

Highlights from Seton Hall's latest NSSE Results ²⁰¹² + Review of 12 years ²⁰⁰¹⁻¹² of SHU NSSE Outcomes

2012 Summary Report

This summary of SHU's NSSE results has two parts.
Part one: highlights of SHU's latest results (NSSE 2012).
Part two: relative review of SHU's latest results NSSE theme by theme with comparison of the latest SHU results to SHU in previous years or to latest year peer results.
→ Comparison relative to SHU historical engagement levels, i.e. referring to NSSE results from prior years; and
→ Comparison relative to levels reported in aggregate across other institution sets. That is, with reference to results across either all Carnegie peers who happened to have participated⁹ in the latest NSSE; or to results across a smaller set of 6 participant universities selected because considering size and academics as well as mission, these 6 may be more similar to SHU than some in the Carnegie set.

The NSSE Survey

For 12 years, SHU has participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement, the annual national research study more commonly known as NSSE ("nessie"). The attraction of NSSE is that it collects concrete characterizations from students and distills these to profile the extent a university **engages, challenges** and **supports** its undergraduates. Such a profile all would agree is important and relevant. But these frames as stated are mere concepts. The value and soundness of NSSE comes from the building blocks used to construct the profile. The student responses to NSSE questions, i.e. the "measures" NSSE uses to construct the institutional profiles, are both analytic (rather than holistic) and explicit (rather than implicit). These attributes are what make NSSE distinctive, and these are the reason NSSE is of such value to SHU.

While NSSE metrics, like all survey metrics, are indirect; NSSE questions are far more concrete than questions found on the preponderance of surveys probing students for agreement with holistic statements (concerned with broad notions of quality) or seeking satisfaction ratings on entire categories of service. In contrast to NSSE, typical surveys offer pronouncements on some totality of campus life experienced and then seek to measure each student's agreement with same. NSSE asks for few if any summative ratings based on overall evaluation using criteria left to the student to decide. Instead, respondents characterize specific elements using explicitly defined criteria. The resulting set of measures collected this way are only later combined by NSSE to establish student renderings key aspects of academic and campus environments.

Students measures center on specific features in each student's own classes or study environments, or on components within the curriculum they have experienced, or at the parts of campus life that relates to them. Students quantify in units of frequency or regularity their participation, or opportunity to participate, in academic endeavors that are challenging, active and collaborative. They are also probed on the amount, nature and quality of interactions between students and faculty. There are asked

about specific enriching educational experiences they have completed or plan to do. And they are asked for how helpful and supportive based on their own experiences they perceive SHU's administration, faculty and fellow students.

Response Rate

In 2012 just over 500 Seton Hall students (257 first year, 253 senior year) responded to the NSSE survey administered in **Spring 2012**. Seton Hall's **23%** rate of response is higher than response rates for the comparison groups, 21% and 19% for SHU's Carnegie peer institutions and 6 selected universities, respectively. These are the rates for institutions participating in NSSE in the same year.

Part one: Highlights - NSSE 2012

What students say about Seton Hall experiences - 2012
NSSE researchers combine responses to NSSE questions to distill the concrete results into 5 broad themes called the NSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practices. Each of the 5 indicator levels are reported separately for first-year (FY) and senior year (SR) students.

Academic Challenge (a NSSE benchmark) **theme 1**



How much time spent on homework by SHU freshmen?
About half (**49%**) of FY students spend at least 16 hours per week preparing for class. 12% spend 5 hours or less.

How much writing is assigned in the freshman year?
43% of FY students report writing 5 or more papers of length 5 to 19 pages. 60% say they wrote 5 or more papers of lengths under 5 pages their first SHU year.

SHU assignments require thinking at what level?
Heavy or substantial¹ emphasis is indicated for:
Synthesizing / Organizing ideas **79%** of FY **86%** of SR
Making judgments / Applying **80%** of FY **88%** of SR

To what degree is studying and spending time on academic work emphasized at Seton Hall?
90% of FY students perceive the Seton Hall campus as one that places substantial¹ emphasis on academics.

Active and Collaborative Learning (a NSSE benchmark) **theme 2**

How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?
56% of FY students and **64%** of seniors say they frequently² discuss readings or ideas from coursework with others outside of class.



Do students at SHU work together on projects – both inside and outside of class?

42% of FY students and 50% of seniors say they work frequently² with other students on projects **in class**. With 48% and 62%, respectively saying they work frequently² **outside of class** with classmates to prepare assignments.

How often do students make class presentations?

Half (49%) of FY students and two-thirds (68%) of seniors report that they often³ make presentations in class.

How many first year students participate in community-based projects as part of a regular course at SHU?

40% of FY students say they have participated frequently² in community-based projects as part of a regular course.

