



Highlights of 2009 NSSE Results with Recommendations

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), administered by the University of Indiana, collects information from a sample of first year and senior students regarding the quality of their undergraduate experience. This summary provides comparisons between University of South Alabama (USA) NSSE 2009 participants with USA NSSE 2006 participants, Urban Universities, Southeastern Peers and all NSSE 2009 institutions.

For both groups of students, mean scores reported in 2009 were **higher** than the scores reported in 2006 for each of the nine items. While this improvement over 2006 scores is important, there are opportunities for improvement when considering the comparison groups. USA first year students had a lower mean score for eight of the nine items than students from at least one of the other groups as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Scores for USA First Year Students, 2009 Relative to Comparison Groups

	USA 2006	Urban	Southeast	All 2009 Respondents
Level of Academic Challenge	Higher*	Lower*	Lower	Lower***
Active and Collaborative Learning	Higher***	Lower	Higher*	Equal
Student Faculty Interaction	Higher**	Lower	Lower	Lower
Enriching Educational Experience	Higher	Lower*	Lower	Lower*
Supportive Campus Environment	Higher**	Higher	Lower	Lower
Acquiring a Broad General Education	Higher	Higher*	Higher	Higher
Quality of Academic Advising	Higher	Higher**	Lower	Higher
Entire Educational Experience	Higher	Higher	Lower	Lower
Attend the Same Institution	Higher	Higher**	Lower	Higher

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Recommendations to improve USA first year student engagement include:

- Increase opportunities for students to participate in learning communities;
- Increase awareness of service-learning opportunities;
- Create mentoring programs with both current students and faculty as mentors;
- Encourage faculty involvement with students groups; and,
- Provide additional training to improve student advising.

USA NSSE 2009 senior participants' scores were higher than comparison groups with the exception of four areas as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores for USA Seniors, 2009 Relative to Comparison Groups

	USA 2006	Urban	Southeastern	All 2009 Respondents
Level of Academic Challenge	Higher	Higher***	Higher***	Higher
Active and Collaborative Learning	Higher	Higher***	Higher*	Higher*
Student Faculty Interaction	Higher**	Higher***	Higher	Higher*
Enriching Educational Experience	Higher	Lower	Lower	Lower***
Supportive Campus Environment	Higher	Higher*	Lower	Lower
Acquiring a broad general education	Higher*	Higher***	Higher**	Higher*
Quality of Academic Advising	Higher*	Higher***	Higher	Higher
Entire Educational Experience	Higher*	Higher	Lower*	Lower*
Attend the Same Institution	Higher**	Equal	Lower***	Lower***

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Even though the relative scores have improved since 2006, there are continued opportunities to enrich the educational experience and further enhance the supportive nature of the USA campus environment.

Recommendations include:

- Further explore ways to enrich the educational experience with student surveys and focus groups;
- Examine best practices for participants with higher scores and implement programs that make sense for USA;
- Increase availability and awareness of service-learning and practicum opportunities;
- Promote capstone experiences and study broad programs; and,
- Encourage faculty involvement with students.