OUT-OF-CLASSROOM STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AT VIRGINIA TECH: THE EFFECTS OF RACE, GENDER, AND CLASS YEAR ON ENGAGEMENT LEVELS AND THEIR USE AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' GRADES

by

Jaime L. Williams

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APPROVED:

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Dr. Joan B. Hirt, chairperson

_____ _____

Dr. Steven M. Janosik Dr. Catherine T. Amelink

_____

Dr. Cynthia P. Bonner

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Student Engagement at Virginia Tech: The Effects of Race, Gender, and Class Year on Engagement Levels and Their Use as Predictors of Students' Grades

Executive Summary

Engagement is one of the better predictors of learning and personal development among college students. College and university studies have identified differences in student engagement based upon demographic variables associated with students (Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayek, 2004; Kezar, 2006; Laird, et al., 2007).

The Division of Student Affairs at Virginia Tech was interested in out-of-classroom engagement levels of students based on race, gender, and class standing, and wanted to determine if student engagement could serve as a significant predictor of students' grades. The findings revealed that:

- Virginia Tech students are highly engaged in exercise activities, practicum or internship experiences, and community service and volunteer work
- Majority students participated in physical fitness activities significantly more frequently than underrepresented students; however, underrepresented students participated in artistic activities more frequently than majority students
- Women were significantly more likely than men to report planned or actual participation in artistic activities, internships, community service work, and study abroad programs, whereas men were more likely to participate in physical fitness activities
- First-year students were significantly more likely to report planned or actual participation in artistic events, internships, community service work, learning communities, and study abroad programs

- Physical fitness activities as well as planned or actual participation in internships and study abroad programs had a positive influence on students' grades

Based on these findings, an increased awareness of study abroad programs at Virginia Tech is recommended. In addition, it is advised that Residential Life develop a strategic plan for making learning communities a requirement of first-year students, and that Recreational Sports develop assessment to determine the reasons for higher majority student participation in physical fitness activities.

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Section One

Introduction and Background

College students have multiple opportunities to become engaged in out-of-classroom activities at institutions of higher education. Out-of classroom engagement can be thought of as participation in activities such as club sports and student organizations. More formal and intentional methods of out-of-classroom engagement sponsored by colleges and universities are numerous as well. These methods are evident in the growth on campuses of living-learning communities, peer mentoring programs, participation in student government, wellness programs, and many others.

Enriching educational experiences that promote student learning are associated with engagement outside of the classroom (National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], 2000). In addition, administrators should implement a variety of quality programs and initiatives that address student engagement (Kezar, 2006; Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Williams, & Holmes, 2007). Studies have identified differences in student engagement based upon the size of the institution as well as demographic variables associated with the students enrolled (Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayek, 2004; Kezar, 2006; Laird, et al., 2007).

A large body of research on student learning has concluded that students who are actively involved in co-curricular activities gain more from their college experience than students who are not as involved (Astin 1977, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini 1991, 2005). Kuh (2003) asserts that engagement is generally considered to be among the better predictors of learning and personal development among college students. For instance, student engagement is linked positively to desirable learning outcomes such as critical thinking and grades (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006).

The learning that takes place as a result of student engagement does not cease upon graduation from college. The very act of being engaged also adds to the foundation of skills and dispositions that are essential to a productive and satisfying life after college. In other words, students who are involved in educationally productive activities inside and outside of the classroom are developing cognitive and affective abilities that increase their capacity for continuous learning and personal development (Shulman, 2002).

College and university administrators can enhance these opportunities for engagement and student learning by the quality and quantity of the activities they offer as well as how they communicate their expectations for involvement to their students. Although students themselves largely control their levels of engagement, institutional culture, climate, and practices also play a role in determining what opportunities exist for engagement and how much students take advantage of those opportunities (Laird, et al., 2007). For instance, campuses develop and offer learning communities, first-year experience programs, undergraduate research programs, mentoring programs, co-curricular programs, teaching and learning centers, honors programs, and other specialized units in an attempt to more effectively engage students (Kezar, 2006).

One factor that can influence student engagement is the size of the student body at an institution. Over the last century there has been periodic concern about whether institutions with high enrollments were losing their potential to create effective learning environments (Kezar, 2006). Although impersonal and passive environments can be found within small or large campuses, research has shown that these environments are more common in larger institutions (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Institutions consumed by sheer numbers of students can generate climates where the students feel forgotten. Students at large institutions have less direct contact with faculty due to larger class sizes and may find it more difficult to establish a

support network (Kezar, 2006). These elements negatively impact student engagement. This lack of engagement leads to lower levels of student learning (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Love & Love, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

There are variables other than enrollment that are associated with differences in engagement. Recent studies have examined differences in engagement among students based on race and ethnicity, sex, and year in school (Harper, et al., 2004; Laird, et al., 2007; Pike & Kuh, 2005, 2006; Zhao, Carini, & Kuh, 2005). For example, students from underrepresented groups on predominantly white campuses participate in fewer out-of-classroom activities due to impediments to their engagement, such as a negative racial or ethnic campus climate (Hurtado & Ponjuan 1999, as cited in Laird, et al., 2007). Differences by gender have also been identified. National trends show that women are more likely to attend art exhibits, plays, and theatrical performances whereas men are more likely to spend significant time each week relaxing or socializing (NSSE 2006 Annual Report). A student's year in school can also affect engagement. Seniors are more likely to participate in learning communities or related programs than first year students at research universities (NSSE 2006 Annual Report).