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

More than two-thirds (68%) of SHU seniors responding say they have participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

Student-Faculty Interaction

(a NSSE benchmark) **theme 3**



Are Seton Hall faculty accessible and supportive?

Three out of four (77%, 75%) FY and senior students say Seton Hall faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic.⁵

Do students work on research projects with faculty?

Almost 1 in 3 seniors responding (30%) say who have worked on a research project with a faculty member.

Do students receive prompt feedback from faculty?

Three out of four (74%, 76%) FY and senior students say they receive feedback promptly³ from faculty at SHU.

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

92% of seniors report at least occasionally⁴ discussing career plans with faculty or advisors. 62% characterize the frequency of discussing career plans as often³.

Enriching Educational Experiences

(a NSSE benchmark) **theme 4**



Are learning communities at SHU available & used?

In their first year almost a third of those responding (32%) had participated in a learning community. By senior year respondents indicating yes increases to 4 out of 10 (42%).

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

About two thirds (65% of FY, 68% of seniors) of students indicated they frequently² are in serious conversation with students from a race or ethnicity different than theirs.

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

Similarly, two-thirds (67% of FY, 66% of seniors) say they frequently² have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs.

Do students participate in activities that enhance their lives by strengthening spirituality or religious beliefs?

More than a third (35% of FY, 37% of seniors) of those responding indicated they engage frequently² in activities that enhance their spirituality such as worship, meditation, or prayer.

Do students participate in community service?

A clear majority of students at Seton Hall (81% of FY, 75% of seniors) say they have done community service or volunteer work while studying at Seton Hall.

How many students study in other countries?

Almost 3 in 10 (29%) of all seniors responding indicated they had taken advantage of the opportunities at SHU to complete a study abroad program.

Do students devote time for co-curricular activities?

While the majority no more than 5 hours, a good number of students (38% of FY, 40% of seniors) spend 6 or more hours a week participating in co-curricular activities.

Are there culminating senior experiences or projects?

By the spring of their senior year, most students at SHU (60%) of students have completed a capstone course, a senior project or thesis, or a comprehensive exam.

Supportive Campus Environment

(a NSSE benchmark) **theme 5**



To what extent does Seton Hall help students deal with their academic and social needs?

A large majority of those responding (83% of FY, 77% of seniors) indicated they see Seton Hall as an institution that provides the support they need to help them succeed academically¹. Regarding support of social needs, most FY students (55%) say Seton Hall provides the support they need to help them thrive socially on campus¹.

How satisfied with academic advising received at SHU?

Asked to characterize the guidance they receive from advisors at Seton Hall, 85% of FY students and 78% of seniors responded with good or excellent, with more than a third selecting the superlative (34% and 45%, respectively).

Extent satisfied with the SHU educational experience?

Most (89%) seniors responding rated their educational experience as good or excellent. Four in five (80%) say they would choose Seton Hall again if they could start their college career over.

How well do students get along with administrators?

(survey language: "administrative personnel and offices") 59% of FY students and 50% of seniors find administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible.⁵

How supportive to other students are students at SHU?
 79% of FY students and 82% of seniors see students as friendly, supportive, and helping them to feel they belong.⁵

Part Two: Review & Comparison

Multiple years – multiple comparison dimensions.
 Seton Hall now has 12 years of NSSE results and as a result, has good ability to measure itself against itself. In addition, NSSE results are (re-)calibrated each year against national reference values using results of other institutions participating in that year.

As an institution with multiple years of data, Seton Hall can review its NSSE data both internally (over time) to reveal trend, and externally (comparing its results against those at participating peer institutions). By reviewing using both comparisons as reference, SHU can interpret a scale for its engagement positives, monitor to ensure positives are sustained or improved further, and discern any areas of challenge especially any that have persisted across survey years. In essence, SHU can use NSSE to help monitor the effectiveness of the institution's efforts and investments to foster instructional and campus practices long proven to engage students in their learning and their academic life.

Review Dashboards ^{7 8 13 14}

Systematic reviews are made each year of SHU results. These are conducted via review of multiple years of SHU NSSE results, and via comparison of latest year SHU results to latest year peer institution data. SHU has developed its own comparison tool for reviewing SHU NSSE data both ways, all at once so to speak. That tool is referred to as a SHU NSSE Dashboard⁷.

Dashboards are used in annual reviews of NSSE results because they facilitate a **full** and **balanced** review.

