



The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*)

Overview of 2015 Survey Results Wayne Community College

Introduction

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*), a product and service of the Center for Community College Student Engagement, helps community colleges discover why some entering students persist and succeed and others do not.

Administered during the 4th and 5th weeks of the fall academic term, *SENSE* asks students to reflect on their earliest experiences (academic and services-related) with the college. *SENSE* serves as a complementary piece to the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\)](#), with a more narrowed focus on early student experiences.

SENSE Member Colleges

SENSE data analyses are based on a three-year cohort of entering student data from participating colleges. This approach increases the total number of institutions and students contributing to the national data set, which in turn increases the reliability of the overall results. In addition, the three-year cohort approach minimizes the impact, in any given year, of statewide consortium participation. If a college participated more than one time in the three-year period, the cohort includes data only from that college's most recent year of participation.

The *SENSE* 2015 (2012-2015) cohort includes 267 institutions in 39 states, the District of Columbia, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia. One-hundred and two 2015 cohort colleges are classified as small (<4,500), 65 as medium (4,500-7,999), 66 as large (8,000-14,999), and 34 as extra-large institutions (15,000 + credit students). Sixty-eight of the colleges are classified as urban-serving, 57 as suburban-serving, and 142 as rural-serving.

SENSE Sampling

In *SENSE* sampling procedures, students are sampled at the classroom level. The survey was administered in classes randomly selected from those courses most likely to enroll entering students, with

a random sample pulled from all first college-level English and math courses and all developmental reading, writing, and math courses, excluding ESL courses.

Of those entering students sampled at our institution, 169 respondents submitted usable surveys. The number of completed surveys produced an overall “percent of target” rate of 28%. The percent of target rate is the ratio of the adjusted number of completed surveys (surveys that were filled out properly and did not fall into any of the exclusionary categories) to the target sample size.

Excluded Respondents

Exclusions serve the purpose of ensuring that all institutional reports are based on the same sampling methods and that results are therefore comparable across institutions. Respondents are excluded from institutional reports for the following reasons:

- ✘ The respondent did not indicate whether he or she was enrolled full-time or less than full-time at the institution.
 - ✘ The respondent did not indicate whether he or she was an entering or returning student.
 - ✘ The survey is invalid. A survey is invalid if a student answered all sub-items of Item 19 as either *never* or *four or more times*.
 - ✘ The student reported his or her age as under 18.
 - ✘ The student indicated that he or she had taken the survey in a previous class or did not respond to item 1.
 - ✘ Oversample respondents are not included because they are selected outside of *SENSE*'s primary sampling procedures.
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2015 Student Respondent Profile

Enrollment Status

27% of our entering student respondents report being less than full-time college students, compared to 27% (Overview/ *SENSE* 2015 Cohort Overview/ Student Respondent Profile) of the 2015 *SENSE* Cohort colleges' entering student respondents. 73% of the entering student respondents at our college report attending college full-time, while 73% (Overview/ *SENSE* 2015 Cohort Overview/ Student Respondent Profile) of the 2015 *SENSE* Cohort colleges' entering student respondents attended full-time. Population data¹ for all students at our college are 53% less than full-time and 47% full-time. 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/less than full-time variable so that reports will accurately reflect the underlying student population.

Age

Entering student respondents at our college range in age from 18 to 67 years old. 79% are between 18 and 24 years old. Students at our college are older than the 2015 *SENSE* Cohort respondents, of which over half (82%) of students are between 18 and 24 (Overview/ *SENSE* 2015 Cohort Overview/ Student Respondent Profile).

Sex

44% of our entering student respondents are male and 54% are female, which is comparable to the 2015 *SENSE* Cohort, which is 43% male and 54% female (Overview/ *SENSE* 2015 Cohort Overview/ Student Respondent Profile).

¹ Population data are those reported for the most recent IPEDS enrollment report.

