National Survey
of Student Engagement

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Benchmark Comparisons

August 2007

National Survey of Student Engagement

Interpreting the Benchmark Comparisons Report

To focus discussions about the importance of student engagement and guide institutional improvement efforts, NSSE created five clusters or "benchmarks" of effective educational practice: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. This Benchmark Comparisons Report compares the performance of your institution with your selected peers or consortium. In addition, page 9 provides two other comparisons between your school and (a) above-average institutions with benchmarks in the top 50% of all NSSE institutions and (b) high-performing institutions with benchmarks in the top 10% of all NSSE institutions. These displays allow you to determine if the engagement of your typical student differs in a statistically significant, meaningful way from the average student in these comparison groups. More detailed information about how benchmarks are created can be found on the NSSE Web site at www.nsse.iub.edu/2007_Institutional_Report/.

Class and Sample
Means are reported for first-year students and seniors. Institution-reports class ranks are used. All randomly selected students are included in these analyses. Students in targeted or locally administered oversamples are not included.

Statistical Significance
Benchmarks with mean differences that are larger than would be expected by chance alone are noted with one, two, or three asterisks, denoting one of three significance levels ($p<.05$, $p< .01$, and $p<.001$). The smaller the significance level, the smaller the likelihood that the difference is due to chance. Please note that statistical significance does not guarantee that the result is substantive or important. Large sample sizes (as with the NSSE project) tend to produce more statistically significant results even though the magnitude of mean differences may be inconsequential. It is recommended to consult effect sizes to judge the practical meaning of the results.

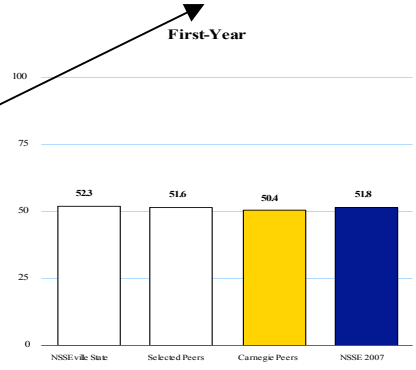
Effect Size
Effect size indicates the practical significance of the mean difference. It is calculated by dividing the mean difference by the standard deviation of the group to which the institution is being compared. In practice, an effect size of .2 is often considered small, .5 moderate, and .8 large. A positive sign indicates that your institution's mean was greater, thus showing an affirmative result for the institution. A negative sign indicates the institution lags behind the comparison group. Look for patterns of effect sizes that point to areas of student or institutional performance that warrant attention.

Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)

Benchmark Comparisons

	NSSEville State	NSSEville State compared with: Selected Peers			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
Class	Mean [a]	Mean [a]	Sig [b]	Effect Size [c]	Mean [a]	Sig [b]	Effect Size [c]	Mean [a]	Sig [b]	Effect Size [c]
First-Year	52.3	51.6		.05	50.4	*	.14	51.8		.04
Senior	55.8	55.9		-.01	55.6		.02	55.8		.00

Mean
The mean is the *weighted* arithmetic average of student level benchmark scores.



Bar Charts
A visual display of first-year and senior mean benchmark scores for your institution and your selected peer or consortium groups.

Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) Items

Benchmark Description & Survey Items
A description of the benchmark and the individual items used in its creation are summarized.

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.

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, etc. related to academic program)
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more; number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages; and number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizing analysis of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizing application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work