In creating each year SHU's NSSE results displayed as **dashboards** built faithfully around the **NSSE benchmarks**, SHU ensures appropriate coverage of the measures NSSE considers as key factors in student engagement. In using the benchmarks themselves as the overarching framework, dashboard based review is guaranteed comprehensive.¹³

A second aspect of "balanced" coverage is to ensure that consideration of the significance of SHU's results is made along both dimensions – thus ensuring that SHU's latest results are viewed relative to the results at other institutions (to show **magnitudes of difference** between SHU and peers); and also, relative to SHU's own history (to show **progression or trend**). By employing dashboard cells that follow a single uniform format, in a design simple enough to be "read", interpreted and used by numerous and varying SHU audiences;⁸ SHU takes full advantage of the richly complex NSSE data sets that include both multiple years and multiple reference group comparisons.



Layout: Each column maps to a single NSSE benchmark. **Row 1** shows progress in terms of changes in benchmark scores. For each column, subsequent rows (2 through 5) contain 4 more summary info cells, summarizing both review of SHU compared to SHU (over time) and review of SHU's current value compared to the average value for peers (latest year) for a single question from the set of questions NSSE uses to calculate each benchmark score. **Summary cell:** For review of SHU versus SHU, each cell includes the 12-year **high**, the 12-year **low** and the **current** Seton Hall value, as well as the current average value for participating **peer** institutions.⁹ When fully implemented (as originally designed) each dashboard cell will also include a link to a **bar chart** display (accessed by clicking in the cell) which opens to reveal results year by year 2001-2012.¹⁴

Scope: Given 2 distinct NSSE target groups, 2 dashboards must be built; one for FY students, and one for seniors. Each provides 5 outcome sets summarizing multiple years of information for each of the 5 NSSE benchmark themes.

Use: Scanning of all dashboard summary cells, uniformly presented in this way, provides an overall synopsis of SHU engagement levels. And with benefit of the extra effort to add progress charts as supplement¹⁴ consideration of granular trend details (year by year SHU values) is also possible. With charts, one can avoid pitfalls possible when relying on dashboard information alone; i.e., incorrect impressions on extent of change, duration of trend, etc.

(Note that NSSE "benchmark" values are simply scores, on a 100 point scale, resulting from combining responses to individual questions that define each NSSE category.)

Focus on SHU's Strengths evidenced by 12 year Review

Examples of SHU's relative strengths (SHU vs peers)

I. Academic Challenge dashboard column 1
 (LAC benchmark) (row 1)

NSSE's **Academic Challenge** (a benchmark based on 9 individual survey questions) is an important NSSE metric. Comparing SHU's scores (58 and 61, for FY and SR students, respectively) to the academic challenge scores based on averages across SHU peers, one sees that SHU's results are generally, for both FY and SR students, comparable in all instances and better in one, than results of its peers. The one instance of superiority is when comparing SHU to its Carnegie peers, for **FY students**. In that context SHU's score, 58, is slightly superior (statistically significantly higher) to that of its peers, 56.

II. Active and Collaborative Learning dashboard column 2
 (ACL benchmark) (row 1)

NSSE's **Active and Collaborative Learning**, another essential metric supporting deeper learning, combines 7 individual questions. Across most years, Seton Hall's score for **FY students** has proved statistically higher than scores averaged across SHU's Carnegie peers. But review shows that the once fairly large positive differences have continued to lessen; to the point that now, for the first time, the gap is small enough to no longer be of even statistical significance. (FY score for SHU: **49** in 2012, across Carnegie peers and Select 6 groups: **46-47**).

For seniors this year, similar to last, statistically there is no difference; with all 3 scores roughly equal (55, 53 and 54 for SHU, Carnegie peers and Select 6, respectively).

Class Presentations (ACL) [dashboard column 2](#)
[indiv question row 2](#)

One substantive positive difference noted in the past and continuing this year is seen on comparing SHU and peers for the frequency their FY respondents report they make presentations in class. At SHU almost half of **FY students (49%)** say they frequently make classroom presentations. Compare this with 47% (no significant difference with Carnegie peers) but roughly one in three (**34%**) across the Select 6 set of institutions, a substantive positive gap.

III. Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI benchmark) [dashboard column 3](#)
(row 1)

Student-Faculty Interaction as measured by NSSE's benchmark combining 6 individual questions, has long been evident a SHU strength.¹⁰ Across all 12 years, Seton Hall's score for FY students has proved substantively higher than those averaged across SHU Carnegie peers, and once again large positive differences are noted this year for **FY students** (at SHU: **42**, across Carnegie peers; across the Select 6 group, average score: **37**).

SHU's SFI score for seniors has not been as consistently high as has the one for FY. But the positive gap has proved in all years large enough to be of statistical significance. This year the positive gap for seniors is again definitively "big". At SHU, the average score for **seniors** was **53** while across the Select 6 set of schools, the average for seniors was **45**, and across all Carnegies peers just **39**.

