

National Survey of Student Engagement 2008

James Madison University



Presentation Outline



- I. Intro: Engagement and NSSE
- II. Preview of Strengths and Concerns
- III. Benchmark Comparisons
- IV. Highpoints (Individual Questions)
- V. Concerns (Individual Questions)
- VI. JMU Impact
 - Freshmen to Seniors
 - Freshmen vs. Transfers

Why Should We Care About Engagement?

- ◆ Involved students (academic and out-of-class) gain more from the college experience than those who are not as involved.
- ◆ Engagement affects:
 - ◆ Persistence and retention
 - ◆ Student learning
 - ◆ Student success
 - ◆ First-year grades
- ◆ Effective institutions channel students to engage in appropriate activities.



NSSE Background



- ◆ Pew Charitable Trusts convened higher education leaders in 1998 to discuss ranking systems.
- ◆ NSSE emerged as alternative to gather information about student engagement.
- ◆ Administered by Indiana University in spring to Seniors and First-Year students.
- ◆ 714 institutions in 2008 (22 of JMU's Carnegie Peers).
- ◆ Questions on institutional expectations, behavior, and student reactions to college.

Strengths

- ◆ Perceived strengths of JMU students include:
 - ◆ Working in **groups**.
 - ◆ **Integrating/organizing** information.
 - ◆ **Well-rounded** educational experience.
 - ◆ **Relationships** (faculty, staff, & students).
 - ◆ **Involved** in the life of the campus.
 - ◆ Feel they are **supported** academically and socially.
 - ◆ **Satisfied** with the JMU experience.

Concerns

- ◆ Concerns raised by JMU student responses:
 - ◆ **Ethnic diversity**: understanding and conversing with students from different ethnic backgrounds.
 - ◆ **Preparation**: time spent studying / preparing for academic work / accountability.
 - ◆ **Contact**: out-of-class contact with faculty (Freshmen).
 - ◆ **Rigor**: additional writing (Freshmen) and quantitative work (Freshmen and Seniors).
 - ◆ **Advising**: continued improvements with advising.

NSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice



- ◆ Five benchmarks created to focus **discussion** on student engagement and guide **improvement**.
- ◆ Performance of JMU students compared with **Carnegie** Classification institutions and with the entire **National** study.
- ◆ Results help determine if the engagement of our **typical student** differs (statistically) from the typical student in comparison groups.

Level of Academic Challenge

Emphasizes the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

◆ JMU Freshmen mean score was **slightly below**¹ their Carnegie peers and **matched** their National peers.

◆ JMU Seniors mean score **matched** their Carnegie and National peers.

- ◆ Preparing for class
- ◆ Number of assignments read
- ◆ Number of papers written
- ◆ Coursework emphasizes:
 - ◆ Analysis
 - ◆ Synthesis
 - ◆ Judgment
 - ◆ Application
- ◆ Worked harder than expected
- ◆ Campus emphasis on time spent studying

1. $p < .01$

Active and Collaborative Learning

Student involvement and collaboration in learning and problem solving.

◆ JMU Freshmen mean score was **above**¹ their Carnegie and National peers.

◆ JMU Seniors mean score was **above**¹ their Carnegie and National peers.

1. $p < .001$

- ◆ Class discussion
- ◆ Class presentations
- ◆ Worked in groups in and out of class
- ◆ Tutored other students
- ◆ Service-learning and community-based projects for class
- ◆ Discussed ideas from class outside of class

Student-Faculty Interaction

Learning how experts think and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty in and out of the classroom.

◆ JMU Freshmen mean score **matched** their Carnegie peers and was **below**¹ their National peers.

◆ JMU Seniors mean score was **above**² their Carnegie and National peers.

◆ 1. $p < .01$

◆ 2. $p < .001$

- ◆ Discussed grades or assignments
- ◆ Talked about career plans
- ◆ Discussed ideas from readings or class with faculty members outside of class
- ◆ Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, etc.)
- ◆ Received prompt feedback on academic performance
- ◆ Worked with faculty on research outside of course

Enriching Educational Experiences

Complementary learning opportunities, diversity experiences, technology utilization, and activities designed to integrate and apply knowledge.

◆ JMU Freshmen mean score was **below**¹ their Carnegie peers and **below**² their National peers.

◆ JMU Seniors mean score **matched** their Carnegie peers and was **above**¹ their National peers.

