Interpreting the Mean Comparisons Report

Sample
The Mean Comparisons report is based on information from all randomly selected students for both your institution and your comparison institutions. Targeted oversamples and other non-randomly selected students are not included in this report.

Variables
The items from the NSSE survey appear in the left column in the same order and wording as they appear on the instrument. The name of each variable appears in the second column for easy reference to your data file and the summary statistics at the end of this section. Response options are also provided to help you interpret the statistics.

Benchmark
Items that make up the five “Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice” are indicated by the following:

LAC = Level of Academic Challenge
ACL = Active and Collaborative Learning
SFI = Student-Faculty Interaction
EEE = Enriching Educational Experiences
SCE = Supportive Campus Environment

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Mean
The mean is the weighted arithmetic average of student responses on a particular item. Means are provided for your institution and all comparison groups. For more information about weighting go to: www.nsse.iub.edu/2009_Institutional_Report/NSSE_2009_Weighting.cfm.

Class
Results are reported separately for first-year students (FY) and seniors (SR). Institution-reported class ranks are used.

Statistical Significance
Items with mean differences that are larger than would be expected by chance alone are noted with one, two, or three asterisks, referring to three significance levels (p < .05, p < .01, and p < .001). The smaller the significance level, the smaller the likelihood that the difference is due to chance. Statistical significance does not guarantee the result is substantive or important. Large sample sizes (like those produced by NSSE) tend to generate more statistically significant results even though the magnitude of mean differences may be inconsequential. It is recommended to consult effect sizes (see below) to judge the practical meaning of the results.

Effect Size
Effect size indicates the “practical significance” of the mean difference. It is calculated by dividing the mean difference by the pooled standard deviation. In practice, an effect size of .2 is often considered small, .5 moderate, and .8 large. A positive sign indicates that your institution's mean was greater, thus showing an affirmative result for your institution. A negative sign indicates the institution lags behind the comparison group, suggesting that the student behavior or institutional practice represented by the item may warrant attention. An exception to this interpretation is the "coming to class unprepared" item (item 1f.) where a negative sign is preferred (i.e., meaning fewer students reporting coming to class unprepared).
## Interpreting the Frequency Distributions Report

### Sample
The Frequency Distributions report is based on information from all randomly selected students for both your institution and your comparison institutions. Targeted oversamples and other non-randomly selected students are not included in this report.

### Variables
The items from the NSSE survey appear in the left column in the same order and wording as they appear on the instrument.

### Variable Names
The name of each variable appears in the first column for easy reference to your raw data file and the Mean Comparisons report.

### Benchmark
Items that comprise the five “Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice” are indicated by the following:

- **LAC** = Level of Academic Challenge
- **ACL** = Active and Collaborative Learning
- **SFI** = Student-Faculty Interaction
- **EEE** = Enriching Educational Experiences
- **SCF** = Supportive Campus Environment

### Response Options
Response options listed just as they appear on the instrument.

### Weighting
Weights adjusting for gender, enrollment status, and institutional size are applied to the percentage column (%) of this report. Weights are computed separately for first-year students and seniors. Weighted results present a more accurate representation of your institution and comparison group students. Only the column percents are weighted. The counts are the actual number of respondents. Because the counts are unweighted and the column percentages are weighted, you will not be able to calculate the column percent directly from the count numbers. For more information about weighting, please visit the NSSE Web site at [www.nsse.iub.edu/2009_Institutional_Report/NSSE_2009_Weighting.cfm](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/2009_Institutional_Report/NSSE_2009_Weighting.cfm).

### Class
Frequency distributions are reported separately for first-year students and seniors. Institution-reported class ranks are used.

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### Mean Comparisons
The name of each variable appears in the first column for easy reference to your raw data file and the Mean Comparisons report.

### Variables
The items from the NSSE survey appear in the left column in the same order and wording as they appear on the instrument.

### Weighting
Weights adjusting for gender, enrollment status, and institutional size are applied to the percentage column (%) of this report. Weights are computed separately for first-year students and seniors. Weighted results present a more accurate representation of your institution and comparison group students. Only the column percents are weighted. The counts are the actual number of respondents. Because the counts are unweighted and the column percentages are weighted, you will not be able to calculate the column percent directly from the count numbers. For more information about weighting, please visit the NSSE Web site at [www.nsse.iub.edu/2009_Institutional_Report/NSSE_2009_Weighting.cfm](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/2009_Institutional_Report/NSSE_2009_Weighting.cfm).

### Class
Frequency distributions are reported separately for first-year students and seniors. Institution-reported class ranks are used.

### National Survey of Student Engagement

### Sample
The Frequency Distributions report is based on information from all randomly selected students for both your institution and your comparison institutions. Targeted oversamples and other non-randomly selected students are not included in this report.

### Variables
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### Variable Names
The name of each variable appears in the first column for easy reference to your raw data file and the Mean Comparisons report.

### Benchmark
Items that comprise the five “Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice” are indicated by the following:

- **LAC** = Level of Academic Challenge
- **ACL** = Active and Collaborative Learning
- **SFI** = Student-Faculty Interaction
- **EEE** = Enriching Educational Experiences
- **SCF** = Supportive Campus Environment

### Response Options
Response options listed just as they appear on the instrument.

### Weighting
Weights adjusting for gender, enrollment status, and institutional size are applied to the percentage column (%) of this report. Weights are computed separately for first-year students and seniors. Weighted results present a more accurate representation of your institution and comparison group students. Only the column percents are weighted. The counts are the actual number of respondents. Because the counts are unweighted and the column percentages are weighted, you will not be able to calculate the column percent directly from the count numbers. For more information about weighting, please visit the NSSE Web site at [www.nsse.iub.edu/2009_Institutional_Report/NSSE_2009_Weighting.cfm](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/2009_Institutional_Report/NSSE_2009_Weighting.cfm).

### Class
Frequency distributions are reported separately for first-year students and seniors. Institution-reported class ranks are used.

### National Survey of Student Engagement

### Sample
The Frequency Distributions report is based on information from all randomly selected students for both your institution and your comparison institutions. Targeted oversamples and other non-randomly selected students are not included in this report.

### Variables
The items from the NSSE survey appear in the left column in the same order and wording as they appear on the instrument.

### Variable Names
The name of each variable appears in the first column for easy reference to your raw data file and the Mean Comparisons report.

### Benchmark
Items that comprise the five “Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice” are indicated by the following:

- **LAC** = Level of Academic Challenge
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- **SFI** = Student-Faculty Interaction
- **EEE** = Enriching Educational Experiences
- **SCF** = Supportive Campus Environment

### Response Options
Response options listed just as they appear on the instrument.