

## Trends in Effective Educational Practices at Miami

### National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The NSSE is a national survey assessing the extent to which undergraduates engage in a variety of educationally effective activities. Students respond to questions about how they spend their time and what skills they are developing as the result of their college enrollment.

The NSSE is administered online to Oxford campus first-year students and seniors at Miami University during the spring semester. For the years included in the current analyses (2005 - 2011), the response rates range from 35% (2005) to 18% (2011).

Two comparison groups are used with the NSSE data: 1) Other participating institutions in the same Carnegie Class as Miami University and, 2) all participating NSSE institutions.

### NSSE Benchmarks

In 2005, NSSE developed five benchmarks of effective educational practice, each of which is based on multiple NSSE items. The benchmarks are:

- Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)
- Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)
- Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)
- Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)
- Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)

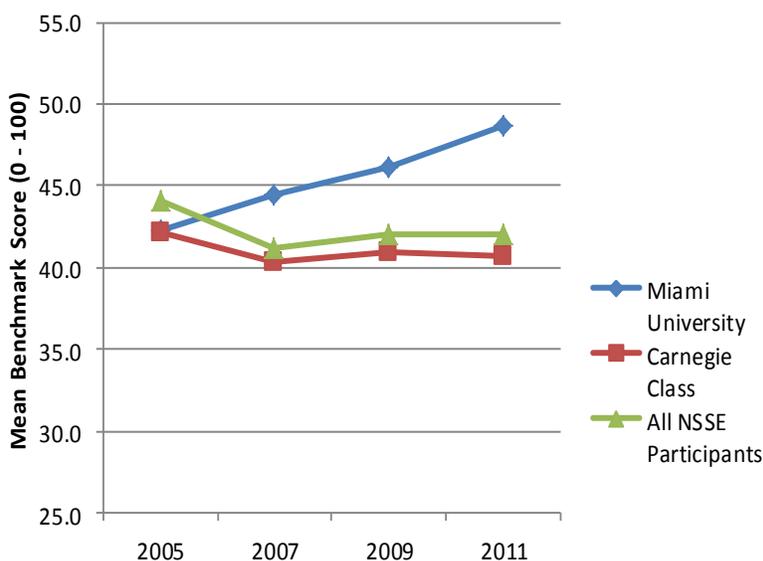
### Trends in NSSE Benchmarks

There was significant improvement at Miami between 2005 and 2011 on all five benchmarks while the comparison groups' benchmark scores remained steady or decreased during the same time period. Both first-year students and seniors at Miami demonstrated significantly increased levels of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and a supportive campus environment between 2005 and 2011.

By 2011, Miami students scored significantly higher than students in the comparison groups on many of the benchmarks, including benchmarks where Miami students originally scored at or below the comparison groups. In 2011, Miami first-year students and seniors

scored higher than students in both comparison groups on level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, and enriching educational experiences. Miami seniors scored higher than both comparison groups on level of student-faculty interaction and supportive campus environment while Miami first-year students scored higher than the Carnegie comparison group on both of those benchmarks. An example of one of the benchmarks trends is provided below.

### Student-Faculty Interaction: Seniors



### Implications

The results suggest that Miami University is experiencing improvements in its academic environment that are not occurring at other institutions. These improvements are consistent with the university's goals for increased academic engagement. Although alternative explanations exist, results from other assessments at Miami support the current findings of increased engagement.

Miami faculty and staff should be encouraged by these results and should continue to find ways to improve the learning environment for our students. For a full list of the activities and behaviors included in the benchmarks as well as the full NSSE report, please visit: <http://www.units.muohio.edu/oir/Surveys/NSSE/>.