

National Survey of Student Engagement Comparison of 2001 and 2004 Findings

University of Kansas

Executive Summary

Overview

KU participated for the first time in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which assesses the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices, during Spring 2001. Six hundred and twenty-six (626) students completed the survey online. Sufficient data are unavailable to calculate response rates for 2001 participants.

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
	195	149	174	108
Total	344		282	

KU again participated in NSSE during Spring 2004. One thousand and sixty-six (1,066) students completed the survey, again online. KU oversampled students in 2004 in order to have sufficient responses to analyze the results by discipline. The response rate was 32%.

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
	316	179	327	244
Total	495		571	

NSSE Survey

Student engagement was assessed through combining responses to items that comprised five benchmark areas of effective educational practice. The five benchmark areas are:

- Level of academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Enriching educational experiences
- Student-faculty interactions
- Supportive campus environment

Scales for the individual NSSE questions predominantly ran from 1 to either 4 or 7; scales are supplied below for each set of questions. The NSSE mean benchmark values are on a scale of 0 to 100, with higher values indicating greater levels of student engagement. Note that values do vary substantially across the five benchmarks; these variances are consistent across samples. All benchmark values were calculated by NSSE¹.

Rank Order and Score of NSSE Benchmarks by Student Level

Benchmark values indicate KU students are well engaged.

First Year Students

First year students' benchmark scores (100 point scale) ranked as follows. The rank order of benchmark scores is the same for freshmen if you disregard the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark values, which are not comparable across the two survey years².

First Year Students	2001 KU		2004 KU	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Enriching educational experiences ²	1	57.6	5	26.6
Supportive campus environment	2	57.3	1	59.7
Level of academic challenge	3	51.3	2	52.6
Active and collaborative learning	4	39.8	3	39.5
Student-faculty interactions ³	5	33.3	4	31.3

Note these 2001 and 2004 values are not comparable due to rescaling of items in 2003.

Senior Year Students

Seniors' benchmark scores (100 point scale) ranked as follows. Again, the rank order of benchmark scores is the same for seniors if you disregard the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark values, which are not comparable across the two survey years².

Senior Year Students	2001 KU		2004 KU	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Level of academic challenge	1	54.9	1	55.2
Supportive campus environment	2	53.0	2	54.3
Enriching educational experiences ²	3	48.4	5	40.4
Active and collaborative learning	4	47.2	3	46.7
Student-faculty interactions ³	5	44.4	4	42.3

Note these 2001 and 2004 values are not comparable due to rescaling of items in 2003.

Mean Values for Items Contributing to NSSE's Five National Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

Below are mean values for the two survey years by class rank for the individual items that contributed to each of the five benchmark scores. The text of some items has been shortened; please [click here](#) to be directed to the 2004 NSSE survey, which contains the same items as those used in the 2001 survey.

Benchmark 1: Level of Academic Challenge

		<i>1=never</i>	<i>2=sometimes</i>	<i>3=often</i>	<i>4=very often</i>
				2001	2004
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	1 st year			2.39	2.64
	4 th year			2.52	2.53

		<i>1= very little</i>	<i>2=some</i>	<i>3=quite a bit</i>	<i>4=very much</i>
				2001	2004
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	1 st year			3.07	3.13
	4 th year			3.27	3.26
Synthesizing and organizing ideas into new interpretations	1 st year			2.76	2.87
	4 th year			3.00	3.03
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods	1 st year			2.69	2.81
	4 th year			2.82	2.87
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	1 st year			2.95	3.06
	4 th year			3.16	3.22
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	1 st year			3.05	3.14
	4 th year			3.00	2.97

<i>1=none</i>	<i>2=fewer than 5</i>	<i>3=between 5 and 10 20</i>	<i>4=between 11 and 20</i>	<i>5=more than</i>
		2001		2004
Number of assigned readings		1 st year	3.51	3.47
		4 th year	3.40	3.47
Number of written papers of 20 pages or more		1 st year	1.10	1.18
		4 th year	1.58	1.54
Number of written papers between 5 and 19 pages		1 st year	2.23	2.18
		4 th year	2.56	2.51
Number of written papers of fewer than 5 pages		1 st year	3.03	3.04
		4 th year	3.10	2.95
<i>1=0 hr/wk</i>	<i>2=5 or fewer hr/wk 6=21-25 hr/wk</i>	<i>3=6-10 hr/wk 7=26-30 hr/wk</i>	<i>4=11-15 hr/wk 8=more than 30 hr/wk</i>	<i>5=16-20 hr/wk</i>
		2001		2004
Preparing for class		1 st year	4.19	3.97
		4 th year	3.86	3.86

