



Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) Executive Summary: 2018

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 survey¹ is comprised of questions that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and student retention, with the option for 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*², 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. For comparison purpose, college are categorize by size; Folsom Lake College (FLC) is categorized by CCSSE as a large college (see Table 1). CCSSE used a two-year cohort of participating colleges in all core survey analysis for the 2018 cohort. Approximately 310,000 students at 537 institutions in 47 states participated in the current cohort (2017 and 2018). 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 Colleges

College Size	Number of Institutions
Small colleges (fewer than 4,499 students)	274
Medium colleges (4,500–7,999 students)	125
Large colleges (8,000–14,999 students)	100
Extra-large colleges (15,000 or more students)	38

¹ Survey instrument: http://www.ccsse.org/refresh/CCSSE_Refresh_Sample.pdf

² Center for Community College Student Engagement website: <http://www.ccsse.org/center/>

Folsom Lake College participated in the CCSSE for the first time in the spring of 2014, and then again in 2016, and most recently in 2018. Prior to 2014, 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.

In March 2018, 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 33 classes, with a total of 582 students participating. The overall response rate was 36%, with an in-class response rate of 72%. A total of 54% of classes 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

Academic Challenge	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.
Active and Collaborative Learning	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.
Student Effort	Students’ own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will attain their educational goals.
Student-Faculty Interaction	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.
Support for Learners	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 a comparison of FLC student responses over time. Each survey item within the benchmark is included in the related table, with both the survey questions and response categories. Some CCSSE survey questions were modified in the 2018 survey; in cases where the response categories were changed, comparison data for 2016 and 2014 has been removed from these benchmark reports as it no longer provides a meaningful comparison.

Table 2: Academic Challenge

	FLC Mean 2018	FLC Mean 2016	FLC 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>			
4o. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.	2.42	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.	2.97	3.11	3.04
5c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways.	2.87	2.95	2.87
5d. Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods.	2.70	2.82	2.77
5e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.	2.64	2.77	2.85
5f. Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill.	2.73	2.82	2.88
<i>Item 6: During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done at this college? 0= None, 1= 1-4; 2= 5-10; 3=11-20 4= More than 20</i>			
6a. Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packets of course readings.	1.92*		
6c. Number of written papers or reports of any length.	1.69*		
<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.	4.78	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.	3.01	3.19	2.98

*Response categories in 2018 survey changed significantly; no comparison data available for 2016 and 2014.

Table 3: Active and Collaborative Learning

	FLC Mean 2018	FLC Mean 2016	FLC 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.	2.81	2.94	2.85
4b. Made a class presentation.	2.01	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.	2.01	1.97	1.91
4h. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary).	1.36	1.27	1.32
4i. Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course.	1.26	1.24	1.25
4q. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	2.61	2.65	2.69

Table 4: Student Effort

	FLC Mean 2018	FLC Mean 2016	FLC 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.	2.34	2.59	2.54
4d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or other information from various sources.	2.79	2.97	2.99
4e. Came to class without completing readings or assignments.	1.93	1.97	1.91
<i>Item 6: During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done at this college? 0= None, 1= Between 1 and 4; 2= Between 5 and 10; 3= Between 11 and 20. 4= More than 20</i>			
6b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment.	0.94*		
<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).	2.19	2.01	1.98
<i>Item 13.1 How often do you use the following services at this college? 0= Never, 1= 1 time , 2= 2-4 times, 3= 5 or more times</i>			
12.1d Peer or other tutoring.	0.53*		
12.1e Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	0.55*		
12.1h Computer lab.	1.13*		

*Response categories in 2018 survey changed significantly; no comparison data available for 2016 and 2014.

Table 5: Student-Faculty Interaction

	FLC Mean 2018	FLC Mean 2016	FLC 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>			
4j. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor.	2.79	2.88	2.83
4k. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.	2.39	2.50	2.51
4l. Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor.	1.88	1.94	1.96
4m. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class.	1.66	1.75	1.63
4n. Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance.	2.65	2.74	2.70
4p. Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework.	1.33	1.40	1.37

Table 6: Support for Learners

	FLC Mean 2018	FLC Mean 2016	FLC 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.	2.95	3.06	2.93
9c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.	2.51	2.65	2.43
9d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	1.73	1.86	1.81
9e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially.	1.93	2.09	2.06
9f. Providing the financial support you need to afford your education.	2.30	2.37	2.43
<i>Item 13.1 How often do you use the following services at this college? 0= Never, 1= 1 time, 2=2-4 times; 3=5 or more times.</i>			
13.1a Academic advising/planning.	1.20*		
13.1b Career counseling.	0.56*		

*Response categories in 2018 survey changed significantly; no comparison data available for 2016 and 2014.

