

Lake Forest College
NSSE 2014
Administered in Spring 2014

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Institutional Research

Introduction

Lake Forest College administered the most recent iteration of the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) in the spring of 2014. Previous surveys were given in 2007, 2008, and 2011. This iteration continues the College's administration of the survey on a three year cycle.

The results discussed here compare:

- Lake Forest to the NSSE universe, and in particular those schools scoring in the top 10%.
- Lake Forest compared to a comparison group of selected liberal arts colleges and universities who responded to the NSSE in 2013 and 2014.

Generally, engagement indicator scores were very favorable for first-years and seniors. First-years compared well to the NSSE Top 10% group on 9 out of 10 indicators. Seniors compared well to the NSE Top 10% group on 2 out of 10 indicators.

What is NSSE?

NSSE is administered nationally. In 2014, 713 schools participated in the survey.

Extract from the NSSE 2014 Overview:

"The National Survey of Student Engagement collected information annually from first-year and senior students about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. Since the inception of the survey, nearly 1,500 bachelor's-granting colleges and universities in the United States and Canada have used it to measure the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices that are empirically linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, and graduation. NSSE data are used by faculty, administrators, research and others for institutional improvement, accountability, and related purposes."

The survey is administered over the Web to volunteers in the first year and senior class. All students in those classes receive an invitation to participate. In 2014, Lake Forest had an overall participation rate of 46%; 43% of the first-years and 50% of the seniors responded. Lake Forest's respondents were 62% female and 38% male. Nationwide, 64% of NSSE respondents in 2014 were female and 36% were male.

In 2014, the NSSE was updated. The NSSE is now comprised of two separate components: *Engagement Indicators* and *High-Impact Practices*. *Engagement Indicators* consist of ten sets of questions (47 total) that fit into 4 broad themes. A description of the broad themes is included on the next page. *High-Impact Practices* (HIPs) detail certain undergraduate opportunities that are shown to display "high-impact" due to their positive associations with student learning and retention. First-years (3 items) and Seniors (6 items) were asked HIP related questions that detail opportunities they have done so far or plan to do before they graduate.

Description of Engagement Indicator Themes

Academic Challenge

“Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote student learning by challenging and supporting them to engage in various forms of deep learning. Four Engagement Indicators are part of this theme: *Higher-Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, and Quantitative Reasoning.*”

Learning with Peers

“Collaborating with others in mastering difficult material and developing interpersonal and social competence prepares students to deal with complex, unscripted problems they will encounter during and after college. Two Engagement Indicators make up this theme: *Collaborative Learning and Discussions with Diverse Others.*”

Experiences with Faculty

“Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside of instructional settings. As a result, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for lifelong learning. In addition, effective teaching requires that faculty deliver course material and provide feedback in student-centered ways. Two Engagement Indicators investigate this theme: *Student-Faculty Interaction and Effective Teaching Practices.*”

Campus Environment

“Students benefit and are more satisfied in supportive settings that cultivate positive relationships among students, faculty, and staff. Two Engagement Indicators investigate this theme: *Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment.*”

2014 Engagement Indicator Comparison with NSSE Top 10%

The NSSE Top 10% is comprised of institutions with average scores placing them in the Top 10% of all 2013 and 2014 institutions that administered the survey. The top 10% may contain institutions of all sizes and types.

First-Years

For first-years, Lake Forest compared exceptionally well with the Top 10% in 2014. 9 out of the 10 Engagement Indicators were comparable to the Top 10%. The only engagement indicator that was significantly lower for Lake Forest's responses compared to the Top 10% was *Collaborative Learning*. More information about the first-years' scores will be discussed in the Peer Group Selection below. For a more detailed look at the first-years' responses, please refer to Appendix A.

Below, the symbol * is used to indicate the degree of difference when significant differences are present between Lake Forest and the Top 10%. If no symbol is present in the significance column, it indicates that the Top 10% and Lake Forest are comparable in terms of their performance. Additionally, a check mark (✓) in the further right column of the table will indicate whether Lake Forest performed comparably or better than the NSSE Top 10%.

