

South Puget Sound Community College

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) Overview of 2005 Survey Results December 2005

Introduction

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (*CCSSE*) provides information to colleges about effective educational practices that promote improvements in student learning and persistence. Research shows that the more actively engaged students are — with college faculty and staff, with other students, with the subject matter — the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals. Measuring *student engagement*, the amount of time and energy that students invest in meaningful educational practices, is the underlying foundation for the survey. The *CCSSE* is a tool that helps community colleges assess educational quality, focus on good educational practice, and identify areas in which the college can improve programs and services for students. It is designed to capture student engagement as a measure of institutional quality.

National Perspective

CCSSE conducted its pilot survey in 2001, a field test in 2002, and national administrations in the spring of 2003, 2004, and 2005. In 2005, more than 133,000 students at 257 colleges in 38 states participated in the 2005 survey. These colleges represent about 21% of the approximate 6 million credit students in American public community colleges. Eighteen of the community colleges are classified by size as extra-large institutions (15,000+ credit students), 28 as large (8,000-14,999 students), 61 as medium (4,500-7,999 students), and 150 as small (fewer than 4,500 students)¹. Seventy-two of the 2005 member colleges are located in urban areas, 59 in suburban areas, and 126 in rural areas. South Puget Sound Community College falls into the medium size category and is classified as being located in a suburban area.

College Respondents

The *CCSSE* survey was administered during Winter Quarter 2005 to 52 randomly selected (by *CCSSE*) credit classes – stratified by time of day (morning, afternoon, and evening) – from the college’s class data files. The following classes were excluded from survey administration:

- distance learning
- labs associated with a course
- non-credit classes
- all but the top ESL classes, including classes below the 8th grade reading level
- individual study or self-paced classes
- dual-enrollment courses offered entirely to high school students

Of the 1183 students sampled at our college, 704 submitted usable surveys. The overall “percent of target” rate for the college was 88%. The percent of target rate is the ratio of the adjusted

¹These enrollment statistics are based on Fall 2003 IPEDS data.

number of completed surveys to target sample sizes. The adjusted survey count is the number of surveys that were filled out properly and did not fall into any of the exclusionary categories. Surveys were excluded and considered invalid if the student:

- did not indicate full or part-time enrollment status;
- reported his/her age as under 18;
- indicated that he/she had taken the survey in a previous class; and/or
- did not answer any of the sub-items to question 4², or marked “very often” or “never” to all of the sub-items.

Student Respondent Profile

To compare the characteristics of the student survey respondents with the characteristics of the college’s general student population, *CCSSE* used the data reported by the college in its 2003 IPEDS Enrollment Report for the following variables: gender, race and ethnicity, student age, and enrollment status (full- or part-time).

Gender

Of the 704 student respondents at our college who answered this item, 35% are male and 65% are female. This roughly mirrors the college’s general student population, comprised of 38% males and 62% females.

Age

Approximately 59% of the student respondents were between 18 to 24 years old; 38% between 25 to 49 years old, while only 3% were 50 years and older. In the college’s general student population, 54% are between the ages of 18 and 24; 41% between the ages of 25 and 49; and 5% over the age of 50.

Racial/Ethnic Identification

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>Percent CCSSE Respondents</i>	<i>General Student Population</i>
American Indian/Native American	2.1%	1.8%
Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander	7.1%	5.9%
Black or African American/Non-Hispanic	2.4%	2.4%
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	4.1%	4.7%
White/Non-Hispanic	71%	70.3%
Other	6.2%	12.7%

The students responding to the *CCSSE* closely represents the racial/ethnic make-up of the general student population.

International Students

Almost 7% percent of our students responded yes to the question, “Are you an international student or foreign national?” However, in our general population only 1.2% identified themselves as an international student. There is a greater number of international students represented in the *CCSSE* survey results than there are in the general student population.

² Survey item # 4 reads “In you experiences at this college during the current year, about how often have you done each of the following?” Twenty-one sub-items followed and students were asked to mark *very often*, *often*, *sometimes*, or *never* in response to the sub-item.

Enrollment Status

Seventy-one percent of the student respondents reported attending college full-time, while only 48% of general student population attends full-time. In addition, only 29% of surveyed students reported attending part-time, compared to 52% as reported to IPEDS.

This inverse representation is a result of the sampling technique and the in-class administration process. For this reason, survey results are either weighted or disaggregated on the full-time/part-time variable so that reports will accurately reflect the underlying student population.

The following student respondent categories are weighted according to Fall 2003 IPEDS population data.

Limited English Speaking Students

Students with limited English speaking skills, or those whose native language is not English, comprise a significant proportion of students in community colleges. At our institution, 7% of the respondents were non-native English speakers.

First-Generation Status

Approximately one-third of the students surveyed indicated that neither their mother nor their father had ever attended college. Of those, 8% reported that their father did not graduate from high school and 25% indicated that the highest education credential attained by their father was a high school diploma or GED. Comparably, 7% indicated that their mother had not graduated from high school graduate and 25% reported their mother's highest credential earned was a high school diploma or GED.

Educational Attainment

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents reported starting their college careers at South Puget Sound Community College and 31% started their college experience elsewhere. In reviewing the highest educational credential earned by the respondents, 7% did not have a high school diploma, 65% had a high school diploma or GED; 11% had a vocational/technical certificate, 9% had an associate degree; 8% had a bachelor's degree; and 1% had earned an advanced degree. Therefore, more than 70% of the students had not earned an educational credential above a high school diploma.

Credit Hours Earned

Twenty-eight percent of surveyed students had completed fewer than 15 credit hours; 35% had completed 15 - 44 credit hours; and 39% had completed 45 or more credit hours. The survey captured a good representation of students who are new to the college as well as those who have attended for more than a year.

