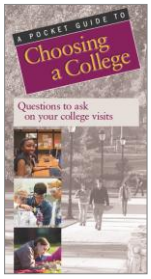
The Student Experience in Brief: Cal Maritime

Each year the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students at hundreds of colleges and universities to reflect on the time they devote to various learning activities. The topics explored are linked to previous research on student success in college.



Results from NSSE can provide prospective students with insights into how they might learn and develop at a given college. To help in the college exploration process, NSSE developed *A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College* to provide students and parents key questions to ask during campus visits.

The following responses were provided by 160 randomly selected Cal Maritime students on the 2010 NSSE survey.

Academic Challenge

To what degree is studying and spending time on academic work emphasized?
75% of FY students feel that this institution places substantial emphasis on academics.[1]

Do faculty hold students to high standards?
60% of FY students frequently work harder than they thought they could to meet faculty expectations.[2]

How much time do students spend on homework each week?
49% of FY students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class. 9% spend 5 hours or less.

What types of thinking do assignments require?
First-year students report substantial emphasis on the following activities:

- Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods: 79%
- Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 82%
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 73%
- Making judgments about value of information: 79%
- Applying theories or concepts: 83%

How much writing is expected?
12% of FY students write more than 10 papers between 5 and 19 pages and 24% have written a paper more than 20 pages in length.

How much reading is expected during the school year?
33% of FY students read more than 10 assigned books and packs of course readings. 21% read fewer than 5.

Do exams require students to do their best work?
58% of FY students report that their exams strongly challenge them to do their best work.[3]

Active Learning

How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?
52% of FY students frequently discuss readings or ideas from coursework outside of class.

Do students work together on projects – inside and outside of class?
58% of FY students frequently work with other students on projects in class, 73% work with peers on assignments outside of class.

How often do students make class presentations?
47% of FY students report that they make frequent presentations in class.

How many students participate in community-based projects in regular courses?
17% of FY students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects during a given year. 60% never took part in such activities.

How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?
By their senior year, 92% of students have participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

Do students have opportunities to tutor or teach other students?
45% of seniors frequently assist their fellow students by tutoring or teaching.

Student-Faculty Interaction

Are faculty members accessible and supportive?
59% of FY students say their faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic.

How many students work on research projects with faculty?
By their senior year, 28% of students have done research with a faculty member.

Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?
54% of FY students indicate that they frequently get prompt verbal or written feedback from faculty members.

Note: FY= First-Year student SR=Senior student

How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?
90% of seniors at least occasionally discuss career plans with faculty.[4] 10% never talk with faculty members about career plans.

Do students and faculty members work together on committees and projects outside of course work?
57% of FY students at least occasionally spend time with faculty members on activities other than coursework.

Enriching Educational Experiences

What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?
During their first year, 18% of students participate in a learning community. By their senior year, 34% of students have taken an independent study class.

How often do students interact with peers with different social, political, or religious views?
66% 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.

How often do students interact with peers from different racial or ethnic backgrounds?
55% of FY students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race.

How many students study in other countries?
By their senior year, 30% of students have studied abroad.

Do students participate in activities that enhance their spirituality?
12% of FY students frequently engage in spiritually enhancing activities such as worship, meditation, or prayer.

What percentage of students participate in community service?
By the time they are seniors, 60% of students have participated in community service or volunteer work.

Supportive Campus Environment

How well do students get along with other students?
68% of FY students report that their peers are friendly, supportive, and help them feel as if they belong.

Are students satisfied with their overall educational experience?
81% of FY students report a favorable image of this institution; 77% of seniors would choose this school again if they could start their college career over.

How much time do students devote to co-curricular activities?
8% of FY students spend more than 15 hours a week participating in co-curricular activities. 39% spend no time participating in co-curricular activities.

How well do students get along with administrators and staff?
25% of FY students find the administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible.

To what extent does the school help students deal with their academic and social needs?
74% of FY students feel that this institution has a substantial commitment to their academic success.
49% feel well-supported by the institution regarding their social needs.

A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College is available at **nsse.iub.edu/html/pocket_guide.cfm**

Notes:

1. "Substantial" emphasis is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very much" and "Quite a bit."
2. "Frequently" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often" and "Often."
3. "Strongly challenge" is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is “Very little” and 7 is “Very much.”
4. "Occasionally" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often," "Often," and "Sometimes."

Data source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2010

NSSE national survey of student engagement

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