

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) - Benchmark Scores by Campus: Spring 2015

Research Report No. 80-15

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

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NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives is to conduct analytical studies and provide information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation, and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

When citing data from this report, the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives must be cited as the source.

4001 Wakefield Chapel Road
Annandale, VA 22003-3796
(703) 323-3129
www.nvcc.edu/oir

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Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) 2015: Benchmark Scores by Campus

Executive Summary

Highlights

- Overall, NOVA students gave the highest scores to items related to *Student-Faculty Interaction* and the lowest scores for items related to *Support for Learners*.
- Students from the **Medical Education** campus reported higher scores than other campuses on four of the five benchmarks.
- The lowest scores tended to come from students at the **Loudoun** and **Manassas** campuses.

Benchmark 1: Active and Collaborative Learning

- “Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions” was the highest rated response at all six campuses.
- Students were least likely to report having “participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course” at five of the six campuses.

Benchmark 2: Student Effort

- The most frequently reported measure of *Student Effort* at all six campuses was “Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.”
- Additionally, at all six campuses students were less likely to pursue peer or other tutoring, relative to other activities, as a way to succeed in their courses.

Benchmark 3: Academic Challenge

- Students at all six campuses overwhelmingly cited examinations as the academic challenge that motivated them to do their best work.
- There was a relatively large variance across campuses in students’ responses to whether they felt they were encouraged to use information they had read or heard to perform a new skill.

Benchmark 4: Student-Faculty Interaction

- At all campuses, email was the most common way students interacted with their instructors while activities with their instructors outside the classroom were relatively infrequent.

Benchmark 5: Support for Learners

- Results indicate that students at all six campuses made use of the supports and services NOVA provides to help students succeed. However, scores indicated infrequent use of academic advising and career counseling services.

Introduction

What is CCSSE?

- The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is an annual nationwide survey of community college students. CCSSE helps institutions gauge their performance in different areas of **student engagement**.

What are benchmarks?

- CCSSE identifies five **benchmarks** for assessing institutional performance in student engagement based on groups of conceptually-related items on the survey:
 - *Active and Collaborative Learning*
 - *Student Effort*
 - *Academic Challenge*
 - *Student-Faculty Interaction*
 - *Support for Learners*

In this Report

- NOVA's results are disaggregated by campus for each of the five benchmarks.
- In Spring 2015, 1,588 NOVA students participated in the survey.

