



# 2006 Institutional Report

## Overview of National 2006 CCSSE Cohort Survey Results

### Introduction

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provides information about effective educational practice in community colleges and assists institutions in using that information to promote improvements in student learning and persistence. CCSSE's goal is to provide member colleges with results that can be used to inform decision making and target institutional improvements. **Student engagement**, or the amount of time and energy that students invest in meaningful educational practices, is the underlying foundation for CCSSE's work. CCSSE's survey instrument, the *Community College Student Report (CCSR)*, is designed to capture student engagement as a measure of institutional quality.

Beginning this year, CCSSE will use a three-year cohort of participating colleges (2004 through 2006) in all of its data analyses<sup>1</sup>, including the computation of benchmark scores. This cohort is referred to as the **2006 CCSSE Cohort** throughout all reports and documentation.

This new approach increases the total number of institutions and students contributing to the national dataset, which in turn increases the reliability of the overall results. In addition, the three-year cohort approach minimizes the impact, in any given year, of participation by statewide consortia.

This overview encompasses four key sections and is organized to provide a general understanding of findings from the 2006 CCSSE Cohort. First, 2006 CCSSE Cohort colleges and student respondents are highlighted as well as data concerning the 2006 CCSSE Consortia. Second, CCSSE institutions and their students are compared with all U.S. public community colleges. In the third section, selected findings are showcased. In the fourth section, information is provided to help college leaders understand and use their CCSSE results.

### CCSSE Member Colleges

The 2006 CCSSE Cohort is comprised of a total of 447 institutions across 46 states participating between 2004 and 2006. Two hundred forty-seven of these member colleges are classified<sup>2</sup> as small (< 4,500), 105 as medium (4,500-7,999), 57 as large (8,000-14,999), and 38 as extra-large institutions (15,000 + credit students). One hundred nineteen of the cohort member colleges are located in urban areas, 119 in suburban areas, and 209 in rural areas.<sup>3</sup>

### CCSSE Consortia

A CCSSE consortium may comprise two or more colleges in a multi-college district, system, or state — or alternatively, a group of five or more colleges with common interests or challenges. Consortium members share reports and can add additional questions to the survey.

2006 CCSSE membership includes statewide participation in Connecticut, Hawaii, and New Hampshire. Other state-based consortia include groups of colleges in Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Texas. Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, and Texas consortia chose to add questions to the CCSR for purposes of statewide assessment, to respond to accrediting agencies, and/or for internal review.

New to CCSSE 2006 consortia is the Campus Compact Consortium. This consortium is supported by the Campus Compact and includes seven colleges across five states. The Campus Compact Consortium added questions to the survey to elicit information about students' experiences with civic engagement, volunteerism, and community service.

This is the second year for the Achieving the Dream Consortium, which for 2006 is comprised of 12 colleges from five states that are part of a national initiative focused on improving success rates for community college students — particularly low-income students and students of color.

This is the third year for the Hispanic-Serving Institutions/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

<sup>1</sup> For returning participants, the college's most recent year of participation is included in data analyses. For example, if a college participated in 2004 and 2006, only the 2006 data would be used in the three-year cohort.

<sup>2</sup> Size classifications are based on the college's enrollment size during their most recent year of CCSSE participation; this may or may not match the college's current size classification.

<sup>3</sup> These enrollment statistics are based on a college's most recent IPEDS data with the exception of situations in which it is necessary for colleges to self-report.

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(HSI/HACU) Consortium. The 2006 consortium consists of 19 colleges in five states. Qualifying institutions include those that have HSI designation and/or hold membership in HACU. The HSI/HACU Consortium joins together to build collaborative and networking relationships and will highlight promising practices through publications and at national and regional community college conferences. The consortium collaborated to add questions to the Community College Student Report and will use CCSSE data and comparative reports to make informed decisions about how to improve these unique institutions.

Also in its third year is the Texas Small Colleges Consortium; however, it was the first year questions were added to the survey. These colleges are working to strengthen educational practice through data-driven decision making and strategically targeted performance improvement initiatives. Twenty-three small Texas community colleges joined CCSSE this year to gain valuable information on the engagement, learning, and retention of the students they serve – and to build institutional capacity for collecting, understanding, and using data about educational practices and student success.

## Student Respondents

Credit classes are randomly selected – stratified by time of day (morning, afternoon, and evening) – from institutional class data files to participate in the survey. Of those sampled, 249,548 students submitted usable surveys. The number of completed surveys produced an overall “percent of target” rate of 80%. Percent of target rate is the ratio of the adjusted number of completed surveys to target sample sizes. (The adjusted survey count is the number of usable surveys that were filled out properly and did not fall into any of the exclusionary categories.<sup>4</sup>)

## Student Respondent Profile

To compare the characteristics of student respondents with the characteristics of the underlying student population for each participating college, CCSSE uses the data reported by the institution in its most recent IPEDS Enrollment Report for the following variables: gender, race and ethnicity, student age, and enrollment status (part- or full-time). The data are aggregated to compare the 2006 CCSSE Cohort survey respondent population to the total student population of the 2006 CCSSE Cohort member colleges.

### Gender

Of the 243,128 student respondents who answered this item, 40% are male and 60% are female. This mirrors the full population of 2006 CCSSE Cohort community college students, comprised of 41% males and 59% females.

### Age

2006 CCSSE Cohort student respondents range in age from 18 to 65+ years old. Approximately 90% are between 18 to 39 years old; 65% are 18 to 24 years old, while 24% are 25 to 39 years old.

### Racial Identification

Sixty-five percent of student respondents identify themselves as White/non-Hispanic, 9% as Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, 11% as Black or African American, and 3% as Asian. Two percent of the student respondents are Native American. Three percent marked “other” when responding to the question, “What is your racial identification?”

### International Students

Responses to the question, “Are you an international student or foreign national?” reflect variations related to college size. Four percent of small college respondents indicate that they are international students, while 5% of medium size college respondents indicate the same. In large institutions, 9% of the students who completed the survey indicate international/ foreign student status. Extra-large institutions have the highest representation of international students at 10%.