Theme	Engagement Indicator	Lake Forest Mean	NSSE Top 10% Mean	Sig.	✓
<i>Academic Challenge</i>	Higher-Order Learning	43.3	42.7		✓
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	39.2	39.3		✓
	Learning Strategies	42.3	43.4		✓
	Quantitative Reasoning	30.1	30.6		✓
<i>Learning with Peers</i>	Collaborative Learning	33.4	37.0	***	
	Discussions with Diverse Others	47.1	45.6		✓
<i>Experiences with Faculty</i>	Student-Faculty Interaction	26.0	26.9		✓
	Effective Teaching Practices	44.8	44.6		✓
<i>Campus Environment</i>	Quality of Interactions	46.1	46.0		✓
	Supportive Environment	41.3	41.4		✓

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

Seniors

Lake Forest seniors were comparable to the NSSE Top 10% in two engagement indicators: *Discussions with Diverse Others* and *Supportive Environment*. Lake Forest Seniors scored below the Top 10% in all other indicators. More information regarding the seniors' scores will be discussed below in the peer group section. For a more detailed look at the seniors' responses, please refer to Appendix A.

Theme	Engagement Indicator	Lake Forest Mean	NSSE Top 10% Mean	Sig.	✓
<i>Academic Challenge</i>	Higher-Order Learning	42.6	45.3	**	
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	39.6	43.1	***	
	Learning Strategies	41.1	44.9	**	
	Quantitative Reasoning	27.9	33.0	***	
<i>Learning with Peers</i>	Collaborative Learning	31.9	37.7	***	
	Discussions with Diverse Others	46.4	45.8		✓
<i>Experiences with Faculty</i>	Student-Faculty Interaction	30.9	34.4	**	
	Effective Teaching Practices	43.0	45.1	*	
<i>Campus Environment</i>	Quality of Interactions	44.5	47.4	**	
	Supportive Environment	39.3	39.0		✓

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

2014 Engagement Indicator Comparison with a Selected Peer Comparison Group

Peer Group

The NSSE also allows for a comparison of Lake Forest and a group of selected liberal arts colleges. The schools include in that peer group for 2014 are shown below. They were chosen from the pool of liberal arts schools that administered the survey in 2013 and 2014.

Institution Name	City	State
Albion College	Albion	MI
Austin College	Sherman	TX
Beloit College	Beloit	WI
Centre College	Danville	KY
Colby College	Waterville	ME
Colorado College	Colorado Springs	CO
Connecticut College	New London	CT
Denison University	Granville	OH
Drew University	Madison	NJ
Gettysburg College	Gettysburg	PA
Goucher College	Baltimore	MD
Grinnell College	Grinnell	IA
Illinois Wesleyan University	Bloomington	IL
Kalamazoo College	Kalamazoo	MI
Kenyon College	Gambier	OH
Knox College	Galesburg	IL
Lawrence University	Appleton	WI
Macalester College	Saint Paul	MN
Muhlenberg College	Allentown	PA
Rhodes College	Memphis	TN
Ripon College	Ripon	WI
Saint Mary's College	Notre Dame	IN
Southwestern University	Georgetown	TX
St. Lawrence University	Canton	NY
St. Olaf College	Northfield	MN
Susquehanna University	Selinsgrove	PA
The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University	Saint Joseph	MN
Wittenberg University	Springfield	OH
Wofford College	Spartanburg	SC

First-Years

Theme	Engagement Indicator	Lake Forest Mean	Peer Group Mean	Sig.	✓
<i>Academic Challenge</i>	Higher-Order Learning	43.3	42.1		✓
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	39.2	38.8		✓
	Learning Strategies	42.3	40.4		✓
	Quantitative Reasoning	30.1	28.1		✓
<i>Learning with Peers</i>	Collaborative Learning	33.4	35.0		✓
	Discussions with Diverse Others	47.1	44.3	***	✓
<i>Experiences with Faculty</i>	Student-Faculty Interaction	26.0	23.1	*	✓
	Effective Teaching Practices	44.8	43.2		✓
<i>Campus Environment</i>	Quality of Interactions	46.1	45.1		✓
	Supportive Environment	41.3	40.5		✓

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

First year students at Lake Forest scored comparably to other first year students at liberal arts colleges in our Peer Group. Additionally, Lake Forest first-years also scored significantly *higher* than our Peer Group with regards to *Discussions with Diverse Others* and *Student-Faculty Interaction*. For a more detailed comparison of how Lake Forest first-years performed relative to first-years in the peer group, please consult Appendix B.

