



National Survey of Student Engagement 2014:
What Students Are Saying About Their UMass Dartmouth Experience
*Comparisons with Peer Institutions, Carnegie Class Institutions, and
Community Engagement Institutions*

Overview:

At UMass Dartmouth, 286 first-year (FY) students and 263 senior (SR) students participated in the Spring 2014 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (i.e., an overall response rate of 20%). This report is a comparison of select responses on NSSE for the 549 student participants at UMass Dartmouth (UMassD) to the responses of students from UMass Dartmouth's new peer institutions (Peer)¹, members of UMass Dartmouth's Carnegie class (Carnegie), and members of Carnegie Community Engagement Institutions (Community). NSSE was recently updated in 2013. Previously, the survey was organized around five benchmark areas: Level of Academic Challenge; Active and Collaborative Learning; Student-Faculty Interaction; Enriching Educational Experiences; and Supportive Campus Environment. Adapted from the former benchmarks, the new NSSE is organized into four engagement themes and a group of high-impact practices (note: only select survey items are grouped into a theme). Ten engagement indicators (EIs) are organized within the four engagement themes.

The NSSE items highlighted in this report are those discussed in the *NSSE 2014 Pocket Guide* for UMass Dartmouth. This report follows the structure of the *Pocket Guide* and, as such, is organized loosely around the four engagement themes. Some of the survey items displayed under a particular theme relate to the theme, but are not specifically grouped under it by NSSE (note: survey items grouped under a particular theme are tagged as "TH"). Mean scores for each of the ten EIs, which are computed on a 60-point scale, are also shown grouped under their respective themes.

Very few survey items were left unchanged when NSSE was updated in 2013. However, two key survey items dealing with student satisfaction were left unchanged and are also included in this report. Additionally, the report displays the 2008 and 2011 UMassD response data for these items to facilitate longitudinal comparisons.

Key Findings:

The six NSSE items that exhibited the largest response differences (i.e., 10 or more percentage points) for UMass Dartmouth and members of its new peer group reflected the following:

- *Students devote more time to working together on class projects and assignments at UMass Dartmouth:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who reported that they frequently worked with their peers on course projects and assignments was 60%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 48% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Students spend more time working together to prepare for exams:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who frequently prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students was 57%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 46% (a difference of 11 percentage points).

- *Students spend more time having discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who frequently had discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity was 76%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 66% (a difference of 10 percentage points).
- *More students indicate involvement in a culminating senior experience:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth who had done (or were doing) a culminating senior experience was 54%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 43% (a difference of 11 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicate involvement in a community-based service learning project:* The percentage of SR students who reported that at least some of their courses included a community-based service-learning project was 43%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 56% (a difference of 13 percentage points).
- *Students indicate less often that they would choose the same institution:* The percentage of FY students who would choose UMass Dartmouth again if they could start their college career over was 71%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 84% (a difference of 13 percentage points).

Engagement Theme: Academic Challenge

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
Mean EI Score: Higher-Order Learning					
<i>FY Students</i>	40.3	37.4	39.0	38.8	+2.9
<i>SR Students</i>	40.6	39.5	41.6	41.1	+1.1
Mean EI Score: Reflective & Integrative Learning					
<i>FY Students</i>	35.3	34.4	35.6	35.7	+0.9
<i>SR Students</i>	35.5	37.3	39.2	39.0	-1.8
Mean EI Score: Learning Strategies					
<i>FY Students</i>	39.4	38.3	39.7	39.2	+1.1
<i>SR Students</i>	38.3	39.3	40.9	40.2	-1.0
Mean EI Score: Quantitative Reasoning					
<i>FY Students</i>	29.5	27.4	27.0	27.0	+2.1
<i>SR Students</i>	30.2	29.4	29.3	29.4	+0.8
How much time do students spend studying each week?					
<i>Average hours per week FY students spend preparing for class...</i>	15	14	13	13	+1%
<i>Average hours per week SR students spend preparing for class...</i>	16	15	14	14	+1%
Do courses challenge students to do their best?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that their courses “highly” challenged them to do their best work²...</i>	51	50	54	50	+1%
How much writing is expected?					
<i>Average estimated number of pages of writing assigned to FY students...</i>	46	45	45	42	+1%
<i>Average estimated number of pages of writing assigned to SR students...</i>	66	70	79	76	-4%
How much reading is expected?					
<i>Average estimated number of hours per week FY students spend on assigned reading...</i>	6	7	7	7	-1%
<i>Average estimated number of hours per week SR students spend on assigned reading...</i>	7	7	7	7	0%
How often do students make course presentations?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” gave course presentations³...</i>	36	30	37	39	+6%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” gave course presentations³...</i>	59	51	56	59	+8%
Do class discussions and assignments include the perspectives of diverse groups of people? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who “frequently” included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments³...</i>	47	46	51	51	+1%
Are students expected to use numbers or statistics throughout their coursework? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who “frequently” used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue³...</i>	42	38	38	37	+4%
<i>Percentage of SR students who “frequently” reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information³...</i>	58	54	53	53	+4%

Engagement Theme: Learning with Peers

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
Mean EI Score: Collaborative Learning					
<i>FY Students</i>	34.3	31.3	31.1	31.6	+3.0
<i>SR Students</i>	33.2	32.3	31.3	33.2	+0.9
Mean EI Score: Discussions with Diverse Others					
<i>FY Students</i>	40.9	40.0	40.3	40.7	+0.9
<i>SR Students</i>	42.3	40.8	41.4	42.1	+1.5
How often do students work together on class projects and assignments? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” worked with their peers on course projects and assignments³...</i>	60	48	51	51	+12%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” worked with their peers on course projects and assignments³...</i>	68	61	62	66	+7%
Do students help each other learn? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” explained course material to one or more students³...</i>	60	59	56	60	+1%
How often do students work together to prepare for exams? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students³...</i>	57	46	46	47	+11%
How often do students interact with others who have different viewpoints or who come from different backgrounds? (TH)					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people with different political views³...</i>	63	69	67	67	-6%
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people from a different economic background³...</i>	76	70	72	73	+6%
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity³...</i>	76	66	71	72	+10%