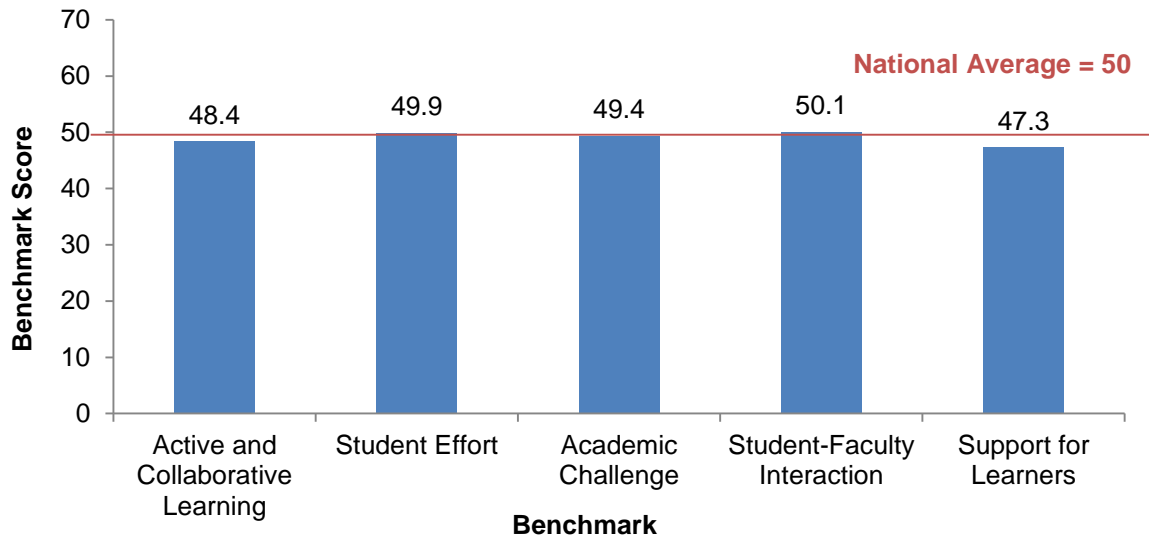
Data Notes

- Benchmark scores were calculated by averaging the scores of items that comprise that benchmark. The scores were then standardized such that the **national average is always 50** for all benchmarks.
- In this way, the scores of other colleges can be viewed as relative scores; this provides an easy way to assess whether an individual college or a group of colleges are performing above or below the mean (50) on each benchmark.
- A table with the campus scores for each benchmark and all items are provided in the appendix.

CCSSE Benchmark Summary at NOVA: Spring 2015

Overall, NOVA students gave the highest scores to items under the *Student-Faculty Interaction* benchmark, followed closely by items related to *Student Effort*. NOVA received the lowest scores for items related to *Support for Learners*.