Benchmark 2: Active and Collaborative Learning

	<i>1=very little</i>	<i>2=some</i>	<i>3=quite a bit</i>	<i>4=very much</i>
			2001	2004
Asked questions or contributed to class discussions	1 st year		2.77	2.81
	4 th year		2.87	2.96
Made a class presentation	1 st year		1.94	1.96
	4 th year		2.50	2.50
Worked with other students on projects during class	1 st year		2.62	2.46
	4 th year		2.46	2.39
Worked with other students on projects outside of class to prepare class assignments	1 st year		2.30	2.29
	4 th year		2.77	2.61
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	1 st year		1.72	1.66
	4 th year		1.93	1.95
Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	1 st year		1.27	1.41
	4 th year		1.56	1.46
Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with others outside of class	1 st year		2.63	2.64
	4 th year		2.75	2.96

Benchmark 3: Enriching Education Experiences

	<i>1=very little</i>	<i>2=some</i>	<i>3=quite a bit</i>	<i>4=very much</i>
			2001	2004
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	1 st year		2.63	2.96
	4 th year		2.75	2.92
Had serious conversations with students who differ from you	1 st year		2.96	2.74
	4 th year		3.01	2.74
Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds	1 st year		2.39	2.53
	4 th year		2.08	2.21
Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment	1 st year		2.40	2.55
	4 th year		2.52	2.65
	<i>1=0 hr/wk</i>	<i>2=5 or fewer hr/wk</i>	<i>3=6-10 hr/wk</i>	<i>4=11-15 hr/wk</i>
	<i>5=16-20 hr/wk</i>	<i>6=21-25 hr/wk</i>	<i>7=26-30 hr/wk</i>	<i>8=more than 30 hr/wk</i>
			2001	2004
Participating in co-curricular activities	1 st year		2.43	2.23
	4 th year		2.16	2.15

		<i>Percent Done/Plan to do²</i>	
		2001	2004
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	1 st year	79%	83%
	4 th year	66%	68%
Community service or volunteer work	1 st year	74%	79%
	4 th year	66%	71%
Foreign language coursework	1 st year	56%	58%
	4 th year	49%	64%
Study abroad	1 st year	40%	48%
	4 th year	20%	29%
Independent study or self-designed major	1 st year	12%	13%
	4 th year	35%	34%
Participate in a learning community ⁴	1 st year	<i>n/a</i>	24%
	4 th year	<i>n/a</i>	17%
Culminating senior experience	1 st year	33%	34%
	4 th year	38%	44%

Benchmark 4: Student Interactions with Faculty Members

	<i>1=never</i>	<i>2=sometimes</i>	<i>3=often</i>	<i>4=very often</i>
			2001	2004
Discussed grades or assignments with instructor	1 st year		2.57	2.65
	4 th year		2.79	2.81
Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	1 st year		2.00	2.10
	4 th year		2.43	2.40
Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	1 st year		1.72	1.73
	4 th year		1.98	2.04
Worked with faculty members on activities other than course work	1 st year		1.40	1.37
	4 th year		1.73	1.79
Received prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance	1 st year		2.60	2.63
	4 th year		2.81	2.79
<i>Percent Done/Plan to do³</i>				
			2001	2004
Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of requirements	1 st year		25%	34%
	4 th year		26%	36%

Benchmark 5: Supportive Campus Environment

	<i>1=very little</i>	<i>2=some</i>	<i>3=quite a bit</i>	<i>4=very much</i>
			2001	2004
Emphasize: Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	1 st year		2.77	2.97
	4 th year		2.61	2.70
Emphasize: Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities	1 st year		1.88	1.97
	4 th year		1.71	1.63
Emphasize: Providing the support you need to thrive socially	1 st year		2.40	2.33
	4 th year		2.13	2.05

Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Friendly, supportive, sense of belonging*

			2001	2004
Quality: Relationships with other students	1 st year		5.84	5.72
	4 th year		5.60	5.75

Unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Available, helpful, sympathetic*

