

The 2004 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

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About NSSE

The [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) is administered annually to freshman and seniors at participating 4-year institutions to assess the extent to which students engage in a variety of good educational practices. NSSE also measures students' activities and satisfaction with their higher educational experiences. During the Spring 2004 semester, 485 UCDHSC – Downtown Denver students participated in NSSE.

NSSE is particularly valuable as an assessment tool because it provides comparisons to students at all universities who participate and allows groups of schools to form consortia for additional comparisons with similar universities. Consortia may also add additional questions to the standard NSSE instrument that are tailored to their unique needs. UCDHSC – Downtown Denver participated in the urban university consortium along with 14 other colleges and universities. See [Methodological Notes](#) for more information on sampling techniques, response rates, the consortium, and statistical issues.

This report highlights major findings for UCDHSC – Downtown Denver and compares our student responses to those at other universities and, for some items, to responses from the 2001 NSSE.

Institutional Benchmarks

NSSE has created scales to facilitate comparisons of institutions on the following five dimensions of effective educational practice:

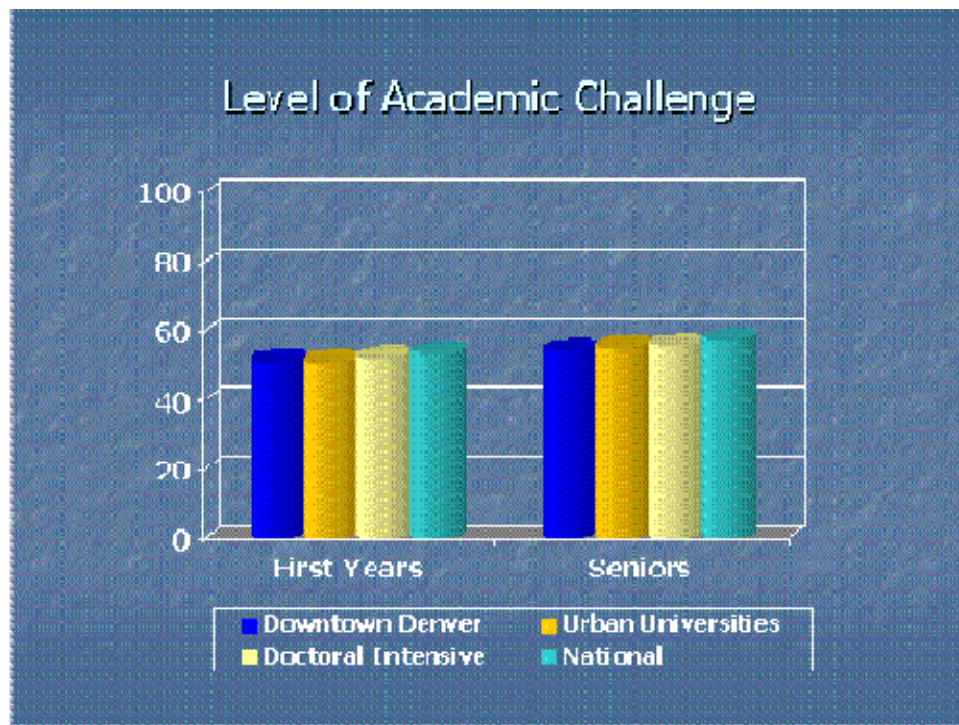
1. Level of academic challenge
2. Active and collaborative learning
3. Student-faculty interactions
4. Enriching educational experiences
5. Supportive campus environment

Level of Academic Challenge

The benchmark for Level of Academic Challenge combines responses to questions about the amount of time students spend preparing for class; the number of books assigned; the number of written papers required; coursework emphases; whether they've worked hard; and whether the campus environment emphasizes academic work.

The chart below provides comparison benchmark scores with other schools in the urban university consortium, with all doctoral-intensive institutions (our Carnegie classification), and with all universities who participated in the 2004 NSSE.

For this benchmark, scores for the Downtown Denver campus lagged the comparison groups among both first year students and seniors; however, none of these differences was statistically significant.