Figure 1. Overall Average CCSSE Benchmark Scores at NOVA: Spring 2015

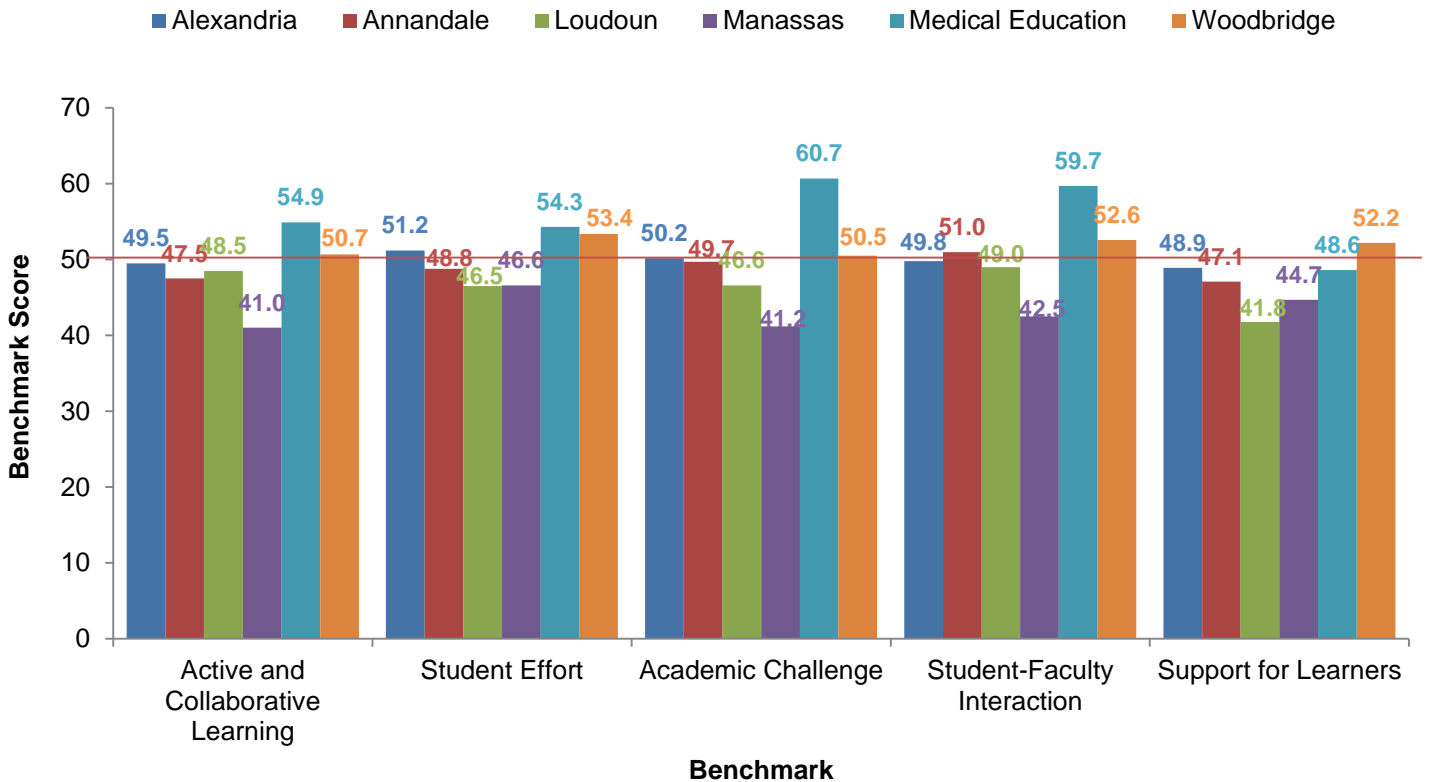


CCSSE Benchmark Scores by Campus Summary: Spring 2015

Disaggregating the scores by campus (Figure 2) reveals the following findings:

- Students from the **Medical Education** campus gave higher scores than other campuses for four of the five benchmarks (excluding *Support for Learners*).
- **Alexandria**, **Manassas**, and **Woodbridge** campuses all gave their highest scores to *Student Effort*, while **Annandale** and **Loudoun** campuses gave their highest scores to *Student-Faculty Interaction*.
- **Woodbridge** campus reported the highest score of the six campuses for the *Support for Learners* benchmark.
- **Alexandria**, **Annandale**, **Loudoun**, and **Medical Education** campuses gave their lowest scores to *Support for Learners*.
- **Loudoun** campus reported the lowest scores of any campus for *Student Effort* and *Support for Learners*.
- **Manassas** students gave lower scores than students from other campuses on three benchmarks: *Active and Collaborative Learning*, *Academic Challenge*, and *Student-Faculty Interaction*.

Figure 2. CCSSE Benchmark Scores by Campus: Spring 2015



Benchmark 1. Active and Collaborative Learning

What is Active and Collaborative Learning?

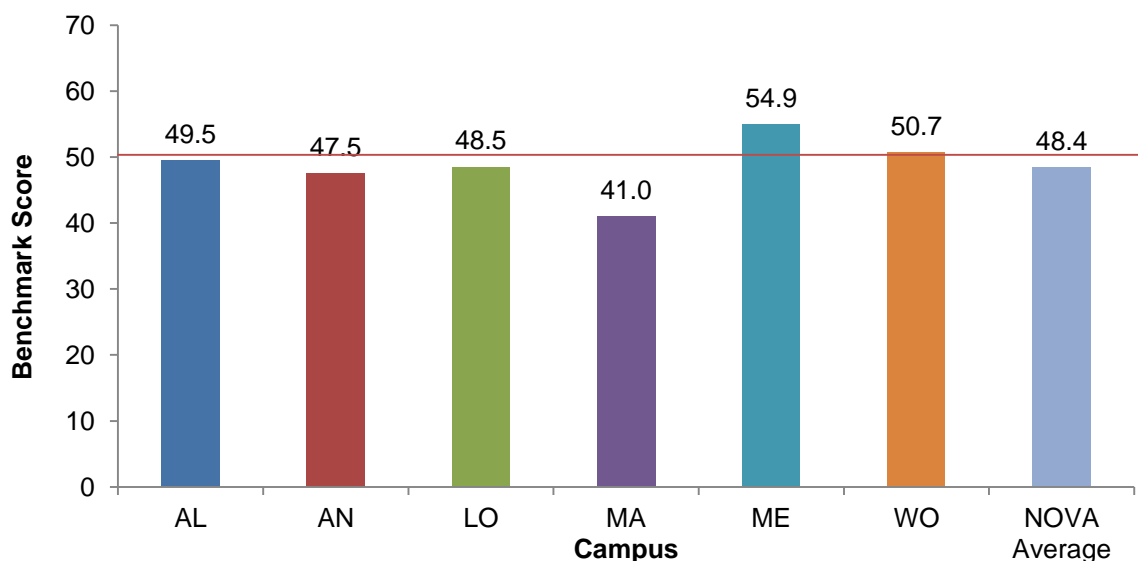
According to CCSSE, “Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaborating with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with real-life situations and problems.”¹

This benchmark is comprised of seven survey items. Survey items that contribute to the *Active and Collaborative Learning* benchmark address topics such as making class presentations and asking questions in class, working with other students on class projects, and participating in community-based projects.