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NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons
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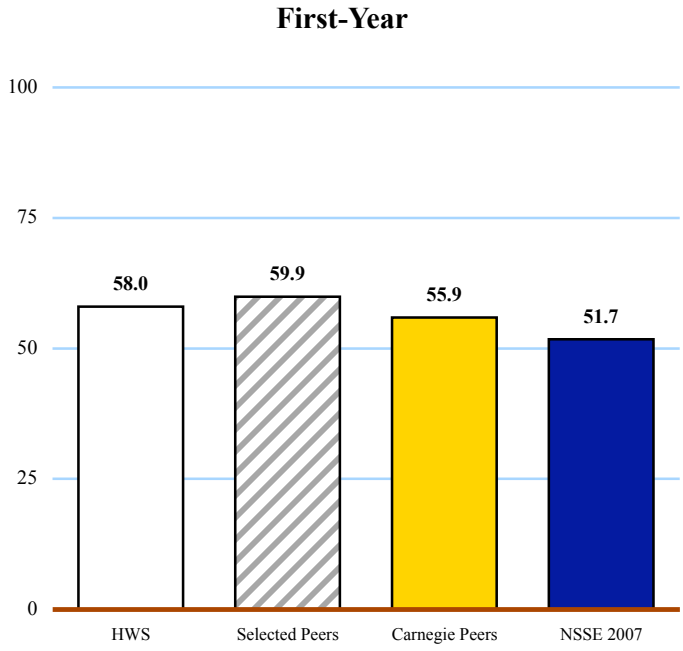
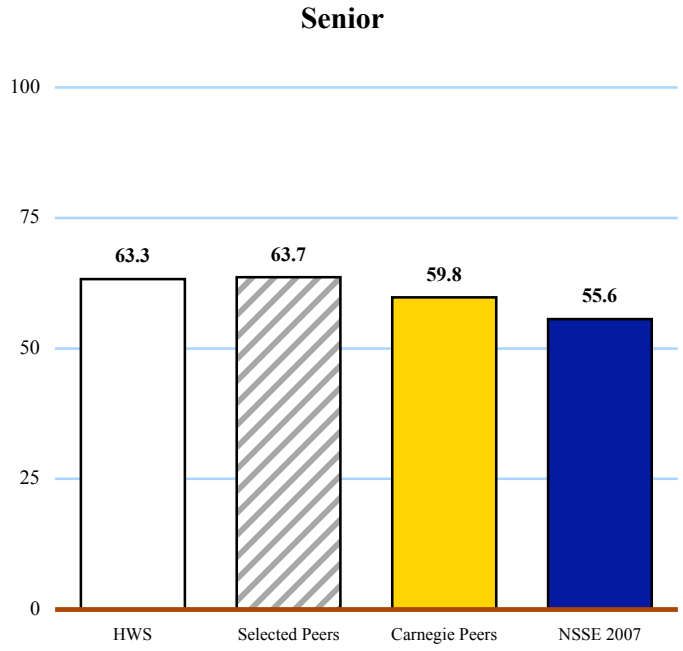
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)

Benchmark Comparisons

HWS compared with:

	HWS	Selected Peers			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
Class	*Mean* [a]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]
First-Year	58.0	59.9	**	-.16	55.9	**	.16	51.7	***	.47
Senior	63.3	63.7		-.03	59.8	***	.26	55.6	***	.54





Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) Items

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- Coursework emphasizing analysis of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizing application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work

[a] Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
[b] * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
[c] Mean difference divided by comparison group standard deviation.

