
NSSE 2021 Topical Module Report

First-year Experiences and Senior Transitions

California State University, San Bernardino

This module includes a set of items only for first-year students and a set only for seniors, with questions adapted from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement and the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, respectively. The first-year items focus on academic perseverance, help-seeking behaviors, and institutional commitment, while the senior items explore post-graduation plans, links between the academic major and future plans, and confidence with skills developed during college.

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First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				CSUSB		CSU		CSUSB	CSU	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?										
a. Studied when there were other interesting things to do	FYSfy01a	1	Never	43	6	98	5	2.7	2.7	.01
		2	Sometimes	269	40	740	41			
		3	Often	237	35	671	37			
		4	Very often	129	19	315	17			
		Total		678	100	1,824	100			
b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn't understand the material	FYSfy01b	1	Never	10	1	50	3	2.9	2.8 **	.12
		2	Sometimes	189	28	579	32			
		3	Often	330	49	841	46			
		4	Very often	146	22	345	19			
		Total		675	100	1,815	100			
c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn't feel like it	FYSfy01c	1	Never	34	5	132	7	2.8	2.6 ***	.24
		2	Sometimes	209	31	724	40			
		3	Often	282	41	667	37			
		4	Very often	155	23	296	16			
		Total		680	100	1,819	100			
d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments	FYSfy01d	1	Never	82	12	156	9	2.5	2.6	-.06
		2	Sometimes	276	41	758	42			
		3	Often	212	31	624	34			
		4	Very often	109	16	282	15			
		Total		679	100	1,820	100			
e. Finished something you have started when you encountered challenges	FYSfy01e	1	Never	14	2	28	2	3.0	2.9	.08
		2	Sometimes	162	24	481	27			
		3	Often	323	48	900	50			
		4	Very often	180	27	406	22			
		Total		679	100	1,815	100			
f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	1	Never	33	5	112	6	2.9	2.8	.07
		2	Sometimes	215	32	561	31			
		3	Often	253	37	750	41			
		4	Very often	179	26	402	22			
		Total		680	100	1,825	100			
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?										
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	1	Not at all difficult	17	3	51	3	3.8	3.6 ***	.20
		2	2	57	8	203	11			
		3	3	199	29	596	33			
		4	4	246	36	660	36			
		5	5	91	13	239	13			
		6	Very difficult	68	10	73	4			
		Total		678	100	1,822	100			
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	1	Not at all difficult	27	4	75	4	4.2	3.9 ***	.21
		2	2	71	10	191	11			
		3	3	118	17	434	24			
		4	4	167	25	548	30			
		5	5	144	21	331	18			
		6	Very difficult	152	22	239	13			
		Total		679	100	1,818	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				CSUSB		CSU		CSUSB	CSU	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	1	Not at all difficult	65	10	197	11	3.4	3.2 ***	.16
		2	2	134	20	353	19			
		3	3	177	26	573	31			
		4	4	157	23	448	25			
		5	5	80	12	163	9			
		6	Very difficult	67	10	88	5			
		Total		680	100	1,822	100			
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	1	Not at all difficult	93	14	247	14	3.3	3.1 **	.14
		2	2	127	19	367	20			
		3	3	179	26	559	31			
		4	4	136	20	383	21			
		5	5	67	10	168	9			
		6	Very difficult	76	11	97	5			
		Total		678	100	1,821	100			
3. During the current school year, about how often have you sought help with coursework from the following sources?										
a. Faculty members	FYSfy03a_16	1	Never	231	34	406	22	1.9	2.1 ***	-.21
		2	Sometimes	305	45	949	52			
		3	Often	120	18	386	21			
		4	Very often	24	4	79	4			
		Total		680	100	1,820	100			
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1	Never	293	43	595	33	1.8	2.0 ***	-.22
		2	Sometimes	276	41	777	43			
		3	Often	82	12	369	20			
		4	Very often	28	4	73	4			
		Total		679	100	1,814	100			
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1	Never	334	49	660	36	1.8	2.0 ***	-.22
		2	Sometimes	215	32	709	39			
		3	Often	94	14	333	18			
		4	Very often	36	5	118	6			
		Total		679	100	1,820	100			
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	1	Never	64	9	128	7	2.6	2.8 ***	-.18
		2	Sometimes	258	38	574	32			
		3	Often	228	34	690	38			
		4	Very often	128	19	428	24			
		Total		678	100	1,820	100			
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	1	Never	268	39	703	39	2.0	2.0	-.01
		2	Sometimes	227	33	600	33			
		3	Often	121	18	372	20			
		4	Very often	63	9	142	8			
		Total		679	100	1,817	100			
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1	Never	447	66	1,004	55	1.5	1.6 ***	-.22
		2	Sometimes	164	24	528	29			
		3	Often	53	8	227	12			
		4	Very often	14	2	61	3			
		Total		678	100	1,820	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				CSUSB		CSU		CSUSB	CSU	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
4. During the current school year, have you participated in a first-year seminar or other course that introduces students to expectations of the academic community and college success skills (goalsetting, study skills, campus resources, etc.)?^j (Comparison data are limited to NSSE 2021.)										
	FYSfy06_21	Yes		384	57	126	42	57%	42% ***	.30
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		No		138	20	94	31			
		Unsure		155	23	82	27			
		Total		677	100	302	100			
5a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?^j										
	FYSfy04a	No		537	79	1,343	74	21%	26% **	-.13
(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")		Yes		139	21	475	26			
		Total		676	100	1,818	100			
5b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)										
	FYSfy04b_1_16	—	Academics are too difficult	40	29	123	26			
	FYSfy04b_2_16	—	Academics are too easy	3	2	12	3			
	FYSfy04b_3_16	—	Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	13	10	73	16			
	FYSfy04b_4_16	—	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	46	34	208	44			
	FYSfy04b_5_16	—	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	34	25	105	22			
	FYSfy04b_6_16	—	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	34	25	101	22			
	FYSfy04b_7_16	—	Too much emphasis on partying	1	1	10	2			
	FYSfy04b_8_16	—	Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun	20	15	85	18			
	FYSfy04b_9_16	—	Relations with faculty and staff	3	2	39	8			
	FYSfy04b_10_16	—	Relations with other students	2	1	51	11			
	FYSfy04b_11_16	—	Campus climate, location, or culture	21	15	89	19			
	FYSfy04b_12_16	—	Unsafe or hostile environment	3	2	15	3			
	FYSfy04b_13_16	—	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	65	48	225	48			
	FYSfy04b_14_16	—	A reason not listed above, please specify:	32	24	61	13			