			2001	2004
Quality: Relationships with faculty members	1 st year		5.20	5.32
	4 th year		5.23	5.41

Unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helpful, considerate, flexible*

			2001	2004
Quality: Relationships with administrative personnel and offices	1 st year		4.61	4.80
	4 th year		4.47	4.58

Supplemental AAUDE Items

2001 and 2004 KU students also responded to 20 additional questions chosen by the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE), of which KU is a member. These questions were designed to supplement, but query disparate issues from, NSSE items. AAUDE questions tapped into issues such as:

- Satisfaction with class size
- Quality of instruction and advising
- Ease of securing classes
- Plans upon graduation

KU's responses to the AAUDE questions are largely consistent across time, though there are a few changes in mean response patterns:

- 2001 freshmen and seniors gave lower ratings than did 2004 freshmen and seniors for the following item:
 - Having to run around to get needed information or approvals
- 2004 freshmen and seniors gave higher ratings than did 2001 freshmen and seniors for the following items:
 - Availability of courses both in their major and needed for general education requirements
 - Professors making learning expectations clear
 - Being challenged to do the very best they can do

It is also noteworthy that 2001 and 2004 respondents provided largely parallel expectations for the time it would take to complete their Bachelor's degree.

Mean Values for AAUDE Items

		<i>1=Far larger than you'd like</i>	<i>2=Somewhat larger</i>	<i>3=OK in size</i>	<i>4=Smaller than you'd like</i>
				2001	2004
Consider the size of the lower-division classes you've taken at this university – have they generally been:	1 st year			2.50	2.54
	4 th year			2.11	2.18
Consider the size of the upper-division classes you've taken at this university – have they generally been:	1 st year			2.64	2.71
	4 th year			2.77	2.82

	<i>1=Poor</i>	<i>2=Fair</i>	<i>3=Good</i>	<i>4=Excellent</i>
			2001	2004
How would you rate the quality of instruction in lower-division courses?			2.75	2.85
			2.49	2.60
How would you rate the quality of instruction in upper-division courses?			3.13	2.98
			3.22	3.27
How would you rate the academic quality of this university in general?			3.11	3.30
			3.04	3.13
How would you rate the academic quality of your major program?			3.39	3.30
			3.22	3.33
How would you rate the quality of academic advising you have received from your college or department at this university?			2.71	2.79
			2.56	2.66
How would you rate this university's responsiveness to student academic problems?			2.57	2.64
			2.39	2.38

	<i>1=Hardly ever</i>	<i>2=Some of the time</i>	<i>3=Most of the time</i>	<i>4=Always or nearly always</i>
			2001	2004
Would you say that the courses you need to take for your major have been available:			2.61	2.98
			2.79	3.26
Would you say that the courses you need to take for your general education requirements have been available:			2.66	3.02
			2.79	3.21

Distributions for AAUDE Items

During the past year, from what source did you receive most of your academic advising?

		<i>Percent Yes</i>	
		2001	2004
Advisors in your college or department	1 st year	50%	53%
	4 th year	48%	47%
Instructors or staff members not formally assigned as advisors	1 st year	8%	11%
	4 th year	24%	27%
Online registration and degree tracking system	1 st year	1%	4%
	4 th year	2%	9%
Undergraduate catalog or other publications	1 st year	19%	10%
	4 th year	16%	9%
Friends or Family	1 st year	22%	20%
	4 th year	10%	7%
Not applicable ⁵	1 st year	<i>n/a</i>	2%
	4 th year	<i>n/a</i>	1%

Do you expect to complete a Bachelor's degree?

		<i>Percent Yes</i>	
		2001	2004
I may well not complete a bachelor's degree	1 st year	1%	1%
	4 th year	0%	1%
At another college or university	1 st year	11%	6%
	4 th year	1%	1%
At this university in more than 5 years total	1 st year	5%	4%
	4 th year	15%	16%
At this university in more than 4 years but within 5 years total	1 st year	32%	34%
	4 th year	41%	38%
At this university in a total of 4 years or less	1 st year	51%	56%
	4 th year	43%	44%

Within one year of ending your undergraduate studies do you plan to:

		<i>Percent Yes</i>	
		2001	2004
Attend graduate or professional school	1 st year	33%	33%
	4 th year	38%	35%
Be employed (including self- and part-time employment)	1 st year	27%	26%
	4 th year	50%	39%
Attend graduate/professional school and be employed at the same time	1 st year	16%	20%
	4 th year	8%	14%
Take time off, have/raise a family, relax, travel, etc.	1 st year	1%	2%
	4 th year	1%	3%
I am not at all sure what I will be doing	1 st year	23%	19%
	4 th year	3%	9%

Which of the following factors, if any, poses the biggest obstacle to your academic progress?