Career Planning with Faculty (SFI) [dashboard column 3](#)
[indiv question row 2](#)

About half of first year students (**48%**) and better than 6 in 10 (**62%**) seniors at Seton Hall say they often or very often talk about career plans with faculty or advisors. These proportions are very high compared with averages across SHU's peers (**32-36%** for FY and **36-47%** for SR students across all Carnegie and Select 6 peers, respectively).

Students working with Faculty (SFI) [dashboard column 3](#)
[indiv question row 4](#)

More than a quarter (**27%**) of first year students and more than a third (**38%**) of seniors at Seton Hall say they work often or very often with faculty outside of class on activities other than coursework. These proportions are substantively higher than last year's results and both are far higher than results across either Carnegie or Select 6 peers (for whom averages are just **19-21%** for FY and **17-28%** for seniors).

Discuss ideas with Faculty (SFI) [dashboard column 3](#)
[indiv question row 5](#)

First year results at SHU continue to outpace results across SHU's Carnegie (**29%**) versus (**23%**) saying they discuss often or very often ideas from class with faculty members outside of class. SHU's FY result is also higher than the average across the Select 6 (**26%**) though this gap is smaller and is not statistically significant. For seniors (**46%**) at Seton Hall reported in 2012 that they discussed often or very often did this with SHU's faculty. These is a high value, whether compared with SHU's Carnegie peers (**23%**) or with the value averaged across the Select 6 schools (**30%**). It also represents an 11 percentage point increase compared to last year and a 12 year high value.

IV. Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE benchmark) [dashboard column 4](#)
(row 1)

As a benchmark, the **Enriching Educational Experiences** metric combines a broader set of educational "features" combining 11 individual questions from the NSSE survey¹¹. SHU's 2012 EEE values are once again statistically significantly higher than those averaged across peers – whether Carnegie or Select 6 – for both student groups. For **FY students** the gap in benchmark scores between SHU and its peers is at least 3, with SHU's benchmark of **36** comparing favorably with peer scores, whether **29** for the average across Carnegie peers or **33** for the metric when averaging across the Select 6 institutions.

SHU's benchmark score for **SR students** responding inched slightly higher than last years' benchmark score. Now at **54**, this metric continues to compare very favorably with the averages across SHU's peers. These this year proved to be just **36** and **49**, across all Carnegie and across the Select 6 peer institutions, respectively. Results from Seniors, for two example questions are provided next.

Capstone Experience (EEE) [dashboard column 4](#)
[indiv question row 4](#)

Up from 58% last year, this year better than 6 in 10 (**61%**) of Seton Hall **seniors** responding say they have already completed a **culminating senior experience**. NSSE gives examples of such experiences as: "a capstone course, a senior project or thesis, a comprehensive exam". SHU's latest 61% compares to just **28%** and **54%** respectively for seniors at comparison group institutions, across all Carnegie or Select 6 peers, respectively.

Study Abroad (EEE) for seniors only [dashboard column 4](#)
[indiv question row 3](#)

Review of Study Aboard responses uncovers another substantive difference depending on whether one compares SHU to values across all Carnegie or to values across the Select 6 peers. And this positive gap, unlike the Capstone one, would be one perhaps somewhat expected since a quarter of the Carnegie peer schools are public institutions whereas just 1 of the Select 6 are. Roughly 1 in 3 seniors, at SHU (**29%**) and at schools in the Select 6 group, said they had taken advantage of Study Abroad. This is three times the far smaller **9%** responding across the Carnegie peers institutions who participated in 2012.

Focus on Academic Rigor
Review of SHU v SHU; SHU v Peers

I. Academic Challenge (Rigor) → Review revealing improvements and also continuing areas of concern.

Assigned Reading (LAC) [dashboard column 1](#)
[indiv question row 2](#)

As noted in prior reports. over the last two years, the proportions of Seton Hall students responding they had read more than 10 books or packets, as assigned, dropped substantially. For **FY students** this drop has gone from 54% two years ago to now just **45%**. At one point the proportion had reached a high of 60%. SHU's proportion for FY students does remain higher, and significantly, so than that when averaging across SHU's Carnegie peers (**34%**). However, it is now lower than the value across the Select 6 schools (**50%**). And, more importantly, SHU's drop without

rebound – seen on comparing this year to two years ago, suggests the question of SHUs **ability to sustain academic rigor improvements**, raised in last year’s report, was unfortunately a valid one. Review of this year’s status reveals only a small climb of 2% and this follows a 7% drop. For **seniors** a much larger climb occurred (from 33% to **43%**). This sizeable rebound represents a return (almost) to the value SHU saw 2 years ago for its seniors (34%). Comparing the latest SHU results of **43%** to results for SHU’s peers: **47%** and **40%** respectively, across Carnegie defined peers, and Select 6 peer institutions.

