Background: First-year and senior students were asked to complete the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) during the spring semester (mid-March to mid-May) of 2015. The NSSE is the most widely used survey instrument in higher education. In the results we receive for this survey we have three different comparison groups: Private Colleges in Minnesota and Border States (21 Colleges including Augsburg, Carthage, Concordia St. Paul & Moorhead, Grinnell, Luther, Macalester, Northwestern, St. Olaf; this is a more rigorous comparison group), Institutions in the same Carnegie Class (Master’s L: Master’s Colleges & Universities with Larger Programs), and the NSSE National Sample.

Our response rates were much higher than the national average and similar to MN & Border States Private institutions:

- 44% for Bethel first-year students compared to 39% for MN & Border States private institutions, 21% for Carnegie Class, and 22% Nationally;
- 41% for Bethel seniors compared to 41% for MN & Border States private institutions, 24% Carnegie Class, and 25% Nationally.
- Our response rates were lower than in 2013 for both first-years (56% in 2013) and seniors (60% in 2013). This is mostly due to the fact that students could take the NSSE during Assessment Day in 2013, but we didn’t have an Assessment Day in 2015.

Elevator Ride Summary

- Continued improvement in prompt and detailed feedback, which has been a weakness for us in the past.

- **Strengths:**
  - Senior Participation in *High Impact Practices (biggest strength)*
  - Collaborative learning
  - Student-Faculty Interactions (Seniors)
  - Supportive Environment (Seniors)
  - Assigned Writing (Seniors)
  - Bethel students spend more time preparing for class
Reflective & Integrative Learning

- Weaknesses
  - Discussions with Diverse Others
  - Students Using Learning Strategies (less likely to review notes)
  - Less likely to prepare multiple drafts of an assignment (First-years)

- Overall
  - Somewhat higher evaluation of entire educational experience compared to national responses, but slightly lower than our own responses in 2013.
    - First-years = 89% good or excellent (90% MN & Border States, Carnegie Class = 86%, National = 86%); in 2013, the percentage for Bethel first-years was 93%.
    - Seniors = 93% good or excellent (89% MN & Border States, Carnegie Class = 86%, National = 86%); in 2013, the percentage for Bethel seniors was 94%.
  - If you could start over again, would you go to this same institution? Lower ratings than 2013, especially for our first-year students.
    - First-years = 85% probably or definitely yes (86% MN & Border States, Carnegie = 83%, National = 84%); in 2013 the percentage for Bethel first-year students was 93%.
    - Seniors = 84% probably or definitely yes (81% MN & Border States, Carnegie Class = 81%, National = 82%); in 2013 the percentage for Bethel seniors was 88%.

- Area of Concern
  - First-year students in 2015 gave lower ratings in certain areas compared to 2013. Most notably in their quality of interactions with other students, which was rated a 6 or 7 on a 7 point scale by 76% of first-years in 2013, but by only 67% in 2015. Another area is listed directly above; significantly less likely to say they would choose Bethel again if they had it to do all over compared to 2013. This percentage was also lower for seniors compared to 2013, but the drop was not as dramatic compared to the first-year students.
More Detailed Results

High Impact Practices
This continues to be an area of great strength for us in CAS. Our seniors are significantly more likely to participate in what NSSE labels as High Impact Practices (HIP). High impact practices include:

- **Learning Communities** (for us, this would be Western Humanities or the Honors program; 44% for Bethel vs. 27% for MN & Border States Colleges & 25% nationally)

- **Service-learning** (88% for Bethel vs. 73% for MN & Border States & 61% nationally)

- **Research with faculty** (our weakest HIP area; 29% for Bethel vs. 37% for MN & Border States & 25% nationally)

- **Internship or field experience** (79% for Bethel vs. 67% for MN & Border States & 51% nationally)

- **Study abroad** (52% for Bethel vs. 37% for MN & Border States & 14% nationally)

- **Culminating senior experience** (technically all of our seniors should select this; our P-course is a capstone to General Education and almost all majors have a senior seminar; 67% for Bethel vs. 68% for MN & Border States and 46% nationally).

92% of our seniors participated in at least two HIPs while at Bethel (a little more than the 89% in 2013), compared to 83% for MN & Border State Private Institutions, 62% for Carnegie Class, and 60% nationally.

This continues to be a “selling point” for our institution; a strength to build on and market.

Compared to seniors at other institutions, Bethel Seniors:

- **write more** (108 pages during a school year compared to 84 for MN & Border States private institutions, 80 for Carnegie Class, and 79 nationally),

- spend more time **preparing for class** (60% study 16 or more hours a week compared to 49% for MN & Border States private institutions, 40% for Carnegie Class, and 41% nationally),

- spend more time in **co-curricular activities**, 

- are more likely to **work** for pay **on campus**, 
• are less likely to work for pay off campus,

• are less likely to say that their experiences at Bethel have helped them in being an informed and active citizen, and

• are more likely to say that their experiences at Bethel have helped them in thinking critically & analytically and acquire job- or work-related knowledge and skills.

NSSE 2015 Engagement Indicators

NOTE: What follows comes directly from a report that NSSE provided for our institution.

