

South Puget Sound Community College

The 2008 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
Summary of Comparative Results
October 2008

Executive Summary

The 2008 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was administered to a random sample of day, evening, and weekend classes in winter quarter 2008. Distance learning, labs associated with another class, non-credit, ESL, individual or self-paced, and dual enrollment classes were all excluded from the sample. The College's final sample of completed and valid surveys was 88% of the target.

The CCSSE results are reported in two ways for comparing SPSCC to other medium comparable colleges; benchmark scores and mean comparisons. Benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of student engagement, learning, and persistence. These benchmarks, which have been shown through research to be important in high quality educational practice, include the areas of active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. SPSCC students' benchmark scores were compared to other medium colleges' scores as a whole as well as broken down into full and part-time students and students who have received 0 to 29 credits and 30 or more credits. For all students together as well as for each of the breakout categories, the benchmark scores in each of the five areas fell below other medium comparable colleges. This result indicates that regardless of how many credits a student took in the quarter or how many credits a student had acquired, SPSCC students are less engaged than students at other comparable colleges. Upon further examination, there was also a difference in the scores among SPSCC students. Part-time students' scores fell way below full-time students for each of the five categories, and students with less than 30 credits had scores below those with greater than 30 credits in all five areas as well. This result indicates that there is a different level of student engagement depending on how many classes they are taking or depending on how long they have been with the College. In general, part-time students who have received less than 30 credits are the least engaged group on campus.

The other way to compare SPSCC to other medium colleges is through an item-by-item comparison of mean scores. This was also done for all students as well as broken down by enrollment status. In this comparison, all SPSCC students scored above the mean of other medium colleges on just one item, which was "total number of credits earned." There were no areas where part-time students scored above the mean, and full-time students scored above on one item, "[hours spent] preparing for class." Alternatively, there were a significant number of survey items where the College fell below the mean of other medium colleges, for all students and broken down by enrollment status, which is shown in detail in the following document. These differences varied depending on the breakdown, but generally, SPSCC students were not as engaged in various areas categorized under "Educational and Personal Growth," which included items such their experience contributing to their ability to speak clearly and effectively, use computing and information technology, and gaining information about career opportunities. SPSCC students also did not use some student services as frequently as students at other medium colleges; however, they reported similar levels of satisfaction with services and other aspects of the College as other medium colleges, regardless of enrollment status. Additionally, there was evidence within the survey responses that students did not use certain student services because they did not view them as important, and not due to inadequacy.

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.

Student Respondents

The CCSSE survey was administered at South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) during Winter Quarter 2008 to 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 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 1276 students sampled at our college, 705 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 number of completed surveys to target sample sizes. The adjusted survey count is the number of properly filled out surveys that 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 and/or,
- indicated that he/she had taken the survey in a previous class

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 most recent IPEDS Enrollment Report for the following variables: gender, race and ethnicity, student age, and enrollment status (full- or part-time). The percentage of students within each demographic category is summarized in Table 1 below for the survey respondents, the College (as reported in IPEDS), all students surveyed in the 2008 CCSSE cohort, and all colleges surveyed in the 2008 CCSSE cohort.

South Puget Sound Community College
Table 1
Respondents to Underlying Populations Comparisons:

Comparison Group and All 2008 CCSSE Cohort Colleges

	Your Respondents	Your Population	2008 Cohort Size Group Comparison Population	2008 CCSSE Cohort Colleges Population
Gender				
Male	42%	39%	40%	41%
Female	58%	61%	60%	59%
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or other Native American	3%	1%	1%	1%
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	9%	5%	5%	6%
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	2%	2%	13%	13%
White, Non-Hispanic	71%	61%	64%	58%
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish	4%	4%	11%	15%
Other	6%	25%	6%	5%
International Student or Foreign National	6%	2%	1%	2%
Student Age				
18 to 19	28%	25%	25%	24%
20 to 21	17%	16%	18%	18%
22 to 24	16%	13%	14%	15%
25 to 29	14%	15%	14%	14%
30 to 39	12%	17%	15%	15%
40 to 49	9%	10%	10%	9%
50 to 64	4%	4%	4%	4%
65 and over	0%	0%	1%	1%
Enrollment Status				
Full - Time	70%	47%	39%	38%
Part - Time	30%	53%	61%	62%