Summary of Benchmark Findings

For the majority of question items within the benchmark reports, FLC students reported similar levels of student engagement across time (2014 to 2018). There are some areas in which FLC students reported higher than previous levels of student engagement (see areas below). These findings suggest that faculty at FLC encourage active student engagement in course material.

- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary).
- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to your program).
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.

There were some of areas in which FLC students reported lower levels of student engagement across time (see areas below). These findings suggest that there are opportunities for improvement in connecting students to existing campus resources, increasing active and collaborative learning, and increasing academic challenge.

- Providing the support you need to thrive socially.
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying.
- Made a class presentation.
- Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.
- Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or other information from various sources.
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory.

Standardized Benchmark Scores

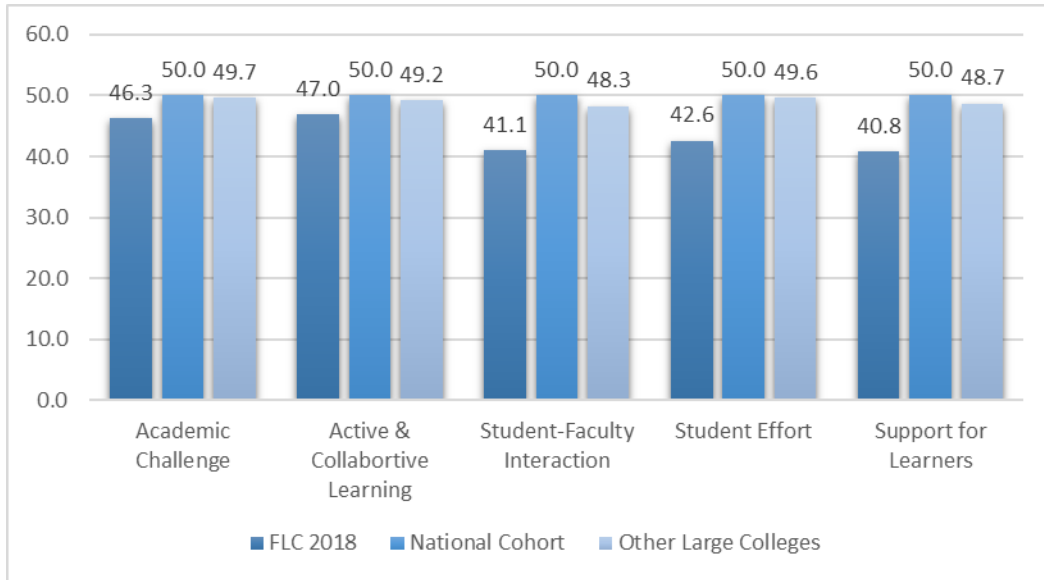
CCSSE supports the use of survey data for benchmarking effective educational practices, for targeting and monitoring progress in quality improvement, for public reporting in ways that serve to increase understanding of collegiate quality, and to support institutional efforts to improve undergraduate 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 other large colleges is another method to evaluate benchmark findings (see Chart 1).

For the benchmarks "Academic Challenge" and "Active & Collaborative Learning", FLC reported scores that closely aligned with the national cohort means and other large colleges. The benchmarks "Student-Faculty Interaction", "Student Effort", and "Support for Learners" were each significantly below the national mean and other large colleges. It is important to note that