### Enrollment Status

Sixty-nine percent of the student respondents report attending college full-time, while 39% of the 2006 CCSSE Cohort colleges’ total student population attended full-time. Only 31% of the surveyed students report being part-time college students, compared to 61% as reported to IPEDS. This inverse representation is a result of the sampling technique and the in-class administration process. For this reason, survey results are either weighted or disaggregated on the full-time/part-time variable so that reports will accurately reflect the underlying student population.

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The results for the following student respondent categories are weighted according to the most recent IPEDS population data.

### Limited English Speaking Students

Students with limited English speaking skills, or those whose native language is not English, comprise a significant proportion of students in community colleges. Among CCSSE participants, small institutions include 6% of non-native English speakers, while 8% of medium institutions’ students are non-native English speakers. Comparatively large numbers of non-native English speaking students attend large (16% of enrollees) and extra-large institutions (21%).

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<sup>4</sup> See exclusionary rules on pg. 3

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## First-Generation Status

Thirty-seven percent of students indicate that neither parent has earned a degree higher than a high school diploma nor has college experience; accordingly, these students are considered “first-generation” status. Of these first-generation students who provided responses for mother **and** father’s education level, 67% percent indicate that their mothers’ highest level of education is a high school diploma, and 61% indicate that level for their fathers.

## Educational Attainment

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents report starting their college careers at the community college where they completed the survey. Meanwhile, 73% of students indicate that their highest level of educational attainment is a high school diploma or GED; 17% report either a certificate or an associate degree; 5% have earned a bachelor’s degree; and 1% have earned an advanced degree.

## Credit Hours Earned

Forty-six percent of students report having completed fewer than 15 credit hours; 21% have completed 15-29 credit hours; and 33% have completed more than 30 credit hours.

## Grades

Forty-five percent of students report that they earned grades of *B+* or higher, while 2% of students report that they earned grades of *C-* or lower.

## External Commitments

Fifty-seven percent of students work 21 or more hours per week; 23% of students care for dependents between 1 and 10 hours per week; and 69% of students spend between 1 and 5 hours per week commuting to and from class.

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## Excluded Respondents

The total counts of respondents in an institution’s raw data file will differ from the numbers reported in the institutional reports due to intentional exclusion of certain surveys. Exclusions serve the purpose of ensuring that all institutional reports are based on the same sampling methods and that results are therefore comparable across institutions. Respondents may be excluded from institutional reports for the following reasons:

- ★ The respondent did not indicate whether he or she was enrolled part- or full-time at the institution. *Because all results are either weighted or broken down by enrollment status, this is essential information for reporting.*
- ★ The survey is invalid.<sup>5</sup>
- ★ The student reported his or her age as under 18.
- ★ The student indicated that he or she had taken the survey in a previous class or did not respond to the item.

- ★ Oversampled respondents are not included. These are surveys that individual institutions paid an additional fee to acquire. Because there are no requirements stipulating how these students are sampled, these data are not included in the standard institutional report.

## **Respondents Included in the College’s Raw Data File**

Raw data files contain responses from all students who completed the CCSR, including oversample and/or on-line respondents, with the exception of invalid surveys and those completed by students under the age of 18.

## **Representation**

### **CCSSE Institutions Compared to All U.S. Public Community Colleges**

Overall, CCSSEs five-year (2002-2006) college membership represents a total of 461<sup>6</sup> (unduplicated) colleges across 45 states. Of the 461 member colleges, 243 are classified<sup>7</sup> as small (< 4,500); 120 as medium (4,500-7,999); 60 as large (8,000-14,999); and 38 as extra-large (15,000+). In terms of urbanicity, 123 member colleges are classified as urban, 122 as suburban, and 216 as rural.<sup>8</sup>

The 2006 CCSSE Cohort membership includes 444<sup>9</sup> colleges across 45 states. Table 1 provides information about the representation of the 2006 CCSSE Cohort member colleges as compared to community and technical colleges across the nation. CCSSE uses the most recent IPEDS enrollment data for comparisons in this table.

Specifically, the numbers and accompanying percentages in parentheses displayed in the first two columns, “2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges” and “National Population,” represent within-category data. In other words, there are 57 large CCSSE member colleges representing 13% of the 444 total 2006 CCSSE Cohort colleges, while there are 148 large colleges in the national population, representing 13% of the overall total of 1,093. Meanwhile, the percentages displayed in the last column represent the proportion of 2006 CCSSE Cohort colleges found in the national population overall as well as by size and urbanicity. For instance, there are 118 urban 2006 CCSSE Cohort member colleges, constituting 28% of the 416 urban colleges nationwide. The percentages in red font show that colleges by size generally mirror the national population (55% and 56% for small, 24% and 22% for medium, 13% and 13% for large, and 8% and 9% for extra-large).

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<sup>5</sup>If a student does not answer any of the 21 sub-items on item 4, answers “Very Often” to all 21 items, or answers “Never” to all, the survey is excluded.

<sup>6</sup>Includes U.S. public, associate-degree granting institutions; does not include hospital-based or private institutions.

<sup>7</sup>Institutional size is based on most recent IPEDS enrollment figures and is defined as small, medium, large, and extra-large.

<sup>8</sup>CCSSE member colleges self-classify in terms of rural, suburban, and urban locations, while colleges in the national population are classified using IPEDS data.

<sup>9</sup>Hospital-based and private institutions are not included in representation charts.

**Table 1: Colleges by Size and Urbanicity**

	2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges	National Population <sup>10</sup>	2006 CCSSE Cohort Proportion of National Population
<b>By Size</b>			
<b># of Institutions</b>	444 (100%)	1,093 (100%)	41%
<b>Small (up to 4,499)</b>	244 (55%)	612 (56%)	40%
<b>Medium (4,500-7,999)</b>	105 (24%)	238 (22%)	44%
<b>Large (8,000-14,999)</b>	57 (13%)	148 (13%)	39%
<b>Extra-Large (15,000+)</b>	38 (8%)	95 (9%)	40%
<b>By Urbanicity</b>			
<b># of Institutions</b>	444 (100%)	1,068 (100%)	42%
<b>Urban</b>	118 (26%)	416 (39%)	28%
<b>Suburban</b>	119 (27%)	256 (24%)	46%
<b>Rural</b>	207 (47%)	396 (37%)	52%

### CCSSE Student Respondents across Member Institutions

In addition, it is valuable to examine the percentages of students represented across participating CCSSE institutions.

