



## Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) Executive Summary: 2016

### Introduction

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is a well-established tool that helps colleges focus on good educational practices and identify areas in which they can improve their programs and services for students. The CCSSE survey provides information on student engagement, a key indicator of learning, and potentially a valid indicator of overall college quality. The survey<sup>1</sup> is comprised of questions that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and student retention, with 15 additional custom questions developed by the college. Identifying what students do in and out of the classroom, knowing students' goals, and understanding external responsibilities can help the college create an environment that can enhance learning, development, and success.

The CCSSE was established in 2001 and is a product and service of the *Center for Community College Student Engagement*, which is part of the Program for Higher Education Leadership at The University of Texas at Austin. The CCSSE survey includes a broad sample of community college students (see Table 1). Folsom Lake College (FLC) is categorized by CCSSE as a medium, urban-serving college. CCSSE uses a three-year cohort of participating colleges in all core survey analysis. Approximately 434,000 students at 701 colleges in 46 states participated in the current cohort (2014 through 2016). Colleges select to participate in the survey and pay for the privilege, so although the sample is diverse, it is not representative of, or generalizable to, the total population of community colleges.

Table 1: CCSSE National College Characteristics

College Characteristics	Number of Colleges
<b>Size</b>	
Small colleges (fewer than 4,499 students)	326
Medium colleges (4,500–7,999 students)	156
Large colleges (8,000–14,999 students)	143
Extra-large colleges (15,000 or more students)	76
<b>Location</b>	
Urban-serving colleges	134
Suburban-serving colleges	163
Rural-serving colleges	404

<sup>1</sup> Survey instrument: [http://www.ccsse.org/aboutsurvey/docs/CCSR\\_2005.pdf](http://www.ccsse.org/aboutsurvey/docs/CCSR_2005.pdf).

Folsom Lake College participated in the CCSSE for the first time in the spring of 2014. Prior to that time, FLC participated in the Noel Levitz Survey of Student Engagement. It was a District-level decision to move to the CCSSE in order to align student assessment practices across the four colleges. All four LRCCD colleges participated in the CCSSE survey in 2014 and 2016.

In March 2016, the CCSSE survey was administered to FLC students in a random sampling of FLC courses at all three educational sites, spanning developmental to upper-level courses. The survey was administered in class, and in a paper format. In all, the survey instrument was administered in 29 classes, with a total of 543 students participating. The overall response rate was 41%, with an in-class response rate of 66%. A total of 64% of class sampled participated in the survey. The random sampling procedures ensure that survey results can be generalized across the entire FLC student population with a high level of confidence.

## Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

To assist colleges in their efforts to reach for excellence, CCSSE introduced national benchmarks to measure student engagement. CCSSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement and that are positively related to student learning and persistence. Benchmarks can be used to compare each institution’s performance to that of similar institutions and to the CCSSE national cohort.

### CCSSE Benchmarks Defined

<b>Academic Challenge</b>	Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Survey items address the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the rigor of examinations used to evaluate student performance.
<b>Active and Collaborative Learning</b>	Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaborating with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with real-life situations and problems.
<b>Student Effort</b>	Students’ own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will attain their educational goals.
<b>Student-Faculty Interaction</b>	In general, the more interaction students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.
<b>Support for Learners</b>	Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that provide important support services, cultivate positive relationships among groups on campus, and demonstrate commitment to their success.

## Benchmarks Reports

The benchmark reports below provide the national cohort mean for the most recent cohort (2014-2016), the FLC mean for the current 2016 cohort, and the FLC prior mean scores for the 2014 cohort. Each survey item within the benchmark is included in the related table, with both the survey questions and response categories.

**Table 2: Academic Challenge**

	National Mean 2016	FLC Mean 2016	FLC Prior Mean 2014
<i>Item 4: In your experiences at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1= Never, 2= Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>			
4p. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.	2.64	2.51	2.56
<i>Item 5: During the current school year, how much has your coursework at this college emphasized the following mental activities? 1= Very little, 2= Some, 3= Quite a bit, 4= Very much</i>			
5b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory.	2.94	3.11	3.04
5c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways.	2.81	2.95	2.87
5d. Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods.	2.65	2.82	2.77
5e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.	2.75	2.77	2.85
5f. Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill.	2.87	2.82	2.88
<i>Item 6: During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done at this college? 1= None, 2= Between 1 and 4; 3= Between 5 and 10; 4= Between 11 and 20. 5= More than 20</i>			
6a. Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packs of course readings.	2.88	2.84	2.78
6c. Number of written papers or reports of any length.	2.88	3.05	3.06
<i>Item 7: 1= Extremely easy... 7= Extremely challenging</i>			
7. Mark the response that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college.	4.95	4.87	4.90
<i>Item 9: How much does this college emphasize each of the following? 1= Very little, 2= Some, 3= Quite a bit, 4= Very much</i>			
9a. Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying.	3.06	3.19	2.98

