

CCSSE 2011 Highlights

A First Glance at Benchmark Scores and Survey Items

September 2011

Introduction

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provides information that helps colleges focus on good educational practice, defined as that which promotes high levels of student learning and retention, as well as identify areas in which colleges can improve their programs and services. By gauging student habits, behaviors and experiences, colleges can gain a better understanding of the dynamics of student engagement, which CCSSE defines as “the amount of time and energy that students invest in meaningful education practices,” and thus has been shown to contribute to student success.

CCSSE is an ongoing research effort of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin. The project was developed in partnership with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a survey designed to assess student engagement factors at 4-year colleges. Established in 2001, CCSSE was developed largely because it was recognized that student engagement factors may be different for 2- and 4-year institutions.

In the spring of 2011, Palm Beach State College participated in CCSSE for the third time; the College previously administered the survey in 2004 and 2007. This report briefly examines Palm Beach State’s performance on the benchmarks over the three administrations, with a special focus on the 2011 results relative to that of other extra-large colleges, defined as those institutions having an enrollment of 15,000 or more, as well as the CCSSE national cohort.

Benchmarks

CCSSE benchmarks colleges in five areas over a 3-year cohort period. Benchmarks consist of groupings of related items from the survey that address key factors to student engagement.

The five benchmarks are:

- **Active and Collaborative Learning.** Students who are actively involved in their education learn more. Collaborating with other students and mastering challenging coursework prepares students for situations they will encounter at work and in their communities and personal lives.
- **Student Effort.** Students’ behaviors toward their coursework contribute significantly to their learning and the attainment of educational goals.
- **Academic Challenge.** The level of intellectual and creative challenge that coursework provides is an important factor in student learning and the quality of education received.
- **Student-Faculty Interaction.** Students’ interactions with their teachers contribute to effective learning and persistence toward educational goal attainment. Instructors serve as role models and mentors, strengthening students’ connections to the college and showing them how experts identify and solve problems.
- **Support for Learners.** Colleges that commit themselves to student success through positive working and social relationships, assistance with academic and career planning, and academic skill development tend to have higher performing and more satisfied students

Benchmark scores for each college are standardized at the student level around a mean score of 50, with a standard deviation of 25. Generally speaking, institutional benchmark scores above

or below 50 indicate institutional performance above or below average, relative to other colleges. CCSSE has informally stated in past administrations that differences of about five points may be regarded as significant.

The 2011 Administration

Over the most recent 3-year cohort period, from 2009 to 2011, CCSSE has been administered in classes at 699 colleges to 443,818 students in 48 states, the District of Columbia, five Canadian provinces, Bermuda and the Northern Mariana Islands. In 2011 alone, 435 colleges, including 13 from Florida, participated.

The 2011 CCSSE administration was coordinated locally by the Palm Beach State College Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness (IRE).

The sample of classes was pulled from a master file provided to CCSSE by IRE of 2,376 spring term on-campus, classroom-based credit and college preparatory classes. CCSSE selected 92 classes, stratified by time-of-day, to participate in the survey.

After IRE analysis of the sample determined that the classes selected for the Belle Glade campus were not representative of the campus, the College selected three additional classes to be surveyed at Belle Glade. These supplemental classes, however, were not included in any calculations or benchmarking conducted by CCSSE because they were not part of the original sample selected by CCSSE; they are solely for the College's internal reporting purposes and are not included in the figures shown in this report.

In-class administration on all four Palm Beach State College campuses took place in March and April, 2011. Of the 95 classes selected, 94 participated, resulting in a class participation rate of 99%. A total of 1,598 completed surveys were received.