Given the relationship between engagement and student learning and development, the engagement patterns of specific groups need to be examined to discover if, how, and why students with certain characteristics are more engaged than others. This information can help to inform college and university administrators about initiatives on their campuses that need the most attention to ensure that learning is enhanced for all students.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (OVPSA) at Virginia Tech was interested in investigating the levels of engagement outside of the classroom environment among certain populations of undergraduates. Student responses to select items on the National Survey

of Student Engagement (NSSE) provided the means to examine student engagement more closely.

Background

The mission of the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) at Virginia Tech is to "promote students' academic success, personal growth, and development of life skills" (DSA Mission Statement, found at www.dsa.vt.edu/about/mission.php). The DSA provides programs and services to more than 28,000 students on the central campus in Blacksburg, Virginia. The division's programs are aimed at promoting ethical, social, civic, leadership, and career development as well as encouraging productive and healthy lifestyles. The environments managed by the DSA, such as student unions, residence halls, and dining centers, are intended to be inclusive and welcoming and contribute to a just, caring community. Finally, the DSA offers services that are considered necessary for students to successfully function on the Virginia Tech campus (DSA Mission Statement, found at www.dsa.vt.edu/about/mission.php).

In the DSA Strategic Plan for 2006-2012, the OVPSA identifies specific goals pertaining to engagement levels of Virginia Tech students. In an attempt to contribute to the holistic educational experiences of undergraduates, the DSA affirms that more participation in leadership development, co-curricular, and residential learning programs should be encouraged in students from diverse backgrounds. In addition, the OVPSA is interested in determining whether engagement in extra-curricular and wellness activities enhances students' holistic experiences at Virginia Tech. Participation in such out-of-classroom activities supports the DSA mission to expand personal growth, advance social development, and improve the overall quality of life for students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the out-of-classroom engagement among Virginia Tech undergraduate students. Differences in the frequency of involvement based on students' race, gender, and class standing were also examined. Finally, this study determined whether indicators of out-of-classroom involvement significantly predict students' grades. This report analyzed data from the NSSE survey that was administered in spring of 2008 to first year students and seniors at Virginia Tech.

Staff in the OVPSA were interested in addressing the following research questions:

1. How often are Virginia Tech students engaged in out-of-classroom activities?
2. Does the amount of out-of-classroom engagement differ based on students' race, gender, or class year?
3. Are indicators of out-of-classroom engagement significant predictors of students' grades?

For the purposes of this study, out-of-classroom engagement was defined using these two questions from the NSSE instrument:

1. During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?
    - Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance
    - Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities
    - Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)
2. Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?
    - Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
    - Community service or volunteer work

- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together
- Study abroad

In this study, race was defined as majority or under-represented status. Gender was defined by students' self-report on the survey as to whether they were male or female. Finally, the definition of class standing was determined by students' reports of whether they were a freshman or senior at Virginia Tech at the time they completed the NSSE.

Organization of the Study

The following sections provide an overview of the data collection and analysis procedures that were used in conducting the study and the findings from the data analysis. The last section, dedicated to discussion and recommendations, provides additional insight into the results as well as implications for research and practice.

Section Two

Methodology

This section focuses on the methods used in the study. Information on the sample, data collection process, the instrument used in this study, and the analysis procedures are described.

Sample

The sample for this study was comprised of randomly selected first-year students and seniors who participated in the NSSE survey at Virginia Tech during the 2008 spring semester. The resulting sample size was N = 1,882. Table 1 reports demographic information about the students in the final sample:

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Sample

Demographic Identification	Sample	
	N	%
Race		
American Indian or other Native American	5	0%
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	102	5%
Black or African American	38	2%
White (non-Hispanic)	1,268	67%
Mexican or Mexican American	6	0%
Puerto Rican	9	0%
Other Hispanic or Latino	23	1%
Multiracial	31	2%

Other	14	0%
Gender		
Male	823	44%
Female	748	40%
Class Year		
Freshman	625	33%
Senior	757	40%
Grades		
A	265	14%
A-	247	13%
B+	343	18%
B	398	21%
B-	156	8%
C+	101	5%
C	49	2%
C- or lower	13	0%

Note: In this table *N* does not equal 1,882 and percentages do not equal 100% due to participants who did not provide demographic information.

Instrumentation

The NSSE was administered at Virginia Tech to measure levels of engagement among undergraduate students. The NSSE was developed by professionals at the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, the Indiana University Center for Survey Research, and the

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. The survey is designed to gauge the extent to which students are involved in good educational practices and what they gain from their college experiences (Kuh, 2001). Items on the instrument ask respondents to report the frequency with which they participate in activities or exhibit behaviors that are highly correlated with desirable learning and personal development outcomes expected from attending college. Students who respond to the survey must reflect on what they are contributing to and gaining from their college experience (Kuh, 2003).

In the 2008 administration of the NSSE, participants responded to a total of 28 items. For the purposes of this study the DSA selected two specific questions to examine student engagement in out-of-classroom experiences at Virginia Tech.