Assigned Papers (LAC) **dashboard column 1 indiv question row 3**

Three years ago **55%** of SHU’s **FY students** reported assignments to write more than four papers of medium length (5 to 19 pages). This proportion not only exceeded SHU’s Carnegie peers by a large amount (55% was 21 percentage points higher the 32% for SHU’s Carnegie peers that year); it also represented a high value across all years, 9 of them then, of SHU’s participation in NSSE. By last year, this proportion was down to a value that, while still substantively higher than that for SHU’s Carnegie peers, matched SHU’s lowest on NSSE to date, 42%.

This year the proportion for **FY students** has improved back to **50%**; but even so, as a key proportion it is 5 percentage points lower than SHU’s high of 55%. By comparison SHU’s peers this year averaged **38%** for the Carnegie defined group and **45%** for the Select 6 group. The positive gaps proved statistically significant for the first but not the second comparison group.

For **Senior students** there was also improvement with a jump from 47% last year back to up to **53%** this year. However, the schools in the Carnegie comparison group proved to have an average value well above that of Seton Hall. That value is **64%** representing a negative gap of more than 10 percentage points. Schools in the Select 6 Group were closer to SHU, with no statistically significant gap; but nonetheless the direction is in favor of the Carnegie schools for which the proportion proved to be **56%**, a 3 point negative gap for SHU.

Hours of Study/Week (LAC) **dashboard column 1 indiv question row 5**

In recent years, the proportions of students specifying more than 15 hours spent each week have moved up and down. This year, their direction is up after last year coming down. For both groups, (FY and SR) values were up by a good amount, 8 percentage points, comparing this year to last.

For FY students the proportion studying more than 15 hours per week is **49%**, comparing well to values across all Carnegie or Select 6 peers, **43%** and **44%** respectively.

For **Seniors**, the proportion is **37%** after being all the way down to 29% last year. Though this value is higher than SHU’s immediately prior year, and is on par with this year’s average of **39%** average across the Select 6 schools, it is 10 percentage points lower than the **47%** proportion seen when averaging across SHU’s Carnegie peers.

Therefore while good to see improvement, two questions remain unanswered. The first: why the zigs and zags over time for this metric. The second: why the large (negative) gap for SHU seniors relative to Carnegie peers? This is a large statistically significant gap that now spans two years.

Focus on Areas of Challenge Based on SHU v Peers

Below are results of review and updated comparisons of SHU NSSE results to those at SHU’s peer institutions for items in **V** where challenges continue, and also in **II** where SHU’s strengths may be dropping.

V. Supportive Campus Environment (SCE benchmark) **dashboard column 5 (row 1)**

This benchmark is about student perceptions of Campus Support. Base on 6 individual questions, three are probes for level of **support provided** to students by SHU – they ask whether students see levels as adequate to help them..

- 1- **succeed academically**,
- 2- **cope with non-academic responsibilities**, and
- 3- **thrive socially**.

The other questions probe students for perceptions about **relationships** on campus – asking for how they view the quality of relationships between students and

- 4- **other students**,
- 5- **faculty members**, and
- 6- **“administrative offices and personnel”**

Seton Hall’s scores on the NSSE for this benchmark have been, and continue to be, roughly on par relative to results averaged across participating Carnegie peers. Although in some years SHU scores were a bit higher on this benchmark relative to scores of peers; overall, it is fair to say that the University evaluates neither too poorly nor well, relative to its peers defined by Carnegie. In essence, SHU’s score for Supportive Campus, looks fairly similar to those of peers. For some that fact is concerning; for others this outcome is viewed as one expected, so not of concern.

What is more concerning is that while SHU appears on par with peers when reviewing the benchmark scores, it has been and is now, well below par for one question used in NSSE’s supportive campus benchmark: the perception of **quality of relationships between students and administrative offices and personnel**. It is not just that SHU’s 2012 results continue to be below that of SHU’s peers for this question. It is that Seton Hall has not shown any sustained improvement for this question in recent years. (Numerical results for this are reviewed below.)

A second potential concerning area inside this benchmark: Seton Hall appears to no longer be in a position of relative strength (compared to its peers) based on review of another relationship question: the NSSE item probing about **how supportive students appear to be to each other**. Last year, for both groups, SHU’s results were statistically significantly higher. This year, for both groups, and both peer categories, SHU’s is instead just on par with its peers.

The results below are included to show specifics for items that comprise NSSE’s supportive campus benchmark.

Academic Support (SCE) **dashboard column 5 indiv question row 2**

A positive outcome: **83%** of FY students and **77%** of seniors say Seton Hall provides the support they need to help them succeed academically. On this particular Supportive Campus question, there *has* been improvement relative to earlier years, and that improvement has been, in both groups, **substantive and sustained**. For first year students there was a small gain this year and for **seniors**

there was a larger gain, with the proportion responding positive to this question, **77%**, proving now a 12 year high. For both groups, values currently are at levels at least 10 percentage points higher than the now distant lows of 69% and 57%.