◆ 1. $p < .001$

◆ 2. $p < .01$

- ◆ Co-curricular activities
- ◆ Practicum, internship, field experience
- ◆ Community service or volunteer work
- ◆ Foreign language coursework
- ◆ Independent study
- ◆ Culminating senior experiences
- ◆ Conversations with students from different backgrounds
- ◆ Electronic media
- ◆ Learning communities

Supportive Campus Environment

Perception that institution is committed to their success; cultivation of positive campus relationships.

- ◆ JMU Freshmen mean score was **above**¹ their Carnegie and National peers.

- ◆ JMU Seniors mean score was **above**¹ their Carnegie and National peers.

◆ 1. $p < .001$

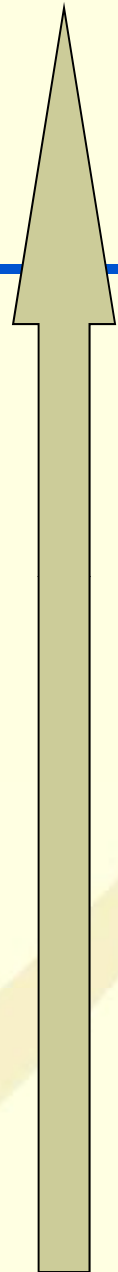
- ◆ Campus provides support for academic success
- ◆ Campus help students cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family)
- ◆ Campus provides support for social interaction
- ◆ Quality of relationships with
 - ◆ Other students
 - ◆ Faculty members
 - ◆ Administrative personnel

NSSE Benchmark	Comparison		
	JMU	Carnegie	NSSE 2008
Level of Academic Challenge: How challenging is JMU's intellectual and creative work?	FY	-	
	SR		
Active/Collaborative Learning Are our students actively involved in learning individually and with others?	FY	+	+
	SR	+	+
Student-Faculty Interaction Do our students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?	FY		-
	SR	+	+
Enriching Educational Experiences Do our students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?	FY	-	-
	SR		+
Supportive Campus Environment Do our students feel JMU is committed to their success?	FY	+	+
	SR	+	+

High Points

Individual items in which the mean of our students' responses were higher than the mean of their Carnegie and/or their National peers' responses.

- ◆ Frequency (how often)
- ◆ Quantity (how much)
- ◆ Quality (how good)
- ◆ Emphasis (how important to JMU)



High Points:

Academic and Intellectual Experiences

JMU Freshmen and Seniors were **more likely** than their **Carnegie** and **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Making class presentations.
- ◆ Integrating ideas and information from various sources.
- ◆ Working in groups.
- ◆ Coursework emphasized making judgments about the value of information and assessing the soundness of those conclusions.
- ◆ JMU contributed to their speaking skills.

High Points: Institutional Environment

JMU Freshmen and Seniors were **more likely** than their **Carnegie** and **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Attending campus events and activities.
- ◆ JMU provided the support they needed to succeed academically and socially.
- ◆ JMU helped them cope with non-academic responsibilities.
- ◆ High quality relationships with faculty, staff, and students.



High Points: National Peers Only

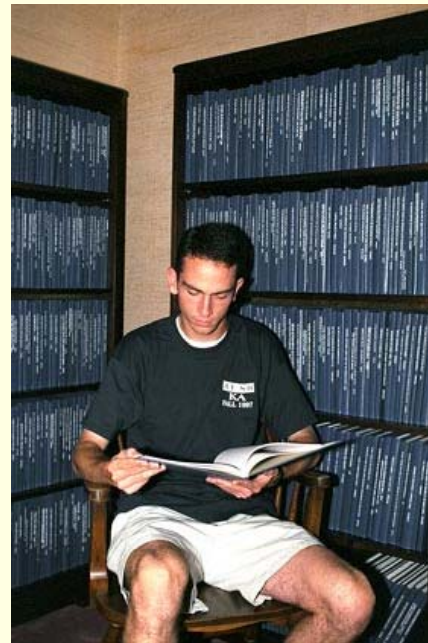
JMU Freshmen and Seniors were **more likely** than their **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Having serious conversations with students different from them in religious beliefs, political opinions, personal values.
- ◆ Exercising or participating in physical fitness activities.
- ◆ Acquiring a broad general education.
- ◆ Acquiring job or work related knowledge and skills.
- ◆ Developing a code of values and ethics.
- ◆ Contributing to the welfare of their community.
- ◆ High satisfaction with the entire educational experience at JMU.
- ◆ If they could start over again, they would still go to JMU.