The first item from the NSSE survey queried students about the frequency of their participation in extra-curricular activities. Respondents were asked, "During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?" Students indicated how often they had attended an art exhibit or play, participated in physical fitness activities, and pursued the enhancement of their spirituality. Participants responded to this question on the following scale: *4 = Very often, 3 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, and 1 = Never.*

The second item asked respondents to report their involvement in out-of-classroom activities in which they have participated or intend to participate in while enrolled at Virginia Tech. Respondents were asked, "Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?" The sub-item choices that were selected from this question for analysis were: practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience or clinical assignment; community service or volunteer work; participate in a learning community; and,

study abroad. Students responded to each activity listed by indicating *4 = Done, 3 = Plan to do, 2 = Do not plan to do,* or *1 = Have not decided.*

Reliability and Validity

A series of measures have been taken to ensure that the NSSE instrument is reliable and valid. Psychometric analyses to test for reliability and validity have been performed following each administration of the NSSE, including field tests conducted in the 1999 pilot study (Kuh, 2003).

The NSSE is always administered in the spring semester of each school year. The students who are randomly selected to participate are first-year students and seniors enrolled in the spring semester and who were enrolled in the previous semester at their institution. Therefore, students answering the survey questions have had enough experience within the institution to respond accurately (Kuh, 2003).

In addition, most of the survey items have been previously used in other reputable student research programs. Responses to the NSSE items have been shown to be generally consistent with evidence from other long-standing student questionnaires and with results from achievement tests (Kuh, 2003).

Finally, the NSSE has been found to correspond with five general conditions that demonstrate construct validity in an instrument: the information requested is known to the respondents; the questions are phrased clearly; the items refer to recent activities in which students have participated; the participants feel the questions warrant serious responses; and, answering the questions does not embarrass or violate the privacy of the respondents (Kuh, 2003). In all, the NSSE is considered a highly valid and reliable instrument.

Data Collection Procedures

Before the NSSE was administered, approval to collect the data was received from the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech. Once approved, the NSSE was administered by utilizing the services of the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (IUCPR). Virginia Tech provided the IUCPR a data file containing contact information on all first-year students and seniors. Virginia Tech also sent IUCPR appropriate letters of endorsement, including acknowledgement of informed consent, which could be included in the invitation to participate in the survey. Students were invited to participate in the NSSE through an email that was sent by the IUCPR and that contained a Web link to the survey. By clicking on the Web link Virginia Tech students provided their consent to participate in the study. The survey was open from February until May of 2008. The IUCPR also sent follow-up emails to non-respondents while the survey was open for data collection. When data collection closed in May 2008, all responses were compiled by the IUCPR in an Excel file and sent to Virginia Tech. This Excel file served as the final data set for this study and was subsequently analyzed.

Data Analysis Procedures

Three types of analyses were conducted to answer the research questions in this study using the JMP statistical software. Analyses included descriptive statistics, chi-square, and multiple regression.

The first research question asked how often Virginia Tech students are engaged in out-of-classroom activities. Descriptive statistics were run to determine how often students participated in various activities.

The second research question asked if students' race, gender, or year in school were related to how much they are engaged in out-of-class activities. Chi-square analyses were

conducted to determine if a significant correlation existed between out-of-classroom engagement and the race, gender, and year in school of the participants. For each chi-square analysis, all response options across the items were used in analysis and the responses of *often* and *very often* were collapsed for reporting purposes for the first item analyzed. For the second item analyzed, the responses of *done* and *plan to do* were collapsed for reporting purposes.

The data set needed to be recoded before the chi-square analysis could be conducted on students' race. The NSSE provides several different sub-classifications for race including: American Indian or Native American; Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander; Black or African American; White (non-Hispanic); Mexican or Mexican American; Puerto Rican; Other Hispanic or Latino; Multiracial; or Other. Respondents also had the option to select "I prefer not to respond." Students that indicated they were Caucasian were grouped as majority students and coded as '1.' If students indicated they were any other race classification listed they were coded as being underrepresented and assigned the value of '2.' Students who selected "I prefer not to respond" were coded with a null value so that those responses were not a part of the analysis. Following the recoding, the data set was imported into JMP and the chi-square analysis was performed.

In addition, the data set needed to be recoded for the chi-square analysis to be conducted on students' year in school. Even though the NSSE was sent to a random selection of first-year students and seniors at Virginia Tech, the options of *freshman, sophomore, junior, senior,* and *unclassified* can be selected when students are responding to their year in school. Some students responded that they were a different classification other than a first-year student or senior. The responses of sophomore, junior, or unclassified were coded with a null value and were not

included in the analysis. Once recoded, the data was imported into JMP and was subsequently analyzed.

The final research question examined the relationship of out-of-classroom engagement and students' grades. The self-reported grades provided by the respondents on the NSSE were used for this analysis. Regression analyses were used to determine if student engagement was a significant predictor of the respondents' grades.

Conclusion

This study focused on determining the levels of student engagement in freshmen and seniors at Virginia Tech, and whether engagement levels differed by students' race, gender, and year in school. I also examined whether student engagement was a significant predictor of GPA. To answer the research questions, I concentrated on students' responses to two items from the NSSE instrument. Finally, I analyzed the data using descriptive statistics, chi-square, and regression analyses.

Section Three

Results

In this section I present the findings from the data analysis and answer the three research questions posed in the study. First, I reveal the descriptive statistics that determine how much Virginia Tech students are engaged. Next, I present the findings from the chi-square analyses that establish the relationship of race, gender, and year in school to student engagement levels. Finally, I disclose the results from the regression analysis that examines whether indicators of student engagement significantly predict students' grades.