2006 CCSSE Cohort member colleges enroll a total of 2,684,223 credit students, or about 42% of the total credit-student population in the nation's community colleges. Table 2 shows a comparison of the adjusted number of CCSSE cohort survey respondents displayed alongside the total student enrollment at participating colleges. The column labeled "2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges Adjusted Respondents" shows the number of usable surveys (those not affected by CCSSE's exclusionary rules). The column labeled, "2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges Enrollments" reflects institutions' populations as reported to IPEDS for the most recent enrollment reports.

These data are displayed by institutional size (small, medium, large, and extra-large) as well as urbanicity (rural, suburban, and urban). The data from Table 2 highlight an over-representation of student respondents from small institutions which in turn results in an under-representation of respondents from extra-large colleges.

<sup>10</sup> Includes all colleges in the target population that have valid IPEDS enrollment data.

**Table 2: Adjusted Respondents by Size and Urbanicity**

	2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges' Adjusted Respondents <sup>11</sup>	2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges' Enrollments
	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Credit Enrollments</i>
	249,548 students (100%)	2,684,223 students (100%)
<b>By Size</b>		
Small (up to 4,499)	92,845 (37%)	536,454 (20%)
Medium (4,500-7,999)	69,057 (28%)	601,049 (23%)
Large (8,000-14,999)	47,794 (19%)	625,675 (23%)
Extra-Large (15,000+)	39,852 (16%)	921,045 (34%)
<b>By Urbanicity</b>		
Urban	81,089 (32%)	1,158,381 (43%)
Suburban	81,238 (33%)	960,791 (36%)
Rural	87,221 (35%)	565,051 (21%)

### CCSSE Member College Enrollments Compared to All U.S. Public Community Colleges

Finally, the 2006 CCSSE Cohort member college enrollment figures represent 42% of the national student population in community colleges. Table 3 shows the number of credit enrolled students from CCSSE member colleges as compared to the number across the nation by size and urbanicity.

Overall, CCSSE's survey respondents from 2002 through 2006 represent a total credit enrollment of 2,778,240 students across 461 CCSSE member colleges. CCSSE's entire college membership represents approximately 42% of the nation's community colleges (1,101 accredited, public associate degree-granting institutions) and 43% of their 6,405,332 credit students.

Specifically, the numbers and accompanying percentages in parentheses displayed in the first two columns, "Students Enrolled in 2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges" and "National Student Population in Community Colleges," represent within-group data. In other words, 534,094 students enrolled in small CCSSE member colleges represent 20% of the 2,681,863 total students enrolled in cohort colleges, while 1,298,056 students enrolled in small colleges nationwide represent 20% of the nationwide enrollment of 6,405,332. Meanwhile, the percentages displayed in the last column represent the proportion of students enrolled in CCSSE cohort member colleges found in the national population by size and urbanicity.

<sup>11</sup> Minus exclusions (see exclusionary rules on pg. 3).

For instance, there are 563,350 students enrolled in rural CCSSE member colleges, which represents 60% of the 935,259 students enrolled in rural colleges nationwide.

large at 23% and 25%, and extra-large at 34% and 33%) and by urbanicity (urban at 43% and 52%, suburban at 36% and 33%, and rural at 21% and 15%).

In general, students enrolled in CCSSE member colleges represent students in public community colleges nationwide by size (small, both at 20%, medium at 23% and 22%,

**Table 3: Enrollments by Size and Urbanicity**

	<b>Students Enrolled in 2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges</b>	<b>National Student Population in Community Colleges</b>	<b>Proportion of Students Enrolled in 2006 CCSSE Cohort Member Colleges</b>
	<b>Credit Enrollment</b>	<b>Credit Enrollment</b>	
	<b>2,681,863 CCSSE students (100%)</b>	<b>6,405,332 national population (100%)</b>	42%
<b>By Size</b>			
<b>Small (up to 4,499)</b>	534,094 (20%)	1,298,056 (20%)	41%
<b>Medium (4,500-7,999)</b>	601,049 (23%)	1,376,917 (22%)	44%
<b>Large (8,000-14,999)</b>	625,675 (23%)	1,604,637 (25%)	39%
<b>Extra-Large (15,000+)</b>	921,045 (34%)	2,125,722 (33%)	43%
<b>By Urbanicity</b>			
<b>Urban</b>	1,157,722 (43%)	3,273,230 (52%)	35%
<b>Suburban</b>	960,791 (36%)	2,114,351 (33%)	45%
<b>Rural</b>	563,350 (21%)	935,259 (15%)	60%

## Selected Findings

Many crucial questions that community colleges need answered — *What are our students' goals? What issues keep our students from persisting? How effectively are we engaging students in the classroom? How satisfied are our students with the support services we offer?* — can be answered by investigating the percentage of student responses to specific CCSSE survey items.

This section on Selected Findings from the 2006 CCSSE Cohort data is organized in terms of seven key topics: Educational Goals, Time on Task, Relationships, Academic Experience, Barriers to Persistence, Student Satisfaction, and Student and Academic Support Services.

## Educational Goals

Community colleges have multiple missions and goals, as do their students. Students responding to the survey are given the opportunity to mark *Primary Goal*, *Secondary Goal*, or *Not a Goal* in response to a list of possible goals for attending their particular college. As a result, many students mark more than one primary goal; therefore, the percentages in the table below do not sum to 100%.