Grades

Fifty-four percent of the respondents report that they had earned grades of *B+* or higher, while only 1% of the students reported that they had earned grades of *C-* or lower.

External Commitments

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students reported they had jobs and were "working for pay;" with almost 50% of them working more than 21 or more hours per week. Thirty-one percent

(31%) indicated they cared for dependents at least 11 hours per week; and 70% of the students said they spend at least 1-5 hours per week commuting to class.

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the respondents are single and 23% are married. Seventy-one percent (71%) reported having no children with 29% of them have children who live with them.

Key Findings

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) reports survey findings primarily in **two ways**:

1. the college's score on national **benchmarks** of effective educational practice compared to similar colleges
2. a survey item-by-item **mean** score. A **mean** is the arithmetic average of all responses on a particular survey item that compares our college to other colleges.

Benchmark Findings

Benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of student engagement, learning, and persistence. *CCSSE* uses five national benchmarks for effective educational practice in community and technical colleges to present results. The benchmarks are tools that can be used to compare college performance with institutions comparable in size.

The five national benchmarks areas include:

- 1) Active and Collaborative Learning,
- 2) Student Effort,
- 3) Academic Challenge,
- 4) Student – Faculty Interaction, and
- 5) Support for Learners

Active and Collaborative Learning

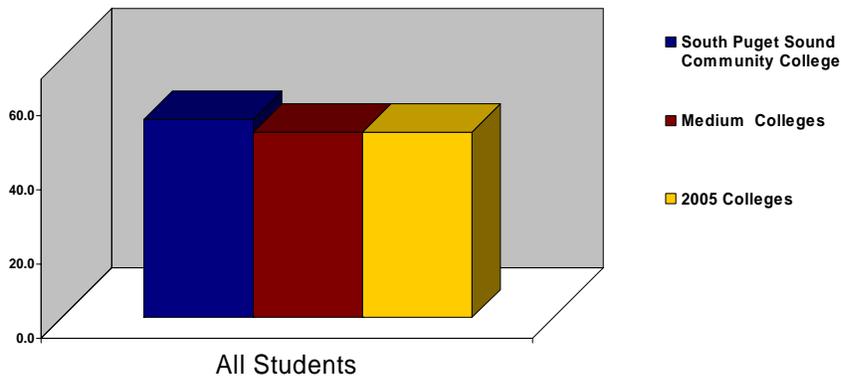
Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning, to their experience in the workplace, community, and in their personal lives. There are seven survey items that contribute to this benchmark:

During the current school year, how often have you

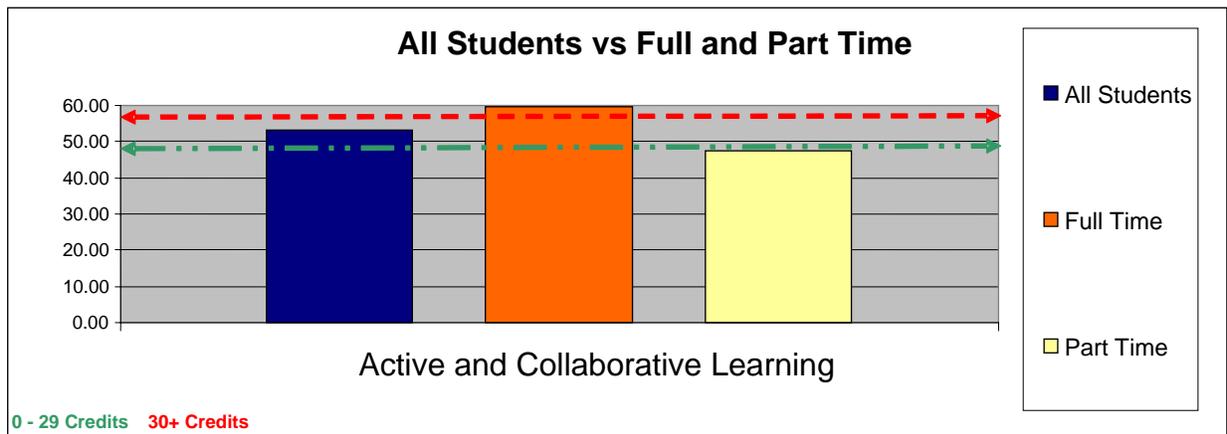
- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
- Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

Overall students at South Puget Sound are more actively involved in their education and collaborate with others, more than students at comparable colleges.

Active and Collaborative Learning



However, as illustrated below, the college’s full-time students and those with more than 30+ credits were more likely to collaborate with others, than students enrolled part-time and those who had earned fewer than 30 credits.



Student Effort

Students who apply themselves and contribute significantly to their learning are more likely to successfully reach their educational goals than students who do not. “Time on task” is a key variable to student success. There are eight survey items on student behavior that contribute to this benchmark:

During the current school year, how often have you

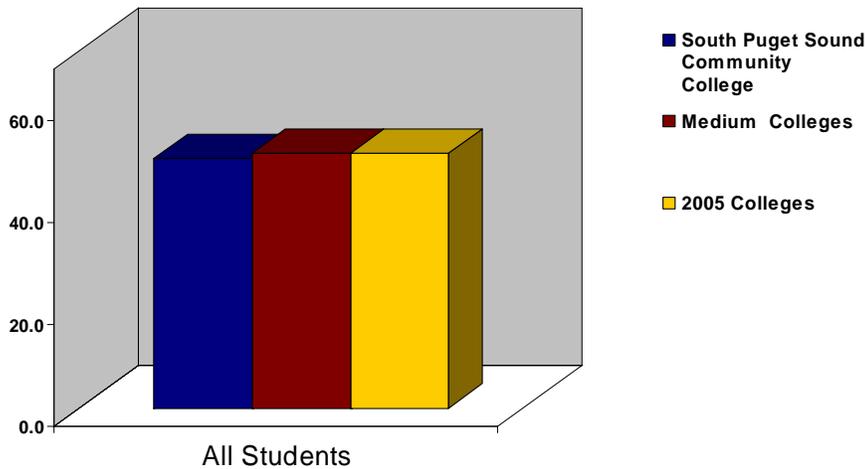
- Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
- Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Come to class without completing readings or assignments
- Used peer or other tutoring services
- Used skill labs
- Used a computer lab