Engagement among Virginia Tech Students Compared to National Norms

The first research question examined the engagement levels among Virginia Tech undergraduate students. Descriptive statistics were run to determine how often students are engaged in out-of-classroom activities. These results were then compared to national norms that are reported in the NSSE Mean Comparisons report (http://www.aap.vt.edu/2008%20VT %20NSSE.htm). Based on responses from first-year students and seniors, Virginia Tech students are highly engaged in exercise and physical fitness activities (67.4%). The majority of participants also indicated that they currently participate in or plan to participate in practicum, internship, or field experiences (83.1%) as well as community service or volunteer work (84.7%). Virginia Tech students indicated lower levels of engagement in activities such as artistic exhibits and performances (25.8%); worship, meditation, or prayer (29.6%); learning communities (32.4%); and study abroad programs (35.8%). Virginia Tech students reported significantly higher engagement levels than the national norms in physical fitness activities and somewhat higher levels in internships and in community service or volunteer work. Participation in learning communities among Virginia Tech students was much lower than the national

average, whereas engagement in artistic and spiritual activities was somewhat lower than the national average. The level of participation in study abroad programs was similar between the two groups. Table 2 illustrates the results of the Virginia Tech statistics compared to the national average.

Table 2

Engagement among Virginia Tech Students Compared to National Norms (*N* = 1,573)

Variables	Virginia Tech % Reporting Often or Very Often *N* = 1,573	National Average % Reporting Often or Very Often
During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?		
Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	25.8%	29%
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	67.4%	56%
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	29.6%	31.5%
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?		
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	83.1%	79%
Community service or volunteer work	84.7%	77%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	32.4%	40%
Study abroad	35.8%	35%

Student Engagement Levels Based on Race, Gender, and Year in School

The second research question addressed whether there were differences in out-of-classroom engagement levels among Virginia Tech undergraduate students based on race, gender, and year in school. Chi-square analyses were run to answer this research question.

I started by determining whether there were significant differences in levels of engagement between majority students and underrepresented groups. The race of the respondents served as the dependent variable and the independent variables were the items selected from the NSSE instrument to measure out-of-classroom engagement for this study. There were significant differences between majority and underrepresented students in the frequency of reported exercise or participation in physical fitness, Pearson x^2 (N = 1,492) = 16.792, p = .0008. Students from underrepresented groups engaged in these activities significantly less often than majority students. There were also significant differences between these two groups on reported frequency of attending art exhibits, plays, or dance and theatre performances, Pearson x^2 (N = 1,492) = 9.106, p = .0279. In this case, however, underrepresented students engaged in such activities significantly more often than their majority counterparts. Table 3 displays the results of the chi-square analysis for student engagement levels based on students' race.

Table 3

Chi-square Results for Student Engagement by Race
(N = 1,487)

Variables	% Responding Very Often or Often		Pearson Chi-Square	p value
	Majority (N = 1,263)	Underrepresented Groups (N = 227)		
During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?				

Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	24.62%	33.33%	9.106	0.027*
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	69.17%	60.36%	16.792	0.000*
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	28.33%	35.52%	6.410	0.093
	% Responding Done/Plan to Do		Pearson Chi-Square	*p* value
	Majority (*N* = 1,261)	Underrepresented Groups (*N* = 226)		
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?				
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	83.44%	84.65%	1.847	0.605
Community service or volunteer work	85.72%	83.33%	1.327	0.723
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	30.46%	38.50%	5.987	0.112
Study abroad	34.66%	36.56%	3.039	0.386

* = Significant at the .05 level

A chi-square analysis was also performed to evaluate the engagement levels in out-of-classroom activities based on students' gender. The dependent variable in this analysis was the gender of the respondents' and the items selected for analysis from the NSSE served as the independent variables. Results reveal that women are significantly more likely to attend art exhibits, plays, or dance and theatre performances than are men, Pearson $x^2(N = 1,673) = 33.142$,

p = .0001. Men, however, are significantly more likely than women to engage in exercise or physical fitness activities, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}675) = 16.019$, p = .0011. In addition, females were significantly more likely to report having participated in or planning to participate in a practicum, internship, and/or field experience, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}563) = 25.666$, p = .0001. Women were also significantly more likely than men to engage in community service or volunteer work, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}562) = 57.289$, p = .0001 and participate in study abroad programs, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}560) = 53.522$, p = .0001. Table 4 illustrates the results of out-of-classroom engagement based on students' gender.

Table 4

Chi-square Results for Student Engagement by Gender
(N = 1,673)

Variables	% Responding Very Often or Often		Pearson Chi-Square	*p* value
	Male (N = 884)	Female (N = 789)		
During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?				
Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	23.57%	28.39%	33.142	0.000*
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	69.87%	64.52%	16.019	0.001*
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	28.30%	30.97%	5.497	0.139
	% Responding Done/Plan to Do		Pearson Chi-Square	*p* value
	Male (N = 816)	Female (N = 743)		

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?				
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	80.44%	86.31%	25.666	0.000*
Community service or volunteer work	78.92%	92.09%	57.289	0.000*
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	31.57%	32.44%	1.660	0.646
Study abroad	26.97%	44.89%	63.522	0.000*

* = Significant at the .05 level

The final chi-square analysis performed for the second research question sought to determine if engagement in out-of-classroom activities is associated with students' year in school. The respondents' class year served as the dependent variable and the items used for analysis from the NSSE served as the independent variables. There were significant differences by class year on reported attendance at art exhibits, plays, or dance and theatre performances, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}376) = 21.237$, $p = .0007$ and in physical fitness activities, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}377) = 8.327$, $p = .0400$. In addition, significant differences were found in planned or actual participation in practicum, internship, and/or field experiences, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}374) = 811.271$, $p = .0001$. Class year was also significantly related to students planning to or participating in community service and volunteer work, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}373) = 158.476$, $p = .0001$ and in planned or actual participation in learning communities, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}371) = 260.315$, $p = .0001$. Finally, significant differences by students' class year were found on reported frequency of planning to or participating in study abroad programs, Pearson $x^2(N = 1{,}374) = 592.355$, $p = .0001$. In all instances, first year students were more likely than their senior counterparts to

engage in these activities. Table 5 depicts the results of engagement in out-of-classroom activities based on students' year in school.