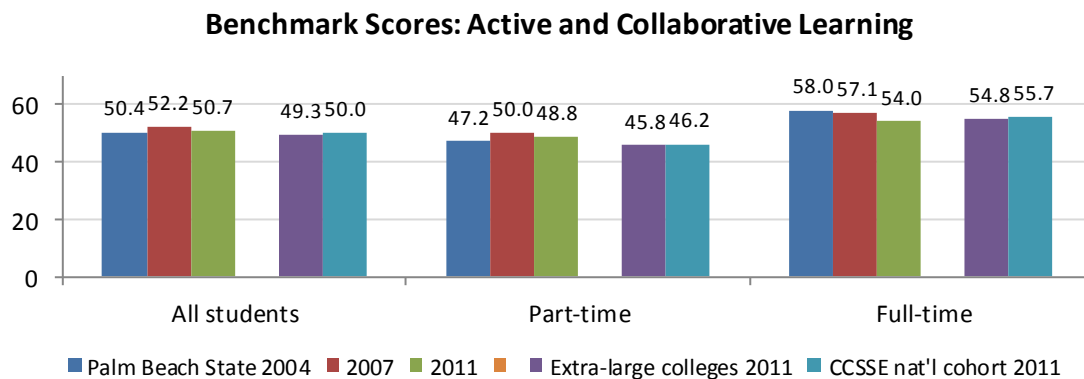
Completed class survey packets were returned to IRE to be checked in, then shipped to CCSSE for scanning, tabulation and analysis. Data were weighted on enrollment status (full-time/part-time) to remove bias introduced by the methodology. Results and final datasets were made available to the College through the CCSSE website (www.ccsse.org) in July 2011.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Palm Beach State College scored 50.7 on the Active and Collaborative Learning benchmark. This was slightly lower than in 2007 but still a little above the benchmarks for both the cohorts of extra-large colleges and all colleges.

Full-time students scored 54.0, three points lower than in 2007 and four points lower than 2004. The benchmark for full-time students is slightly below both the extra-large colleges and national cohort.

Part-time students scored 48.8. This, too, is a touch lower than in 2007 but still about three points higher than that of both the extra-large and national cohorts.



Several items drove performance on this benchmark. First, Palm Beach State College students are more likely than students at other colleges to make a class presentation as part of their coursework. Nearly four in ten (38%) reported doing so often or very often in the academic year preceding administration of the survey, compared with about 31% for students at other extra-large colleges and 29% for the entire CCSSE cohort. This was found to be a statistically significant difference.

On the other hand, Palm Beach State students reported less likelihood of asking questions, contributing to class discussions or working with classmates during class than did students at other schools. Students were slightly more likely, however, to work with fellow students *outside* of class. None of these findings were statistically significant.

Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark Items

	Palm Beach State		Extra large colleges	CCSSE cohort
	2007	2011	2011	2011
	% Often/Very often			
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	67.4%	60.4%	62.1%	65.1%
Made a class presentation	34.3%	38.1%	30.7%	29.3% *
Worked with other students on projects during class	42.0%	42.3%	46.8%	47.7%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	23.7%	25.3%	22.0%	22.9%
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	8.6%	7.1%	7.5%	7.9%
Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	6.5%	4.7%	6.6%	6.8%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family, etc.)	49.8%	51.0%	50.2%	50.1%

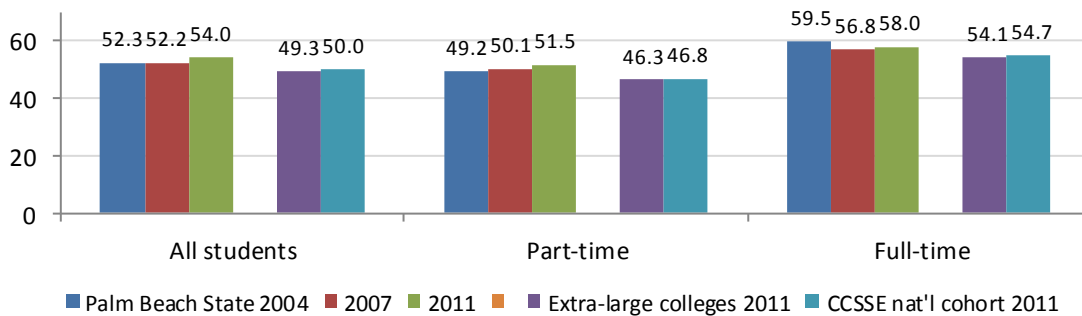
* Palm Beach State 2011 mean score significantly higher ($p < .001$, effect size $\geq .2$).

Student Effort

The College scored 54.0 on the Student Effort benchmark, the highest benchmark for Palm Beach State. The score was nearly two points higher than in 2007 and almost five points higher than for other extra-large colleges. The College scored was four points better than the national cohort, which by definition is set at 50.

Full-time students scored 58.0, slightly higher than in 2007, and nearly four points higher than other extra-large schools. Part-time students scored 51.5, about five points higher than both the cohorts of extra-large colleges and all colleges.

