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- University of Redlands
- Drake University
- Elizabethtown College
- Taylor University

Brigham Young University Hawaii—founded by prophets and operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—exists to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life and in their efforts to influence the establishment of peace internationally.

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Introduction

Purpose of Current Project
Since 2000, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has been collecting data from students at four-year colleges and universities around the country to assess the extent to which students engage in a variety of educationally effective activities. The guiding proposition is that the frequency with which students engage in these activities is a meaningful proxy for collegiate quality. The following report was created from the NSSE data in order to more closely assess student-faculty interaction at Brigham Young University Hawaii (BYUH). The report contains a comparison of data between BYUH, Baccalaureate Colleges – General (Bac-Gen), and all schools which participated in the NSSE (NSSE). Because of BYUH’s decrease in student-faculty interaction, five of BYUH’s selected peer group schools were evaluated in order to assess what might encourage student-faculty interaction.

History of BYUH Human Factors Research Team
The Human Factors Research Team (HFES) created a benchmark comparison book of the BYU-Hawaii’s NSSE data in its entirety in early 2005. The group presented their findings on February 2nd, 2005 to the faculty of BYU-Hawaii. This book, designed to take a deeper look at Cultural Studies, is the latest work of the HFES.
“Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interaction with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.”

-National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
Role of Student Faculty Interaction

Students were asked to rate how often they did each of the following on a numerical scale:

1-Never
2-Sometimes
3-Often
4-Very Often

The NSSE Student Faculty Interaction items were as follows:
1. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
2. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
3. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
4. Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
5. Worked with faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)
Combined First-Year and Senior Students

When all 4 years were compared with an ANOVA there was no significant difference.

When 2004 was compared to 2005 with a simple t-test there was a significant drop in scores.

* Significant at the .05 level
Benchmark Report
BYUH 2004 & 2005

BYUH First-Year and Senior students were weighted against comparable institutions and NSSE’s scores for the year 2004 and 2005.

Two of the five items examined in the Student Faculty Interaction criteria decreased significantly between the years 2004 and 2005.
In comparing 2004 and 2005, BYUH’s First-Year students increased on student faculty interaction. However, BYUH ranked lower than comparable institutions and the national average.
In comparing 2004 and 2005, BYUH Seniors decreased in student faculty interaction. In addition, BYUH ranked lower than comparable institutions and the national average.
Students overall (First-Year and Seniors combined) rated how often they discussed grades or assignments with an instructor based on the following scale:

1=Never  2=Sometimes  3=Often  4=Very Often

Results indicate that during the year 2005, students discussed grades or assignments with their instructors significantly less often than students did in 2004.

* Significant at the .05 level
Students overall (First-Year and Seniors combined) rated how often they discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class based on the following scale.

1=Never   2=Sometimes   3=Often   4=Very Often

Results indicate that during the year 2005, students discussed ideas from their readings or classes with faculty members outside of class significantly less often than students did in 2004.

* Significant at the .01 level
The following questions are also included in student-faculty interaction but did not reach significant changes between 2004 and 2005.

Career - Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor

Feedback - Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)

Other - Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)

1=Never   2=Sometimes   3=Often   4=Very Often

This graph shows that each category decreased slightly between the years, but not at the .05 significance level.

-“I’ve been able to ask my professors what they have done with their degrees and their guidance in this way has helped me know better what my options are and what I want to do.”
-2006, Focus Group Member
The variables that make up Student-Faculty Interactions were averaged together and compared by Schools.

It was found that in 2005 there was no significant difference in the amount of Student-Faculty Interaction between Schools.
BYUH

2002 & 2005

BYUH First-Year and Senior students were weighted against comparable institutions and the NSSE national averages for the year 2002 and 2005.

Two of the five items examined in the Student Faculty Interaction criteria decreased significantly between the years 2002 and 2005.
In comparing 2002 and 2005, BYUH’s First-Year students decreased on student faculty interaction. In 2002 BYUH scored higher than comparable institutions and the national average. Yet, by 2005 BYUH scored lower than both comparable institutions and the national average.
In comparing 2002 and 2005, BYUH’s Senior students decreased on student-faculty interaction. In 2002 BYUH student-faculty interaction scores were higher than comparable institutions and the national average, but by 2005, BYUH was below comparable institutions and national average.
Students overall (First-Year and Seniors combined) rated how often they discussed grades or assignments with an instructor based on the following scale:

1=Never  2=Sometimes  3=Often  4=Very Often

These results indicate that during the year of 2002, students discussed grades or assignments with their instructors significantly more often than students did in 2005.