Table 5

Chi-square Results for Student Engagement by Class Year
(*N* = 1,371)

Variables	% Responding Very Often or Often		Pearson Chi-Square	*p* value
	First-year Students (*N* = 621)	Seniors (*N* = 754)		
During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?				
Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	27.53%	24.90%	21.237	0.000*
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	71.59%	64.99%	8.327	0.040*
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	32.16%	28.91%	5.386	0.146
	% Responding Done/Plan to Do		Pearson Chi-Square	*p* value
	First-year Students (*N* = 620)	Seniors (*N* = 750)		
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?				
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	89.05%	78.62%	811.271	0.000*
Community service or volunteer work	90.16%	81.54%	158.476	0.000*

Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	39.94%	25.34%	260.315	0.000*
Study abroad	47.35%	25.63%	592.355	0.000*

* = Significant at the .05 level

The Influence of Out-of-Classroom Engagement on Students' Grades

To answer the third research question, whether out-of-classroom engagement was a significant predictor of students' self-reported spring semester grades, a regression analysis was performed. A stepwise regression analysis showed that exercise or physical fitness activities (t = 2.04, p = .0419), planning to or participating in practicum, internship, and/or field experiences (t = 3.87, p = .0001), and planning to or participating in study abroad programs (t = 2.43, p = .0151) are significantly related to students' grades. Each of these variables had a positive influence on the grades of the respondents. Table 6 reports the regression results of the influence of engagement on students' grades.

Table 6

Regression Results Illustrating the Influence of Out-of-Class Involvement on Students' Grades (N = 1,542)

Variables	*Beta*	*t*	Std. Error	Sig.
During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?				
Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	.045	0.89	0.051	.373
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	.091	2.04	0.045	.042*
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	.057	1.45	0.039	.148

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?				
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	.193	3.87	0.049	.000*
Community service or volunteer work	.089	1.81	0.049	.070
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	.023	0.55	0.042	.583
Study abroad	.116	2.43	0.047	.015*

*= significant at the .05 level

Conclusion

In summary, the descriptive statistics revealed that Virginia Tech students are highly or moderately engaged in physical exercise, practicum, and community service activities at higher levels than national averages. Virginia Tech students participate in fine arts activities, spirituality activities, and learning communities at some lower levels than national averages. The engagement levels of Virginia Tech students were on par with national norms in study abroad participation. The chi-square analyses performed for the second research question illustrated that there were significant differences in engagement by gender and year in school, but differences by race were not as prevalent. The stepwise regression that was performed to answer the third research question showed that three of the variables used in analysis had a positive influence on students' grades (physical fitness, internship, and study abroad). These results offer some interesting implications for future practice and assessment.

Section Four

Discussion and Implications

This section discusses in detail the results of this study and offers possible explanations of the findings. Implications for practice and future research are suggested based on the results.

Discussion of Findings

The first research question in this study asked about the frequency with which students at Virginia Tech are engaged in out-of-classroom activities. The results showed that compared to national averages, the engagement levels of Virginia Tech students were comparable; however, there were some subtle differences. Slightly higher levels of engagement than the national average were reported among Virginia Tech students in exercise and physical fitness activities as well as planning to or participating in practicum, internship or field experiences, community service or volunteer work, and study abroad programs. However, Virginia Tech students demonstrated lower levels of engagement than national averages in attending art exhibits, plays, theatre or dance performances, activities to enhance their spirituality, and in planned or actual participation in learning communities.

Several reasons could be posed for the variances in levels of engagement between Virginia Tech students and the national averages. First, Virginia Tech students could be more engaged in exercise and physical fitness activities because of the multiple opportunities there are to participate in such programs. With two gyms on campus and a multitude of club sports teams, Virginia Tech offers many ways in which students can take control of their physical fitness. These opportunities are also widely publicized to Virginia Tech students at freshman orientation and through other marketing avenues throughout campus.

Second, the results of this study suggest that Virginia Tech students may be more engaged in practicum and internship programs due to the encouragement they receive from faculty and staff and the expectation that students take advantage of these opportunities. Several highly-attended job fairs are offered at Virginia Tech each year for students seeking internships as well as for students seeking employment after graduation. Also, several academic programs on campus, particularly in engineering- and business-related majors, expect students to participate in internships and field experiences as part of the curriculum. The College of Engineering and Pamplin College of Business account for 9,300 undergraduate students at Virginia Tech, roughly 33% of the student population at the central campus. The large number of students enrolled in these colleges could explain the high number of students engaged in internship and field experiences.

In addition, Virginia Tech students seemed more engaged in community service or volunteer work because of the new community service initiative on campus, VT Engage. This program, spurred by the events of April 16, 2007, has launched a campus-wide attitude of giving back to the surrounding communities in honor and memory of the victims of the Virginia Tech tragedy. With the conception of the VT Engage program, more than 100,000 community service hours were pledged by Virginia Tech students, faculty and staff. The recent implementation of this program could provide a plausible explanation for the high levels of community service and volunteer work reported by Virginia Tech students.