Quality of Relationships with Admin (SCE) **dashboard column 5**
indiv question row 3

It is this item that is the “big negative”. With just **59%** of FY students and **50%** of seniors rating SHU a 5 or higher (on a 1 to 7 scale) when asked to consider how helpful, considerate, and flexible administrative personnel and offices at SHU have been in their experience. Compare these to the 2012 averages at SHU’s Carnegie peer schools, **65%** and **68%** for FY and seniors, respectively. While the averages for the Select 6 schools are slightly lower (**62%** and **59%** for FY and seniors, respectively) they still are higher than at Seton Hall.

Review of results for quality of relationships with admin shows that the **FY students** proportion is actually up slightly this year compared to last (59% versus 56% responding 5 or higher this year versus last). But review also shows that the value averaged across SHU’s peers improved far more.

This comparative outcome confirms SHU’s context for this and possible several items within this benchmark: while the overall pattern may be one of gradual (very gradual!) improvements at SHU, because for certain items SHU begins below that of its peers, such improvement rate cannot achieve catch up to peers. In fact, it is more likely that the formerly small (negative) gap with peers for this item now is widening, such that it may well be approaching a level that could become pronounced and substantive.

For **seniors**, the value this year is flat with the level last year (50% versus 49%). While over time the senior value has moved a bit both up and down with a net overall of a slight up compared to earlier years; still, the movement in recent years has been at best extremely gradual and SHU has experienced no positive change sustained.

To repeat the observation made last year: The Quality of Relationships with Administrative Offices and Personnel is a question on the NSSE that has been noted each year, over many years, as revealing of a pattern that on some level characterizes a part of the Seton Hall experience that is less than positive, when compared to SHU peers who also participate in NSSE.

Quality of Relationships with Faculty (SCE) **dashboard column 5**
indiv question row 4

Down from last year’s 80%, this year **77%** of **FY students** rate the relationship of students and faculty as 5 or better in terms of faculty being available, helpful, and sympathetic. For **seniors** the result is flat with last year, **85%** this year versus 84% the prior year. At Carnegie peer schools the averages appear about the same for FY students and lower for seniors (**76%** and **80%**) suggesting that SHU is **on par** with for first years, and somewhat better for seniors, than at Carnegie peers participating.

For **FY students**, the positive difference evidenced last year is gone; since even at **77%** SHU’s result are just one point higher than one peer, and one point lower than the other. For **seniors**, **85%** ties to a roughly 5 percentage

point difference, same gap this year as last; but again like last year, a difference that did not prove statistically significant. That it did not demonstrates that there is a lot of variation among students responding, for this NSSE item.

Quality of Relationships between Students (SCE) **dashboard column 5**
indiv question row 5

Down from last year’s 83%, this year **79%** of **FY students** and **82%** (down from 88%) of **seniors** responded with at least a 5 out of 7 in rating their relationship with other students in terms of how friendly, supportive, and helpful in terms of fostering their sense of belonging. Comparing to the averages at Carnegie peer schools (**78%** and **84%**), one sees SHU’s lower values as evidence – as discussed above – that the former positive differences between SHU and its peers for this item is not there this year. Similarly now to most other items in this benchmark, SHU’s results appear basically in line with, the values averaged across Seton Hall’s Carnegie peers. Comparing instead to the averages at the Select 6 schools (with results of **75%** and **81%** for FY and seniors, respectively), one sees no statistical differences and a suggestion only for FY students of a slight advantage for SHU.

The bottom line is that SHU’s scores on NSSE’s supportive campus benchmark have remained close to flat in recent years, moving up and down by small amounts without sustaining improvement in scores or questions. Last year SHU’s benchmark score for FY students was 5 points higher than across its Carnegie peers. But this year with a SHU drop of 2 and a peer group climb of 2, the difference is now just 1. SHU’s SR benchmark is also very close to that of its peers, after a 2 point climb by SHU and a 3 point climb by peers.

The explaining factors for an outcome for this theme less than okay, relative to peers, are that for two of the six questions – quality of relations with admin and quality of relationships between students – Seton Hall has dropped. These drops are large enough to warrant further investigation. A good starting place would be a repeat of the ‘Bookstore Explore’ investigations conducted at SHU years back.

Such qualitative investigations can be an important source of understanding the results, in particular the results for this theme because questions used in the supportive campus benchmark, given they are more holistic and less analytical, are a challenge to interpret much less plan for University initiatives in reaction to.

The following area is not an area of challenge; but it is an area where SHU may be seeing one its former relative strengths dropping. And, unlike the above NSSE results suggested area of challenge, the items comprising the theme that follows are not purely holistic, nor are they based on subjective ratings or perceptions by students.