How did NOVA’s Campuses Score?

- Scores for this benchmark were highest at the **Medical Education** campus (54.9) and lowest at **Manassas** (41.0).
- Scores at the remaining four campuses ranged from 47.5 (**Annandale**) to 50.7 (**Woodbridge**).
- Students at all six campuses gave the highest scores to item 4a, “Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.”
- All campuses except the **Medical Education** campus gave the lowest scores to item 4i, “Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course,” suggesting that this activity was not common at most campuses.

Figure 3. Active and Collaborative Learning – Benchmark Scores by Campus: Spring 2015



¹ Community College Survey of Student Engagement, “2015 Cohort Key Findings.” Available at: <http://ccsse.org/survey/survey.cfm>.

Benchmark 2. Student Effort

What is Student Effort?

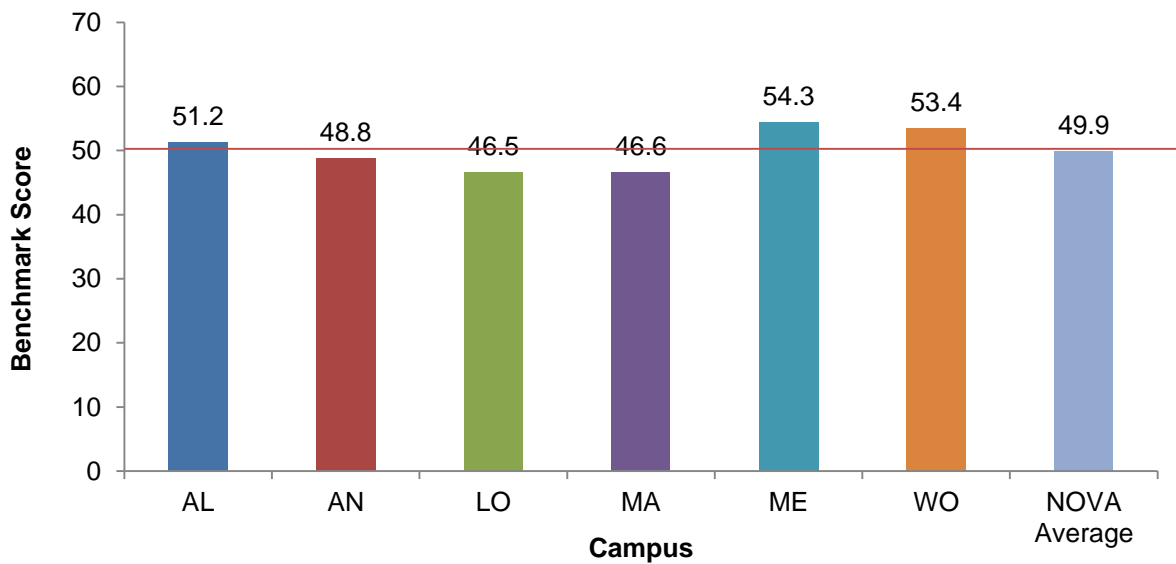
For this benchmark, CCSSE notes that, “Students’ own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and to the likelihood that they will successfully attain their educational goals.”²

The eight survey items that contribute to the *Student Effort* benchmark address topics such as preparing for class, preparing multiple drafts of a paper, and the frequency of use of tutoring or labs. In addition to course-related activities, this benchmark also encompasses co-curricular undertakings such as leisure reading or peer tutoring.

How did NOVA’s Campuses Score?

- **Medical Education** campus scored the highest on this benchmark, followed closely by **Woodbridge**.
- Students at **Loudoun** and **Manassas** campuses scored lowest on this benchmark.
- Students at all six campuses gave their highest scores to item 4d, “Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.”
- The lowest scores at all six campuses were given to item 13d, “Frequency: Peer or other tutoring,” suggesting that students were less likely to pursue tutoring relative to other activities to help them in their studies.

Figure 4. *Student Effort* – Benchmark Scores by Campus: Spring 2015



² Ibid.

Benchmark 3. Academic Challenge

What is Academic Challenge?