Key Findings

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) reports comparative 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 Scores

Benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of student engagement, learning, and persistence. The benchmarks are tools that can be used to compare college performance with institutions comparable in size. The CCSSE uses five national benchmarks areas that have been shown through research to be important in high quality educational practice:

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

The following summaries of the five benchmarks describe the survey items that comprise each benchmark score. After these summaries are three tables: Table 1 shows the benchmark scores for SPSCC compared to other medium colleges and all 2008 colleges for all students; Table 2 shows the same comparison but disaggregated by full or part time status; and Table 3 shows the same comparison disaggregated by students taking 0-29 credits and 30 or more credits.

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.)

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. Eight survey items on student behavior 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 (reverse coded)
- 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)

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 rigor of the academic work at the college. Ten survey items 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

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

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. 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 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

TABLE 1.

**Community College Survey of Student Engagement
2008 Benchmark Summary Table - All Students
South Puget Sound Community College**

All Students				
Benchmark	Your College	Comparison Group Statistics		
			Medium Colleges	2008 <i>CCSSE</i> Cohort
Active and Collaborative Learning	47.8	Benchmark Score	49.7	50.0
		Score Difference	-1.9	-2.2
Student Effort	45.9	Benchmark Score	50.0	50.0
		Score Difference	-4.1	-4.1
Academic Challenge	46.8	Benchmark Score	49.8	50.0
		Score Difference	-3.0	-3.2
Student-Faculty Interaction	45.8	Benchmark Score	49.8	50.0
		Score Difference	-4.0	-4.2
Support for Learners	45.3	Benchmark Score	49.6	50.0
		Score Difference	-4.3	-4.7
		Number of Colleges	147	585

Benchmark Score: Each benchmark score was computed by averaging the scores on survey items that comprise that benchmark. To compensate for disproportionately large numbers of full-time students in the sample, all means used in the creation of the benchmarks are weighted by full- and part-time status. Benchmark scores are standardized so that the weighted mean across all students is 50 and the standard deviation across all participating students is 25. Institutions' benchmark scores are computed by taking the weighted average of their students' standardized scores.

Score Difference: The result of subtracting the comparison group score (same size colleges or 2008 *CCSSE* Cohort) from your college's score on each benchmark.

TABLE 2.

**Community College Survey of Student Engagement
2008 Benchmark Summary Table - Enrollment Status Breakout
South Puget Sound Community College**

Part-Time Students				
Benchmark	Your College	Comparison Group Statistics		
			Medium Colleges	2008 CCSSE Cohort
Active and Collaborative Learning	42.6	Benchmark Score	46.0	46.5
		Score Difference	-3.4	-3.9
Student Effort	39.9	Benchmark Score	46.9	47.1
		Score Difference	-7.0	-7.2
Academic Challenge	40.6	Benchmark Score	46.3	46.5
		Score Difference	-5.6	-5.9
Student-Faculty Interaction	41.0	Benchmark Score	46.3	46.8
		Score Difference	-5.3	-5.8
Support for Learners	42.8	Benchmark Score	47.5	48.5
		Score Difference	-4.7	-5.7
		Number of Colleges	147	585

Full-Time Students				
Benchmark	Your College	Comparison Group Statistics		
			Medium Colleges	2008 CCSSE Cohort
Active and Collaborative Learning	53.7	Benchmark Score	55.2	56.0
		Score Difference	-1.5	-2.3
Student Effort	52.6	Benchmark Score	54.7	55.2
		Score Difference	-2.1	-2.6
Academic Challenge	53.8	Benchmark Score	55.1	55.4
		Score Difference	-1.4	-1.7
Student-Faculty Interaction	51.2	Benchmark Score	54.9	55.9
		Score Difference	-3.8	-4.7
Support for Learners	48.2	Benchmark Score	52.8	53.7
		Score Difference	-4.6	-5.5
		Number of Colleges	147	585

Benchmark Score: Each benchmark score was computed by averaging the scores on survey items that comprise that benchmark. To compensate for disproportionately large numbers of full-time students in the sample, all means used in the creation of the benchmarks are weighted by full- and part-time status. Benchmark scores are standardized so that the weighted mean across all students is 50 and the standard deviation across all participating students is 25. Institutions' benchmark scores are computed by taking the weighted average of their students' standardized scores.