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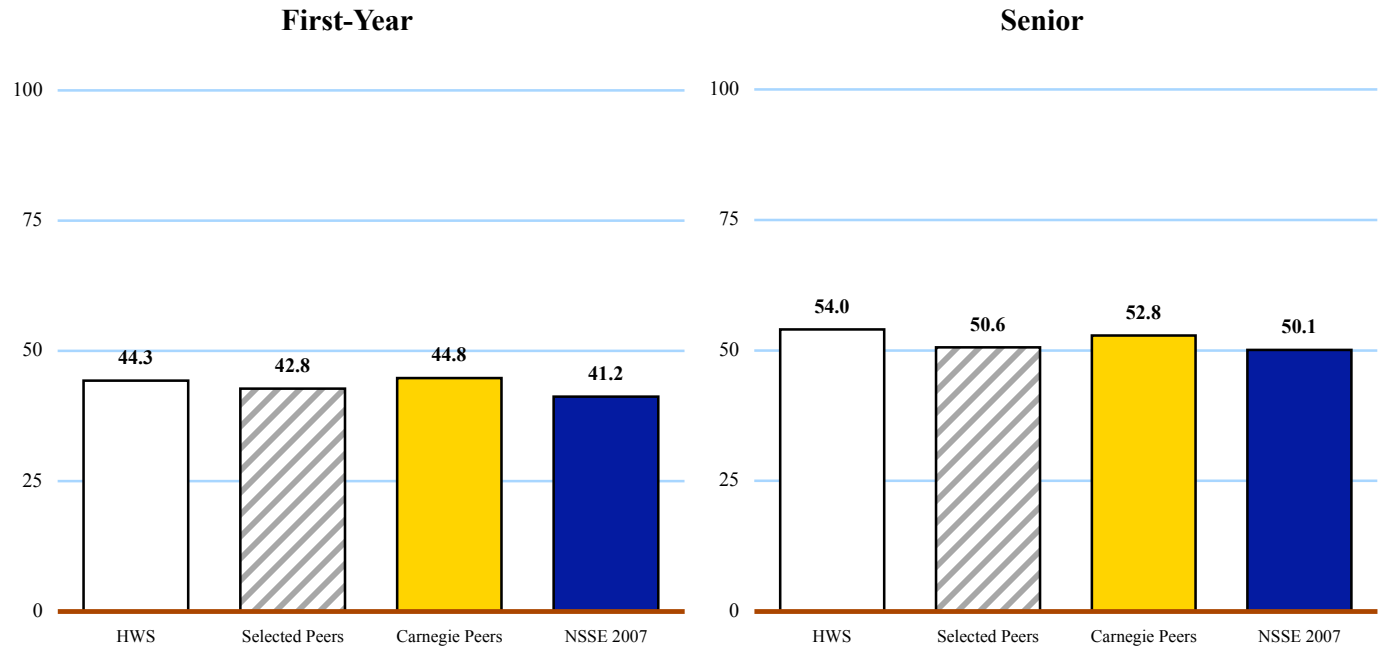
NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)

Benchmark Comparisons

HWS compared with:

	HWS	Selected Peers			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
Class	*Mean* [a]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]
First-Year	44.3	42.8	*	.11	44.8		-.03	41.2	***	.19
Senior	54.0	50.6	**	.22	52.8		.07	50.1	***	.23



Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL) Items

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.

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
- Tutored or taught other students
- Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

[a] Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
[b] * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
[c] Mean difference divided by comparison group standard deviation.

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NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons
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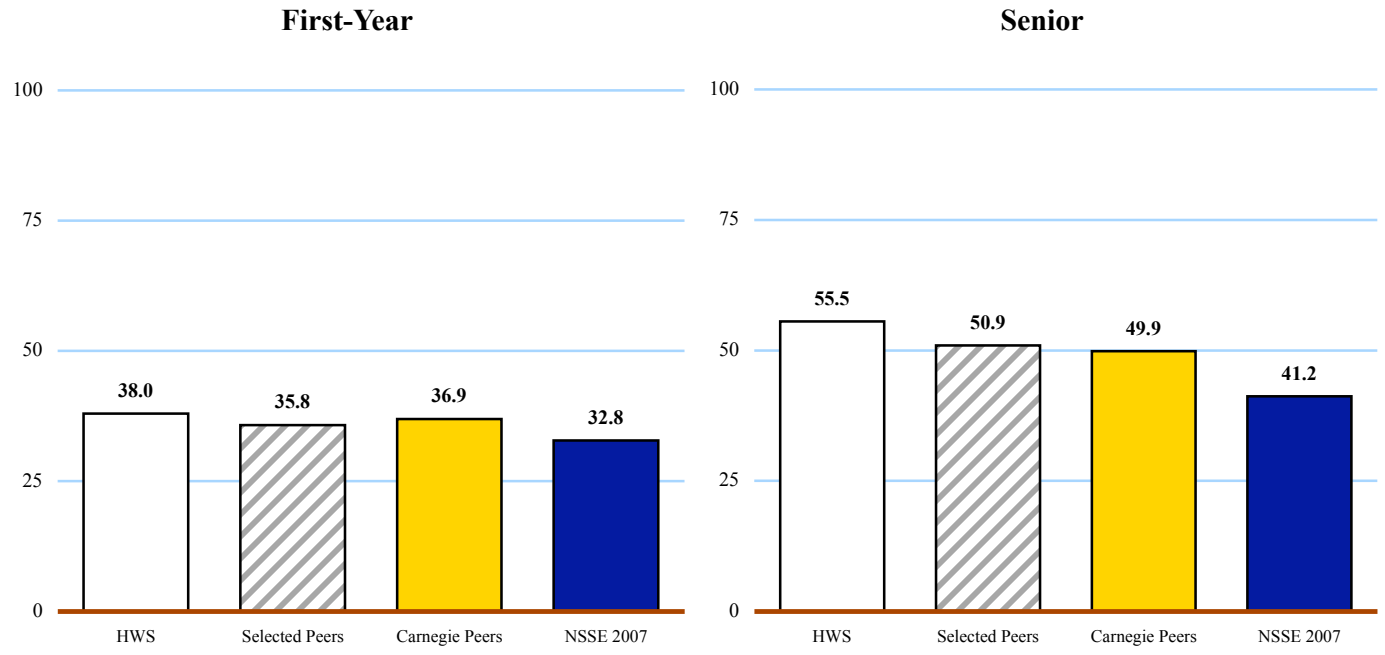
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)