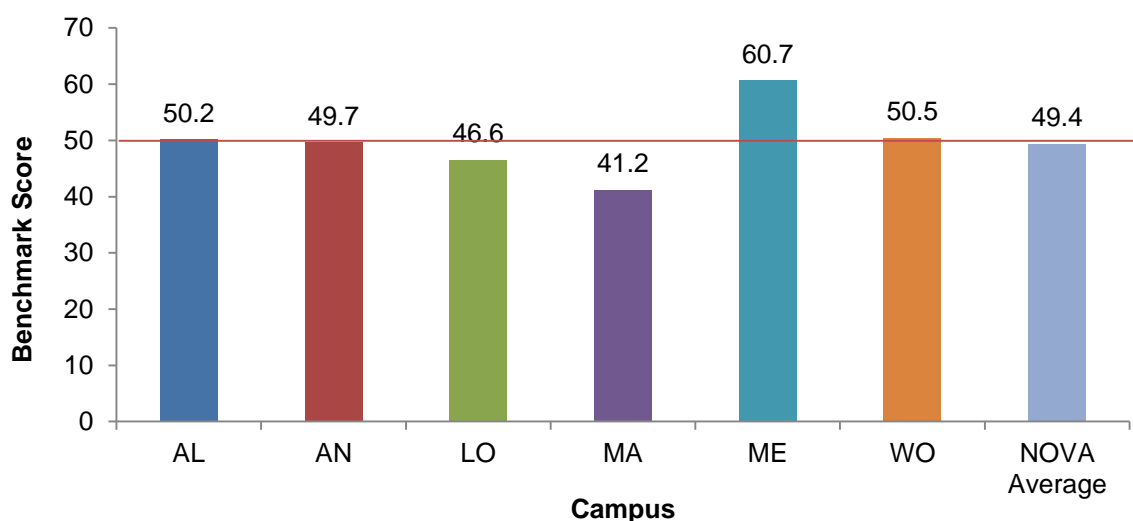
In describing the *Academic Challenge* benchmark, CCSSE notes that, “Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. These survey items address the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the rigor of examinations used to evaluate student performance.”³

The ten survey items that contribute to this benchmark address topics such as synthesizing and organizing ideas in new ways, applying theories or concepts to practical problems, and number of written papers or reports.

How did NOVA’s Campuses Score?

- The **Medical Education** campus scored the highest on this benchmark (60.7), far exceeding both the NOVA (49.4) and national averages (50.0).
- Students at all six campuses overwhelmingly gave their highest scores to item 7, “The extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college,” indicating that respondents found examinations to be their most motivating challenge relative to other coursework or activities.
- Students at the **Alexandria** and **Annandale** campuses gave their lowest scores to the academic challenge posed in item 5d, “Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods.”
- At the other four campuses, item 4p, “Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations,” received the lowest scores.
- The largest variance in responses across campuses came from item 5f, “Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill,” which ranged from 2.5 at **Manassas** to 3.2 at the **Medical Education** campus.

Figure 5. *Academic Challenge* – Benchmark Scores by Campus: Spring 2015



³ Ibid.

Benchmark 4. *Student-Faculty Interaction*

What is Student-Faculty Interaction?

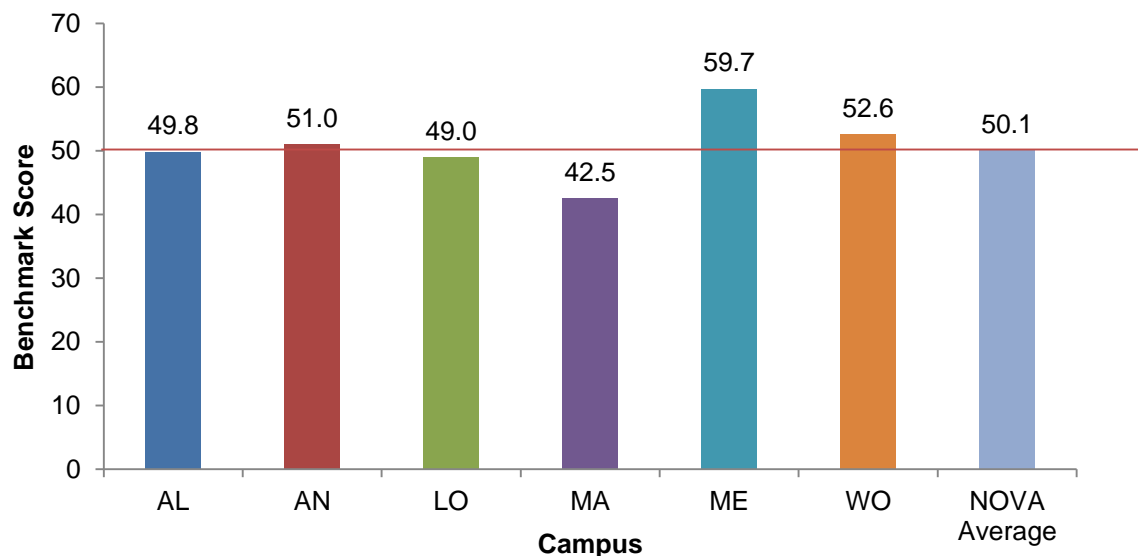
According to CCSSE, “In general, the more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.”⁴