Score Difference: The result of subtracting the comparison group score (same size colleges or 2008 CCSSE Cohort) from your college's score on each benchmark.

TABLE 3.

**Community College Survey of Student Engagement
2008 Benchmark Summary Table - Credit Hour Status Breakout
South Puget Sound Community College**

0 to 29 Credits				
Benchmark	Your College	Comparison Group Statistics		
			Medium Colleges	2008 CCSSE Cohort
Active and Collaborative Learning	43.8	Benchmark Score	47.1	47.7
		Score Difference	-3.2	-3.9
Student Effort	43.2	Benchmark Score	48.7	49.3
		Score Difference	-5.5	-6.1
Academic Challenge	42.8	Benchmark Score	47.8	48.1
		Score Difference	-5.0	-5.3
Student-Faculty Interaction	43.1	Benchmark Score	47.5	48.2
		Score Difference	-4.4	-5.1
Support for Learners	45.0	Benchmark Score	48.9	50.0
		Score Difference	-3.9	-5.0
		Number of Colleges	147	585

30+ Credits				
Benchmark	Your College	Comparison Group Statistics		
			Medium Colleges	2008 CCSSE Cohort
Active and Collaborative Learning	53.4	Benchmark Score	55.3	56.3
		Score Difference	-1.9	-2.9
Student Effort	49.2	Benchmark Score	52.4	52.8
		Score Difference	-3.2	-3.5
Academic Challenge	52.5	Benchmark Score	54.3	54.6
		Score Difference	-1.7	-2.1
Student-Faculty Interaction	49.4	Benchmark Score	54.9	55.8
		Score Difference	-5.5	-6.4
Support for Learners	45.9	Benchmark Score	50.9	51.9
		Score Difference	-5.0	-6.0
		Number of Colleges	147	585

Benchmark Score: Each benchmark score was computed by averaging the scores on survey items that comprise that benchmark. To compensate for disproportionately large numbers of full-time students in the sample, all means used in the creation of the benchmarks are weighted by full- and part-time status. Benchmark scores are standardized so that the weighted mean across all students is 50 and the standard deviation across all participating students is 25. Institutions' benchmark scores are computed by taking the weighted average of their students' standardized scores.

Score Difference: The result of subtracting the comparison group score (same size colleges or 2008 CCSSE Cohort) from your college's score on each benchmark.

Summary of Findings from Benchmark Comparisons

For all students regardless of enrollment status, the benchmark scores in each of the five areas fell below other medium sized colleges. The smallest difference in score (1.9) was in the area of “active and collaborative learning,” while the greatest difference in score (4.3) fell under “support for learners.” The overview of benchmark scores demonstrates that students at SPSCC are generally less engaged than students at comparable colleges.

The benchmark scores were also compiled and compared to other medium colleges by full or part-time. The benchmark scores for full-time students at SPSCC also fell below the scores for other colleges in each of the five areas, with the smallest difference being in “academic challenge” and the greatest difference in “support for learners.” Part-time students’ scores also all fell below other medium colleges and on a greater magnitude. The smallest difference in score (3.4) for them was in “active and collaborative learning” and the greatest difference was in “student effort” with a drastic difference of 7.0 points. This larger difference in scores between SPSCC and other medium colleges broken down by enrollment status also suggests a difference in the experiences of students on our own campus. Full time students scores were significantly greater than part time in each area, particularly in “student effort” and “academic challenge” where the benchmark scores differed by approximately 13 points for each area. This suggests that full-time students are quite a bit more engaged than part-time students.

