Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Enriching Educational Experiences.²

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES HAD HIGHER SCORES



Other Assessments in 2008-09

- Post-program participation surveys of students' experiences with events such as the New Student Orientation and interventions sponsored by the Drug and Alcohol Resource Center.
- Demographic data on students with respect to housing choices.
- Demographic data on graduate student yield as a result of financial aid policy/program changes.
- Post-service periodic surveys administered to clients of Disability Resource Center.
- A study of part-time students' demographics and experiences.
- Comprehensive evaluation of student experiences with the radically transformed dining program. Those data, coupled with the use of the Dining Service Advisory Committee (which serves as a consistent focus group for validation/explanation of data from the surveys) have served as the basis for further program planning and refinement.
- SEOP and ConnCAS pre-program assessments (written and oral via interview) of each student's current skill/attitude/motivation level, mid-program assessments of student progress toward program goals, and end-of-program assessments (paper and interview and self assessment) to determine continuation in the program/SCSU. Our retention and attrition data indicate that this kind of intensive monitoring of student learning goals and progress toward them contribute directly to the success of students in these programs.

² Scores were converted to a scale of 0-100 for ease of comparison.

A Report to the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System

Southern Connecticut State University

Cheryl J. Norton, *President* • July 23, 2009

Summary of Assessment Activities • July 2009

Assessment at Southern is guided by the university's core values of excellence, student success, life-long learning, community involvement, diversity, and access. Our assessment philosophy underscores the belief that evidence-based decisions promote learning and positive developmental outcomes for students.

Assessment activities are coordinated through the Office of Assessment and Planning. The office works closely with the Office of Management Information and Research (OMIR) to provide timely information to support the operations and decision-making of the university leadership and all university departments and offices. Assessment occurs at the institutional level, within degree programs, across programs and university-wide initiatives, and in extra- and co-curricular programs. Findings are presented regularly to the campus at various forums, such as the Enrollment Management Council, Deans' Council, and faculty governance groups. The findings are discussed and course corrections are made as needed.

Institutional-Level Assessments

- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement (BCSSE)**
 - National surveys that provide important data about students' college experiences in a variety of curricular and co-curricular areas; Southern has participated since 2004.
 - Results shared with campus community in variety of venues; departmental and school reports generated.
 - Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, as well as trend analyses, document positive changes in student development and learning over time.
- **Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)**
 - Developed through a partnership between the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) to communicate comparable information about public colleges in a common format through the College Portrait.
 - Initial College Portrait has been completed (see <http://www.southernct.edu/collegeportrait/>)
 - A pilot of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) is planned for 2009-10.
- **Accreditation/Reaccreditation Reviews During 2008-09**
 - The 2008 progress report for NEASC was accepted. This report detailed our progress in five areas of emphasis cited during the 2001 site visit.
 - Several successful reaccreditation site visits were completed during 2008-09:
 - Council on Academic Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE)
 - Public Health Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)
 - National Association for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

Assessment Within Degree Programs

Student Learning Outcomes in the Major

All academic departments have a faculty assessment coordinator; many departments have created standing assessment committees. All programs have identified student learning outcomes for their major, and all have identified appropriate assessment measures; 68 percent of programs have collected data, and 48 percent have completed data analyses that have resulted in changes to the curriculum or other aspects of the program.

5-Year Academic Program Review

- **Undergraduate:** A new process for the 5-year program review was approved in 2008. On a rotating basis, departments complete a self-study providing evidence of meeting 17 standards. The Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC), a standing faculty committee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF), provides peer review and support. The new process is being phased in over three years. In 2008-09, seven departments completed modified self-studies: Journalism, Communication Disorders, Biology, Nursing, Psychology, Media Studies, and Political Science.
- **Graduate:** An ongoing 5-year review process is in place with six programs having completed the cycle in 2008-09: Urban Studies, Communication Disorders, Biology, Nursing, Psychology, and Political Science. The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) of the Graduate Council provides peer review and support for this process.

Assessment Across Programs

University-wide programs — such as the First-Year Experience Program, Writing Across the Curriculum, and the new Liberal Education Program — are designed with assessment embedded into the program structure.

First-Year Experience

All students are part of learning communities and are tracked longitudinally. Information sources include a student survey at New Student Orientation; BCSSE; two self-assessments during the first semester; demographic data; and NSSE during the spring of students' first year. Results from the 2007 pilot year and the first year of full implementation in 2008 suggest the program is effective on the basis of higher first-to-second year retention rates, a decrease of students on academic probation, higher GPAs, and an increase in the number of credits completed.

General Education Assessment

Since 2005, we have conducted trend analyses of NSSE items. The following table, for example, is a summary of seniors' responses from 2005-2008 to the NSSE question "To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?" The table is rank-ordered in percent of seniors reporting substantial impact on their learning in 16 general education areas.

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

As implementation of the new Liberal Education Program is being planned, a committee is working to design embedded assessments into the new program. Data from several competencies (written communication, quantitative reasoning, multilingual communication) are being analyzed this summer.

Writing Across the Curriculum

- Fully implemented in 2007-08
- Results of indirect assessments (student and faculty surveys) have been used to make initial revisions in the program; direct assessment of student writing with rubrics created by academic departments is planned for the 2009-2010 year.

Assessing Faculty Development

Faculty development is an integral element in the assessment process. Events planned are based on identified faculty needs and student assessment data; workshops and training are evaluated. Follow-up evaluations are conducted to gauge long-term effects of professional development activities.

¹ Percent of seniors responding "quite a bit" or "very much" to the question, "To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?"