As seen in Table 4, students identify various educational goals. Fifty-eight percent of the student respondents identify obtaining an associate degree as a primary goal. Fifty percent are interested in transferring to a 4-year college or university, while 41% are primarily interested in obtaining or updating job-related skills. Thirty percent of respondents seek to change careers, and 29% aspire to complete a certification program.

**Table 4: Educational Goals**

	Primary goal	Secondary goal	Not a goal
Complete a certification program	29%	19%	52%
Obtain an associate degree	58%	21%	21%
Transfer to a 4-year college or university	50%	21%	28%
Obtain or update job-related skills	41%	27%	33%
Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	39%	34%	26%
Change careers	30%	16%	55%

## Time on Task

Students' behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will attain their educational goals. "Time on task" is a key variable, and there are a variety of settings and means through which students may apply themselves to the learning process.

Table 5 highlights that only 12% of full-time students spend more than 21 hours per week preparing for class while 38% spend 5 hours or fewer preparing for class.

**Table 5: Time on Task**

	Part-time			Full-time		
	5 hours or fewer	6-20 hours	More than 21 hours	5 hours or fewer	6-20 hours	More than 21 hours
Preparing for class	52%	43%	6%	38%	49%	12%
Working for pay	19%	14%	67%	31%	23%	45%
Participating in college-sponsored activities	97%	2%	1%	93%	6%	2%

Not surprisingly, part-time students spend more time working for pay, more than 21 hours per week, than their full-time counterparts (67% vs. 52%); however, these findings highlight the competing priorities facing all students attending community colleges. Finally, there is minimal participation in college-sponsored activities among all students.

## Relationships

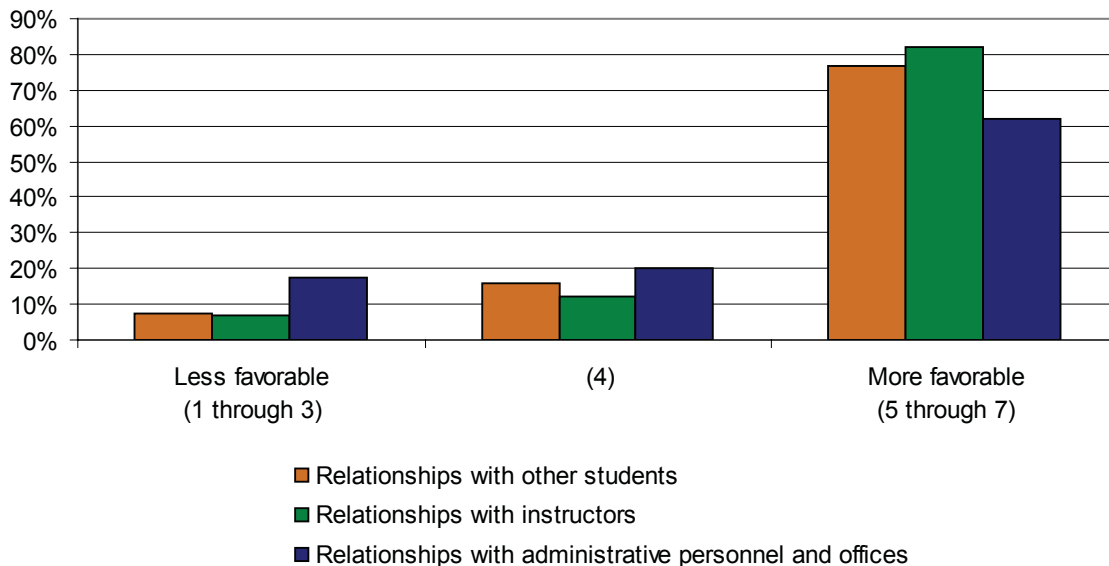
Many educators believe in the power of their individual connections to students – a belief that is supported by higher education research as well. In point of fact, the level of student-faculty interaction is one of the most powerful predictors of student persistence in college. And, in numerous focus groups conducted with community college students, it was found that when asked to cite the factor that was most important in helping them stay in school and succeed there, students inevitably talk about *relationships*.

Various items on the survey can address the level and extent of students' relational experience while attending the college. Item 4q on the survey asks students to indicate how often they worked with instructors on activities other than coursework. Nearly three-fourths (72%) indicated they "Never" engaged in such activities. When asked how much their college encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds, nearly half (45%) stated that this occurred "Quite a bit/Very much." Over two-thirds (71%) indicated that their college provided "Some/Very little" of the support

needed to thrive socially while only 8% indicated this occurred "Very much." Finally, 78% of their friends are "Quite a bit/Extremely" supportive of their attending the college while 86% of their families were supportive of this decision.

Figure 1 highlights results for item 11 on the survey that asks specifically about students' relationships with other students, instructors, and administrative personnel and offices at the college. Overall, students gave high ratings to their relationships. Regarding relationships with other students, respondents judged the quality of their relationships quite favorably with a rating of 5 or higher given by 77%. An even higher percentage (82%) gave favorable ratings to the quality of their relationships with instructors, while relationships with administrative personnel and offices were given a slightly lower favorable rating (62%).