Benchmark Scores: Student Effort



Two key factors that drove performance higher were students' use of tutoring and the skills labs. Four in ten (40%) students surveyed reported using peer or other forms of tutoring often or sometimes, as compared to 28% for both extra-large colleges and the national cohort.

Similarly, students use the skills labs more often than at other schools. A little more than half (53%) use the College's skills labs often or sometimes, as compared to 40% for the comparison groups. Both this and the use of tutoring were found to be statistically significant differences.

In addition, Palm Beach State students were also more likely to prepare two or more drafts of a paper or work on a paper or project requiring access of multiple sources of information. Students were slightly less likely to come to class unprepared.

The only possible detractor to performance on this benchmark was computer lab usage. Students reported marginally less likelihood of using the computer lab than for the comparison groups, about five points lower than for the national cohort.

Student Effort Benchmark Items

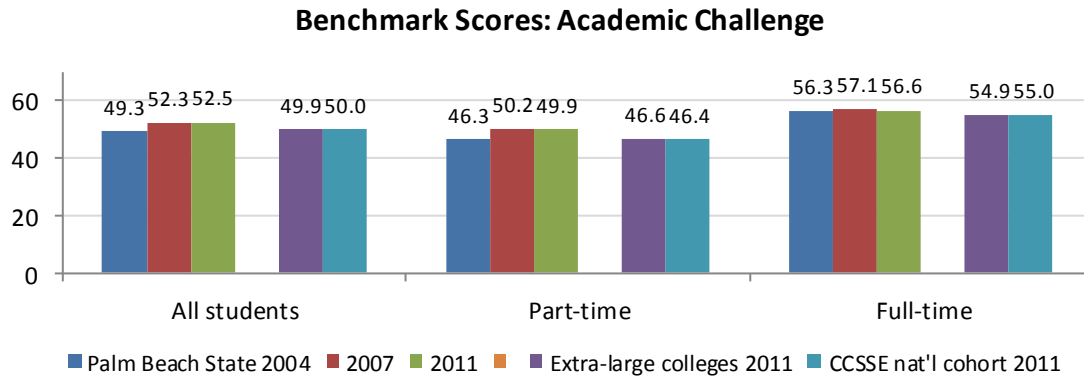
	Palm Beach State		Extra large	CCSSE cohort
	2007	2011	colleges 2011	2011
	% Often/Very often			
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	51.3%	54.4%	50.6%	50.3%
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	66.2%	68.1%	63.1%	62.2%
Came to class without completing reading or assignments	13.1%	9.8%	13.6%	12.6%
	% 5 or more (during current school year)			
Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	22.0%	23.9%	24.3%	24.0%
	% 6 or more hours (during typical week)			
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to your program)	51.8%	56.7%	56.8%	58.6%
	% Sometimes/Often			
Use peer or other tutoring	34.3%	40.0%	27.7% *	27.5% *
Use skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	47.1%	53.0%	39.7% *	40.3% *
Use computer lab	50.7%	57.2%	59.5%	62.6%

* Palm Beach State 2011 mean score significantly higher ($p < .001$, effect size $\geq .2$).

Academic Challenge

The College scored 52.5 on the Academic Challenge benchmark, about the same as in 2007 but about two and a half points higher than the cohort of extra-large colleges.

As with the other measures, full-time students scored higher than part-time students. Full-time students scored 56.6, about a half-point lower than in 2007, but still nearly two points above other extra-large college and the national cohort. Part-time students scored 49.9, about the same as in 2007, but more than three points higher than the comparison groups.



Relative to the cohort comparison groups, the Palm Beach State college students reported experiences at a rate at or above the cohort comparison groups on most benchmark items, although there were no statistically significant findings.

More than half (57%) reported often or very often working harder than they thought possible to meet an instructor's demands. Fewer students in the comparison groups, 51% for extra-large colleges and 52% for the national cohort, felt the same.

A slightly greater proportion of Palm Beach State students reported having five or more assigned textbooks or having to write five or more reports during the academic year.

Difficulty of exams at the College appears to be on par with other 2-year colleges. Sixty-five percent rated the College's exams as challenging, as compared with 66% for other extra-large colleges and 68% for the national cohort.