The last breakdown for comparison of benchmark scores was done for students who have completed 0 to 29 credits versus students completing 30 or more credits. Similar to all previous results, the comparison of students having completed 0 to 29 credits to other medium colleges showed SPSCC behind on all five areas. The smallest difference (3.2) was in “active and collaborative learning” and the greatest difference (5.5) was in “student effort.” Students completing 30 or more credits also fell behind other medium colleges in all five benchmark areas, with the smallest difference (1.7) in “academic challenge” and the greatest difference (5.5) in “student-faculty interaction.” Similar to the results of full versus part-time students, students who have completed 30 or more credits have greater benchmark scores than students who have completed 0 to 29. The smallest difference between these groups (.9) was in “support for learners,” while the greatest difference (9.7) was in “academic challenge.” It is understandable that these results are similar to the breakdown between full and part-time students as these groups are not mutually exclusive and full time students are likely to fall into the 30 or greater credits category and part time are more likely to have received less credits thus far.

In general, each group that was broken down fell short of other medium colleges, with part-time students seeming to suffer the greatest differences. This is further exemplified by the even greater difference in benchmark scores between full and part-time students on our campus.

Mean Score Findings

In comparing SPSCC responses to student responses at other colleges, there were survey items where the College's mean score fell statistically significantly above or below other colleges' scores. A t-test is used to test for statistically significant differences, which measures the probability of the observed difference occurring when there are truly no differences between the means. A difference will be significant when the p-value associated with the given t-test is .001 or less and there is an effect size greater than .2. Effect size measures the magnitude of the difference and thus controls for the chance of a difference being found as a function of sample size. These breakdowns are provided for all students as well as separately for full and part-time students.

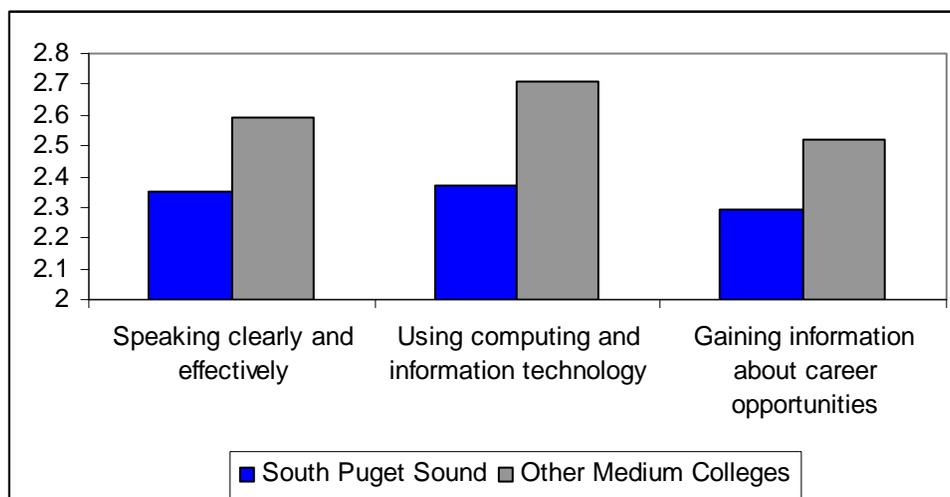
Above the Mean

In 2008, the SPSCC's mean score for all students was significantly above other medium colleges on only one survey item, which was "total number of credits hours earned." There were no instances where the mean for part-time students was higher than other medium colleges, and the mean for full-time students was higher on just one item, which was "[hours spent] preparing for class."

Below the Mean

In contrast to the above section, there were multiple instances where SPSCC's mean scores fell below other medium colleges. These differences are shown in the following graphs.