During the current school year:

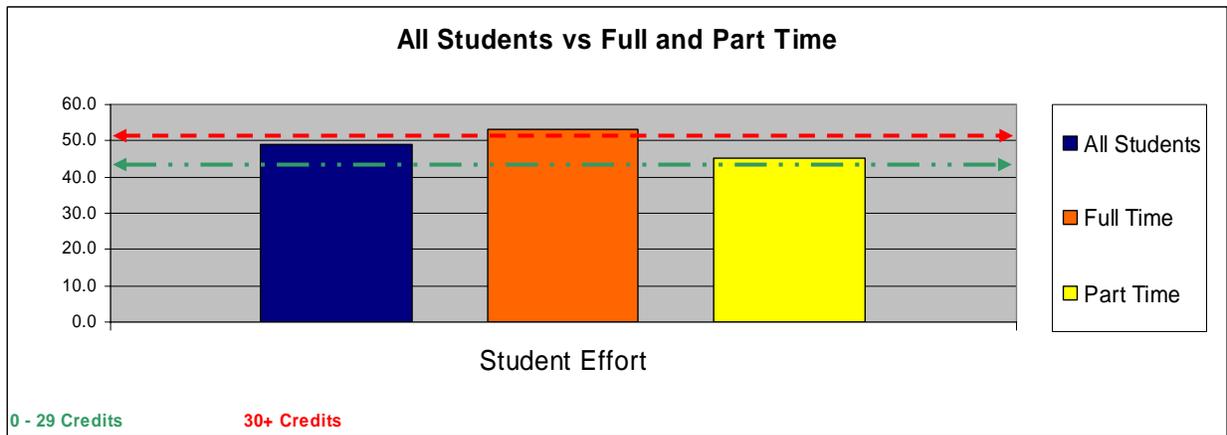
- How many books did you read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment
- How many hours did you spend in a typical week preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, or other activities related to your program)

When comparing South Puget Sound students to students at comparable medium-sized colleges and students at 2005 CCSSE colleges, our students put forth slightly less effort than their counterparts.

Student Effort



However, full-time students and students who had earned 30+ credits were more likely to put forth more effort than our part-time students and those students who had earned 29 credits or less.



Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. The nature of the work, the amount and complexity of assignments, and the standards faculty use

to evaluate student performance are indicators of the rigorousness of the academic work at the college. There are ten survey items that contribute to this benchmark.

During the current school year, how often have you:

- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations

How much does your coursework at this 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

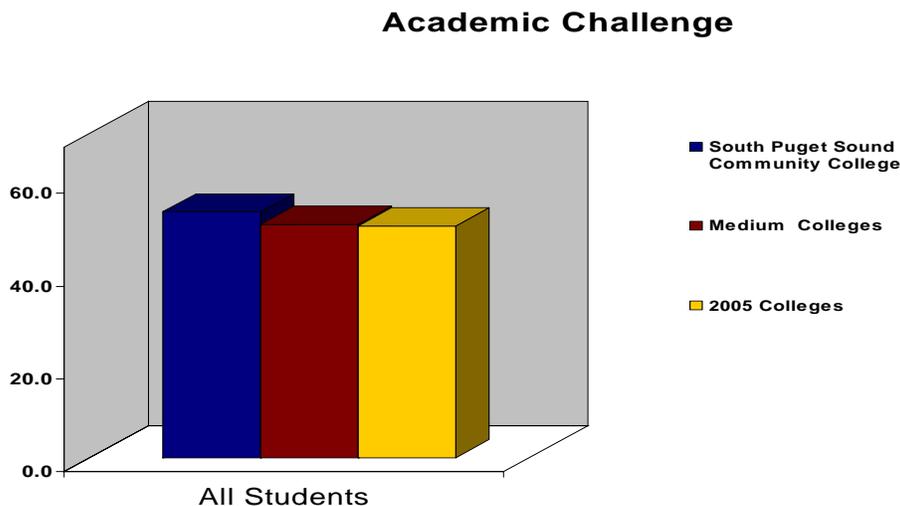
During the current school year:

- 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

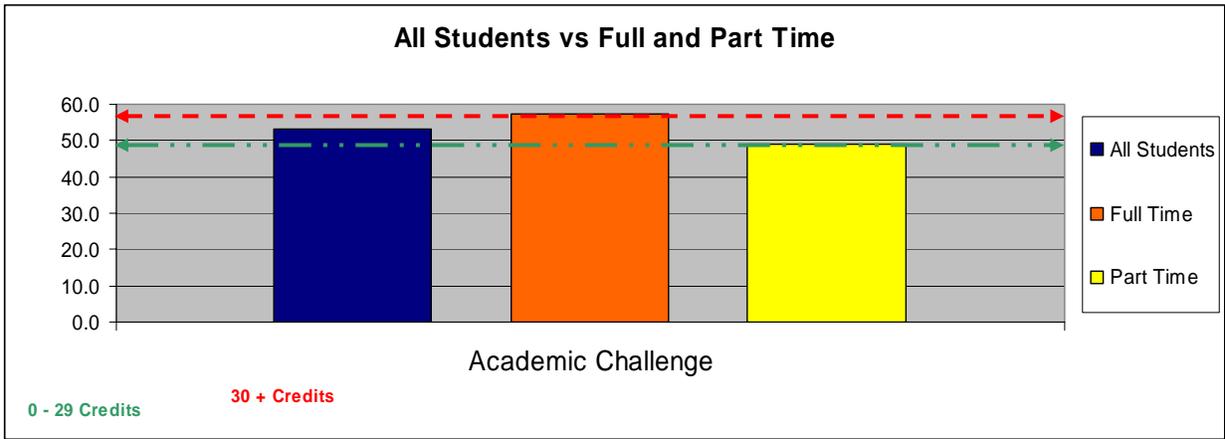
How much does this college emphasize

- Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying

South Puget Sound Community College students worked and studied harder than they anticipated, found classes challenging, and used the information they learned and applied it in new ways.