For *Discussions with Diverse Others*, Lake Forest first-years endorsed three of the four questions “Very Often” or “Often” at a higher rate than peers. Lake Forest students were more likely to have had discussions with “people from a race or ethnicity other than your own”, “people from an economic background other than your own”, and “people with political views other than your own”.

For *Student-Faculty Interaction*, first year students at Lake Forest endorsed three of the four questions “Very Often” or “Often” at a higher rate than peers. Lake Forest students were more likely to have “talked about career plans with a faculty member”, “worked with faculty on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)”, and “discussed your academic performance with a faculty member”.

Seniors

Theme	Engagement Indicator	Lake Forest Mean	Peer Group Mean	Sig.	✓
<i>Academic Challenge</i>	Higher-Order Learning	42.6	44.0		✓
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	39.6	42.6	**	
	Learning Strategies	41.1	39.6		✓
	Quantitative Reasoning	27.9	30.8	*	
<i>Learning with Peers</i>	Collaborative Learning	31.9	35.7	***	
	Discussions with Diverse Others	46.4	42.3	***	✓
<i>Experiences with Faculty</i>	Student-Faculty Interaction	30.9	31.2		✓
	Effective Teaching Practices	43.0	43.9		✓
<i>Campus Environment</i>	Quality of Interactions	44.5	44.8		✓
	Supportive Environment	39.3	37.2		✓

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

Seniors at Lake Forest College scored comparably to the peer group on 7 of the 10 engagement indicators. Seniors at other schools in the peer group scored significantly lower on *Reflective & Integrative Learning*, *Collaborative Learning*, and *Quantitative Reasoning*. Lake Forest seniors scored higher than the peer group on *Discussions with Diverse Others*. For a more detailed comparison of how Lake Forest seniors performed relative to seniors in the peer group, please consult Appendix B.

Lake Forest seniors endorsed “Very Often” or “Often” at a lower rate than the peer group for all of the seven questions asked as a part of the *Reflective & Integrative Learning* Engagement Indicator. These questions included “combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments”, “connected ideas from your learning to societal problems or issues”, “included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments”, “examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective”, “tried to better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective”, “learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept”, and “connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge.”

Lake Forest seniors endorsed “Very Often” or “Often” at a lower rate than the peer group for two of the three questions asked as a part of the *Quantitative Reasoning* Engagement Indicator. These two questions were “reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)” and “evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information”. The question “used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)” was endorsed at an identical rate to the peer group.

Lake Forest seniors endorsed “Very Often” or “Often” at a lower rate than the peer group for all four of the questions asked as a part of the *Collaborative Learning* Indicator. The four questions asked here included “asked another student to help you understand course material”, “explained course material to one or more students”, “prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students”, and “worked with other students on course projects and assignments.”

Lake Forest seniors endorsed “Very Often” or “Often” at higher rate than the peer group for all four of the questions asked as a part of the *Discussions with Diverse Others* Engagement Indicator. The four questions asked here indicated that Lake Forest seniors had discussions at a higher rate with “people from a race or ethnicity other than your own,” “people from an economic background other than your own,” “people with religious beliefs other than your own,” and “people with political views other than your own.”

High Impact Practices

High Impact Practices (HIPs) is a new component of the 2014 administration of the NSSE. HIPs detail certain undergraduate opportunities that display a positive association with student learning and retention.

Extract from the NSSE 2014 Overview:

“(HIPs) demand consider time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback. As a result, participation in these practices can be life-changing (Kuh, 2008). NSSE founder director George Kuh recommends that institutions should aspire for all students to participate in at least two HIPs over the course of their undergraduate experience – one during the first year and one in the context of their major (NSSE, 2007).

In this set of questions, NSSE asks students about their participation in six different HIPs. Both first year and senior students at Lake Forest were asked about their participation in the following HIPs: 1) learning community or some formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together, 2) courses that included a community-based project (service-learning), and 3) work with a faculty member on a research project. Additionally, seniors were asked about their participation in three more HIPs: 4) Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement, 5) study abroad programs, and 6) culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio review, etc.).