There are also possible explanations for the lower levels of engagement by Virginia Tech students compared to the national averages. Students at Virginia Tech could be less engaged in activities to enhance their spirituality due to the nature of the liberal learning that takes place during college. Research indicates that college students become less rigid in their religious

activities by the time they are seniors (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006). Also, there is one small facility on campus, the War Memorial Chapel, which is dedicated to students' spirituality. The maximum capacity of this building is 260 people and a stigma exists that the Chapel is strictly Christian in affiliation while, in reality, it is nondenominational. One final reason that might explain the lack of spiritual participation among Virginia Tech students may be that they are not aware that there is a non-denominational place on campus devoted to spiritual reflection and meditation.

The second research question addressed the differences in out-of-classroom engagement among Virginia Tech students based on race, gender, and year in school. The results revealed that significant differences existed between majority and underrepresented groups in the frequency of participating in exercise or physical fitness activities and in attending art exhibits, plays, dance, or theatre performances. Underrepresented groups reported higher levels of participation in art exhibits, plays, dance and theatre performances, while majority groups were more likely to participate in exercise or physical fitness activities.

The higher levels of engagement in art exhibits, plays, dance, or theatre performances among students from underrepresented groups could be due to the nature of the student organizations in which they participate. Student organizations at Virginia Tech that have a cultural or ethnic focus tend to draw a certain population of students. Examples of this include the Asian American Student Union (AASU), the Black Student Alliance (BSA), and the Indian Student Association (ISA), to name a few. These groups are active on the Virginia Tech campus and organize large-scale cultural shows each year that highlight customs of their native countries or traditions specific to their respective groups. Formal data were not examined on the reasons behind the engagement levels of underrepresented students, but involvement in these

organizations could explain their higher engagement levels in artistic-related activities at Virginia Tech.

The second research question also addressed engagement levels in Virginia Tech students based on their gender. Women reported higher frequencies of attending art exhibits, plays, dance, or theatre performances as well as participating or planning to participate in practicum, internship or field experiences, community service or volunteer work, learning communities, and study abroad programs. Men reported significantly higher frequencies of participating in exercise or physical fitness activities.

Women may be reporting higher frequencies of engagement in practicum, internship, and field experiences based on a need to gain an edge on their male counterparts. Women could be more likely to actively seek these opportunities in male-dominated fields such as engineering to ensure that they are just as competitive as men upon graduation from college.

In addition, women may be reporting higher frequencies of participation in learning communities in an effort to ensure that they feel supported on the Virginia Tech campus. Research shows that students who participate in learning communities report a more supportive campus environment (NSSE 2007 Annual Report). Women may be more likely than men to actively seek a supportive campus environment at a large, research institution like Virginia Tech.

Also, women reported higher levels of engagement than men in study abroad programs. Based on the results of the 2007 administration of the NSSE, women are generally more engaged in study abroad programs than men (NSSE 2007 Annual Report). This may be due to the number of men compared to women in engineering programs at Virginia Tech. Men may perceive that it is not possible to participate in study abroad opportunities due to the fairly rigid curricular structure associated with engineering- or math-related majors. If this is the case, this perception

may explain the low frequency of participation by men in study abroad programs. However, women may be more likely than men to be enrolled in humanities and social sciences majors at Virginia Tech. Nationally, the humanities and social sciences tend to involve more students in study abroad than other majors (NSSE 2007 Annual Report).

Finally, the second research question also asked about the frequency of out-of-classroom engagement based on students' year in school. Significant differences in the frequency of engagement were found in attendance of art exhibits and in plays, dance or theatre performances as well as in physical fitness activities. Significant differences were also found in the planned or actual participation in practicum, internship, and field experiences, community service or volunteer work, learning communities, and in study abroad programs. First-year students reported higher engagement levels in each variable.

First-year students may have reported a higher frequency of involvement in art exhibits, plays, dance, and theatre performances due to the nature of their classes. First-year students typically spend their first year of college taking many of their core curriculum classes which include some courses in the arts and humanities. Many of these classes require that students attend dance, music, or theatre performances as a part of the curriculum. The nature of these required courses for first-year students may contribute to this finding.

Because of high expectations, first-year students may have reported higher frequencies of involvement in all of the variables where they answered that they have done or plan to do the activities. For example, it is highly unlikely that first-year students who responded to the NSSE have already participated in a study abroad program. More than likely, they were reporting that they plan to participate in such an activity. First-year students may have higher expectations for

their out-of-classroom involvement levels than what is ultimately feasible. This may explain why first-year students appeared to be more engaged in out-of-classroom activities than seniors.

The third research question asked whether student engagement in out-of-classroom activities at Virginia Tech was a significant predictor of their grades. Exercising or participating in physical fitness activities, as well as planned or actual participation in practicum, internship, or field experiences and in study abroad programs were positively related to students' grades.

Participating in exercise or physical fitness activities may have a positive influence on students' grades because of the stress relief that exercise can provide. When students are physically fit they feel better overall and exercise may serve as a break from the everyday stress of academia.

Planned or actual participation in practicum, internship, and field experiences as well as study abroad programs may positively influence students' grades due to the relevance of those programs to students' major at Virginia Tech. When students participate in these experiences, they get to apply what they learn in the classroom in practical contexts. Also, by participating in study abroad programs, students may gain a different perspective on the subject matter than what they are used to in the same course on the Virginia Tech campus. It seems possible that getting a different perspective on a subject may enhance students' understanding of the topic.