* Significant at .01 level
Students overall (First-Year and Seniors combined) rated how often they discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class based on the following scale.

1=Never   2=Sometimes   3=Often   4=Very Often

From this analysis it can be concluded that between the years of 2002 and 2005, students discuss ideas from their readings or classes with faculty members outside of class significantly less often.

* Significant at .05 level
The following questions are also included in the NSSE’s student-faculty interaction rating and, although the scores dropped, they did not reach statistical significance when the years 2002 and 2005 were compared.

Career - Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor

Feedback - Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)

Other - Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)

1=Never  2=Sometimes  3=Often  4=Very Often

This graph shows that each category decreased slightly between the years, but not at the .05 level of statistical significance.

-Students should ask themselves, “What is your purpose in being a student?” and realize that students’ purpose should be more than just to get a diploma.

-2006, Focus Group Member
Improvement Possibilities

*Five of BYU-Hawaii’s NSSE 2005 selected peer institutions were chosen to be evaluated:*

- Covenant College (Lookout Mountain, GA)
- University of Redlands (Redlands, CA)
- Drake University (Des Moines, IA)
- Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, PA)
- Taylor University (Upland, IN)
The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education

Uses the following to categorize accredited institutions

– Undergraduate Instructional Program
– Graduate Instructional Program
– Enrollment Profile
– Undergraduate Profile
– Size and Setting
Covenant College (Lookout Mountain, GA)

- Attributes part of their increased faculty interaction to the size of the campus

- “Professors at the college encourage students to call them at home to discuss class assignments, grades, and life in general”

- In the classroom, “active participation” is more common than “droning lectures”
University of Redlands (Redlands, CA)

- Allows students the freedom of charting their own academic direction by “designing individual course and graduation contracts”

- A meal card which allows faculty to eat lunch with students.

- Frequency of e-mailing is stressed.

- Faculty are also invited and encouraged to many of the student/campus activities in order to interact with the students and see their interests.

- Students are also offered chances to work with faculty on projects other than class assignments.
Drake University (Des Moines, IA)

- Conducts course evaluations in the middle of the semester.

- Many of the student clubs and organizations claim better student/faculty interaction as a specific goal.
Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, PA)

- Employs faculty members as academic advisors in order to better assist students with their academic course decisions.

- Academic advisors are required to:
  - meet with students at least three times during a semester,
  - be familiar with students’ academic background
  - encourage students to participate in service opportunities and internships.
Improvement Possibilities

Taylor University (Upland, IN)

• Engaging and Retaining Scholars Program (ERSP)
  – Developed to expound opportunities for faculty/student collaborative research.

• Center for Research and Innovation (CR&I)
  – “a comprehensive entity that provides the resources necessary for faculty and students to pursue their dreams” in research and entrepreneurship.
Student Recommendations

• Extended Office Hours

“...I think it’s hard to find time to talk with my professors about career etc.” a student said. “It’s hard to find time during their office hours to get a hold of them because we work the same hours. My professors have gone home already [by the time I am free].”

• Wider, More Consistent Use of Blackboard System

“[It allows me] to have consistent knowledge of my performance.”

• Limit recreational interaction

“Too friendly is not necessary [and] talking story in class is not helpful,” a student said. “This kind of interaction is alright outside of class, but not during.”

• Learning students’ names

“I had a teacher who had note cards to learn our names,” a student said. “She also encouraged us to learn each others names. It created a better environment.”

• Increased Research Opportunities

“...Having a research experience and publication would be good I have been looking forward to receiving some experience with my professor in this, but have not yet. “

• Increased Post-Graduate Preparedness
(graduate school, job opportunities, internships)

“I had an idea of what I wanted to do. I just didn’t know the opportunities available to me.”

-Winter 2006 Focus Group Members
Expected Benefits towards Students

What Students expect to gain from student-faculty interaction:

• Quality Personal Relationships

• Letters of Recommendation (in depth discussion of grades, ability, personality, etc.)

• Improved in and outside of Classroom Performance

• Graduate Studies Options and Career Advice

• Research Opportunities

-2006 Focus Group