



Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

National Survey of Student Engagement: Comparative Benchmarks from 2004 to 2009

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research

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The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is based on the rationale that student engagement can serve as a proxy for student learning and personal development. The survey was created to assess the extent to which a university's practices, investments, and environment encourage undergraduate students to take full advantage of institutional opportunities and resources that lead to positive student outcomes such as student satisfaction, persistence, and graduation. The survey is administered to freshmen and seniors only.

This report constitutes a summary of the five NSSE benchmark indices of effective educational practice: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment (benchmarks are on a scale from 0 to 100; see Appendix A for definitions and items included in each benchmark), comparing Loyola's benchmarks to those of several peer groups. Results are summarized in figures and table below. Peer groups vary by year, but include: all institutions participating in NSSE, institutions of Loyola's Carnegie classification, institutions in the NSSE Jesuit Consortium, and a set of institutions selected specifically for their similarity to Loyola (see Appendix B for 2009 sample sizes and response rates). The latter two peer groups are small, and the institutions comprising them change substantially from year to year. This report summarizes benchmarks from 2004 to 2009.

Key Findings

Level of Academic Challenge

- The Level of Academic Challenge (LAC) benchmark is an indicator of the extent to which Loyola emphasizes the importance of academic effort and sets high academic expectations.
- The freshman and senior LAC benchmarks changed little over the 2004-09 period, for Loyola and its peer groups (see Table 1 and Figure 1).
- In 2009, Loyola's freshman LAC benchmark (59) was comparable to those of Jesuit Consortium institutions and to selected peers, and higher than that of Carnegie peer institutions.

- In 2009, Loyola's senior LAC benchmark (60) was greater than that of Carnegie class peer institutions, equal to that of selected peers, and slightly lower than that of Jesuit peers.

Active and Collaborative Learning

- The Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL) benchmark indicates the degree to which students are active in class and collaborate with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material.
- For all peer groups, ACL benchmarks tend to be higher for seniors than for freshmen, because seniors have had more opportunities to do some of the activities included in the benchmark (see Figure 2 and Appendix A).
- After dropping from 2005 to 2007, Loyola's ACL benchmark rose again, to 41 for freshmen and 51 for seniors in 2009.
- For both freshmen and seniors at Loyola, the 2009 ACL benchmark was equal to that for their peers at universities in the same Carnegie class, compared to the previous two years, when Loyola's benchmarks were lower than the Carnegie class group.
- For both freshmen and seniors at Loyola, the 2009 ACL benchmarks were lower than for freshmen and seniors at Loyola's Jesuit and selected peer institutions, although the gap was slightly narrower than in the past.

Student-Faculty Interaction

- The Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI) benchmark measures the degree to which students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty both in and out of the classroom.
- For Loyola freshmen, the SFI benchmark has been somewhat volatile over time; it has been less volatile for Loyola seniors (see Figure 3).
- After a low of about 29 in 2007, the Loyola freshman SFI benchmark increased to 33 in 2008 and 2009. For seniors, the benchmark was up slightly, from about 42 in 2007 to about 45 in 2009.
- In 2009, the Loyola freshman SFI benchmark was essentially the same as that of freshmen at Loyola's

Carnegie peers, but was lower than those of freshmen at other Jesuit and selected peer institutions.

- In the past, the SFI benchmark had been lower for Loyola students than Jesuit and selected peers. By 2009, however, the Loyola senior SFI benchmark of student-faculty interaction had risen to 45, about equal to those for Jesuit and selected peer institutions. It was higher than that of the Carnegie peer institutions.

Enriching Educational Experiences

- The Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE) benchmark indicates participation in complementary learning opportunities to enhance students' academic programs, including experiencing diversity and involvement in a variety of both academic and non-academic activities.
- Seniors had higher EEE benchmarks than did freshmen, across all institutions, because they had more opportunities to do some of the activities included in the EEE benchmark (see Figure 4 and Appendix A).
- In 2009, Loyola's freshman EEE benchmark (30) was lower than that of other Jesuit and selected peer institutions, but higher than that of other universities in the same Carnegie class. This was the same pattern as in 2008.
- After rising from 2004 to 2006, the senior EEE benchmark rose again from 2007-2009, to a high of 48. By 2009, the benchmark was equal to that of other Jesuit and selected peer institutions, and higher than that of Carnegie peers.

