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FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 5, 2007**

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High-Impact Practices Boost Learning, Involved Parents No Problem

Findings from a national survey released today show that taking part in certain activities during college boosts students' performance in many areas, such as thinking critically, solving real world problems, and working effectively with others. These "high-impact" activities include learning communities, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, and capstone projects.

Contrary to what some educators believe, students who frequently talk with their parents and follow their advice participate more frequently in educationally purposeful activities and are more satisfied with their college experience. This is also true for students with so-called "helicopter parents" – those who intervened with institutional officials to solve problems their student encountered on campus.

The 2007 report from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is based on information from about 313,000 randomly selected first-year and senior students at 610 four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada. The NSSE study, titled "*Experiences That Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success*," gives schools an idea of how well their students are learning and what they put into and get out of their undergraduate experience.

"The results clearly show that colleges and universities should do everything possible to encourage undergraduates to participate in at least two high-impact activities, one in the first year and one later in their studies. Such experiences will better prepare students for a productive, satisfying lifetime of continuous learning," says George Kuh, the NSSE director and Indiana University Bloomington professor of higher education.

Now in its eighth year, the survey findings annually provide comparative standards for determining how effectively colleges are contributing to learning. Five key areas of educational performance are measured: 1) level of academic challenge, 2) active and collaborative learning, 3) student-faculty interaction, 4) enriching educational experiences, and 5) supportive campus environment.

"NSSE is becoming increasingly helpful in improving student success and building public confidence in the commitment of colleges and universities to improve teaching and learning," says Paul E. Lingenfelter, President of the State Higher Education Executive Officers. According to Douglas Bennett, president of Earlham College, "NSSE provides prospective students and their parents with information and insights that will help them find a college or university that is a good fit for them."

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Other key findings from the 2007 report are:

- Students who meet with their advisor at least twice a year are more engaged and gain more from college, yet 10% never meet with their advisor.
- Thirteen percent of first-year students have parents who frequently intervene with college officials; another quarter had parents who intervened sometimes.
- When faculty members provide guidance and feedback on projects and papers, students are more satisfied and say they benefit more in desired ways.
- First-year men report higher SAT or ACT scores, but spend less time than women preparing for classes and more time relaxing and socializing in the first year of college.
- Students who study abroad report greater gains in intellectual and personal development than their peers who do not have such an experience.
- First-generation students are less likely to take part in enriching educational experiences such as study abroad, an internship, or research with a faculty member.
- An internship or field placement is the most powerful form of a culminating senior experience in terms of greater self-reported gains.
- Only 29% of seniors at public institutions do a culminating senior experience, compared with 42% of their private college and university counterparts.

“NSSE is an institution’s most trustworthy lens for seeing deeply into the quality of students’ experiences because its results can translate directly into plans for action and reform and transformation strategies,” says Lee S. Shulman, president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. According to James H. Breece, University of Maine system vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, “NSSE provides invaluable information to our administrators, faculty, and staff that they need to make changes to improve the student experience.”

Kuh believes that colleges and universities should be more consistently using promising practices in teaching and learning throughout the curriculum to engage all their students at high levels. “The real question,” he says, “is whether we have the will to do so.”

The NSSE 2007 Report is sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

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The NSSE 2007 Report, *Experiences That Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success*, may be obtained for \$20 from the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, School of Education, 1900 E. 10th Street, Eigenmann Hall, Suite 419, Bloomington IN 47406-7512. NSSE Web site: www.nsse.iub.edu.



National Survey of Student Engagement

Executive Snapshot 2007

University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez

Dear Colleague:

This is a summary of some key findings from your institution's performance on the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement. We hope you can use this information to stimulate discussion on your campus about how to improve the quality of the undergraduate experience at University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez.

