

The NSSE is an annual survey that assesses the extent to which first-year and senior undergraduates engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development. The survey is based on the premise that the frequency with which students engage in effective educational practices indicates the quality of the educational experience.

NSSE is supported by grants from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Charitable Trusts. It is also co-sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning.

In addition to allowing for national comparison of NSSE data, San Jose State University (SJSU) is also included in a consortium that is comprised of 13 California State Universities (CSU) campuses as a further comparative source for planning and benchmarking. For more detailed information about the NSSE and SJSU/CSU results, please visit [www.oir.sjsu.edu/nsse](http://www.oir.sjsu.edu/nsse).

**Survey Sample and Demographics**

In the 2008 spring semester, 1,892 first-year and 3,319 senior undergraduate students were selected through a random sampling process to receive the NSSE via US mail and/or electronic mail. Students had the option of completing the survey in paper form or by logging on to a web version. The overall response rate for SJSU was 26%. Fifty-six percent of the first-year (freshmen) respondents were female and 44% were male. Senior respondents were similarly distributed in terms of gender, with 57% of respondents being female and 43% male. Not surprisingly, most seniors lived off campus (97%) rather than on campus (3%) in comparison to first-year students (61% & 39%, respectively). First-year students and seniors had a similar race/ethnicity distribution (see table below).

<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Freshmen</b>	<b>Seniors</b>
American Indian/Native American	0%	1%
Asian/Asian American/Pacific Isl.	35%	34%
Black/African America	5%	3%
White (non-Hispanic)	31%	28%
Latino	16%	17%
Other	8%	7%

**Summary of Findings**

The following presents a summary of findings for each section of the NSSE. It describes items within each section of the survey and presents SJSU findings and comparisons to the CSU Consortium, Master’s institutions (defined by Carnegie classifications), and NSSE national group in text and tables. The tables contain mean scale scores and, in some cases, frequency distributions. Only items where SJSU significantly differed from at least one of the comparison groups were included in the tables below. Significance was measured at the p<.001 level using t tests and are noted with an asterisk.

Please visit the Office of Institutional Research’s National Survey of Student Engagement Report page to view NSSE results for the previous three administrations (2002, 2004, & 2005) <http://www.oir.sjsu.edu/Assessment/projects/nsse>.

**Academic and Intellectual Experiences**

This section of the survey consists of 22 items that assess the frequency of student experiences within the current year. Items address issues such as class related participation and activities, working relationships and dialogue between students and faculty, course related use of technology, and paid or voluntary academically related services.

- San Jose State University seniors have more educational experiences than freshmen. The top three academic and intellectual activities most experienced by both groups involve integrating ideas, using diverse perspectives, and the use of electronic mail as a source of communication with professors.
- SJSU seniors and freshmen report having least experience with out of the classroom activities (working with faculty, community projects, and tutoring).

SJSU: Activities Most Frequently Experienced	Freshmen	Seniors
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	3.10	3.37
Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	2.92	3.23
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	2.88	2.94

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

SJSU: Activities Least Frequently Experienced	Freshmen	Seniors
Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	1.56	1.67
Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course	1.57	1.80
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	1.68	1.87

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

### Freshmen Comparisons

- SJSU freshmen did not significantly differ from their California State University peers. In comparison to both their Master's institute peer group and the national peer group, SJSU students have more experience with classroom presentations. They also report having more in class partner/group work than the national average.
- Although the use of electronic mail was one of the top three most frequent activities for SJSU students, freshmen communicate with professors to a lesser degree than do their peers in the Master's group and national group. Communication includes discussions regarding grades/assignments, career goals, and electronic mail contact.

