
Analysis of FHSU and Peer Results for the 2002 - 2008 NSSE Senior Benchmarks

A Multi-Year Comparison of
Institutional and Peer
Performance Relative to the
NSSE Benchmarks for Senior
Students

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1. Analytic Parameters

These analyses are predicated on the following parameters, unless otherwise indicated:

Dependent measures: NSSE benchmark mean scores
Independent variable: Institutional, peer, and combined NSSE performance
Sample\Population: Students with class rank of senior

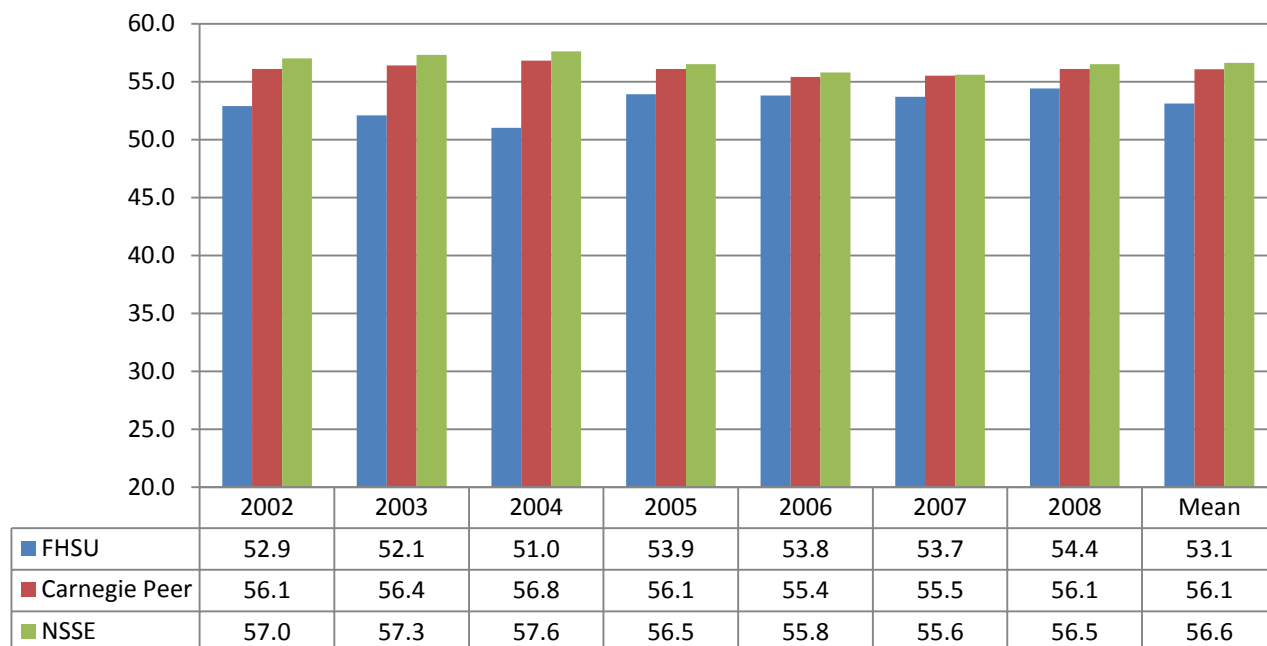
2. Results

Annually, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects information from samples of freshman and senior students about the nature and quality of their undergraduate experience. The survey is a powerful tool that assesses the extent to which undergraduate students are “engaged” in effective educational practices. NSSE concludes their analysis by calculating mean scores for each of its five benchmarks of effective educational practice. The five benchmarks of effective educational practice are:

Benchmark Title	Benchmark Description
Level of Academic Challenge	Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.
Active and Collaborative Learning	Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the messy, unscripted problems they encounter daily during and after college.
Student-Faculty Interaction	Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.
Enriching Educational Experiences	Complementary learning opportunities enhance academic programs. Diversity experiences teach students valuable things about themselves and others. Technology facilitates collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge.
Supportive Campus Environment	Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.

Fort Hays State University has participated in NSSE annually since 2002 and has used the information as a means of informing curriculum change and institutional strategy. FHSU is a noted “innovator/rebel” due, in large part, to the number of distance learners that we educate.

Analysis 2.1: Level of Academic Challenge. This analysis explored the performance differences on the Level of Academic Challenge benchmark between senior students at FHSU, Carnegie peer, and all NSSE institutions from 2002 through 2008.