High Points: Freshmen

JMU Freshmen were **more likely** than their **Carnegie** and **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Reading a greater number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length course-packs.



High Points: Seniors

JMU Seniors were **more likely** than their **Carnegie** and **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Using electronic media/using computers in academic work.
- ◆ Receiving prompt feedback from faculty.
- ◆ Working with faculty on activities other than coursework.
- ◆ Organizing information and experiences into more complex interpretations.
- ◆ Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.
- ◆ Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project, etc.).

Additional High Points: Seniors

JMU Seniors were **more likely** than their **Carnegie** and **National** peers to report:

- ◆ They learned something that changed the way they understood a concept.
- ◆ Examining the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic.
- ◆ Tried to better understand someone else's views and perspectives.
- ◆ Understanding themselves.
- ◆ Developing a deepened sense of spirituality.

Concerns

Items in which the mean of our students' responses were lower than the mean of the Carnegie and/or the National peers' responses.



Concerns: Freshmen

JMU Freshmen were **less likely** than their **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Number of books read on their own.
- ◆ Number of papers or reports 20 pages or more.
- ◆ Participated in a learning community or other formal cohort program.
- ◆ Working on research projects with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.
- ◆ Independent study or self-designed major.

Concerns: Freshmen and Seniors

JMU Freshmen and Seniors were **less likely** than their **Carnegie** and **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Having serious conversations with or understanding students of a different race or ethnicity than their own.
- ◆ Number of problem sets that take more than an hour.
- ◆ Preparing 2 or more drafts of a paper or assignment.
- ◆ Time spent preparing for class (studying, reading, homework, and other academic activities).
- ◆ Institutional expectations for significant amounts of time studying and doing academic work.

Concerns: National Peers Only

JMU Freshmen and Seniors were **more likely** than their **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Time spent relaxing and socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.).

JMU Seniors were **more likely** than their **National** peers to report:

- ◆ Coming to class without completing assignments.

Impact of Being at JMU

- ◆ Items in which Freshmen scored below ↓ and Seniors scored above ↑ their **Carnegie** and/or **National** peers:
 - ◆ Asked questions in class / contributed to class discussions.
 - ◆ Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor.
 - ◆ Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.
 - ◆ Discussed ideas from readings or class with faculty members outside class.
 - ◆ Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.
 - ◆ Community service / volunteer work.
 - ◆ Study abroad.



Impact of Starting at JMU

- ◆ After controlling for class rank, Native students at JMU scored significantly higher than Transfer students on:
 - ◆ Learning something that changed the way they understood an issue or concept.
 - ◆ Participating in practicum, internship, community service, study abroad, culminating senior experience.
 - ◆ Acquiring knowledge and skills in general education, learning on their own, understanding themselves, solving complex problems, and developing values and ethics.
 - ◆ Participating in physical fitness, co-curricular activities.
 - ◆ Feeling supported for academic and social success.
 - ◆ Evaluating the JMU experience highly.

Summary: Strengths

- ◆ Perceived strengths of JMU students include:
 - ◆ Working in **groups**.
 - ◆ **Integrating/organizing** information.
 - ◆ **Well-rounded** educational experience.
 - ◆ **Relationships** (faculty, staff, & students).
 - ◆ **Involved** in the life of the campus.
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Summary: Concerns

- ◆ Concerns raised by JMU student responses:
 - ◆ **Ethnic diversity**: understanding and conversing with students from different ethnic backgrounds.
 - ◆ **Preparation**: time spent studying / preparing for academic work / accountability.
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 - ◆ **Advising**: continued improvements with advising.

Conclusion

- ◆ 66% of our students have participated in some form of practicum or internship by the time they graduate.
- ◆ 73% of our students have participated in community service by the time they graduate.
- ◆ 87% of our freshmen feel that JMU places substantial emphasis on academics.
- ◆ 89% of our seniors have discussed career plans with faculty.
- ◆ 91% of our seniors would choose JMU again if they were starting over.
- ◆ 92% of our freshmen report a favorable image of JMU.

2008 JMU NSSE Summary

<http://www.jmu.edu/stusuccess/>

NSSE (top left)