Supportive Campus Environment

- The Supportive Campus Environment (SCE) benchmark indicates the degree to which students feel supported by

the university in both academic and non-academic areas, and the quality of students' relationships with other students, faculty members, and administrative personnel.

- The SCE benchmark tends to be a little higher for freshmen than for seniors, across all institutions (see figure 5).
- Loyola's freshman SCE benchmark rose from 56 in 2007 to 61 in 2009, approximately equal to that of Carnegie peer institutions, but still lower than that of Jesuit and selected peers.
- Loyola's senior SCE benchmark rose from 51 in 2006 to 56 in 2009, again approximately equal to that of Carnegie peer institutions, but still lower than that of Jesuit and selected peers.

Implications

- Relative to its peers, Loyola's highest benchmarks were level of academic challenge and, for seniors, student-faculty interaction and enriching educational experiences.
- Statistically, most of Loyola's benchmarks are at least as high as those of its Carnegie peers, and sometimes higher.
- There is evidence that drops in some of the benchmarks have begun to reverse themselves over the last two or three years, including in Student-Faculty Interaction.
- Still, Loyola tends to lag behind its Jesuit and selected peers. Nevertheless, in some cases, improvements in benchmarks over the last two or three years have led Loyola to begin catching up to those peers.

Benchmark ¹	Freshmen						Seniors					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Level of academic challenge												
Loyola	57.8	58.5	56.1	55.6	58.3	58.7	59.7	60.3	58.0	58.9	58.8	59.5
Carnegie peers	52.1	51.1	51.8	51.3	51.9	53.4	55.5	55.0	55.2	54.9	55.5	56.4
NSSE (all)	53.6	52.6	51.7	51.8	53.0		57.6	56.5	55.8	55.6	57.0	
Jesuit consortium	56.9	56.1	56.5	57.4	57.2	58.3	59.7	59.3	60.0	59.3	60.9	60.9
Selected peers				56.9	57.2	58.4				58.1	60.6	59.8
Active and collaborative learning												
Loyola	40.4	41.9	38.6	37.6	40.2	41.3	47.0	49.7	47.6	47.4	48.6	51.1
Carnegie peers	38.9	38.9	39.7	40.3	41.9	42.2	47.4	47.8	48.4	49.5	50.1	50.4
NSSE (all)	42.3	42.4	41.4	41.3	42.0		51.4	51.5	50.4	50.1	48.0	
Jesuit consortium	43.0	44.3	45.1	43.9	46.1	44.8	52.1	53.4	54.1	52.8	54.5	53.1
Selected peers				43.3	46.1	46.7				52.4	54.9	53.5
Student-faculty interaction												
Loyola	32.2	37.4	31.9	29.4	32.9	32.8	41.3	43.9	42.2	41.8	42.5	44.5
Carnegie peers	29.5	30.6	30.5	32.0	33.3	33.3	39.2	40.6	40.0	40.5	41.0	40.9
NSSE (all)	33.3	34.0	32.1	32.8	33.0		44.0	44.1	41.3	41.2	39.0	
Jesuit consortium	33.7	35.8	35.3	34.7	37.3	36.4	45.3	46.5	45.7	45.2	46.1	45.5
Selected peers				33.7	36.2	36.4				43.7	45.6	44.3
Enriching educational experiences												
Loyola	29.7	29.7	27.9	28.0	29.4	29.6	38.1	42.7	43.4	43.2	44.7	47.5
Carnegie peers	26.6	27.8	28.1	27.3	27.6	28.0	39.3	40.9	41.2	39.8	39.6	40.7
NSSE (all)	26.6	30.4	26.7	27.1	26.0		40.9	42.1	39.9	39.9	40.0	
Jesuit consortium	29.7	28.2	31.1	30.3	31.2	31.8	45.2	46.5	47.3	47.6	47.5	48.6
Selected peers				29.3	30.9	32.5				46.7	48.6	48.4
Supportive campus environment												
Loyola	57.2	57.1	57.5	56.5	58.9	61.2	52.9	55.0	51.3	52.1	53.6	56.0
Carnegie peers	59.0	56.8	57.8	59.0	60.3	60.1	54.4	53.2	54.7	56.2	56.8	56.7
NSSE (all)	62.8	60.1	59.1	59.9	61.0		59.7	57.5	56.6	56.9	58.0	
Jesuit consortium	64.3	63.6	64.5	63.4	65.2	65.7	61.2	60.3	61.3	61.0	62.4	63.1
Selected peers				62.3	62.3	63.6				58.5	58.9	60.2