First-Years

HIP Area	Lake Forest Participation %	Peer Group Participation %	Sig.	✓
Learning Community	5	10	*	
Service-Learning	44	42		✓
Research With Faculty	13	6	***	✓
<i>Participated in one HIP</i>	52	48		✓
<i>Participated in two or more HIPs</i>	8	8		✓

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

First-years participated in HIPs at a similar rate to other schools in the comparison peer group. 8% of first-years at Lake Forest indicated participating in two or more HIPs; the amount was the same at other liberal arts schools in the peer group. 52% of first-years at Lake Forest indicated that they participated in at least one HIP; 48% of first-years at schools in the peer group reported that they participated in a HIP.

Lake Forest first-years indicated participating in learning community groups at a significantly lower rate than first-years in the peer group. Conversely, Lake Forest first-years also reported participating in research with faculty at a significantly higher rate than schools in the peer group.

Seniors

HIP Area	Lake Forest Participation %	Peer Group Participation %	Sig.	✓
Learning Community	30	27		✓
Service-Learning	47	64	***	
Research With Faculty	46	52		✓
Internship	68	75	*	
Study Abroad	37	58	***	
Culminating Senior Exp.	71	79	*	
<i>Participated in one HIP</i>	95	98	***	
<i>Participated in two or more HIPs</i>	81	92	***	

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

Seniors at other institutions in the peer group reported significantly higher HIP participation than Lake Forest. 95% of Lake Forest seniors reported participating in one HIP; 98% of seniors at other institutions in the peer group reported participating in one HIP. The gap increased when looking at participation in two or more HIPs. 81% of Lake Forest seniors reported participating in two or more HIPs; 92% of seniors at schools in the Peer Comparison Group reported participating in two or more HIPs.

Lake Forest seniors participated in learning communities and research with faculty at a rate similar to seniors in the peer group. Seniors at other liberal arts schools in the peer group participated in service learning opportunities, internships, study abroad programs, and culminating senior experiences at a significantly higher rate than Lake Forest seniors.

Two significant differences among the seniors’ responses will likely require additional analysis to determine the exact cause of their origins. Specifically, internships and culminating senior experiences will need to be looked at more in-depth.

The “Internship” HIP is more completely defined in the survey as “internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement”. Lake Forest students are less likely to say that they have participated in one of these practices, but we have no insight into which type of experience they mean. Schools with nursing or with more education majors may have influenced the average results.

The culminating senior experience HIP area includes any “capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.” that the student may have participated in. Lake Forest requires that all graduating seniors participate in some type of capstone or final project depending on their major. It is possible that seniors’ responses here indicate that they view their capstone or final project as another course rather than a culminating experience in their program. Further investigation may be needed to analyze this.

For a more detailed look at the HIP response data, please consult Appendix C.

Other Questions

The survey also contained some questions which were not included in the Engagement Indicators or High Impact Practices.

Satisfaction

Both first year and senior students were asked two questions about their overall satisfaction about Lake Forest College. These questions were “How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?” and “If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?” Both of these questions were measured on a 1 to 4 scale with 1 being the most negative response and 4 being the most positive response. Results for these questions are seen in the table below.

Satisfaction Question		Lake Forest Mean	Peer Group Mean	Sig.
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution? (1 = Poor...4 = Excellent)	FY	3.26	3.45	***
	SR	3.32	3.53	***
If you could start over again, would you go to the <i>same institution</i> you are now attending? (1 = Definitely no...4 = Definitely yes)	FY	3.10	3.34	***
	SR	3.01	3.29	***

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

Overall mean responses to the questions fell within the “Good” and “Probably Yes” range for first-years and seniors at Lake Forest. However, Lake Forest College first-years and seniors feel significantly less satisfied than students in the peer group.

Time Usage

Students were asked a set of questions pertaining to the number of hours they spent doing activities in a typical 7-day week. Results for these questions can be seen in the table below.