Academic Challenge Benchmark Items

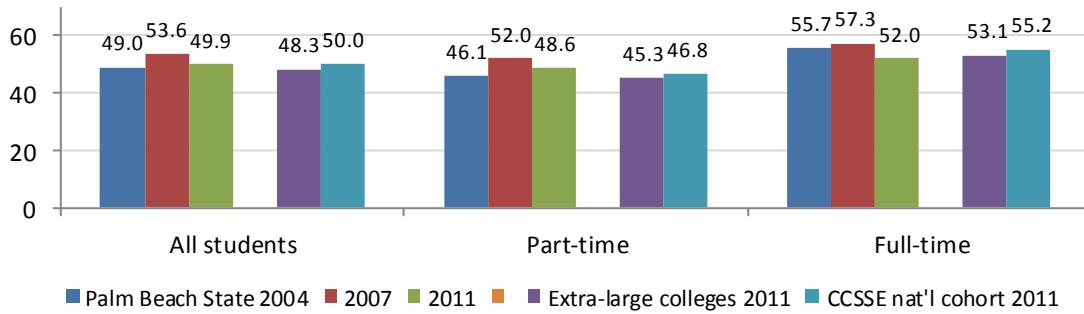
	Palm Beach State		Extra large colleges 2011	CCSSE cohort 2011
	2007	2011		
	% Often/Very often			
Worked harder that you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	52.7%	56.6%	51.3%	52.2%
	% Quite a bit/Very much			
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory	69.0%	71.4%	69.8%	68.6%
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information or experiences in new ways	61.9%	63.5%	62.0%	61.0%
Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments or methods	55.5%	53.2%	53.8%	52.9%
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	58.5%	58.9%	57.6%	57.4%
Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skills	58.0%	64.0%	61.7%	62.6%
College emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying	70.9%	74.8%	72.9%	73.8%
	% 5 or more (during current school year)			
Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books or book-length packs or course readings	51.6%	59.3%	55.4%	56.4%
Number of written reports of any length	59.5%	63.9%	60.0%	59.8%
	% 5 or more (on 7-point scale)			
Extent to which examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college	63.1%	65.1%	65.9%	67.8%

Student-Faculty Interaction

Palm Beach State scored 49.9 on the Student-Faculty Interaction benchmark, the lowest of the five benchmarks and the only one under 50. This score dropped nearly four points from 2007, when it was the highest of the five benchmarks. However, the College's score is still slightly higher than that of other extra-large colleges.

The benchmark for both full- and part-time students declined from 2007. Full-time students dropped more than five points to 52, one point below that of other extra-large colleges and three below the national cohort. Part-time students' score fell more than three points to 48.6, which remains about three points above the score for other extra-large colleges and nearly two points higher than the national cohort.

Benchmark Scores: Student-Faculty Interaction



Palm Beach State performed relatively well on the benchmark items as compared to other extra-large colleges. Students were more likely to discuss grades, assignment, career plans and use email to communicate with their instructors.

Student-Faculty Interaction Benchmark Items

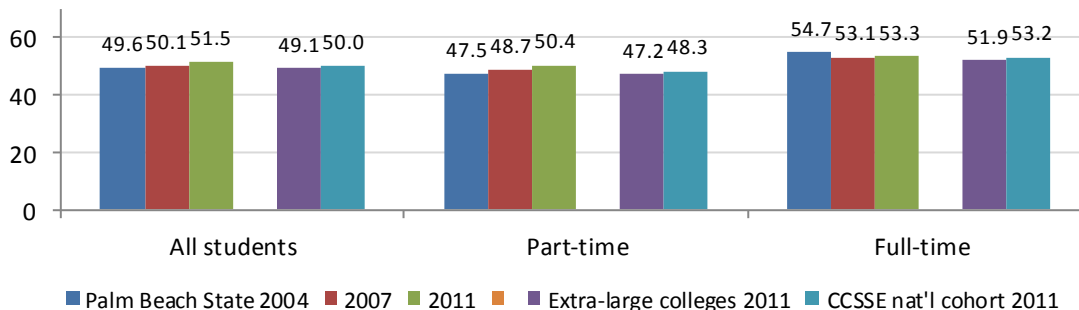
	Palm Beach State		Extra large colleges 2011	CCSSE cohort 2011
	2007	2011		
	% Often/Very often			
Used email to communicate with an instructor	53.4%	61.9%	57.0%	58.4%
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	49.4%	49.8%	45.9%	48.4%
Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor	28.3%	27.7%	23.7%	26.4%
Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with instructors outside of class	16.7%	15.8%	15.5%	16.6%
Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance	57.5%	54.6%	56.0%	57.4%
Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework	9.2%	8.9%	8.6%	9.3%

Support for Learners

The College scored 51.5 on the Support for Learners benchmark, slightly above the score for both extra-large colleges and the national cohort.

