The primary goal of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is to assess the extent to which first-year students and seniors engage in effective educational practices that are linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, and graduation.

Purpose & Methodology

The purpose of NSSE 2014 is to assess how engaged UW-Stout first-year students and seniors are in their education compared to four peer groups: 1) UW Comprehensives, 2) Polytechnic Peers, 3) NSSE and 4) NSSE top 10% or best practices.

Methodology:

- **Marketing of the survey:** Postings were placed on UW-Stout’s Facebook page, a flier was posted in the residence halls and Career Services and copies sent to the Advisement Center, information was placed in the Student daily email, and an ad was submitted to the MSC Video Information System.

- **Survey Distribution:** In spring 2014, first-year students and seniors nearing graduation were sent an email by Chancellor Sorensen asking them to complete the survey. Up to four additional follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents. Response rates were 24% for first-year students and 23% for seniors.

- Engagement Indicators (EI) are based on three to eight survey questions each and are organized into four broad themes. Each EI is scored on a 60 point scale.

Key Research Questions

1. How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on **Academic Challenge**?
2. How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on **Learning with Peers**?
3. How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on **Experiences with Faculty**?
4. How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on **Campus Environment**?
5. How do first-year students and seniors rate their overall educational experience at Stout?
Research Question 1

How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on Academic Challenge?

*Higher-Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies and Quantitative Reasoning* are the four Engagement Indicators (EI) for Academic Challenge.

**First-year Students**
- Stout first-year students had lower mean scores for all four Engagement Indicators compared to all four comparison groups and was statistically lower for all four compared to the Polytechnic, NSSE and NSSE top 10%.
- Mean scores varied from 24.6 to 36.5. *Higher-Order Learning* had the highest mean score for Stout and *Quantitative Reasoning* had the lowest mean score.

**Seniors**
- Stout seniors had equal to or lower mean scores for all four Engagement Indicators compared to the UW Comprehensives, NSSE and NSSE top 10% but scored higher than the Polytechnic on *Higher-Order Learning* and *Reflective & Integrative Learning*.
- Stout seniors were statistically lower than the NSSE top 10% for all four Engagement Indicators. Most Stout scores were not statistically different from the other three comparison groups.
- Mean scores varied from 28.3 to 40.4. Like first-year students, *Higher-Order Learning* had the highest mean score for Stout and *Quantitative Reasoning* had the lowest mean score.

### Mean Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Indicator</th>
<th>UW-Stout</th>
<th>First-year students compared with</th>
<th>Seniors compared with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher-Order Learning</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>38.5 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective &amp; Integrative Learning</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>33.7 **</td>
<td>34.5 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Strategies</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>37.7 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>29.0 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Each EI is scored on a 60 point scale. To produce an indicator score, the response set for each item is converted to a 60-point scale (e.g., Never = 0; Sometimes = 20; Often = 40; Very often = 60), and the rescaled items are averaged. Results weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups); *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed)
Summary of Findings for Five Key Research Questions

- Stout first-year students scored lower than seniors on all four Engagement Indicators. The largest gap (6.6) was in Reflective & Integrative Learning and the smallest gap (1.0) was in Learning Strategies.

- Both Higher-Order Learning and Quantitative Reasoning had a gap between first-year students and seniors of about 4.0.

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality.

Source: NSSE definition of Academic Challenge

Research Question 2

How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on Learning with Peers?

Collaborative Learning and Discussions with Diverse Others are the two Engagement Indicators (EI) for Learning with Peers.

First-year Students

- Stout first-year students had lower mean scores for both Engagement Indicators compared to the Polytechnic, NSSE and NSSE top 10%. Most scores were statistically lower than Collaborative Learning compared to the NSSE.

- Compared to the UW Comprehensives, Stout first-year student scores were slightly higher on Collaborative Learning and statistically lower on Discussions with Diverse Others.