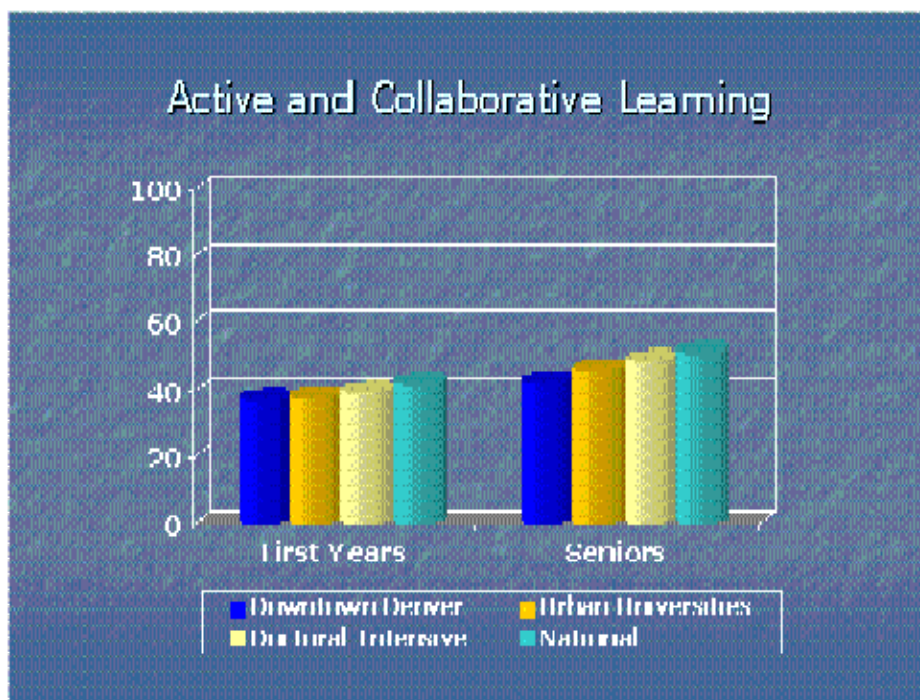


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Active and Collaborative Learning

The second benchmark, Active and Collaborative Learning, measures responses to questions about whether the student asked questions or contributed to class discussions, made a presentation, worked with other students on projects, tutored or taught other students, participated in a community project as part of a course, or discussed ideas from readings or class with others outside of class.

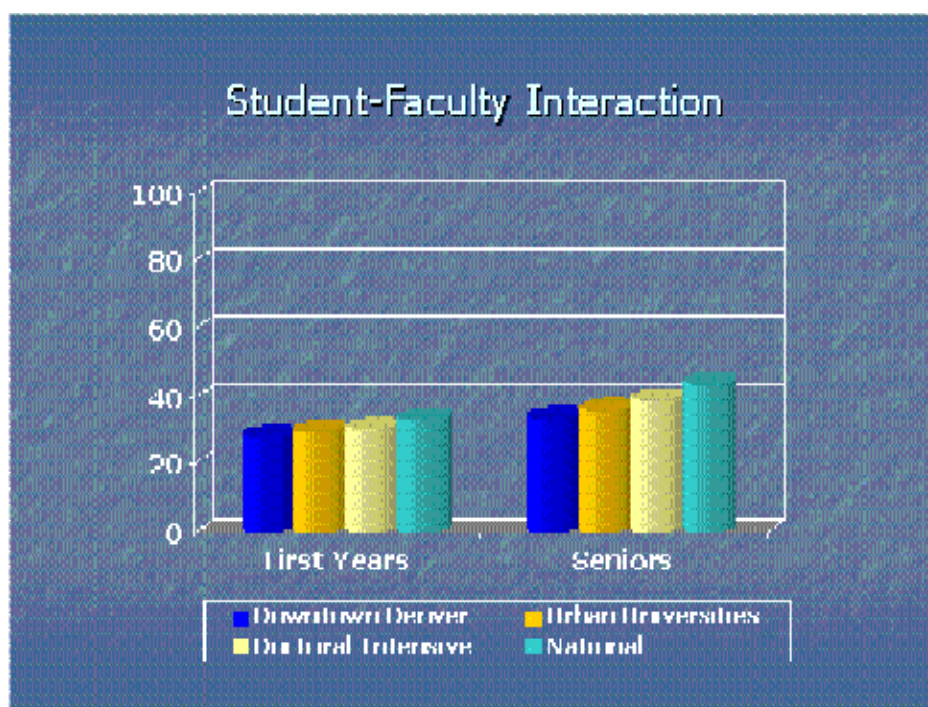
Most of the differences between Downtown Denver and the comparison groups are not statistically significant with the exception of seniors – our students lagged the overall NSSE respondents significantly.



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Student-Faculty Interaction

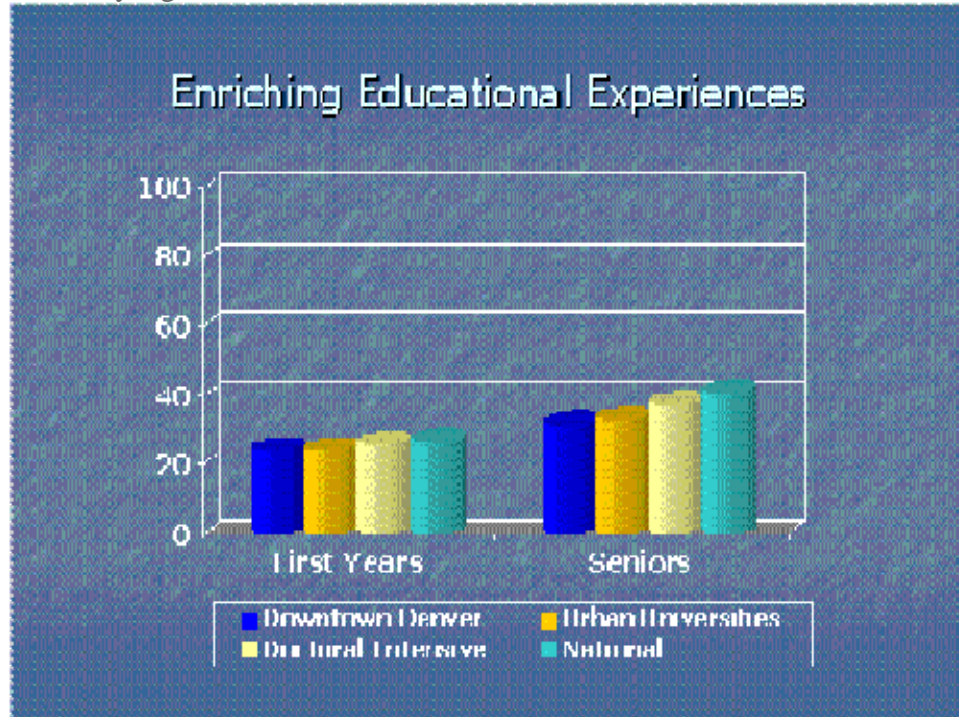
The next benchmark, Student-Faculty Interaction, combines responses to questions about whether the student discussed grades, assignments, career plans, or ideas with an instructor; worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework such as committees; received prompt feedback from faculty; or worked with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements. None of the differences are statistically significant.