Benchmark Comparisons

		HWS compared with:								
	HWS	**Selected Peers**			**Carnegie Peers**			**NSSE 2007**		
Class	*Mean* [a]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]
First-Year	38.0	35.8	*	.13	36.9		.06	32.8	***	.29
Senior	55.5	50.9	**	.21	49.9	***	.26	41.2	***	.69



Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI) Items

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.

- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)
- Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance
- Worked with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements

[a] Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
[b] * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
[c] Mean difference divided by comparison group standard deviation.

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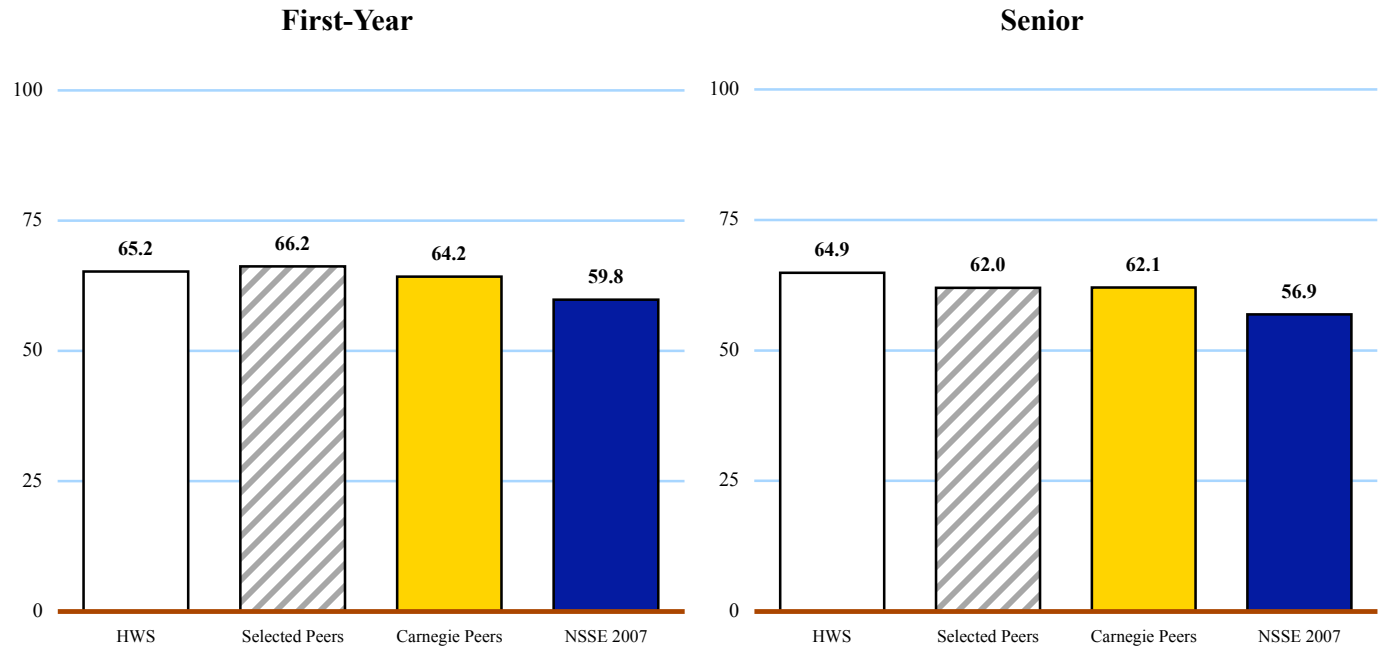
NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)