Full-time students and students with 30+ credits found the academics more challenging than their part-time counterparts and those students who had earned less than 30 credits.



Student-Faculty Interaction

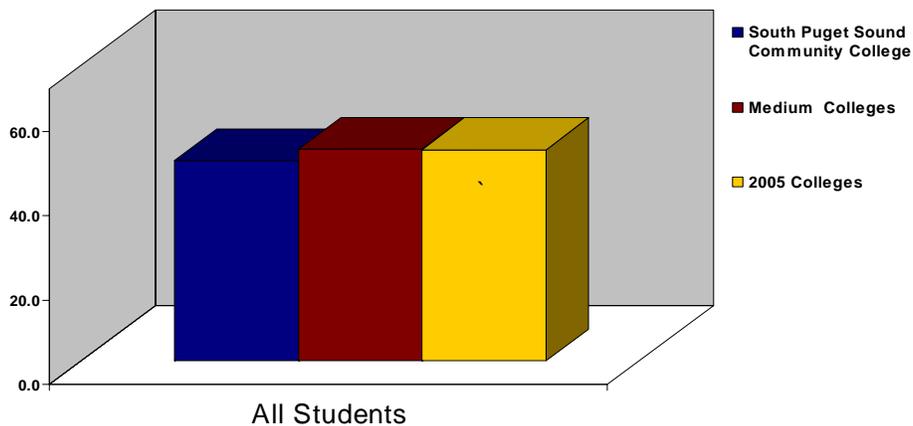
The more students have contact with and interact with their professors, the more likely they are to learn effectively and persist toward their educational goal. Research shows that personal interaction with faculty strengthens a student’s connection to the college. The interaction helps students to see how problems are identified and solved. Faculty members are role models and mentors for students. There are six survey items related to this benchmark.

During the current school year, how often have you

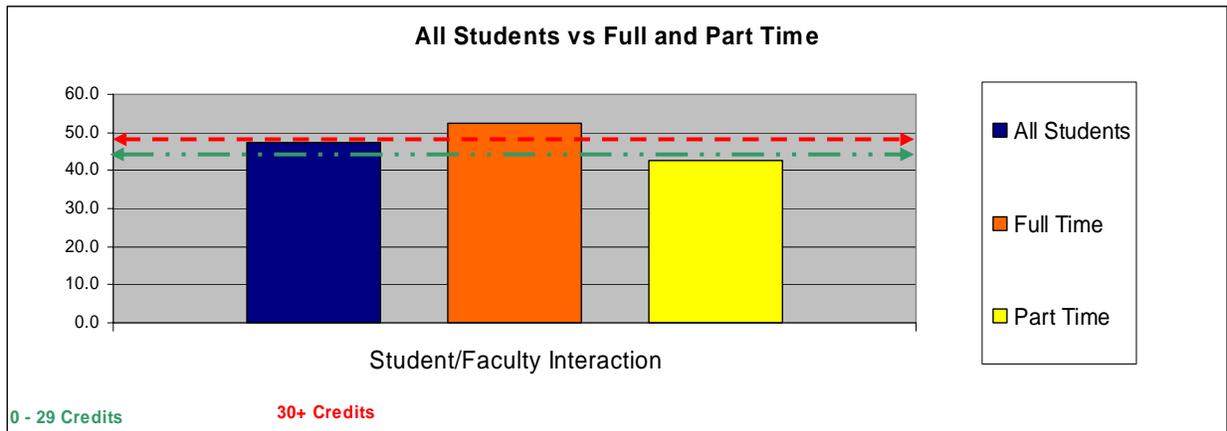
- Used email to communicate with an instructor
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings of classes with instructors outside of class
- Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance
- Worked with instructors

Students at the college were less likely to interact with faculty than students at other colleges.

Student/Faculty Interaction



However, full-time students were more likely to interact with faculty than part-timers and those earning less than 30 credits.



Support for Learners

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and help them cultivate positive working and social relationships. Students persist and are more successful in reaching their educational goal when academic and support services are targeted to students needs. There are seven survey items that contribute to this benchmark.

How much does this college emphasize

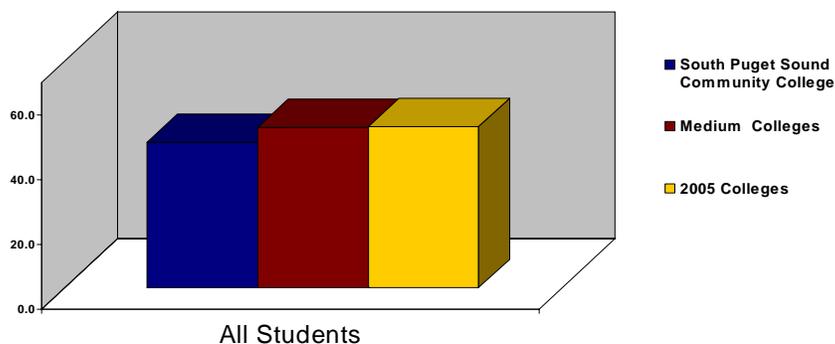
- Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Helping you cope with your nonacademic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Providing the support you need to thrive socially
- Providing the financial support you need to afford your education