Educational and Personal Growth- All Students Below the Mean

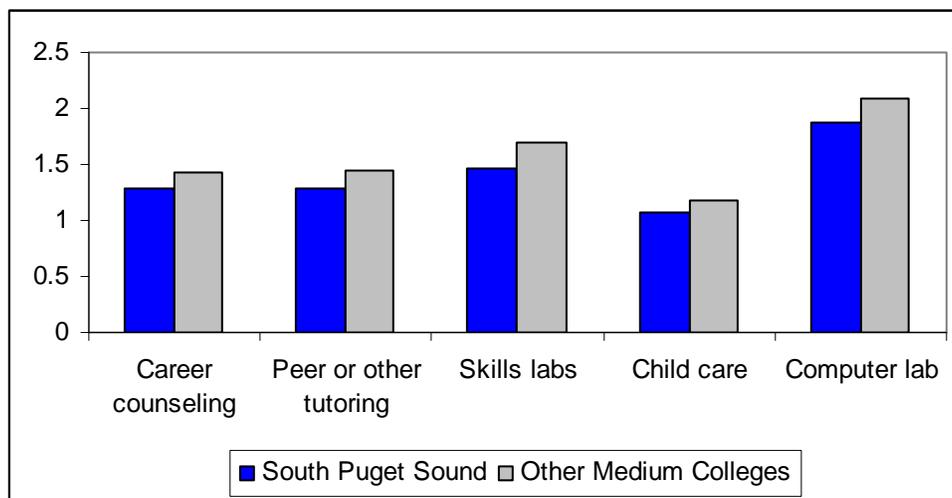


*Scale of 1 to 4

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 skills in speaking clearly and effectively, use of computers and information technology, or in gaining information about career opportunities.

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 similar to students at other colleges, there were several areas where our students' use rate was significantly less. These areas are shown in the graph below for all students.

**Student Services: Frequency of Use- All Students
Below the Mean**

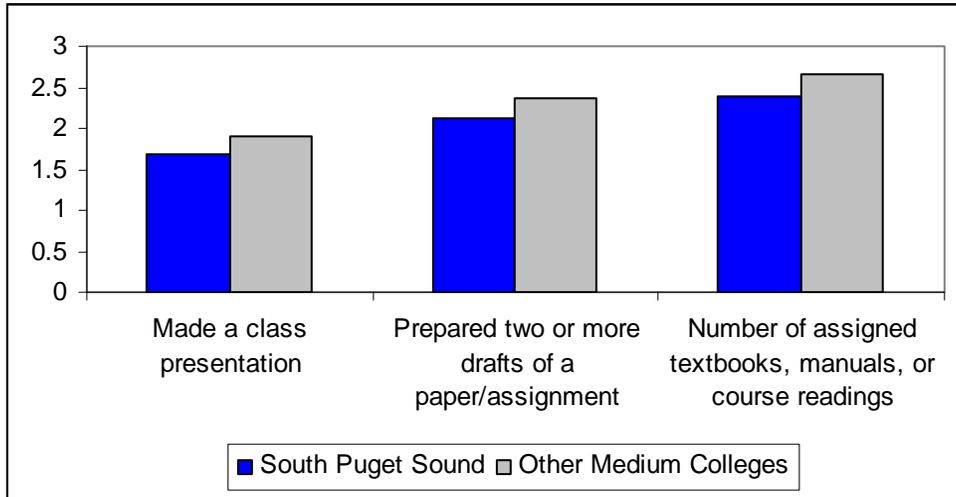


*Scale of 1 to 3

Students did not use career counseling, peer or other tutoring, skill labs (math, writing, etc.), child care, and the computer lab as frequently as students at other colleges. However, students were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction and the level of importance of each of these 11 services. There were no significant differences in the mean scores of satisfaction, and students at SPSCC viewed the level of importance in academic advising and planning as well as career counseling lower than comparable colleges. The fact that students rated frequency of use and level of importance of career counseling lower may suggest that our students do not use it because they do not view it as important.

