RESEARCH
Office of Institutional Research
BRIEF

Summary of Community College Survey of Student Engagement 2004

The 2004 CCSSE was administered to randomly selected classes during Spring 2004 session. This brief will describe the benchmarks created from the 38 engagement items and will present the performance of St. Petersburg College students on these benchmarks and in comparison to the other community colleges within Florida (Florida Consortium), in comparison to other extra large colleges (more than 15,000 students, 24 colleges total) and in comparison to 152 participating colleges from 38 states across the United States.

CCSSE's 2004 Benchmarks

The five benchmarks are described below:

Active & Collaborative Learning: Research shows that students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to apply what they have learned in various settings. Collaboration with others to solve problems or master challenging content helps students to develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with situations that they may encounter in the workplace, community, education settings and their personal lives. Seven survey items contribute to this benchmark and they are listed below:

> During the current school year, how often have you:
> - Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
> - Made a class presentation
> - Worked with other students on projects during class
> - Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
> - Tutored or taught other students (paid or volunteer)
> - Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
> - Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class

Student Effort: Students own behaviors contribute to their learning and the likelihood that they will successfully attain their academic goals. Associated with this benchmark are eight survey items that summarize student behavior in this area:

> During the current school year, how often have you
> - 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 information from various sources
> - Come to class without completing readings or assignments
> - Used peer or other tutoring
> - Used skill labs
> - Used a computer lab

During the current school year
- How many books did you read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment
- How many hours did you spend in a typical week preparing for class

Academic Challenge: Ten items in the survey correspond to components of academic challenge as shown below:

During the current school year, how often have you
- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards

How much does your coursework at the college emphasize
- 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
- Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill

During the school year
- How many assigned textbooks, manuals, books or book-length packs of course readings did you read
- How many papers or reports of any length did you write
- To what extent have your examinations challenged you to do your best work

How much does this college emphasize
- Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying

Student-Faculty Interaction: Interaction with faculty strengthens students' connections to the college, increases effective learning and increases persistence of students toward their educational goals. Six items compose this benchmark:

During the current school year, how often have you
- Used email to communicate with an instructor
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings/classes with instructors outside of class
- Received prompt feedback form instructors on your performance
- Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework

Support for Learners: Community college students benefit from services targeted to assist with career/academic planning, academic skill development and other issues that might affect learning and retention. Seven survey items contribute to this benchmark:

How much does this college emphasize
- Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social and racial/ethnic backgrounds
- Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities
- Providing the support you need to thrive socially
- Providing the financial support you need to afford your education

During the current school year, how often have you
- Used academic advising/planning services
- Used career counseling services

Understanding and Using the Benchmarks

To make the benchmark scores easier to interpret and to allow comparison across the five benchmarks and across institutions, the individual item responses are rescaled so that all items are on the same scale (0 to 1). The scores were then standardized so that the respondent scores have a mean of 50, weighted by full-time and part-time attendance status, and a standard deviation of 25. Benchmark scores are then computed by averaging the scores on the associated items.
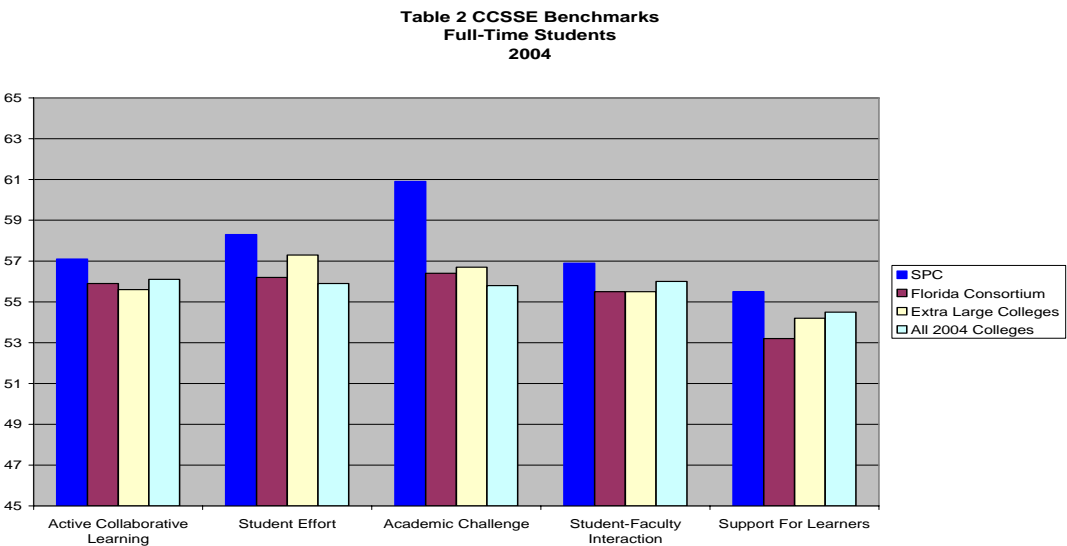
Results

Table 1 presents benchmark results for all students.

