The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) measures levels at which college students feel they are engaged in educationally meaningful activities associated with high levels of learning and development.

Faculty, administrators, governing boards, state agencies, and prospective students are interested in what students say about their educational experiences. In an effort to facilitate productive discussion about student engagement and its importance to student learning, collegiate quality, and institutional improvement, NSSE created the following five benchmarks of effective educational practice:

1. Level of academic challenge
2. Active and collaborative learning
3. Student-faculty interactions
4. Enriching educational experiences
5. Supportive campus environment

These benchmarks are based on responses to key items from the NSSE survey that capture many of the most important aspects of the student experience. Research suggests these student behaviors and institutional features are among the most powerful contributors to learning and personal development, and assist in determining the effectiveness with which the University and its environment are contributing to student learning.

In this document, Georgia Southern University's 2011 benchmark results are presented in two distinct formats. First, the University's average benchmark scores for first-year and senior participants are compared against those of: (1) a group of 21 comparison institutions from within the University System of Georgia (USG Consortium); (2) all Carnegie-classified Doctoral/Research institutions (Carnegie Class) participating in NSSE 2011; and (3) NSSE 2011 national norms (NSSE 2011).

Second, Georgia Southern's mean benchmark scores are depicted longitudinally across the four University NSSE administrations (2002, 2004, 2005, 2008, and 2011) to allow for examination of temporal variations and trends in student engagement behaviors and their perceptions of their undergraduate experience.

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

### NSSE LAC Items: Georgia Southern Highlights

Note: FY = First-Year Student  SR = Senior Student  Carnegie Class = NSSE 2011-participating Doctoral/Research institutions  NSSE 2011 = all NSSE 2011-participating institutions

1. 88% of FY students feel that Georgia Southern places substantial emphasis on academics.
2. 63% of FY students frequently work harder than they thought they could to meet faculty expectations.
3. 31% of FY students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class. 14% spend 5 hours or less.
4. First-year students report substantial emphasis on the following activities:
   - Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods: 78%
   - Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 81%
   - Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 65%
   - Making judgments about value of information: 71%
   - Applying theories or concepts: 77%
5. 5% of FY students write more than 10 papers between 5 and 19 pages and 16% have written a paper more than 20 pages in length.
6. 20% of FY students read more than 10 assigned books and packs of course readings. 31% read fewer than 5.
7. 49% of FY students reported that their exams strongly challenge them to do their best work.

### NSSE 2011: Georgia Southern vs. Comparison Groups

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<td>57</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
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1. The average benchmark score is the weighted average of the student-level scores, using only randomly sampled students from each year's data.
II. Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)

Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the complex, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.

**NSSE ACL Items: Georgia Southern Highlights**

*Note: FY = First-Year Student  SR = Senior Student  Carnegie Class = NSSE 2011-participating Doctoral/Research institutions  NSSE 2011 = all NSSE 2011-participating institutions*

1. 56% of FY students frequently discuss readings or ideas from coursework outside of class.
2. 52% of FY students frequently work with other students on projects in class, 51% work with peers on assignments outside of class.
3. 27% of FY students report that they make frequent presentations in class.
4. 20% of FY students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects during a given year. 53% never took part in such activities.
5. By their senior year, 41% of students have participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.
6. 23% of seniors frequently assist their fellow students by tutoring or teaching them.

**NSSE 2011: Georgia Southern vs. Comparison Groups**

*Due to a change to the 'research with faculty' item in 2004, statistics for 'SFC' (the alternate version of student-faculty interaction that does not include that item) are reported for all years, and 'SFI' is reported beginning with 2004.*

III. Student-Faculty Interactions (SFI)

Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.

**NSSE SFI Items: Georgia Southern Highlights**

*Note: FY = First-Year Student  SR = Senior Student  Carnegie Class = NSSE 2011-participating Doctoral/Research institutions  NSSE 2011 = all NSSE 2011-participating institutions*

1. 47% of FY students say their faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic.
2. By their senior year, 24% of students have done research with a faculty member.
3. 55% of FY students indicate that they frequently get prompt verbal or written feedback from faculty members.
4. 91% of seniors at least occasionally discuss career plans with faculty. 9% never talk with faculty members about career plans.
5. 43% of FY students at least occasionally spend time with faculty members on activities other than coursework.

**NSSE 2011: Georgia Southern vs. Comparison Groups**

*Due to a change to the 'research with faculty' item in 2004, statistics for 'SFC' (the alternate version of student-faculty interaction that does not include that item) are reported for all years, and 'SFI' is reported beginning with 2004.*
IV. Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)

Complementary learning opportunities in and out of class augment academic programs. Diversity experiences teach students valuable things about themselves and others. Technology facilitates collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge.

NSSE EEE Items: Georgia Southern Highlights

Note: FY = First-Year Student  SR = Senior Student  Carnegie Class = NSSE 2011-participating Doctoral/Research institutions  NSSE 2011 = all NSSE 2011-participating institutions

1. During their first year, 11% of students participate in a learning community. By their senior year, 11% of students have taken an independent study class.
2. 56% of FY students say they frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs.
3. 7% of FY students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race.
4. By their senior year, 10% of students have studied abroad.
5. 34% of FY students frequently engage in spiritually enhancing activities such as worship, meditation, or prayer.
6. By the time they are seniors, 68% of students have participated in community service or volunteer work.

V. Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)

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.

NSSE SCE Items: Georgia Southern Highlights

Note: FY = First-Year Student  SR = Senior Student  Carnegie Class = NSSE 2011-participating Doctoral/Research institutions  NSSE 2011 = all NSSE 2011-participating institutions

1. 61% of FY students report that their peers are friendly, supportive, and help them feel as if they belonged.
2. 94% of FY students report a favorable image of Georgia Southern; 86% of seniors would choose Georgia Southern again if they could start their college career over.
3. 12% of FY students spend more than 15 hours a week participating in co-curricular activities. 31% spend no time participating in co-curricular activities.
4. 39% of FY students find the administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible.
5. 84% of FY students feel that Georgia Southern has a substantial commitment to their academic success. 60% feel well-supported by Georgia Southern regarding their social needs.

NSSE 2011: Georgia Southern vs. Comparison Groups


Georgia Southern University, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis
2011 NSSE Benchmark Pamphlet
12/2/2011