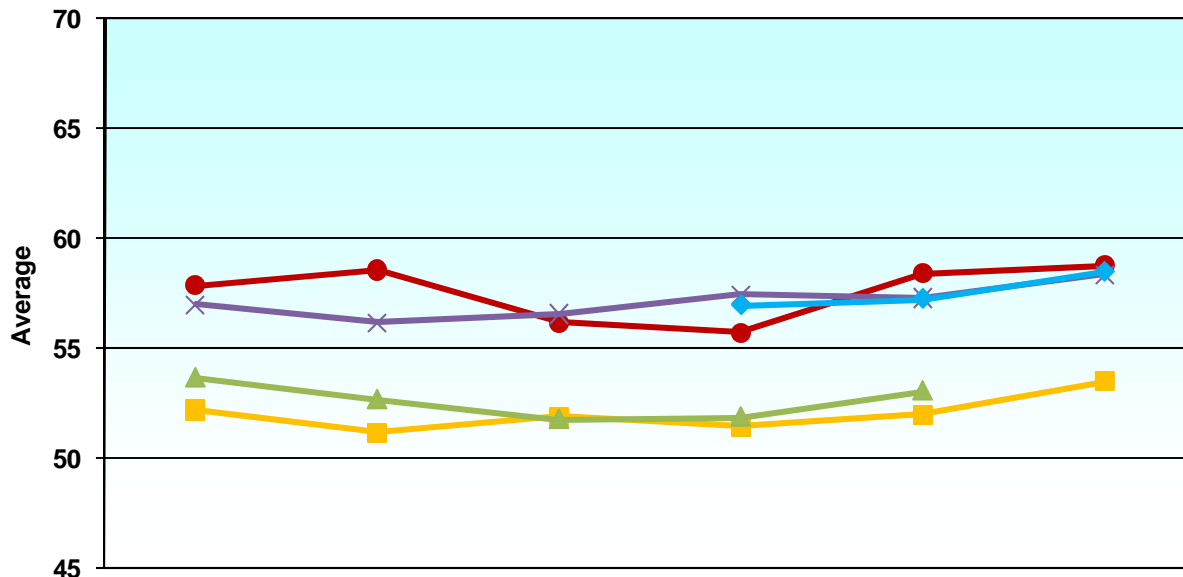
Source: NSSE 2001-2009

Note: Effect sizes for benchmark differences (mean difference divided by pooled standard deviation) on which Loyola was significantly lower/higher are bolded in red/blue. Effect sizes unavailable before 2005. For the NSSE (all) comparison group, benchmarks after 2007 are only available rounded off, and the statistical significance of differences from Loyola is unknown; 2009 benchmarks for the all NSSE institutional group not available until 11/09.

¹ Scale for all benchmarks: 0 - 100; see appendix for items included in benchmarks.

Figure 1
NSSE Benchmark: Level of Academic Challenge
2004-09 (Average)