During the current school year, how often have you

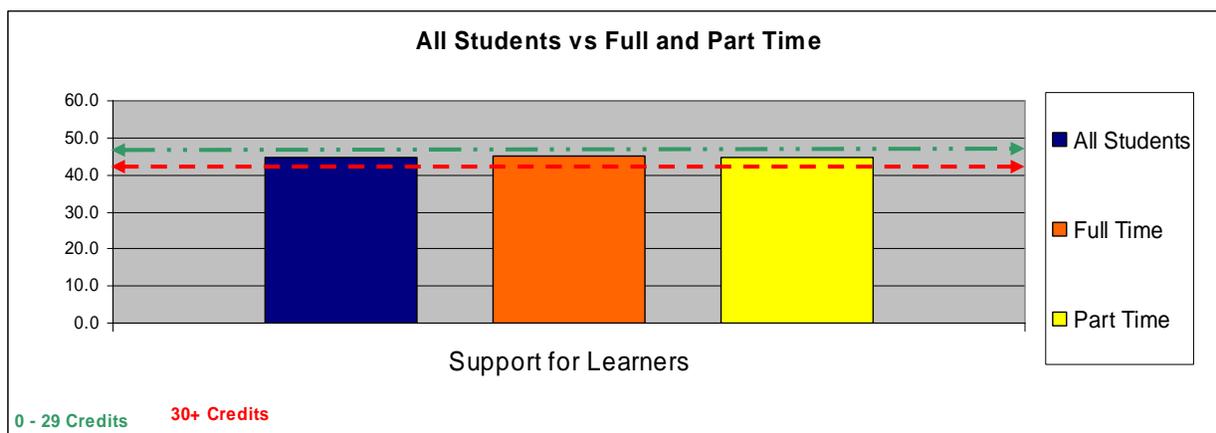
- Used academic advising/planning services
- Used career counseling services

Students want opportunities to cultivate social and working relationships with other students on campus. When comparing South Puget Sound students to all other colleges, our students felt that the college did not provide or emphasize opportunities that supported them.

Support for Learners



Both full and part-time students perceive that they are not receiving the amount of support they need from the college. However, students with fewer than 30 credits felt they were receiving more support than our students who had earned more than 30 credits. This may suggest that the college has adequate services for new students, but need to do more for continuing students.



Mean Score Findings

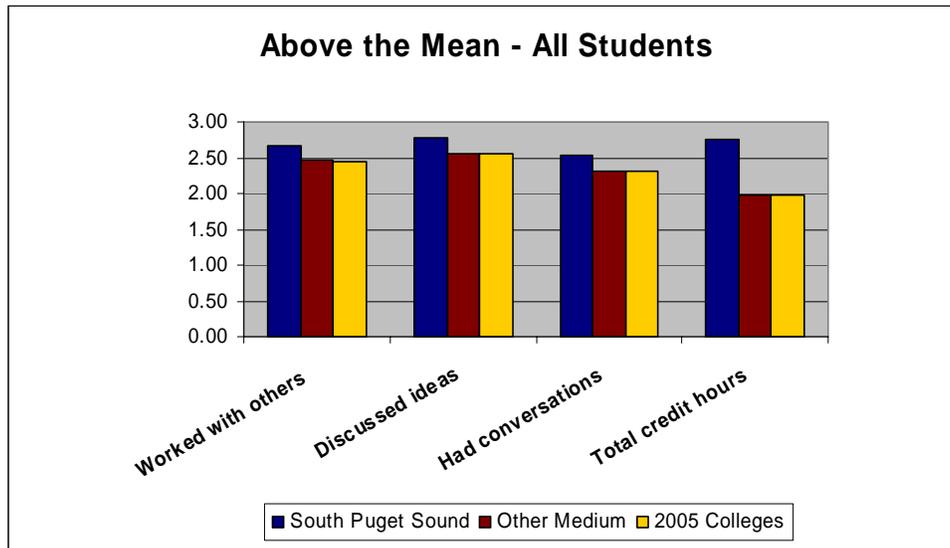
In comparing South Puget Sound Community College student responses to student respondents at other colleges, there were survey items where the college's mean score fell **significantly above** or **significantly below** other colleges scores.

Above the Mean

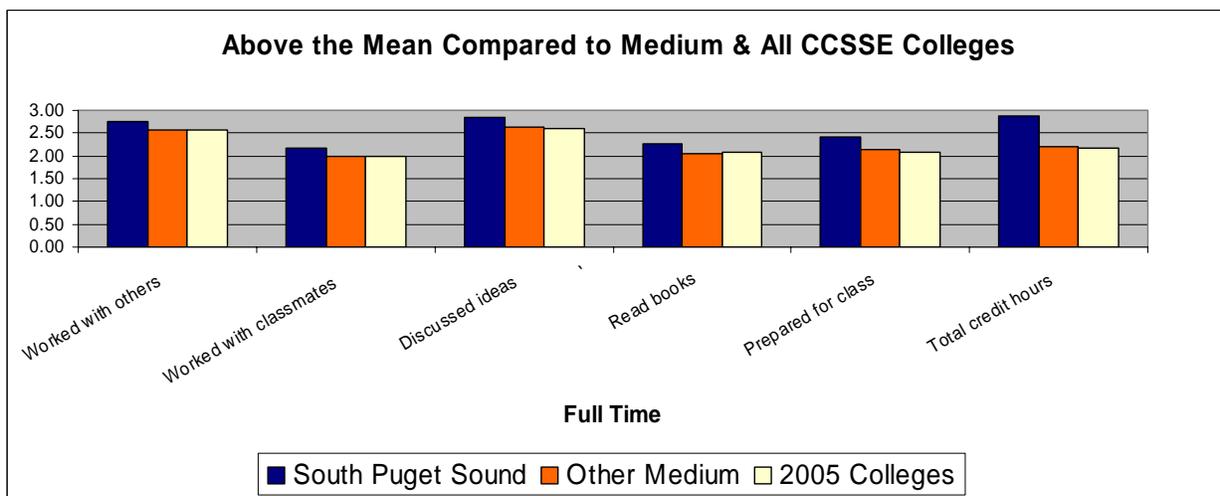
The following graphs represent those areas where the college's mean scores for all students fell significantly **above** comparable colleges and other 2005 *CCSSE* colleges.