Table 1 CCSSE Benchmarks
All Students 2004
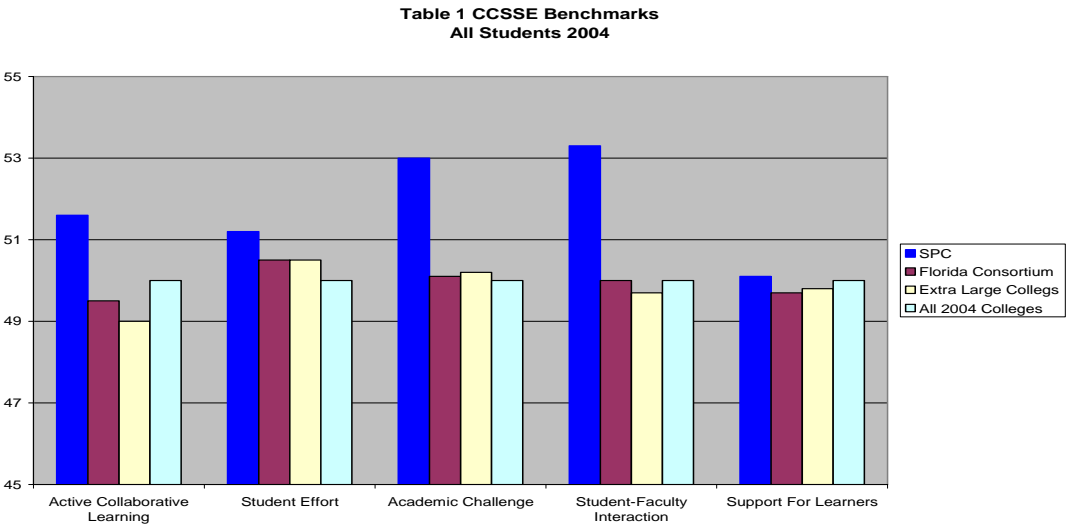
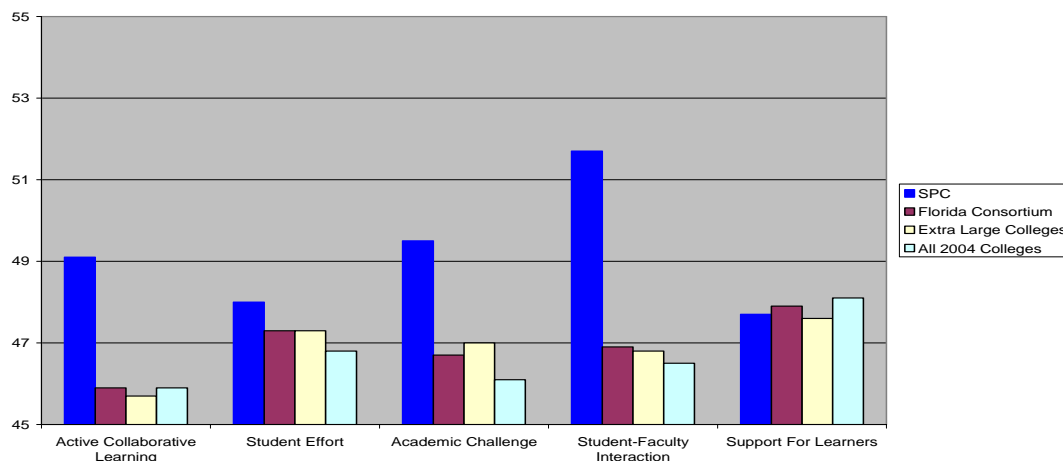For all benchmarks, SPC scores exceeded the Florida Consortium, Extra-Large Colleges and all colleges.

The benchmark results for full-time students are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 CCSSE Benchmarks
Full-Time Students
2004

For all benchmarks, SPC scores of full-time students exceeded the Florida Consortium, Extra-Large Colleges and all colleges.

The results for part-time students are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 CCSSE Benchmarks
Part-Time Students
2004

With the exception of Support for Learners, SPC scores of part-time students exceeded the Florida Consortium, Extra-Large Colleges and all colleges. In the Support for Learners benchmark, the scores for all groups were essentially the same (range: 47.8 to 48.1).