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Enriching Educational Experiences

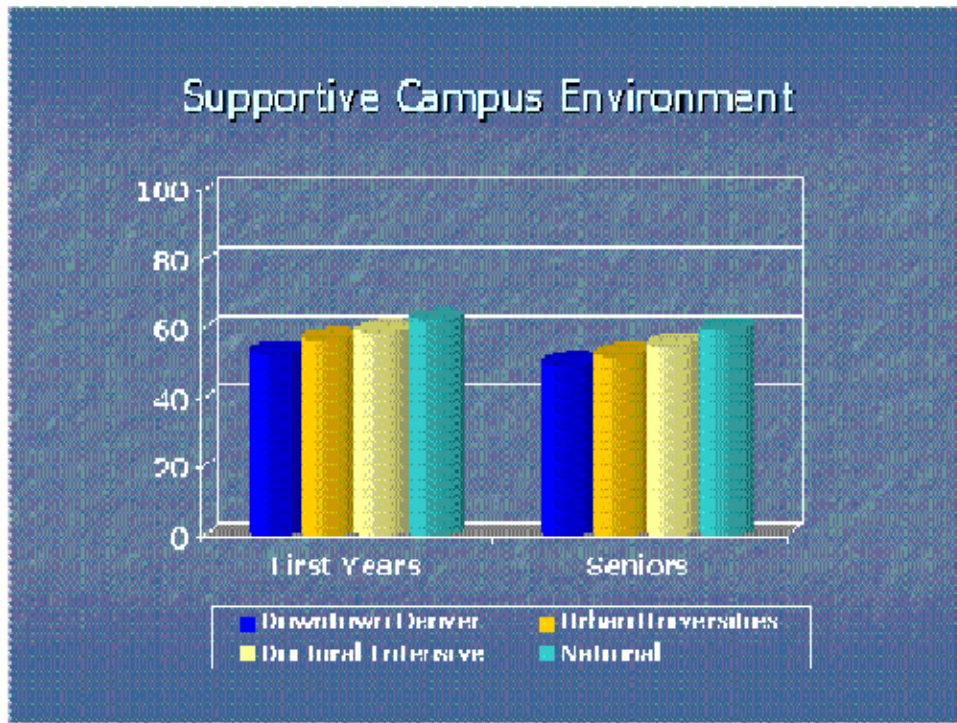
The fourth benchmark, Enriching Educational Experiences, combines responses to questions about whether the student participated in activities such as co-curricular projects; internships, field experiences; community service or volunteer work; study abroad; independent study; capstone courses; whether the student had engaged in serious conversations with students with different religious beliefs, ethnic backgrounds or values and whether the campus environment encouraged such interaction; and whether the student had participated in a learning community. While Downtown Denver scored lower than the comparison groups, none of the differences are statistically significant.



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Supportive Campus Environment

The final benchmark, Supportive Campus Environment, combines responses to questions regarding whether the student finds that the campus environment provides the support needed academically and socially; supports non-academic responsibilities such as work or family; and whether the student rates the quality of relationships with other students, faculty and administrative personnel highly. Again, none of the differences are statistically significant.



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NSSE also provides additional analyses of the benchmark scores to take into account characteristics of the university that may affect our scores such as our high minority composition, nontraditional age of many of our students and our non-residential campus. This analysis compares our actual benchmarks to predicted scores based on factors such as these. Once these factors are taken into account, Downtown Denver's benchmarks are very close to where we would expect them (the scores are on a scale of 1 to 100, and none of the differences here exceeds 2 points). For all but one of the benchmarks for first year students, we slightly exceed our predicted score – that is, our first year students were slightly more engaged in these dimensions than we would expect given the characteristics of our university. Our actual scores for seniors lag, but again the differences are small.

Note: This analysis STILL does not take into account other ways in which our student body is distinctive from other universities participating in the NSSE. For instance, it does not adjust for the relatively high proportion of our students with significant outside commitments, where we rank high even in comparison to other urban universities.

