



Institutional Research Reports

Community College Survey of Student Engagement 2011 Gordon College Key Findings

Introduction

Gordon College (GC) is focused on being a leader in education and accepts that the student “voice” is important as the college seeks to enhance options for student learning. Ascertaining what GC students do in and out of the classroom, knowing their ambitions, and understanding their outside responsibilities is an essential step in creating an environment that can improve student learning, development, and retention. Surveys are one way to hear from students. In 2005, GC decided to provide its students with the opportunity to participate in a national survey focusing on retention, learning, and teaching in community colleges. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was administered for the first time in spring 2005, and again in spring 2008 and spring 2011.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is housed within the Community College Leadership program at the University of Texas Austin. Student engagement, or the amount of time and energy students invest in meaningful educational practices, is the underlying foundation for CCSSE. The national CCSSE survey instrument, the *Community College Student Report (CCSR)*, concentrates on how students spend their time, the nature and quality of students’ interactions with faculty members and peers, and what students have gained from their classes and other aspects of their college experience. The survey is a valuable tool designed to capture student engagement as a measure of institutional quality and assist participating institutions in identifying where they are and what further action may be helpful in their continuing work to support and strengthen teaching, learning, and retention.

This report presents the key findings of the 2011 CCSSE survey. The key findings include a benchmark comparison between Gordon College, the Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts. The report also highlights the highest and lowest student engagement at GC.

CCSSE and GC’s Comparison Group

CCSSE uses a three-year cohort of participating colleges (2009 – 2011) in all of its data analyses, including the computation of benchmark scores. This cohort is referred to as the 2011 CCSSE Cohort. The 2011 CCSSE Cohort includes 699 institutions from 48 states and the District of Columbia, five Canadian provinces, plus Bermuda and the Mariana Islands. Three-hundred thirteen colleges are classified as small (<4,500), 185 as medium (4,500-7,999), 125 as large (8,000-14,999), and 76 as extra-large institutions (15,000+) credit students. One hundred forty-nine of the colleges are classified as urban-serving, 149 as suburban-serving, and 401 as rural-serving. One of GC Comparison Groups consists of the Georgia Consortium Cohort which includes thirteen USG state and two-year colleges. Table 1 illustrates the Georgia Consortium.

Table 1

Georgia Consortium

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	Atlanta Metropolitan College	Bainbridge College
College of Coastal Georgia	Darton College	East Georgia College
Gainesville State College	Georgia Highlands College	Georgia Perimeter College
Gordon College	Middle Georgia College	South Georgia College
Waycross College		

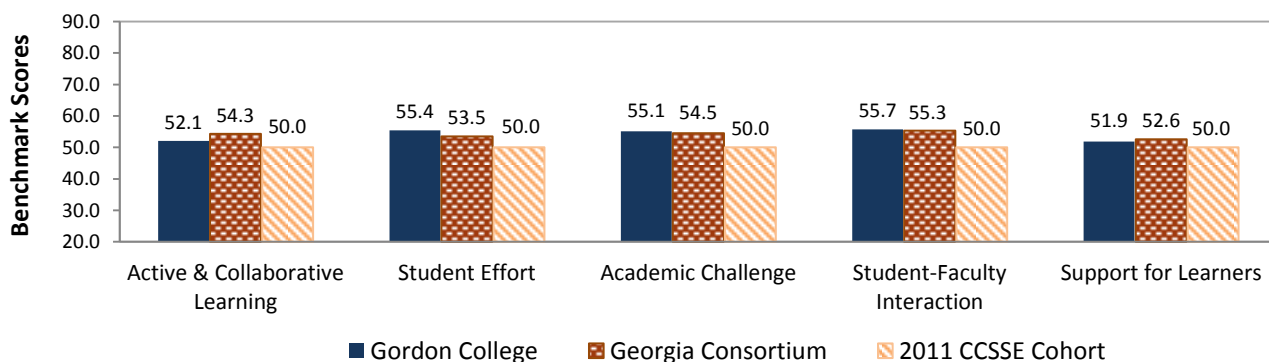
CCSSE Benchmarks

The CCSSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of student engagement, learning, and retention. CCSSE's five benchmarks depict areas that research has shown to be significant to students' college experiences and educational outcomes. The five benchmarks of efficient educational practice in community colleges:

- Active and Collaborative Learning – students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think and apply what they are learning in different settings.
- Support for Learners – students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relationships among groups on campus.
- Student Effort – students' behavior contribute to their learning and achievement of their educational goals
- Academic Challenge – challenging intellectual and creative work is essential to student learning
- Student-Faculty Interaction – the more interaction students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and persist.