Racial/Ethnic Identification

44% of our entering student respondents identified themselves as White, Non-Hispanic; 13% as Hispanic, Latino, Spanish; 28% as Black or African American; and 1% as Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander. 2% of the student respondents are American Indian or Native American. 3% marked *other* when responding to the question, “What is your racial/ethnic identification?”. Our student sample is equally diverse than the 2015 *SENSE* Cohort, which is comprised of 49% White/Non-Hispanic; 19% Hispanic, Latino, Spanish; 15% Black or African American; 3% Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander; and 2% American Indian or Native American respondents (Overview/ *SENSE* 2015 Cohort Overview/ Student Respondent Profile).

International Students

7% of our entering students responded *yes* to the question, “Are you an international student or nonresident alien?”. Our college has more international students than in the 2015 *SENSE* Cohort, of which 5% are international (Overview/ *SENSE* 2015 Cohort Overview/ Student Respondent Profile).

First-Generation Status

26% of entering student respondents indicate that neither parent has college experience; accordingly, these students are considered “first-generation.”

The results for the following student respondent categories are weighted according to the most recent IPEDS population data.

Limited English Speaking Students

At our college, 13% of *SENSE* respondents are non-native English speakers.

Orientation

15% of entering student respondents report attending an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes, while 12% report attending an online orientation. 7% of entering student respondents report enrolling in an orientation course during their first semester/quarter at the college.

Courses Dropped

2% of entering student respondents report dropping at least one course after the first day of class.

External Commitments

30% of entering student respondents work 21 or more hours per week.

Goals

Entering student respondents were asked to indicate their reasons or goals for attending this college; students could choose more than one goal. 65% indicated that completing a certificate is a goal, 91% indicated that obtaining an Associate degree is a goal, and 72% indicated that transfer to a 4-year college is a goal.

***SENSE* Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice**

To assist colleges in their efforts to reach for excellence, the Center reports national benchmarks of effective practice with entering students in community colleges. Research shows that the more actively engaged students are—with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter—the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals.

SENSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement early in the college experience—and that are

positively related to student learning and persistence. Benchmarks are used to compare each institution's performance to that of similar institutions and with the *SENSE* Cohort. Each individual benchmark score is computed by averaging the scores on survey items that make up that benchmark. Benchmark scores are then standardized so that the mean (the average of all participating students) always is 50 and the standard deviation is 25. The six benchmarks of effective educational practice with entering students in community colleges are early connections, high expectations and aspirations, clear academic plan and pathway, effective track to college readiness, engaged learning, and academic and social support network.

Early Connections

When students describe their early college experiences, they typically reflect on occasions when they felt discouraged or thought about dropping out. Their reasons for persisting almost always include one common element: a strong, early connection to someone at the college.

- 18a Agreement: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome
- 18i Agreement: The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)
- 18j Agreement: A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance
- 18p Agreement: At least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name
- 23 Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?

High Expectations and Aspirations

Nearly all students arrive at their community colleges intending to succeed and believing that they have the motivation to do so. When entering students perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty, they are more likely to understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement. Students then often rise to meet expectations, making it more likely that they will attain their goals. Often, students' aspirations also climb, and they seek more advanced credentials than they originally envisioned.

- 18b Agreement: The instructors at this college want me to succeed
- 18t Agreement: I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college
- 18u Agreement: I am prepared academically to succeed in college
- 19c Frequency: Turn in an assignment late
- 19d Frequency: Not turn in an assignment
- 19f Frequency: Come to class without completing readings or assignments
- 19s Frequency: Skip class

Clear Academic Plan and Pathway

When a student, with knowledgeable assistance, creates a road map — one that shows where he or she is headed, what academic path to follow, and how long it will take to reach the end goal— that student has a critical tool for staying on track. Students are more likely to persist if they not only are advised about what courses to take, but also are helped to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them.

- 18d Agreement: I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me
- 18e Agreement: An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major
- 18f Agreement: An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them
- 18g Agreement: An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter
- 18h Agreement: A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school (work, children, dependents, etc.) to help me figure out how many courses to take

Effective Track to College Readiness

Nationally, more than six in 10 entering community college students are underprepared for college-level work. Thus, significant improvements in student success will hinge upon effective assessment, placement of students into appropriate courses, and implementation of effective strategies to ensure that students build academic skills and receive needed support.

