

CCSSE, SENSE and VCEQ

A Comparative Study of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) and the Vernon College Effectiveness Questionnaire (VCEQ)

Background

To gain college specific data in the areas of student experience and institutional performance, Vernon College participates in the administration of the CCSSE and SENSE surveys. Each survey is administered biannually with the latest being CCSSE in April 2011 and SENSE in September 2011. In order to delve more deeply and provide opportunity for external and internal constituent comments, Vernon College created and administered a College Effectiveness Questionnaire during April and May 2012.

The information gleaned from the surveys, questionnaire and this study will be used to provide direction and prioritization for research based decision making to ensure the continued development and improvement of a student success agenda for Vernon College.

Purpose

The study examines conceptually related survey and questionnaire items to determine student experience and institutional performance. This overview focuses on the general findings from the CCSSE, SENSE and VCEQ concentrating on the two areas of: opportunities for improvement and higher performance.

Method

The CCSSE targets returning students and was administered to 525 students. SENSE targets new student experience within the first three weeks of the semester and was administered to 347 students. The VCEQ targeted external and internal constituents in which 179 participated.

CCSSE and SENSE benchmark specific questions were grouped along with VCEQ conceptually related items into the eight theme areas of:

Group Themes	*CCSSE Benchmark	SENSE Benchmark
Class presentations and contribution to discussions; Working with students inside and outside of class; Participation in service learning/community based projects	Active and Collaborative Learning	Engaged Learning
Class expectations such as draft requirements for papers; Integrating ideas in papers/projects; Student behaviors such as prepared for class, attendance	Student Effort	Engaged Learning

and use of computer and skills labs		
Rigor of course; Number of written papers or reports Coursework emphasized mental activities; Exams challenge to do best work	Academic Challenge	Engaged Learning
Communication and discussion inside and outside of class; Prompt feedback; Faculty member learned my name; Use of electronic tools such as email to communicate; Instructors want students to succeed; Students are motivated and academically prepared; Clear explanation of grading policies and syllabus	Student – Faculty Interaction	Engaged Learning, Early Connections, High Expectations and Aspirations, Academic and Social Support Network
Felt welcomed; Staff member learned my name; Support to succeed at college; Support to thrive socially; Clear explanation of academic and student support; Financial support; Academic advising/planning; Discussion of commitments outside of school; Enrollment requirements based on placement criteria; Communication and information provided prior to enrollment; Participation in supplemental instruction (tutoring); Student learned name of other student/s	Support for Learners	Academic and Social Support, Clear Academic Plan and Pathway, Early Connections, Effective Track to College Readiness

*For the purposes of this study, the CCSSE benchmarks will be used as the theme titles.

Additional grouping themes and titles based on the VCEQ include:

- Community
- Recruiting
- Alumni

Survey and questionnaire items were reviewed to determine the lowest (opportunities for improvement) and higher (higher performance) rated/scored questions. Related comments found on the VCEQ were studied for supplemental information.

Key Findings

Opportunities for Improvement

Active and Collaborative Learning
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions • Number of class presentation made during school year • Working with other students on projects and class assignments during and outside of class • Participation in community-based (service learning) projects as part of regular course
<p>Related comments, summarized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to participate in local political and community events • Access to private/public businesses for internships
Student Effort
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning in • Worked on paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources • Peer or other tutoring – frequency
Academic Challenge
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of written papers or reports of any length
Student-Faculty Interaction
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class • Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance
<p>Related comments, summarized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backup contact requested for when instructor is out due to unforeseen circumstances • Improve process for contacting adjunct instructors • "...unwillingness to answer questions...'you should know this' or 'look it up'..."
Support for Learners
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome • At least one staff member other than an instructor learned my name • Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college • Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance? • College member discussed and helped you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) and to figure out how many courses to take • Providing the support you need to thrive socially

- Providing the financial support you need to afford your education
- The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)
- A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance
- Academic advising/planning – frequency
- Required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester
- All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college
- Provides strong student support services to meet the needs of students (i.e. counseling, advising and testing)
- Provides students with opportunities for personal development in addition to academic development
- Implements processes and practices that promote student success in retention, completion, and transfer functions (note: related to all benchmark areas)

Related comments, summarized:

- Lack of civility among some students, faculty and staff; need of civil code of conduct to improve acceptable behavior/etiquette
- Communication skills and helpfulness of faculty and staff:
 “Students need to feel like something other than just a number.”
 “You need to go to another site that will send us a list every morning so I don’t have to look it up. That takes too much of my time. Who told you to do that anyways? We are too busy, our phones are ringing off the hook, ...”
 “...they are rude.”; “...better people skills for _____ personnel, very, very rude.”
 “Your _____ department can be very uncaring and unhelpful...”
 “...very impatient and lack of drive to help me.”
- More help on how to get started in college
 Students are given incorrect information
 Do not require students to attend new student group advising before seeing a counselor
 Accessible counselors and services – “...offers little to aid students who work until 5 pm.”
 Improve registration process
 Someone available to “...go to for just general questions about school...”
- Online classes need to be “up and running on the date class starts”
- Improve counseling and advising services
- Improve career counseling and placement
- Evaluate computer labs and bookstore opening times
 “...8 a.m. is too late. Especially on test days...”
- Free CPR for nursing students
- Continue communication with active and non-active students
- “Provide more qualified tutors, updated resources, and resources for beginning the transition into the marketplace such as a place to start looking for their first job, resume writing, online posting of resumes, etc.”
- Improve Blackboard training for adjunct instructors
- More on campus student activities
- Encourage active study groups
- Provide daycare, charging moderate fees