**Figure 1: Relationships**



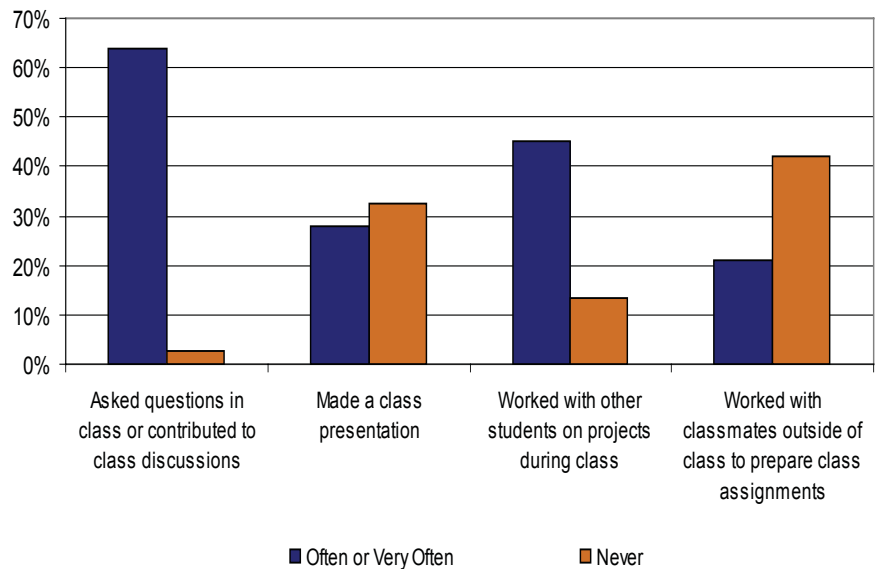
## Academic Experience

A positive academic experience is a product of many ingredients, one of which is the amount of time and energy that students invest in their academic work. The *CCSR* asks students to respond to seven survey items in order to gauge how actively they are involved in their education. Students are given the opportunity to mark *Very Often*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, or *Never* in response to items such as the following:

- ★ 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 assignments

While some students are highly involved in their academic experience (those who marked *Often* or *Very Often*), others are less engaged, as illustrated by their responses of *Never*, as displayed in Figure 2.

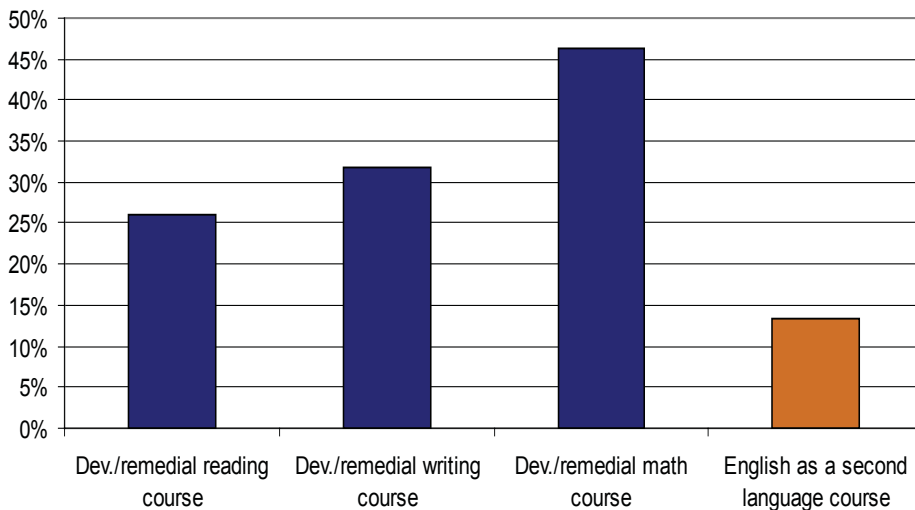
Figure 2: Academic Experience



## Developmental Education and ESL

Community colleges have quite diverse student populations, and in order to adequately serve student needs, the institutions offer a variety of courses and special programs. Item 8 on the *CCSR* asks students to identify which course paths they are following. As shown in Figure 3, large percentages of students either have taken or plan to enroll in developmental reading, writing, and/or math courses, while smaller percentages plan on taking an ESL course.

Figure 3: Developmental Education and ESL (Have Done or Plan to Do)



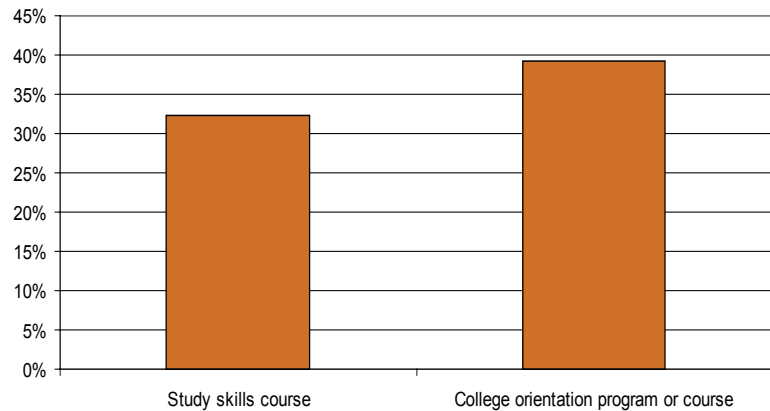
## Study Skills and Orientation Courses

Nearly a third have taken or will enroll in a study skills course, and 39% have taken or will enroll in an orientation course, as highlighted in Figure 4.

## Curricular Experiences

Table 6 shows the percentage of students who have taken or plan to enroll in internships, honors courses, and organized learning communities.

**Figure 4: Study Skills and Orientation Courses  
(Have Done or Plan to Do)**



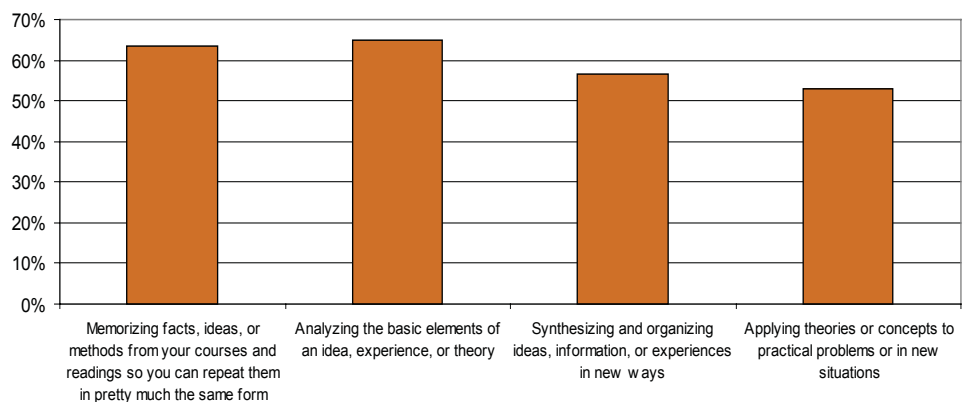
**Table 6: Curricular Experiences**

	<i>Have done or Plan to do</i>
Internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	57%
Honors course	26%
Organized learning communities (linked courses/study groups led by faculty or counselors)	26%

## Student Learning

Student respondents indicate how much their coursework emphasizes intellectual processes such as memorization, the application of theories and concepts to practical problems, analysis, synthesis and organization, making value judgments, and using learned information to perform new skills. Figure 5 illustrates students' perceptions of the extent to which their respective colleges promote these cognitive activities.