The *Student-Faculty Interaction* benchmark is comprised of six survey items. These items address topics such as using email to communicate with an instructor, talking about career plans with an instructor or advisor, and receiving prompt feedback from instructors on performance.

How did NOVA’s Campuses Score?

- **Medical Education** campus students reported the highest scores for this benchmark, at 59.7, while **Manassas** reported the lowest, 42.5. Scores for the other four campuses ranged from 49.0 (**Loudoun**) to 52.6 (**Woodbridge**).
- Responses for individual benchmark items were fairly consistent across campuses, with all six campuses giving their highest scores to item 4k, “Used email to communicate with an instructor,” and their lowest scores to item 4q, “Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework.”
- This suggests that at all campuses, email was the most common way students interacted with their instructors, while activities with their instructors outside the classroom were relatively infrequent.

Figure 6. *Student-Faculty Interaction* – Benchmark Scores by Campus: Spring 2015



⁴ Ibid.

Benchmark 5. Support for Learners

What is Support for Learners?

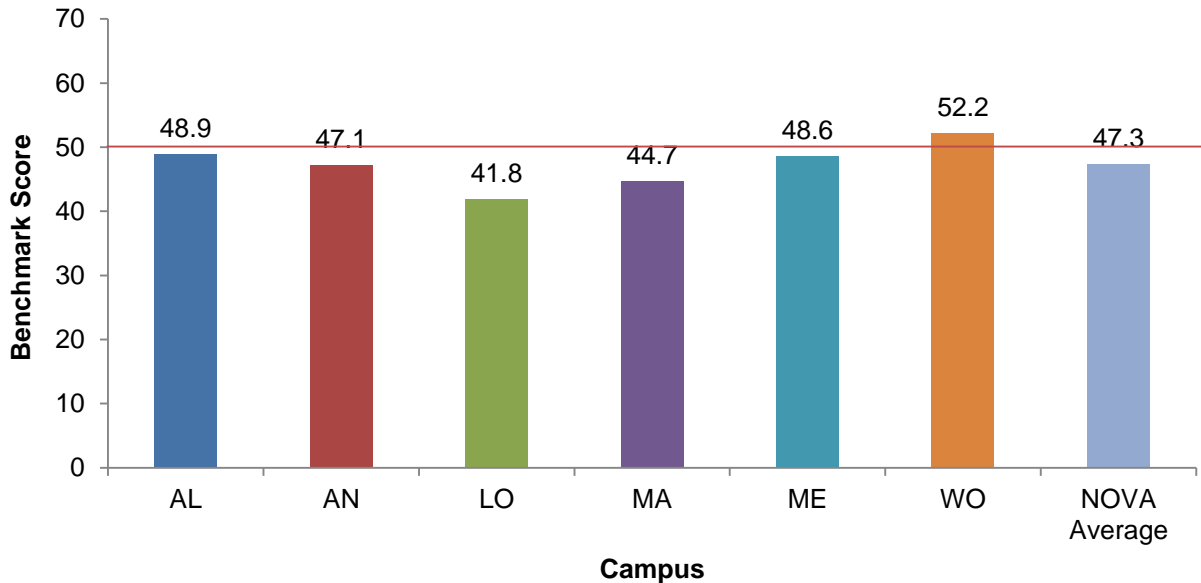
CCSSE notes that, “Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that provide important support services, cultivate positive relationships among groups on campus, and demonstrate commitment to their success.”⁵

The seven survey items that contribute to the *Support for Learners* benchmark address topics such as encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds, helping students cope with non-academic responsibilities, and providing the financial support students need.

