

# The Thriving Quotient

The Thriving Quotient™ (TQ) is a reliable ( $\alpha=.89$ ) instrument used at over 285 colleges and universities across the country. The instrument was developed to measure the academic, social, and psychological aspects of a student's college experience that are most predictive of their academic success, institutional fit, satisfaction with college, and ultimately graduation. The 24 items on the TQ cluster onto 5 scales:

- **Engaged Learning** – A measure of the degree to which students are energized by what they are learning, believe what they are learning is worthwhile to them, are able to apply what they're learning, and are continuing to think about it outside of class.
- **Academic Determination** – A measure of students' goal-directedness, investment of effort, application of their strengths to academic challenges, and regulation of their own learning and use of time.
- **Positive Perspective** – A measure of students' optimism and explanatory style.
- **Social Connectedness** – A measure of the degree to which students are involved in healthy relationships and social support networks, whether on or off campus.
- **Diverse Citizenship** – A measure of students' desire to make a difference in the community around them, as well as their openness to differences in others.

Examining thriving among college students developed out of a desire to understand student success more holistically than previous higher education research that had focused solely on student retention. Dr. Laurie Schreiner developed the Thriving Quotient™ (TQ) using concepts from positive psychology (e.g., flourishing) and retention theory to introduce the term thriving to “describe the experiences of college students who are fully engaged intellectually, socially, and emotionally” (Schreiner, 2010, p. 4). Thriving is not

about personality traits, but rather describes malleable qualities within a student, meaning that institutions can teach students to thrive. An exciting discovery from years of TQ research has been that there are specific campus experiences that serve as significant pathways to student thriving. These pathways are also assessed in the online instrument and include students' sense of community on campus, perceptions of institutional integrity, interaction and satisfaction with faculty, levels of campus involvement, spirituality, and certainty about their major. An analysis of the pathways that are most predictive of thriving among your students is included in this report, based on these additional items and scales.

The CCCU norms referenced in this report refer to the average responses of students from 22 CCCU universities in Fall of 2024.

Statistically significant differences between the responses of your students and these norms are indicated by an asterisk.

“Significant” differences are those which are statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level or below ( $p < .01$ ,  $p < .001$ ), meaning that the difference in the average scores could be due to chance or random fluctuation less than 5% of the time.

THE THRIVING QUOTIENT UG – FALL 2024

Bethel University

ITEMS Items are on a 6-point scale, with 6 indicating “strongly agree” Any significant difference from any of the norms is denoted with an asterisk* in the relevant column.	NATIONAL NORMS (N = 7368)		YOUR INSTITUTION (N = 276)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Engaged Learning</b>	<b>4.72</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>4.88*</b>	<b>0.78*</b>
1. I feel as though I am learning things in my classes that are worthwhile to me as a person.	5.02	0.98	5.16*	0.85*
2. I can usually find ways of applying what I'm learning in class to something else in my life.	4.89	0.96	4.98	0.86
3. I find myself thinking about what I'm learning in class even when I'm not in class.	4.59	1.14	4.88*	1.02*
4. I feel energized by the ideas I'm learning in most of my classes.	4.38	1.11	4.49	1.03
<b>Academic Determination</b>	<b>4.87</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>4.97*</b>	<b>0.62*</b>
5. I am confident I will reach my educational goals.	5.09	0.96	5.24*	0.84*
6. Even if assignments are not interesting to me, I find a way to keep working at them until they are done well.	4.76	1.07	4.89*	0.96*
7. I know how to apply my strengths to achieve academic success.	4.86	0.97	5.01*	0.89*
8. I am good at juggling all the demands of college life.	4.52	1.08	4.60	1.06
9. Other people would say I'm a hard worker.	5.11	0.90	5.25*	0.78*
10. When I'm faced with a problem in my life, I can usually think of several ways to solve it.	4.87	0.91	4.83	0.91
<b>Social Connectedness</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>1.08</b>
11. Other people seem to make friends more easily than I do. (reverse-scored so that a higher score is a positive indication)	3.21	1.41	3.20	1.40
12. I feel like my friends really care about me.	5.03	0.96	5.00	0.97