The five benchmarks contain 38 engagement items/questions from the CCSSE survey that emulate many of the most essential aspects of the student experience. Figure 1 displays Gordon College benchmark scores when compared with the Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts. Overall, Gordon College students reported higher benchmark scores in Student Effort, Academic Challenge, and Student-Faculty Interaction when compared with other students in the Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts.

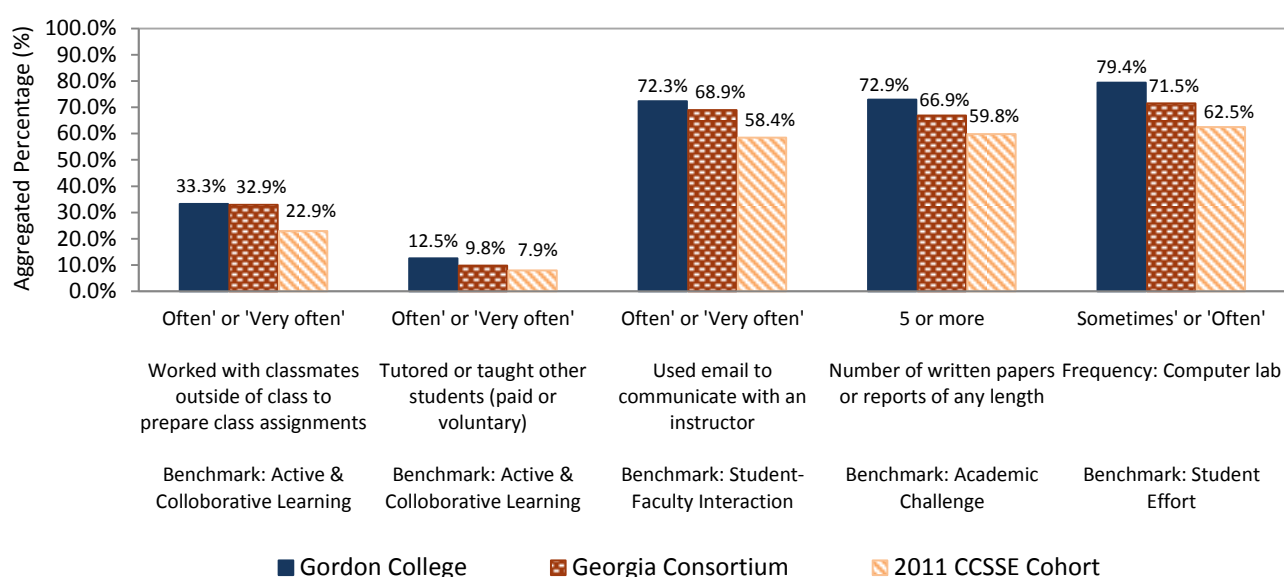
Figure 1



Benchmark Items

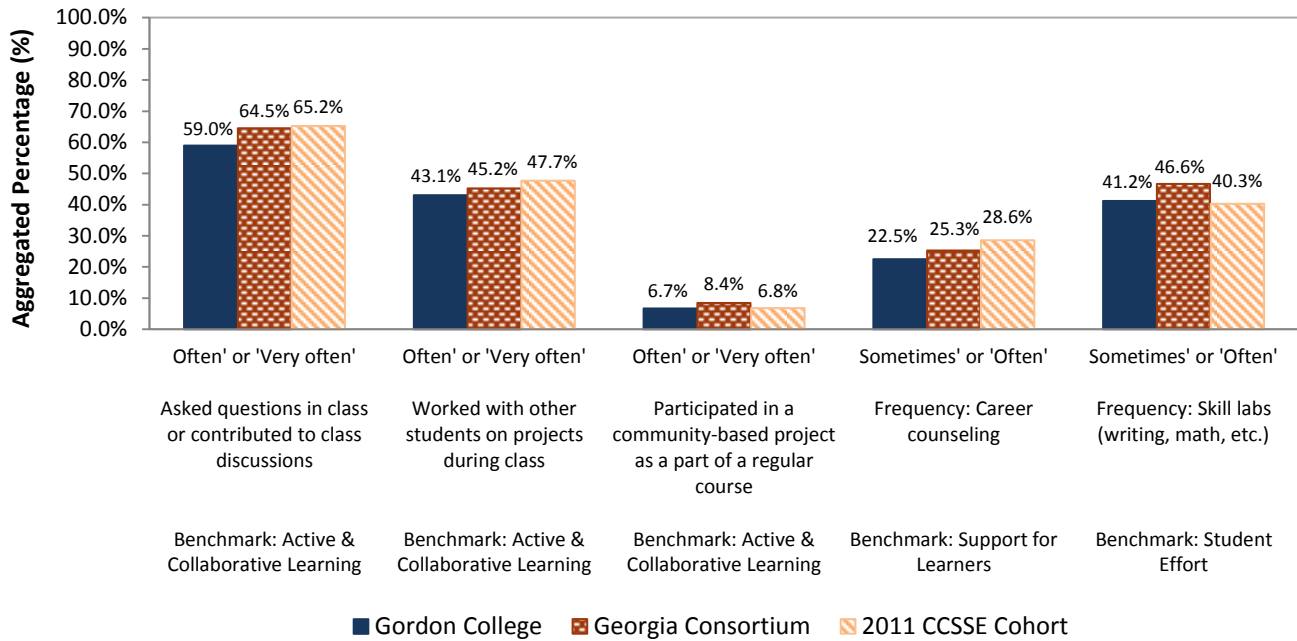
This section features five items across four benchmarks on which GC scored the highest and five items on which the college scored the lowest in comparison to the Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts. Figure 2 displays aggregated frequencies for items on which Gordon College performed most favorably when compared with the Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts. For example, 33.3% of Gordon College students, compared with 32.9% and 22.9% of Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts, respectively, responded 'Often' or 'Very often' on worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.