Freshmen: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Made a class presentation	2.53	2.46	2.32*	2.27*
Come to class without completing readings or assignments	2.17	2.08	2.00*	2.01*
Worked with other students on projects during class	2.56	2.54	2.44	2.41*
Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	2.92	3.00	3.09*	3.11*
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	2.44	2.50	2.60*	2.62*
Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	1.96	2.02	2.17*	2.19*

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

\* indicates significant difference

### Senior Comparisons

- SJSU seniors had a positive significant difference in their educational experiences in comparison to their CSU peers. Specifically, SJSU seniors make more class presentations and participate in more service learning type of projects. Other positive differences found for SJSU seniors involve working and communicating with other students and being more diverse in their ideas and communication with others.
- There were no negative significant differences between SJSU and CSU seniors. However, like San Jose State freshmen, seniors also communicate with professors less often than do their peers in the Master's group and national group. Communication includes discussion regarding grades/assignments, career goals, electronic mail contact, and collaborations. Students also report receiving performance evaluations less promptly.

Seniors: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion	2.85	2.92	3.09*	3.07*
Made a class presentation	2.93	2.81*	2.87	2.80*
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	2.94	2.86	2.85	2.81*
Come to class without completing readings or assignments	2.20	2.17	2.07*	2.10*
Worked with other students on projects during class	2.72	2.65	2.60*	2.52*
Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course	1.80	1.69*	1.76	1.74
Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	3.23	3.27	3.34*	3.38
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	2.71	2.72	2.81*	2.81*
Talked about career plans with a faculty mentor or advisor	2.17	2.26	2.40	2.42
Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance	2.64	2.65	2.79*	2.80*
Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	1.67	1.69	1.80*	1.84*
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	2.89	2.79	2.65*	2.67*

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

\* indicates significant difference

## Mental Activities

In this section, activities such as memorization, analysis, synthesis, making judgments and application of concepts were assessed.

- SJSU freshmen and seniors report that their coursework most emphasizes the use of analyzing. Freshmen also found making judgments to be a frequent concept used in their assignments. Seniors most often use the application of theories and concepts for problem solving.
- Students at San Jose State did not significantly differ from the students in the comparison groups in regards to the use of analyzing, synthesizing, making judgments, and the application of theories. Seniors (mean = 2.88), however, do practice memorization as a method of completing assignments significantly more than their peers in the Master's group (mean = 2.77) and the national group (mean = 2.75).

Freshmen: Activity Most Frequently Experienced	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	3.00	3.09	3.06	3.10
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	2.94	2.92	2.90	2.90

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

\* indicates significant difference

Seniors: Activity Most Frequently Experienced	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	3.27	3.26	3.22	3.24
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	3.16	3.16	3.18	3.19

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

\* indicates significant difference

## Reading and Writing

This section asks students about the number of assigned books read as well as the number of written reports completed of various lengths.

- SJSU seniors did not significantly differ from the comparison groups.

### Freshmen Comparisons

- Freshmen at San Jose State are assigned a significantly greater number of papers/reports 5 – 19 pages in length than their peers at other CSUs and a lower number of reading assignments than the national average for their peer group.

Freshmen: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	3.09	3.16	3.20	3.25*
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	2.36	2.19*	2.24	2.29

1=none, 2=between 1 and 4, 3=between 5 and 10, 4=between 11-20, 5=more than 20;

\* indicates significant difference

## Problem Sets

This section was made up of two questions assessing the amount of problem sets students completed per week. The first question asked for the number of problems that took an hour or more, and the second question asked for the number of problems that took less than an hour.

- SJSU freshmen did not significantly differ from the comparison groups.

### Senior Comparisons

- As was also seen in the 2005 NSSE report, seniors at San Jose State continue to have more problem sets assigned as homework which take students more than an hour to complete.

Seniors: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Number of problem sets that take you more than an hour to complete	2.89	2.78	2.64*	2.61*

1=none, 2=1-2, 3=3-4, 4=5-6, 5=more than 6;

\* indicates significant difference

## Challenge of Examinations

The only question in this section asks, "Select the circle that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year challenged you to do your best work?"

- There were no significant differences between SJSU students and any of the comparison groups. San Jose State's first-year student average was 5.23 and the senior average was 5.32 on a continuous scale where 1=very little and 7=very much.

## Additional Collegiate Experiences

In this section, students are asked six questions pertaining to the frequency of their experience with college related activities. Items relate to artistic experiences, physical fitness, spiritual growth, and reflections of your own perspectives.

