Survey of Entering Student Engagement

Overview of 2023 Survey Results  
[College Name]

This drop-in template can be customized using your college’s SENSE 2023 results. The gold, italicized text throughout this template provides instructions to assist you in presenting your findings. Please note that the example data provided in the bar graphs are 2023 SENSE cohort data; all of the data for your college will need to be manually entered. You can review your results through the [SENSE Online Reporting System](https://www.ccsse.org/sense/members/archive.cfm). Once logged in, you will need to select the “Institutional Reports from the 2023 SENSE Cohort” option, then select Standard Reports (third tab) in the vertical navigation bar.

This tool may be used in conjunction with the SENSE Drop-In Overview Presentation Template, a PowerPoint template that assists colleges in presenting SENSE data to their college community. This resource is available in the [Tools](http://www.ccsse.org/sense/tools/sharingresults.cfm) section of the SENSE website.

# Introduction

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*), a product and service of [CCCSE](http://www.cccse.org), collects and analyzes data about institutional practices and student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college. CCCSE’s goal is to provide member colleges with results that can be used to inform decision making and target institutional improvements. Student engagement, or the amount of time and energy students invest in meaningful educational practices, is the underlying foundation for CCCSE’s work. The *SENSE* survey instrument is designed to capture student engagement as a measure of institutional quality.

# *SENSE* Member Colleges

*SENSE* data analyses are based on a three-year cohort of entering student data from participating colleges. This approach increases the total number of institutions and students contributing to the national data set, which in turn increases the reliability of the overall results. In addition, the three-year cohort approach minimizes the impact, in any given year, of statewide consortium participation. If a college participated more than one time in the three-year period, the cohort includes data only from that college’s most recent year of participation.

The 2023 *SENSE* Cohort includes [160 institutions](http://www.ccsse.org/sense/members/reports/2023/comparison.cfm) from 39 states and the Marshall Islands, and Micronesia. Seventy-six colleges are classified as small (<4,500), 38 as medium (4,500-7,999), 30 as large (8,000-14,999), and 16 as extra-large institutions (15,000+ credit students).

# *SENSE* Administration

## In-Class Administration

In SENSE sampling procedures, students are sampled at the classroom level. The survey was administered in classes randomly selected from face-to-face and hybrid courses most likely to enroll entering students, with a random sample pulled from all first college-level English and math courses; all developmental reading, writing, and math courses; and student success courses.

Of those entering students sampled at our institution,       (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 2: Percent of Target/“Adjusted Survey Count”) respondents submitted usable surveys. The number of completed surveys produced an overall “percent of target” rate of      % (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 2: Percent of Target/“Percent of Target”). The percent of target rate is the ratio of the adjusted number of completed surveys (surveys that were filled out properly and did not fall into any of the exclusionary categories) to the target sample size.

## Online Administration

In order to boost responses to the online survey, *SENSE* does not employ a sampling strategy for the online administration. All students 18 years and over enrolled in credit bearing or developmental education courses were invited to participate. Of       (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 2: Percent of Target/“Targeted Number of Surveys”) students invited to participate,       (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 2: Percent of Target/“Adjusted Survey Count”) provided valid survey responses (surveys contained responses and did not fall into any of the exclusionary categories).

### Excluded Respondents

Excluding certain respondents from institutional and cohort-level reports ensures that results are comparable across institutions. Respondents are excluded from institutional reports for the following reasons:

* The respondent did not indicate full-time or part-time enrollment at the institution.
* The respondent did not indicate their sex
* The respondent did not indicate whether they were an entering or returning student.
* The survey is invalid. A survey is invalid if a student does not answer any of the 19 sub-items in Item 19, answers *four or more times* to all 19 sub-items, or answers *never* to all 19 sub-items.
* Respondents indicated their age as under 18.
* Respondents indicated that they had taken the survey previously or they left Item 1 blank.
* Oversampled respondents are not included in CCCSE-generated reports because they are selected outside of *SENSE’s* primary sampling procedures.

# 2023 Student Respondent Profile

Please note that percentages may not total 100% in each category due to missing data and/or rounding.

### Enrollment Status

     % (Standard Reports/ Appendix/Table 1: Respondents to Underlying Populations/“Your Entering Respondents Percentage”) of surveyed entering students report being part-time college students. Population data[[1]](#footnote-1) indicate that      % of entering students attend our college part-time (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 1: Respondents to Underlying Populations/“Your Population”).

### Sex

     % of entering student respondents are male and      % are female (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table1: Respondents to Underlying Populations/“Your Entering Respondents Percentage”).

Full-time students are enrolled in more classes than part-time students and are therefore more likely to be sampled in the in-class administration of the survey. In the online version of the survey, both full-time and female students tend to be overrepresented. Therefore, *SENSE* 2023 results are weighted by both enrollment status and sex so that they accurately represent the underlying student population.