How did NOVA’s Campuses Score?

- **Woodbridge** campus students gave the highest score for this benchmark (52.2), while students at **Loudoun** campus reported the lowest score (41.8).
- All six campuses gave their highest scores to benchmark 9b, “Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college,” and their lowest scores to item 13b, “Frequency: Career counseling.”
- These results suggest that despite a relatively infrequent use of career counseling services, NOVA students generally feel supported by the services NOVA offers to help them succeed.

Figure 7. Support for Learners – Benchmark Scores by Campus: Spring 2015



⁵ Ibid.

APPENDIX: Data Tables – CCSSE Benchmark Scores by Survey Item and Campus: Spring 2015

Table 1. CCSSE Benchmark Scores by NOVA Campus and NOVA Average: Spring 2015

Benchmark	AL	AN	LO	MA	ME	WO	NOVA Avg.
1. Active and Collaborative Learning	49.5	47.5	48.5	41.0	54.9	50.7	48.4
2. Student Effort	51.2	48.8	46.5	46.6	54.3	53.4	49.9
3. Academic Challenge	50.2	49.7	46.6	41.2	60.7	50.5	49.4
4. Student-Faculty Interaction	49.8	51.0	49.0	42.5	59.7	52.6	50.1
5. Support for Learners	48.9	47.1	41.8	44.7	48.6	52.2	47.3

Table 2. Active and Collaborative Learning – Means for Individual Benchmark Items: Spring 2015

Benchmark 1. Active and Collaborative Learning	AL	AN	LO	MA	ME	WO	NOVA Avg.
4a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	2.90	2.78	2.93	2.68	3.02	2.88	2.87
4b. Made a class presentation	2.23	2.16	2.18	1.95	2.27	2.25	2.20
4f. Worked with other students on projects during class	2.53	2.52	2.47	2.38	2.64	2.59	2.50
4g. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	1.86	2.03	1.92	1.74	2.05	2.05	1.92
4h. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	1.38	1.40	1.35	1.28	1.34	1.39	1.36
4i. Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	1.32	1.32	1.33	1.19	1.58	1.30	1.31
4r. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.)	2.56	2.29	2.44	2.39	2.65	2.53	2.48

Note: The highest scores for each campus are indicated in **green**; the lowest scores are indicated in **red**.
The maximum possible score for each of the items that comprise this benchmark is 4.

Table 3. Student Effort – Means for Individual Benchmark Items: Spring 2015

Benchmark 2. Student Effort	AL	AN	LO	MA	ME	WO	NOVA Avg.
4c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	2.58	2.56	2.51	2.60	2.74	2.72	2.60
4d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	2.89	3.01	2.87	2.83	3.01	3.02	2.94
4e. Came to class without completing readings or assignments	1.75	1.97	1.93	1.97	1.66	1.90	1.87
6b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	2.15	2.15	2.13	2.11	1.90	2.12	2.12
10a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to your program)	2.09	1.93	2.12	1.89	2.49	1.97	2.05
13d. Frequency: Peer or other tutoring	1.48	1.48	1.34	1.33	1.24	1.49	1.43
13e. Frequency: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	1.73	1.67	1.56	1.74	1.69	1.78	1.70
13h. Frequency: Computer lab	1.87	1.95	1.85	1.86	2.10	2.06	1.91

Note: The highest scores for each campus are indicated in **green**; the lowest scores are indicated in **red**.
This benchmark is comprised of 8 items, with varying scales and maximum scores ranging from 3 to 5.

