Patterns of Student-Student and Student-Faculty Interactions at CUNY: Implications for Increasing Student Engagement

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• This presentation focuses on student-student interaction and student-faculty interaction
  – Part of NSSE's Benchmarks of Effective Practice
  – Interaction with fellow students and with faculty is central to student engagement
  – Student engagement is correlated with retention and graduation
  – NSSE items and benchmark measures are grounded in several decades of educational research on persistence in higher education
• Subset of the available indicators
  – Student-student indicators are part of 3 NSSE benchmarks:
    • Active and Collaborative Learning
    • Enriching Educational Experiences
    • Supportive Campus Environment
  – The Student-faculty indicators are the core of the NSSE Student-Faculty Interaction benchmark
• NSSE results reflect Spring 2009 administration at CUNY senior colleges
• Administered to all first-year students and seniors*
• Online survey, invitation and reminders sent by email**
  – Paper follow-up to subsample of non-respondents
  – CUNY’s average response rate was 16%
• Related results from the 2008 CUNY Student Experience Survey

*Students over-sampled at some colleges; responses of over-sampled students are not included in the results presented here.
**Medgar Evers administered only paper surveys.
Student-Student (Peer) Interactions

- How often have students:
  - Worked with other students on projects **during class**
  - Worked with classmates **outside of class** to prepare class assignments
  - Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment
  - Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own
  - Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you

- To what extent do students believe the college encourages students to study together?

- How do students rate the quality of their relationships with other students?
2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Peer Interaction Items

In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?  
1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
- Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own
- Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values

CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
• In general, seniors are somewhat more likely to interact with peers than are first year students.
• CUNY students are more likely to interact with diverse students than are students at NSSE institutions in general.
• CUNY students are more likely to work with others in class, but less likely to work with others outside of class, compared to the NSSE average.
2008 CUNY Undergraduate Student Experience Survey

My College Encourages Students to Study Together

Percentage who Agree/Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUNY Colleges</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medgar Evers</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaGuardia</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMCC</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hostos</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsborough</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehman</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensborough</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYCT</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baruch</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jay</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CUNY Average: 43.8%
• Wide variation across colleges in student perceptions about how much colleges encourage students to study together.

• Community colleges rate higher on this item than senior colleges, in general.
2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Relationships with other students

Select the circle that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution.
1=Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of alienation to 7=Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging

Colleges are sorted from high to low on first year student mean scores.

CUNY Colleges

NYCCT  Baruch  Medgar Evers  John Jay  City  York  Lehman  Queens  Brooklyn  Staten Island  Hunter

CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
• CUNY students rate their relationships slightly lower than NSSE average, but higher than the middle of the rating scale.
• At most CUNY colleges, seniors rate their relationship with students higher than to first-year students, but at some colleges, first-years have better relationships with fellow students.
• What policies and practices are in place at your campus to encourage students to work together outside of class?
• What are some limitations on students’ ability to interact? Are there ways to foster more interaction within these limits?
Student-Faculty Interaction

• How often have students:
  – Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor
  – Discussed grades/assignments with an instructor
  – Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
  – Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
  – Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)

• How satisfied are students with the availability of faculty outside of class?

• How do students rate the quality of their relationships with faculty?
2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Student-Faculty Interaction Items

In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?
1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

- Used e-mail to communicate: CUNY Avg 3.17, NSSE Avg 3.21
- Discussed grades or assignments: CUNY Avg 2.55, NSSE Avg 2.71
- Talked about career plans: CUNY Avg 2.01, NSSE Avg 2.83
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes outside of class: CUNY Avg 2.01, NSSE Avg 2.20
- Activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.): CUNY Avg 1.53, NSSE Avg 1.64
• Most often interact with faculty via email
• Least often as non-course based interactions
• CUNY and Other NSSE institutions are similar in this regard
• CUNY students are about as likely as students at other NSSE institutions to have discussions with faculty outside of class, but have lower levels of interaction with faculty on all other items.
2008 CUNY Undergraduate Student Experience Survey

Level of Satisfaction with the Availability of Faculty Outside of Class

Percentage Satisfied/Very Satisfied

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baruch</td>
<td>63.1</td>
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CUNY Average: 59.9%
• This is a general measure of perceived availability

• In general, community college students are less satisfied with availability of faculty outside of class than senior college counterparts.
2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
Relationships with faculty members

Select the circle that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution.
1=Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic to 7=Available, Helpful, Sympathetic

Colleges are sorted from high to low on first year student mean scores.
• All colleges are above the midpoint on the scale, but…
• CUNY is consistently below the NSSE average
• At some colleges, seniors report that faculty are less helpful/sympathetic compared to ratings from first-year students