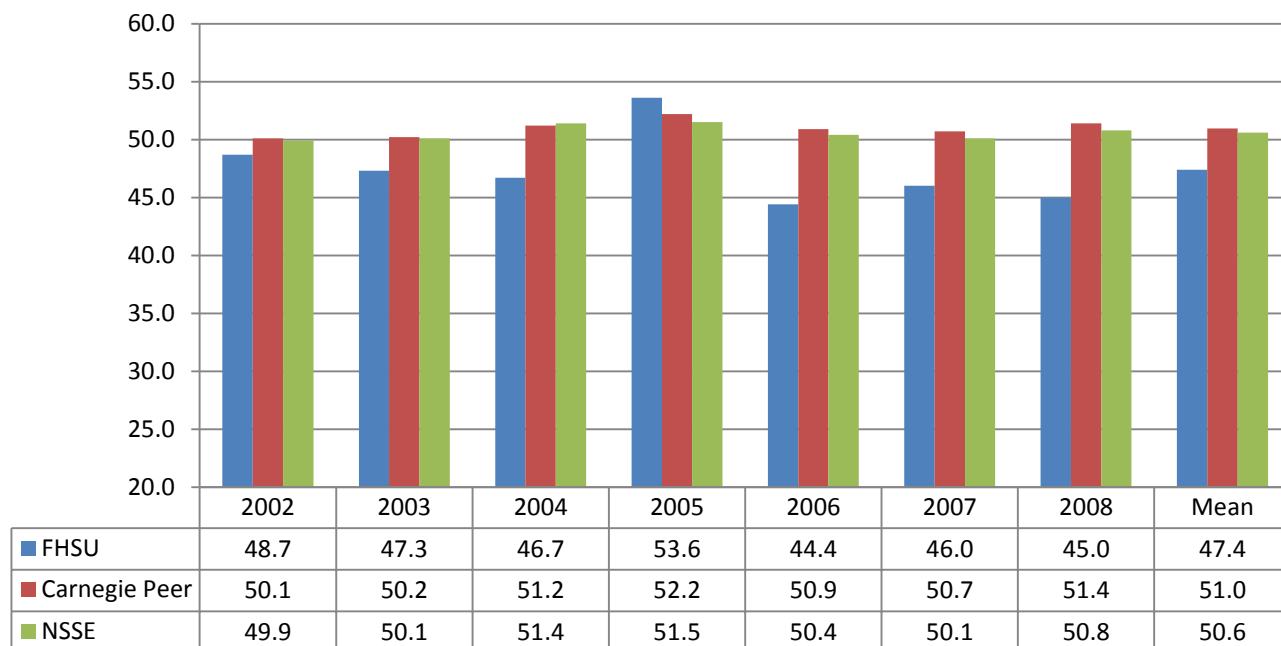
FHSU seniors have consistently reported lower than peer and overall NSSE performance on this critical benchmark. Performance since 2005 tends to reflect some improvement relative to peers and overall NSSE mean scores, with 2008 showing the best FHSU performance across our longevity in NSSE.

Senior students' levels of academic challenge could be enhanced with the following activities:

- Set higher expectations related to preparing for class,
- Assign more readings and written assignments,
- Require more time studying and on academic work,
- Emphasize analysis, synthesis, application, and value judgment in coursework.

In order to improve senior perception of academic challenge, Academic Affairs has taken three major steps. First, each department was asked to perform an "academic audit" on their undergraduate program in an effort to align learning outcomes, innovative teaching methods, and assessment. Second, FHSU continues to measure learning outcomes at the institutional level through instruments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment and iSkills exam. Finally, for the past three years departments have been asked to submit learning outcomes results as part of their annual reporting process.

Analysis 2.2: Active and Collaborative Learning. This analysis explored the performance differences on the Active and Collaborative Learning benchmark between senior students at FHSU, Carnegie peer, and all NSSE institutions from 2002 through 2008.

