Dear Colleague:

This is a summary of some key findings from your institution's performance on the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement. We hope you can use this information to stimulate discussion on your campus about how to improve the quality of the undergraduate experience at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
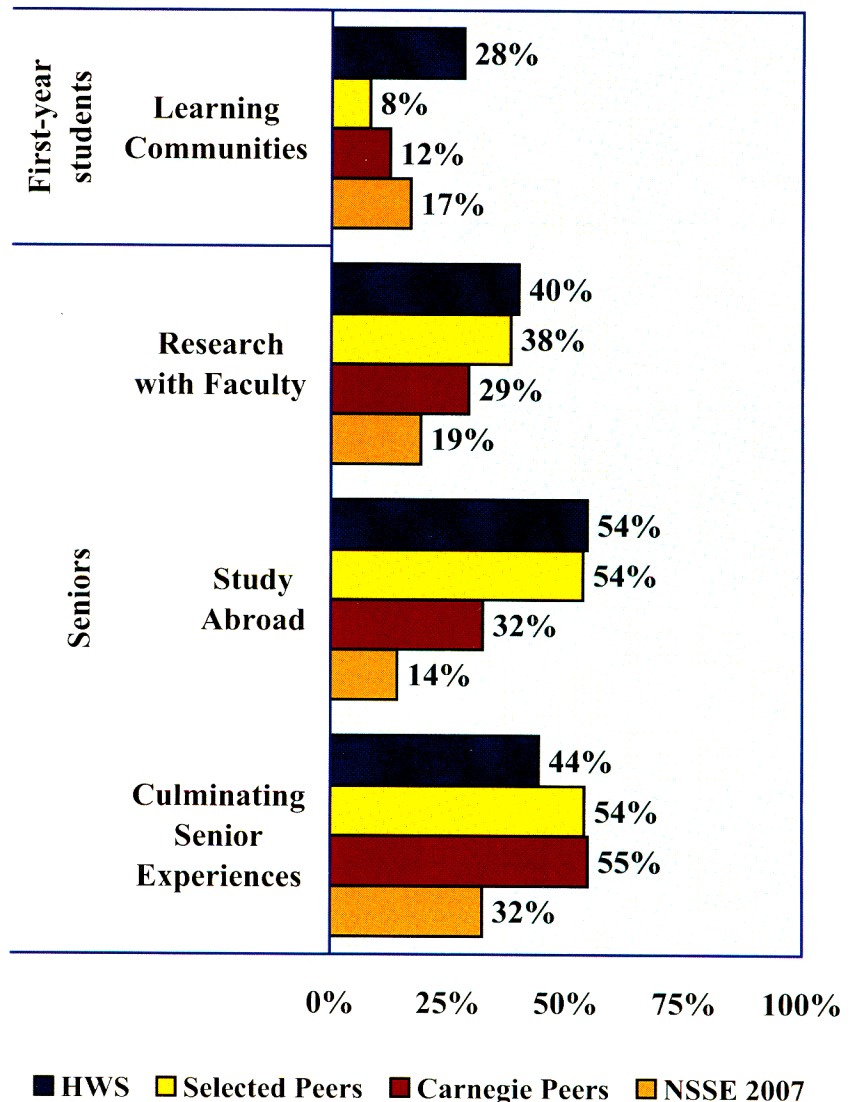
Sincerely,

George D. Kuh

Chancellor's Professor and Director

Percent of Students Who Participated in High-Impact Educational Practices at Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Selected Peer Institutions

A common question from NSSE users is, "What is the one thing we should do to increase student engagement and success on our campus?" Our answer: Make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high impact activities, one in the first year, and one later related to their major field.

High-impact activities place students in circumstances that essentially demand they interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters. Left to their own devices, many students and faculty members may not do these things. Educationally effective institutions recognize this and create incentives to induce purposeful behavior towards these ends.

Research suggests that promising options for new students are first-year seminars, learning communities, and service learning. In the later years of college, research with faculty, study abroad, internships, and a culminating senior experience serve this purpose. The adjacent figure shows the percent of your students who had some of these experiences compared to students at institutions in your selected peer groups.

First-year students

Learning Communities
- 28%
- 8%
- 12%
- 17%

Seniors

Research with Faculty
- 40%
- 38%
- 29%
- 19%

Study Abroad
- 54%
- 54%
- 32%
- 14%

Culminating Senior Experiences
- 44%
- 54%
- 55%
- 32%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

■ HWS   □ Selected Peers   ■ Carnegie Peers   ■ NSSE 2007

Note: The institutions in each of your selected peer groups, as well as the criteria used to define these groups is provided in your NSSE 2007 Selected Peer Groups report.