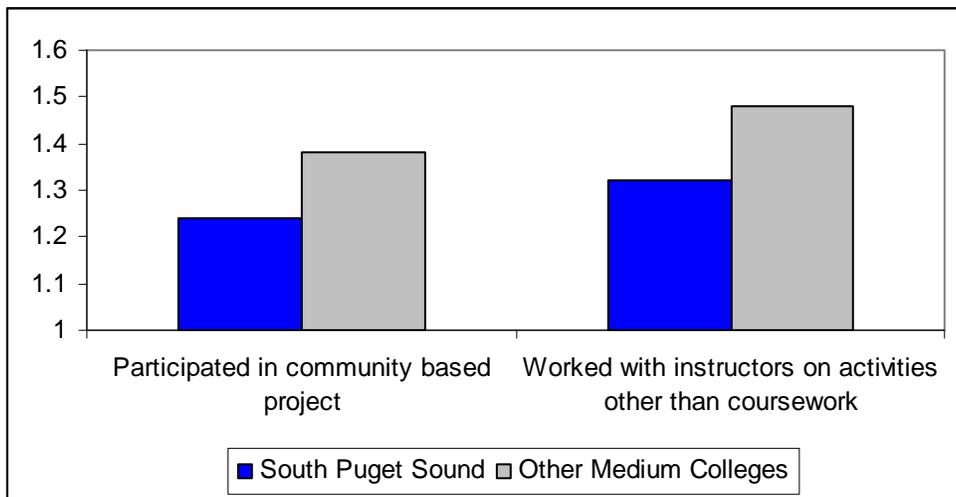
When the mean scores were compared to other medium colleges broken down by full and part-time status, many more differences arose where SPSCC fell below the mean. Part-time students in particular had a different experience with their classes than their counterparts at other colleges. Part-time students spent less time doing presentations and preparing multiple drafts of papers before turning them in. They also reported having fewer books and other material assigned and indicated that examinations did not challenge them to do their best work as compared to their peers (not represented in the graph due to a different scale of responses). Full-time students reported less outside of class participation such as a community project and working with faculty on other activities besides coursework. The following graphs show these areas and the differences with other medium colleges.

Academic, Intellectual, and Social Experiences- Part-Time Students Below the Mean



*Scale of 1 to 4

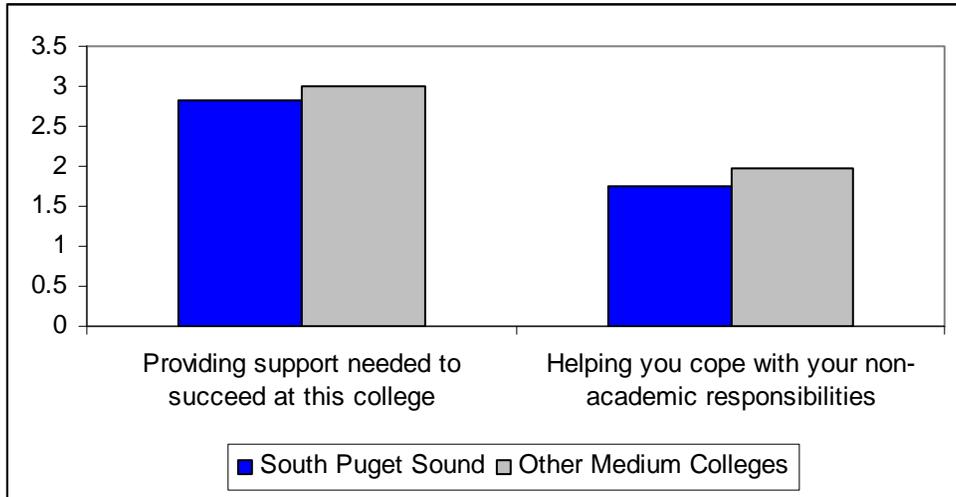
Academic, Intellectual, and Social Experiences- Full-Time Students Below the Mean



*Scale of 1 to 4

The next area asked students their opinions about how much SPSCC emphasized assisting students in various areas. Full-time students indicated they received less support than other students at other medium colleges in getting the help they needed to succeed and less help coping with their non-academic responsibilities, as shown in the graph below. There were no significant differences for part-time students where they fell below the mean of other medium colleges in this area.

