



CU-Colorado Springs

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2002 Responses from CU-Colorado Springs Students *Instructional Innovations*

Research Brief No. 4

NSSE Overview

In spring 2002, CU-Colorado Springs participated in a national study of college students, along with 367 other four-year colleges and universities. Seven hundred randomly selected first-year and senior students at CU-Colorado Springs were invited to share their views by completing *The College Student Report*. This survey is part of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that is administered by the Indiana University at Bloomington.

The NSSE questionnaire took students less than 15 minutes to complete and participants had the choice of using paper or the Web. The survey asked students how they spend time, the nature and quality of their interactions with faculty members and peers, and what they had gained from their classes, as well as other aspects of their college experience. Approximately 301 students completed a survey (131 freshmen and 170 seniors), providing a 43% response rate.

Instructional Innovations

Several NSSE questions addressed different types of instructional innovations. Categories of innovation include A. use of technology, B. student-faculty interaction, C. cooperation among students, D. active learning, and E. communicating high expectations to students.

A. Use of Technology: Findings suggest that CU-Colorado Springs freshmen start out using technology less in their classes than their counterparts nationally, but are typically using technology at similar rates by the time they are seniors. Specifically, two types of technology were examined: 1) use of an electronic medium, such as a list-serv, chat group, or the Internet, to

discuss or complete an assignment, and 2) use of email to communicate with an instructor.

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often

| How often have you: | CU- Colorado Springs Freshmen and Senior Mean | NSSE Public Institutions Mean |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment | FR 2.43 | FR 2.58 |
| | SR 2.78 | SR 2.78 |
| Used email to communicate with an instructor | FR 2.68 | FR 2.80 |
| | SR 3.05 | SR 3.03 |

When asked whether the institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the area of using computing and information technology, students responded similarly to students at other public institutions.

B. Student-Faculty Interaction: Freshmen and seniors were asked about the frequency of their contact with faculty concerning grades and assignments or discussing ideas with faculty outside class. These students were also asked if they receive prompt feedback on their performance.

The majority of CU-Colorado Springs' freshmen and seniors reported they discussed grades or assignments with faculty and received prompt feedback (written or oral) from faculty on their academic performance. Levels of interaction in these areas are somewhat less for freshmen.

Fewer than 17% of seniors and freshmen say they often discuss ideas from class with faculty outside of class.

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often

| How often have you: | CU-Colorado Springs Freshmen and Senior Mean | NSSE Public Institutions Mean |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor | FR 2.48 | FR 2.52 |
| | SR 2.71 | SR 2.76 |
| Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with faculty members outside of class | FR 1.62 | FR 1.71 |
| | SR 1.85 | SR 1.99 |
| Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance | FR 2.52 | FR 2.51 |
| | SR 2.56 | SR 2.72 |

Findings note interaction between students and faculty in the classroom at CU-Colorado Springs is occurring. As the mean scores above reveal, the NSSE benchmarks indicate even more frequent dialog is occurring at other public four-year institutions.

C. Cooperation Among Students: CU-Colorado Springs students compared similarly with fellow freshmen and seniors from other public institutions when asked how often they worked with other students on projects during and outside of class.

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often

| How often have you: | CU-Colorado Springs Freshmen and Senior Mean | NSSE Public Institutions Mean |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Worked with other students on projects during class | FR 2.34 | FR 2.38 |
| | SR 2.41 | SR 2.49 |
| Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments | FR 2.25 | FR 2.29 |
| | SR 2.77 | SR 2.71 |
| Tutored or taught other students | FR 1.54 | FR 1.63 |
| | SR 1.90 | SR 1.79 |

Mean responses indicate that more freshmen work with other students on projects during class, while seniors tend to work with classmates outside of class (slightly more often than seniors nationally). Likewise, tutoring other students at least

sometimes was more commonplace among seniors here than elsewhere.

D. Active Learning: The survey asked students to rate their coursework by tasks that characterize active learning. The results confirm that these characteristics are broadly found at CU-Colorado Springs. Most students indicated that there is “quite a bit” or “very much” active learning taking place, as evident in the means below (all greater than 2.71).

1= very little, 2= some, 3= quite a bit, 4= very much

| To what extent has your coursework emphasized: | CU-Colorado Springs Freshmen and Senior Mean | NSSE Public Institutions Mean |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interactions and relationships | FR 2.71 | FR 2.76 |
| | SR 3.00 | SR 2.98 |
| Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations | FR 2.97 | FR 2.93 |
| | SR 3.07 | SR 3.13 |

Sixty-percent of seniors reported participating in a culminating senior experience, including capstone, thesis, or comprehensive exam, compared to 49% of seniors at other four-year public institutions. About the same proportion of seniors have participated in a practicum, internship, field experience, or clinical assignment.

E. Communicating High Expectations: Student motivation levels to succeed academically are examined in two NSSE inquiries. The first provides self-reported data on effort devoted to studies outside of class. The second confided the frequency that instructor expectations made them work harder than they thought they could.

The primary difference in effort toward study is that CU-Colorado Springs freshmen are more inclined to devote at least the minimum amount of hours to maintain good standing. Nationally, 77% of freshmen spend 6 hours or more per week in study. At CU-Colorado Springs, 81% of freshmen devote this same level of effort.

| Hours per Week Spent Preparing for Class | CU-Colorado Springs | | NSSE Public Institutions | |
|--|---------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
| | Freshmen | Seniors | Freshmen | Seniors |
| 0 - 5 hours | 19% | 24% | 23% | 23% |
| 6 - 15 hours | 53% | 43% | 46% | 42% |
| 16-25 hours | 21% | 19% | 22% | 23% |
| 26 or more hours | 7% | 14% | 9% | 12% |

Levels of expectation placed upon the student by instructors mirror national rates. Forty-three percent of freshmen and over half of seniors responded “often or very often” when asked whether they had worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructors standards or expectations.

Conclusions

NSSE results presented in this report provide a valuable look into the types of instructional innovations taking place at CU-Colorado Springs.

CU-Colorado Springs’ students are using technology at similar rates than students nationally. Student-faculty interaction is occurring inside and outside the classroom as well as student-to-student interaction. Most students agree that active learning is a significant part of their studies.

In addition, CU-Colorado Springs’ students spend more time preparing for class than their peers at other public institutions, and agree that they have often worked harder than they thought they could to meet instructor expectations.

For further information on NSSE and CU-Colorado Springs’ results, please contact the Office of Institutional Research.

Prepared by: Office of Institutional Research
November 7, 2002