Benchmark Comparisons

		HWS compared with:								
	HWS	**Selected Peers**			**Carnegie Peers**			**NSSE 2007**		
Class	*Mean* [a]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect Size* [c]
First-Year	65.2	66.2		-.06	64.2		.05	59.8	***	.29
Senior	64.9	62.0	*	.18	62.1	*	.16	56.9	***	.42



Supportive Campus Environment (SCE) Items

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.

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices

[a] Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
[b] * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
[c] Mean difference divided by comparison group standard deviation.

Interpreting the Top 10% and Top 50% Comparisons

This section of the NSSE Benchmark Comparisons report allows you to estimate the performance of your average student in relation to the average student attending two different institutional peer groups identified by NSSE for their high levels of student engagement: (a) those with benchmark scores placing them in the top 50% of all NSSE schools in 2007 and (b) those with benchmark scores in the top 10% for 2007.[a] These comparisons allow an institution to determine if their engagement of their students differs in significant, meaningful ways from these high performing peer groups.

Example

		NSSEville State	NSSE 2007 Top 50%			NSSE 2007 Top 10%		
		Mean	*Mean*	*Sig*	*Effect size*	*Mean*	*Sig*	*Effect size*
First-Year	LAC	57.1	55.8	*	.10	60.5	***	-0.28
	ACL	50.3	45.8	***	.28	50.7		-0.02
	SFI	37.3	37.2		.01	42.0	***	-0.24
	EEE	21.8	30.0	***	-.63	34.4	***	-0.98
	SCE	60.9	64.7	***	-.21	69.7	***	-0.49

NSSEville State CAN conclude...

- The average score for NSSEville State first-year students is slightly above (i.e., small positive effect size) that of the average student attending NSSE 2007 schools that scored in the top 50% on Level of Academic Challenge (LAC).
- The average NSSEville State first-year student is as engaged (i.e., not significantly different) as the average student attending NSSE 2007 schools that scored in the top 10% on Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL).
- It is *likely* that NSSEville State is in the top 50% of all NSSE 2007 schools for first-year students on Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) and Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL).[a,b]

NSSEville State CANNOT conclude[a]...

- NSSEville State is in the top half of all schools on the Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI) benchmark for first-year students.[b]
- NSSEville State is a "top ten percent" institution on Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL) for first-year students.[b]

For additional information on how to understand and use the Top 50% and Top 10% section of the benchmark report, see www.nsse.iub.edu/2007_Institutional_Report/.

[a] Precision-weighted means (produced by Hierarchical Linear Modeling) were used to determine the top 50% and top 10% institutions for each benchmark, separately for first-year and senior students. Using this method, benchmark scores of institutions with relatively large standard errors are adjusted substantially toward the grand mean of all students, while those with smaller standard errors receive smaller corrections. Thus, schools with less stable data, though they may have high scores, may not be identified among the top scorers.

[b] NSSE does not publish the names of the top 50% and top 10% institutions because of our commitment not to release individual school results and because of issues raised in our policy against the ranking of institutions.