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				CSUSB		CSU		CSUSB	CSU	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
6. How important is it to you that you graduate from <i>this institution</i>?										
	FYSiy05	1	Not important	11	2	46	3	5.4	5.3	.06
		2	2	11	2	33	2			
		3	3	24	4	89	5			
		4	4	68	10	172	10			
		5	5	79	12	203	11			
		6	Very important	476	71	1,261	70			
		Total		669	100	1,804	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	CSUSB	CSUSB	CSU	CSUSB	CSU	CSUSB	CSU			
FYSfy01a	678	2.67	2.66	.033	.019	0.85	0.82	2,500	.849	.01
FYSfy01b	675	2.91	2.82	.028	.018	0.74	0.77	1,244	.007	.12
FYSfy01c	680	2.82	2.62	.032	.020	0.84	0.84	1,220	.000	.24
FYSfy01d	679	2.51	2.57	.035	.020	0.90	0.85	1,158	.173	-.06
FYSfy01e	679	2.99	2.93	.029	.017	0.77	0.74	2,492	.087	.08
FYSfy01f	680	2.85	2.79	.033	.020	0.87	0.85	2,503	.120	.07
FYSfy02a	678	3.80	3.58	.045	.025	1.16	1.07	2,498	.000	.20
FYSfy02b	679	4.16	3.87	.055	.031	1.43	1.31	1,132	.000	.21
FYSfy02c	680	3.37	3.16	.055	.030	1.43	1.28	1,112	.001	.16
FYSfy02d	678	3.27	3.08	.058	.031	1.51	1.34	1,099	.004	.14
FYSfy03a_16	680	1.91	2.08	.031	.018	0.81	0.78	1,179	.000	-.21
FYSfy03b_16	679	1.77	1.96	.031	.020	0.82	0.83	2,491	.000	-.22
FYSfy03c_16	679	1.75	1.95	.034	.021	0.88	0.90	1,229	.000	-.22
FYSfy03d_16	678	2.62	2.78	.034	.021	0.90	0.89	2,496	.000	-.18
FYSfy03e_16	679	1.97	1.97	.037	.022	0.97	0.95	2,494	.906	-.01
FYSfy03f_16	678	1.46	1.64	.028	.019	0.73	0.83	1,365	.000	-.22
FYSfy06_21 ^k	677	.567	.417	.0191	.0284	--	--	--	.000	.30
FYSfy04a ^k	676	.206	.261	.0156	.0103	--	--	--	.004	-.13
FYSfy05	669	5.42	5.35	.042	.028	1.09	1.20	1,306	.141	.06