NSSE 2007 Question Comparisons

By examining individual questions, you can better understand what contributes to your institution's overall performance. The following two sections feature the five questions where your first-year and senior students scored the highest and the five questions where they scored the lowest, *in relation to students at your first selected peer/consortium group.*
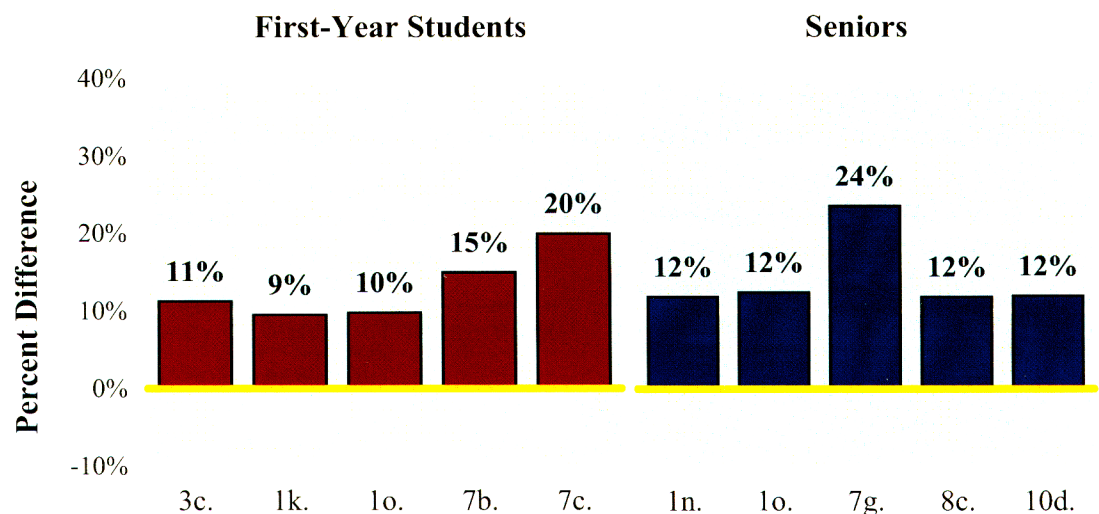
While these questions were chosen to represent the largest percentage differences (in actual percentage points), they may not be the most important to your institutional mission or current program or policy goals. We encourage you to review your *NSSE 2007 Institutional Report* for additional results of specific interest to your campus.

Highest Performing Areas

Quest.	Bench.[1]	Percent of students who...	HWS	Selected Peers	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2007
First-Year Students						
3c.	LAC	Wrote at least one paper or report of 20 pages or more	**29%**	18%	17%	17%
1k.	ACL	Did a community-based project as part of a regular course[2]	**19%**	9%	14%	12%
1o.	SFI	Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor[2]	**33%**	23%	32%	29%
7b.	EEE	Participated in community service or volunteer work	**56%**	41%	45%	38%
7c.	EEE	Participated in a learning community	**28%**	8%	12%	17%
Seniors						
1n.	SFI	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor[2]	**71%**	59%	63%	58%
1o.	SFI	Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor[2]	**64%**	52%	55%	41%
7g.	EEE	Did an independent study or self-designed major	**57%**	33%	30%	17%
8c.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with admin. personnel and offices[3]	**68%**	56%	57%	53%
10d.	SCE	Said the institution substantially helps students cope w/ non-acad. matters[4]	**37%**	25%	29%	24%

The adjacent figure based on the table above displays the questions with the greatest positive percent difference between your students and those in your first selected peer group/consortium. These are areas where your students excel relative to your peers.
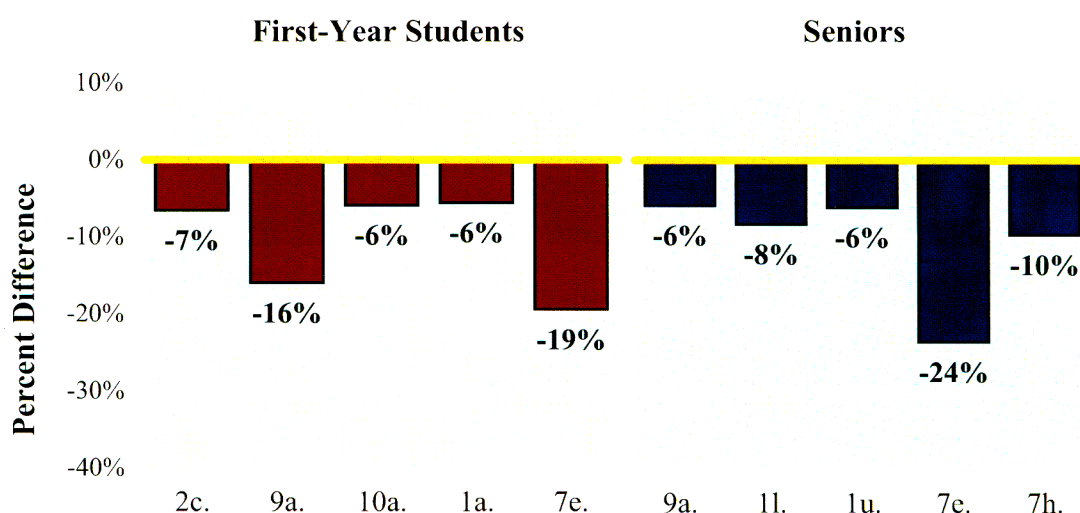