**Figure 5: Student Learning  
(Quite a bit or Very Much)**



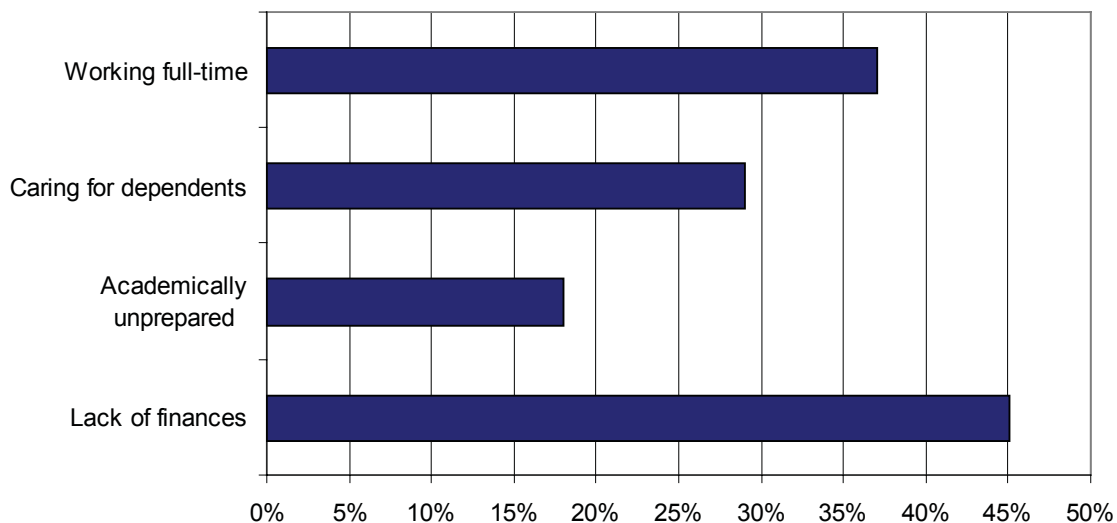
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## **Barriers to Persistence**

CCSSE also asks students to indicate the issues that would require them to withdraw from college. That is, what keeps students from achieving their educational goals? The percentage of students who report that the various factors would result in their withdrawing from class or from college is highlighted in Figure 6. Again, students could mark more than one factor; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100%.

Other barriers to persistence include lack of peer or family support. Twenty-two percent of students report that their friends are *Somewhat* or *Not Very* supportive of “your attending this college” while only 13% respond similarly about support from their immediate families.

**Figure 6: Barriers to Persistence  
(Likely or Very Likely)**



## **Student Satisfaction**

A useful measure of satisfaction is whether a student recommends a service or institution to others. The *CCSR* asks students if they would recommend their college to a friend or family member. Ninety-four percent report they would make such a recommendation. Another item asks students to evaluate their entire educational experience. Eighty-six percent describe their experience as *Good* or *Excellent*, and only 1% rate their experience as *Poor*.

Another measure of student satisfaction is the percent of returning or successful students. Sixty-five percent of the students indicate that they plan to enroll in their college within the next 12 months, while 12% report that they have accomplished their goals and will not be returning. On the other hand, twenty-three percent report they are uncertain or have no plans to return.

## **Student and Academic Support Services**

Often surveys ask a combination of questions relating to satisfaction, use, or importance levels of services, but rarely are surveys designed in a way that asks students to link all three, as does *CCSSE*. Table 7 displays use, satisfaction, and importance of a number of key academic and student support services. The first column reports the percentage of students who say that they used the service either *Sometimes* or *Often*; the second column shows the percentage of students who report they are *Somewhat* or *Very Satisfied* with the service; and the third column reports the percentage of students who rate the service as *Somewhat* or *Very Important*.

Accordingly, students are most likely to use, express satisfaction with, and rate as important the following services: academic advising and planning and computer labs. While almost half of the students report child care as important, only 5% use child care services and only 11% are satisfied with this service. Similarly, 64% of respondents rate job placement assistance as important, but only 12% use this service and only 23% are satisfied with it.

**Table 7: Student Services by Use, Satisfaction, and Importance**

	Use	Satisfaction	Importance
Academic Advising /planning	55%	71%	89%
Career Counseling	28%	45%	78%
Job placement assistance	12%	23%	64%
Peer or other tutoring	25%	39%	69%
Skills labs (writing, math, etc.)	39%	51%	74%
Child care	5%	11%	45%
Financial aid advising	44%	50%	77%
Computer lab	62%	71%	83%
Student Organizations	15%	28%	58%
Transfer credit assistance	27%	37%	71%
Services to students with disabilities	9%	18%	59%

**Note: The services highlighted in bright blue in each column are the three highest ratings in that area while the services highlighted in orange are among the lowest rated in each area.**

**Participation in Selected Activities**

The first 21 engagement items on the CCSR ask students to indicate how often they have engaged in particular activities during the current academic year. For purposes of analysis, CCSSE collapsed the response categories *Often* and *Very Often* to report substantial levels of engagement; the criterion for inclusion was that 50% of all students had to report participating in the activity. This information is highlighted in Table 8.

Across the board, part-time students are less likely than are their full-time peers to indicate substantial levels of engagement.

**Table 8: Percentage of Students Who Reported Participating Often or Very Often in Selected Activities by Enrollment Status**

Most Frequent Student Activity Items	All	Part-Time	Full-time
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	64%	63%	66%
Used the Internet or instant messaging to work on an assignment	59%	53%	68%
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	59%	52%	68%
Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance	56%	55%	56%
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	50%	45%	55%

In comparison, it is also important to note what students are *not doing* in college as frequently as one might expect. To report the least frequent activities, *CCSSE* uses the *never* response category. Table 9 consists of items where 30% or more of **all** students report *never* engaging in that particular activity.

