



CU-Colorado Springs

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

Research Brief No. 7

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 typically 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. Over 300 CU-Colorado Springs students completed a survey (131 freshmen and 170 seniors), providing a 43% response rate.

Student Experiences With Diversity

The NSSE study explores four areas of student experiences regarding diversity issues:

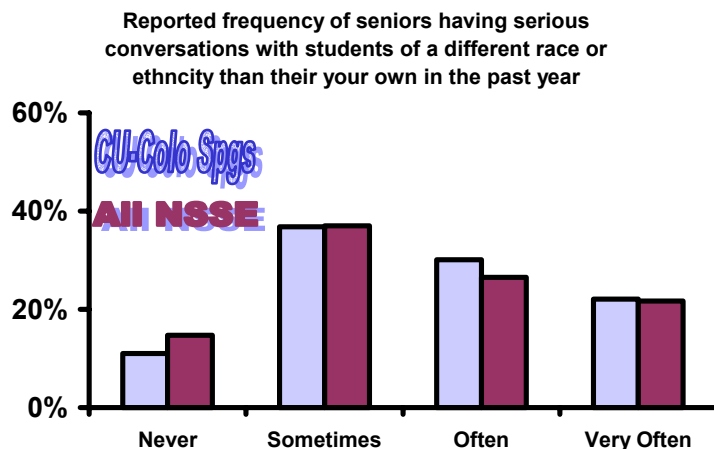
- student-to-student interaction,
- curriculum emphasis,
- personal development,
- and campus climate.

The NSSE results reveal that students generally perceive that valuing diversity is not emphasized as an institutional commitment nor does it have a strong presence in the curriculum. The most common response from surveyed students is that institutions have *some* emphasis on encouraging different groups to interact and that *sometimes*

their college educational experiences include diversity issues.

Nonetheless, responses to these questions at CU-Colorado Springs can be compared to the national benchmark set by the other public four-year institutions participating in the study, and therefore provide benchmarks in helping to determine this institution's areas of strength or areas for improvement.

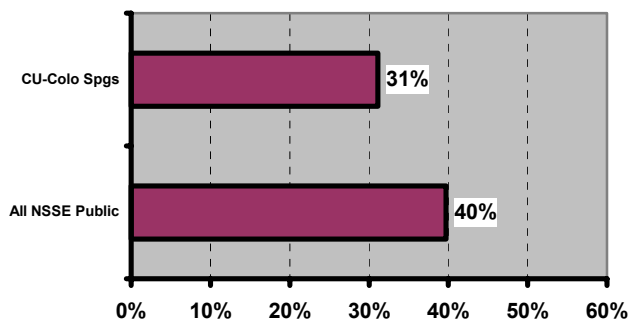
Comparison of the responses from CU-Colorado Springs seniors to their peers nationally is mixed concerning diversity issues. An area of strength for this campus rests with student-to-student interaction. The majority of CU-Colorado Springs seniors say they often have serious conversations with students from a different ethnicity than their own. Nationally, slightly less than a majority of seniors report the same level of interaction.



Only 11% of CU-Colorado Springs seniors report that they had no substantive interaction with other ethnic groups in the past year. Nationally, about 15% of seniors report a similar lack of contact with other ethnic groups in the past year.

CU-Colorado Springs seniors have proportionally less positive experiences than seniors nationally concerning diversity as promoted by the institution, as part of their personal development as college students, or as a part of their studies.

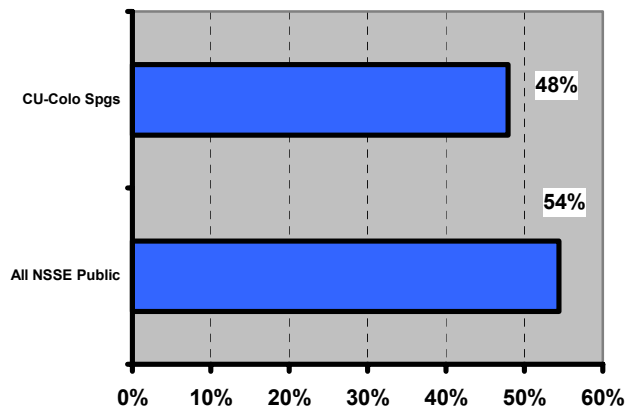
Seniors reporting that their institution often or very often emphasizes/encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds?



As the chart above indicates, seniors elsewhere perceive their institutions as promoting interaction among students of diverse backgrounds to a greater degree than do CU-Colorado Springs seniors. One in three seniors here say the institution does *very little* to encourage contact among diverse groups of students compared to about one in five seniors nationally.

Another significant difference between CU-Colorado Springs seniors and seniors elsewhere is in the area of personal development in understanding people from different backgrounds.

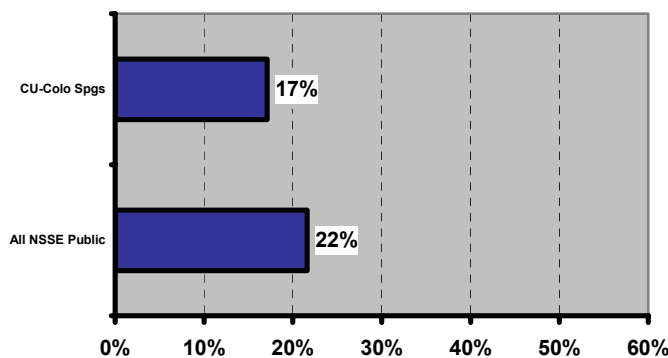
Seniors agreeing that their college experience has often or very often contributed to their personal development in understanding people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds



Nationally, more than half of seniors survey reported frequent opportunity for personal development in understanding people of other races and cultures as part of the college education. CU-Colorado Springs seniors were 6% less likely than seniors nationally to report this same frequency of opportunities for personal development in learning about other cultures.

CU-Colorado Springs seniors were also 4% less likely than seniors nationally to report frequent class discussions and writing assignments concerning diversity in race, religion, gender, and political beliefs. The most prominent difference concerning this issue between CU-Colorado Springs seniors and their national peers is the 5% difference in those reporting that diverse perspectives are *very often* included in class discussions and writing assignments.

Senior responses that class discussions and writing assignments *very often* include diverse perspectives



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

Prepared by: Office of Institutional Research
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