



SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

A Data Walk on Student Engagement @ SU

Hosted by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

February 2025

WHAT IS A DATA WALK?

A data walk is a tool that shares data with stakeholders in an accessible, purposeful way to encourage understanding and discussion of data relevant to their lives.

Sharing NSSE data with the Southwestern community can:

- Empower stakeholders with information about student perceptions
- Provide an estimate of how students spend their time and what they gain from attending Southwestern
- Inspire further discussion or action around areas of concern to inform practices and improvement

WHAT IS NSSE?

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects data from over 250,000 students annually. Since 2000 over 6.5 millions students from 1,700 four-year institutions have completed the survey about their undergraduate experience inside and outside of the classroom.

Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality:

- The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities.
- The second is how institutional resources, courses, and other learning opportunities facilitate student participation in activities that matter to student learning.

NSSE surveys undergraduate students in their first and final year to measure their levels of engagement and their perceptions of experiences at Southwestern.

NSSE Comparison Groups

Southwest Private (18 NSSE institutions in the same geographic region and private sector)

Private, Baccalaureate/Arts & Sciences (86 NSSE institutions sharing Southwestern's 2021 Basic Carnegie Classification "Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences Focus")

SU Cohort Schools (14 NSSE institutions that appear on the Board of Trustees or Strategic Planning Cohort lists)

Southwestern has participated in NSSE since 2003.

What did First-Year Students Say?

Highest & Lowest Engagement Indicators

These questions represent the largest differences (in percentage points) in Southwestern student responses relative to other private, baccalaureate institutions with an arts & science focus.

First-year

Highest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information^b (QR)

Quality of interactions with academic advisors^d (QI)

Talked about career plans with a faculty member^b (SF)

Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (...) ^b (QR)

Institution emphasis on helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (...) ^f (SE)

Lowest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

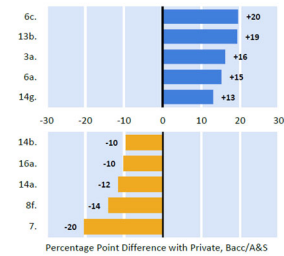
Institution emphasis on providing support to help students succeed academically^f (SE)

Spent more than 15 hours per week preparing for class

Institution emphasis on studying and academic work^e

Discussions with...People from countries other than your own

Assigned more than 50 pages of writing^d



Comparing first-year with senior student responses, is there anything that surprises you?

Why? Your reflections....

Comments from participants:

Note #1—Why more writing? Interesting.....

Note #2—What is the disconnect between high quality of interaction with student/staff services and not feeling like a community?

Note #3—Where is the community not coming together?

Note #4—Academic advising is a strength beyond first year and therefore beyond professional advisors.

Note #5—Writing amounts remain low

Note #6—First years do not equate thinking, studying, and academic work as academic emphasis.

Note #7—Discussions with people from other countries has not improved.

Note #8—Shocked by how low the feeling of community is at the end of their Southwestern experience.

Note #9—Student here....not too surprised.

Note #10—Me too, I'm shocked.

What did Senior Students Say?

Highest & Lowest Engagement Indicators

Senior

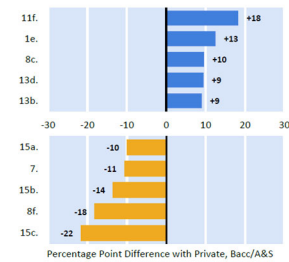
Highest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

- Completed a culminating senior experience (...) (HIP)
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments^b (CL)
- Discussions with... People with religious beliefs other than your own^b (DD)
- Quality of interactions with student services staff (...) (QI)
- Quality of interactions with academic advisors^d (QI)

Lowest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

- I feel comfortable being myself at this institution^b (SB)
- Assigned more than 50 pages of writing^d
- I feel valued by this institution^b (SB)
- Discussions with...People from countries other than your own
- I feel like part of the community at this institution^b (SB)

These questions represent the largest differences (in percentage points) in Southwestern student responses relative to other private, baccalaureate institutions with an arts & science focus.



High Impact Practices

An area of strength at Southwestern

Due to their positive associations with student learning and retention, certain undergraduate opportunities are designated "high-impact."
High-Impact Practices (HIPs) share several traits:

- Demand considerable time and effort,
- Facilitate learning outside of the classroom,
- Require meaningful interactions with faculty and students,
- Encourage collaboration with diverse others, and
- Provide frequent and substantive feedback.

