

# ORAP Research Bulletin

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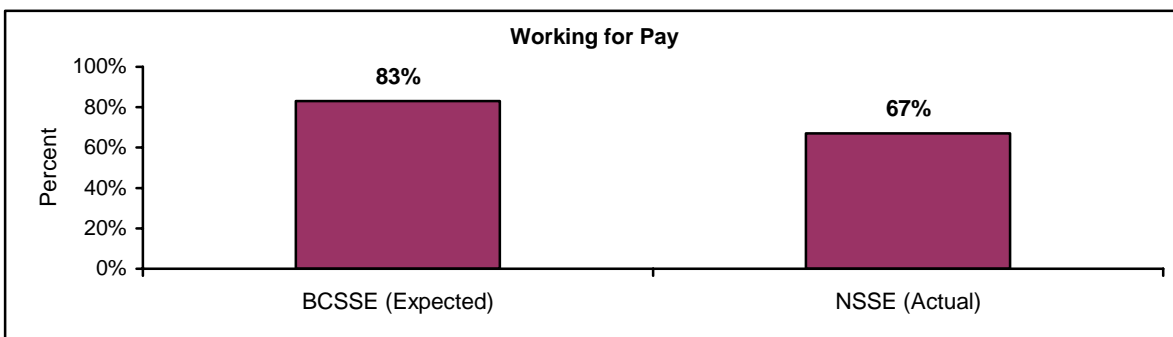
## First-Year Student Expectations vs. Actual Experiences: Comparing the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement & National Survey of Student Engagement

In fall 2007, for the first time, Adelphi University administered the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)<sup>1</sup> to entering first-year students in an effort to measure their pre-college academic and co-curricular experiences, and their expectations for participating in educational activities during college. In spring 2008, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to a random sample of freshmen and seniors to assess the extent to which students engage in a variety of educational practices that are empirically linked to positive learning and development outcomes. BCSSE is most informative when used in conjunction with NSSE as possible gaps between students' expectations for college and actual first year college experiences can be identified. Ninety freshmen participated in both BCSSE and NSSE.<sup>2</sup> This bulletin highlights some of the comparisons.

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### Working for Pay

Eighty-three percent of respondents expected to work during their first year of college; 67 percent of respondents actually did.



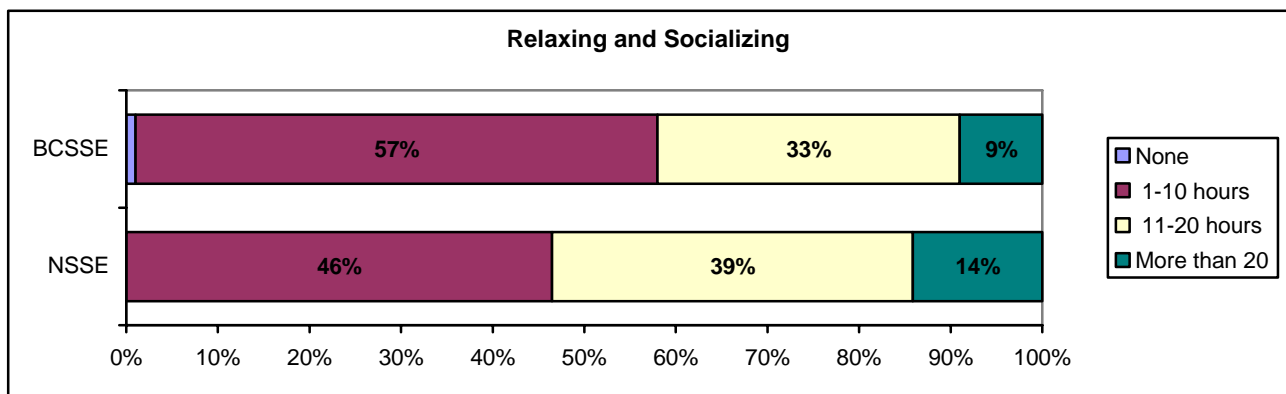
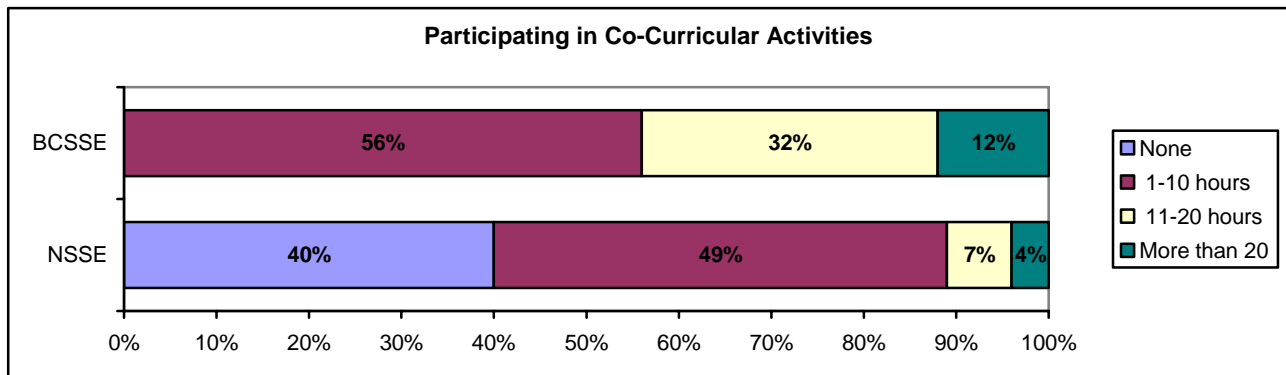
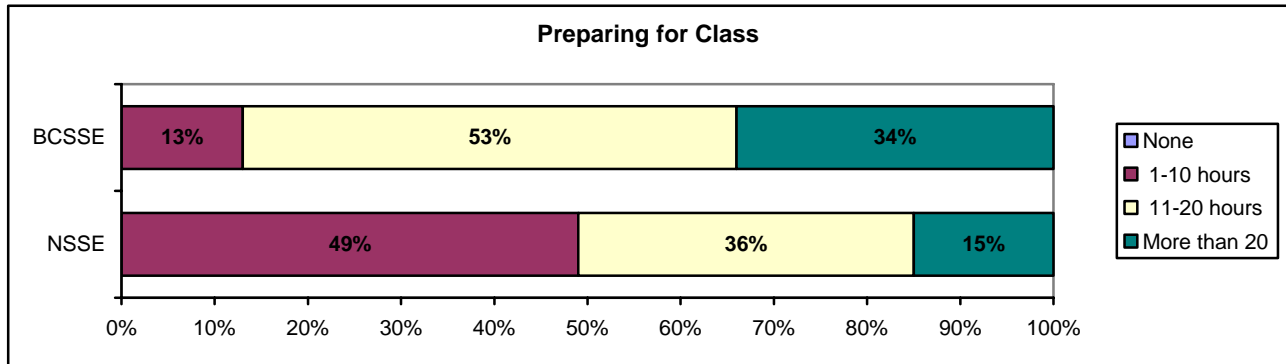
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<sup>1</sup>Conducted by The Center for Postsecondary Research & Planning at Indiana University.