Example of an Active & Collaborative Learning metric, to show where one of SHU’s strengths may be slipping

Class Presentations (ACL) **dashboard column 2**
indiv question row 2

In 2012 **68%** of SHU **seniors** and **49%** of **FY students** indicated they often or very often make presentations.

These proportions are about the same as those at Carnegie peer schools where **68%** of seniors and **47%** of FY students gave similar characterization.

However, comparing SHU with SHU prior years it is noted that as recently as 2011, the positive difference between SHU and its Carnegie peers was much higher:

FY students: 42% at SHU 37% at Carnegie peers
Senior students: 69% at SHU 64% at Carnegie peers

While for **FY students** across the **select 6 group** results are lower than for SHU (**34%** for Select 6, **49%** for SHU) this was the only relative strength observable for this item.

Advising Ratings (this item not used in NSSE's benchmarks)

Seton Hall students give **Quality of Academic Advising** favorable ratings, though for FYs somewhat lower this year: One third (**34%**) of **FY students** respond with "Excellent" and another half (**51%**) report "Good". The total of these two positive responses, **85%**, is somewhat higher than results for both SHU's Carnegie peers (39% + 42% = **81%**) and the Select 6 schools (34% + 44% = **78%**). When **seniors** are asked the same question, those responding positively sum to a slightly lower level (**78%**) for seniors than for FY; but to one that is the same as Carnegie peers and somewhat higher than across the Select 6 schools (**70%**).

Satisfaction-based "metrics" (this item not used in NSSE's benchmarks)

In contrast with the majority of items on the NSSE, crafted to be consistent with the analytical intent of the survey, one question seeks a rating from each student of his or her totally general satisfaction with SHU. The question is not in any way operationalized; that is, no components of satisfaction are given, nor any criteria defined. Because of this, the diagnostic value of the item is arguably limited, as noise in the responses from vagueness for students trying to answer, and institutions trying to interpret results abound – Nonetheless, the question does provide a rating of overall satisfaction for which the University receives normative values for comparison to other institutions.

Are students satisfied with their overall educational experience – would they make the same choice again?

A improved and positive outcome this year for this item, with **85%** of the **FY students** and **80%** of **seniors** responding to say they would choose this school again if they could start their college career over. For peers, the results were 82% - 83% for first year and 82% of seniors, considering both Carnegie and Select 6 schools.

Student Gains & Development (these are not used in NSSE's benchmarks)

To what extent have experiences at SHU contributed to knowledge/skills/development in...

- ... Understanding People of Other Backgrounds⁶
- ... Contributing to the Welfare of Your Community⁶
- ... Developing a Deepened Sense of Spirituality⁶
- ... Developing a Personal Code of Values and Ethics⁶

About two thirds of Seton Hall students responded either "quite a bit" or "very much" to three of these four questions, with more than half responding positively to the fourth, the one concerning spirituality (more below on this question). **FY responses** were **66%**, **64%**, **57%** and **72%**, respectively. **Senior** results: **68%**, **60%**, **53%** and **70%**, respectively, for the four questions as listed above.

For both groups, the highest levels of positive response were for **Developing a Personal Code of Values and Ethics** with **72%** and **70%** responding positively.

The highest gap with Carnegie peers was for **Contributing to the Welfare of Your Community** where SHU's **64%** and **60%**, for FY and seniors, compared very favorably to the **51%** and **50%** at Carnegie peers. At Select 6 institutions, the averages were very close to SHU's.

A large statistically highly significant (positive) gap between SHU and students at both peer groups was observed again this year in Seton Hall **senior students** responding to the question probing students on extent they see their experiences at SHU as having contributed to their developing a **Deepened Sense of Spirituality**. At SHU, **53%** of seniors responded "quite a bit" or "very much"; while at SHU's Carnegie peers, just 32% responded this way across the pool; and at Select 6 institutions the proportion was 31%.

Conclusions 2012 (also see Executive Summary)

SHU engagement levels, listed in brief:

NSSE data continue to provide Seton Hall some interesting metrics as gauge of the engagement levels of its undergraduate students. In bullet format, some of the strengths, trends and challenges from this year's NSSE:

Strengths

- ❖ **Student-Faculty Interaction** metrics remain high and continue to suggest good levels of interaction, especially compared to participating peer schools.
- ❖ At SHU there appears to be very high levels of opportunity for what NSSE calls "**Enriching Educational Experiences.**"

Challenges

- ❖ While benchmark scores for **Academic Challenge** remain at or near highest levels for SHU, several key metrics concerning **Expectation and Rigor** are once again **lower** this year than in years prior.
- ❖ For FY students, the positive margins for SHU over its peers for **Collaborative and Active Learning** metrics appear to be shrinking.
- ❖ Student perceptions concerning how **Supportive a Campus they perceive SHU to be**, now appear to be lower, significantly so, than those of students at peer institutions, for one key metric: the **Quality of Relationships between students and administrative offices and personnel**. Just half of seniors (and just 3 in 5 FY students) express a positive view when asked about this aspect of SHU's campus.