NSSE asks students about their participation in the six HIPs shown in the box at right.

High-Impact Practices in NSSE

Service-Learning

Courses that included a community-based project

Learning Community

Formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together

Research with Faculty

Work with a faculty member on a research project

Internship or Field Experience

Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement

Study Abroad

Culminating Senior Experience

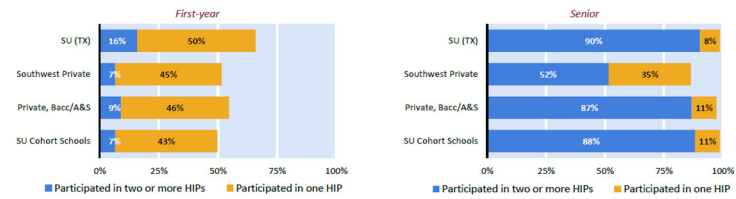
Capstone course, senior project or thesis, portfolio, recital, comprehensive exam, etc.

High Impact Practices

First-Year to Senior Year Growth

Both figures include participation in service-learning, learning communities, and research with faculty. The senior figure also includes participation in internships or field experiences, study abroad, and culminating senior experiences.

Southwestern students participate in High Impact Practices at greater rates than all three comparison groups in the first-year and over time through graduation.



High Impact Practices

Southwestern's Center for Integrative Learning and high impact experience offerings are an area of strength as compared to all comparison groups.

Statistical Comparisons

The table below displays the percentage of your students who participated in a given High-Impact Practice, including the percentage who participated in at least one or in two or more HIPs. It also graphs the difference, in percentage points, between your students and those of your comparison groups. Blue bars indicate how much higher your institution's percentage is compared to the comparison group. Dark red bars indicate how much lower your institution's percentage is compared to the comparison group. (Comparison group percentages appear on the following pages.)

		Your students' participation compared with:								
	SU [TX]	Southwest Private		Private, Bacc/A&S		SU Cohort Schools				
	%	Difference*	ES†	Difference*	ES†	Difference*	ES†			
First-year										
Service-Learning	62	+12	.25	+13	*	.26	+18	**	.36	
Learning Community	10	+3	.10	+1		.03	+4		.13	
Research with Faculty	12	+8	*	.32	+5	.16	+5		.17	
Participated in at least one	66	+14	*	.29	+11	.23	+16	*	.33	
Participated in two or more	16	+9		.30	+7	.21	+9		.30	
Senior										
Service-Learning	70		-1	-.03	+7	.15	+14	*	.29	
Learning Community	30	+12	*	.29	+3	.06	+8		.17	
Research with Faculty	49	+35	***	.77	+2	.03		-3	-.05	
Internship or Field Exp.	64	+21	***	.43	-5	-.11		-3	-.07	
Study Abroad	31	+24	***	.66	-1	-.02		-6	-.12	
Culminating Senior Exp.	94	+57	***	1.34	+18	***	.54	+7	*	.23
Participated in at least one	99	+12	***	.53	+1	.11	+0		.00	
Participated in two or more	90	+39	***	.91	+4	.11	+2		.07	

High Impact Practices @ Southwestern?

WHICH HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE IS MOST VALUABLE FOR STUDENTS IN YOUR OPINION? WHY?

CAPSTONES	INTERNSHIPS
STUDY ABROAD/AWAY	UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Participant comments:

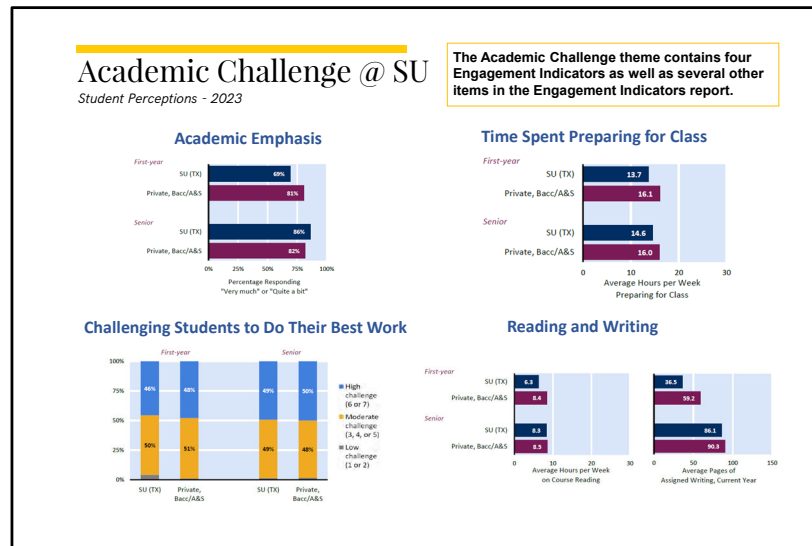
- They are all valuable especially in conjunction with one another and depending what the student wants, needs, circumstances.
- Given that we are a fine arts institution, I am encouraged to see our HIP numbers for STEM-interested students. Could we increase field experience opportunities? e.g. to ecological sites, etc.

