

Memorandum

TO: Members of the Saint Mary's College Community

FROM: Mark Figueroa

DATE: September 24, 2007

SUBJECT: 2007 NSSE Data

During Spring 2007, Saint Mary's College first-year and senior students were invited to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) along with students from over 600 other colleges and universities. 149 of the 602 first-year and 84 of the 441 senior Saint Mary's students responded, resulting in an overall institutional response rate of 22%. This is lower than the national NSSE response rate of 30%. However, the demographic profile of the College's survey respondents is similar to the overall undergraduate student population.

The National Survey of Student Engagement queries students about their participation in activities that support the educational goals of the College. It is currently the best available instrument for collecting information about, measuring and comparing student activities that support their academic work. In particular, the NSSE survey focuses on activities which research has consistently shown support student's intellectual, social and spiritual development. To help institutions "focus discussions about the importance of student engagements and guide institutional improvement efforts" NSSE aggregates the responses to these questions into five benchmark measurements. The five benchmarks, called Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice, are: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus. A detailed report of the five benchmarks can be found at: http://nsse.iub.edu/2007_Institutional_Report/index.cfm

Consistent with previous year's results, the most recent data indicate that Saint Mary's students report higher levels of engagement than those at other comprehensive institutions. To access these data go to: <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/about-smc/institutional-research/nsse.html>

To allow institutions to compare their students' experiences with those at other institutions, NSSE provides comparative data for institutions that scored in the top 50 percent nationally (what they term above-average institutions) and those that scored in the top 10 percent nationally (what they term high-performing institutions) on the five benchmark indicators. The data in the table below provides an estimate of the performance of the average Saint Mary's student as compared to the average student at other institutions in the 10% and 50% peer groups as identified by NSSE.

2007 NSSE Benchmark Comparisons with Highly Engaging Institutions		SMC mean	Top 50% mean	Top 10% mean
First-Year	Level of Academic Challenge	59.6	55.3	57.8
	Active and Collaborative Learning	46.5	45.3	48.7
	Student-Faculty Interaction	39.8	37.1	40.4
	Enriching Educational Experiences	29.0	29.5	32.4
	Supportive Campus Environment	63.0	65.2	68.2
Senior	Level of Academic Challenge	65.8	58.8	63.0
	Active and Collaborative Learning	57.7	54.3	57.8
	Student-Faculty Interaction	53.2	47.4	54.1
	Enriching Educational Experiences	50.0	45.6	50.3
	Supportive Campus Environment	62.7	63.1	66.3

From the data above, we can conclude that:

- The average score for SMC first-year students is significantly above that of the average student attending schools that scored in the top 50% on Level of Academic Challenge and is as engaged as the average student attending schools that scored in the top 10% on the same benchmark.
- The average score for SMC first-year students is significantly above that of the average student attending schools that scored in the top 50% on Student-Faculty Interaction.
- The average score for SMC first-year students is slightly below that of the average student attending schools that scored in the top 50% on Enriching Educational Experiences and Supportive Campus Environment.
- The average score for SMC seniors is significantly above that of the average student attending schools that scored in the top 50% on Level of Academic Challenge.
- The average score for SMC seniors is significantly above that of the average student attending schools that scored in the top 50% on Student-Faculty interaction and Educational Experiences.

Additional results from the NSSE and FSSE (Faculty Survey of Student Engagement) will be disseminated in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at x4754 or email me at mfiguero@stmarys-ca.edu