- In comparison to students in participating Master's institutions and students in the NSSE group, SJSU students participate in spiritual enhancement activities less often. Seniors also have less experience with reflecting on the positives and negatives of their own views. No other differences were found significant.

Freshmen: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	1.86	1.77	1.96	2.06*

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often; \* indicates significant difference

Seniors: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	1.86	1.92	2.06*	2.12*
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	2.53	2.64*	2.65*	2.69*

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often; \* indicates significant difference

## Enriching Educational Experiences

This section asks about student participation in various experiences including internships, volunteerism, learning communities, research, foreign language coursework, study abroad, independent study or self-designed major, and culminating experiences. The question, "Which of the following have you done, do you plan to do, do not plan to do, or have not decided before you graduate from your institution?" was asked and the tables below represent the proportion of freshmen and seniors responding "Done" among all valid respondents.

### Freshman Comparisons

- The only significant difference in enriching educational experiences between San Jose State and a comparison group was a difference in taking foreign language coursework where the national average student participated in foreign language coursework more than SJSU students.

Freshmen: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Foreign language coursework	.14	.19	.18	.22*

\* indicates significant difference

### Senior Comparisons

- Out of a total of eight items, SJSU seniors had significantly lower means on seven items. They have participated in fewer field work experiences, volunteer work, working with faculty on research projects, taking foreign language coursework, studying abroad, independent study, and a culminating senior experience.

Seniors: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	.47	.42	.48	.53*
Community service or volunteer work	.52	.50	.55	.60*
Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	.16	.14	.16	.20*
Foreign language coursework	.25	.36*	.34*	.41*
Study abroad	.07	.09	.10	.15*
Independent study or self-designed major	.12	.11	.16*	.18*
Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)	.26	.29	.30	.33*

\* indicates significant difference

## Quality of Relationships

This section provides information about student relationships with other students, faculty members, and administrative personnel and offices. The question asks the student to “select the circle that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution” on a continuous scale from 1 to 7. There are different scale value labels for each of the three questions and those are listed at the bottom of each table.

- San Jose State Seniors did not significantly differ in their perception of the quality of their relationship with other students. In general, both seniors and freshmen at SJSU do not have as positive a relationship with other students, faculty members, and administrative personnel in comparison to students in the comparison groups. The relationship with other students is the most positive for students in all groups and the relationship with administrative personnel is the least positive.

Relationships: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Relationships with other students	Freshmen	5.19	5.35	5.44	5.48*
	Seniors	5.47	5.48	5.58	5.59

1=unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation to 7=friendly, supportive, sense of belonging;

\*indicates significant difference

Relationships: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Relationships with faculty members	Freshmen	4.84	5.07	5.16*	5.19*
	Seniors	5.07	5.27*	5.42*	5.41*

1=unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic to 7=available, helpful, sympathetic;

\*indicates significant difference

Relationships: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Relationships with administrative personnel and offices	Freshmen	3.97	4.46*	4.60*	4.65*
	Seniors	3.86	4.36*	4.52*	4.54*

1=unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid to 7=helpful, considerate, flexible;

\*indicates significant difference

## Time Usage

This section contains seven items that provide information about how students spend their time by asking, “About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?” in regards to various activities.

### Freshmen Comparisons

- The only significant difference was found in the number of hours students work for pay off campus. Freshmen at San Jose State spend an average of six to ten hours a week working off campus where as the students in the national average works for pay off campus about one to five hours a week.

Freshmen: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Working for pay off campus		3.02	2.61	2.73	2.46*

1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=more than 30 hrs/wk;

\*indicates significant difference

### Senior Comparisons

- SJSU seniors spend significantly more time in preparing for class and commuting to class than their peers in the Master's group and the national average. They also work more hours for pay off campus in comparison to all three groups. Two things they do spend significantly less time on than their peers in the Master's group and national group are working for pay on campus and participating in co-curricular activities.