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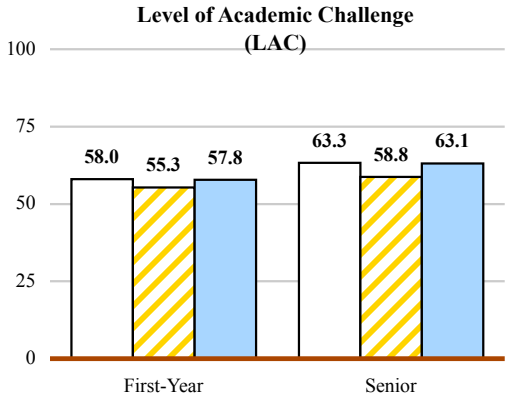
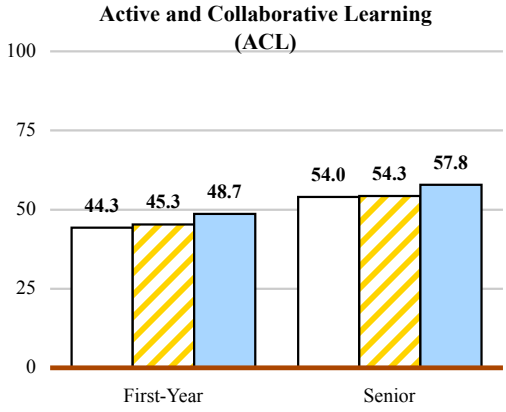
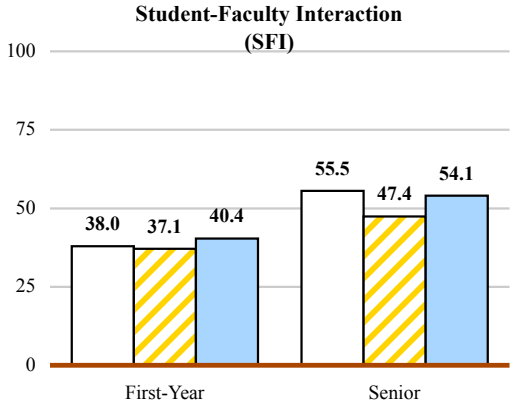
NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons With Highly Engaging Institutions
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

		HWS	HWS compared with NSSE 2007 Top 50%			HWS compared with NSSE 2007 Top 10%		
		Mean [a]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect size* [c]	*Mean* [a]	*Sig* [b]	*Effect size* [c]
First-Year	LAC	58.0	55.3	***	.21	57.8		.02
	ACL	44.3	45.3		-.06	48.7	***	-.25
	SFI	38.0	37.1		.05	40.4	**	-.12
	EEE	32.6	29.5	***	.23	32.4		.01
	SCE	65.2	65.2		.00	68.2	**	-.16
Senior	LAC	63.3	58.8	***	.33	63.1		.02
	ACL	54.0	54.3		-.02	57.8	**	-.22
	SFI	55.5	47.4	***	.38	54.1		.07
	EEE	55.0	45.6	***	.54	50.3	***	.27
	SCE	64.9	63.1		.09	66.3		-.08



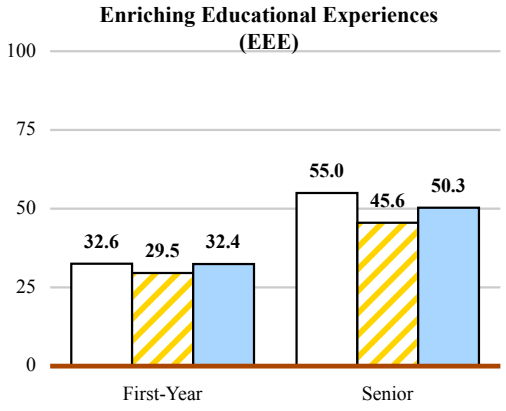


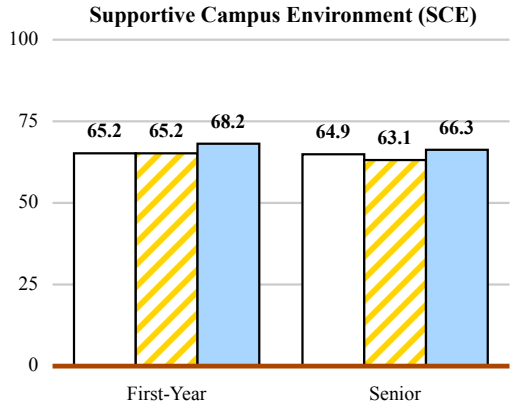


Legend

- HWS
- Top 50%
- Top 10%

This display compares your students with those attending schools that scored in the top 50% and top 10% of all NSSE 2007 institutions on the benchmark.





[a] Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
[b] * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
[c] Mean difference divided by comparison group standard deviation.