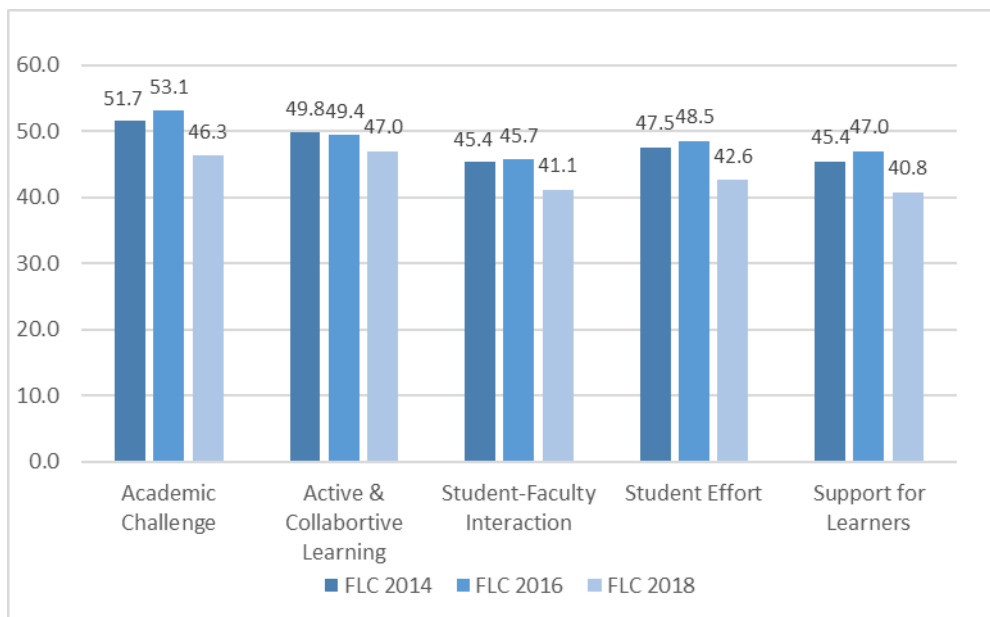
community colleges can differ dramatically on such factors as size, locations, resources, enrollment patterns, and student characteristics. It is important to take these differences into account when interpreting benchmark scores, especially when making institutional comparisons.

Chart 1: Standardized Benchmark Scores



When comparing the FLC cohorts over time (see Chart 2), there is some variance between benchmarks scores year to year, but the overall trend by 2018 is a decreased score across all benchmarks.

Chart 2: FLC Standardized Benchmark Scores



Other Survey Findings

Overall, students reported a high level of satisfaction with their experiences at FLC:

- 94% reported they would recommend this college to a friend or family member
- 87% reported their immediate family was extremely or quite a bit supportive of their attendance at this college
- 87% reported their entire education experience at this college as excellent or good
- 84% reported their friends were extremely or quite a bit supportive of their attendance at FLC
- 84% of students reported feeling welcome and respected at this college
- 80% of students reported that the Steps to Success process was very or somewhat easy to navigate
- 75% of students reported that they have good relationships with others at this college

In addition to the standard CCSSE questions, FLC asked a series of additional custom questions to gather more information about the student experience. When asked about competing personal responsibilities, 45% of students agreed that their work responsibilities interfered with their college/academic responsibilities. A total of 27% of students agreed that family responsibilities interfered with their college/academic responsibilities. And a total 27% of students reported that they have considered dropping out of college for financial reasons. When asked if they had a clear idea of exactly what courses they would need to take to achieve their goals at FLC, only 41% students reported having a clearly defined pathway.

Table 7: Competing Personal Responsibilities

	# of Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My work responsibilities interfere with my college/ academic responsibilities.	415	8.9%	35.7%	39.3%	16.1%
My family responsibilities interfere with my college/ academic responsibilities.	462	5.2%	22.3%	40.7%	31.8%
I have considered dropping out of college for financial reasons.	479	8.9%	18.6%	24.9%	47.7%

Table 8: Clearly Defined Pathway

	# of Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a clear idea of exactly what courses I will need to take to achieve my goal(s) at Folsom Lake College.	510	40.60%	38.30%	15.60%	5.50%

Student Demographic Profile

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

- 6% reported spending more than eleven hours per week commuting to and from class
- 9% reported using public assistance to pay for tuition
- 12% reported speaking a native (first) language other than English
- 15% reported being married
- 10% reported spending 30 hours or more providing care for dependents living with them (parents, children, spouse, etc.) in a typical week
- 13% reported having children who live with them and depend on their care
- 29% reported working 30 hours a week or more
- 89% agree that they can become more intelligent by working hard on their studies

FLC asked a series of additional custom questions about access to resources known to be related to college success, and the majority of students report that they always have access to these important resources. While access to childcare was only identified as a need by 21% of students, a significant portion of those students (42.7%) do not always have the childcare resources they need.

Table 9: Access to Resources

	# of Respondents	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I have stable/permanent housing.	521	87.2%	10.5%	0.7%	1.6%
I have access to healthy food.	520	76.7%	20.7%	1.8%	0.8%
I have health insurance coverage.	513	88.4%	6.8%	1.7%	3.1%
I have access to computers/electronic devices and reliable internet service.	513	86.7%	11.5%	1.4%	0.4%
I have access to reliable transportation	514	86.7%	11.5%	1.8%	0.1%
I have access to childcare when needed	115	57.3%	20.2%	15.6%	6.9%

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](#).

This year's CCSSE data identified many positive practices at FLC. 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.