

## B. UW-Stout Student Engagement and Proficiency

### Overall engagement

- Since participating in the NSSE over the last 6 years, the results continue to indicate that Stout first-year students are less engaged in their education than Stout seniors. In 2006, first-year students show a pattern of mean scores below the Carnegie Peers' sample on about 60% of the NSSE questions. In 2006, scores increased for the first-year students on 63% of the questions and they increased for senior students for 77% of the questions.
- On 63% of the survey questions, UW-Stout senior mean scores were equal or higher than the polytechnic peer group means. First-year student data show a pattern of mean scores somewhat below the average with 60% of the survey means below the polytechnic peer group means.
- Findings from a new engagement survey of UW-Stout students indicate that relationships continue to be a primary factor in student engagement. Students report higher ratings on statements about engagement their sophomore and senior years, as compared with freshmen and junior years.

### Out of class activities

- The number of hours in a 7-day week freshmen and seniors spend relaxing and socializing increased in 2006. Stout students remain slightly above the national, Carnegie Peers, polytechnic peers and UW System average.
- Freshmen indicate they are spending less time attending campus events and activities than they did in 2002 (2.84 down to 2.64 in 2006 on a 4 point scale). Stout's rating is significantly lower than the NSSE average, and lower than the polytechnic average, but is the same as the Carnegie Peers' average.

### Academic Engagement

- In 2005-06 the EAC identified "amount of time studying and on academic work" as one of three opportunities for improvement on the NSSE survey. The ratings on this question for both freshmen and seniors increased slightly in 2006, .01 for freshmen and .05 for seniors.
- The EAC identified "making classroom presentations" and "working effectively with other students during class" and "acquiring job or work-related skills" as three of four areas of celebration on the NSSE survey. The ratings for these questions remained about the same as last year with a change of .02 or less except for the question on "acquiring job or work-related skills" for seniors. The rating went from 3.16 in 2005 to 3.23 in 2006.
- Every year since the 2001 NSSE, Stout seniors scored significantly **higher** than the Carnegie Peers' and national samples for the question, *Worked with other students on projects during class*.
- For 2006, Stout seniors scored significantly higher than the polytechnic peers on "worked other students on projects during class" and "acquiring a broad general education."
- Every year since the 2001 NSSE, Stout seniors scored significantly **lower** than the master's and national samples on: Culminating senior experience (comprehensive

exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.). In 2006, Stout seniors also scored significantly lower on this question than the polytechnic peer group.

- Stout freshmen scored significantly lower than the polytechnic peer group on: Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments and spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work.
- In a recent engagement survey, students reported the highest levels of agreement with these statements:
  - I am more willing to participate in class when I feel my instructor respects me
  - I am accountable for my learning
  - The instructor can change how I feel about a subject
- Students reported the next highest levels of agreement with:
  - Instructors can influence their level of engagement by: having high expectations, knowing my name, pushing me to think in-depth, make me part of the learning process, and changing the way I feel about a subject.
  - When I'm engaged in learning, these things are happening in the classroom: I can apply what I learn, I learn from students with other life experiences, there is hands-on learning, there is an open environment, there is feedback, I know what is expected of me
  - I influence my own level of engagement by taking ownership of what happens in group work

### **Student Proficiency**

- The EAC identified “quantity and quality of writings” as one of three opportunities for improvement on the NSSE survey. The ratings for freshmen on the three writing questions (number of written papers or reports) saw little change from 2005 to 2006 (.02 change). Two of the three questions for seniors increased by at least .12 and are at or near the Carnegie Peer and national ratings. The two questions are *Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more* and *Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages*.
- UW-Stout scores on ACT CAAP Writing Skills are comparable to national scores in 2007, as are the scores for junior/senior students, male/female students, students enrolled full-time/part-time, and enroll as freshmen/transfer students when examined individually. The 2007 average is also consistent with the 2004 Writing Skills average.
- UW-Stout scores on ACT CAAP Reading Skills are comparable to national scores in 2007, as are the scores for junior/senior students, male/female students, students enrolled full-time/part-time, and enroll as freshmen/transfer students when examined individually. However, the 2007 average is lower than the 2004 Reading average.
- Further analysis of the ACT CAAP 2007 results found that both self-reported motivation and self-reported GPA were independently related to performance on the CAAP Writing Skills and Reading tests, with greater effort and higher GPA associated with high levels of performance. Students who invested best effort exceeded the national mean on Writing Skills and matched the national mean on Reading; students who invested moderate, little, or no effort scored below the national means on both Writing Skills and Reading.

- Each fall, graduating seniors are asked to evaluate their general education experience at Stout. Between 1999 and 2006, there were significant increases on the following skills: use communication technologies when available, use logical and mathematical reasoning, critically analyze information, appreciate the fine and performing arts, value life-long aesthetic experiences, understand how natural and physical sciences affect life, understand how technology affects human experience, understand how technology affects the environment, understand social-economic-political forces, appreciate value of history for current problems, and understand the effects of political ideas/systems.