Time Usage Area		Lake Forest Mean	Peer Group Mean	Sig.
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, etc.)	FY	15.4	17.9	
	SR	16.6	17.9	
Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, etc.)	FY	7.6	8.4	
	SR	7.4	9.2	**
Working for pay on campus	FY	3.8	3.5	
	SR	7.0	6.3	
Working for pay off campus	FY	2.5	1.1	*
	SR	6.0	2.4	***
Doing community service or volunteer work	FY	1.9	1.8	
	SR	2.8	2.4	
Relaxing and socializing (time with friends, video games, TV, keeping up with friends online, etc.)	FY	11.8	13.2	
	SR	11.3	13.3	**
Providing care for dependents (children, parents, etc.)	FY	.8	.6	
	SR	2.6	.7	**
Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.)	FY	1.5	1.3	
	SR	3.8	1.8	***

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed).

Lake Forest first-years spend their time in a comparable manner to other first-years in the peer group with the exception of time spent working off campus. Lake Forest first-years, on average, spent about an hour more per week working off campus than other first-years in the peer group.

Lake Forest seniors spent their weekly time doing significantly different things than the peer group in five categories. Lake Forest seniors spent significantly less time participating in co-curricular activities and relaxing and socializing than seniors at other liberal arts schools in the peer group. Lake Forest seniors spent significantly more time working for pay off campus, providing care for dependents, and commuting to campus than other seniors in the peer group.

Background Characteristics

A majority of Lake Forest first-years (56%) planned on completing more than one major; only 35% of First-years in the peer group only planned on completing more than one major. The trend continues in seniors. 39% of Lake Forest seniors plan to complete more than one major compared to 26% of seniors in the peer group.

Lake Forest students are less likely to be white than students are other liberal arts college in the peer group. In first-years, 52% of students identified as white at Lake Forest while 70% of students at schools in the Peer Group identified as white. In seniors, 62% of students identified as white Lake Forest while 77% of students at schools in the Peer Group identified as white.

Lake Forest students are more likely to be international students or foreign nationals than the peer group. 15% of first-years identified themselves as from an international population at Lake Forest compared to 9% of first-years at peer group schools. 12% of seniors identified themselves as from an international population at Lake Forest compared to 5% of seniors at peer group schools.

Lake Forest seniors were more likely to be transfer students. 19% of Lake Forest seniors started at another college at another institution before attending Lake Forest. Only 5% of seniors at other schools in the peer group transferred in from another institution.

Lake Forest first-years students were more likely to live off-campus. 84% of Lake Forest first-years reported they lived off campus compared to 94% for the peer group. Conversely, Lake Forest seniors were more likely to live on-campus. 63% of Lake Forest seniors reported they lived on-campus compared to 55% of seniors in the peer group. Additionally, 34% of seniors in the peer group reported living in a residence within walking distance of campus, compared to 8% at Lake Forest.

Lake Forest respondents reported lower grades than respondents from the peer group. 42% of first-years and 33% of seniors reported their typical grade of being a B or lower compared to 28% of first-years and 23% of seniors in the peer group.

Lake Forest College students reported a higher rate of being a first-generation college students compared to students from the peer group. 39% of first-years and 39% of seniors at Lake Forest reported being first-generation college students compared to 21% of first-years and 19% of seniors in the peer group.

Conclusion

The NSSE is a survey of students self-reporting their engagement in activities which NSSE has determined to be important to various aspects of student success. The report allows us to compare how much our students engage in those activities compared to select peer groups.

Lake Forest first year students displayed similar levels of engagement to the NSSE Top 10% and the other schools in the peer group. Lake Forest seniors displayed comparable levels of engagement to students in the peer group. However, Lake Forest seniors only displayed favorable engagement comparisons to the NSSE Top 10% for 2 of the 10 engagement indicators (Discussions with Diverse Others and Supportive Environment). The other 8 engagement indicators displayed unfavorable significant differences when comparing Lake Forest seniors to those of the NSSE Top 10%.

Lake Forest first-years were more likely to participate in research with faculty than the peer group, but less likely to be a part of a learning community when compared to the peer group. Lake Forest seniors were less likely to participate in service learning opportunities, internships, study abroad opportunities, and culminating senior experiences when compared to the peer group.