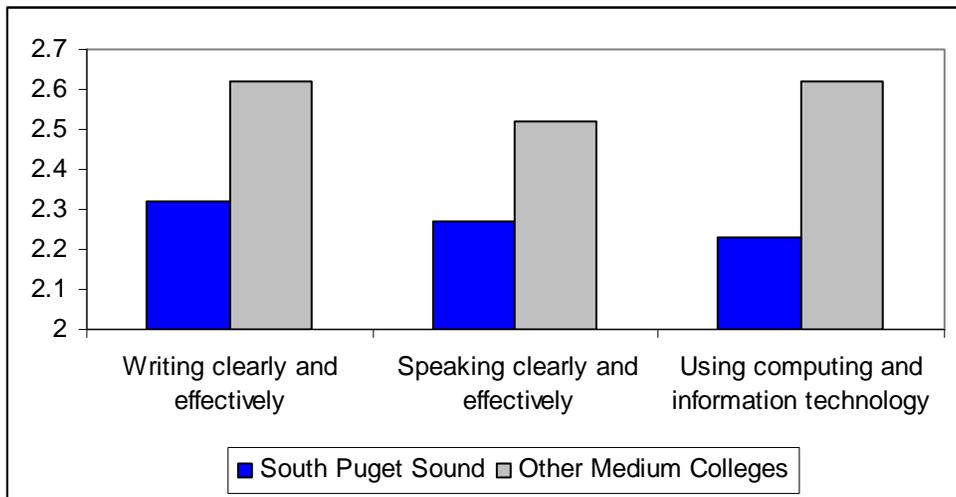
**Institutional Emphasis - Full-Time Students
Below the Mean**



*Scale of 1 to 4

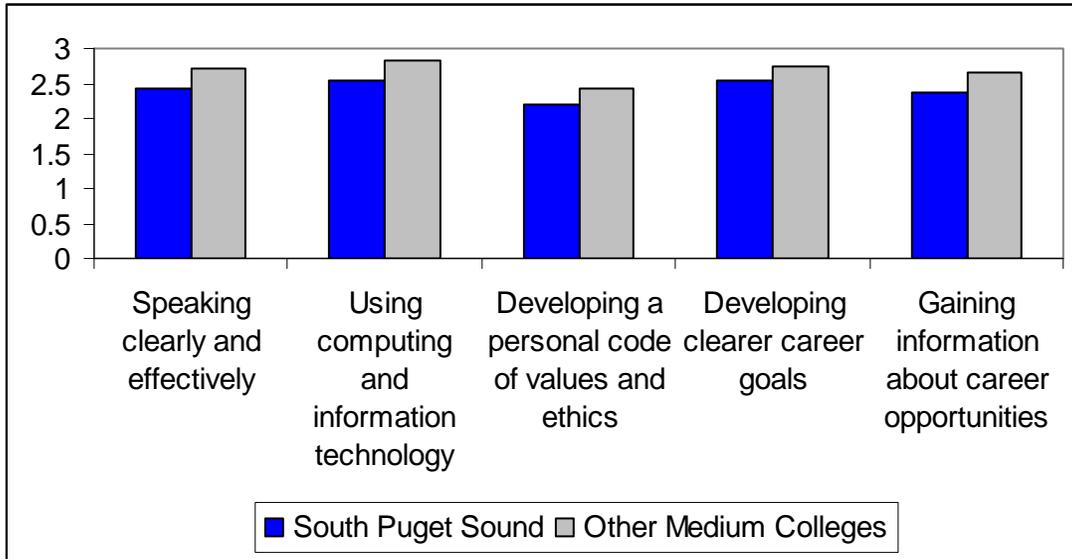
Like all students together, both full and part-time students fall below other comparable colleges in several areas having to do with their educational and personal growth. These are shown in the next two graphs for part and full-time students, respectively.

