

**2012
National Survey of Student Engagement
Veterans Report**

Administered February 2012 to May 2012



**INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SOUTHEAST**

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Executive Summary

Student veterans in the 2012 NSSE sample scored higher than non-veterans on all five NSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice except for ***Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)***, but differed significantly only on the ***Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)*** benchmark, scoring higher than non-veterans. Veterans again scored higher than non-veterans on every individual item in the ACL benchmark, but differed significantly only on making a class presentation. Further items were analyzed, but none bore significant differences.

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Survey Background and Summary

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to freshmen and seniors in Spring 2012 and is administered at IU Southeast on a 3-year rotation. The NSSE measures student engagement both inside and outside the classroom. The NSSE benchmarks IU Southeast student scores against three groups: chosen peers who administered the NSSE in the same year as IU Southeast, similar Carnegie classification institutions in the region, and all similar Carnegie classification institutions in the nation.

In 2012, invitations to participate were sent to 1,352 freshmen and 1,350 seniors. The overall response rate was 22%, down from 27% in 2009. This decrease in response rate is likely due to a change from in-class, paper format to a fully electronic administration. Survey fatigue may also have played a role. A total of 590 students responded to the survey.

NSSE developed multiple indicators, or Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice, that combine individual but related questions into 100-point scales for ease of comparison. The benchmarks are best used in the manner that follows, by disaggregating results and comparing scores for different groups of students.

The Dean of Students requested data that measures the adjustment and transition of veterans to the IU Southeast experience. OIRA has created the following report that details mean differences in benchmarks by veteran status, as well as additional related items.

OIRA plans to make this data report accessible through the OIRA/NSSE website to encourage greater usage of the data and for campus transparency.

NSSE 2012: Veterans Report

The Veterans Sample at IU Southeast

The NSSE sample produced a small percentage of veterans for analysis.

Table 1: Current or Former Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard

	N	%
Yes	35	6.3%
No	524	93.7%
Total	559	100.0%

Due to the large difference in sample size between veterans and non-veterans, care was taken to determine if the inferential statistical tests that follow were valid. This is discussed further in the Appendix of this report.

NSSE Benchmarks

In Table 2, we present the means for each NSSE benchmark by veteran status and whether the mean differences are significant. We also found no significant differences with the variance between the two groups, so equal variance is assumed for each benchmark (for further explanation of equality of variances, please see the Appendix).

Table 2: NSSE Benchmark Means, by Veteran Status

		N	Mean	Sig
Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)	Veterans	35	56.5	
	Non-Veterans	524	56.1	
Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)	Veterans	35	58.5	*
	Non-Veterans	523	50.5	
Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)	Veterans	35	42.5	
	Non-Veterans	519	42.0	
Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)	Veterans	35	38.0	
	Non-Veterans	524	33.4	
Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)	Veterans	35	63.1	
	Non-Veterans	523	64.3	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The only benchmark that differed significantly for veterans compared to non-veterans was Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL), which captures aspects related to intensive student involvement in their education and collaborating with others in problem solving or mastering difficult materials. The veteran mean is 8% higher than non-veterans, indicating greater involvement in their own education including applying learning in various settings. Since the ACL benchmark was significantly greater for veterans, and since the benchmark is driven by its composite questions, we ran analyses on each of its seven questions to determine which aspects of active and collaborative learning differ for veterans.

NSSE 2012: Veterans Report

*Table 3: ACL Benchmark Question Means, by Veteran Status. ("In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you...")
(1=never; 2=sometimes; 3=often; 4=very often)*

		N	Mean	Sig	EqVar
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	Veterans	35	3.51		
	Non-Veterans	520	3.25		
Made a class presentation	Veterans	34	3.15	**	no
	Non-Veterans	517	2.72		
Worked with other students on projects during class	Veterans	34	2.97		no
	Non-Veterans	520	2.79		
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	Veterans	35	2.66		
	Non-Veterans	521	2.48		
Tutored or taught other students	Veterans	35	2.06		
	Non-Veterans	518	1.79		
Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course	Veterans	35	1.71		
	Non-Veterans	516	1.57		
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers)	Veterans	35	3.20		
	Non-Veterans	521	3.01		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Items denoted "no" under EqVar means equal variances are not assumed and the generalized statistic was generated

The veteran mean for each item was higher than for non-veterans. The only significant difference in the means was in making class presentations, where veterans made significantly more presentations than non-veterans.