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				CSUSB		CSU		CSUSB	CSU	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
1. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?										
	FYSsr01_16	No		505	34	1,246	33			
		Yes		971	66	2,545	67			
		Total		1,476	100	3,791	100			
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?										
	FYSsr01a	—	Full-time employment	491	50	1,542	60			
		—	Part-time employment	69	7	152	6			
		—	Graduate or professional school	259	26	482	19			
		—	Military service	4	0	13	1			
		—	Service or volunteer activity (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.)	6	1	13	1			
		—	Internship (paid or unpaid)	63	6	151	6			
		—	Travel or gap year	23	2	84	3			
		—	No plans at this time	37	4	77	3			
		—	Other, please specify:	32	3	61	2			
		Total		984	100	2,575	100			
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation?^j										
	FYSsr01b	No		341	61	878	52	39%	48% ***	-0.19
		Yes, I will start a new job		42	8	299	18			
		Yes, I will continue in my current job		173	31	510	30			
		Total		556	100	1,687	100			
		<i>(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")</i>								
2. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] To what extent have courses in your major(s) prepared you for your post-graduation plans?										
	FYSsr02	1	Very little	65	7	165	6	3.0	2.9 *	.09
		2	Some	199	20	617	24			
		3	Quite a bit	361	37	971	38			
		4	Very much	359	36	812	32			
		Total		984	100	2,565	100			
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?^j										
	FYSsr03	Yes		1,296	87	3,290	87	87%	87% 0.0	.02
		No		42	3	135	4			
		Unsure		147	10	370	10			
		Total		1,485	100	3,795	100			
		<i>(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")</i>								
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?^j										
	FYSsr04	Yes		324	22	891	23	22%	23% 0.0	-0.04
		No		746	50	1,869	49			
		Unsure		411	28	1,042	27			
		Total		1,481	100	3,802	100			
		<i>(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")</i>								

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				CSUSB		CSU		CSUSB	CSU		
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d	
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?^j											
	FYSsr05		Yes	420	28	1,095	29	28%	29%	0.0	-.01
			No	632	42	1,624	43				
			Unsure	438	29	1,082	28				
			Total	1,490	100	3,801	100				
6. How much confidence do you have in your ability to complete tasks requiring the following skills and abilities?											
a. Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information	FYSsr06a		1	Very little	14	1	36	1	3.4	3.4	.02
			2	Some	145	10	371	10			
			3	Quite a bit	571	38	1,506	40			
			4	Very much	754	51	1,875	49			
				Total	1,484	100	3,788	100			
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b		1	Very little	12	1	31	1	3.5	3.4 **	.09
			2	Some	98	7	360	9			
			3	Quite a bit	554	37	1,424	38			
			4	Very much	820	55	1,977	52			
				Total	1,484	100	3,792	100			
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c		1	Very little	35	2	89	2	3.2	3.2	-.02
			2	Some	261	18	575	15			
			3	Quite a bit	566	38	1,581	42			
			4	Very much	621	42	1,540	41			
				Total	1,483	100	3,785	100			
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d		1	Very little	20	1	60	2	3.3	3.3	.03
			2	Some	194	13	530	14			
			3	Quite a bit	612	41	1,567	41			
			4	Very much	658	44	1,634	43			
				Total	1,484	100	3,791	100			
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e		1	Very little	50	3	146	4	3.1	3.0	.04
			2	Some	310	21	847	22			
			3	Quite a bit	602	41	1,495	39			
			4	Very much	522	35	1,303	34			
				Total	1,484	100	3,791	100			
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f		1	Very little	37	2	127	3	3.1	3.1	.02
			2	Some	307	21	790	21			
			3	Quite a bit	615	41	1,525	40			
			4	Very much	525	35	1,344	35			
				Total	1,484	100	3,786	100			
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g		1	Very little	211	14	531	14	2.5	2.6	-.03
			2	Some	538	36	1,310	35			
			3	Quite a bit	449	30	1,183	31			
			4	Very much	286	19	761	20			
				Total	1,484	100	3,785	100			
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSsr06h		1	Very little	348	23	782	21	2.3	2.4	-.04
			2	Some	520	35	1,390	37			
			3	Quite a bit	372	25	1,009	27			
			4	Very much	243	16	605	16			
				Total	1,483	100	3,786	100			