Notes

Concerning Mappings used in report highlights

1. "Substantial" emphasis is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very much" and "Quite a bit."
2. "Frequently" for the purposes of this report is defined by combining responses given as either "Very often" or "Often."
3. "Often" for the purposes of this report is defined by combining responses given as either "Very often" or "Often."
4. "At least occasionally" combines responses "Very often," "Often," and "Sometimes." (the other option being "Never")
5. Based on students responding 5, 6, or 7 on a 7-point scale.
6. Responses made to NSSE questions 11(l), 11(o), 11(p), and 11(n); none are included currently in a NSSE benchmark.

Concerning Multi-year comparisons

⁷ Seton Hall's NSSE web-dashboards are an innovation of Seton Hall's Institutional Research office. They are comparisons made across multiple years of NSSE data comparing SHU with SHU over time and SHU with Carnegie peers at one point in time (latest year). All comparisons are framed by the 5 NSSE benchmark themes. They were developed in 2007 with the goal of improving dissemination and use of rich complex data sets.

⁸ Feedback on SHU's NSSE dashboard is always appreciated. (Janet Easterling: email easterja@shu.edu or call 973 761-9735)

⁹ "Carnegie" peer institutions are those that offer doctorates in similar numbers and also in similar number of different areas as SHU: for example, American University, DePaul University. "Select 6" peer institutions are those selected because considering size and academics as well as mission, these 6 may be more similar to SHU than some in the Carnegie defined set: for example, Catholic University, Villanova University
The full listings are provided in later end notes ^{15 16}

¹⁰ Because of a question change, comparisons of Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI) benchmarks over multiple-years can only go back as far as 2004. NSSE does provide a recalculated score which it labels SFC which omits the rescaled question but it ceased providing this value for peers beyond 2008. Because of this, SHU NSSE dashboards were modified to use only SFI scores even though SFC is available for SHU versus SHU.

Concerning specific NSSE benchmarks or questions

¹¹ The NSSE questions used to derive its Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE) benchmark are quite diverse. They include: Participating in co-curricular activities, Practicum / internship / field experience / co-op experience / clinical assignment, Community service / volunteer work, Foreign language coursework / study abroad, Independent study / self-designed major, Culminating senior experience, Serious conversations with students that have different religious beliefs / political opinions / personal values, Serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity, a Campus environment that encourages contact among students from different backgrounds, and Use of electronic technology to discuss or complete an assignment.

¹² Activities listed on survey as examples (by NSSE) include: "organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc."

Concerning status of SHU's NSSE Dashboards (dashboards that serve as supplement to the summary report)

¹³ SHU NSSE Dashboards – November 2012 Static dashboards

Seton Hall NSSE dashboards are made available each year to aid in reviews of multiple years of results. The years spanned by the latest dashboards are 2001 through 2012. At the time of this report, the static versions of the dashboards are completed and available. There are no plans to provide the interactive dashboards at this time.

¹⁴ SHU NSSE Dashboards – possible as future project Interactive Web Dashboards

This format for SHU's NSSE dashboard is one that can be made accessible via SHU's intraweb for interactive exploratory navigation, once set up and fully stocked with bar charts showing year by year outcomes and trends for each dashboard cell. Crafting new sets of such "interactive dashboards" is a project that can be initiated at any point in the year. However, because of the need as preliminary tasks, of first creating then converting dozens of sets of multi-year graphs to be used inside clickable web dashboard cells, the project does require extensive time and resources to complete. Accordingly, there must be demand for enhanced summary information of this type, and that demand must be high to justify allocating the amount of time needed to the project. Until a point where such levels of demand are made known, no plans will be made to recreate interactive dashboards for 2012.

¹⁵ SHU Carnegie Peers Who Participated in NSSE 2012 (based on SHU's "Basic Carnegie" Classification)

Adelphi University
American University
Barry University
Capella University
Cardinal Stritch University
Central Michigan University
Colorado Technical University
DePaul University
East Carolina University
Edgewood College
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Metro
Lynn University
Morgan State University
Pace University
Regent University
St. John's University-New York
Tennessee State University
Texas A&M University - Commerce
Trevecca Nazarene University
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
University of Phoenix-Online Campus
Widener University
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

¹⁶ SHU Select 6 Peers from Participants in NSSE 2012 (selected as more similar to Seton Hall University)

Catholic University of America, The
DePaul University
Loyola University Chicago
St. John's University-New York
Syracuse University
Villanova University