Seniors: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Preparing for class (studying, reading writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)		4.29	4.25	4.02*	4.14
Working for pay on campus		1.45	1.55	1.64*	1.79*
Working for pay off campus		4.60	4.23*	4.27*	3.78*
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)		1.77	1.82	1.94*	2.11*
Commuting to class (driving, walking, etc.)		2.59	2.56	2.46*	2.36*

1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=more than 30 hrs/wk;

\*indicates significant difference

## Institutional Environment

The questions in this section ask students about the extent to which their institution emphasizes certain resources and activities. The question is phrased, "To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following?" in regard to various resources and activities.

- The degree of support needed for academic success SJSU freshmen and seniors feel their institution emphasizes is less than that reported by their peers in all three comparison groups. Seniors also feel the support needed to thrive socially is not being greatly emphasized at San Jose State.

Freshmen: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	2.83	3.01*	3.04*	3.07*
Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	2.56	2.66	2.77*	2.84*

1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much; \*indicates significant difference

Seniors: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	2.70	2.82*	2.91*	2.94*
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	2.12	2.12	2.19	2.23*
Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	2.37	2.46	2.52*	2.62*

1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much; \*indicates significant difference

## Educational and Personal Growth

Items in this section ask students about "the extent to which this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development" in various areas.

### Freshmen comparisons

- Compared to freshmen in the comparison groups, SJSU students feel their institution has contributed to a lesser extent in their professional development and social/community development. Professional development includes critical/analytical thinking, work-related knowledge, and computing and information technology. Social/community development includes voting and community contributions.

Freshmen: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge	2.56	2.68	2.75*	2.80*
Thinking critically and analytically	3.03	3.21*	3.18*	3.21*
Using computing and information technology	2.82	2.99	3.02*	3.04*
Voting in local, state, or national elections	2.08	2.37*	2.25	2.24
Contributing to the welfare of your community	2.28	2.38	2.42	2.47*

1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much; \*indicates significant difference

### Senior Comparisons

- Although seniors at SJSU do feel their institution had some contribution to their ability to learn on their own, the contribution was significantly less than that of the national average. The contribution made to student's growth by San Jose State, significantly more so than that of participating Master's institution and the national group, is an understanding of others from a diverse background. This finding is not surprising as was seen earlier in the report that SJSU students have more in-depth discussions with others from a diverse background.

Seniors: Significant Differences	SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Learning effectively on your own	2.94	2.93	3.00	3.05*
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.77	2.68	2.65*	2.64*

1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much; \*indicates significant difference

## Quality of Advising

There was only one question pertaining to the quality of advising, which is reproduced in the table below.

Quality of Advising: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?	Freshmen	2.73	2.91*	2.97*	3.00*
	Seniors	2.56	2.76*	2.81*	2.85*

1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent; \*indicates significant difference

## Satisfaction

The final two questions on the standard survey instrument relate to student satisfaction and are reproduced below.

Satisfaction: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	Freshmen	2.98	3.12*	3.15*	3.19*
	Seniors	2.93	3.10*	3.15*	3.21*

1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent; \*indicates significant difference

Satisfaction: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU	Master's	NSSE
If you could start over again, would you go to the <i>same institution</i> you are now attending?	Freshmen	2.99	3.17*	3.17*	3.23*
	Seniors	3.00	3.14*	3.15*	3.20*

1=definitely no, 2=probably no, 3=probably yes, 4=definitely yes; \*indicates significant difference

### Consortium Questions

Consortium items are questions developed by California State University administrators of participating institutions. These ten items were only included in the survey distributed to students attending a CSU. The items refer to courses students have taken, learning contributed by the institution in various areas (such as professional and working with others effectively), and a student's connection to the institution.

- There were no significant differences between SJSU freshmen and CSU freshmen.
- SJSU seniors generally feel less of a connection to their campus than do other seniors in the CSU comparison group.

Consortium: Significant Differences		SJSU	CSU
To what extent do you feel connected to this institution	Freshmen	2.85	2.98
	Seniors	2.82	2.96*
To what extent do you feel a sense of community at this institution	Freshmen	2.80	2.93
	Seniors	2.65	2.82*

1=not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = some, 4 = very much; \*indicates significant difference