

A Comparison of Results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Oakton Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (OFSSE) - Spring 2006

This month the Office of Research is pleased to provide an excerpt of a report prepared by Robin Remich, Manager of the Learning Center at the Ray Hartstein Campus. Robin is working with us this year to gain experience in institutional research.

The CCSSE is a national survey through which community colleges examine institutional practices and student behaviors that research has shown to be correlated with student learning and retention. The CCSSE was completed by 776 students in randomly selected spring 2006 classes, excluding distance education classes. Results were weighted so that full-time students did not dominate the findings. The OFSSE is an on-line survey developed by the Office of Institutional Research to solicit faculty perspectives on topics parallel to those in the CCSSE. All full- and part-time faculty teaching in the spring 2006 term were encouraged to complete the survey; 158 did so.

In this In the Abstract we focus on responses to questions related to students' engagement in a variety of mental or other activities, and the extent to which students and faculty perceive students' experiences have contributed to specific knowledge, skills and personal development. Note the phrase "mental activities" is one used by CCSSE.

Table 1. In this course/during the current school year how much does your coursework emphasize the following mental or other activities?

Activity	Percent responding very much or quite a bit	
	Faculty	Students
Synthesize and organize ideas, information or experience in new ways	87%	60%
Apply theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	86%	55%
Analyze the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	79%	67%
Make judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	75%	50%

Table 2. How much do you think students' experiences/your experiences at Oakton have contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

Knowledge, Skill, Personal Development	Percent responding very much or quite a bit	
	Faculty	Students
Thinking critically and analytically	77%	59%
Working effectively with others	69%	51%
Writing clearly and effectively	67%	54%
Speaking clearly and effectively	65%	50%
Solving numerical problems	46%	47%

There are many possible explanations for these results. For example, approximately 70% of Oakton students attend part-time, many taking just one course. Their exposure to the activities, knowledge, skill and personal development areas may be narrower than for students who take a number of Oakton courses. It may be that some students don't define or recognize the mental or other activities in the same way as do faculty; perhaps faculty might tell students when they are engaging in these activities. Another set of questions to explore is whether these results are appropriate for Oakton.

Additional information about and results from the CCSSE and OFSSE are available from the Office of Research.