Comparison of Actual and Predicted Benchmark Scores

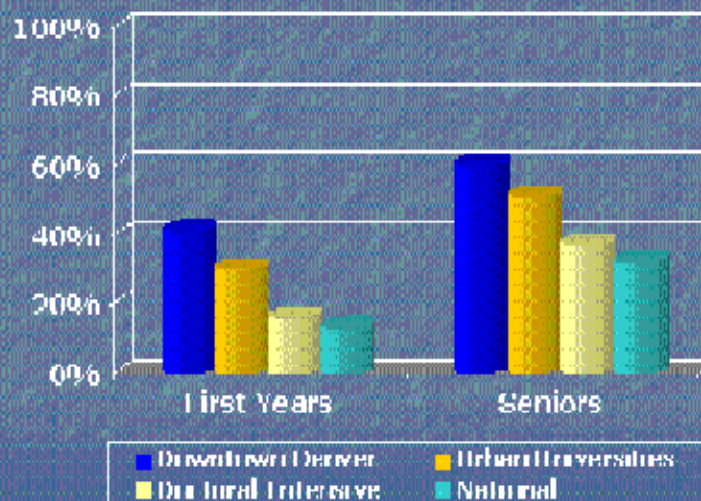
Benchmark	First Year Difference	Senior Difference
Level of Academic Challenge	0.3	-1.4
Active & Collaborative Learning	1.4	1.7
Student-Faculty Interaction	0.5	-1.3
Enriching Educational Experiences	0.2	-1.6
Supportive Campus Environment	-0.2	-0.7

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Student Lifestyle

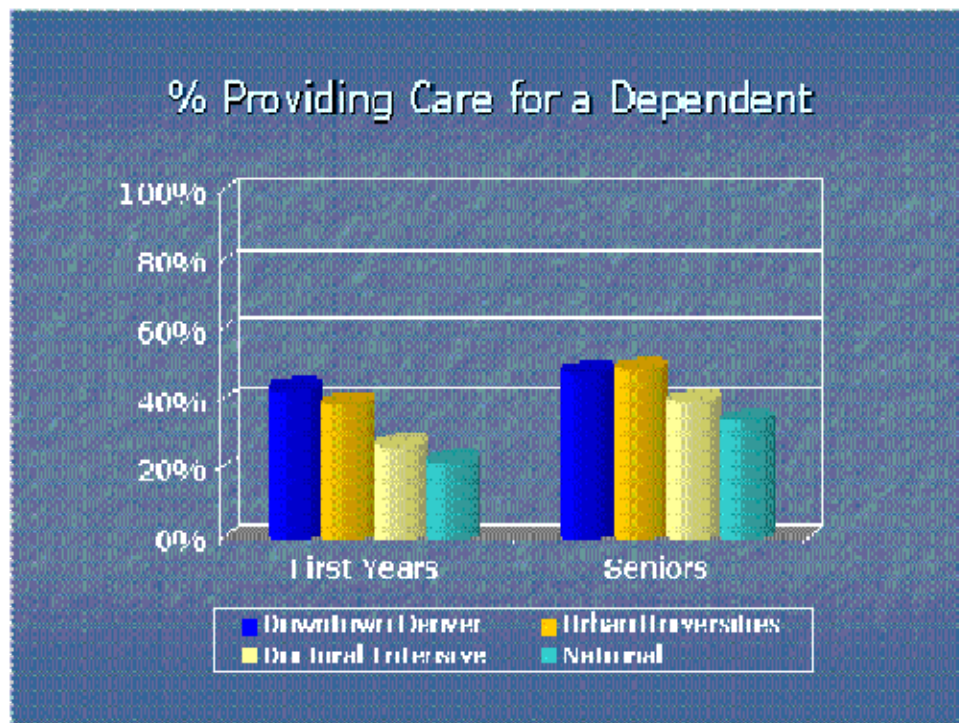
One of the primary differences between the Downtown Denver students and those at other institutions participating in the NSSE is the amount of time spent working. Over 40% of Downtown Denver's freshmen and 60% of seniors work at least half-time. At the other universities in the urban consortium, the corresponding percentages are 30% for first years and 51% for seniors, and the percentages decline for the other comparison groups. All differences here ARE statistically significant.