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Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				CSUSB		CSU		CSUSB	CSU	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
i. Leadership skills	FYSSr06i	1	Very little	85	6	158	4	3.1	3.1	-.02
		2	Some	271	18	748	20			
		3	Quite a bit	527	36	1,358	36			
		4	Very much	600	40	1,521	40			
		Total		1,483	100	3,785	100			
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSSr06j	1	Very little	128	9	242	6	2.9	3.0	-.04
		2	Some	335	23	938	25			
		3	Quite a bit	548	37	1,351	36			
		4	Very much	473	32	1,261	33			
		Total		1,484	100	3,792	100			
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?										
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSSr07a	1	Very little	34	2	113	3	3.2	3.1 **	.10
		2	Some	224	15	683	18			
		3	Quite a bit	613	41	1,558	41			
		4	Very much	608	41	1,427	38			
		Total		1,479	100	3,781	100			
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSSr07b	1	Very little	238	16	653	17	2.7	2.6 *	.07
		2	Some	364	25	1,007	27			
		3	Quite a bit	474	32	1,190	31			
		4	Very much	405	27	932	25			
		Total		1,481	100	3,782	100			
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSSr07c	1	Very little	44	3	144	4	3.2	3.1 **	.09
		2	Some	248	17	731	19			
		3	Quite a bit	574	39	1,480	39			
		4	Very much	610	41	1,426	38			
		Total		1,476	100	3,781	100			
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSSr07d	1	Very little	138	9	388	10	2.8	2.8	.05
		2	Some	399	27	1,063	28			
		3	Quite a bit	482	33	1,259	33			
		4	Very much	452	31	1,066	28			
		Total		1,471	100	3,776	100			
8. Have you been creating an ePortfolio or other collection that includes samples of your work over time, shows your progress, and helps you reflect on the knowledge and skills you have gained?^j (Comparison data are limited to NSSE 2021.)										
	FYSSr09_21	Yes		473	32	186	28	32%	28% *	.10
		No		869	59	408	61			
		Unsure		132	9	79	12			
		Total		1,474	100	673	100			

9. Is there anything your institution could have done better to prepare you for your career or further education? Please describe.

This final question asked students to respond in an open text box. Comments were recorded for 415 seniors. Responses are provided in your NSSE21 Student Comments Report and in a separate SPSS data file.

These open-ended responses appear exactly as respondents entered them and may not be suitable for distribution without prior review.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
		CSUSB	CSU	CSUSB	CSU	CSUSB	CSU			
FYSsr01b ^k	556	.387	.480	.0207	.0122	--	--	--	.000	-.19
FYSsr02	984	3.03	2.95	.029	.018	0.91	0.90	3,547	.014	.09
FYSsr03 ^k	1485	.873	.867	.0087	.0055	--	--	--	.575	.02
FYSsr04 ^k	1481	.219	.234	.0107	.0069	--	--	--	.227	-.04
FYSsr05 ^k	1490	.282	.288	.0117	.0073	--	--	--	.653	-.01
FYSsr06a	1,484	3.39	3.38	.018	.011	0.70	0.70	5,270	.529	.02
FYSsr06b	1,484	3.47	3.41	.017	.011	0.66	0.69	2,852	.003	.09
FYSsr06c	1,483	3.20	3.21	.021	.013	0.81	0.78	2,630	.614	-.02
FYSsr06d	1,484	3.29	3.26	.019	.012	0.74	0.75	5,273	.254	.03
FYSsr06e	1,484	3.08	3.04	.022	.014	0.83	0.85	5,273	.212	.04
FYSsr06f	1,484	3.10	3.08	.021	.014	0.81	0.83	5,268	.481	.02
FYSsr06g	1,484	2.55	2.57	.025	.016	0.96	0.96	5,267	.332	-.03
FYSsr06h	1,483	2.34	2.38	.026	.016	1.01	0.98	5,267	.241	-.04
FYSsr06i	1,483	3.11	3.12	.023	.014	0.90	0.87	5,266	.614	-.02
FYSsr06j	1,484	2.92	2.96	.024	.015	0.94	0.91	5,274	.189	-.04
FYSsr07a	1,479	3.21	3.14	.020	.013	0.78	0.81	5,258	.002	.10
FYSsr07b	1,481	2.71	2.63	.027	.017	1.04	1.03	5,261	.024	.07
FYSsr07c	1,476	3.19	3.11	.021	.014	0.82	0.84	5,255	.002	.09
FYSsr07d	1,471	2.85	2.80	.025	.016	0.97	0.97	5,245	.074	.05
FYSsr09_21 ^k	1,474	0.32	0.28	.0122	.0173	--	--	--	.038	.10

Endnotes

- a. Column percentages are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Counts are unweighted; column percentages cannot be replicated from counts. Comparison group details are in the *Selected Comparison Groups* report, linked in the Data & Reports table on the Institution Interface.
- b. All statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Unless otherwise noted, statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests. Items with categorical response sets are left blank.
- c. These are the values used to calculate means. For the majority of items, these values match the codes in the data file and codebook.
- d. Effect size for independent t -tests uses Cohen's d ; z -tests use Cohen's h .
- e. Statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Categorical items are not listed.
- f. The 95% confidence interval for the population mean is equal to the sample mean plus or minus 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.
- g. A measure of the amount individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.
- h. Degrees of freedom used to compute the t -tests. Values differ from N s due to weighting and whether equal variances were assumed.
- i. Statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests or z -tests. Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between your students' mean and that of the students in the comparison group is due to chance.
- j. Statistical comparison uses z -test to compare the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes" with all who responded otherwise.
- k. Mean represents the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes."

Key to symbols:

- ▲ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.
- △ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▽ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▼ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

Note: It is important to interpret the direction of differences relative to item wording and your institutional context.