OIRA was specifically requested to examine if the perception of campus support differed significantly for veterans compared to non-veterans. Neither the benchmark nor its six composite questions suggest significant differences between the two groups (results are included in the Appendix).

Six additional questions in the NSSE reflect aspects of social integration, from working with faculty on non-coursework activities, having serious conversations with diverse others, practicing spirituality and evaluating academic advising. None of these items bore significant differences between veterans and non-veterans (results in the Appendix).

Implications

Intuitively, the student experience at IU Southeast or any institution of higher learning will vary for veterans of the armed forces. Over 50% of the veterans in the NSSE sample report their age between 40 and 55 years, while this cohort consists of only 8% of the non-veteran population. Additionally, 29% of the non-veteran sample are 19 years or younger and an additional 33% are 20 to 23 years old, while the veterans sample comprise just 9% of these cohorts.

NSSE 2012: Veterans Report

While NSSE analyses on the above benchmarks and individual items may not suggest differences by veteran status other than Active and Collaborative Learning, perhaps the differences are masked by age, a significant positive correlate (.29, $p < .001$, in results not shown) with veteran status. Campus leaders may want to pay particular attention to the student experience as it relates to non-traditional students.

Appendix

Equality of Variances

Many statistical applications assume that differences across groups (i.e., veterans and non-veterans) are equal, or an expectation of homogeneous variance. However, noticeable differences in sample size cells—in this case, the number of veterans compared to the number of non-veterans—can render this assumption invalid and lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Levene's test can determine if differences in sample variations occur due to random error rather than large differences in sample size. Thus, when OIRA ran its independent sample t-tests on the benchmarks and items in this report, we first examined the results of Levene's test. If the test was not significant, then we assumed equal variances and used the reported statistic. If the test was significant, we assumed unequal variance and instead reported the generalized statistic and an indicator of "no" was placed in the "EqVar" column of that table.

Non-Significant Results

Supportive Campus Environment Questions

Table 4a: SCE Benchmark Question Means, by Veteran Status ("Which best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution...")

		N	Mean	Sig
Relationships with other students ¹	Veterans	35	5.69	
	Non-Veterans	522	5.73	
Relationships with faculty members ²	Veterans	33	6.03	
	Non-Veterans	521	5.68	
Relationships with administrative personnel and offices ³	Veterans	34	5.18	
	Non-Veterans	523	5.06	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

¹[range from 1=(Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of alienation) to 7=(Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging)]

²[range from 1=(Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic) to 7=(Available, Helpful, Sympathetic)]

³[range from 1=(Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid) to 7=(Helpful, Considerate, Flexible)]

NSSE 2012: Veterans Report

Table 4b: SCE Benchmark Question Means, by Veteran Status. ("To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following...")

		N	Mean	Sig
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	Veterans	35	3.11	
	Non-Veterans	520	3.14	
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	Veterans	35	2.03	
	Non-Veterans	520	2.22	
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	Veterans	35	2.26	
	Non-Veterans	522	2.49	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Social Integration Questions

*Table 5a: Social Integration Question Means, by Veteran Status. ("During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following...")
(1=never; 2=sometimes; 3=often; 4=very often)*

		N	Mean	Sig
Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	Veterans	35	1.83	
	Non-Veterans	517	1.76	
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	Veterans	35	2.91	
	Non-Veterans	522	2.61	
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.	Veterans	35	2.83	
	Non-Veterans	521	2.77	
Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	Veterans	34	1.94	
	Non-Veterans	521	2.01	
Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	Veterans	34	2.09	
	Non-Veterans	520	2.07	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

*Table 5b: Social Integration Question Means, by Veteran Status.
("Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of...")
(1=poor; 2=fair; 3=good; 4=excellent)*

		N	Mean	Sig
Academic advising you have received at your institution?	Veterans	35	3.11	
	Non-Veterans	524	3.02	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$