Implications of Findings

The results of this study were significant for future practice and research. First, many of the colleges and departments on campus could use the results related to study abroad programs. Virginia Tech students' engagement levels in study abroad opportunities were lower overall than national norms. In addition, first-year students were almost twice as likely to plan to participate in a study abroad compared to seniors. To help encourage study abroad among Virginia Tech

students, a study abroad fair is held on campus each year. However, low participation results suggest that there are misconceptions among students that they cannot afford to study abroad or that it would delay graduation. Recent studies indicate that concerns about delayed graduation as well as costs contribute to the low number of students who study abroad nationally (Malmgren & Galvin, 2008). Also, the current study showed that participation in study abroad programs is a significant predictor of students' grades. Additional research has shown that students who participate in study abroad programs demonstrate greater gains in intellectual and personal development than those who do not study abroad (Malmgren & Galvin, 2008). Virginia Tech students could increase their academic success from more exposure to study abroad programs. Advisors should work with students to reassure them that graduation does not need to be delayed due to study abroad and help them discover monetary assistance if needed.

Additionally, colleges and departments at Virginia Tech could address the issue of male involvement in study abroad programs. Almost twice as many women as men at Virginia Tech reported planned or actual participation in a study abroad. Administrators and faculty in various disciplines on campus should inquire as to why their male students do not participate in these programs. Specific reasons were not examined in the current study, but the issue may be that males tend to be enrolled in majors at Virginia Tech that do not offer study abroad programs. If this is the case, deans and department heads might begin to remedy the lack of these opportunities by collaborating with Outreach and International Affairs or other relevant disciplines that have study abroad programs already in place.

The Division of Student Affairs could also benefit from the results of this study. Specifically, Residence Life staff could use the results to enhance participation in learning communities. Overall, engagement in learning communities was low among Virginia Tech

students. However, first-year students reported significantly higher frequencies of planned or actual participation in learning communities than seniors. While participation in learning communities and the prevalence of these environments has expanded in recent years, Residence Life professionals might consider increasing the number of these communities. By developing a living-learning community in each residence hall on campus, more students could be involved. Staff in Residence Life might also consider an initiative to require all in-coming first-year students to be a part of learning communities once the capacity for such participation is established. All first-year students are currently required to live in a residence hall and if enough learning communities could be developed to accommodate them, such an initiative would be feasible. In recent years, a number of colleges and universities have begun requiring all in-coming students to participate in a living-learning community. A 2007 study (Eck, Edge, & Stephenson, 2007) cited the development of required living-learning communities as highly effective on one college campus: students were more likely to develop critical thinking skills and wellness knowledge due to their engagement in living-learning programs.

The results of this study could also be applicable to administrators in Recreational Sports. Students in the majority group demonstrated higher frequencies of involvement in exercise and physical fitness activities than those from underrepresented groups. Participation in these activities was a significant predictor of students' grades. Recreational Sports staff would benefit from discovering why majority students may use their services more than students from underrepresented groups. They could use this information to create or improve programs that are of interest to a broader range of students. More involvement in the new programs could potentially increase students' grades at Virginia Tech.

In addition to the implications for practice yielded by the study, the results also suggest a need for more research. First, a qualitative study could be conducted based on the same research questions and survey items as the current study. A qualitative study of student engagement in out-of-classroom activities could yield some significant findings through focus groups with Virginia Tech students. This approach would provide more thorough information as to why certain populations of students are more engaged than others.

In addition, more research could be done on engagement as a significant predictor of students' grades. A regression analysis could be performed on NSSE survey items that address out-of-classroom engagement as well as academic engagement. The findings could speak to whether certain out-of-classroom activities significantly influence students' grades as much as academic engagement.

Finally, the results from the current study could be compared with findings on student engagement from other institutional types. Comparing student engagement at Virginia Tech with other research universities would be worthwhile as well as with other institutional types. The information gained from these comparisons could determine if Virginia Tech students are as engaged as their counterparts from other research universities. Also, the findings could suggest whether the campus climate at Virginia Tech needs adjustment to encourage the out-of-classroom involvement levels similar to students at other institutional types.

Limitations

As with all studies, the research presented here has some limitations. First, my analysis used the self-reported grades of the respondents. Even though students generally respond accurately to questions about their behavior (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988), the actual grade point

averages of Virginia Tech students would have provided a more accurate analysis when determining the influence of out-of-classroom engagement on students' grades.

In addition, this study used students' perceptions and self-reports of their own engagement levels. Bradburn and Sudman (1988) argue that student perceptions of engagement are generally accurate. Pace (1984) and Pascarella (2001) also maintain that college students are best qualified to respond to questions about their experiences and what they have gained from them. However, additional studies show that students may inflate certain aspects of their behaviors and levels of engagement in activities (Pike, 1999). The possibility exists that some students at Virginia Tech exaggerated their engagement levels in their responses to various items on the NSSE.

Conclusion

This study measured the engagement of Virginia Tech students based on their responses to selected items on the National Survey of Student Engagement. It is clear that there are some differences in levels of engagement, and that engagement in certain activities leads to higher levels of academic success (as measured by students' grades). There are steps that campus leaders should take to ensure that engagement opportunities are available and appealing to all types of students, and such efforts are likely to lead to higher levels of success for greater numbers of students. Further research in the area of student engagement is needed and could be used to gain a richer perspective of how and why students are engaged as well as what other types of activities are the best predictors of students' grades.