Freshmen



Seniors

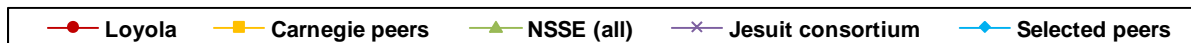
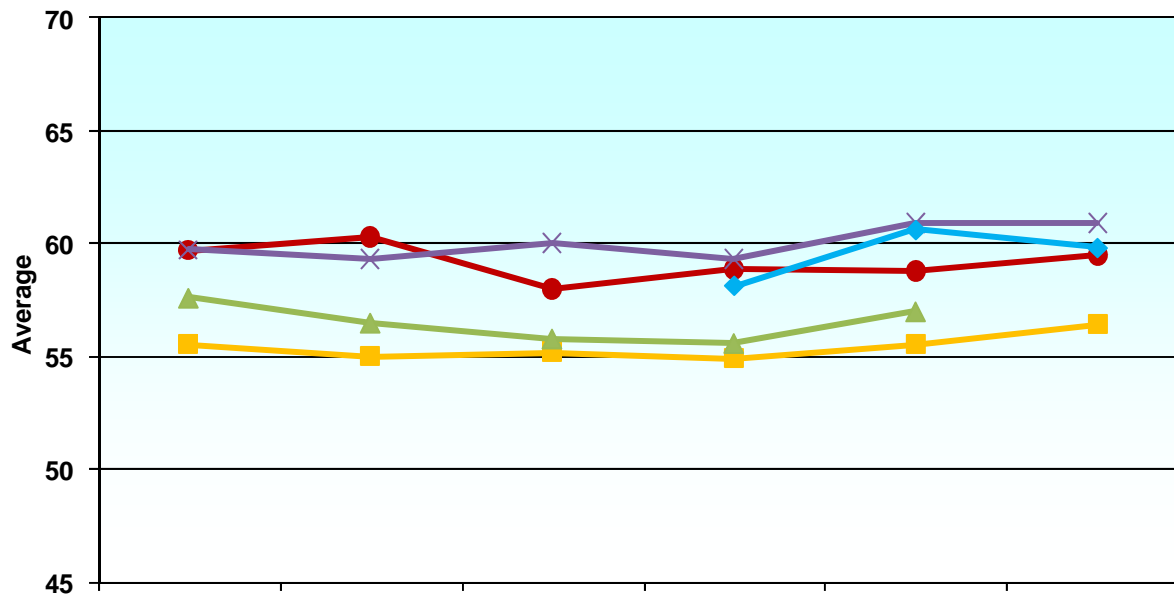


Figure 2
NSSE Benchmark: Active and Collaborative Learning:
2004-09 (Average)