Sincerely,

George D. Kuh

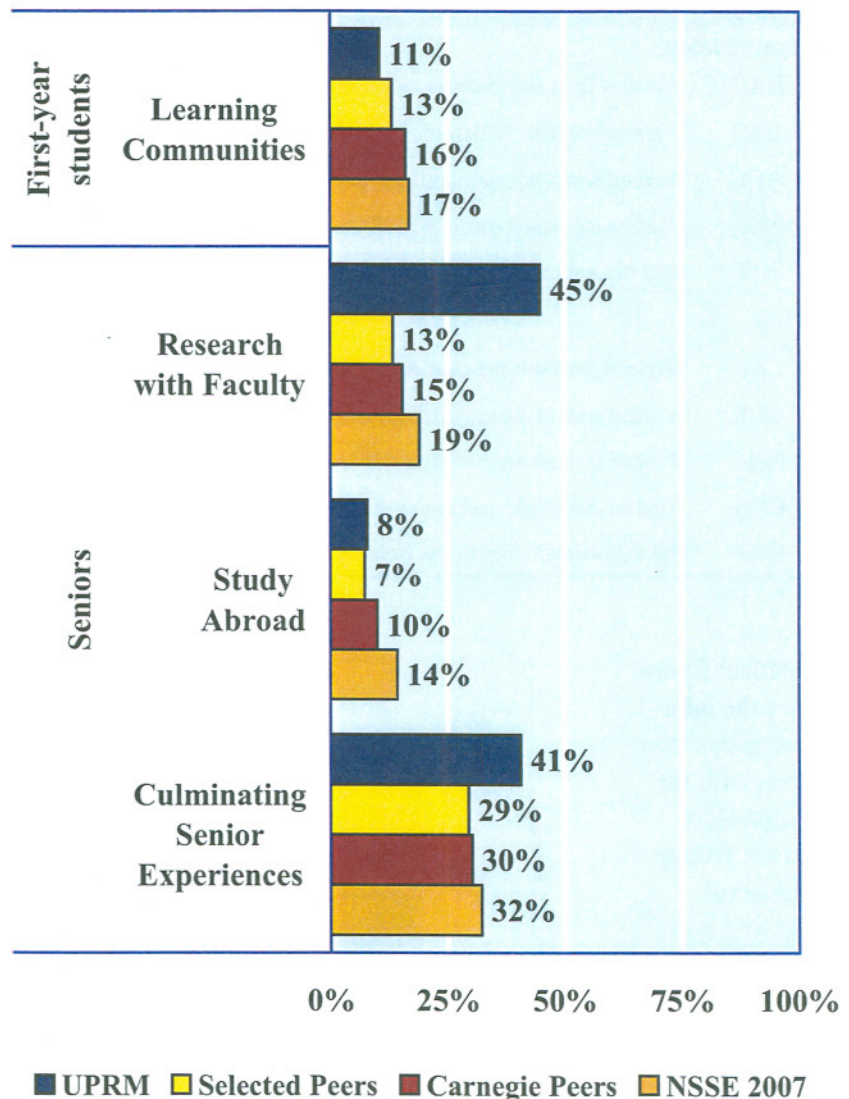
Chancellor's Professor and Director

Percent of Students Who Participated in High-Impact Educational Practices at University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez and Selected Peer Institutions

A common question from NSSE users is, "What is the one thing we should do to increase student engagement and success on our campus?" Our answer: Make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high impact activities, one in the first year, and one later related to their major field.

High-impact activities place students in circumstances that essentially demand they interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters. Left to their own devices, many students and faculty members may not do these things. Educationally effective institutions recognize this and create incentives to induce purposeful behavior towards these ends.

Research suggests that promising options for new students are first-year seminars, learning communities, and service learning. In the later years of college, research with faculty, study abroad, internships, and a culminating senior experience serve this purpose. The adjacent figure shows the percent of your students who had some of these experiences compared to students at institutions in your selected peer groups.



Note: The institutions in each of your selected peer groups, as well as the criteria used to define these groups is provided in your NSSE 2007 Selected Peer Groups report.