		<i>Percent Yes</i>	
		2001	2004
Money, work obligations, finances	1 st year	40%	37%
	4 th year	58%	43%
Family obligations	1 st year	3%	2%
	4 th year	4%	5%
Difficulties getting the courses you need	1 st year	11%	7%
	4 th year	7%	4%
Lack of good academic advising	1 st year	8%	4%
	4 th year	10%	3%
Lack of personal motivation	1 st year	38%	18%
	4 th year	21%	11%
No real obstacles ⁵	1 st year	<i>n/a</i>	32%
	4 th year	<i>n/a</i>	34%

What is your primary reason for working for pay (either on- or off-campus)?

		<i>Percent Yes</i>	
		2001	2004
To gain knowledge/skills	1 st year	6%	4%
	4 th year	15%	11%
To earn money for basic expenses	1 st year	57%	37%
	4 th year	63%	57%
To earn extra spending money	1 st year	34%	17%
	4 th year	20%	16%
For something to do	1 st year	3%	0%
	4 th year	2%	1%
I don't work for pay ⁵	1 st year	<i>n/a</i>	42%
	4 th year	<i>n/a</i>	15%

Freshmen Respondents

Note: the below demographics reflect students who completed this survey.

	2001	2004
Number of Respondents	344	495
Overall Response Rate⁶	<i>n/a</i>	30%
Mode of Administration		
Paper	0%	0%
Web	100%	100%
Gender		
Female	43%	64%
Male	57%	36%
Race/Ethnicity⁷		
African American/Black	2%	3%
American Indian/Native American	3%	1%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	6%	6%
Caucasian/White	88%	79%
Hispanic	3%	3%
Other	1%	6%
Multiple	0%	3%
Unknown	3%	3%
International	2%	5%
Enrollment Status⁸		
Full Time	98%	100%
Part Time	2%	0%
Place of Residence⁹		
On campus	90%	85%
Off campus	10%	15%

Senior Respondents

Note: the below demographics reflect students who completed this survey.

	2001	2004
Number of Respondents	282	571
Overall Response Rate⁶	<i>n/a</i>	33%
Mode of Administration		
Paper	0%	0%
Web	100%	100%
Gender		
Female	62%	58%
Male	38%	42%
Race/Ethnicity⁷		
African American/Black	3%	2%
American Indian/Native American	2%	2%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	5%	7%
Caucasian/White	87%	81%
Hispanic	4%	4%
Other	0%	7%
Multiple	0%	6%
Unknown	3%	1%
International	4%	6%
Enrollment Status⁸		
Full Time	87%	85%
Part Time	13%	15%
Place of Residence⁹		
On campus	11%	12%
Off campus	89%	88%

**Technical Footnotes to Supplement the
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- ¹ NSSE calculated overall institution benchmark values by placing the individual items for each benchmark on a 100-point scale, taking the average of the items, and weighting the average by each school's ratio of full time/part time students and sex of respondents. NSSE used this weighting scheme in order to compensate for the fact that part-time and male students were underrepresented.
- ² The Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark has 7 items that were rescaled between 2003 and 2004. As such, values for this benchmark and the corresponding items are not comparable.
- ³ The Student-Faculty Interaction Benchmark has one item that was not included in the 2001 survey. As such, values for this benchmark are not directly comparable, and 2001 mean responses for this item are not available.
- ⁴ This item was not included in the 2001 survey. As such, 2001 mean responses for this item are not available.
- ⁵ This response option was not available in the 2001 version of the AAUDE question.
- ⁶ Sufficient data are unavailable to calculate response rates for 2001 participants.
- ⁷ Students were allowed to choose more than one category for race/ethnicity. Thus, race/ethnicity percentages for each sample may be over 100%.
- ⁸ Students supplied their enrollment status. Number of credit hours was not provided by NSSE to help students determine the correct status. Students were told that a part time status was "Less than full-time."
- ⁹ On-campus housing included both university-operated residence halls and fraternity/sorority houses.