

Learning Environment 2004

National Survey of Student Engagement (04) Benchmark Summary Report

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Purpose

The purpose of this Benchmark summary report is to present the scores in five Benchmark areas that compares ULV with 40 other Doctoral Intensive institutions. This information is provided as part of the service that the NSSE organization provides institutions that participate in its yearly Nation Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Procedure

The University of La Verne provides the NSSE organization with names of freshmen and seniors. They select a random sample from each group and send them a letter to log on and take the survey. This is ULV's first participation in the survey. Their efforts produced 84 freshmen, 65% of who were traditional-age (age less than 24), and 98 seniors, 88% of who were adult students (age 24 and older). Thus, the results should be interpreted with this inherent bias in the two samples in mind. In the future, if we decide to continue with NSSE, we should ask them to sample our students separately for traditional age and adult groups. However, the current age breakdown is a close reflection of the current ULV profiles of freshmen and seniors.

Each benchmark is a composite of number of items, reported as a mean rating across these given set of items.

1. **Level of Challenge** refers to academic activities involving preparation time, reading and writing assignments, theory and application, integration of information, and critical analysis.
2. **Active and Collaborative Learning** refers to activities involving participation in discussion, study groups, team work, tutoring or being tutored, and discussion of ideas outside of class.
3. **Student-Faculty interaction** refers to activities involving conversation between students and faculty regarding assignments, grades, career plans, discussion of ideas outside of class, receiving prompt feedback, and working with faculty on research or community projects outside of coursework.
4. **Enriching Educational Experiences** refers to participation in co-curricular activities, internships, community service, conversations with students of different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds, and using electronic technology for assignments.

5. Supportive Campus Environment refers to receiving help for academic success, help to cope with non-academic responsibilities, quality of relationship with other students, faculty and staff, and having opportunities for thriving socially.

Findings

Findings are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1
NSSE (04) Benchmark Analysis comparing the mean scores of ULV Freshmen (n=84) and Seniors (n=98) with doctoral Intensive (n=40 Univ.) institutions using aggregate item scores.

Benchmark areas	Freshman (mostly traditional)		Senior (mostly adult)	
	ULV Mean(%ile)	Doct. Int. Mean	ULV Mean(%ile)	Doct. Int. Mean
1. Level of Academic Challenge (9 items)	55.4 (82)	52.4	58.2 (82)	55.9
2, Active and Collaborative Learning (7 items)	44.9 (92)	39.7	54.0 (80)	49.0
3. Student-Faculty Interaction (6 items)	32.6 (73)	30.3	35.3 (21)	39.4
4. Enriching Educational Experience (11 items)	28.5 (79)	25.7	31.4 (16)	37.4
5. Supportive Campus Environment (6 items)	67.8 (98)	59.1	63.0 (96)	55.3

For freshmen:

- In all of the five benchmark areas the scores significantly exceed the norms of Doctoral Intensive institutions. Their engagement scores are in the 73-98th percentiles range.
- Specially notable are the scores in the Active and Collaborative Learning (92nd percentile) and the Supportive Campus Environment (98th percentile, near the top). The benchmark area of Level of Academic Challenge is also impressively high at the 82nd percentile.

- Although quite high, the areas that have room for improvement are in Student-Faculty Interaction and Enriching Educational Experiences.

For seniors:

- The scores significantly exceed the norms of Doctoral Intensive institutions in three areas: Level of Academic Challenge (92nd percentile), Active and Collaborative Learning (80th percentile), and Supportive Campus Environment (96th percentile, near the very top).
- Two areas that seniors score significantly lower are Student-Faculty Interactions and Enriching Educational Experiences. These may be partially understood in the context of the fact that most seniors were adults who tend to take courses at regional campuses. Nevertheless, they need attention.

Action Recommendations

- Incorporate the areas where ULV shows exceptional strength in marketing and image projection for both traditional and adult programs; namely, the areas of Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, and Supportive Campus Environment.
- Conduct focus groups with off-campus adult seniors to find out what the issues are, and how to improve the following two areas: Faculty-Student Interactions and providing Enriching Educational Experiences relevant to adult students.