NSSE 2007 Question Comparisons

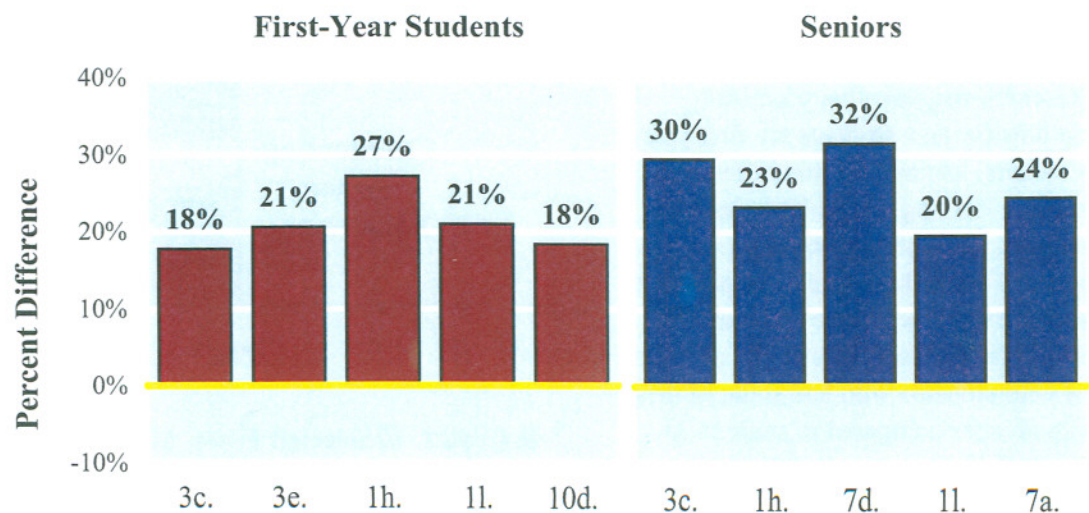
By examining individual questions, you can better understand what contributes to your institution's overall performance. The following two sections feature the five questions where your first-year and senior students scored the highest and the five questions where they scored the lowest, *in relation to students at your first selected peer/consortium group*.

While these questions were chosen to represent the largest percentage differences (in actual percentage points), they may not be the most important to your institutional mission or current program or policy goals. We encourage you to review your *NSSE 2007 Institutional Report* for additional results of specific interest to your campus.

Highest Performing Areas

Quest.	Bench. ¹	Percent of students who...	UPRM	Comparison Groups		
				Selected Peers	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2007
First-Year Students						
3c.	LAC	Wrote at least one paper or report of 20 pages or more	35%	18%	17%	17%
3e.	LAC	Wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	47%	26%	30%	31%
1h.	ACL	Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments ²	62%	34%	37%	41%
1l.	EEE	Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment ²	74%	53%	51%	52%
10d.	SCE	Said the institution substantially helps students cope w/ non-acad. matters ⁴	50%	32%	34%	33%
Seniors						
3c.	LAC	Wrote at least one paper or report of 20 pages or more	79%	50%	50%	49%
1h.	ACL	Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments ²	81%	58%	55%	58%
7d.	SFI	Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of class	45%	13%	15%	19%
1l.	EEE	Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment ²	81%	61%	60%	60%
7a.	EEE	Did a practicum, internship, field exp., clinical assgmt	67%	42%	48%	53%

The adjacent figure based on the table above displays the questions with the greatest positive percent difference between your students and those in your first selected peer group/consortium. These are areas where your students excel relative to your peers.