### Age

Entering student respondents at our college range in age from       to       years old.      % are between 18 and 24 years old (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 1: Respondents to Underlying Populations/“Your Entering Respondents Percentage”).

### Racial/Ethnic Identification

     % of our entering student respondents identified themselves as White, Non-Hispanic;      % as Hispanic, Latino, Spanish;      % as Black or African American; and      % as Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander.      % of the student respondents are American Indian or Native American.      % marked *other* when responding to the question, “What is your racial/ethnic identification?” (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 1: Respondents to Underlying Population Comparisons/“Your Entering Respondents Percentage”)

### International Students

     % of our entering students responded *yes* to the question, “Are you an international student or nonresident alien?” (Standard Reports/Appendix/Table 1: Respondents to Underlying Population Comparisons/“Your Entering Respondents Percentage”).

### First-Generation Status

     % (will need to be calculated using the data file—see explanation that follows) of entering student respondents indicate that neither parent has attended at least some college; accordingly, these students are considered "first-generation.”

**How to calculate the percentage of first-generation respondents using your college’s raw data file** (Standard Reports/Data File)**:**

1. In the raw data file, find the IWEIGHT column.
2. Sort all data by this column.
3. Delete all rows in which the IWEIGHT value is missing.
4. Find the FIRSTGEN column.
5. Sort all data by this column.
6. Students who indicated that either their mother or father had attended at least some college will have a response value of “2” (not first-generation). Students who indicated that neither parent had attended at least some college will have a response value of “1” (first-generation).
7. To calculate the percentage of first-generation respondents, sum the “1” response values in the FIRSTGEN column. Then, divide that number by the total count of the “1” and “2” response values.

*The results for the following student respondent categories are weighted according to the most recent IPEDS population data.*

### Non-Native English Speaking Students

At our college,      % of entering student respondents are non-native English speakers (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Frequencies/Item 33).

### Orientation

     % of entering student respondents report attending an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes, while      % report attending an online orientation.      % of entering student respondents report enrolling in an orientation course during their first semester/quarter at the college. (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Frequencies/Item 11)

### Courses Dropped

     % of entering student respondents report dropping at least one course after the first day of class (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Frequencies/Item 9).

### External Commitments

     % of entering student respondents work 21 or more hours per week (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Frequencies/Item 24b).

### Goals

Entering student respondents were asked to indicate their reasons or goals for attending this college and could mark multiple goals as applicable.      % indicated that completing a certificate is a goal,      % indicated that obtaining an Associate degree is a goal, and      % indicated that transfer to a 4-year college is a goal (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Frequencies/Item 37).

# *SENSE* Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

Your college may wish to include details on the SENSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice in this report. SENSE benchmarks can illustrate areas in which your college is doing well and areas in which it may want to focus future efforts. Details on each of the benchmark areas are included. You can insert your college’s benchmark scores (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Benchmarks) in the charts that follow. A list of [SENSE benchmarks](https://www.ccsse.org/sense/tools/docs/working_with_results/SENSE_Benchmarks.pdf) and related sub-items can also be found in the [Tools](http://www.ccsse.org/sense/tools/workingresults.cfm) section of the SENSE website.

To assist colleges in their efforts to reach for excellence, CCCSE reports national benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges. Research shows that the more actively engaged students are—with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter—the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals.

SENSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement early in the college experience—and are positively related to student learning and persistence. Standardized benchmark scores are used to compare each institution’s performance to that of similar institutions and with the SENSE Cohort. Each individual benchmark score is computed by averaging the scores on survey items that make up that benchmark. Benchmark scores are standardized so that the mean (the average of all participating students) is always 50 and the standard deviation is 25. The six benchmarks of effective educational practice with entering students in community colleges are early connections, high expectations and aspirations, clear academic plan and pathway, effective track to college readiness, engaged learning, and academic and social support network.

### Early Connections

When students describe their early college experiences, they typically reflect on occasions when they felt discouraged or thought about dropping out. Their reasons for persisting almost always include one common element: a strong, early connection to someone at the college.

***SENSE* Items**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18a | Agreement: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome |
| 18i | Agreement: The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.) |
| 18j | Agreement: A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance |
| 18p | Agreement: At least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name |
| 23 | Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance? |

### High Expectations and Aspirations

Nearly all students arrive at their community colleges intending to succeed and believing that they have the motivation to do so. When entering students perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty, they are more likely to understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement. Students then often rise to meet expectations, making it more likely that they will attain their goals. Often, students’ aspirations also climb, and they seek more advanced credentials than they originally envisioned.