National Survey of Student Engagement

NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons
Detailed Statistics and Effect Sizes [a]
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

First-Year Students

		Mean Statistics			Distribution Statistics					Reference Group Comparison Statistics			
					Percentiles [d]								
		Mean	SD [b]	SEM [c]	5th	25th	50th	75th	95th	Deg. of Freedom [e]	Mean Diff.	Sig. [f]	Effect size [g]
LEVEL OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGE (LAC)													
HWS	(N = 382)	58.0	11.9	.6	38	50	57	66	77				
Selected Peers		59.9	11.8	.2	40	52	60	69	79	2,698	-1.9	.003	-.16
Carnegie Peers		55.9	12.9	.1	34	47	56	65	77	28,318	2.1	.002	.16
NSSE 2007		51.7	13.3	.0	30	43	52	61	74	382	6.3	.000	.47
Top 50%		55.3	12.7	.0	34	47	55	64	76	141,041	2.7	.000	.21
Top 10%		57.8	12.7	.1	37	49	58	67	78	33,162	.2	.745	.02
ACTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING (ACL)													
HWS	(N = 397)	44.3	14.6	.7	24	33	43	52	71				
Selected Peers		42.8	14.1	.3	24	33	43	52	67	2,902	1.6	.043	.11
Carnegie Peers		44.8	15.2	.1	24	33	43	52	71	30,260	-.5	.547	-.03
NSSE 2007		41.2	16.2	.0	19	29	38	52	71	397	3.1	.000	.19
Top 50%		45.3	16.1	.0	24	33	43	57	75	399	-1.0	.180	-.06
Top 10%		48.7	17.2	.1	24	38	48	58	81	414	-4.4	.000	-.25
STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION (SFI)													
HWS	(N = 385)	38.0	16.9	.9	17	28	33	44	72				
Selected Peers		35.8	17.1	.4	11	22	33	44	67	2,726	2.2	.020	.13
Carnegie Peers		36.9	17.7	.1	11	22	33	47	72	28,628	1.0	.268	.06
NSSE 2007		32.8	17.8	.0	11	22	28	44	67	415,729	5.1	.000	.29
Top 50%		37.1	18.5	.1	11	22	33	50	72	387	.9	.305	.05
Top 10%		40.4	19.4	.1	11	28	39	53	78	401	-2.4	.006	-.12
ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES (EEE)													
HWS	(N = 379)	32.6	12.2	.6	15	23	31	42	52				
Selected Peers		31.5	12.0	.3	12	23	31	39	52	2,646	1.0	.126	.09
Carnegie Peers		30.0	12.7	.1	11	21	29	38	51	27,724	2.5	.000	.20
NSSE 2007		27.1	13.1	.0	8	18	26	35	50	400,115	5.5	.000	.42
Top 50%		29.5	13.1	.0	11	20	29	37	52	200,075	3.0	.000	.23
Top 10%		32.4	13.3	.1	12	23	32	41	55	37,294	.2	.798	.01
SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT (SCE)													
HWS	(N = 371)	65.2	17.3	.9	36	56	67	78	92				
Selected Peers		66.2	17.4	.4	36	56	67	78	94	2,603	-1.0	.306	-.06
Carnegie Peers		64.2	18.0	.1	33	53	64	78	94	27,331	1.0	.299	.05
NSSE 2007		59.8	18.6	.0	28	47	61	72	92	391,655	5.4	.000	.29
Top 50%		65.2	18.0	.1	33	53	67	78	94	113,430	.0	.989	.00
Top 10%		68.2	18.3	.1	36	56	69	81	97	24,266	-3.0	.002	-.16

[a] All statistics are weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.

[b] Standard Deviation is a measure of the average amount the individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.

[c] The 95% confidence interval for the population mean it is equal to the sample mean plus/minus the product of 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.

[d] A percentile is the point in the distribution of student-level benchmark scores at or below which a given percentage of benchmark scores fall.

[e] Degrees of freedom used to compute the t-tests. Values vary for the total Ns due to weighting and the equal variance assumption.

[f] Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between the mean of your institution and that of the comparison group occurred by chance.

[g] Effect size is calculated by subtracting the comparison group mean from the school mean, and dividing the result by the standard deviation of the comparison group.