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Appendix A: The National Survey of Student Engagement

National Survey of Student Engagement 2008

The College Student Report

1 In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? Mark your answers in the boxes. Examples: ☒ or ■

	Very often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Made a class presentation	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Worked with other students on projects **during class**	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Worked with classmates **outside of class** to prepare class assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
u. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	☐	☐	☐	☐
v. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	☐	☐	☐	☐

2 During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. **Memorizing** facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. **Analyzing** the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. **Synthesizing** and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. **Making judgments** about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. **Applying** theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	☐	☐	☐	☐

3 **During the current *school year*, about how much reading and writing have you done?**

a. Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings

☐ None ☐ 1-4 ☐ 5-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ More than 20

b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment

☐ None ☐ 1-4 ☐ 5-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ More than 20

c. Number of written papers or reports of **20 pages or more**

☐ None ☐ 1-4 ☐ 5-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ More than 20

d. Number of written papers or reports **between 5 and 19 pages**

☐ None ☐ 1-4 ☐ 5-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ More than 20

e. Number of written papers or reports of **fewer than 5 pages**

☐ None ☐ 1-4 ☐ 5-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ More than 20

4 **In a *typical week*, how many homework problem sets do you complete?**

	None	1-2	3-4	5-6	More than 6
a. Number of problem sets that take you **more** than an hour to complete	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Number of problem sets that take you **less** than an hour to complete	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5 **Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work.**

Very little ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 Very much

6 **During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?**

	Very often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	☐	☐	☐	☐

7 **Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?**

	Done	Plan to do	Do not plan to do	Have not decided
a. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Community service or volunteer work	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Foreign language coursework	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Study abroad	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Independent study or self-designed major	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐

8 **Mark the box that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution.**

a. Relationships with **other students**

Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of alienation ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging

b. Relationships with **faculty members**

Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 Available, Helpful, Sympathetic

c. Relationships with **administrative personnel and offices**

Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 Helpful, Considerate, Flexible

9 About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)

☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ More than 30
Hours per week

b. Working for pay **on campus**

☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ More than 30
Hours per week

c. Working for pay **off campus**

☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ More than 30
Hours per week

d. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)

☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ More than 30
Hours per week

e. Relaxing and socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.)

☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ More than 30
Hours per week

f. Providing care for dependents living with you (parents, children, spouse, etc.)

☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ More than 30
Hours per week

g. Commuting to class (driving, walking, etc.)

☐ 0 ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ More than 30
Hours per week

10 To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Using computers in academic work	☐	☐	☐	☐

11 To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Acquiring a broad general education	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Writing clearly and effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Speaking clearly and effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Thinking critically and analytically	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Analyzing quantitative problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Using computing and information technology	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Working effectively with others	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Voting in local, state, or national elections	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Learning effectively on your own	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Understanding yourself	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Solving complex real-world problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Contributing to the welfare of your community	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	☐	☐	☐	☐

12 Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

13 How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

14 If you could start over again, would you go to the *same institution* you are now attending?

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Probably no
- ☐ Definitely no

15 Write in your year of birth: 1 9 _ _

16 Your sex:

☐ Male ☐ Female

17 Are you an international student or foreign national?

☐ Yes ☐ No

18 What is your racial or ethnic identification? (Mark only one.)

☐ American Indian or other Native American
☐ Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
☐ Black or African American
☐ White (non-Hispanic)
☐ Mexican or Mexican American
☐ Puerto Rican
☐ Other Hispanic or Latino
☐ Multiracial
☐ Other
☐ I prefer not to respond

19 What is your current classification in college?

☐ Freshman/first-year ☐ Senior
☐ Sophomore ☐ Unclassified
☐ Junior

20 Did you begin college at your current institution or elsewhere?

☐ Started here ☐ Started elsewhere

21 Since graduating from high school, which of the following types of schools have you attended other than the one you are attending now? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Vocational or technical school
☐ Community or junior college
☐ 4-year college other than this one
☐ None
☐ Other

22 Thinking about this current academic term, how would you characterize your enrollment?

☐ Full-time ☐ Less than full-time

23 Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?

☐ Yes ☐ No

24 Are you a student-athlete on a team sponsored by your institution's athletics department?

☐ Yes ☐ No (Go to question 25.)

On what team(s) are you an athlete (e.g., football, swimming)? Please answer below:

25 What have most of your grades been up to now at this institution?

☐ A ☐ B+ ☐ C+
☐ A- ☐ B ☐ C
☐ B- ☐ C- or lower

26 Which of the following best describes where you are living now while attending college?

☐ Dormitory or other campus housing (not fraternity/sorority house)
☐ Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within **walking distance** of the institution
☐ Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within **driving distance** of the institution
☐ Fraternity or sorority house

27 What is the highest level of education that your parent(s) completed? (Mark one box per column.)

Father	Mother	
☐	☐	Did not finish high school
☐	☐	Graduated from high school
☐	☐	Attended college but did not complete degree
☐	☐	Completed an associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
☐	☐	Completed a bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
☐	☐	Completed a master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
☐	☐	Completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

28 Please print your major(s) or your expected major(s).

a. Primary major (Print only one.):

b. If applicable, second major (not minor, concentration, etc.):

THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR RESPONSES!

After completing the survey, please put it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and deposit it in any U.S. Postal Service mailbox. Questions or comments? Contact the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University, 1900 East Tenth Street, Eigenmann Hall Suite 419, Bloomington IN 47406-7512 or nsse@indiana.edu or www.nsse.iub.edu.