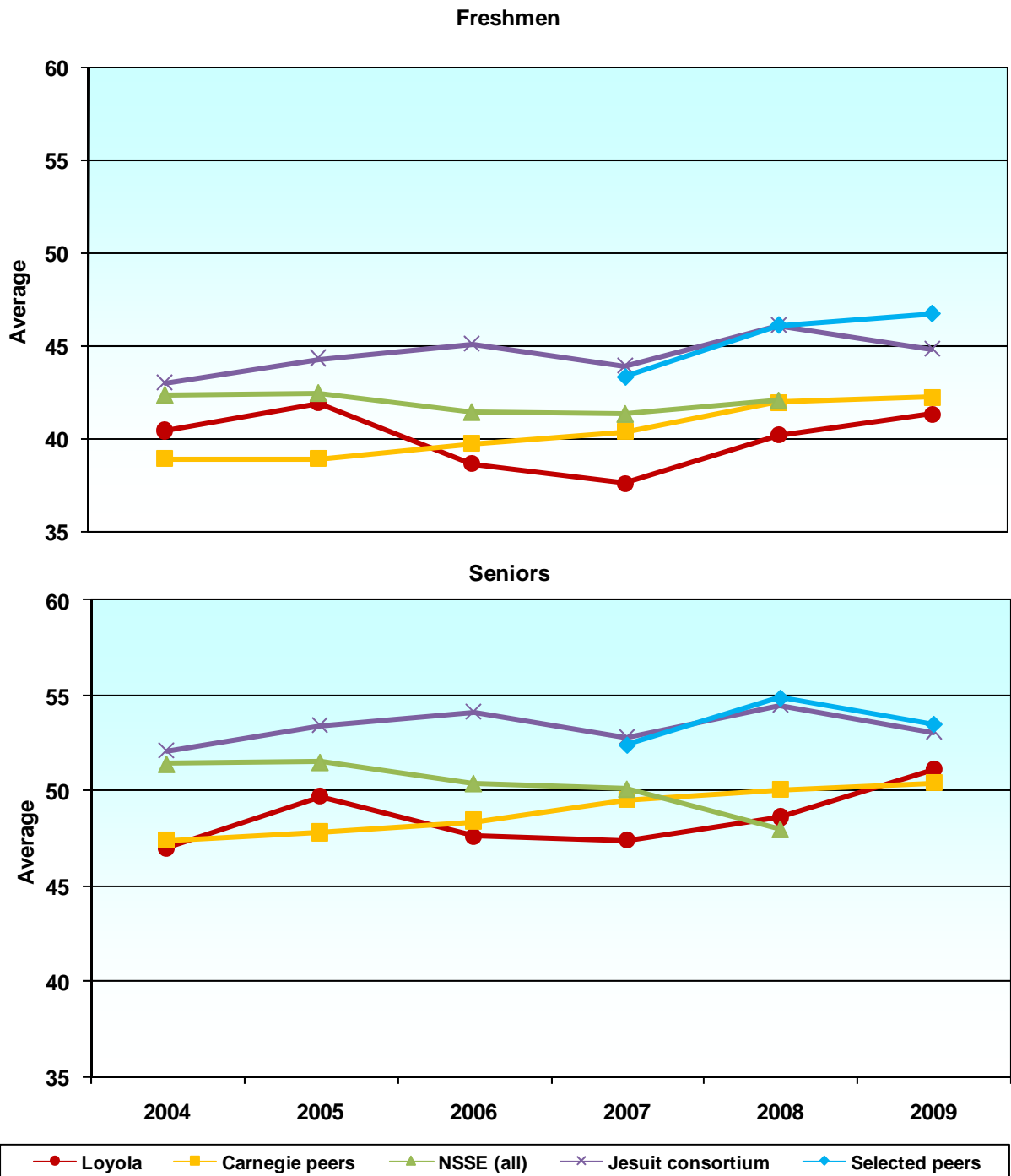
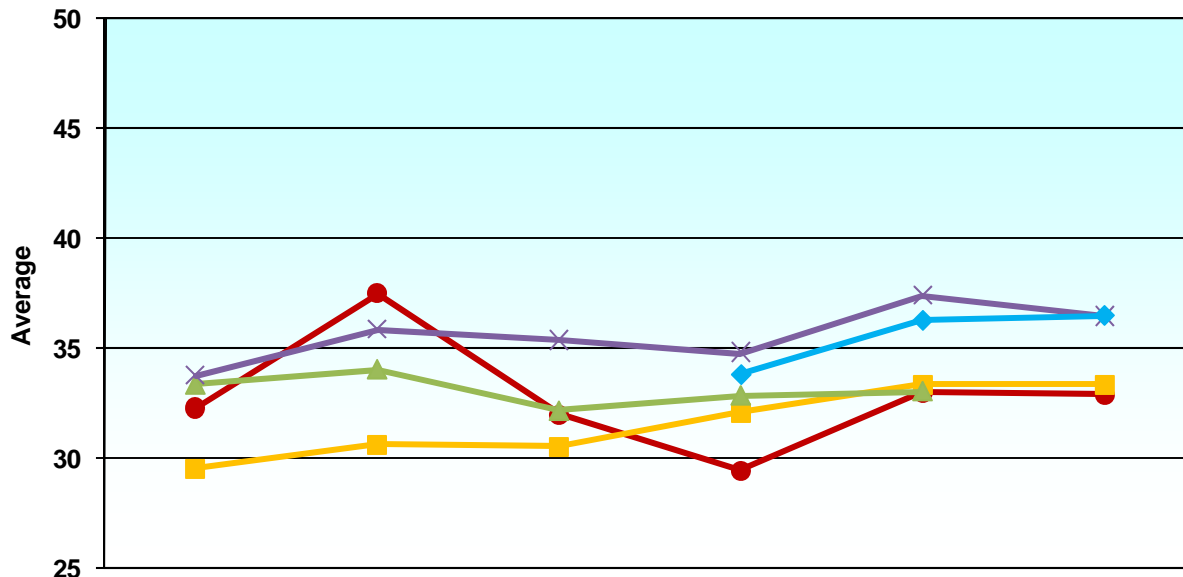
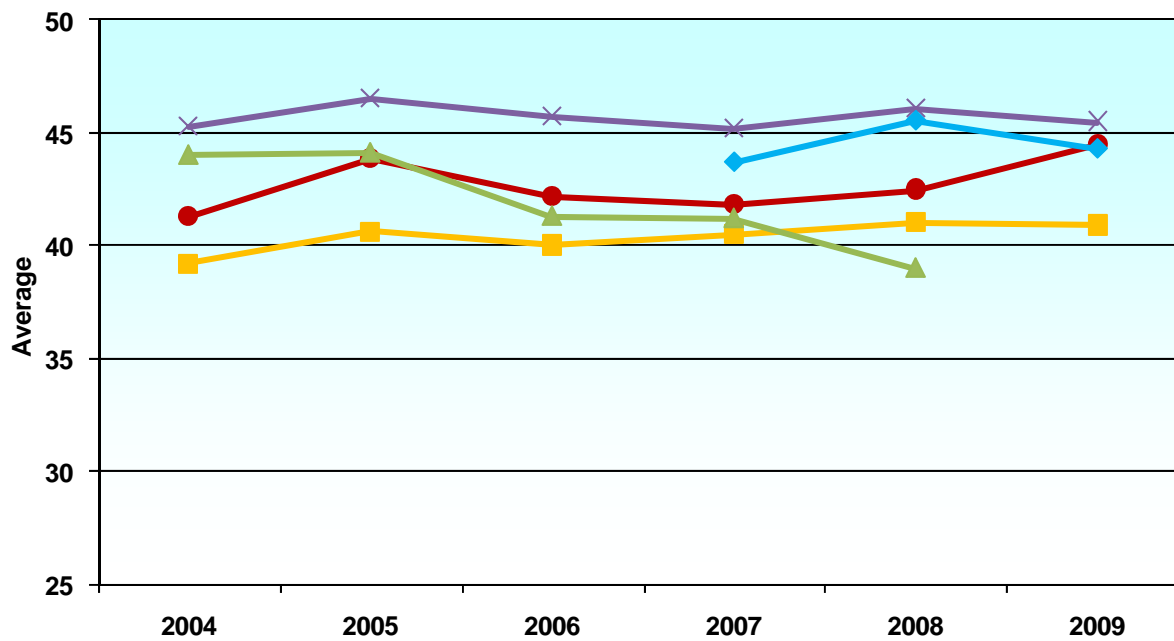