**Educational and Personal Growth- Part-Time Students
Below the Mean**



*Scale of 1 to 4

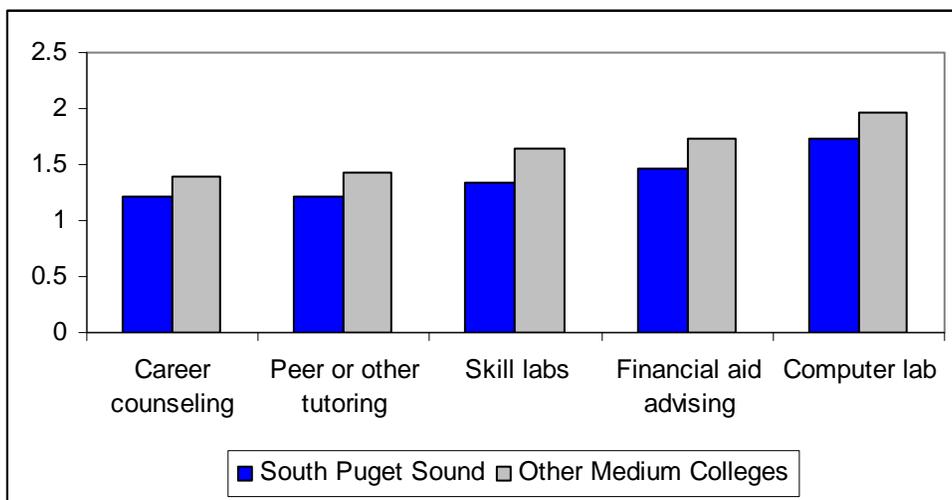
**Educational and Personal Growth- Full-Time Students
Below the Mean**



*Scale of 1 to 4

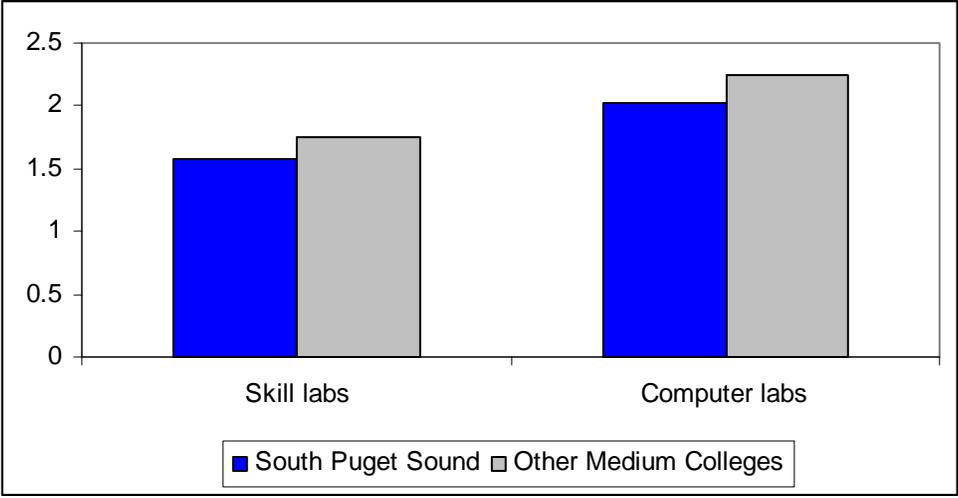
Finally, the following graphs show the areas where full and part-time students' scores fell below the mean of other medium colleges in the area of student services. As noted on page 12, students were asked to rate their frequency of use, satisfaction with, and importance of various student services. Similar to the report for all students, full and part-time students' mean scores fell below other medium colleges on several frequency items, yet there were no significant differences in the level of satisfaction. There were no "importance" items where full-time students' scores fell below, but there were three items where part-time students' scores fell below, which were academic advising/planning, career counseling, and financial aid. Career counseling and financial aid were also both areas in which part-time students indicated that they did not use them as frequently as their peers did; this may be because they did not view the services as important to them.

**Student Services: Frequency of Use- Part-Time Students
Below the Mean**



Scale of 1 to 3

**Student Services: Frequency of Use- Full-Time Students
Below the Mean**



*Scale of 1 to 3