ITEMS Items are on a 6-point scale, with 6 indicating “strongly agree” Any significant difference from any of the norms is denoted with an asterisk* in the relevant column.	NATIONAL NORMS (N = 7368)		YOUR INSTITUTION (N = 276)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
13. I don't have as many close friends as I wish I had. (reverse-scored so that a higher score is a positive indication)	3.63	1.57	3.44	1.55
14. I feel content with the kinds of friendships I currently have.	4.77	1.08	4.65	1.14
15. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns. (reverse-scored so that a higher score is a positive indication)	3.88	1.55	3.92	1.53
16. It's hard to make friends on this campus. (reverse-scored so that a higher score is a positive indication)	4.06	1.39	4.14	1.37
<b>Diverse Citizenship</b>	<b>4.77</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>4.86*</b>	<b>0.63*</b>
17. I spend time making a difference in other people's lives.	4.46	1.00	4.50	0.98
18. I know I can make a difference in my community.	4.78	0.97	4.79	0.97
19. I value interacting with people whose viewpoints are different from my own.	4.69	0.96	4.80	0.89
20. It's important for me to make a contribution to my community.	4.78	0.94	4.92*	0.86*
21. It is important to become aware of the perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds.	5.23	0.85	5.39*	0.79*
22. My knowledge or opinions have been influenced or changed by becoming more aware of the perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds.	4.67	1.05	4.81*	0.99*
<b>Positive Perspective</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>4.60</b>	<b>0.98</b>
23. My perspective on life is that I tend to see the glass as “half full” rather than “half empty.”	4.46	1.16	4.57	1.17
24. I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless.	4.60	1.02	4.64	1.00
<b>THRIVING QUOTIENT composite score</b>	<b>4.61</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>4.70*</b>	<b>0.59*</b>
<b>Students' self-reported assessment of their thriving</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>4.35</b>	<b>1.05</b>

ITEMS Items are on a 6-point scale, with 6 indicating “strongly agree.” Any significant difference from any of the norms is denoted with an asterisk.*	CCCU NORMS (N = 7368)		YOUR INSTITUTION (N = 276)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Psychological Sense of Community</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>4.83</b>	<b>0.94</b>
25. I feel like I belong here.	4.83	1.23	4.93	1.15
26. Being a student here fills an important need in my life.	4.52	1.09	4.53	1.00
27. I feel proud of the college or university I have chosen to attend.	4.85	1.17	4.94	1.03
28. There is a strong sense of community on this campus.	4.84	1.10	4.87	1.14
<b>Spirituality</b>	<b>5.17</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>5.28</b>	<b>0.97</b>
29. My spiritual or religious beliefs provide me with a sense of strength when life is difficult.	5.15	1.04	5.25	1.01
30. My spiritual or religious beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.	5.24	1.03	5.37	0.99
31. My spiritual or religious beliefs are the foundation of my approach to life.	5.13	1.13	5.20	1.18
<b>Institutional Integrity</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>4.87*</b>	<b>0.87*</b>
32. My experiences on campus so far have met my expectations.	4.64	1.17	4.86*	1.08*
33. The institution was accurately portrayed during the admissions process.	4.54	1.21	4.71*	1.03*
34. Overall, the actions of faculty, staff, and administrators on this campus are consistent with the mission of the institution.	5.01	1.03	5.05	0.98
<b>Outcome Measures</b>				
35. I am confident that the amount of money I’m paying for college is worth it in the long run.	4.11	1.38	4.23	1.30
36. I intend to re-enroll at this institution next year (graduating were instructed to leave this blank).	5.18	1.10	5.31	1.07
37. I really enjoy being a student here.	4.93	1.05	5.04	0.98
38. I intend to graduate from this institution	5.37	0.98	5.50	0.96
39. Given my current goals, this institution is a good fit for me	5.02	1.09	5.07	1.05
40. If I had to do it over again, I would choose a different institution. (reverse-scored)	4.35	1.54	4.55	1.47

<b>Family Items</b>				
<b>41.</b> My family encourages me to complete my degree	5.50	0.89	5.62*	0.68*
<b>42.</b> I regularly talk to my family about what I'm learning in college.	4.21	1.33	4.23	1.31
<b>43.</b> My family approves of me attending this institution.	5.44	0.88	5.52	0.82