Figure 3
NSSE Benchmark: Student-Faculty Interaction
2004-09 (Average)

Freshmen



Seniors



● Loyola
 ■ Carnegie peers
 ▲ NSSE (all)
 × Jesuit consortium
 ◆ Selected peers

Figure 4
 NSSE Benchmark: Enriching Educational Experiences:
 2004-09 (Average)

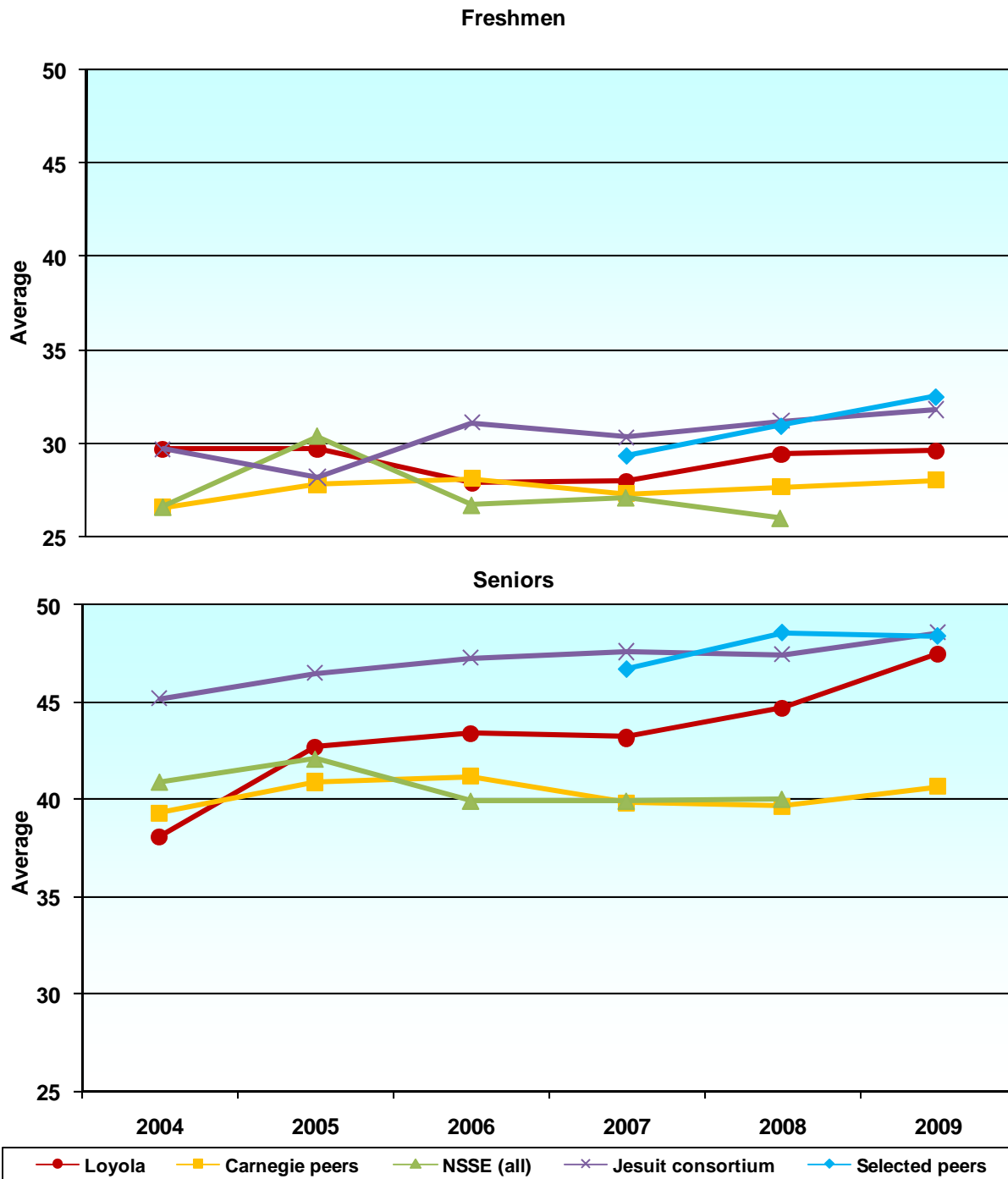
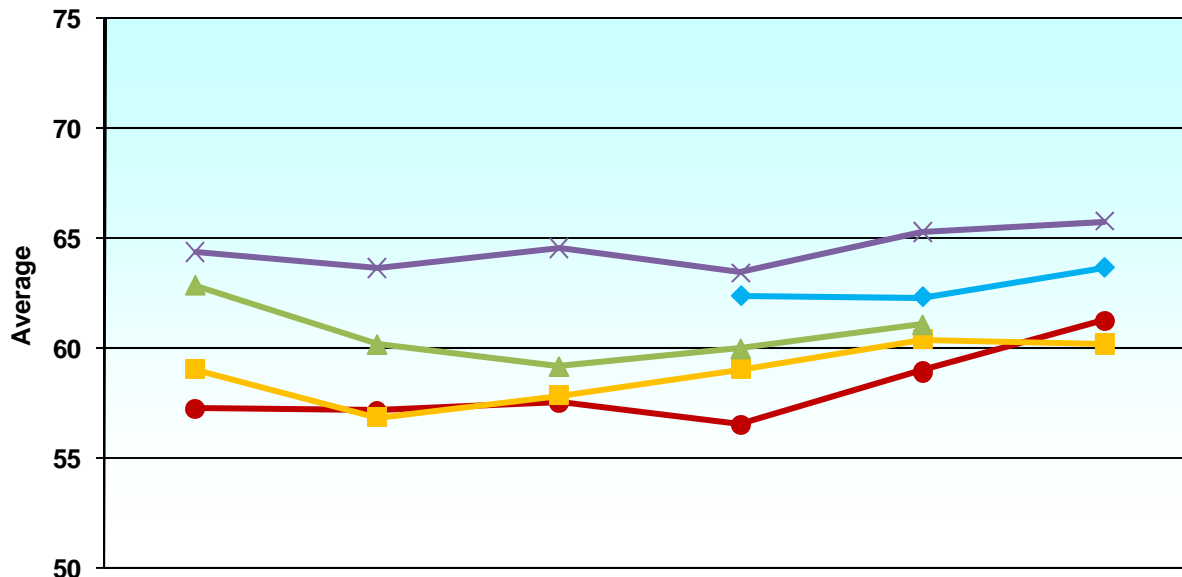
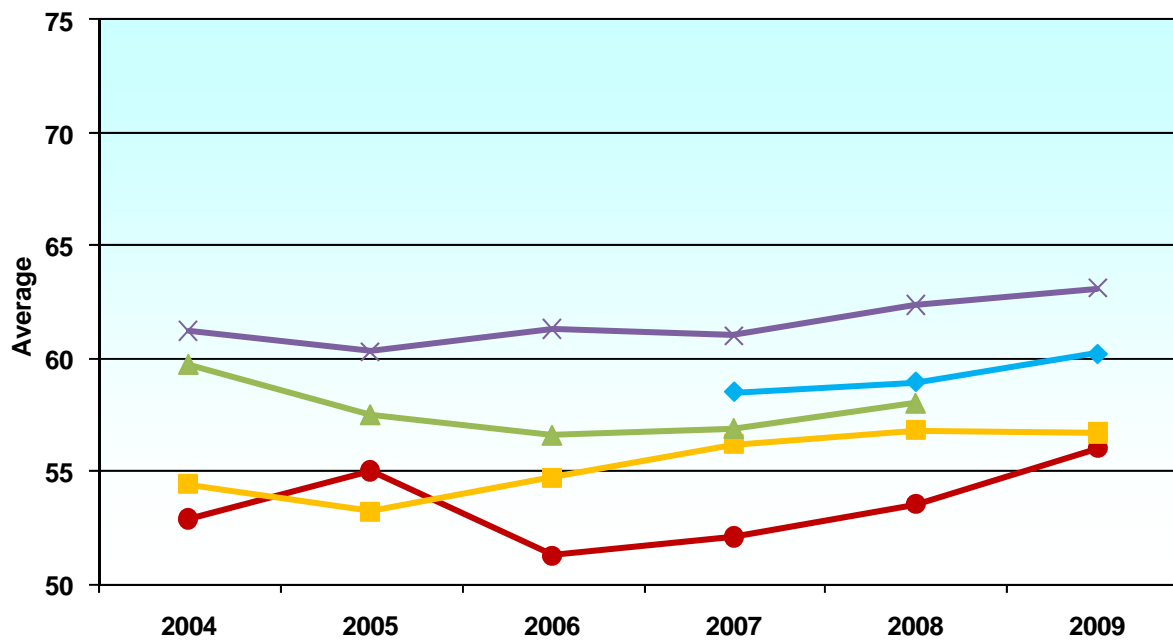


Figure 5
NSSE Benchmark: Supportive Campus Environment
2004-09 (Average)

Freshmen



Seniors



● Loyola
 ■ Carnegie peers
 ▲ NSSE (all)
 × Jesuit consortium
 ◆ Selected peers

APPENDIX A Benchmark definitions and items included

Level of Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, 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; number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages; and number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizes: **Analysis** of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizes: **Synthesis** and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizes: **Making of judgments** about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizes: **Applying** theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Campus environment emphasizes: Spending significant amount of time studying and on academic work.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.

- 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 (paid or voluntary)
- Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

Student-Faculty Interaction

Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.

- 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 written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance
- Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements

Enriching Educational Experiences

Complementary learning opportunities enhance academic programs. Diversity experiences teach students valuable things about themselves and others. Technology facilitates collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge.

- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, social fraternity or sorority, 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 (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)
- Serious conversations with students of different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own

- Using electronic medium (e.g., listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) 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

Supportive Campus Environment

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.

- 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

Appendix B								
2009 Response Rates and Sample Sizes: Loyola and Comparison Groups								
	Loyola		Carnegie		Jesuit		Selected	
	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors
Response Rate ^a								
Overall	33%		28%		35%		34%	
By class	30%	35%	26%	31%	33%	36%	33%	35%
NSSE sample size ^b	1,990	1,995	94,117	96,204	12,441	13,010	11,412	10,554

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement, 2009

^a Response rate (number of respondents divided by sample size) is adjusted for non-deliverable mailing addresses, students for whom contact information was not available, and other students who were sampled yet unavailable during the survey administration.

^b This report is based on information from all randomly selected students for both Loyola and comparison institutions. Targeted and locally administered oversamples (i.e., non-randomly selected students) are not included in this report.