Community
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is highly responsive and adaptive to meeting the changing needs of the external college community or environment • Employees are known for serving the community in government, on boards or committees, or in other capacities
<p>Related comments, summarized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing Education program: most classes do not make, offer more variety • Offer more community and family friendly activities in Vernon and Wichita Falls • Improve community service “Doing an Easter egg hunt, parade float, and an art gallery every once in a while are not really into the community...” • Increased course availability – number of sections, modes of delivery, evening classes, variety of courses, more 11 week summer courses • Offer dual credit in modality needed by high schools • Encourage use of civic groups to use campus facilities • Collaborate with other educational institutions, government agencies (state especially), Sheppard AFB, Chamber of Commerce, etc...

Recruiting
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers educational opportunities that can attract leading high school graduates within its 12 county service area to attend
<p>Related comments, summarized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create partnerships with area high schools: Communities in Schools, PALS, Key Club... • Participate in more workshops or college days in area junior high and high schools • Communication through Workforce Solutions • Encourage children (from kid league to high school) to attend athletic events, plays, choral productions, etc... • Encourage high school activities to be held at VC locations • Vernon College Expo to promote programs

Alumni
<p>Lowest rated/scored questions (not ranked):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides former students with opportunities to maintain a strong connection to the College
<p>Related comments, summarized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Since I am about to walk the stage on Saturday...I am wondering about what alumni activities Vernon College will offer its graduates...” • “Follow up with students who work after graduation.”

Higher Performance

Student Effort
Higher rated/scored questions (not ranked): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill labs – * CCSSE frequency of use rated 1.86• Computer lab – *CCSSE frequency of use rated 2.19 *(1 = rarely/never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often)• Not turn in an assignment – low frequency
Academic Challenge
Higher rated/scored questions (not ranked): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent to which examinations during current school year challenged student to do best work• Coursework emphasized the mental activities of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory○ synthesizing and organizing ideas, information or experiences• Provides rigorous learning experiences with a variety of delivery methodologies (i.e. face to face, online and hybrid courses).
Student-Faculty Interaction
Higher rated/scored questions (not ranked): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used electronic tool (email, text messaging, Facebook, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with instructor• Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor• The instructors at this college want me (student) to succeed• I (student) have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college• I (student) am prepared to academically succeed in college
Related comments, summarized: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The majority of my instructors have been fabulous and it has been my pleasure to have experienced learning from them. “• “I enjoy attending college here and prefer it to MSU because of the smaller classrooms with more one on one attention, the care and concern of the instructors and the price.• “...the teachers are more than willing to help. It is small enough to be personable and my teachers have been more interested in teaching than publishing and tenure.”
Support for Learners
Higher rated/scored questions (not ranked): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotes a culture committed to student learning• Has qualified administrative and academic officers with experience, competence and capacity to lead the institution• Has competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission, goals and priorities of the institution• Operates and maintains facilities and learning resources that are appropriate to support educational programs, support services and its’ teaching, learning and leading mission
Related comments, summarized: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Vernon College has been an outstanding place to earn my education. I have been provided many opportunities due to my preparedness through Vernon College, and for that I am thankful.”

- “I have found my educational experience at Vernon College to be highly rewarding.”
- “The quality of my life has improved while attending Vernon College.”
- “I have utilized the Financial Aid workshops from VC and I find them very helpful for myself and my students and their parents. I also like the New Student Orientation that was offered this year for HS students. That was very helpful to my students.”
- “I believe the current remodeling of the Century City Campus...will improve student success...”

Community

- Higher rated/scored questions (not ranked):
- Successfully fulfills its’ vision statement (Vernon College will promote a culture of success for our students and communities through learner-centered quality instructional programs and exemplary services).
 - Successfully fulfills its’ mission statement (The mission of Vernon College is teaching, learning and leading).

- Related comments, summarized:
- “I am proud to say that Vernon College is my college.”
 - “I wish Vernon College would expand to a 4-year college because I love this school.”
 - “I feel that VC is doing a good job of promoting community-oriented programs and other events.
 - “Top members of VC are more present in community...”
 - “I appreciate all that VC does for the community.”
 - “I feel that VC is committed to student success and really cares about the students and the communities they serve.”
 - “Well run, conservative approach to education.”

Recruiting

- Related comments, summarized:
- “Vernon College is a great school for students to attend that are from small rural high schools. The hands on attention given at Vernon College helping students to succeed is very important.”
 - “I feel that the best educational decision I made was attending Vernon College. I just wish that I would have done it sooner.”

Implications for Further Study

The lowest rated/scored questions along with related comments point to potential challenges and barriers for future, current and former students as well as internal and external constituents. These challenges and barriers can have a negative effect on a prosperous student success agenda: student access, persistence and completion. In example, new students who were surveyed during the first three weeks of school (SENSE) showed positive scores in the areas of motivation and prepared to academically succeed in college. In contrast, continuing students marked low ratings/scores to survey questions related to interaction and providing the support students need to help them succeed at this college (CCSSE). Information gleaned from this study should be used to facilitate discussion and possibly more specific research to establish a plan of action, provide direction and prioritize resources in the long term and annual planning processes.