Table 4. Academic Challenge – Means for Individual Benchmark Items: Spring 2015

Benchmark 3. Academic Challenge	AL	AN	LO	MA	ME	WO	NOVA Avg.
4p. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	2.65	2.69	2.47	2.40	2.71	2.62	2.60
5b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea or theory	3.01	3.03	2.93	2.70	3.20	2.98	2.98
5c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways	2.84	2.76	2.72	2.56	3.11	2.80	2.80
5d. Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	2.63	2.64	2.60	2.51	2.86	2.72	2.65
5e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	2.71	2.71	2.63	2.40	3.01	2.71	2.70
5f. Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill	2.83	2.73	2.71	2.47	3.17	2.79	2.77
6a. Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packs of course readings	2.92	2.87	2.89	2.87	3.10	2.93	2.91
6c. Number of written papers or reports of any length	2.78	2.92	2.83	3.00	2.98	2.87	2.87
7. The extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college	4.92	4.91	4.78	4.78	5.32	4.93	4.90
9a. Encouraging students to spend significant amounts of time studying	3.10	3.04	3.02	2.81	3.38	3.21	3.08

Note: The highest scores for each campus are indicated in green; the lowest scores are indicated in red. The maximum possible score for each item ranges between 4 and 7.

Table 5. Student-Faculty Interaction – Means for Individual Benchmark Items: Spring 2015

Benchmark 4. Student-Faculty Interaction	AL	AN	LO	MA	ME	WO	NOVA Avg.
4k. Used email to communicate with an instructor	3.02	3.14	3.18	2.78	3.42	3.07	3.07
4l. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	2.55	2.66	2.63	2.35	2.74	2.73	2.61
4m. Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor	2.07	2.13	1.98	1.85	2.33	2.24	2.08
4n. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	1.79	1.77	1.78	1.61	2.10	1.80	1.78
4o. Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance	2.78	2.76	2.61	2.61	2.93	2.74	2.73
4q. Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework	1.50	1.39	1.42	1.47	1.52	1.52	1.46

Note: The highest scores for each campus are indicated in green; the lowest scores are indicated in red. The maximum possible score for each of the 6 items in this benchmark is 4.

Table 6. Support for Learners - Means for Individual Benchmark Items: Spring 2015

Benchmark 5. Support for Learners	AL	AN	LO	MA	ME	WO	NOVA Avg.
9b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	2.97	2.91	2.73	2.87	3.17	3.01	2.92
9c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	2.77	2.63	2.64	2.53	2.80	2.87	2.71
9d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	1.91	1.94	1.77	1.74	1.91	1.97	1.88
9e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially	2.12	2.11	2.01	2.08	2.15	2.22	2.11
9f. Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	2.46	2.41	2.38	2.65	2.46	2.70	2.47
13a. Frequency: Academic advising/planning	1.80	1.79	1.66	1.71	1.72	1.94	1.78
13b. Frequency: Career counseling	1.51	1.51	1.30	1.38	1.39	1.50	1.45

Note: The highest scores for each campus are indicated in green; the lowest scores are indicated in red. The 7 survey items that contribute this benchmark have a maximum score of either 3 or 4.

NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals: 2005 – 2015

Mission

With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

Strategic Goals

- I. **STUDENT SUCCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will move into the top tier of community colleges with respect to the college readiness, developmental course completion, retention, graduation, transfer, and career placement of its students.
- II. **ACCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase the number and diversity of students being served to mirror the population growth of the region.
- III. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – Northern Virginia Community College will focus on student success by creating an environment of world-class teaching and learning.
- IV. **EXCELLENCE** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop ten focal points of excellence in its educational programs and services that will be benchmarked to the best in the nation and strategic to building the College's overall reputation for quality.
- V. **LEADERSHIP** – Northern Virginia Community College will serve as a catalyst and a leader in developing educational and economic opportunities for all Northern Virginians and in maintaining the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.
- VI. **PARTNERSHIPS** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop strategic partnerships to create gateways of opportunity and an integrated educational system for Northern Virginians who are pursuing the American Dream.
- VII. **RESOURCES** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase its annual funding by \$100 million and expand its physical facilities by more than one million square feet in new and renovated space. This includes the establishment of two additional campuses at epicenters of the region's population growth, as well as additional education and training facilities in or near established population centers.
- VIII. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS** – Northern Virginia Community College will be recognized as a leader among institutions of higher education in Virginia for its development and testing of emergency response and continuity of operation plans.

NOVA

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