

## **Memorandum**

**TO:** Members of the Saint Mary's College Community  
**FROM:** Mark Figueroa  
**DATE:** November 4, 2005  
**SUBJECT:** 2005 NSSE Data

In an ongoing effort to disseminate campus data and utilize the data to inform our practice, the survey results from our participation in the 2005 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) are presented here. What follows is a presentation of our institutional benchmark scores. The benchmarks (with NSSE descriptions of each) were created to help institutions “focus discussions about the importance of student engagements and guide institutional improvement efforts.” The five benchmarks are:

**Level of Academic Challenge** – Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality.

**Active and Collaborative Learning** – Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings.

**Student-Faculty Interaction** – Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom.

**Enriching Educational Experiences** – Complementary learning opportunities in and out of the class augment academic programs.

**Supportive Campus Environment** – 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.

For the 2005 surveys, institutions were allowed to select a “Peer Group” which differs from the traditional comparison group NSSE has used in the past (Carnegie Classification- Master’s Colleges and Universities) for SMC. Our selected “Peer Group” includes:

Holy Names University, Santa Clara University, University of Redlands,  
University of San Diego, University of San Francisco, and Whittier College

The Peer Group institutions that were selected represent all WCC schools (3) who participate in the NSSE survey as well as one regional comparison institution and two other California schools with populations and offerings similar to Saint Mary’s.

For 2005, Saint Mary’s College “scores” were higher than both our NSSE comparison group (Master’s Colleges and Universities) and our selected Peer Group institutions for both our First-Year Students and our Seniors in all but one area. The comparative mean scores on the five NSSE Benchmark themes are presented below.

<b>2005 NSSE Benchmark Scores Saint Mary’s College, SMC Selected Peer Group, and Master’s Colleges and Universities First Year Students</b>	<b>Mean Score SMC First –Year</b>	<b>Mean Score Peer Group First-Year</b>	<b>Mean Score Master’s First-Year</b>
Level of Academic Challenge	60.0	56.7	51.6
Active and Collaborative Learning	48.1	46.0	42.5
Student-Faculty Interaction	41.2	36.0	33.9
Enriching Educational Experiences	30.5	31.2	26.7
Supportive Campus Environment	65.5	61.9	60.1

<b>2005 NSSE Benchmark Scores Saint Mary’s College, SMC Selected Peer Group, and Master’s Colleges and Universities Seniors</b>	<b>Mean Score SMC Seniors</b>	<b>Mean Score Peer Group Seniors</b>	<b>Mean Score Master’s First-Year</b>
Level of Academic Challenge	63.5	61.9	56.0
Active and Collaborative Learning	58.7	56.1	52.2
Student-Faculty Interaction	53.1	45.7	43.6
Enriching Educational Experiences	49.5	49.2	40.3
Supportive Campus Environment	63.9	60.5	58.0

In addition to scoring higher than our “comparison” groups, we also scored very close to the top 10% of all NSSE institutions. The comparative scores are presented in the table below.

<b>2005 NSSE Benchmark Scores Saint Mary’s College and top 10% of all NSSE Institutions First Year Students &amp; Seniors</b>	<b>Mean Score SMC First -Year</b>	<b>Mean Score Top 10% First-Year</b>	<b>Mean Score SMC Seniors</b>	<b>Mean Score Top 10% Seniors</b>
Level of Academic Challenge	60.0	60.5	63.5	64.1
Active and Collaborative Learning	48.1	50.6	58.7	59.5
Student-Faculty Interaction	41.2	42.4	53.1	56.9
Enriching Educational Experiences	30.5	33.9	49.5	55.9
Supportive Campus Environment	65.5	69.5	63.9	67.0

For those who are interested in more in-depth analysis, additional data tables will be posted on the Institutional Research website later in this semester.

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