As with other measures, full-time students scored higher than part-time students. Full-time students scored 53.3, a little more than a point higher than other extra-large institutions and about even with the national cohort. Part-time students increased nearly two points from 2007 to 50.4, which is three points higher than other extra-large schools and two points above the national cohort.

Benchmark Scores: Support for Learners



For the most part, Palm Beach State performed well on the benchmark items, in comparison to the cohorts. Students were slightly more likely to state that the college provides social supports and the support to help them succeed, in general, than were students in the extra-large and national cohorts. Moreover, they were eight points more likely to state that the college encourages contact with a diverse group of students “quite a bit” or “very much.”

About half of students (50%) gave the same rating to the question of Palm Beach State providing the necessary financial support. This is up greatly from 2007 when only 37% of students felt so. The 2011 figure is roughly in line with the cohort groups.

Students were a little more likely to use academic advising and planning but less likely to use career counseling than were students at other extra-large colleges.

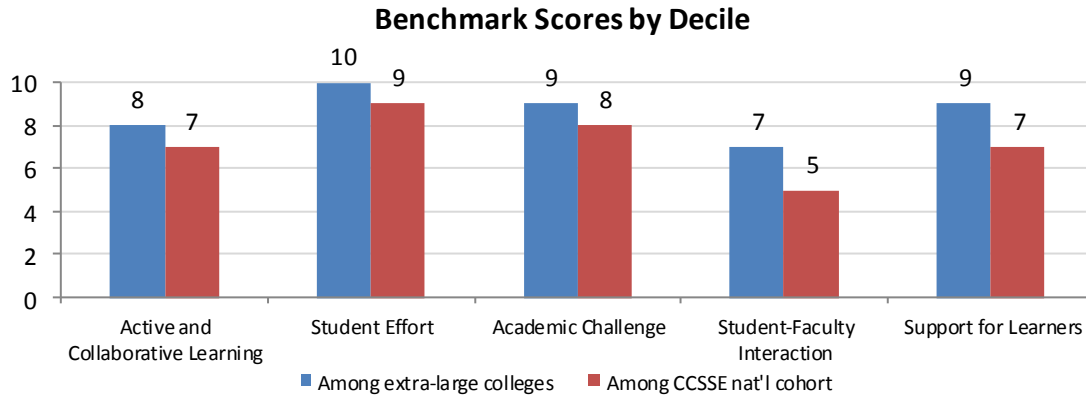
Support for Learners Benchmark Items

	Palm Beach State 2007	2011	Extra large colleges 2011	CCSSE cohort 2011
% Quite a bit/Very much				
College provides the support you need to help you succeed at this college	70.4%	75.0%	71.0%	72.5%
College encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	53.5%	58.7%	51.8%	50.2%
College helps you code with you non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	26.0%	26.1%	25.6%	26.2%
College provides the support you need to thrive socially	32.5%	39.2%	33.0%	33.6%
College provides the financial support you need to afford your education	36.5%	49.6%	47.8%	51.2%
% Sometimes/Often				
Use academic advising/planning	53.3%	61.3%	54.9%	57.8%
Use career counseling	27.3%	27.6%	30.7%	28.5%

Decile Rankings

Relative to other extra-large colleges, Palm Beach State College ranks in the seventh decile or higher on all five benchmarks. On the Student Effort benchmark, the College ranks in the tenth decile, or the top 10% of all extra-large schools.

Among the national cohort, the College is in the seventh decile or higher on four of the five measures. Only on Student-Faculty Interaction does Palm Beach State perform in the lower half of all participating colleges.



Furthermore, Palm Beach State is at the ninth decile (top 20%) or above on all benchmarks among part-time students at extra-large colleges. Among full-time students, however, the College is in the ninth decile only on Student Effort, while ranking in the lower half of extra-large colleges on Active and Collaborative Learning and Student-Faculty Interaction.