**Table 3: Active and Collaborative Learning**

	National Mean 2016	FLC Mean 2016	FLC Prior Mean 2014
<i>Item 4: In your experiences at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1= Never, 2= Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>			
4a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.	2.92	2.94	2.85
4b. Made a class presentation.	2.17	2.16	2.25
4f. Worked with other students on projects during class time.	2.56	2.58	2.54
4g. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.	1.96	1.97	1.91
4h. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary).	1.39	1.27	1.32
4i. Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course.	1.36	1.24	1.25
4r. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	2.54	2.65	2.69

**Table 4: Student Effort**

	National Mean 2016	FLC Mean 2016	FLC Prior Mean 2014
<i>Item 4: In your experiences at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1= Never, 2= Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>			
4c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.	2.53	2.59	2.54
4d. Worked on a paper or projected that required integrating ideas or other information from various sources.	2.84	2.97	2.99
4e. Came to class without completing readings or assignments.	1.83	1.97	1.91
<i>Item 6: During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done at this college? 1= None, 2= Between 1 and 4; 3= Between 5 and 10; 4= Between 11 and 20. 5= More than 20</i>			
6b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment.	2.03	2.16	2.11
<i>Item 10. About how many how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following? 0=None, 1= 1-5 hours, 2= 6-10 hours, 3= 11-20 hours, 4= 21-30 hours, 5 = more than 30 hours</i>			
10a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to your program).	2.00	2.01	1.98
<i>Item 13.1 How often do you use the following services at this college? 1= Rarely/Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Often</i>			
13.1d Peer or other tutoring.	1.53	1.42	1.35
13.1e Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	1.75	1.56	1.45
13.1h Computer lab.	2.04	1.85	2.03

**Table 5: Student-Faculty Interaction**

	National Mean 2016	FLC Mean 2016	FLC Prior Mean 2014
<i>Item 4: In your experiences at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1= Never, 2= Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>			
4k. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor.	2.94	2.88	2.83
4l. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.	2.64	2.50	2.51
4m. Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor.	2.17	1.94	1.96
4n. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class.	1.82	1.75	1.63
4o. Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance.	2.76	2.74	2.70
4q. Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework.	1.50	1.40	1.37

**Table 6: Support for Learners**

	National Mean 2016	FLC Mean 2016	FLC Prior Mean 2014
<i>Item 9: How much does this college emphasize each of the following? 1= Very little, 2= Some, 3= Quite a bit, 4= Very much</i>			
9b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college.	3.06	3.06	2.93
9c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.	2.63	2.65	2.43
9d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	2.05	1.86	1.81
9e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially.	2.26	2.09	2.06
9f. Providing the financial support you need to afford your education.	2.58	2.37	2.43
<i>Item 13.1 How often do you use the following services at this college? 1= Rarely/Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Often</i>			
13.1a Academic advising/planning.	1.84	1.78	1.77
13.1b Career counseling.	1.46	1.51	1.49

## Summary of Benchmark Findings

For the majority of question items within the benchmark reports, FLC students reported similar levels of student engagement to the national cohort. There are some areas in which FLC students reported higher than average levels of student engagement (.10 point or greater difference); these findings suggest that faculty at FLC have high standards of academic excellence and that they encourage active student engagement in course material.

- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)
- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory.
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways.

- Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods.
- Number of written papers or reports of any length.
- Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying.
- Worked on a paper or projected that required integrating ideas or other information from various sources.
- Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment.

There were some of areas in which FLC students reported lower levels of student engagement than the national cohort (.10 point or greater difference); these findings suggest that there are opportunities for improvement in connecting students to existing campus resources, enhancing student-faculty interactions, and exploring student service options to enhance support for learners.

- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary).
- Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course.
- Use of: Peer or other tutoring; Skill labs (writing, math, etc.); Computer lab.
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.
- Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor.
- Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Providing the support you need to thrive socially.
- Providing the financial support you need to afford your education.