- 12a Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math
- 12b I took a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.)
- 14 This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester/quarter
- 21a Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.)
- 21b Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses
- 21c Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability

Engaged Learning

Instructional approaches that foster engaged learning are critical for student success. Because most community college students attend college part-time, and most also must find ways to balance their studies with work and family responsibilities, the most effective learning experiences will be those the college intentionally designs.

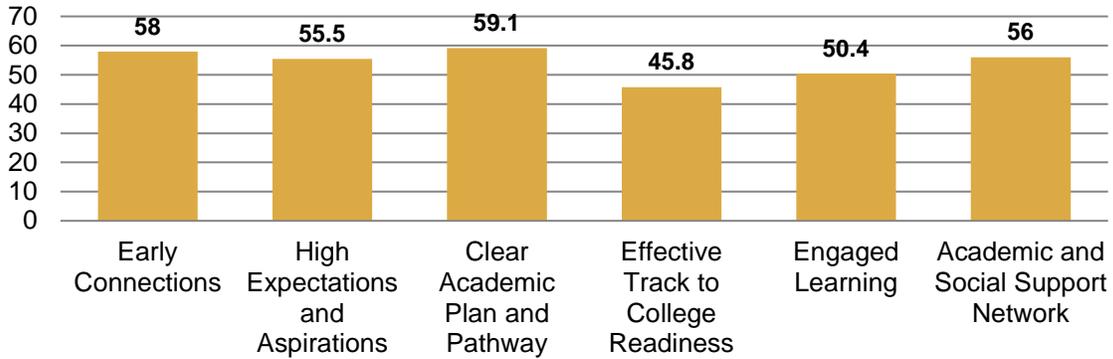
- 19a Frequency: Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions
- 19b Frequency: Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
- 19e Frequency: Participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)
- 19g Frequency: Work with other students on a project or assignment during class
- 19h Frequency: Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments
- 19i Frequency: Participate in a required study group outside of class
- 19j Frequency: Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class
- 19k Frequency: Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with another student about coursework
- 19l Frequency: Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework
- 19m Frequency: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor
- 19n Frequency: Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class
- 19o Frequency: Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance
- 19q Frequency: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class
- 20d2 Frequency of use: Face-to-face tutoring
- 20f2 Frequency of use: Writing, math, or other skill lab
- 20h2 Frequency of use: Computer lab

Academic and Social Support Network

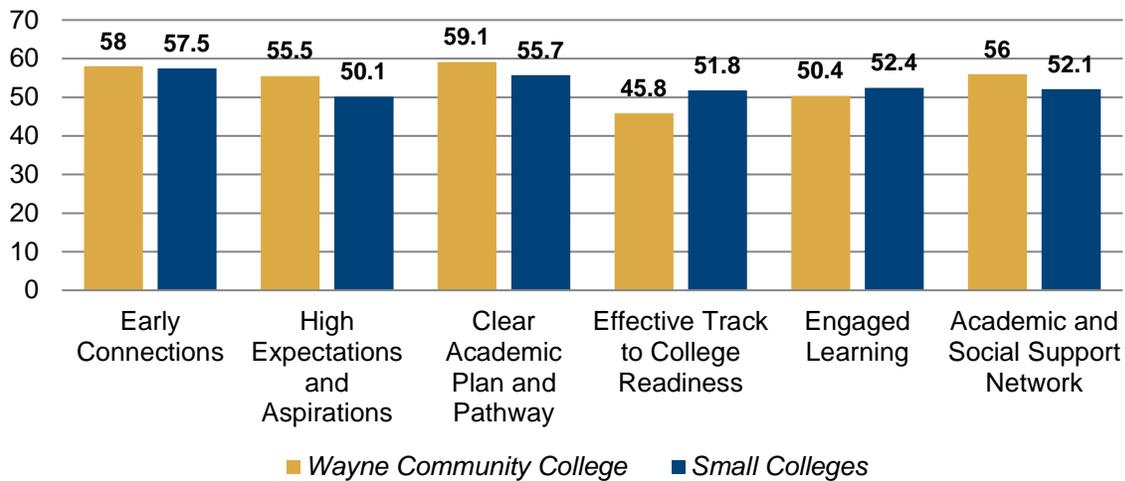
Students benefit from having a personal network that enables them to obtain information about college services, along with the academic and social support critical to student success. Because entering students often don't know what they don't know, colleges must purposefully create those networks.

