

Results of the Spring, 2011 Administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement at New Mexico Highlands University

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is administered to freshmen and senior students in the spring semester to assess their experiences with their undergraduate institution. It is administered by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. In 2011, 751 institutions from the United States and Canada participated in the survey. As a part of Highlands’ participation in the Voluntary System of Accountability, we must administer a survey of student engagement at least once every three years. The NSSE was first administered at Highlands’ in the spring of 2009 and administered for a second time in the spring of 2011. This report summarizes the results from the spring, 2011 administration of the survey.

More information about the NSSE can be found here: <http://nsse.iub.edu/>. More information about the Voluntary System of Accountability can be found here: <http://www.voluntarysystem.org/>.

We can compare Highlands’ performance to three different comparison groups: 1) all Southwest public institutions; 2) all institutions sharing our Carnegie classification (Masters-Large Programs); or 3) a self-selected group of comparison institutions.

400 freshmen and 477 seniors were invited to take the survey online. The overall response rate was 21% (13% of the freshmen and 29% of the seniors). While this response rate is disappointing, it is not significantly different from the response rates of our selected peer group, and is almost exactly the same as our response rate in 2009 (see table below).

	Highlands		Southwest Public		Carnegie Class	
	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR
Response Rate^a						
Overall	21%		18%		27%	
By class	13%	29%	15%	20%	24%	29%
NSSE sample size ^b	400	477	62,774	79,470	223,239	241,442
Sampling Error^c						
Overall	6.3%		0.6%		0.2%	
By class	12.7%	7.1%	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%
Number of respondents ^b	52	136	9,271	16,100	53,033	71,029
Total population	400	477	65,536	86,141	225,014	246,496

The NSSE groups its items into five general categories: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive

Campus Environment. Examples of the items that made up each of these categories are included at the end of this report.

The tables below, (provided by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research), compare Highlands’ performance in each of the five categories to the performance of the three comparison groups. As can be seen, in not a single category did Highlands’ students score significantly lower than any of the comparison groups and, in a few cases, Highlands’ students scored significantly higher than the comparison groups. While this is good, in represents a decrease in our performance from the 2009 administration when our freshmen students scored significantly higher than the comparison groups in several cases.

Level of Academic Challenge 2011

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Southwest Public			Carnegie Class			Our Comparison Group		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	49.6	51.1		-.11	53.4		-.29	52.0		-.16
Senior	57.6	55.7		.13	57.5		.01	56.6		.07

^a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups).
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Level of Academic Challenge 2009

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Selected Peers			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	54.5	50.6	*	.28	53.1		.11	53.7		.06
Senior	57.9	56.1		.12	56.9		.07	57.0		.06

^a Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Active and Collaborative Learning 2011

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Southwest Public			Carnegie Class			Our Comparison Group		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>

First-Year	47.6	41.5	*	.35	43.1		.27	44.2		.19
Senior	54.4	50.7	*	.20	52.0		.13	51.2	*	.17

^a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups).
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Active and Collaborative Learning 2009

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Selected Peers			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	52.9	43.5	***	.53	43.3	***	.57	43.2	***	.59
Senior	56.5	52.5	*	.22	51.5	***	.28	51.0	***	.31

^a Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Student-Faculty Interaction 2011

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Southwest Public			Carnegie Class			Our Comparison Group		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	38.6	33.0	*	.29	34.4		.23	36.0		.13
Senior	43.4	40.0		.16	41.6		.09	42.7		.03

^a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups).
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Student-Faculty Interaction 2009

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Selected Peers			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	46.8	36.2	***	.55	35.2	***	.63	34.6	***	.66
Senior	43.8	41.8		.10	41.7		.10	42.0		.09

^a Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Enriching Educational Experiences 2011

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Southwest Public			Carnegie Class			Our Comparison Group		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	26.1	27.7		-.11	26.5		-.03	26.0		.01
Senior	36.9	36.8		.01	38.3		-.08	35.4		.09

^a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups).
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Enriching Educational Experiences 2009

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Selected Peers			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	29.9	26.7		.23	27.0		.22	28.0		.14
Senior	37.8	36.3		.09	38.5		-.04	40.8		-.16

^a Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Supportive Campus Environment 2011

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Southwest Public			Carnegie Class			Our Comparison Group		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	58.5	61.8		-.17	62.9		-.23	63.5		-.23
Senior	61.3	59.0		.11	59.6		.09	59.3		.10

^a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups).
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Supportive Campus Environment 2009

Mean Comparisons	<i>New Mexico Highlands University compared with:</i>									
	Highlands	Selected Peers			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	63.6	61.9		.08	61.6		.10	61.6		.11
Senior	60.2	60.1		.00	58.8		.07	58.2		.10

^a Weighted by gender, enrollment status, and institutional size.
^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed).
^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.

Box and whisker charts (available in this [Excel sheet](#)), show that Highlands’ students demonstrate a great deal of variance in their responses to the NSSE, suggesting that individual student experiences at NMHU vary a great deal.

Comparison of 2009 and 2011 Results

As can be seen in the tables above, and summarized in the table below, the scores for freshmen students in 2011 were quite lower than in 2009.

	<i>2009</i>	<i>2011</i>
Level of Academic Challenge	54.5	49.6
Active and Collaborative Learning	52.9	47.6
Student Faculty Interaction	46.8	38.6
Enriching Educational Experiences	29.9	26.1
Supportive Campus Environment	63.6	58.5

This difference is difficult to explain. Because of the small numbers involved (75 in 2009 and 52 in 2011) the sampling error is quite large. We may not be able to collect reliable results from our freshmen until we can increase our response rate.

Examples of items in each of the five general areas:

Level of Academic Challenge

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or labwork, etc. related to academic program)
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs course readings
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more; number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages; and number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizes: **Analysis** of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizes: **Synthesis** and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizes: **Making of judgments** about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizes: **Applying** theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Campus environment emphasizes: Spending significant amount of time studying and on academic work

Active and Collaborative Learning

- 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 (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

Student-Faculty Interaction

- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)
- Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance
- Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements

Enriching Educational Experiences

- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, social fraternity or sorority, etc.)
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- Community service or volunteer work
- Foreign language coursework / Study abroad
- Independent study or self-designed major
- Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)
- Serious conversations with students of different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Using electronic medium (e.g., listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment
- Campus environment encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together

Supportive Campus Environment

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices