

# What Students Are Saying About Their EKU Experience



Each year the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students at hundreds of colleges and universities to reflect on the time they devote to various learning activities. The topics explored are linked by previous research on student success in college.

Eastern Kentucky University participated in NSSE in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, and 2007.

The following responses were provided by 1,092 randomly selected EKU students on the 2007 NSSE survey. Specifically, 433 first year (FY) students and 659 seniors (SR) responded.

## Academic Challenge

### To what degree is studying and spending time on academic work emphasized?

76% of FY and 80% of SR students feel that this institution places substantial emphasis on academics.<sup>1</sup>

### Do faculty hold students to high standards?

57% of FY and 62% of SR students frequently work harder than they thought they could to meet faculty expectations.<sup>2</sup>

### How much time do students spend on homework each week?

26% of FY and 29% of SR students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class. 25% of FY and 22% of SR students spend 5 hours or less.

### What types of thinking do assignments require?

First-year students report substantial emphasis on the following activities:

- Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods: 67% FY/65% SR
- Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 82% FY/82% SR
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 65% FY/73% SR
- Making judgments about value of information: 69% FY/ 74% SR
- Applying theories or concepts: 75% FY/82% SR

### How much writing is expected?

4% of FY and 8% of SR students write more than 10 papers between 5 and 19 pages. 14% for FY and 45% of SR have written a paper more than 20 pages in length.

### How much reading is expected during the school year?

38% of FY and 35% SR students read more than 10 assigned books and packs of course readings. 17% of FY and 30% of SR read fewer than 5.

### Do exams require students to do their best work?

52% of FY and 51% of SR students report that their exams strongly challenge them to do their best work.<sup>3</sup>

## Active Learning

### How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?

55% of FY and 61% of SR students frequently discuss readings or ideas from coursework outside of class.<sup>2</sup>

### Do students work together on projects – inside and outside of class?

48% of FY and 54% of SR students frequently work with other students on projects in class, 29% of FY and 52% of SR students work with peers on assignments outside of class.<sup>2</sup>

### How often do students make class presentations?

30% of FY and 64% of SR students report that they make frequent presentations in class.<sup>2</sup>

### How many students participate in community-based projects in regular courses?

8% of FY and 20% of SR students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects during a given year.<sup>2</sup> 72% of FY and 51% of SR never took part in such activities.

### How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?

By their senior year, 48% of students have participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

### Do students have opportunities to tutor or teach other students?

17% of seniors and 13% of FY students frequently assist their fellow students by tutoring or teaching them.<sup>2</sup>

## Student-Faculty Interaction

### Are faculty members accessible and supportive?

44% of FY and 58% of SR students say their faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic.

### How many students work on research projects with faculty?

By their senior year, 16% of students have done research with a faculty member.

### Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?

61% of FY and 75% of SR students indicate that they frequently get prompt verbal or written feedback from faculty members.<sup>2</sup>

\* Note: FY= First-Year Student SR=Senior Student  
IPEDS=156620

### **How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?**

88% of seniors at least occasionally discuss career plans with faculty.<sup>4</sup> 12% never talk with faculty members about career plans.

### **Do students and faculty members work together on committees and projects outside of course work?**

38% of FY and 54% of SR students at least occasionally spend time with faculty members on activities other than coursework.<sup>4</sup>



## **Enriching Educational Experiences**

### **What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?**

During their first year, 11% of students participate in a learning community. By their senior year, 15% of students have taken an independent study class.

### **How often do students interact with peers with different social, political, or religious views?**

50% of FY and 53% of SR students say they frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs.<sup>2</sup>

### **How often do students interact with peers from different racial or ethnic backgrounds?**

40% of FY and 44% of SR students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race.<sup>2</sup>

### **How many students study in other countries?**

By their senior year, 5% of students have studied abroad.

### **Do students participate in activities that enhance their spirituality?**

34% of FY and 33% of SR students frequently engage in spiritually enhancing activities such as worship, meditation, or prayer.<sup>2</sup>

### **What percentage of students participates in community service?**

During their first year, 25% of students have participated in community service or volunteer work and by the time they are seniors, 56% of students have done so.

## **Supportive Campus Environment**

### **How well do students get along with other students?**

56% of FY and 64% of SR students report that their peers are friendly, supportive, and help them feel as if they belong.

### **Are students satisfied with their overall educational experience?**

82% of FY students report a favorable image of this institution; 84% of seniors would choose this school again if they could start their college career over.

### **How much time do students devote to co-curricular activities?**

7% of FY and 8% of SR students spend more than 15 hours a week participating in co-curricular activities. 47% of FY and 51% of SR students spend no time participating in co-curricular activities.

### **How well do students get along with administrators and staff?**

29% of FY and 34% of SR students find the administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible.

### **To what extent does the school help students deal with their academic and social needs?**

69% of FY and 70% of SR students feel that this institution has a substantial commitment to their academic success.<sup>1</sup> 38% of FY and 34% of SR students feel well-supported by the institution regarding their social needs.

### **To what extent does the school help students deal with their non-academic responsibilities?**

27% of FY and 22% of SR students feel well-supported by the institution regarding their non-academic responsibilities.

#### **Notes:**

1. "Substantial" emphasis is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very much" and "Quite a bit."
2. "Frequently" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often" and "Often."
3. "Strongly challenge" is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is "Very little" and 7 is "very much."
4. "Occasionally" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often," "Often," and "Sometimes."

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