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NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons
Detailed Statistics and Effect Sizes [a]
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Seniors

		Mean Statistics			Distribution Statistics					Reference Group Comparison Statistics			
					Percentiles [d]								
		Mean	SD [b]	SEM [c]	5th	25th	50th	75th	95th	Deg. of Freedom [e]	Mean Diff.	Sig. [f]	Effect size [g]
LEVEL OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGE (LAC)													
HWS	(N = 223)	63.3	12.5	.8	43	56	64	72	84				
Selected Peers		63.7	12.7	.3	42	56	64	73	82	2,023	-.4	.684	-.03
Carnegie Peers		59.8	13.6	.1	36	51	60	70	81	20,606	3.5	.000	.26
NSSE 2007		55.6	14.2	.0	32	46	56	65	78	223	7.7	.000	.54
Top 50%		58.8	13.8	.0	36	50	59	69	81	112,932	4.5	.000	.33
Top 10%		63.1	13.4	.1	40	54	64	73	84	16,504	.2	.802	.02
ACTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING (ACL)													
HWS	(N = 231)	54.0	16.7	1.1	29	43	52	67	81				
Selected Peers		50.6	15.5	.4	29	38	48	62	76	2,129	3.4	.002	.22
Carnegie Peers		52.8	16.3	.1	29	43	52	62	81	21,435	1.2	.273	.07
NSSE 2007		50.1	17.3	.0	24	38	48	62	81	416,344	3.9	.001	.23
Top 50%		54.3	16.9	.0	29	43	52	67	86	121,319	-.3	.777	-.02
Top 10%		57.8	17.5	.1	29	48	57	71	90	25,507	-3.8	.001	-.22
STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION (SFI)													
HWS	(N = 225)	55.5	22.4	1.5	22	39	56	72	94				
Selected Peers		50.9	21.4	.5	17	33	50	67	89	2,038	4.6	.003	.21
Carnegie Peers		49.9	21.5	.1	17	33	50	67	89	20,772	5.7	.000	.26
NSSE 2007		41.2	20.7	.0	11	28	39	56	80	398,957	14.3	.000	.69
Top 50%		47.4	21.2	.1	17	33	44	61	83	94,108	8.1	.000	.38
Top 10%		54.1	21.6	.2	22	39	56	72	94	11,727	1.5	.316	.07
ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES (EEE)													
HWS	(N = 221)	55.0	17.4	1.2	25	43	56	68	81				
Selected Peers		54.9	15.7	.4	27	44	55	65	80	267	.2	.885	.01
Carnegie Peers		49.5	17.8	.1	19	37	50	62	78	20,334	5.5	.000	.31
NSSE 2007		39.9	17.8	.0	11	26	39	52	70	387,891	15.2	.000	.85
Top 50%		45.6	17.5	.0	17	33	46	58	75	150,744	9.5	.000	.54
Top 10%		50.3	17.5	.1	21	39	50	62	79	30,092	4.8	.000	.27
SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT (SCE)													
HWS	(N = 221)	64.9	17.2	1.2	36	53	67	78	94				
Selected Peers		62.0	16.1	.4	33	53	64	72	89	1,967	2.9	.013	.18
Carnegie Peers		62.1	17.9	.1	31	50	63	75	92	20,063	2.8	.021	.16
NSSE 2007		56.9	19.1	.0	25	44	58	69	89	382,078	8.0	.000	.42
Top 50%		63.1	18.5	.1	31	50	64	75	94	98,719	1.7	.162	.09
Top 10%		66.3	18.6	.1	33	53	67	81	94	24,789	-1.4	.265	-.08

[a] All statistics are weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.

[b] Standard Deviation is a measure of the average amount the individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.

[c] The 95% confidence interval for the population mean it is equal to the sample mean plus/minus the product of 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.

[d] A percentile is the point in the distribution of student-level benchmark scores at or below which a given percentage of benchmark scores fall.

[e] Degrees of freedom used to compute the t-tests. Values vary for the total Ns due to weighting and the equal variance assumption.

[f] Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between the mean of your institution and that of the comparison group occurred by chance.

[g] Effect size is calculated by subtracting the comparison group mean from the school mean, and dividing the result by the standard deviation of the comparison group.