Engagement Theme: Experiences with Faculty

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
Mean EI Score: Student-Faculty Interaction					
<i>FY Students</i>	18.5	18.5	20.0	19.3	0.0
<i>SR Students</i>	22.2	22.9	23.2	23.0	-0.7
Mean EI Score: Effective Teaching Practices					
<i>FY Students</i>	38.4	39.1	40.7	40.0	-0.7
<i>SR Students</i>	39.8	39.8	41.5	40.9	0.0
Are faculty members accessible and supportive?⁷ <i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with faculty as “high”⁴...</i>	41	45	50	45	-4%
How often do students talk with faculty members about their career plans? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” discussed career plans with faculty³...</i>	24	29	32	30	-5%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” discussed career plans with faculty³...</i>	35	39	41	40	-4%
Do faculty members clearly explain course goals and requirements? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who said instructors clearly explained course goals and requirements “quite a bit” or “very much”...</i>	78	80	81	81	-2%
Do students receive prompt and detailed feedback? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that instructors “substantially” gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments⁵...</i>	57	59	64	62	-2%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that instructors “substantially” gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments⁵...</i>	68	64	69	66	+4%
How often do students talk with faculty members outside class about what they are learning? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class³...</i>	22	21	25	23	+1%
How many students work on research projects with faculty? <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member...</i>	4	5	5	4	-1%
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member...</i>	26	25	20	20	+1%

Engagement Theme: Campus Environment

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
Mean EI Score: Quality of Interactions					
<i>FY Students</i>	39.8	40.3	41.4	40.3	-0.5
<i>SR Students</i>	40.7	41.3	42.9	42.0	-0.6
Mean EI Score: Supportive Environment					
<i>FY Students</i>	34.6	35.2	37.0	37.1	-0.6
<i>SR Students</i>	28.6	31.3	32.9	33.0	-2.7
Are students encouraged to use learning support services (tutors, writing center)? (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who said the institution “substantially” emphasized the use of learning support services⁵...</i>	75	73	78	76	+2%
How satisfied are students with academic advising?⁷ (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴...</i>	39	44	47	42	-5%
<i>Percentage of SR students who rated the quality of their interactions with academic advisors as “high”⁴...</i>	46	48	52	47	-2%
How well do students get along with each other?⁷ (TH) <i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with their peers as “high”⁴...</i>	60	55	58	57	+5%

High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>UMassD- Peer</u>
Participated in at least one HIP					
<i>FY Students</i>	49	53	58	58	-4%
<i>SR Students</i>	82	84	84	85	-2%
What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who participated in a learning community during their first year...</i>	9	12	14	14	-3%
<i>Percentage of SR students who had done (or were doing) a culminating senior experience...</i>	54	43	43	42	+11%
How many students study in other countries?					
<i>Percentage of SR students who have studied abroad...</i>	6	11	10	10	-5%
How many students get practical, real-world experience through internships or field experiences?					
<i>Percentage of SR students who participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement by spring of their senior year...</i>	47	48	46	48	-1%
How many courses include community-based service-learning projects?					
<i>Percentage of FY students who said that “at least some” of their courses included a community-based service-learning project⁶...</i>	43	48	53	53	-5%
<i>Percentage of SR students who said that “at least some” of their courses included a community-based service-learning project⁶...</i>	43	56	63	65	-13%

Satisfaction							
NSSE Item	2008	2011	2014				
	UMassD	UMassD	UMassD	Peer	Carnegie	Community	UMassD -Peer
Would students choose the same institution again? <i>Percentage of FY students who “definitely” or “probably” would attend this institution if they started over again...</i>	72	75	71	84	83	82	-13%
<i>Percentage of SR students who “definitely” or “probably” would attend this institution if they started over again...</i>	79	68	72	81	83	82	-9%
How satisfied are students with their educational experience? <i>Percentage of FY students who rated their entire educational experience at this institution as “excellent” or “good”...</i>	77	75	78	85	86	85	-7%
<i>Percentage of SR students who rated their entire educational experience at this institution as “excellent” or “good”...</i>	87	76	79	84	87	86	-5%

Notes:

- Members of UMass Dartmouth’s new peer institutions (i.e., comparative and aspirant peers that participate in the 2013 and/or 2014 NSSE) included Binghamton University (State University of New York) (Binghamton, NY); Louisiana Tech University (Ruston, LA); Marshall University (Huntington, WV); The University of New Orleans (New Orleans, LA); The University of Texas at Dallas (Richardson, TX); University of Arkansas at Little Rock (Little Rock, AR); University of Idaho (Moscow, ID); University of Montana (Missoula, MT); University of North Dakota (Grand Forks, ND); University of South Dakota (Vermillion, SD); University of Southern Maine (Portland, ME); and Wichita State University (Wichita, KS)*
- "Highly" emphasis is defined by is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is "Not at all" and 7 is "Very much."
- "Frequently" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often" and "Often."
- "High" is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is "Poor" and 7 is "Excellent."
- "Substantially" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very much" and "Quite a bit."
- "At least some" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Some," "Most," and "All."
- Percentages shown were calculated by NSSE on all responses, including response choice of "Not Applicable."

Data source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2008, 2011, 2014