

# A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College: NSSE 2013 Answers from Students Concordia University Irvine

Each year the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students at hundreds of colleges and universities to reflect on the time they devote to various learning activities. The topics explored are linked to previous research on student success in college.

Results from NSSE can provide prospective students with insights into how they might learn and develop at a given college. To help in the college exploration process, NSSE developed *A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College* to provide students and their families key questions to ask during campus visits.

The following responses were provided by 311 Concordia Irvine students on the 2013 survey.



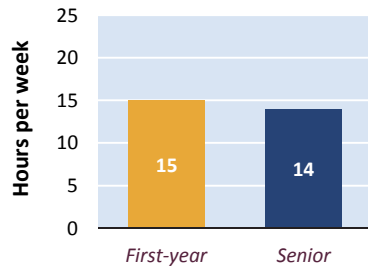
*A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College* is available at [nsse.iub.edu/html/pocket\\_guide.cfm](http://nsse.iub.edu/html/pocket_guide.cfm)



## Academics

### How much time do students spend studying each week?

First-year (FY) students spent an average of 15 hours per week preparing for class while seniors spent an average of 14 hours per week.



### Do courses challenge students to do their best?<sup>a</sup>

59% of FY students reported that their courses 'highly' challenged them to do their best work.

### How much writing is expected?

In an academic year, FY students were assigned an average of 55 pages of writing and seniors estimated they were assigned an average of 81 pages.

### How much reading is expected?

FY students estimated they read an average of 7 hours per week and seniors read, on average, 7 hours.

### How often do students make course presentations?<sup>b</sup>

64% of FY students and 68% of seniors 'frequently' gave course presentations.

### Do class discussions and assignments include the perspectives of diverse groups of people?<sup>b</sup>

66% of FY students 'frequently' included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments.

### Are students expected to use numbers or statistics throughout their coursework?<sup>b</sup>

46% of FY students 'frequently' used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue; 52% of seniors 'frequently' reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information.

## Experiences with Faculty

### Are faculty members accessible and supportive?<sup>c</sup>

61% of FY students gave the quality of their interactions with faculty a 'high' rating.

### How often do students talk with faculty members or advisors about their career plans?<sup>b</sup>

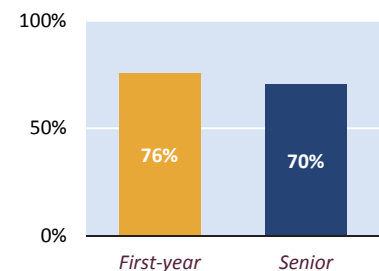
43% of FY and 61% of seniors 'frequently' discussed career plans with faculty.

### Do faculty members clearly explain course goals and requirements?

84% of FY students said instructors clearly explained course goals and requirements 'quite a bit' or 'very much.'

### Do students receive prompt and detailed feedback on tests and assignments?<sup>d</sup>

76% of FY students and 70% of seniors said instructors 'substantially' gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments.



### How often do students talk with faculty members outside class about what they are learning?<sup>b</sup>

31% of FY students 'frequently' discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class.

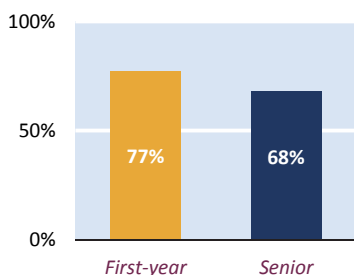
### How many students work on research projects with faculty?

9% of FY students and 34% of seniors worked on a research project with a faculty member.

## Learning with Peers

### How often do students work together on class projects and assignments?<sup>b</sup>

77% of FY students and 68% of seniors 'frequently' worked with their peers on course projects and assignments.



### Do students help each other understand difficult material?<sup>b</sup>

69% of seniors 'frequently' explained course material to one or more students.

### How often do students work together to prepare for exams?<sup>b</sup>

75% of FY students 'frequently' prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students.

### How often do students interact with others who have different viewpoints or who come from different economic backgrounds?<sup>b</sup>

80% of FY students 'frequently' had discussions with people with different political views; 82% of FY students 'frequently' had discussions with people from a different economic background.

## Campus Environments

### Do students use learning support services (tutors, writing center)?<sup>d</sup>

89% of FY students said the institution 'substantially' emphasized the use of learning support services.

### How satisfied are students with academic advising?<sup>c</sup>

56% of FY students and 42% of seniors gave the quality of their interactions with academic advisors a 'high' rating.

### How well do students get along with each other?<sup>c</sup>

74% of FY students gave the quality of their interactions with their peers a 'high' rating.

### How do students evaluate their entire educational experience at this institution?

91% of FY and 94% of seniors rated their entire educational experience at this institution as 'excellent' or 'good.'

## Rich Educational Experiences

### What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?

During their first year, 16% of students participated in a learning community. By spring of their senior year, 36% of students had done or were in progress doing a culminating senior experience.

### How many students study in other countries?

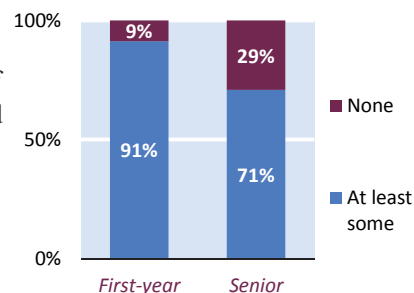
By their senior year, 17% of students had studied abroad.

### How many students get practical, real-world experience through internships or off-campus field experiences?

By spring of their senior year, 59% of students had participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement.

### How many courses include community-based service-learning projects?<sup>e</sup>

91% of FY students and 71% of seniors said 'at least some' of their courses included a community-based service-learning project.



## Notes

- 'Highly' is a 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale where 1 is 'Not at all' and 7 is 'Very much.'
- 'Frequently' is 'Often' or 'Very often.'
- A 'High' rating is a 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale where 1 is 'Poor' and 7 is 'Excellent.'
- 'Substantially' is 'Quite a bit' or 'Very much.'
- 'At least some' is defined by combining responses of 'Some,' 'Most,' and 'All.'



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