<sup>2</sup> Results should be used with caution given the small number of respondents.

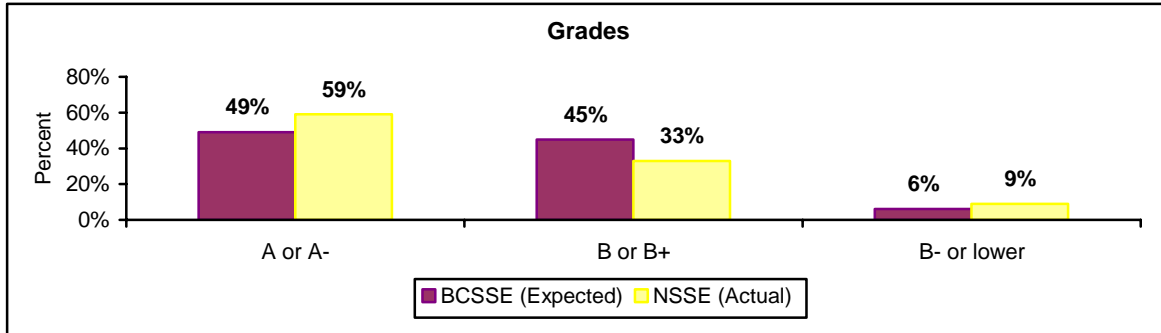
## Activities in a Typical Week

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of hours they expected to engage in particular activities during a typical 7-day week. Students are spending less time 'preparing for class,' and 'participating in co-curricular activities' than expected, but they are spending slightly more time 'relaxing and socializing' than expected. All of the BCSSE respondents expected to spend at least some time participating in co-curricular activities; however 40 percent indicated on NSSE that they did not spend any time doing so.



## Grades

While 49 percent of BCSSE respondents expected to earn A's or A-, 59 percent reported on NSSE that they did; conversely, 45 percent expected to earn B's or B+, but 33 percent actually did. Only 6 percent expected to earn B- or lower, although slightly more (9%) did.



## Educational Practices

Respondents were asked to indicate if they expected to engage in 15 educational practices “very often,” “often,” “sometimes,” or “never” during their first year of college. “Often” and “very often” responses were later added together to better represent engagement; responses were then compared between the two surveys. Expectations were exceeded for two of the educational practices and appear in the table below:

Exceeded First-Year Expectations	BCSSE (Expected)	NSSE (Actual)	Difference
Received prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance (written or oral)	61%	68%	7%
Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class	58%	62%	4%

Thirteen educational practices did not exceed first-year expectations; the greatest differences were occurred for ‘working with faculty members on activities other than coursework’ and ‘working with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.’ The table that follows details the differences for the 13 educational practices that did not exceed expectations:

<b>Did Not Exceed First-Year Expectations</b>	<b>BCSSE (Expected)</b>	<b>NSSE (Actual)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity	71%	69%	-2%
Worked with other students on projects during class	51%	43%	-8%
Had serious conversations with students who are very different in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions or values	76%	65%	-11%
Discussed grades or assignments with instructor	66%	53%	-13%
Learned something that changes the way you understand an issue or idea	86%	72%	-14%
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	96%	80%	-16%
Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	72%	56%	-16%
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion	82%	61%	-21%
Made a class presentation	57%	35%	-22%
Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	49%	27%	-22%
Try to better understand someone else's view by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	87%	64%	-23%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	63%	29%	-34%
Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities)	54%	14%	-40%

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**For additional information on this Research Bulletin topic or other ORAP projects, contact:**  
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