Seniors

- Stout seniors scored lower than three of the comparison groups on Collaborative Learning and statistically lower than the Polytechnic and NSSE top 10%.

- Stout seniors scored statistically lower than the Polytechnic, NSSE and NSSE top 10% on Discussions with Diverse Others but scored higher than the UW Comprehensives.
Collaborating with others in mastering difficult material and developing interpersonal and social competence prepare students to deal with complex, unscripted problems they will encounter during and after college.

Diversity

Since Stout is a member of the UW Comprehensive consortium, additional questions were asked of Stout students. First-year students and seniors were asked, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (4 point scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)

a. My institution fosters an environment where racial and ethnic diversity is respected.
b. My institution fosters an environment where persons of all genders are respected.
c. My institution fosters an environment where persons of all sexual orientations are respected.
d. I feel safe at this institution no matter where I am or what time of the day it is.

Mean scores for both Stout first-year students and seniors ranged from 3.3 to 3.5 for all four statements. Scores were equal to or near (within 0.1) the UW Comprehensive average scores for all statements except the last statement on feeling safe, where Stout seniors scored statistically higher at 3.5 compared to 3.3 for the UW Comprehensive average.
Research Question 3

How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on Experiences with Faculty?  

*Student-Faculty Interaction* and *Effective Teaching Practices* are the two Engagement Indicators (EI) for Experiences with Faculty.

**First-year Students**

- Stout first-year students had mean scores for both Engagement Indicators that were equal to or lower than all four comparison groups and Stout was statistically lower on both indicators compared to the NSSE top 10%.
- *Effective Teaching Practices* score was 38.0 compared to *Student-Faculty Interaction* at 19.0.

**Seniors**

- Stout seniors had higher mean scores than three of the four comparison groups for both Engagement Indicators. Stout scores were statistically lower than the NSSE top 10%.
- Like the first-year student scores, *Effective Teaching Practices* score was highest for Stout of the two Engagement Indicators at 41.4 compared to *Student-Faculty Interaction* at 25.3.

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**Mean Comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Indicator</th>
<th>UW-Stout Mean</th>
<th>UW Mean</th>
<th>Polytechnic Mean</th>
<th>NSSE Mean</th>
<th>NSSE Top 10% Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>26.9 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching Practices</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>40.2 **</td>
<td>44.6 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniors compared with</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>34.4 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching Practices</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>45.1 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- Stout first-year students scored lower than seniors on both Engagement Indicators. The largest gap (6.3) was in *Student-Faculty Interactions*, while the gap for *Effective Teaching Practices* was smaller (3.4).
Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside of instructional settings. As a result, faculty become role models, mentors and guides for lifelong learning.

Source: NSSE definition of Experiences with Faculty

Research Question 4

How do Stout students compare on the Engagement Indicator theme on Campus Environment?

*Quality of Interactions & Supportive Environment* are the two Engagement Indicators (EI) for Campus Environment.

**First-year Students**
- Stout **first-year students** had a mean score for *Quality of Interactions* that was higher than three of the comparison groups. Stout was statistically lower compared to the NSSE top 10%.
- Stout **first-year students** had a mean score for *Supportive Environment* that was slightly lower than three of the comparison groups with Stout statistically lower compared to the NSSE top 10%.
- *Quality of Interactions* score was 42.4 compared to *Supportive Environment* at 36.1.

**Seniors**
- Stout **seniors** had higher mean scores than three of the four comparison groups for both Engagement Indicators and was statistically higher compared to the Polytechnic on *Quality of Interactions*. Both Stout scores were statistically lower than the NSSE top 10%.
- Like the **first-year student** scores, *Quality of Interactions* score was highest for Stout of the two Engagement Indicators at 44.3 compared to *Supportive Environment* at 33.7.
## Quality of Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Indicator</th>
<th>UW-Stout Mean</th>
<th>UW Mean</th>
<th>Polytechnic Mean</th>
<th>NSSE Mean</th>
<th>NSSE Top 10% Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive Environment</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>41.4 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Seniors compared with

<table>
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<th>Engagement Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Interactions</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>42.0 *</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>47.4 ***</td>
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<tr>
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### Students benefit and are more satisfied in supportive settings that cultivate positive relationships among students, faculty, and staff.