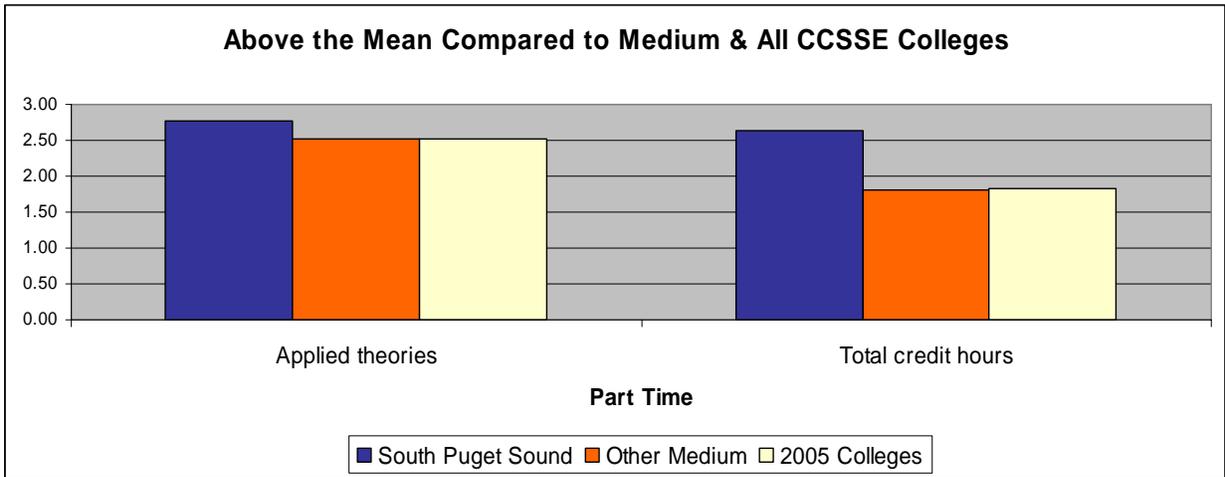
Students at the college were more likely to work with other students on projects during class, engage in discussion with others (such as family members, co-workers and other students) about readings and their classes, and had serious conversations with students who were different than themselves, than students at other *CCSSE* colleges. South Puget Sound students are more

actively involved in their education. Comparably, students taking the survey at the college had accumulated more credits than their counterparts.



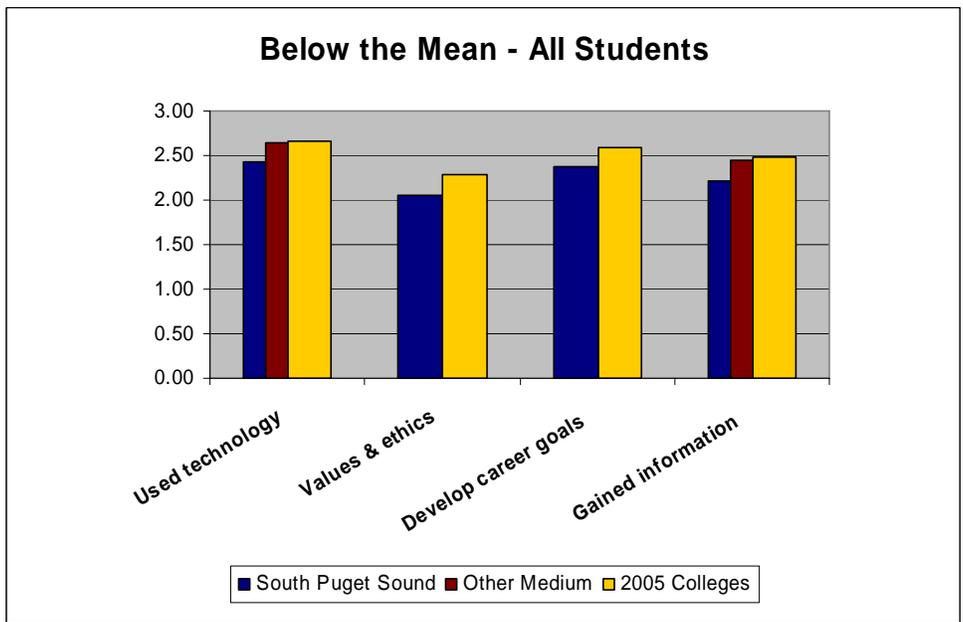
However, in comparing students by enrollment status to other CCSSE colleges, our full-time students were more likely to work with other students during class, work with their classmates outside of class, read more books, and discuss their readings/classes with others outside of class than their part-time counterparts. In contrast, part-time students were more likely to apply the theories and concepts learned in the classroom to practical or new situations than full-time students.





