



ORAP Research Bulletin

Office of Research, Assessment & Planning
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2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collected data from first-year students and seniors at four-year colleges and universities across the United States. With the exception of 2006, Adelphi has participated in NSSE since its inception. NSSE results are intended to assist institutions in assessing the extent to which their students engage in a variety of educational practices that are empirically linked to positive learning and development outcomes. In spring 2007, both paper- and web-based questionnaires were sent to a group of randomly selected Adelphi students, and 192 of them completed these surveys - 88 first-year students and 104 seniors. The overall response rate was 33%, and the respondents were broadly representative of Adelphi's freshmen and seniors as a whole. Students' responses were compared to those from doctoral peer institutions in Adelphi's Carnegie classification and to all national respondents.

Students' Characteristics

The NSSE survey highlighted a number of areas in which Adelphi freshman and senior respondents were distinct from their peers across the nation:

- Adelphi respondents (both freshmen and seniors) were more likely to be from minority groups.
- Adelphi freshmen respondents were considerably less likely to live on-campus.
- Adelphi senior respondents were older than seniors in the comparison groups.
- Adelphi senior respondents were more likely to be transfer students and enrolled part-time.
- Adelphi respondents (both freshmen and seniors) were notably more likely than their national peers to work for pay off-campus and spend more time caring for dependents.

Strategic Planning Goals

Adelphi University participates in a number of surveys including NSSE. The data generated by these surveys enable the University to identify its strengths as well as areas in need of improvement. Survey data also provide useful tools for gauging Adelphi University's success in reaching important goals laid out in its strategic plan and to determine if actions taken as the result of previous studies had the intended impact. Three of the four goals (*Academic Improvement, Student Recruitment and Retention, and Facilities: Renovation and Construction*) were reflected in NSSE and are briefly addressed using relevant survey results.

Strategic Goal: Academic Program Improvement

Objective: Provide academic programs that are challenging and rigorous

Strengths

- On NSSE's "Level of academic challenge" benchmark, which combines 12 related items, Adelphi freshmen's overall average rating increased slightly from previous years and was higher than that of their peers. Senior ratings were higher than their national peers as well:

Level of Academic Challenge Benchmark - 2007			
	Adelphi	Doctoral Peers	All National
Freshmen	54.4	52.0	51.7
Seniors	56.7	56.1	55.6

Based on a scale of 1 to 100

- Also, significantly more Adelphi seniors reported having worked harder than their peers to meet an instructor's expectations.

Challenges

- Although Adelphi senior's overall average rating of "Level of academic challenge" benchmark was higher than that of their national peers, it declined compare to the previous year.

Objective: Provide a broad-based General Education Program

Strengths

- Both freshmen and senior ratings on the extent to which Adelphi contributes to analyzing quantitative problems improved over previous years:

Adelphi's Contribution to Analyzing Quantitative Problems						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007
Freshmen	2.49	2.49	2.52	2.55	2.68	2.72
Seniors	2.86	2.84	2.75	2.74	2.96	3.04

Based on a scale of 1 to 4

- Senior ratings on Adelphi's contribution to all general education-related items (e.g., writing, speaking clearly, critical thinking, quantitative analysis, and solving real-world problems) also improved over previous years.

Challenges

- Freshmen ratings of an institutional contribution to speaking clearly and effectively dropped to their lowest level and were significantly lower than their peers nationally.

Objective: Improve Information Literacy

Strengths

- Adelphi freshmen and seniors (with the exception of the 2005 cohort) showed a steadily increasing use of email to communicate with instructors or students, and increasingly more seniors reported that Adelphi contributed to their use of computing and information technology.

Challenges

- Adelphi freshmen ratings of institutional emphasis on using computers in academic work and senior ratings of their institution's contribution to using computing and information technology were significantly lower than their national peers.

Objective: Build Global and Participatory Citizenship

Strengths

- Improvement was evident in the proportion of Adelphi freshmen reporting tutoring other students and participating in community-related projects.
- Adelphi freshmen were more likely to report the inclusion of diverse perspectives in class discussions or assignments than their national peers. Seniors also reported significantly more emphasis on understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups than their peers.

Challenges

- Adelphi seniors were significantly less likely than their counterparts to complete foreign language coursework and participate in community service or co-curricular activities. This finding is not surprising, however, given the large proportions of non-traditional students, commuters, and students who work off-campus.

Strategic Goal: Student Recruitment and Retention

Objective: Enhance the overall quality of students' experience

Strengths

- Adelphi students continued to respond positively to the quality of academic advising.
- When asked whether they would choose Adelphi if they could start over again, the freshmen rating was the highest since 2001. Senior responses for this same item (after notable decline in 2004) have improved:

Would Choose Adelphi Again If Starting Over Again						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007
Freshmen	3.11	3.10	3.16	3.11	3.08	3.20
Seniors	3.12	3.13	3.19	3.01	3.09	3.12

Based on a scale of 1 to 4

Challenges

- Students' ratings assessing the entire quality of their Adelphi educational experience have fluctuated over the years, particularly for seniors. Recently implemented improvements in the financial aid process and student services, as well as the completion of the construction projects underway, especially the athletic and performing arts centers, should enhance students' future perceptions of Adelphi:

Entire Educational Experience						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007
Freshmen	3.03	3.07	3.15	3.24	3.17	3.20
Seniors	3.17	3.21	3.23	3.19	3.12	3.18

Based on a scale of 1 to 4

Objective: Assist students in career and life planning

Strengths

- Adelphi seniors' perceptions of the extent to which the University contributed to their acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills have steadily increased since 2003 and exceeded those of their peers:

Adelphi's Contribution to Acquiring Work-Related Knowledge and Skills						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007
Seniors	3.01	3.07	3.03	3.06	3.11	3.23

Based on a scale of 1 to 4

- In the past two NSSE administrations, Adelphi seniors were more likely to report that they talked about career plans with faculty members than in previous years. These ratings were also higher than those of their peers.

Challenges

- Freshmen ratings on acquiring job related skills declined since 2005 and were lower than their peers nationally (although not significantly).

Adelphi's Contribution to Acquiring Work-Related Knowledge and Skills						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007
Freshmen	2.38	2.42	2.63	2.63	2.63	2.54

Strategic Goal: Facilities – Renovation and Construction

Objective: Upgrade recreational facilities

- Adelphi freshmen and seniors were considerably less likely to participate in physical activities than members of the comparison groups. The launch of the health and wellness website and the current renovations of recreational facilities, however, should generate more positive results in the future.

Conclusion

Adelphi continues its tradition of offering challenging academic programs, fostering a high level of student-faculty interaction, and providing a supportive campus environment. Although Adelphi's students were less likely to participate in collaborative learning, study abroad, and co-curricular activities, the findings should be interpreted within the context of Adelphi's student characteristics (e.g., non-traditional students, commuters). Overall, Adelphi students were satisfied with their entire educational experience and emphatically responded that they would choose attending Adelphi again if they could start over.

This ORAP Research Bulletin presents highlights from the full report available on ORAP's website.

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