% Working 20 + Hours On or Off Campus



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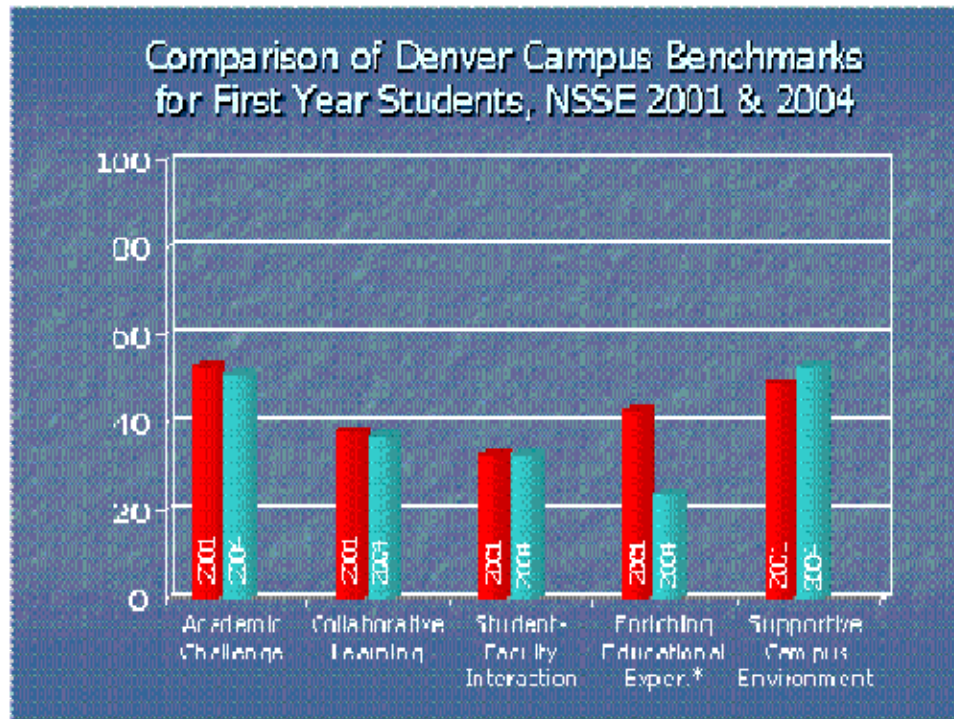
A relatively high proportion of Downtown Denver's students also provide care for a dependent compared to other NSSE institutions (43% of first years, 48% of seniors). Though this is not statistically significant from the other schools in the urban consortium, it is significantly higher than the other groups. For instance, Downtown Denver's freshmen are more than twice as likely to care for a dependent as those at all participating NSSE schools.



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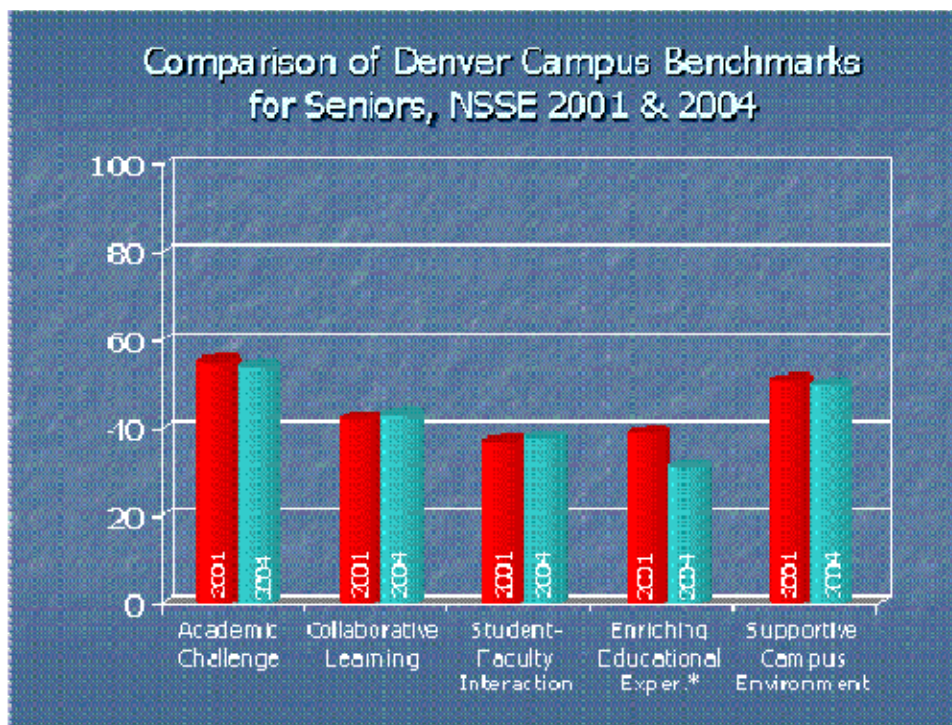
2001 & 2004 Benchmark Comparisons

A comparison of the Downtown Denver campus' benchmark scores for First Year students between 2001 and 2004 shows that most of our scores have remained stable. The one exception is the benchmark for Enriching Educational Experiences, which fell dramatically. This is most likely due to a change in question wording for the items covered by this scale. NSSE reports that "for most institutions, this change will produce a substantially lower score in 2004 compared to prior years, particularly for first-year students."



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Similar results were found in the comparisons of Senior responses on the benchmark scales between 2001 and 2004. Again, most of our scores have remained stable except for the re-tooled Education Enrichment measure.



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Click [here](#) for more information on the components of the NSSE 2004 benchmarks.