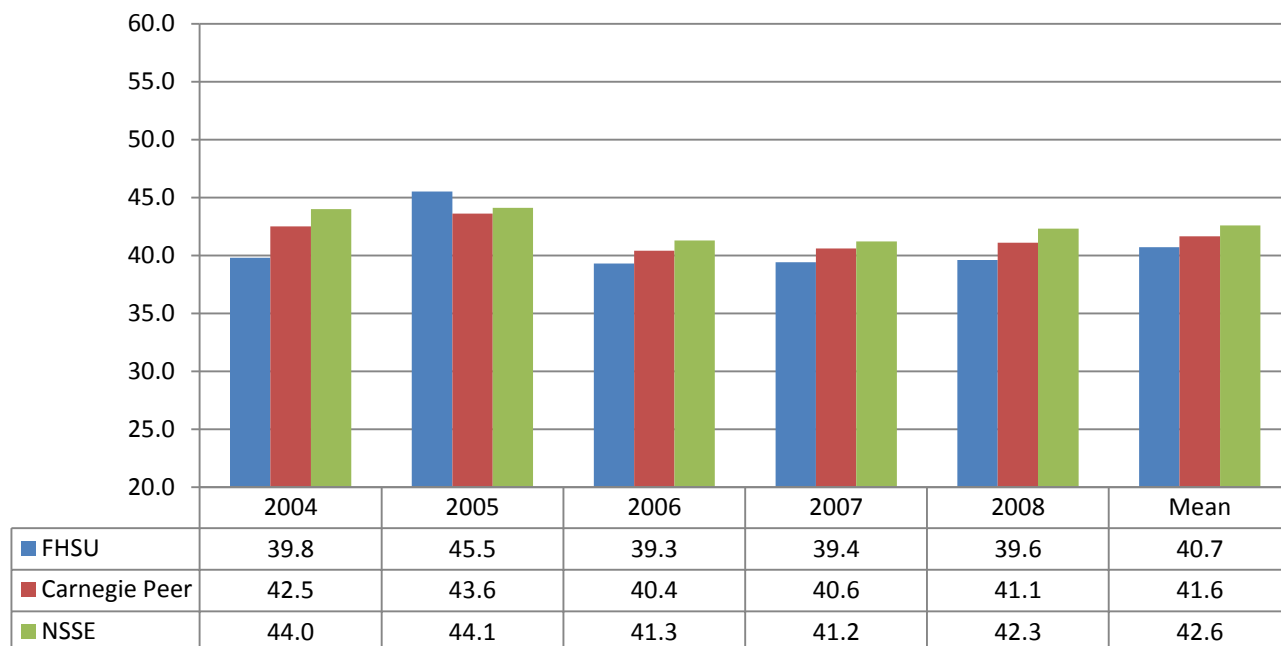


FHSU seniors have consistently reported lower than peer and overall NSSE performance on this benchmark, with a notable spike in 2005. Performance since 2006 reflects minor improvement, and relative to peers and overall NSSE mean scores, a large gap still exists. The 2008 results reveal a below average FHSU performance in “Active and Collaborative Learning” for seniors across our seven year history with NSSE.

Senior students’ active and collaborative learning could be enhanced with the following activities:

- Require class discussion, class presentations, or a community-based project,
- Work with other students during class or outside class, or tutor other students,
- Discuss ideas from class with others.

Analysis 2.3: Student-Faculty Interaction This analysis explored the performance differences on the Student-Faculty Interaction benchmark between senior students at FHSU, Carnegie peer, and all NSSE institutions from 2004 through 2008.

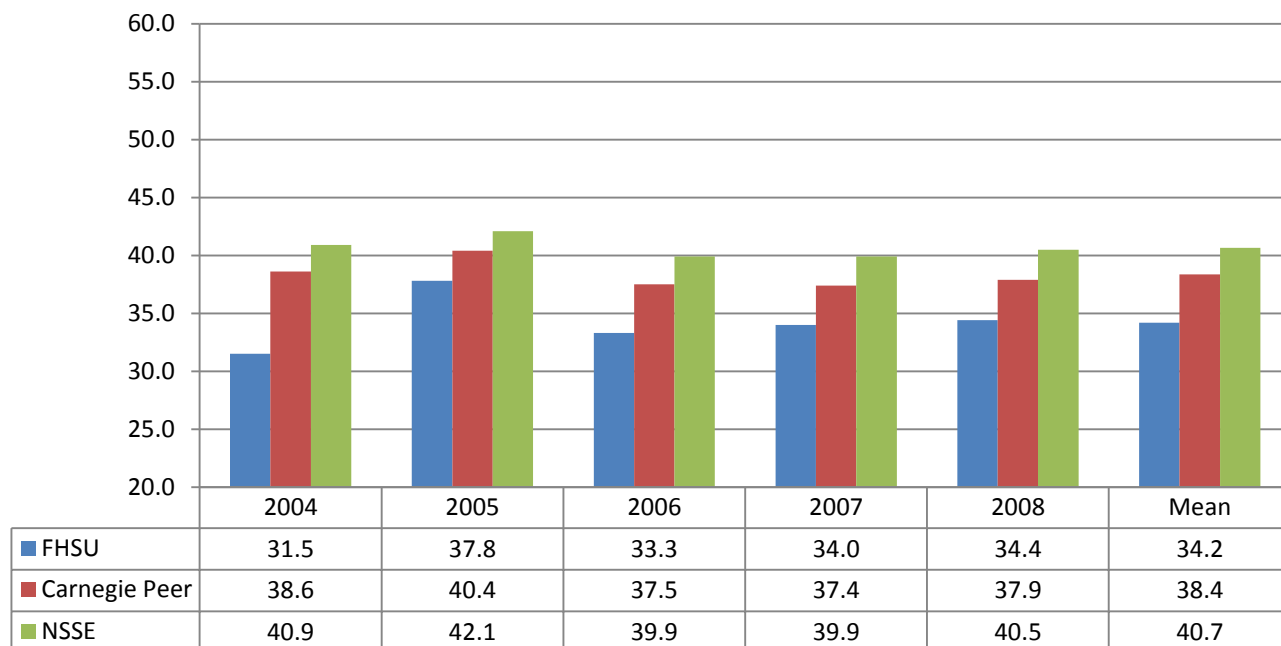


FHSU seniors have consistently reported lower than peer and overall NSSE performance on this benchmark, with the exception of a marked spike in 2005. Performance since 2006 reflects no substantive improvement. The 2008 results reveals a below average FHSU performance in “Student/Faculty Interaction” for seniors.

