



**Major Findings from the
Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
Institutional Research & Assessment**

The CCSSE is a nationally-normed survey of students' engagement with their coursework. In the Spring of 2005, over 1000 Mercer students completed the detailed student survey instrument. The students were in Mercer course sections randomly selected by the CCSSE consortium for effective representation of the college population. This ensures comparability of Mercer's data to all other colleges in the survey pool. The CCSSE group is based at the University of Texas at Austin (www.ccsse.org).

Below are some key findings and benchmarks, which will be integral to Strategic Planning and college-wide efforts in recruitment, retention, advisement, General Education, and the assessment of student outcomes. It is impossible in this short summary to present the rich details the CCSSE has generated about Mercer's students. If you have questions about any of the findings, or would like to learn more about other topics covered, please contact Institutional Research & Assessment at mcccira@mccc.edu or call Dr. Gianna Durso-Finley at (609) 586-4800 x3301.

Summary of Student Engagement Findings:

Overall, Mercer is doing fine compared with peer schools on key benchmarks of student engagement. It may also be useful to note that these benchmark peers are institutions, like Mercer, that have made a significant commitment of financial resources and staff time to implementing the CCSSE survey. Therefore, the peer schools in this group may be places where assessment activity is taken seriously, and Mercer is likely to be "in good company."

Benchmark*	Mercer County Community College	Large Colleges	2005 Colleges
<i>Student Effort</i>	48.8	50.2	50.0
<i>Active and Collaborative Learning</i>	49.6	49.2	50.0
<i>Academic Challenge</i>	49.8	50.3	50.0
<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	51.0	49.8	50.0
<i>Support for Learners</i>	52.0	49.2	50.0
Number of Schools		28	257

*Benchmark scores are computed by averaging the scores on survey items that comprise that benchmark. Means used in the sample are weighted by full and part-time status and are standardized so that the weighted mean across all students is 50, with a standard deviation of 25. Although slight differences occur between Mercer's scores and those of peer schools, none are statistically significant.

All findings from the CCSSE are consistent with the mean average for Mercer's peer schools and with the national findings. Strategic Planning should focus on areas for which Mercer would prefer to be a "high-achieving" college. After an appropriate interval, re-assessment with the CCSSE could provide key evidence of programmatic impact.

General Statistics:

- 72% Started at MCCC; 28% Started elsewhere
- 46% of students report that their father had no degree beyond high school
- 48% of students report that their mother had no degree beyond high school

Mercer's Students on how hard they worked:

- 64% of students responding said they "Often" or "Very often" asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion
- 16% said they "Often" or "Very often" came to class without completing the readings or assignments
- 46% said they "Often" or "Very often" worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations

On what they did in class:

- 63% of students said their courses "Quite a bit" or "Very much" emphasized memorization
- 49% of students said their courses "Quite a bit" or "Very much" emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- 49% of students said that Mercer "Very much" or "Quite a bit" encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- 70% of students said that Mercer "Very much" or "Quite a bit" encouraged the use of computers in academic work

And out of class:

- 75% of students read four or fewer books over the course of the year for personal or academic enrichment that were not assigned
- 57% worked 20 or more hours per week
- 69% of students said that Mercer "Very much" or "Quite a bit" provided the support they needed to help them succeed at this college
- 14% are taking classes at another college simultaneously with Mercer

With respect to the College Mission:

- 68% of students said that Mercer "Very much" or "Quite a bit" helped them in acquiring a broad general education
- 48% of students said that Mercer "Very much" or "Quite a bit" helped them in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills

What gets in the way of reaching their goals at Mercer?

- 38% report it "Likely" or "Very likely" that work would make them leave a class or the college
- 31% report that the care of dependents would be a key issue
- 48% said that transfer to a 4-year college or university would be the main reason they'd leave Mercer

Paying for college:

- 41% said their own funds were the primary source of their tuition payments
- 35% said grants or loans were key sources of their tuition payments

Overall Experience:

- 84% rated their overall experience at Mercer as Good or Excellent
- 93% would recommend Mercer to a friend or family member