

Notes on the 2005-06 NSSE results for UW-Superior

The National Survey of Student Engagement surveyed UW-Superior first-year and last-year students in Spring 2006. As part of the survey reporting, NSSE staff indicated which questions for which UW-Superior's responses significantly differed from the three norm groups: COPLAC participants, Carnegie peers (essentially regional master's-level public universities) and all NSSE participants.

The items that had some significant variance are highlighted below.

I'd like to note that our age distribution is substantially different than our COPLAC and Carnegie Peers, with the 91% traditional age freshmen in the UWS study, compared with 98% and 93% at the peers. At the senior level, 53% of our students are traditional age, compared with 80% and 70% at the peers. This partly reflects our high percentage of transfer enrollees.

The items that most stand-out as different from our COPLAC peers are as follows:

Our students report that:

- Freshmen have average exposure to diverse perspectives and Senior have above-average exposure.
- Freshmen have below-average exposure to service learning, but Seniors have similar exposure to seniors at peer institutions.
- Freshmen report less memorization and less conceptual problem solving, while Seniors are similar to students at peers.
- Freshmen report more than a typical amount of "problem sets" that take more than an hour, while Seniors report more than a typical amount that take less than an hour.
- Freshmen and Seniors report similar participation rates for "spiritual activities" compared to COPLAC peers, but less than the other two peer groups.
- Seniors report less practical/clinical experience than students at COPLAC peers.
- Seniors report less foreign language coursework than students at peers.
- Freshmen and Seniors are more likely to work more off-campus.
- Freshmen and Seniors are less likely to participate in co-curricular activities.
- Seniors are more likely to have dependent care responsibilities.
- Freshmen are more likely to be commuters than at other COPLAC schools.
- Freshmen do not report the same level of institutional support to help them succeed academically as do students at all three peer groups.
- Seniors report more than typical encouragement to have contact with students from other backgrounds.

- Freshmen support substantially less institutional emphasis on attending campus events and activities.
- Freshmen report below-average experiences to understand themselves, develop values & ethics, contribute to community welfare, and develop a sense of spirituality. Seniors score similar to students at peer institutions in all these categories.
- Freshmen rate their “entire (UWS) educational experience” as less satisfying as do students from all three peer group institutions. Seniors rate it as similar to peers.
- Freshmen are less confident that they made the right college choice than students in the comparison groups. Seniors are similarly confident.

Observations made by Jim Miller, UW-Superior Institutional Research