Part-time students are more likely than are their full-time peers to report “never” with regard to significant levels of engagement.

**Table 9: Percentage of Students Who Reported Never Participating in Selected Activities by Enrollment Status**

<b>Least Frequent Student Activity Items</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>	<b>Full-time</b>
Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	80%	84%	74%
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	73%	78%	67%
Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework	72%	77%	66%
Skipped class	50%	56%	41%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	48%	53%	41%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	42%	49%	32%
Made a class presentation	33%	40%	21%
Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor	32%	38%	25%
Came to class without completing readings or assignments	30%	34%	23%

## 2006 Special Focus Questions: Academic Planning and Advising

For the 2006 survey, *CCSSE* added five special items to the survey focused on “Academic Planning and Advising.” The items were chosen because of the evident importance of such activities for community college students. Each year in the future, a different topic for the special item set will be selected, based on interest among *CCSSE* colleges and the research community, and the national results will be shared in *CCSSE*'s annual report. This strategy will help to keep the survey fresh -- addressing issues of importance to community colleges and their students -- while also keeping the core survey stable, so as to facilitate comparisons across survey years.

### The Importance of Planning and Advising

Community colleges around the country are involved in focused efforts to improve student outcomes, and educators recognize the importance of academic planning and advising to student persistence and goal attainment. In other words, there is an increasing understanding that if students don't know where they are going, they probably will end up somewhere else.

Table 10 highlights the questions and corresponding response options for the five special focus questions included in the 2006 survey.

**Table 10: 2006 *CCSSE* Special Focus Additional Questions**

Question	Response Options
While attending this college, what has been your best source of academic advising (academic planning, course recommendations, graduation requirements, etc.)? <b>(Choose only one.)</b>	1=Academic advisor (not faculty) 2=Academic advisor (faculty) 3=Friends, family, or other students 4=Online college registration and/or computerized degree advising system 5=I have not received any academic advising
With advising assistance from the college, I have set academic goals and created a plan for achieving them.	1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree 5=I do not use advising services
The information I have received from academic advisors has been accurate and up-to-date.	1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree 5=I do not use advising services
How would you rate the strength of your working relationship with your current academic advisor?	1=Poor 2=Fair 3=Good 4=Excellent 5=I do not use advising services
Have you declared a major program of study at this college?	1=Yes 2=No

## Academic Planning and Advising Results

Community college faculty members play an integral role in the academic advising experiences of students. In fact, 43% of the 78,174 students who responded to the first special focus item report that faculty advisors are their best source of academic advising; only 10% of respondents describe non-faculty academic advisors in the same way (see Table 11). Family, friends, and other students are also a valuable resource for students: over a quarter of respondents (26%) indicate that they consider these parties their best source of academic advising. On a somewhat troubling note, 13% of survey respondents report not having received academic advising from any source. Of those students who receive academic planning and advising services, 42% of respondents rate the strength of their working relationship with their advisor as “good” or “excellent,” while 11% rate this relationship as “poor.”

As previously illustrated in this overview, part-time students are less likely than their full-time peers to report substantial levels of engagement in many college activities. This trend is also found in the arena of academic advising.

Seventeen percent of part-time students report that they have not received any academic advising, as compared to only 8% of full-time students. Part-time students are also less likely to indicate that the strength of their relationship with their advisor is “good” or “excellent” (38% vs. 47%), and they are less likely to have declared a major program of study than their full-time peers (64% vs. 76%). Similarly, 16% of students with 0-29 credit hours report not having received any academic advising, as compared to 8% of respondents who have attained 30 or more credit hours. These students are also less likely to describe the strength of their relationship with their advisor as “good” or “excellent” (40% vs. 48%) and are less likely to have declared a major program of study (63% vs. 82%) than their peers who have 30 or more credit hours.

**Table 11: Selected Special Focus Question Frequencies**

	Part-time	Full-time	0 to 29 credits	30+ credits	All Students
<b>While attending this college, what has been your best source of academic advising (academic planning, course recommendations, graduation requirements, etc.)?</b>					
Academic advisor (not faculty)	10%	9%	9%	10%	10%
Academic advisor (faculty)	40%	47%	40%	50%	43%
Friends, family, or other students	25%	29%	28%	23%	26%
Online college registration and/or computerized degree advising	8%	7%	7%	9%	7%
I have not received any academic advising	17%	8%	16%	8%	13%
<b>How would you rate the strength of your working relationship with your current academic advisor?</b>					
Poor	11%	12%	11%	12%	11%
Fair	22%	24%	23%	23%	23%
Good	25%	30%	27%	28%	27%
Excellent	13%	17%	13%	20%	15%
I do not use advising services	29%	16%	26%	17%	23%
<b>Have you declared a major program of study at this college?</b>					
Yes	64%	76%	63%	82%	69%
No	36%	24%	37%	18%	31%

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## CCSSE in Action: Understanding Survey Results

CCSSE recommends that college leaders familiarize themselves with CCSSE findings before communicating about the results. The following are some things to consider:

### CCSSE Benchmarks<sup>12</sup>

Benchmarks are groups of conceptually related items that address key areas of student engagement, learning, and persistence. CCSSE's five benchmarks denote areas that educational research has shown to be important in quality educational practice. The five benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges are **active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners**. These benchmarks are tools that can be used to compare college performance across benchmarks, to similarly sized institutions, and to the full CCSSE population of community colleges.

As a reminder, the benchmark results highlight data from the 2006 CCSSE Cohort, which includes 447 institutions and 249,548 student respondents. The larger number of institutions and students contributing to the national dataset increases the reliability of the overall results. In addition, the three-year cohort approach minimizes the impact, in any given year, of statewide consortia participation.