<b>SATISFACTION ITEMS</b> (Items are on a 6-point scale, with 6 indicating "very satisfied") Any significant difference from any of the norms is denoted with an asterisk* in the relevant column.	<b>NATIONAL NORMS</b> (N = 7368)		<b>YOUR INSTITUTION</b> (N = 276)	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Satisfaction with:</b>				
The amount you are learning in your classes.	4.79	0.93	4.99*	0.75*
The amount of contact you have had with your professors this year.	4.85	0.90	5.02*	0.80*
The academic advising you have experienced this year.	4.65	1.12	4.87*	1.07*
The kinds of interactions you have had with other students on this campus this year.	4.83	1.00	4.89	0.95
The quality of interaction you have had with your professors this year.	4.92	0.90	5.08*	0.78*
The interactions you have had this year with students of different ethnic backgrounds at this institution.	4.87	0.93	4.83	0.89
Your instructors' sensitivity to the needs of diverse students.	4.84	0.93	4.97*	0.79*
The degree to which your instructors include diverse perspectives in the curriculum.	4.80	0.98	4.86	0.94
Your instructors' encouragement for students to contribute diverse perspectives in class discussions.	4.87	0.96	4.98	0.85
The level of compassion your instructors have shown this year as you have faced challenges.	5.08	0.94	5.22*	0.79*
Your current living situation	4.76	1.21	4.94*	1.08*
Your current physical health	4.56	1.21	4.59	1.23
Your current mental health	4.31	1.29	4.42	1.26
Your overall experiences at this university this year.	4.89	1.08	5.07*	1.03*

STUDENT FREQUENCY OF INVOLVEMENT ITEMS (Items are on a 6-point scale, with 1 indicating “never” and 6 indicating “very frequently”) <i>Any significant difference from the norms is denoted with an asterisk</i>	CCCU NORMS (N = 7368)		YOUR INSTITUTION (N = 276)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Campus events or activities	4.27	1.22	4.18	1.23
Campus organizations	3.98	1.35	4.07	1.47
Community service	3.48	1.36	3.45	1.42
Fraternity/Sorority to which you belong	2.04	1.67	1.58*	1.37*
Campus ethnic organizations	2.19	1.48	2.20	1.54
<b>FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION ITEMS</b>				
Met with your academic advisor	3.91	1.27	4.02	1.24
Discussed career or grad school plans with a professor	3.66	1.43	3.70	1.40
Discussed academic issues with a professor	3.46	1.44	3.39	1.48
Connected with your instructors outside of class	3.87	1.34	3.85	1.34
Conducted research with a professor	2.19	1.57	1.88*	1.48*
Interacted with professors informally or socially outside of class	2.99	1.57	2.72*	1.50*

<b>CCCU SPIRITUAL LIFE ITEMS</b> (Items are on a 6-point scale, with 1 indicating “never” and 6 indicating “very frequently”) <i>Any significant difference from the norms is denoted with an asterisk</i>	<b>CCCU NORMS</b> <b>(N = 5469)</b>		<b>YOUR INSTITUTION</b> <b>(N = 276)</b>	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>CCCU Spiritual Life Scale</b>	<b>4.98</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>5.02</b>	<b>0.92</b>
I have experienced spiritual growth at this college.	4.98	1.14	4.98	1.09
My college helps me integrate my faith into my life.	5.01	1.08	5.09	1.01
My college has helped me explore my faith.	5.02	1.08	5.11	0.99
My college peers have positively impacted my faith.	4.91	1.14	4.98	1.10
The faculty and staff at my college have positively impacted my faith.	4.99	1.07	4.94	1.05

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION – ALL NUMBERS INDICATE PERCENTAGES**

Class Level	CCCU	Inst
First-Year	32.1	26.7
Sophomore	18.6	17.9
Junior	24.0	22.1
Senior	23.5	30.3
Other	1.8	3.1

Gender	CCCU	Inst
Female/Woman	62.8	69.1
Male/Man	36.0	30.4
Non-binary	0.1	0.0
Prefer not to respond	1.1	0.5

Sexual Orientation	CCCU	Inst
Straight/heterosexual	93.0	95.8
Gay/Lesbian	0.6	
Bisexual	2.2	0.5
Other self-identification (text box)	0.8	
Prefer not to respond	3.4	3.6

Additional Demographics	CCCU	Inst
Percent whose parents/guardians did not attend college	30.4	23.6
Percent who live on campus	71.5	66.7
Percent who transferred into this institution	15.3	11.8
Percent for whom this institution was their first choice at enrollment	64.4	76.9
Percent who are student athletes	26.4	16.9
Percent who are international students	5.6	1.0