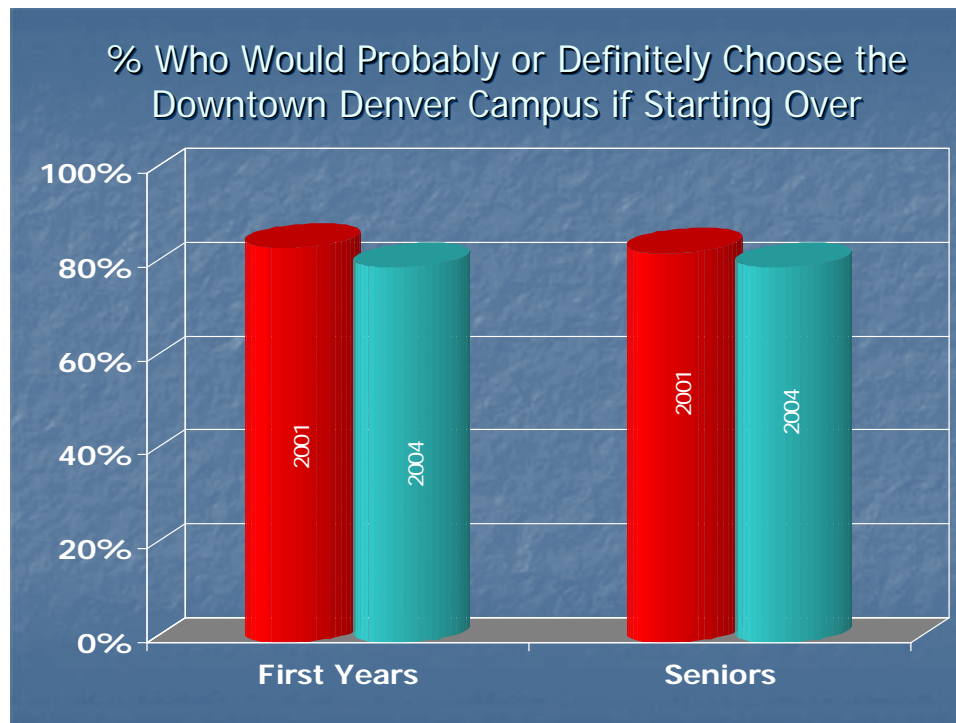
Selected Other Results

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Choosing an Institution

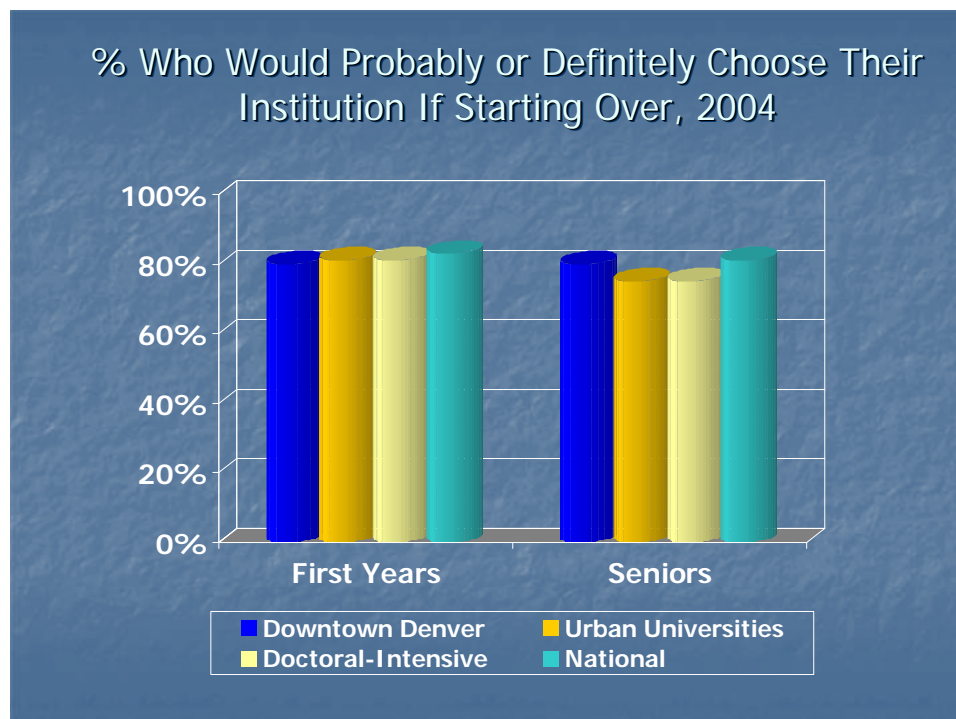
As in 2001, a high proportion of Downtown Denver's students said they would choose us if they were starting over again (80% for both first years and seniors). This percentage fell slightly for both groups since 2001, but not significantly.



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The percentage of first year students who would probably or definitely choose UCDHSC - Downtown Denver again if starting over was on par with students at the other schools in our urban consortium, those in our Carnegie classification, and all students who responded to the NSSE in 2004.