Capstones—

- Because there are a variety of skills being used and is not a high cost financially

Study Abroad/Away—

- Tolerance learned here
- The cultural exposure connection to peers and travel experience is very powerful



Comments from participants:

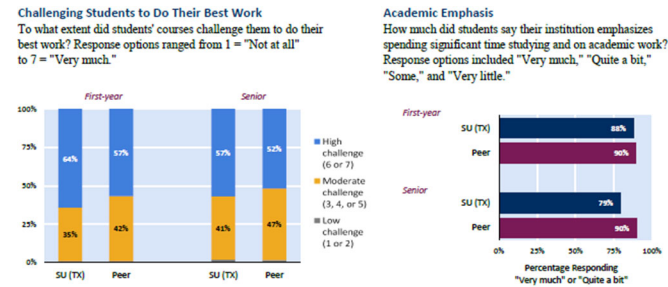
The “time spent preparing for class” numbers were interesting.

What were the numbers pre-covid? (*see next two slides for an answer*)

Map this onto what are official materials (handbook, catalog) say, how much time students should spend outside of class per credit. Share that info more widely, use it to construct class syllabi,

In response to the participant question about Pre-Covid responses on the previous slide on Academic Challenges (not included in the Data Walk):

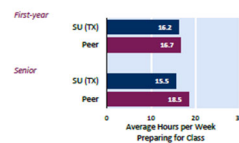
Spring 2019 NSSE responses



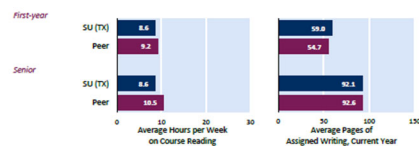
In response to the question about Pre-Covid responses on the previous slide on Academic Challenge (not included in the Data Walk) :

Spring 2019 NSSE responses

Time Spent Preparing for Class
This figure reports the average weekly class preparation time for your students compared to students in your comparison group.



Reading and Writing
These figures summarize the number of hours your students spent reading for their courses and the average number of pages of assigned writing compared to students in your comparison group. Each is an estimate calculated from two or more separate survey questions.



Experiences with Faculty

First-Year Perspectives

The table below displays how your students responded to each EI item, and the difference, in percentage points, between your students and those of your comparison group. Blue bars indicate how much **higher** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group. Purple bars indicate how much **lower** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group.

Student-Faculty Interaction Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"	SU (TX) %	Percentage point difference ^a between your first-year students and		
		Southwest Private	Private, Bacc/A&S	SU Cohort Schools
3a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member	54	+17	+16	+20
3b. Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	32	+12	+6	+7
3c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	41	+16	+5	+3
3d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	44	+15	+8	+9
Effective Teaching Practices Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much instructors have...				
5a. Clearly explained course goals and requirements	77	-4	-5	-8
5b. Taught course sessions in an organized way	81	+2	+1	-2
5c. Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	79	+3	+1	-3
5d. Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	68	-4	-1	-1
5e. Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	76	+8	+8	+4

First-year students responded more favorably on **Student-Faculty Interactions** relative to comparison groups. Their responses on **Effective Teaching Practices** more closely mirror comparison groups.

Comments from participants:

5.a. Let's intentionally pay attention to this one. Feeling that we could move the needle here relatively easily by being more intentionally explicit.

5.d. Mid-semester grades! Require faculty comments and feedback

Experiences with Faculty

Senior perspectives

The table below displays how your students responded to each EI item, and the difference, in percentage points, between your students and those of your comparison group. **Blue** bars indicate how much **higher** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group. **Purple** bars indicate how much **lower** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group.

Seniors responded more favorably on **Student-Faculty Interactions** relative to comparison groups. Their responses on **Effective Teaching Practices** more closely mirror comparison groups.