Below the Means

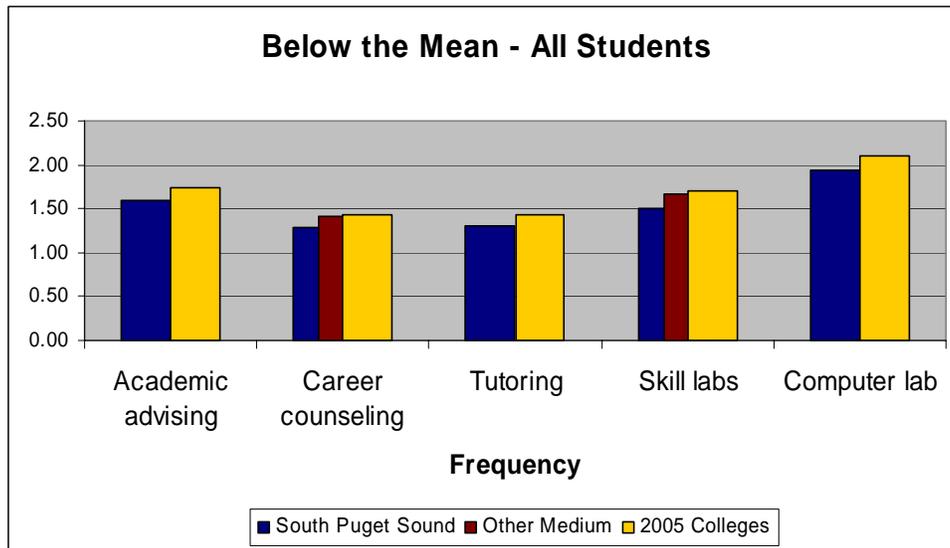
The following graphs represent those areas where the college’s mean scores for all students fell significantly **below** comparable colleges and other 2005 *CCSSE* colleges.



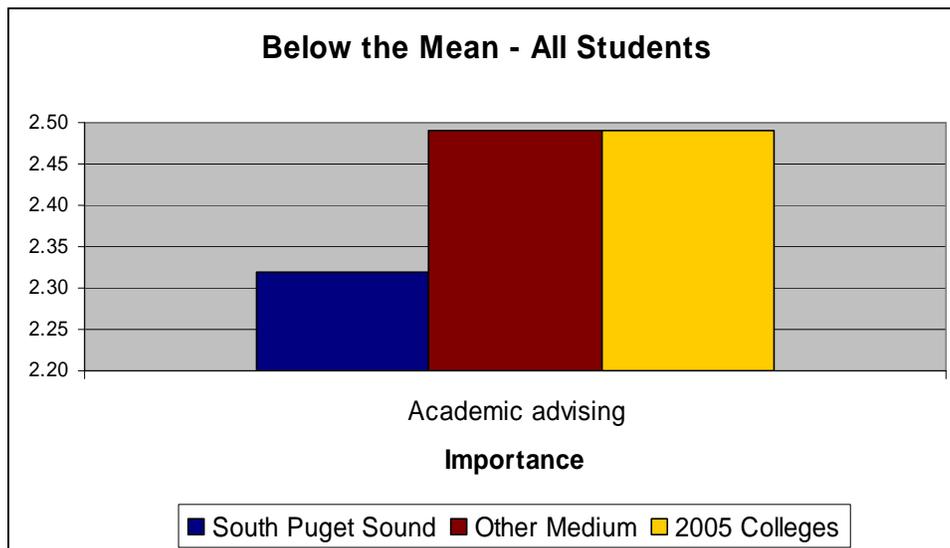
When asked, “How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development” in a variety of areas, students perceived that the college did little to contribute to their use of computers and information technology or in gaining information about career opportunities. In addition, the college fell below the mean in two additional areas when compared just to other 2005 *CCSSE* colleges. Students did not believe that the college did enough in helping them develop a personal code of values and ethics or developing clearer career goals.

The *CCSSE* asked students to rate **how frequently they used particular services** at the college, the importance of these services and how satisfied they were with them. The services included: 1) academic advising/planning, 2) career counseling, 3) job placement assistance, 4) peer and

other tutoring, 5) skill labs, 6) child care, 7) financial aid advising, 8) computer lab, 9) student organizations, 10) transfer credit assistance, and 11) services to students with disabilities. While our students used many of the support services at a frequency rate as students at other colleges, there were several areas where our students' use rate was significantly less than the use rate of those same services by students at comparable medium-size colleges and *CCSSE* colleges.