Comparison Groups

First-Year Students

Seniors

Lowest Performing Areas

Comparison Groups

Quest.	Bench. [1]	Percent of students who...	HWS	Selected Peers	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2007
First-Year Students						
2c.	LAC	Said courses emphasized **synthesizing** ideas into new complex relationships[4]	**76%**	83%	73%	66%
9a.	LAC	Spent more than 10 hours/week preparing for class (studying, etc.)	**63%**	79%	65%	55%
10a.	LAC	Said the institution emphasizes studying and academic work[4]	**82%**	88%	85%	79%
1a.	ACL	Asked questions/contributed to class discussions[2]	**67%**	73%	70%	57%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	**31%**	50%	39%	22%
Seniors						
9a.	LAC	Spent more than 10 hours/week preparing for class (studying, etc.)	**67%**	73%	64%	55%
1l.	EEE	Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment[2]	**50%**	58%	55%	60%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity[2]	**56%**	62%	52%	53%
7e.	EEE	Completed foreign language coursework	**54%**	78%	65%	41%
7h.	EEE	Completed a culminating senior experience (capstone, thesis, comp. exam)	**44%**	54%	55%	32%

The adjacent figure based on the table above displays the questions with the greatest shortfall between your students and those in your first selected peer group or consortium. These are areas where your students trail your peers.

First-Year Students — 2c. -7%, 9a. -16%, 10a. -6%, 1a. -6%, 7e. -19%

Seniors — 9a. -6%, 1l. -8%, 1u. -6%, 7e. -24%, 7h. -10%

Percent Difference

Notes

[1] LAC=Level of Academic Challenge; ACL=Active and Collaborative Learning; SFI=Student Faculty Interaction; EEE=Enriching Educational Experiences; SCE=Supportive Campus Environment

[2] Combination of students responding 'very often' or 'often'

[3] Rated at least 5 on a 7-point scale

[4] Combination of students responding 'very much' or 'quite a bit'

Respondent Characteristics

The adjacent table displays your number of respondents, response rates, and sampling errors. Sampling error (ideally below 5%) is an estimate of the margin by which the true percentage of your students on a given item differs from the reported percentage because not all of your students were surveyed.

	N	Resp. Rate	Sampling Error
First-Year Students	397	65%	+/-2.9%
Seniors	231	60%	+/-4.1%

Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

To represent the multi-dimensional nature of student engagement, NSSE developed five indicators of effective educational practice. These "benchmarks" are created from clusters of NSSE questions that best represent these practices.

The table below summarizes key benchmark results for your institution and institutions in your selected peer groups. *The '+' symbol indicates that your institution's score is statistically higher than the respective comparison group (p<.05), the '-' symbol indicates a score statistically lower than the comparison group, and a blank space indicates no significant difference. For detailed results, review your NSSE07 Benchmark Comparisons report.*

	Class	*HWS*	Comparison Groups		
			Selected Peers	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2007
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)					
How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?	First-Year	**58**	−	+	+
	Senior	**63**		+	+
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)					
Are your students intensely involved in their education?	First-Year	**44**	+		+
	Senior	**54**	+		+
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)					
Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?	First-Year	**38**	+		+
	Senior	**56**	+	+	+
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)					
Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?	First-Year	**33**		+	+
	Senior	**55**		+	+
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)					
Do your students feel the college is committed to their success?	First-Year	**65**			+
	Senior	**65**	+	+	+

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For More Information

A comprehensive summary of all of your results is contained in the NSSE 2007 Institutional Report we sent in August to Jonathan Wolff, Office of the Provost. Reports used in this Executive Snapshot: NSSE 2007 Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, Benchmark Comparisons, and Respondent Characteristics.