When comparing the benchmark question items between the college’s 2014 and 2016 cohorts, most items did not show substantive change (.10 point or greater difference). A total of 6 items did show significant change between the cohort years, with 5 out of 6 items moving in a positive direction toward increasing student engagement (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Comparison Between FLC Cohorts**

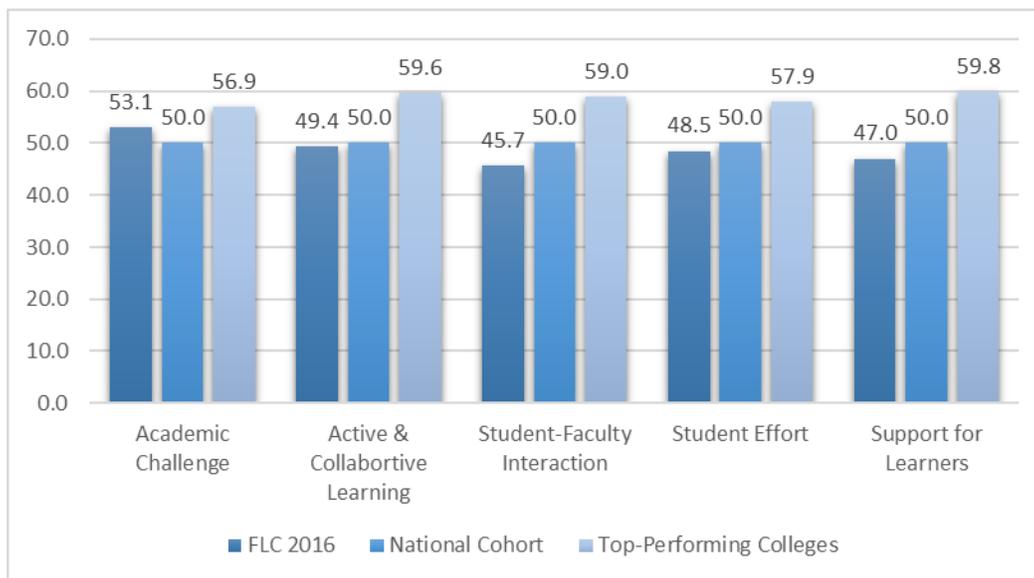
<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Item #</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Point Change</b>
Support for Learners	9c	Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.	+ .22
Academic Challenge	9a	Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying.	+ .21
Support for Learners	9b	Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college.	+ .13
Student-Faculty Interaction	4n	Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class.	+ .12
Student Effort	13.1e	Use of: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	+ .11
Student Effort	13.1h	Use of: Computer lab.	- .18

## Standardized Benchmark Scores

CCSSE supports the use of survey data for benchmarking effective educational practices, for targeting and monitoring progress in quality improvement, for public reporting in ways that serve to increase understanding of collegiate quality, and to support institutional efforts to improve undergraduate student learning and retention. CCSSE especially supports public reporting of student engagement results in ways that enable thoughtful, responsible institutional comparisons while encouraging and celebrating institutional diversity.

One way of evaluating and reporting student engagement is to compare overall standardized benchmark scores across colleges. Overall benchmark scores are standardized to have a mean of 50 (national cohort score) and standard deviation of 25 across all respondents. Comparing FLC’s standardized benchmark scores to the national cohort and to top performing colleges (top 10% of the cohort by benchmark) is another method to evaluate benchmark findings.