Age	CCCU	Inst
Under 18	0.9	3.6
18-20	65.4	64.6
21-23	30.0	27.7
24-26	1.8	2.1
27-30	0.7	1.5
31-34	0.3	
35-38	0.2	
39-42	0.2	0.5
43-46	0.2	
47-50	0.1	
Over 50	0.1	

CCCU= CCCU Norms  
Inst = Your Institution

<b>Degree Aspirations</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
Bachelor's Degree	38.0	35.9
Teaching Credential	2.2	3.1
Master's Degree	38.8	40.5
Doctorate	13.1	9.2
Medical or Law Degree	5.7	7.2
Other	0.9	3.1

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
African American/ Black	5.0	2.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.7	
Asian American/Asian/ Pacific Islander	4.1	6.8
White/European	70.5	82.2
Latinx/Hispanic	11.4	4.2
Multiethnic	3.2	2.1
Other	2.3	
Prefer not to respond	2.7	2.6

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Inst = Your Institution

<b>Do You Work for Pay?</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
No	36.0	19.0
Work on campus	27.1	39.0
Work off campus	25.8	19.0
Work both on and off campus	11.1	23.1

<b>Family Income</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
Less than \$30,000 a year	14.0	6.3
\$30,000-\$59,999	20.9	20.0
\$60,000-\$89,999	25.2	25.3
\$90,000-\$119,999	20.9	18.9
\$120,000 and over	19.0	29.5

<b>High School Grades</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
Mostly A's	53.0	63.9
Mostly A's and B's	33.3	28.4
Mostly B's	6.1	5.7
Mostly B's and C's	5.9	1.5
Mostly C's	1.1	0.5
Below a C average	0.6	0.0

<b>College Grades</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
Mostly A's	38.3	43.3
Mostly A's and B's	41.0	39.2
Mostly B's	8.6	9.8
Mostly B's and C's	9.6	6.7
Mostly C's	1.9	1.0
Below a C average	0.7	0.0

<b>Certainty of Major</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
Very Unsure	1.7	0.5
Unsure	2.7	4.6
Somewhat Unsure	3.5	2.1
Somewhat Sure	14.0	8.7
Sure	31.1	30.8
Very Sure	47.0	53.3

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**Considering the financial aid you've received and the money you and your family have, how much difficulty have you had so far in paying for your school expenses?**

	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
No difficulty	20.8	27.8
A little difficulty	27.2	28.4
Some difficulty	25.9	20.6
A fair amount of difficulty	18.0	18.0
Great difficulty	8.2	5.2

**We are interested in what helps students thrive in college. Thriving is defined as getting the most out of your college experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying the college experience. Given that definition, to what extent do you think you are thriving as a college student this semester?**

<b>Self-Rated Thriving</b>	<b>CCCU</b>	<b>Inst</b>
Not even surviving	1.0	0.5
Barely surviving	5.8	7.2
Surviving	17.5	10.8
Somewhat thriving	28.8	28.4
Thriving most of the time	38.0	44.8
Consistently thriving	8.9	8.2

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## Predictive Model

Because your sample size was less than 300, no predictive model specific to your students' responses is provided. However, below are the major predictors of thriving in the CCCU sample of undergraduates. The following predictors accounted for 63% of the variation in undergraduate student thriving. These are listed in order of their contribution to thriving; thus, those listed first should be among your top priorities if your scores are lower in that area.

No demographic characteristics significantly predicted thriving, which means that students should be able to thrive under the right conditions, regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, generation status, or household income. However, high school grades were a slight but statistically significant predictor of thriving scores, as was the desire to earn an advanced degree at some point in life. Being an athlete contributed positively to thriving, as did working for pay. Experiencing difficulty in paying school bills was a significant negative predictor of thriving, indicating that financial challenges are a significant barrier to thriving in college.