The results for students with 0-29 credits are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 CCSSE Benchmarks
Students with 0-29 Credits
2004
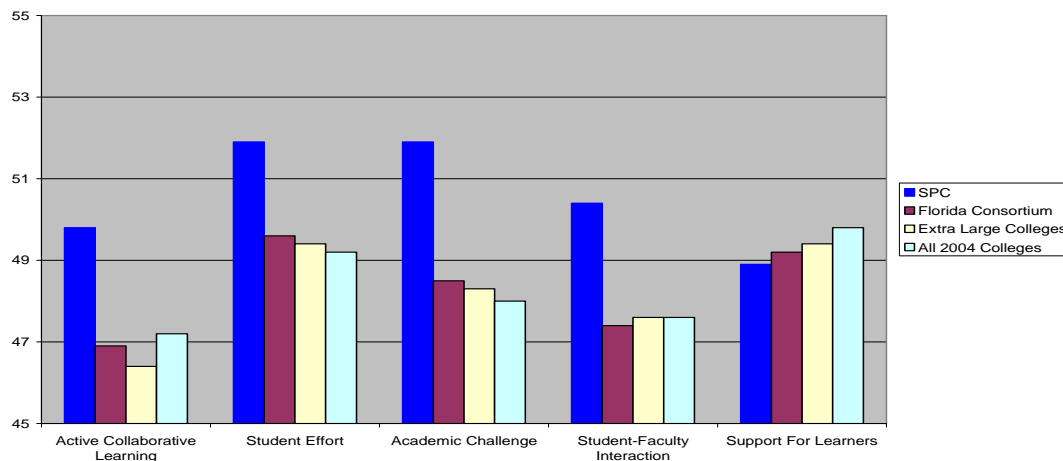
With the exception of Support for Learners, SPC scores of students with 0-29 credits exceeded the Florida Consortium, Extra-Large Colleges and all colleges. In the Support for Learners benchmark, SPC's benchmark score was below the comparison groups.

The results for students with more than 30 credits are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 CCSSE Benchmarks
Students with 30+ Credits
2004
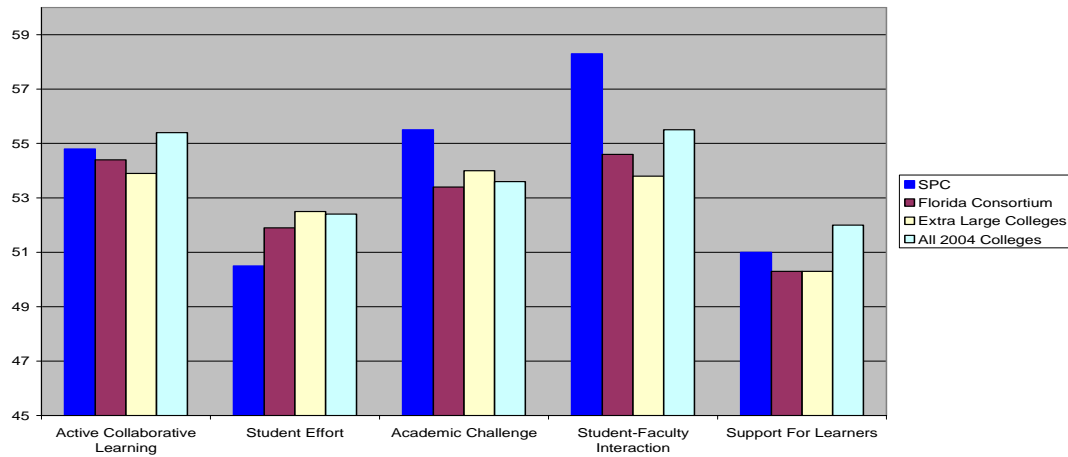
For Academic Challenge and Student-Faculty Interaction, SPC scores of students with more than 30 credits exceeded the Florida Consortium, Extra-Large Colleges and all colleges. In the Active and Collaborative Learning and Support for Learners benchmarks, SPC exceeded the scores of the Florida Consortium colleges and the Extra-Large colleges. In the Student Effort benchmark, SPC's benchmark score was below the comparison groups.

Conclusion:

The benchmark scores for SPC in the areas of Active and Collaborative Learning, Academic Challenge and Student-Faculty Interaction consistently exceed the scores of other community colleges in Florida, other Extra-Large Colleges and all colleges participating in the 2004 CCSSE. For the Student Effort Benchmark, the scores of SPC students with more than 30 credits fell below those of the three comparison groups. In the Support for Learners benchmark, part-time students and students with less than 30 credits rated SPC lower than full-time students and students with more than 30 credits. This might represent an area for further research at SPC.