Senior students’ student/faculty interaction could be enhanced with the following activities:

- Discuss grades, assignments, or class content with students,
- Provide prompt written or oral feedback on assignments,
- Discuss career plans or other co-curricular activities with students,
- Work with students on a research project outside course requirements.

Analysis 2.4: Enriching Educational Experiences This analysis explored the performance differences on the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark between senior students at FHSU, Carnegie peer, and all NSSE institutions from 2004 through 2008.

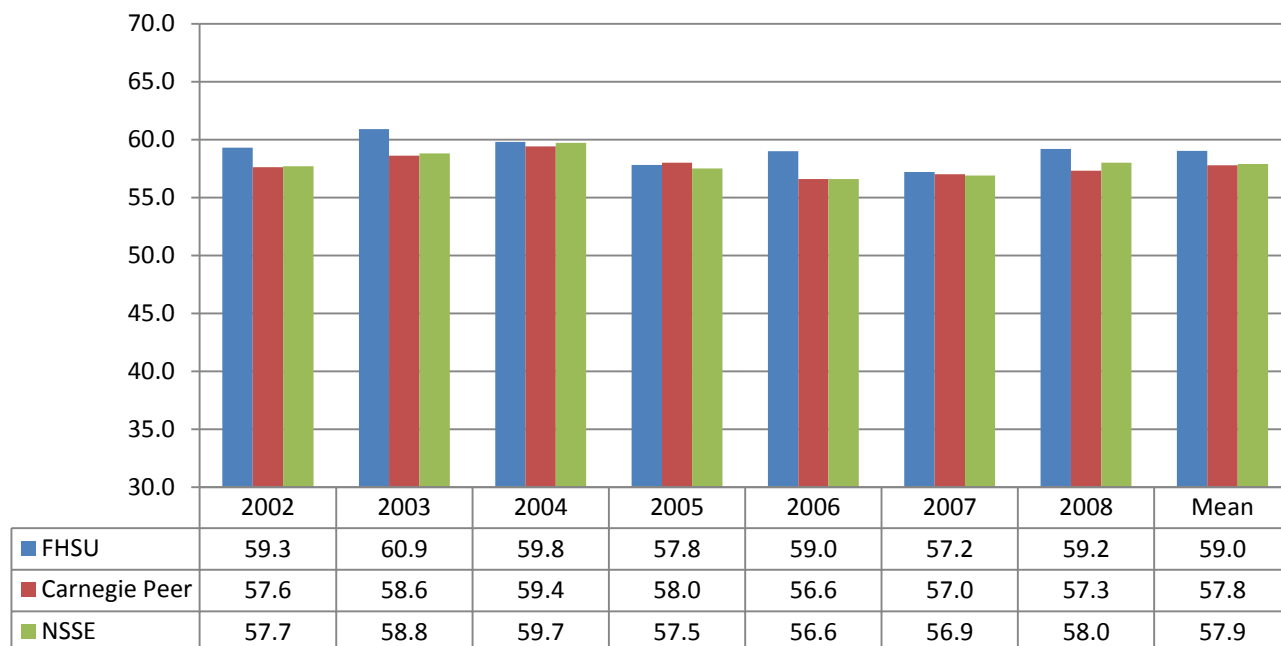


FHSU seniors have consistently reported lower than peer and overall NSSE performance on this benchmark. Performance since 2006 reflects some improvement, but relative to peers and overall NSSE mean scores, a large gap still exists. The 2005 results reveal the best FHSU performance in “Enriching Educational Experiences” for freshmen with a marked spike, but 2008 is above the FHSU average.

Senior students’ educational experiences could be enriched with the following activities:

- Participation in co-curricular activities,
- Major capstone experience,
- Conversations with diverse populations,
- Community service, foreign language coursework, or independent study.

Analysis 2.5: Supportive Campus Environment This analysis explored the performance differences on the Supportive Campus Environment benchmark between seniors at FHSU, Carnegie peer, and all NSSE institutions from 2002 through 2008.



FHSU seniors have consistently reported higher than peer and overall NSSE performance on this benchmark. The 2008 FHSU results reveal slightly above average performance in “Supportive Campus Environment” for seniors across our seven year history with NSSE.

Senior students’ satisfaction with the campus environment could be enriched with the following activities:

- Campus support for academic, non-academic, and social issues,
- Improved relationships between students, faculty, support services, and administrative personnel.