The following were the significant predictors of thriving in the undergraduate CCCU sample (listed in order of their contribution to the variation in thriving scores):

- 1) **Sense of community on campus**—whether students feel like they belong and matter to the institution. Sense of community has four components: (1) **membership** – a sense of belonging (which is strongly tied to engaged learning in the classroom, as well); (2) **ownership** – having a voice, feeling that one matters and has a contribution to make; (3) **relationship** – positive emotional connections with others, opportunities to celebrate with one another, and frequently cross paths with one another; and (4) **partnership** – synergy, and working together on issues bigger than any single person could accomplish. Ways of enhancing a sense of community on campus include opportunities for students to speak into campus issues and hear the results of surveys such as this one and how the institution plans to respond; examining the physical structure of the campus and whether there are attractive gathering places for students and faculty to interact, as well as places for commuters and students from diverse cultural backgrounds to feel at home; and creating student-faculty research partnerships, large-scale events that bring the community together, and meaningful extended service-learning connections with the local community.
- 2) **Spirituality** – defined as students' sense of meaning and purpose and the extent to which their spiritual or religious beliefs are a source of strength during difficult times and a lens through which they see the world and make decisions. Spirituality

can deepen a sense of belonging and enhance thriving when the spiritual expressions are ones that connect emotionally and are culturally familiar; thus, an examination of opportunities to access sacred space and culturally familiar expressions of spirituality could highlight pathways for students to feel a greater sense of belonging and be more likely to thrive.

- 3) **Family support** – measured as the extent to which students’ family encourages them to complete a degree, attend this particular school, and whether students talk to their family members about what they’re learning. This variable supports student thriving, as it is associated with more positive perceptions of the institution and greater involvement in campus activities that lead to a sense of belonging at the institution. Including families in the student’s educational journey, beginning with orientation and continuing through sustained communications and appropriate opportunities for families to be part of campus events, can leverage this particular pathway to thriving.
- 4) **Students’ satisfaction with their current mental health** -- those who are experiencing mental health struggles find it challenging to thrive. Proactively equipping students with appropriate coping skills during the first-year seminar or through co-curricular programming could be helpful, as could advisors who are attentive to mental health issues and can make appropriate referrals.
- 5) **Peer satisfaction** – students’ satisfaction with the quality of their interaction with their peers, and particularly with their peers of a different race or ethnicity. Addressing peer interactions through residence life programming, first-year seminar topics, or outreach programs on conflict management and developing social skills could be helpful. Many students’ social skills were negatively affected by COVID, so the basics of how to make friends may need to be addressed in orientation and first-year experiences, in particular. Helping students navigate relationships with others of a different race/ethnicity is a particularly vital skill to address.
- 6) **Students’ certainty of their major** – when students believe they have made the right choice about their major, they are more likely to thrive because they have found a network of peers and faculty with similar interests, as well as enhanced opportunities to interact at a deeper level with faculty. Focusing on advising, particularly in the first two years, is the best strategy for ensuring this pathway to thriving is accessible to all students. Excellent advising is associated with a greater likelihood of selecting a major that is a good fit, more positive perceptions of the institution, and greater satisfaction with learning and faculty interaction, all of which increase the likelihood of thriving. Providing a sufficient number of qualified and

trained advisors, equipping them to be “success coaches,” and finding ways to encourage students to connect regularly with their advisors can leverage this pathway to thriving.

- 7) **Relationships with faculty** – specifically, whether those interactions are sufficient and rewarding, whether faculty respond compassionately to students, and whether faculty are sensitive to the needs of diverse learners and include diverse perspectives in their curriculum and class discussions. Students who are satisfied with their learning experiences are also much more likely to thrive in college. We recommend providing faculty development opportunities that focus on engaging today’s learners through culturally relevant and inclusive pedagogy, as well as encouraging faculty to interact with students through mentoring, research partnerships, and informal social activities.
- 8) **Campus involvement** – the level of students’ participation in campus events and activities, as well as their involvement in campus organizations, contributes positively to their thriving because it increases students’ sense of belonging. Research indicates that the quality of involvement is more important than the quantity, so selective involvement in activities and organizations where students can become deeply involved in leadership is recommended.
- 9) **Institutional integrity**, defined as the extent to which the institution is delivering on the implicit promises it makes to students. Specifically, perceptions of integrity involve expectations being met, perceiving the institution as having accurately portrayed itself during the admissions process, and believing that faculty, staff, and administrators’ actions are congruent with the mission of the institution. Identifying students’ expectations, ensuring the institution is accurately portrayed on websites and campus tours, and clearly communicating to students about what to expect of their experience on your campus can have a positive impact on perceptions of institutional integrity. Often, the place students feel is most incongruent is the Financial Aid Office, so clear, user-friendly communication about financial aid packages is essential.

## **Student Comments – see separate file**