National Survey of Student Engagement

University of South Carolina Upstate

Respondent Characteristics
August 2009
The Student Experience in Brief: USC Upstate

Active Learning

How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?
57% of FY students frequently discuss readings or ideas from coursework outside of class.

Do students work together on projects – inside and outside of class?
47% of FY students frequently work with other students on projects in class, 36% work with peers on assignments outside of class.

How often do students make class presentations?
31% of FY students report that they make frequent presentations in class.

How many students participate in community-based projects in regular courses?
15% of FY students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects during a given year. 42% never took part in such activities.

How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?
By their senior year, 56% of students have participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

Do students have opportunities to tutor or teach other students?
24% of seniors frequently assist their fellow students by tutoring or teaching them.

Student-Faculty Interaction

Are faculty members accessible and supportive?
48% of FY students say their faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic.

How many students work on research projects with faculty?
By their senior year, 15% of students have done research with a faculty member.

Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?
65% of FY students indicate that they frequently get prompt verbal or written feedback from faculty members.

Note: FY = First-Year Student SR = Senior Student

Academic Challenge

To what degree is studying and spending time on academic work emphasized?
82% of FY students feel that this institution places substantial emphasis on academics.¹

Do faculty hold students to high standards?
58% of FY students frequently work harder than they thought they could to meet faculty expectations.²

How much time do students spend on homework each week?
32% of FY students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class. 19% spend 5 hours or less.

What types of thinking do assignments require?
First-year students report substantial emphasis on the following activities:
- Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods: 70%
- Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 79%
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 68%
- Making judgments about value of information: 74%
- Applying theories or concepts: 77%

How much writing is expected?
7% of FY students write more than 10 papers between 5 and 19 pages and 14% have written a paper more than 20 pages in length.

How much reading is expected during the school year?
27% of FY students read more than 10 assigned books and packs of course readings. 26% read fewer than 5.

Do exams require students to do their best work?
50% of FY students report that their exams strongly challenge them to do their best work.³

Results from NSSE can provide prospective students with insights into how they might learn and develop at a given college. To help in the college exploration process, NSSE developed A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College to provide students and parents key questions to ask during campus visits.

The following responses were provided by 366 randomly selected USC Upstate students on the 2009 NSSE survey.