Student-Faculty Interaction	SU (TX)	Percentage point difference* between your seniors and		
		Southwest Private	Private, Bacc/A&S	SU Cohort Schools
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"...	%			
3a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member	60	+22	+3	+7
3b. Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	49	+27	+8	+12
3c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	58	+32	+8	+6
3d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	49	+19	+8	+11
Effective Teaching Practices				
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much instructors have...				
5a. Clearly explained course goals and requirements	87	+6	+2	-0
5b. Taught course sessions in an organized way	85	+6	+1	+0
5c. Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	81	+9	-2	-1
5d. Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	73	+5	+0	-0
5e. Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	73	+3	+0	-2

Campus Environment

First-Year Perspectives

First-Year student interactions with academic advisors scored the strongest statistically of all survey questions

First-year students responded quite favorably on the Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment at SU. The highest percentages are highlighted.

Quality of Interactions Percentage rating a '6' or '7' on a scale from 1="Poor" to 7="Excellent" their interactions with...	SU (TX) %	Percentage point difference* between your first-year students and			
		Southwest Private	Private, Bacc/A&S	SU Cohort	Schools
13a. Students	55	-5	+2	+0	
13b. Academic advisors	76	+13	+19	+24	
13c. Faculty	76	+13	+13	+11	
13d. Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)	62	+3	+13	+16	
13e. Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	55	-5	+7	+9	
Supportive Environment					
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much the institution emphasized...					
14b. Providing support to help students succeed academically	69	-6	-10	-10	
14c. Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	85	+10	+5	+4	
14d. Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	66	+6	+3	+1	
14e. Providing opportunities to be involved socially	81	+9	+7	+8	
14f. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)	75	+10	+6	+10	
14g. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	51	+4	+13	+17	
14h. Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)	66	+5	-3	-0	
14i. Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	60	+19	+3	+4	

Comments from participants:

Thank you, Dr. Leach (13b)

Ways to Improve Campus Environment

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS ON HOW SOUTHWESTERN CAN IMPROVE ON THE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT?

PLEASE TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS...

Comments from participants:

- The JEDI center needs to expand into old bookstore and offer more student space.
- Hire a transfer student support specialist to give more targeted transition assistance to the 50+ who enter every fall, in addition to spring.
- I second the need for a transfer student support specialist.

Campus Environment

Senior Perspectives

Seniors responded less favorably on **Quality of Interactions** than First-Year students. Senior responses on the **Supportive Environment** were mixed.

Learning support services, academic & personal support, and interactions with academic advisor and faculty scored the highest percentages.

Quality of Interactions	SU (TX)	Percentage point difference ^a between your seniors and		
		Southwest Private	Private, Bacc/A&S	SU Cohort Schools
Percentage rating a 6 or 7 on a scale from 1="Poor" to 7="Excellent" their interactions with...	%			
13a. Students	47	-19	-5	-5
13b. Academic advisors	71	+9	+9	+9
13c. Faculty	72	+6	+6	+3
13d. Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)	48	-7	+9	+13
13e. Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	33	-25	-5	-2
Supportive Environment				
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much the institution emphasized...				
14b. Providing support to help students succeed academically	74	+2	-0	+1
14c. Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	80	+12	+8	+9
14d. Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	56	+0	+1	-0
14e. Providing opportunities to be involved socially	68	+8	-1	+0
14f. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)	65	+9	+6	+11
14g. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	28	-10	+1	+6
14h. Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)	55	+6	-9	-6
14i. Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	47	+13	-7	-7

How Students Assess Their Experience @ SU

Students' perceptions of certain aspects of cognitive and affective development, as well as their overall satisfaction with the institution, provide useful evidence of their educational experiences.

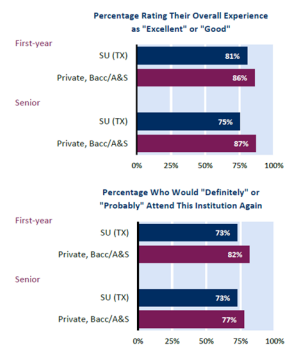
Perceived Gains Among Seniors

Students reported how much their experience at your institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ten areas.



Satisfaction with SU (TX)

Students rated their overall experience at the institution, and whether or not they would choose it again.



Comments from participants:

Satisfaction numbers are concerning, think there is room to drill deeper here. I wonder both why and when students are making this determination. What is it based on? And how can we respond? Which peers are doing better? Why? How?

<p>What do graduates gain the most after four years at Southwestern?</p>	<p>How has student engagement prepared students for their future?</p>
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Comment from participants:

Should Southwestern have a math requirement for general education? Examples: #1 math for non-majors or #2 business math or #3 financial literacy