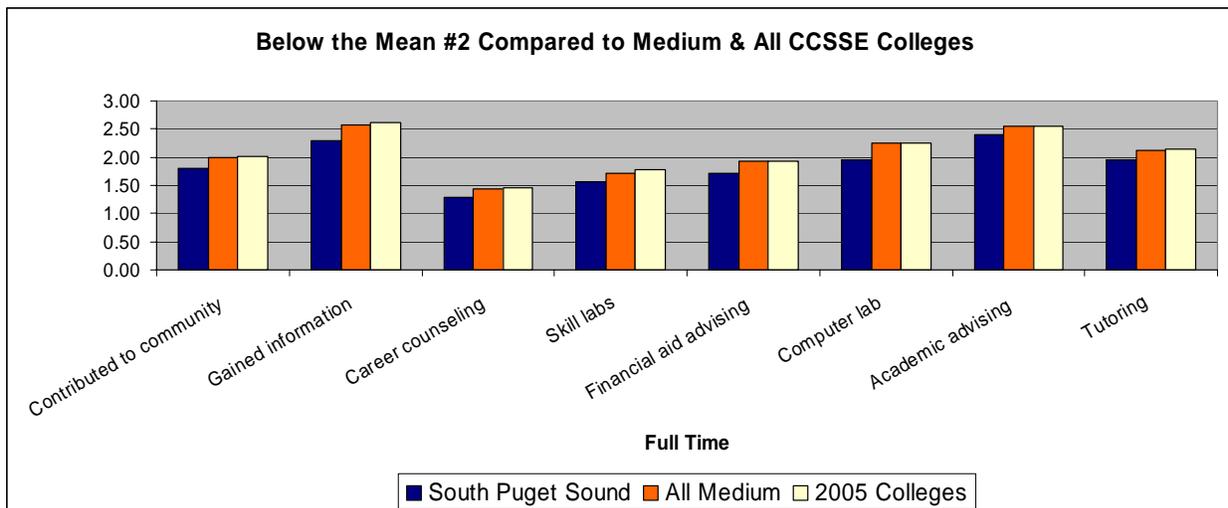
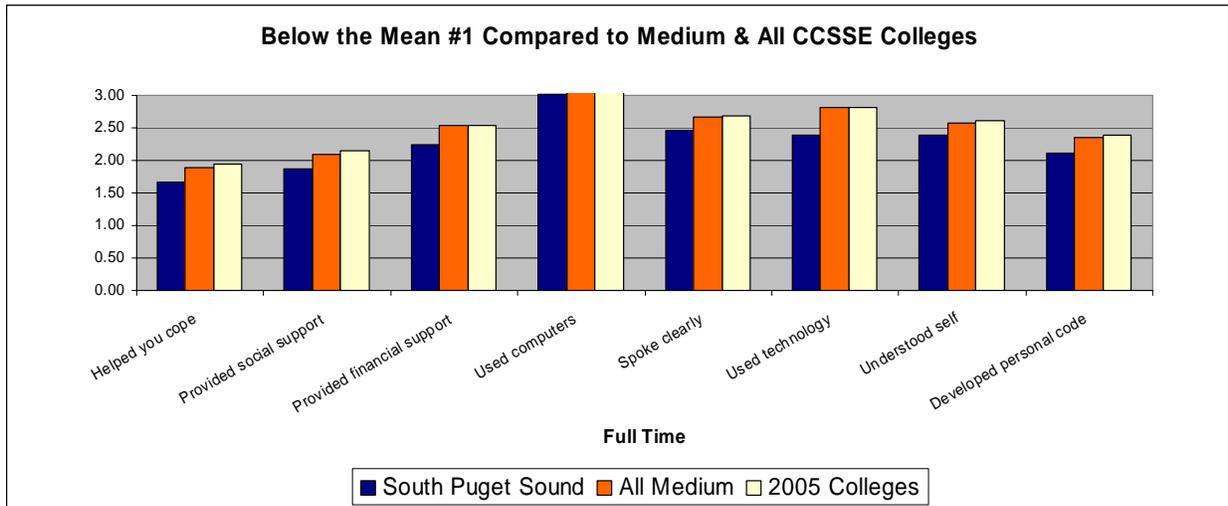


Students did not use career counseling or skill labs (math, writing, etc.) as other students and particularly, our students used academic advising, tutoring, and the computer lab less than 2005 *CCSSE* students. In addition, while our students did not use academic advising as students at other colleges, our students' also viewed the **level of importance** of academic advising below the view of students at other colleges. This may suggest that our students do not use academic advising because they do not view it as important.



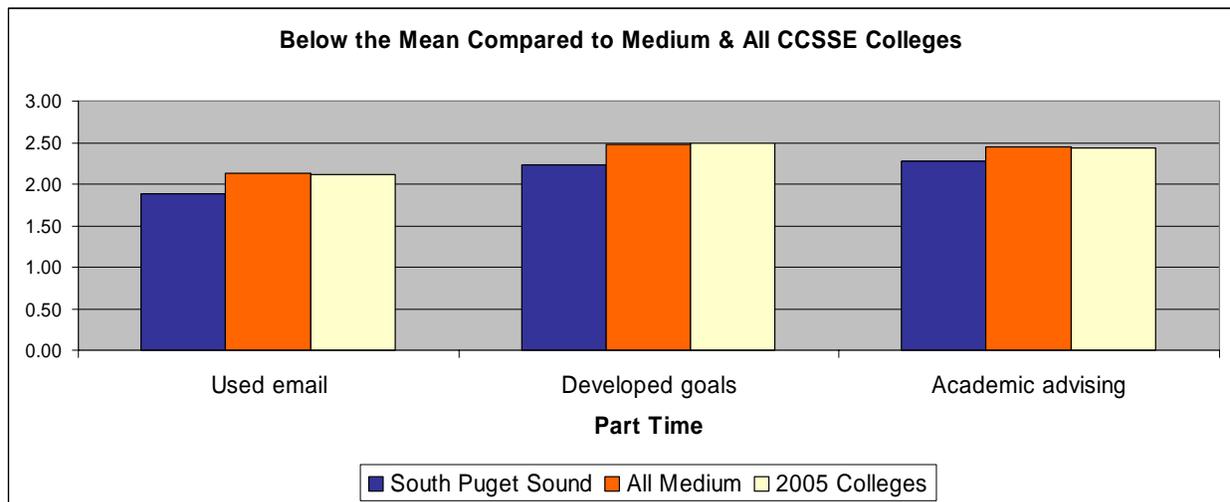
In the area of satisfaction, it should be noted that there **were no significant differences** in the mean scores of our students' satisfaction with any of the listed support services from students at comparable medium-sized colleges or all other *CCSSE* colleges.

While as a group there were few areas where the college fell significantly below the mean, when disaggregated by enrollment status, full-time and part-time students experienced the college differently. There are also multiple areas where our college's mean score was significant different than comparable medium-sized colleges and other CCSSE colleges. The following represents those areas when asked "How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development" that fell below the mean of other colleges for full-time students.



However, for part-time students there were three areas where their responses to the question "How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development" fell significantly below the mean of part-time students at comparable colleges. Those areas include: 1) used email to communicate with an instructor, developed clearer career goals, and how often they used academic advising and

planning.



Summary