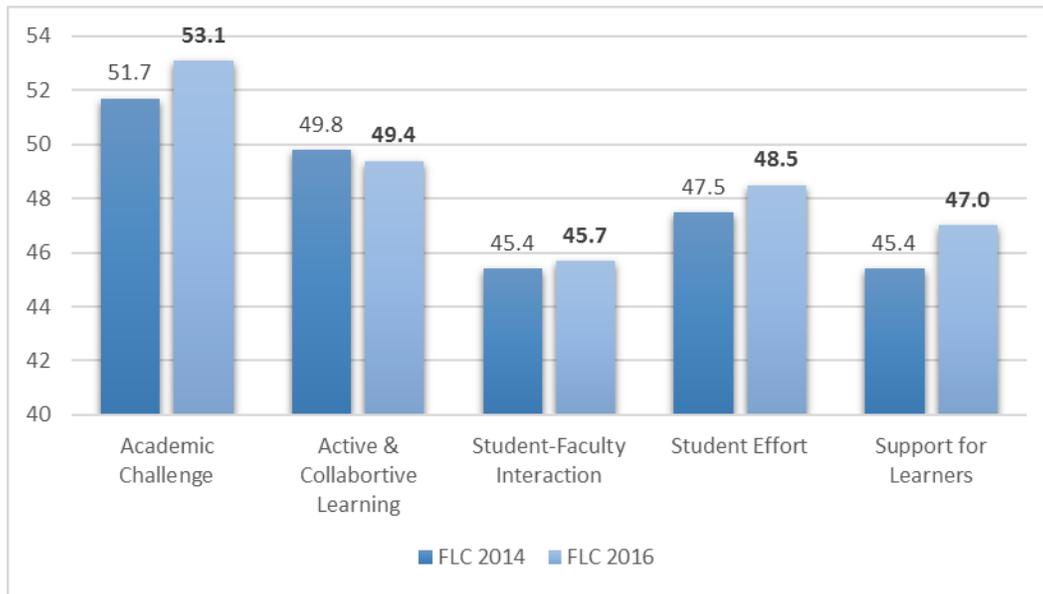
Chart 1: Standardized Benchmark Scores



For the benchmark “Academic Challenge,” FLC reported scores higher than the national cohort mean. The benchmarks “Active & Collaborative Learning” and “Student Effort” were slightly lower for FLC than the national mean, but within close range and not substantively different. The benchmarks of “Student-Faculty Interaction” and “Support for Learners” were each significantly below the national mean by 3 points or more.

When comparing the FLC 2014 and 2016 cohorts (see Chart 2), there is an overall trend of improvement, with 4 out of 5 benchmarks increasing by an average of 1.1 points. The benchmark “Support for Learners” increased by 1.6 points from 45.4 to 47.0. The benchmark “Academic Challenge” increased by 1.4 points from 51.7 to 53.1. The benchmark “Active & Collaborative Learning” showed a slight decrease of 0.4 point, from 49.8 to 49.4.

Chart 2: 2014 vs. 2016 Standardized Benchmark Scores



## Other Survey Findings

- Overall, students report a high level of satisfaction with their experiences at FLC:
  - 97% reported they would recommend FLC to a friend or family member
  - 96% reported they feel safe on campus most or all of the time
  - 94% reported the campus environment (buildings and grounds) are very or somewhat welcoming
  - 89% reported their immediate family was extremely or quite a bit supportive of their attendance at FLC
  - 86% reported that their entire education experience at FLC as excellent or good
  - 86% report the quality of their relationships with faculty as “friendly, supportive, sense of belonging”
  - 81% reported their friends were extremely or quite a bit supportive of their attendance at FLC
  - 80% of students reported that the Steps to Success process was very or somewhat easy to navigate
- Among students who use “services to students with disabilities,” FLC students used these services more often and they were more satisfied with these services
- When asked how much their college contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal development in identified areas, FLC students reported higher than average scores for:
  - Acquiring a broad general education
  - Writing clearly and effectively
  - Thinking critically and analytically
- The majority of FLC students (59%) are definitely or probably interested in taking an online course in the future

## Student Demographic Profile

The CCSSE survey asks students a series of questions about their demographics and life experiences. Some of survey questions mirror data already collected the college, but other survey questions provide new insights into the demographic profile of the FLC student body.

- 9% reported spending more than eleven hours per week commuting to and from class
- 9% reported using public assistance to pay for tuition
- 10% reported attending a 4-year college or university since high school
- 10% reported the quality of their relationships with other students as “unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation”
- 13% reported speaking a native (first) language other than English
- 15% reported being married
- 19% reported spending 30 hours or more providing care for dependents living with them (parents, children, spouse, etc.) in a typical week
- 25% reported having children who live with them
- 26% reported attending another community college or technical since high school
- 28% reported working 30 hours a week or more
- 29% reported they most frequently take classes at FLC in the evenings
- 79% reported participating in no college-sponsored activities (organization, campus publication, student government, sports, etc.) in a typical week

## Conclusion

The CCSSE survey provides the college with a rich set of data for understanding student engagement, measuring progress on campus initiatives, and planning for the future. This report provides only a brief summary of the CCSSE survey results. The full set of standard survey questions and student responses can be found on the Office of Institutional Research page on the Insider: [OIR Surveys & Research Briefs](#). The additional 15 custom questions were program/department specific, and those survey responses were shared directly with those programs.

This year’s CCSSE data identified many positive practices at FLC. Students report high levels of overall satisfaction with the services and supports provided by the college. Faculty are providing a learning environment that encourages critical thinking and academic rigor. And students report that their interactions with faculty, staff, and other students as overwhelming friendly, supportive and considerate. The survey data also highlights opportunities for improvement, including: connecting more students to existing support services, increasing opportunities for faculty-student interactions, and exploring new or enhanced supports to address the non-academic needs of students.