

# The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) At Farmingdale State College – Spring 2020

In spring 2020, first-year and senior students in baccalaureate programs across the nation participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The survey, administered by the Indiana Center for Postsecondary Research, collects information regarding students' attitudes, behaviors and engagement in educational practices that are linked with positive learning outcomes, personal development, student satisfaction, persistence and higher graduation rates.

3,918 Farmingdale first-year and senior students were invited to participate. The response rate was 26% among first-year students and 23% among seniors (21% and 24%, respectively in 2017). 11 students completed the survey after the switch to remote instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which represents 2% of senior respondents and 1% of first-year respondents. Females were somewhat over-represented by both first-year and senior respondents, as were racial minorities among first-year students. Results are compared to responses from students at other SUNY State-Operated campuses that participated in the survey and students from institutions in our Carnegie classification. Academic Advising and Diversity & Inclusion survey results were from add-on modules with limited institutional participation, and therefore, were only compared to participating institutions in our Carnegie classification. The questions in the Academic Advising module changed, and therefore, it is not possible to make comparisons to prior survey administrations of this module.

## **Key Findings**

- Most (71%) of our first-year students had a good or excellent educational experience at Farmingdale. However, this is down from 82% in the last survey administration in 2017 and is lower than the 78% reported by students at SUNY State-Operated campuses. Conversely, 84% of seniors reported having a good or excellent educational experience, up from 82% in 2017 and higher than the 79% reported by students at SUNY State-Operated campuses.
- The decline in our first-year students who indicated they had a good or excellent educational experience corresponds to a drop in the percentage giving an excellent rating to their interactions with academic advisors, other students, faculty and staff. In contrast, these ratings improved since 2017 among our senior students.
- Less first-year students indicated that they would definitely or probably attend Farmingdale again than in 2017 (72% vs 82%), and this percentage was lower than reported by students in our comparison groups. A higher percentage of seniors indicated they would definitely or probably attend Farmingdale again versus 2017 (83% vs 79%), and this was higher than reported by students in our comparison groups.
- Participation in high-impact practices (learning communities, service learning, internships or field experience, research with faculty, study abroad, or senior capstone project) has increased among both our first-year and senior students compared to 2017. However, compared to our peer institutions, Farmingdale's students have participated in fewer high-impact practices.

- FSC's first-year and senior undergrads spend less time preparing for class compared to students at the other SUNY State-Operated campuses and is down compared to what our students reported in the last survey administration in 2017. The percentage of our students who reported that their institution emphasizes spending time studying and on academic work very much or quite a bit is lower than reported by students at other SUNY State-Ops.
  - A higher percentage of our seniors than first-year students feel that their courses challenge them very much to do their best work.
- Our first-year students are less collaborative with other students than they were in 2017 and less than their peers at other institutions. In contrast, our senior students were more collaborative with other students than they were in 2017, but less than their peers at other institutions.
- The lower student collaboration scores than our benchmark peers reflect the higher number of hours our students work off-campus and provide care for dependents. More than one-third (35%) of our seniors indicated that Farmingdale does very little to help manage students' non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.). However, this percentage is down from 41% in 2017.
  - The majority of our first-time (54%) and seniors (62%) do not participate in co-curricular activities; percentages that are significantly higher than reported by students at our benchmark peers. Compared to 2017, this percentage is up from 48% in 2017 among our first-time students and down from 64% among our seniors.
- The majority of our students indicated that Farmingdale emphasizes providing support to help students succeed academically, using learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.), providing support for students' overall well-being, and providing opportunities to be involved socially 'quite a bit' or 'very much'. These were generally on par with our benchmark peers, except providing opportunities to be involved socially was significantly lower than our peers.
- 46% of our first-year and 49% of our senior students gave our faculty members a 6 or 7 rating in regard to the quality of their interactions, with 1 being poor and 7 being excellent. Compared to 2017, the percentage was the same among first-year students and 51% among seniors.
  - For many of our students, interaction with faculty occurs mainly during class time. More than one-half of our first-year students and seniors never worked with a faculty member on a committee or student group during the year, and over one-third never discussed course topics with a faculty member outside of class during the school year.
  - Most of our first-year and senior students indicated that their instructors have done the following 'quite a bit' or 'very much'; clearly explained course goals and requirements, taught the course in an organized way, used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points, provided feedback on a draft or work in progress, and provided prompt feedback on tests or completed assignments.
- Most of our first-year and senior students indicated that their coursework emphasizes applying facts or theories to new problems, evaluating points of view, forming new ideas

from various pieces of information, analyzing an idea, and memorizing course material. This is on par with what was reported for the SUNY State-Operated campuses, but generally lower among senior students from institutions in our Carnegie classification.

- The top two highest performing items among our first-year and senior students compared to other SUNY State-Operated campuses highlights the higher quality of our students' interactions with administrative offices and academic advisors.
  - The lowest performing item compared to other SUNY State-Operated campuses among our first-year students was "spent more than 15 hours per week preparing for class" and among seniors was "participated in an internship, co-op field experience, clinical placement".
- Our seniors reported how much their experience at FSC contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal development in ten areas. A majority of students reported 'very much' or 'quite a bit' in each of the ten areas, with the highest being 'thinking critically and analytically' (81%), followed by 'writing clearly and effectively' (79%), working effectively with others (70%), acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills (69%), and speaking clearly and effectively (67%).
- The majority of our first-year students and seniors feel that Farmingdale provides a supportive environment 'quite a bit' or 'very much' for various categories of diversity, including racial/ethnic and gender identity, economic background, religious affiliation, sexual orientation and disability status.
  - Ratings were generally higher than reported in 2017 among our seniors, but lower among our first-year students. Farmingdale students, in general, perceive that diversity is emphasized more by the institution than it is in their coursework.
- Our first-year students discussed their academic interests, course selections, or academic performance with an academic advisor that was assigned to them an average of 2 times during the academic year and 1.7 times with an academic advisor who was available to any student. This was lower than reported by peer students at other institutions in our Carnegie classification. Similar results were reported among our senior students.
  - Farmingdale first-year students' ratings of academic advising fared on par with our peers in terms of availability, providing information about support services, notification of important policies and deadlines, reaching out and following-up, listening to concerns, and respect for students' identity and culture. Among seniors, these ratings were lower than our peers.
  - Farmingdale first-year and seniors students discuss their academic goals and future plans, how their major relates to their goals, special opportunities such as study abroad, participation in co-curricular activities, and resources for their well-being with someone at our institution less often than students do with people at their institutions in our Carnegie classification.
- Family members and friends were cited most often as having helped our first-year students develop their academic goals and future plans, followed by academic advisors. A similar response is seen among our seniors with academic advisors and online advising system being tied for third place.