- 18l Agreement: All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college
- 18m Agreement: All instructors clearly explained course grading policies
- 18n Agreement: All instructors clearly explained course syllabi (syllabuses)
- 18o Agreement: I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class
- 18q Agreement: At least one other student whom I didn't previously know learned my name
- 18r Agreement: At least one instructor learned my name
- 18s Agreement: I learned the name of at least one other student in most of my classes

SENSE Benchmark Scores for Wayne Community College



SENSE Benchmark Scores for Wayne Community College compared to Small Colleges



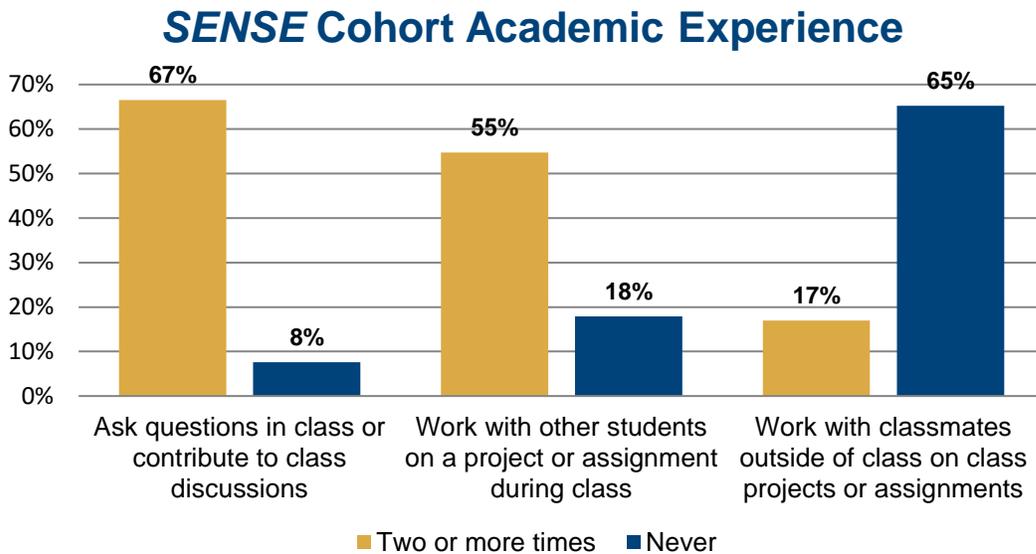
Example Selected Finding

Academic Experience

A positive academic experience is a product of many ingredients, one of which is the amount of time and energy students invest in their academic work and spend collaborating with others. *SENSE* asks students to respond to several survey items in order to gauge how actively they are involved in their education. Students are given the opportunity to mark *never*, *once*, *two or three times*, or *four or more times* in response to items such as the following:

- Item 19a—Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Item 19g—Worked with other students on projects during class
- Item 19h—Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments

While some students are highly involved in their academic experience (those who marked *two or more times*), others are less engaged, as illustrated by their responses of *never*, as displayed in the following graph.



Additional areas that may be of interest to your institution are shown below

Academic Advising/Planning
SENSE: 18d-g, 20a, 23

Orientation and Registration
SENSE: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Relationships
SENSE: 18a, 18k, 18p, 18q, 18r, 18s

Barriers to Persistence
SENSE: 18h, 24b, 32

Peer-to-peer interaction in class
SENSE: 18k, 18s, 19a, 19g

Student-Faculty Interaction
SENSE: 18r, 19l, 19m, 19n, 19o, 19q

Educational Goals
SENSE: 37a-c

Peer-to-peer interaction out of class
SENSE: 19h, 19i, 19j, 19k

Student Satisfaction
SENSE: 27

Financial Assistance
SENSE: 15a-c, 16, 18i, 18j, 20g

Placement (Developmental, ESL)
SENSE: 12a-c, 13, 14, 17a-d

Support Services
SENSE: 20a-k

Job Skills/Job Placement
SENSE: 20b-c

Reasons for Attending College
SENSE: 37a-c

Technology
SENSE: 19k, 19l, 20h