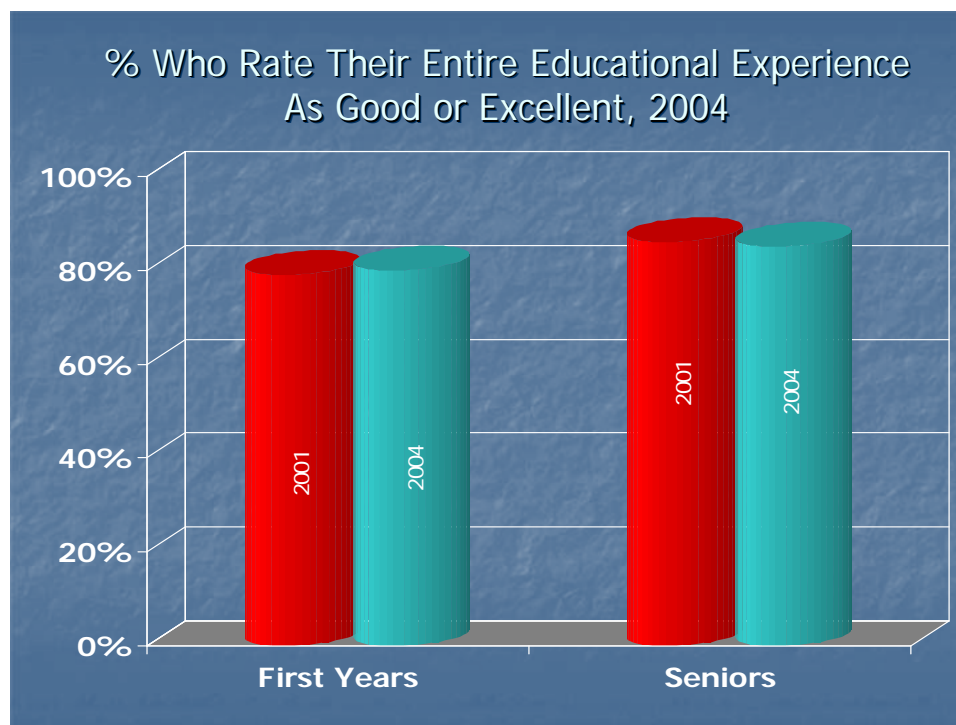
Downtown Denver seniors rated us more highly on this question than those at other urban universities as well as those in our Carnegie classification. While coming close, none of these differences is statistically significant.



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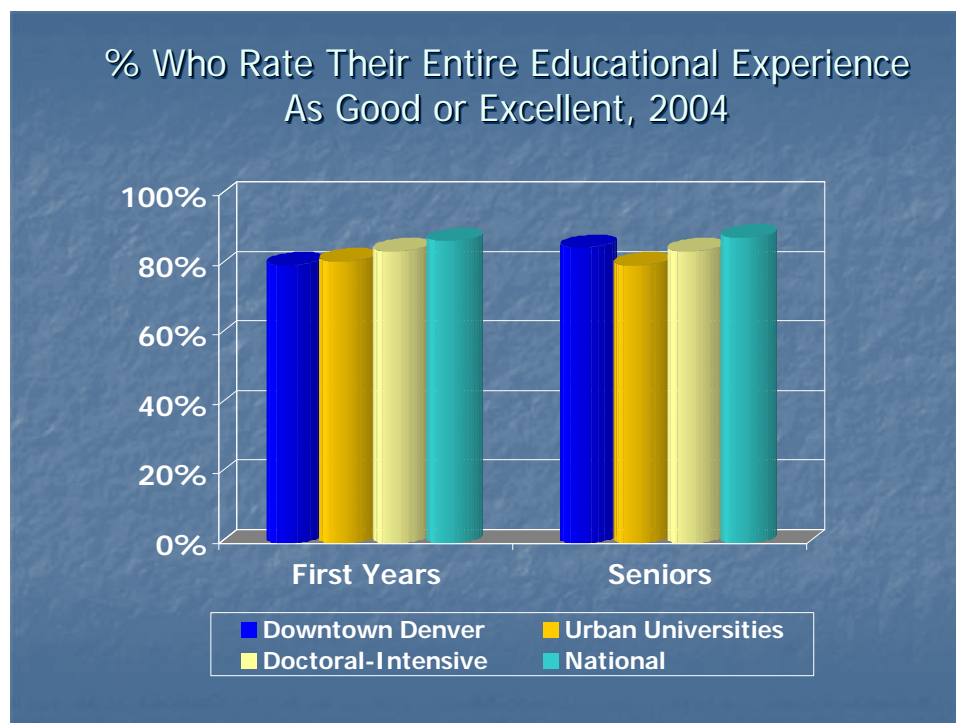
Educational Experience Ratings

Little change was seen among our first years and seniors between the 2001 and 2004 surveys in how they rate their entire educational experience. Any change that did occur was not statistically significant.



