

The Student Experience at AU in Comparison to Peers

Results from the NSSE can provide information about how the perceived experience of Alfred University students compares to the experiences of students at other colleges and universities.

Benchmark comparisons are to 81 other Mid-East Private Schools, 69 other Carnegie-Classified Masters Institutions and to the entire pool of 643 schools that participated in NSSE for the 2009 year.

The NSSE was administered via e-mail distribution in the spring of 2009 to all first-year and all senior students. The response rates of 46% and 50%, respectively, exceeded response rates for all comparison groups. In addition, AU student respondents were balanced by gender, with 53% of the females and 47% of the males responding, as compared to the overall NSSE response rates of 64% female and 36% male.

The benchmark data reported below is created by clustering related NSSE items and then standardizing the results along a scale of 0-100. The resulting scores reflect the degree to which students endorse various statements of engagement as characterizing their experiences for each benchmark index.

The results listed below describe each of the benchmark indices and provide interpretive statements. Also listed are data tables showing statistical analysis of significant differences between AU and our peer institutions.

Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)

- ❖ The LAC benchmark is an index of the degree to which colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing academic effort and setting high expectations. Items include:
 - Preparing for class by studying, reading, writing, doing homework
 - Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packets of readings
 - Number of written papers or reports of various lengths and types
 - Coursework emphasizing analysis of ideas, synthesis of information, making judgments about the value of data or arguments, and applying theory or concepts to practical problems.
 - Working harder than expected to meet the instructor's standards
 - Campus environment which emphasizes significant time spent studying or doing schoolwork.
- ❖ Both first year and senior respondents at AU rate LAC significantly lower than other Mid-East Private Schools and lower than other schools in our Carnegie Class.
- ❖ First year respondents at AU also rate LAC lower than those in the total population of NSSE data.
- ❖ Seniors at AU rated LAC lower than those in the overall NSSE population, but there was not a significant difference between the two groups.

Mean Comparisons

Alfred University compared with:

Class	AU	Mid East Private			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
First-Year	50.8	56.0	***	-.39	53.1	*	-.17	53.7	**	-.21
Senior	55.2	58.6	**	-.24	57.7	*	-.17	57.0		-.13

^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 (ACL)

- ❖ The ACL benchmark provides information about the degree to which students see themselves as collaborating with others to solve problems and apply learning to different situations. Items include:
 - Asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions
 - Making a class presentation
 - Working with other students on projects during class or preparing with others outside of class
 - Tutoring other students
 - Participating in community-based projects or services learning as part of a course
 - Discussing ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (e.g. family, co-workers)
- ❖ Overall, first-year respondents do find opportunities for collaborative learning, though not to the degree experienced by seniors.
- ❖ Although some small differences are apparent between AU students and our comparison groups, none of these differences reach statistical significance.

Mean Comparisons

Alfred University compared with:

Class	AU	Mid East Private			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
First-Year	43.3	45.2		-.12	44.6		-.08	43.2		.01
Senior	52.4	52.1		.02	53.2		-.05	51.0		.08

^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 (SFI)

- ❖ The SFI questions measure the degree to which students have the opportunity to see faculty members as role models, mentors, and guides for life-long learning through interactions inside and outside of class.
 - Discussion of grades or assignments with instructors
 - Talking about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
 - Discussing ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
 - Working with faculty members on non-class activities (e.g. committees, student life groups, etc.)
 - Receiving prompt written and oral feedback from faculty on academic performance
 - Working on a research projects with a faculty member outside of course requirements
- ❖ The general trend is for first-year respondents to have limited experiences, which grow and deepen as students move through their college years.
- ❖ First-year respondents at AU rate SFI lower than other Mid-East Private schools, but at the same level as students in other master's institutions and the NSSE population as a whole.
- ❖ Senior respondents at AU rate SFI significantly higher than those in Mid-East Private Schools, with the magnitude of difference increasing in comparison to other schools in our Carnegie Class and also the entire NSSE population.

Mean Comparisons

Alfred University compared with:

Class	AU	Mid East Private			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
First-Year	34.2	36.7	*	-.13	35.7		-.08	34.7		-.03
Senior	48.5	45.1	*	.16	43.5	**	.24	42.0	***	.32

^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 Education Experiences (EEE)

- ❖ EEE is a measure of learning activities which complement academic programs, including:
 - Participating in co-curricular activities and campus organizations
 - Participation in internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignments
 - Involvement in community service or volunteer work
 - Foreign language coursework and study abroad experiences
 - Culminating senior research or capstone projects or comprehensive integrative exams
 - Serious conversations with students from diverse ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds
 - Using electronic media to discuss or complete assignments
 - Participation in learning communities where groups of students take courses together
- ❖ Response trends across institutions suggest that enriching experiences grow as students progress through their studies; ratings from first-year students are lower than other benchmark clusters.
- ❖ First-year respondent at AU rate EEE significantly lower than other Mid-East Private Schools and somewhat lower than the NSSE population, but are in line with other students in our Carnegie Class.
- ❖ Senior respondents at AU rate EEE lower than other schools that are considered Mid-East Private.
- ❖ In contrast, seniors at AU rate EEE somewhat higher than those in our Carnegie Class and those in the entire NSSE data sample, but the differences did not reach statistical significance

Mean

Comparisons

Alfred University compared with:

Class	AU	Mid East Private			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
First-Year	26.4	29.5	***	-.23	26.8		-.03	28.0	*	-.12
Senior	42.4	45.4	*	-.16	40.1		.13	40.8		.08

^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 (SCE)

- ❖ **The SCE benchmark is an index of the degree to which students feel satisfied with the degree of support and commitment to student success expressed through positive working and social relationships.**
 - **Campus environment provides support needed to help students succeed academically**
 - **Campus environment helps students cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family)**
 - **Campus environment provides support needed to thrive socially**
 - **Quality of relationships with other students**
 - **Quality of relationships with faculty members**
 - **Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices**
- ❖ **The NSSE data suggest that students across all types of institutions perceive college campuses to provide a high degree of support.**
- ❖ **AU students in both their first and senior years responded no differently than students in each category of benchmark institutions**

Mean

Comparisons

Alfred University compared with:

Class	AU	Mid East Private			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2009		
	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
First-Year	62.6	63.4		-.04	62.7		-.01	61.6		.06
Senior	59.3	59.8		-.03	61.0		-.09	58.2		.05

^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.