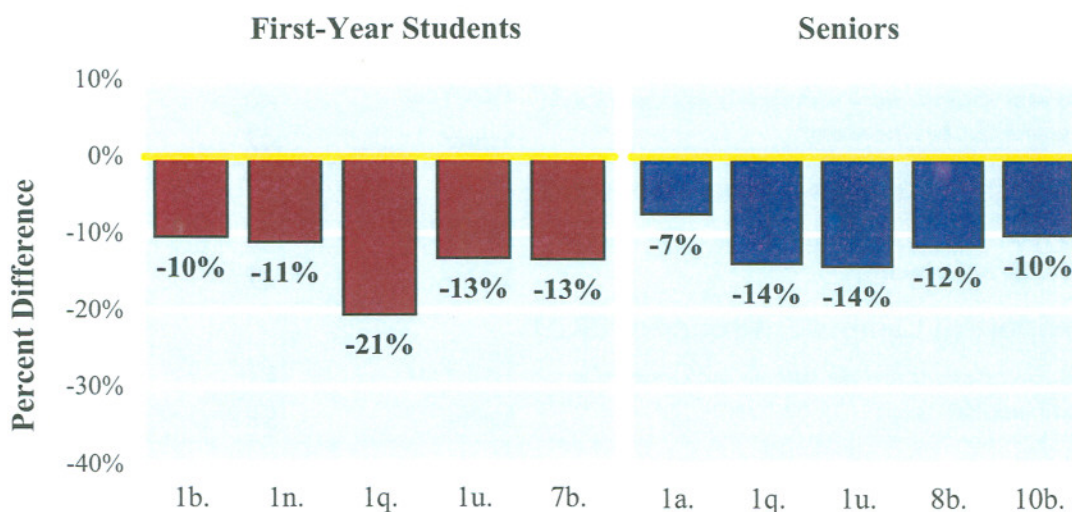




Lowest Performing Areas

Quest.	Bench. ¹	Percent of students who...	Comparison Groups			
			UPRM	Selected Peers	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2007
First-Year Students						
1b.	ACL	Made a class presentation ²	19%	30%	34%	30%
1n.	SFI	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ²	38%	49%	49%	48%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	31%	51%	54%	53%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ²	34%	48%	49%	50%
7b.	EEE	Participated in community service or volunteer work	18%	31%	34%	38%
Seniors						
1a.	ACL	Asked questions/contributed to class discussions ²	61%	68%	72%	69%
1q.	SFI	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty ²	47%	60%	63%	62%
1u.	EEE	Had serious conversations w/ students of another race or ethnicity ²	39%	53%	52%	53%
8b.	SCE	Positively rated their relationships with faculty members ³	63%	75%	79%	78%
10b.	SCE	Said the institution provides substantial support for academic success ⁴	53%	63%	68%	68%

The adjacent figure based on the table above displays the questions with the greatest shortfall between your students and those in your first selected peer group or consortium. These are areas where your students trail your peers.



Notes

- ¹ LAC=Level of Academic Challenge; ACL=Active and Collaborative Learning; SFI=Student Faculty Interaction; EEE=Enriching Educational Experiences; SCE=Supportive Campus Environment
- ² Combination of students responding 'very often' or 'often'
- ³ Rated at least 5 on a 7-point scale
- ⁴ Combination of students responding 'very much' or 'quite a bit'

Respondent Characteristics

The adjacent table displays your number of respondents, response rates, and sampling errors. Sampling error (ideally below 5%) is an estimate of the margin by which the true percentage of your students on a given item differs from the reported percentage because not all of your students were surveyed.

	N	Resp. Rate	Sampling Error
First-Year Students	340	15%	+/-4.9%
Seniors	223	14%	+/-6.1%



Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

To represent the multi-dimensional nature of student engagement, NSSE developed five indicators of effective educational practice. These "benchmarks" are created from clusters of NSSE questions that best represent these practices.

The table below summarizes key benchmark results for your institution and institutions in your selected peer groups. The '+' symbol indicates that your institution's score is statistically higher than the respective comparison group ($p < .05$), the '-' symbol indicates a score statistically lower than the comparison group, and a blank space indicates no significant difference. For detailed results, review your NSSE07 Benchmark Comparisons report.

	Class	UPRM	Comparison Groups		
			Selected Peers	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2007
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)					
<i>How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?</i>	First-Year	56	+	+	+
	Senior	62	+	+	+
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)					
<i>Are your students intensely involved in their education?</i>	First-Year	44	+	+	+
	Senior	56	+	+	+
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)					
<i>Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?</i>	First-Year	26	-	-	-
	Senior	47	+	+	+
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)					
<i>Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?</i>	First-Year	24		-	-
	Senior	42	+	+	
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)					
<i>Do your students feel the college is committed to their success?</i>	First-Year	61	+		
	Senior	56			

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For More Information

A comprehensive summary of all of your results is contained in the NSSE 2007 Institutional Report we sent in August to Leo Velez, Office of Institutional Research and Planning - UPRM. Reports used in this Executive Snapshot: NSSE 2007 Mean Comparisons, Frequency Distributions, Benchmark Comparisons, and Respondent Characteristics.



National Survey of Student Engagement

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