Source: NSSE definition of Campus Environment

## Advising

**First-year students** and **seniors** were asked, *how much do you agree or disagree with the following three statements about advising?* (4 point scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)

a. During this academic year my academic advisor has been accessible when I needed to see him or her.
b. My advising interactions help me make better decisions about my academic goals.
c. I fulfilled my student responsibilities related to the advising process.

Mean scores for both Stout **first-year students** and **seniors** ranged from 3.1 to 3.5 for all three statements. Scores were equal to or near (within 0.1) the UW Comprehensive average scores with no statistical differences.
How do first-year students and seniors rate their overall educational experience at Stout?

Students were asked two questions at the end of the NSSE that addressed overall satisfaction with their education at Stout.

1. *How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?* (4-point scale with 1 = poor and 4 = Excellent)

2. *If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?* (4-point scale with 1 = definitely no and 4 = definitely yes)

- Stout’s mean score was 3.3 for **first-year students** and **seniors** on both questions.
- Mean scores for the three peer groups ranged from 3.2 to 3.3 for both questions. Stout’s score for **first-year students** was statistically higher on the first question compared to the UW Comprehensives.
- 93% of Stout **first-year students** indicated their educational experience was *Good* or *Excellent* compared to 89% of Seniors.
- If they could start over, 88% of Stout **first-year students** and **seniors** indicated that they would *probably yes* or *definitely yes* go to the same institution they are now attending.
- In 2008 and 2011, mean scores for Stout on these two questions ranged from 3.1 to 3.3. **Senior** scores ranged from 3.2 to 3.3 and **first-year students** scores ranged from 3.1 to 3.2. Comparing 2011 to 2014, **first-year student** scores were statistically higher in 2014 for both questions.

- On the 2014 Alumni Follow-up Study the One-Year and Five-Year undergraduate alumni, as well as, the Graduate Alumni rated the question: *If you had it to do over again, would you attend UW-Stout*, as the highest rated question on the survey.
Major Findings Summary

First-Year Students

- Stout first-year students scored lower than all four of the comparison groups on 7 of the 10 Engagement Indicators and scored statistically lower than the NSSE top 10% for all indicators.

- There were only two Engagement Indicator scores (Reflective & Integrative Learning and Discussions with Diverse Others) that had statistical differences between Stout first-year students and the UW-Comprehensives.

- Stout first-year students scored statistically lower on 6 of the 10 Engagement Indicators compared to the Polytechnic and NSSE.

- Stout first-year students scored higher than three of the comparison groups on Quality of Interactions.

- The highest Engagement Indicator score for first-year students was Quality of Interactions at 42.4 and the lowest score was Student–Faculty Interactions at 19.0.

Seniors

- Stout seniors scored lower than all four of the comparison groups on 2 of the 10 Engagement Indicators and scored statistically lower than the NSSE top 10% for all indicators.

- There were no statistical differences in Engagement Indicator scores between Stout seniors and the UW-Comprehensives.

- For 4 of the 10 Engagement Indicators, there were statistical differences between Stout senior scores and the Polytechnic. Three scores were statistically lower and one was higher (Quality of Interactions).

- For 2 of the 10 Engagement Indicators, there were statistical differences between Stout senior scores and the NSSE. For both indicators, Stout scores were lower (Learning Strategies and Discussions with Diverse Others).

- Stout seniors scored higher than three of the comparison groups on Student-Faculty Interactions, Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment.

- The highest Engagement Indicator score for seniors was Quality of Interactions at 44.3 and the lowest score was Student–Faculty Interactions at 25.3.

Overall Experience

- Stout first-year students and seniors rated their overall educational experience similar to the comparison groups.
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parq@uwstout.edu