Engagement Indicators: Overview

Engagement Indicators are summary measures based on sets of NSSE questions examining key dimensions of student engagement. The ten indicators are organized within four broad themes: Academic Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, and Campus Environment. The tables below compare average scores for your students with those in your comparison groups.

Use the following key:

▲▲ Your students’ average was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

▲▲ Your students’ average was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.

-- No significant difference.

▽▽ Your students’ average was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.

▽▽ Your students’ average was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

First-Year Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Engagement Indicator</th>
<th>Your first-year students compared with MN &amp; Border States</th>
<th>Your first-year students compared with Carnegie Class</th>
<th>Your first-year students compared with NSSE 2014 &amp; 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher-Order Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Challenge</td>
<td>Reflective &amp; Integrative Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Strategies</td>
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### Quantitative Reasoning

- Students at Bethel University are engaged in Quantitative Reasoning.

### Learning with Peers

- Collaborative Learning: △
- Discussions with Diverse Others: ▼

### Experiences with Faculty

- Student-Faculty Interaction: ▽
- Effective Teaching Practices: ▽

### Campus Environment

- Quality of Interactions: △
- Supportive Environment: ▽

### Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Engagement Indicator</th>
<th>Your seniors compared with MN &amp; Border States</th>
<th>Your seniors compared with Carnegie Class</th>
<th>Your seniors compared with NSSE 2014 &amp; 2015</th>
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<td>Higher-Order Learning</td>
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<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Learning</td>
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Strengths

**Collaborative Learning:** Both our first-year and senior students are significantly more likely to report that they engage in collaborative learning compared to other students in all three comparison groups. Below are the items that make up the collaborative learning scale:

1e. Asked another student to help you understand course material
1f. Explained course material to one or more students
1g. Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
1h. Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

Bethel students rated each of these items much higher than students in comparison groups.

**Student-Faculty Interactions:** Seniors scored significantly higher on the student-faculty interaction scale compared to Carnegie Class Institutions and the National Sample (our first-year students had significantly lower responses compared to first-years in MN & Border States and similar responses to other first-year students in the comparison groups). Below are the items that make up the Student-Faculty Interactions scale:

3a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member
3b. Worked w/faculty on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
3c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
3d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member

Bethel seniors rated three of the four items much higher than students in Carnegie and National NSSE comparison groups. 3d, Discussed academic performance with faculty member, was rated similarly to students in comparison groups.

**Quality of Interactions:** Both Bethel first-years and seniors scored significantly higher on this scale compared to students in similar Carnegie Class Institutions and nationally. Our results were similar to MN & Border States Private institutions. Items on this scale include students' ratings of their interactions with:

13a. Students
13b. Academic advisors
13c. Faculty
13d. Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)
13e. Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

Bethel seniors gave much higher ratings to their interactions with academic advisors and faculty and somewhat higher ratings on interactions with student services staff compared to seniors in Carnegie Class institutions and nationally. Interestingly, Bethel Seniors’ ratings of their interactions with faculty are actually significantly higher than their ratings of their interactions with other students. This is very different from the trends you see at other institutions.

Bethel first-years gave higher ratings to their interactions with students, faculty, student services staff, and other administrative staff compared to first-years in Carnegie Class institutions and nationally.

**Supportive Environment:** Bethel seniors had significantly higher scores on this scale compared to seniors in the Carnegie Class and National comparison groups. Bethel first-year students had similar scores compared to other first-year students. This scale includes the following items:

14b. Providing support to help students succeed academically
14c. Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)
14d. Encouraging contact among students from diff. backgrounds (soc., racial/eth., relig., etc.)
14e. Providing opportunities to be involved socially
14f. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)
14g. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
14h. Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)
14i. Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues
Items with higher ratings for Bethel seniors include providing support to help students succeed academically (14b), support services (14c), opportunities socially (14e), and attending campus activities (14h).

**Reflective & Integrative Learning:** Bethel First-years and Seniors had significantly higher scores on this scale compared to students in the Carnegie Class and National groups. This scale includes the following items:

2a. Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
2b. Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
2c. Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
2d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
2e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
2f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
2g. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

Bethel First-year students scored higher on all items on this scale compared to Carnegie Class and the national sample, EXCEPT for 2c (included diverse perspectives) and 2e (understand someone else’s views). Seniors rated all the of the scale items higher than seniors in Carnegie Class and the national sample.

**Weaknesses**

**Discussions with Diverse Others:** Our first-year students and seniors scored significantly lower on this scale compared to students in all other groups. This difference is quite large. On this scale student rated how often they had discussions with:

8a. People from a race or ethnicity other than your own
8b. People from an economic background other than your own
8c. People with religious beliefs other than your own
8d. People with political views other than your own
Our first-year students rated all of these items much lower compared to first-years in all other groups. Our seniors rated the 8a-8c much lower and 8d somewhat lower compared to seniors in all other comparison groups. These are the exact same patterns as we found in 2013.

**Learning Strategies:** Both our first-year students and our seniors scored lower on this scale compared to students in other groups. Items on this scale include:

9a. Identified key information from reading assignments
9b. Reviewed your notes after class
9c. Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials

Bethel first-year students were much less likely to review notes after class compared to other first-year students. Bethel seniors were also a little less likely to say the identified key information from reading assignments and summarized what they learned in class compared to other seniors. Bethel seniors were much less likely to say they reviewed their notes after class.

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