



# HIGHLIGHTS

*Published by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement*

## INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

### PILOT TEST INVITATION TO CCSSE 2004 COLLEGES ONLY

**\*\* free of charge \*\***

The pilot (Web-based only) will be conducted October 18 through December 31, 2004. Electronic reports and data files will be provided to participating colleges in early 2005.

### COLLEGES REGISTERING FOR CCSSE 2005 AND CCSSE 2004 COLLEGES

are invited to register  
for the  
Spring 2005 National Administration  
(Web-based only) of the  
**Community College Faculty Survey  
of Student Engagement**

**\*\* Fee: \$800 \*\***

For more information, or to register for the pilot, call CCSSE at (512) 471-6807  
or send e-mail to [info@ccsse.org](mailto:info@ccsse.org).

## Oakton Community College Student and Faculty Perceptions About Students' Engagement and Academic Experiences

Oakton Community College serves the northern suburbs of Chicago. The college enrolls 9,700 students per semester in credit offerings and another 10-15,000 in non-credit offerings across two campuses. Two-thirds of credit students are in transfer programs, 16-20 percent do not speak English as their native language, and an estimated 20 percent already have bachelor's degrees or higher. The college has 150 full-time and more than 400 part-time faculty members. More than two-thirds of students attend part-time, and many attend periodically, stopping in and out as their education, employment and family responsibilities and interests shift. Oakton is especially proud of the range and quality of student support services that complement its academic offerings, the strength of its professional development program, and its commitment to integrity and ethical behavior.

In spring 2003, Oakton participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). During that year, approximately 65,000 students from ninety-three community colleges completed CCSSE's survey instrument, the Community College Student Report (CCSR).

The CCSR asks questions about institutional practices and student behaviors that research has shown to be highly correlated with student learning and retention. The survey is administered to students during randomly selected classes, and results are weighted to ensure that full-time student responses do not inappropriately dominate survey results. A total of 792 Oakton students completed usable CCSSE surveys. CCSSE's methodology is very much like the methodology Oakton uses for its Current Student Survey, which has enabled Oakton to make internal comparisons.

The CCSR examines students' perceptions, experiences, and satisfaction. In fall 2003, Oakton conducted a companion survey for faculty to elicit their perceptions about students' engagement and academic experiences at Oakton. The Oakton faculty survey was developed by the College's General Education Assessment Subcommittee. Survey items paralleled those in the CCSR to permit comparing faculty and student perceptions on the same or similar questions. Additional faculty survey items focused on faculty perceptions of students' meeting Oakton's general education objectives.

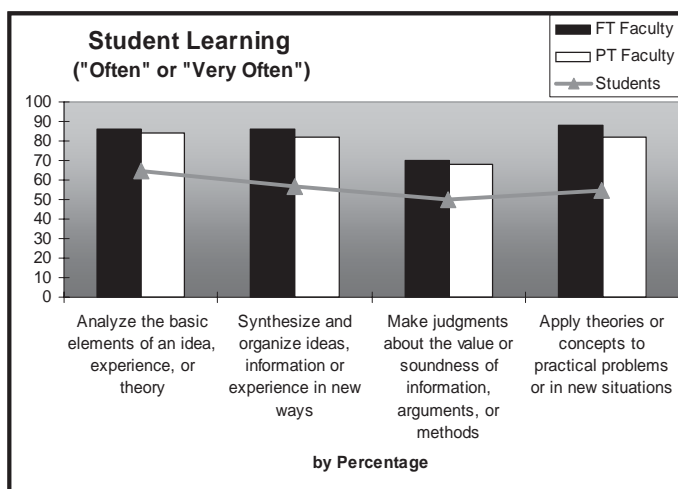
Conducted online, the survey drew responses from 130 faculty members, 67 full-time and 63 part-time. Data were

presented in tables and charts to enable easily comprehensible comparisons to be made. Survey results were shared with faculty and staff in several ways: the Office of Research monthly bulletin, *In the Abstract*, presented some findings; a complete report of findings was distributed to the Student Academic Assessment Team (of which the General Education Subcommittee is a part); and excerpts were sent to all department chairs.

General observations about comparative results include the following:

- Faculty at Oakton tend to perceive that the college contributes more to students' knowledge and skills in general education areas than do students;
- The pattern of faculty and student perceptions regarding students' engagement at the college is mixed, though in nearly all cases faculty perceive more engagement than do students;
- Part-time faculty think Oakton students have more often been exposed to topics and experiences associated with ethics and diversity than do full-time faculty; and
- Faculty report using an array of teaching approaches in their courses, with full-time faculty reporting more frequent use of different approaches than part-time faculty.

The graph below highlights the ways in which full- and part-time faculty and students responded "often" or "very often" to items focusing on student learning.



Across the board, full- and part-time faculty have similar perceptions about the extent to which courses emphasize

selected mental and learning activities; but in all cases, students perceive less emphasis than do faculty. However, the value of this study resides less in the statistical findings than in its utility for prompting discussions about topics such as the use of varied teaching approaches, the reasons faculty and students may differ in their perceptions regarding the extent of learning occurring at Oakton, and how Oakton might encourage greater student engagement.

For example, in summer 2004, Oakton conducted a group discussion about ways to encourage faculty to review *CCSSE* results for improvement initiatives. As a result of suggestions made, additional discussions will be held in fall 2004 about the results, and a joint division meeting for all faculty may be devoted, in part, to a similar conversation. In spring 2005, a semester-long faculty seminar on Effective Classroom Practices will be held, and one session is planned to be devoted to *CCSSE* and the College's faculty survey results.

While those familiar with the *CCSSE* and faculty survey results find them to be intriguing and worth discussion, one challenge is that many topics compete for faculty attention and college leaders recognize the need to restrain from overwhelming faculty with numerous discussion topics, all claimed to be "critical." Thus, at Oakton, college leaders chose to disseminate *CCSSE* and faculty survey results in small doses over time, intending to spark small group discussions at opportune moments.

### CCSSE Engages Faculty

In response to demand from the community college field, *CCSSE* is pleased to announce the availability of a new faculty survey, offered as a companion to the *Community College Student Report*. The new survey, The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, elicits information from faculty about their teaching practices, the ways they spend their professional time, both in and out of class, and their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences.

The survey items align with those on the student survey, so reports of overall college results will enable colleges and their faculties to examine and discuss areas in which faculty and student perceptions are similar and areas in which they may diverge. Survey findings will also provide a useful guide in understanding challenges experienced by faculty and appropriately targeting faculty development initiatives.