***SENSE* Items**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18b | Agreement: The instructors at this college want me to succeed |
| 18t | Agreement: I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college |
| 18u | Agreement: I am prepared academically to succeed in college |
| 19c | Frequency: Turn in an assignment late |
| 19d | Frequency: Not turn in an assignment |
| 19f | Frequency: Come to class without completing readings or assignments |
| 19s | Frequency: Skip class |

### Clear Academic Plan and Pathway

When a student, with knowledgeable assistance, creates a road map—one that shows where they are headed, what academic path to follow, and how long it will take to reach the end goal—that student has a critical tool for staying on track. Students are more likely to persist if they not only are advised about what courses to take, but also are helped to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them.

***SENSE* Items**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18d | Agreement: I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me |
| 18e | Agreement: An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major |
| 18f | Agreement: An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them |
| 18g | Agreement: An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter |
| 18h | Agreement: A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school (work, children, dependents, etc.) to help me figure out how many courses to take |

### Effective Track to College Readiness

Nationally, more than six in 10 entering community college students are underprepared for college-level work. Thus, significant improvements in student success will hinge upon effective assessment, placement of students into appropriate courses, and implementation of effective strategies to ensure that students build academic skills and receive needed support.

***SENSE* Items**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 12a | Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math |
| 12b | I took a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) |
| 14 | This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester/quarter |
| 21a | Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.) |
| 21b | Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses |
| 21c | Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability |
| 12a | Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math |

**Engaged Learning**

Instructional approaches that foster engaged learning are critical for student success. Because most community college students attend college part time, and most also must find ways to balance their studies with work and family responsibilities, the most effective learning experiences will be those the college intentionally designs.

***SENSE* Items**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 19a | Frequency: Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions |
| 19b | Frequency: Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in |
| 19e | Frequency: Participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student) |
| 19g | Frequency: Work with other students on a project or assignment during class |
| 19h | Frequency: Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments |
| 19i | Frequency: Participate in a required study group outside of class |
| 19j | Frequency: Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class |
| 19k | Frequency: Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with another student about coursework |
| 19l | Frequency: Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework |
| 19m | Frequency: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor |
| 19n | Frequency: Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class |
| 19o | Frequency: Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance |
| 19q | Frequency: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class |
| 20d2 | Frequency of use: Face-to-face tutoring |
| 20f2 | Frequency of use: Writing, math, or other skill lab |
| 20h2 | Frequency of use: Computer lab |

**Academic and Social Support Network**

Students benefit from having a personal network that enables them to obtain information about college services, along with the academic and social support critical to student success. Because entering students often don’t know what they don’t know, colleges must purposefully create those networks.

***SENSE* Items**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18l | Agreement: All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college |
| 18m | Agreement: All instructors clearly explained course grading policies |
| 18n | Agreement: All instructors clearly explained course syllabi (syllabuses) |
| 18o | Agreement: I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class |
| 18q | Agreement: At least one other student whom I didn’t previously know learned my name |
| 18r | Agreement: At least one instructor learned my name |
| 18s | Agreement: I learned the name of at least one other student in most of my classes |

Benchmark scores for following tables are available online (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Benchmarks).

# Benchmarks Over Time

If your college has participated in multiple SENSE administrations, you may be interested in exploring your raw benchmark scores over time. The raw benchmarks over time graph can be found in the third tab (Raw Benchmarks & Graphs) of the Excel files on the reporting website (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Students/Benchmarks) and (Standard Reports for [College Name]/Part-Time & Full-Time/Benchmarks).

For more information, see [How Benchmarks Are Calculated](https://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/How_Benchmarks_are_Calculated.pdf).

# Example Selected Findings

When presenting findings to the college community, we recommend that you include selected findings that are most relevant to your mission, vision, values, and/or strategic plan. An example of a selected finding related to students’ academic experience follows.

You can also refer to your institution’s Executive Summary of Results (Standard Reports) for aspects of highest and lowest engagement on your campus or the SENSE Drop-In Overview Presentation Template, available in the [Tools](https://www.ccsse.org/sense/tools) section of the SENSE website, for topics that may be relevant to your college.

### Academic Experience

A positive academic experience is a product of many ingredients, one of which is the amount of time and energy students invest in their academic work. *SENSE* asks students to respond to several survey items in order to gauge how actively they are involved in their education. Students are given the opportunity to mark *never*, *once*, *two or three times*, or *four or more times* in response to items such as the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 19a | Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions |
| 19g | Worked with other students on projects during class |
| 19h | Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments |

While some students are highly involved in their academic experience (those who indicated a frequency of two or more times), others are less engaged, as illustrated by their responses of *never*, as displayed in the following graph.

These cohort data are **EXAMPLE** data. College-specific results can be found online (Standard Reports/Standard Reports for [College Name]/All Entering Students/Frequencies).

A table of additional areas that may be of interest to your institution and corresponding survey items are on page 4 of the [Data Narrative Exercise](https://www.ccsse.org/tools/docs/working_with_results/Data_Narrative_Exercise.pdf).

1. Population data are those reported for the most recent IPEDS enrollment report. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)