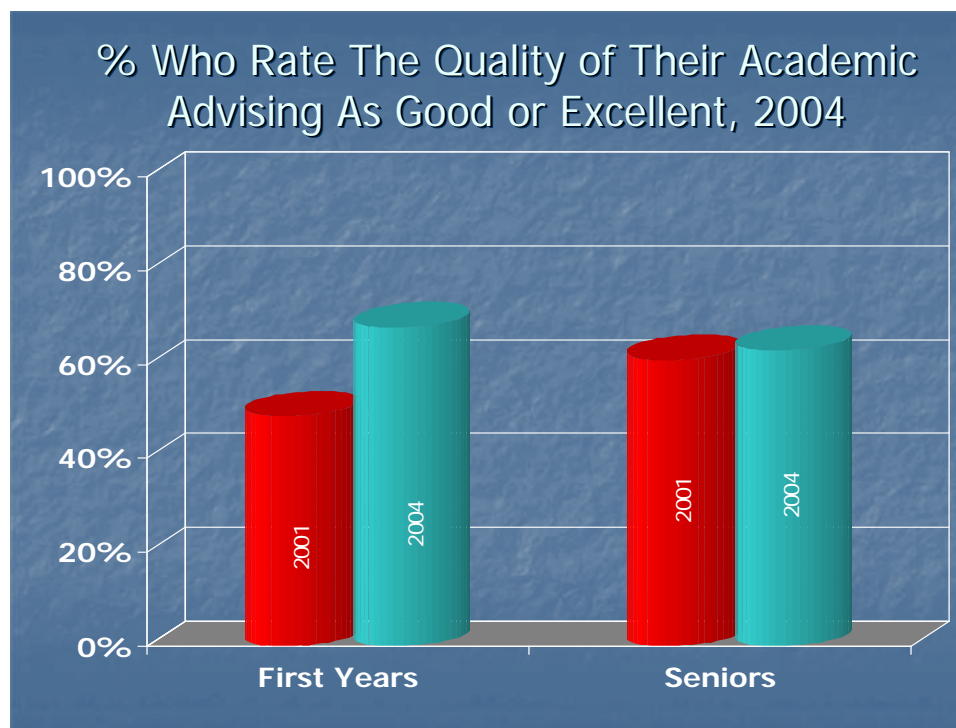
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Our first year students rate their educational experiences at the Downtown Denver Campus on par with those at other urban universities, though significantly lower than students at all NSSE-participating institutions. In contrast, Downtown Denver's seniors are significantly more positive about our campus than their counterparts in the consortium, and on par with the NSSE overall.



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In 2001, satisfaction with advising was among the strongest predictor of overall satisfaction and was significantly lower than other urban universities for First Years, and for all NSSE-participating schools for both classes. Downtown Denver has made significant gains since then, particularly among First Years. There are no longer statistically significant differences between us and the other urban universities, though we still lag significantly compared to all NSSE institutions.



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About the NSSE

The [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) has been administered annually since 2000. NSSE surveys freshmen and seniors at 4-year colleges and universities to assess the extent to which they engage in a variety of good educational practices. In 2004, 458 colleges and universities participated in the NSSE. The project is supported by the Pew Trusts and the Carnegie Foundation along with fees paid by participating schools.

This is the second time UCDHSC - Downtown Denver has participated in the NSSE. We began in Spring, 2001 and plan to continue to participate biennially.

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Urban Consortium

About NSSE Consortia

The NSSE allows creation of consortia, groups of eight or more schools. These facilitate comparisons with similar universities. Consortia can also add up to twenty common optional items at the end of the NSSE instrument. This is the only way that questions can be added to the NSSE.

In 2001 and again in 2004, UCDHSC – Downtown Denver was a member of the urban consortium. Our consortium (urban universities) included optional questions on family or work commitments that may delay completion of education, importance of various aspects of the student's college education such as acquiring work-related skills, family support and parental educational levels, and income. Aggregate data for the consortium are provided to all members – thus, we received data on our responses, the urban consortia, and all schools participating in the NSSE.

Members of the Urban Consortium, 2004

For the 2004 NSSE, the members of the urban consortium included:

Boise State University
Columbia College – Chicago
DePaul University
Long Island University – Brooklyn Campus
Mercy College
Metropolitan State College of Denver
Northeastern Illinois University
Pace University, Purdue University – Calumet
Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville
University of Akron
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs
University of Massachusetts – Boston
University of Missouri – Kansas City
UCDHSC – Downtown Denver.

Members of this consortium will change in subsequent years as participation in the NSSE varies.

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Margins of Error

Due to sample size differences, margins of error vary depending on the group in question.

	Margin of error
Downtown Denver campus overall (n=470)	± 4.5%
Denver Seniors (n=272)	± 6.0%
Denver First Years (n=198)	± 7.0%
Urban Consortium Seniors (n=2562)	± 1.9%
Urban Consortium First Years (n=2139)	± 2.1%
All NSSE Seniors (n=45,224)	± 0.5%
All NSSE First Years (n=44,481)	± 0.5%

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Statistical Significance

Statistical significance is determined by a test of differences in means or proportions at a 95% confidence interval ($p < .05$).

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Response Rate

Downtown Denver	30%
Urban Consortium	31%
NSSE Overall	38%

Our analysis of respondents compared to non-respondents suggests off-setting effects of non-response. Whites were more likely to respond to the NSSE at the Downtown Denver campus but were less engaged than minority respondents. Women were much more likely to respond and were more engaged than men. CLAS students were less likely to respond, and, among those who did respond, less engaged than students in other schools and colleges. Business students had the highest response rate.

NSSE's analysis of non-respondents suggest that, overall, non-respondents are more engaged than respondents, on average.

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Components of NSSE 2004 Benchmarks

Level of Academic Challenge

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, etc. related to academic program)
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings.
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more; between 5-19 pages; and fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizing analysis of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizing application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in a new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work

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Active and Collaborative Learning

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Worked with other students on projects during class

- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
- Tutored or taught other students
- Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

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Student-Faculty Interaction

- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)
- Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
- Worked with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements

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Enriching Educational Experiences

- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.)
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- Community service or volunteer work
- Foreign language coursework & study abroad
- Independent study or self-designed major
- Culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.)
- Serious conversations with students of different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity
- Using electronic technology to discuss or complete an assignment
- Campus environment encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together

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Supportive Campus Environment

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices

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