NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

2007 Benchmark Comparisons Report

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & PLANNING

FEBRUARY 2008
Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

*IWU had significantly higher scores than its NSSE peers for both first-year students and seniors in the Level of Academic Challenge Benchmark (p < .001).*

**Level of Academic Challenge Benchmark Items - IWU**

- **Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, etc. related to academic program)**
  
  1 = 0 hrs/wk, 2 = 1-5 hrs/wk, 3 = 6-10 hrs/wk, 4 = 11-15 hrs/wk, 5 = 16-20 hrs/wk, 6 = 21-25 hrs/wk, 7 = 26-30 hrs/wk, 8 = more than 30 hrs/wk

  Both first-year students and seniors spent an average of approximately 16-20 hours per week preparing for class.

- **Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings**
  
  1 = none, 2 = 1-4, 3 = 5-10, 4 = 11-20, 5 = more than 20

  Both first-year students and seniors reported an average between 5-10 and 11-20 assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings per school year.

- **Number of written papers or reports of…**
  
  1 = none, 2 = 1-4, 3 = 5-10, 4 = 11-20, 5 = more than 20

  **...20 pages or more**

  1) First-year students averaged almost no written papers of 20 pages or more per school year.

  2) Seniors reported an average between 0 and 1-4 written papers of 20+ pages per school year.

  **...between 5 and 19 pages**

  Both first-year students and seniors reported an average between 1-4 and 5-10 written papers per school year.

  **...fewer than 5 pages**

  Both first-year students and seniors reported approximately 5-10 written papers per school year.
Both first-year students and seniors reported substantial* emphasis on the following coursework activities:

Note: * Combined "quite a bit" & "very much"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework Activities</th>
<th>First-year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing and organizing ideas</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making judgments about the value of information</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying theories or concepts to practical problems</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of students who frequently* worked harder than they thought they could to meet faculty standards or expectations

Note: * Combined "often" & "very often"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of students who felt that IWU placed substantial* emphasis on studying and academic work

Note: * Combined "quite a bit" & "very much"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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</table>
Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.

* There were no significant differences between IWU and its NSSE peers in the Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark.

### Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark Items

- Percentage of students who frequently* asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
  - First-year: 63%
  - Seniors: 79%
- Percentage of students who frequently* made a class presentation
  - First-year: 17%
  - Seniors: 51%
- Percentage of students who frequently* worked with other students on projects during class
  - First-year: 30%
  - Seniors: 34%
- Percentage of students who frequently* worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
  - First-year: 42%
  - Seniors: 57%
- Percentage of students who frequently* tutored or taught other students
  - First-year: 17%
  - Seniors: 32%
- Percentage of students who frequently* participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
  - First-year: 7%
  - Seniors: 13%
- Percentage of students who frequently* discussed ideas from their readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)
  - First-year: 62%
  - Seniors: 65%

Note: * Combined "often" & "very often"
Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.

*IWU seniors had significantly higher scores than its NSSE senior peers in the Student-Faculty Interaction Benchmark (p < .001).*

**Student-Faculty Interaction Benchmark Items**

- Percentage of students who frequently* discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
  - First-year: 46%
  - Seniors: 55%

- Percentage of students who frequently* talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
  - First-year: 23%
  - Seniors: 60%

- Percentage of students who frequently* discussed ideas from their readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
  - First-year: 18%
  - Seniors: 35%

- Percentage of students who frequently* worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)
  - First-year: 18%
  - Seniors: 30%

- Percentage of students who frequently* received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance
  - First-year: 57%
  - Seniors: 69%

* Combined "often" & "very often"

- By their senior year, 35% of students reported working with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements, while 42% of the first-year students plan to work with faculty before they graduate.
Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark

Complementary learning opportunities enhance academic programs. Diversity experiences teach students valuable things about themselves and others. Technology facilitates collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge.

IWU had significantly higher scores than its NSSE peers for both first-year students and seniors in the Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark (p < .001).

Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark Items

- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-year</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both first-year students and seniors spent an average of approximately 6-10 hours per week participating in co-curricular activities.

- By their senior year, 73% of students reported participating in a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment, while 81% of first-year students plan to participate in these activities before they graduate.

- Seventy-five percent of seniors reported participating in community service or volunteer work, while 44% of first-year students have already participated, and another 40% plan to do so before graduation.

- By their senior year, 74% of students reported participating in foreign language coursework, while 45% of first-year students have already participated, and another 31% plan to do so before they graduate.

- Almost 50% of the seniors reported participating in a study abroad program. Sixty-five percent of the first-year students plan to study abroad before graduation.

- Approximately 30% of the seniors reported participating in an independent study or self-designed major, while almost 20% of first-year students plan to do the same.

- Over 50% of the seniors reported participating in a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.). Fifty-seven percent of first-year students plan a similar activity before graduating.
Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark Items (continued)

- Percentage of students who frequently* had serious conversations with students of different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
  
  First-year: 66%
  Seniors: 60%
  Note: * Combined "often" & "very often"

- Percentage of students who frequently* had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity
  
  First-year: 59%
  Seniors: 47%
  Note: * Combined "often" & "very often"

- Percentage of students who frequently* used electronic technology to discuss or complete an assignment
  
  First-year: 46%
  Seniors: 53%
  Note: * Combined "often" & "very often"

- Percentage of students who felt that IWU strongly* encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
  
  First-year: 60%
  Seniors: 36%
  Note: * Combined "quite a bit" & "very much"

- Almost 20% of the seniors reported participating in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together. Twenty-one percent of first-year students plan to do the same before they graduate.
**Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark**

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.

*IWU had significantly higher scores than its NSSE peers for both first-year students and seniors on the Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark (p < .001; p < .01).*

**Supportive Campus Environment Benchmark Items**

- Percentage of students who felt that IWU placed a substantial* commitment to their academic success
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

  Note: * Combined "quite a bit" & "very much"

- Percentage of students who felt that IWU strongly supported their needs in coping with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  Note: * Combined "quite a bit" & "very much"

- Percentage of students who felt that IWU strongly supported their social needs
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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</table>

  Note: * Combined "quite a bit" & "very much"

- Sixty-three percent of first-year students reported that their peers were friendly, supportive, and helped them feel as if they belonged, while 72% of the seniors reported similar feelings.

- Forty-six percent of first-year students reported faculty members as available, helpful, and sympathetic to their needs. Sixty-one percent of the seniors reported feeling the same of faculty.

- Thirty-five percent of first-year students found the administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible, while 25% of the seniors reported the same.