### Enrollment Status

Enrollment status (part-time versus full-time) receives special attention in CCSSE reports; all results are either presented separately for part-time and full-time students or are weighted by enrollment status. In the CCSSE sampling procedure, classes are selected, not students. Accordingly, full-time students, who by definition are enrolled in more classes than part-time students, are more likely to be sampled. As a result, though approximately two-thirds of the students enrolled at the participating institutions are part-time students, the proportion in the CCSSE sample is nearly opposite. In the data analysis process, therefore, CCSSE assigns weights to responses based on respondents' enrollment status, thereby producing more accurate measures of student engagement.

Weighting is a technique that proportionally adjusts an individual respondent's contribution to a statistic, such as a mean or frequency; thus, some responses are weighted more heavily than others. If subgroups (e.g., part- versus full-time students) differ in their responses, then aggregate results will be biased in favor of the larger subgroup. Bias occurs, for example, when a disproportionate number of

full-time students complete the survey as compared to the population.

With the assignment of weights, subgroups (part-time) that are disproportionately small in the sample relative to the population have larger weights that increase their impact on summary statistics; the converse is true for subgroups (full-time) that are disproportionately large in the sample relative to the population.

There are several other individual characteristics, such as race, sex, or credit hours completed, where there could potentially be differences in subgroups. This observation begs the question: *Why does CCSSE weight data on enrollment status and not on other individual characteristics?* The answer is simple: there is no reason to weight on other demographic variables. The only systematic bias that occurs is with enrollment status.

### Effect Size as a Measure of Notable Differences

Effect size is a measure of group differences. In the CCSSE results, it refers to mean differences between your institution and the group of colleges to which your institution is being compared divided by their standard deviation. This procedure rescales all effect sizes to the same scale (differences in standard deviations) and thus allows for comparisons.

CCSSE uses both statistical significance and standardized effect sizes to identify items on which a college's performance differs from comparison groups. An asterisk (\*) highlights items for which students' responses differ at a statistically significant level ( $p < .001$ ) and have standardized effect sizes with absolute values equal to or greater than .2. Statistical significance is based on the effect size, the number of respondents, and the variability in their responses; as a single number, it also is the probability that the observed difference between outcomes would occur where there is truly no difference in the groups being compared. While this is a useful guideline for identifying differences between groups, very small differences can be statistically significant in very large sample sizes such as the CCSSE national data set. Thus, items where notable differences occurred were identified as standardized effect sizes of (.2) or greater.

### Statistical Significance Meets Practical Significance

In addition to focusing on items meeting the criteria highlighted above, look for patterns in students' responses. For example, are students consistently above or below the mean of the comparison group in certain areas of engagement? Are the differences explainable in terms

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<sup>12</sup> Please see the Benchmark Overview for specific information regarding calculations of benchmark scores.

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of a college's mission, the nature of the undergraduate program, or certain students' characteristics? Also, do not rely exclusively on statistical significance tests to identify areas that warrant attention. A consistent pattern of scoring above the mean, even though all the items may not reach statistical significance, may indicate the institution is doing the right things in terms of good educational practice. At the same time, some institutions have very high expectations for student engagement and may fall short of their own aspirations even though comparisons with other institutions are favorable. And in some cases, of course, it may be that the national mean is itself unacceptably low.

### **CCSSE Consortia Results**

CCSSE consortium colleges<sup>12</sup> that added questions to the survey instrument will find their corresponding frequency results behind the Frequency Distributions tab. In addition to a college's comparison to its consortium group and the 2006 CCSSE Cohort, a consortium college also will receive a comparison to other colleges in its size category.

### **Oversampling**

CCSSE's sample sizes are determined by institutional size, as reported in IPEDS. Colleges may elect to oversample in order to examine results for specific groups (such as students enrolled in developmental courses or students attending particular campus sites) or in order to increase overall sample size. The oversample data is included in the college's dataset available on CCSSE's Web site for download.

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<sup>12</sup>See pp. 1-2 for information about CCSSE consortia.

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## Fast Facts

### Survey Instrument: *The Community College Student Report (CCSR)*

- ★ Paper administration, in-class; ranges from 25-50 minutes to complete
- ★ Web-based administration; approximately 15 minutes to complete (available only in oversample situations).

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### CCSSE Participants

- ★ 249,548 students from 447 institutions in 46 states have completed the CCSR between 2004 and 2006.

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### 2006 CCSSE Cohort Respondents

Gender: Male student respondents – 40%      Female student respondents – 60%

#### Race/Ethnicity

- ★ Asian – 3%
- ★ Black – 11%
- ★ Latino/Hispanic – 9%
- ★ International – 6%
- ★ Native American – 2%
- ★ White – 65%
- ★ Other – 3%

Enrollment Status: Part-time – 31%      Full-time – 69%

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### 2006 CCSSE Consortia

- ★ Statewide and State-based consortia: Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Tennessee
- ★ Texas Small Colleges Consortium: 23 small colleges across Texas
- ★ Hispanic-Serving Institutions/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HSI/HACU) Consortium: 19 colleges
- ★ Achieving the Dream Consortium: 12 colleges
- ★ Campus Compact Consortium: 7 colleges

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### CCSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

- ★ Active and Collaborative Learning (items: 4a, 4b, 4f, 4g, 4h, 4i, and 4r)
- ★ Student Effort (items: 4c, 4d, 4e, 6b, 10a, 13d1, 13e1, and 13h1)
- ★ Academic Challenge (items: 4p, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, 6a, 6c, 7, 9a)
- ★ Student-Faculty Interaction (items: 4k,4l,4m,4n,4o,and 4q)
- ★ Support for Learners (items: 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 9f, 13a1, and 13b1)

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### Validity and Reliability

For a detailed explanation of CCSSE's sampling and analysis methodologies, see "Dimensions of Student Engagement in American Community Colleges: Using the Community College Student Report in Research and Practice," provided online at <http://www.ccsse.org/aboutsurvey/psychometrics.pdf>.

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### Future Plans

- ★ Development of entering student survey
- ★ Focus group research on the importance of relationships for community college students
- ★ Special focus survey items related to entering/new students