Figure 2
Highest Student Engagement



The aggregated frequencies for the items on which GC performed least favorably compared with the Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts are illustrated in Figure 3. For example, 59.0% of Gordon College students, compared with 64.5% and 65.2% of other students in the Georgia Consortium and 2011 CCSSE cohorts, responded 'Often' or 'Very Often' on asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.

Figure 3
Lowest Student Engagement



Special Focus Items

CCSSE has created a standard feature, known as “Special Focus”, that allows participating colleges and national researchers to probe more deeply into areas of student experience and institutional performance that are vital to student success. The special focus questions are a set of five questions that CCSSE adds to the survey. Each year a different topic is selected for the special item set, based on interest among CCSSE colleges and the research community. The 2011 “Special Focus Questions” elicited new information about students’ experiences associated with promising educational practices such as early registration, orientation, freshman seminars, organized learning communities, and student success. Figures 3 – 7 illustrate the frequency results from five “promising practices” items for Gordon College (n = 436) and the 2011 CCSSE Cohort.

Figure 3

During the current semester/quarter at this college, I completed registration before the first class session(s).

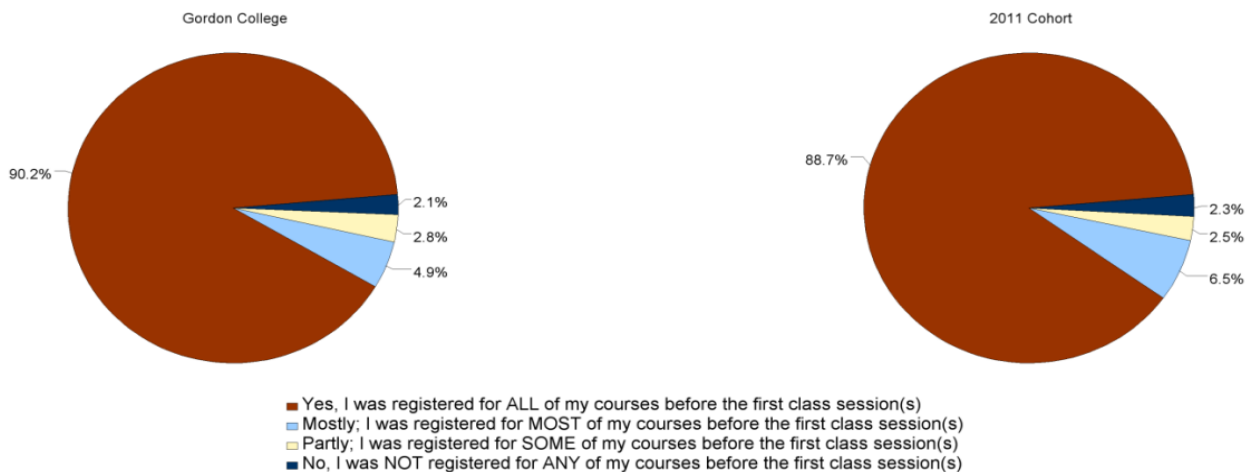


Figure 4

The ONE response that best describes my experience with orientation when I first came to college is...

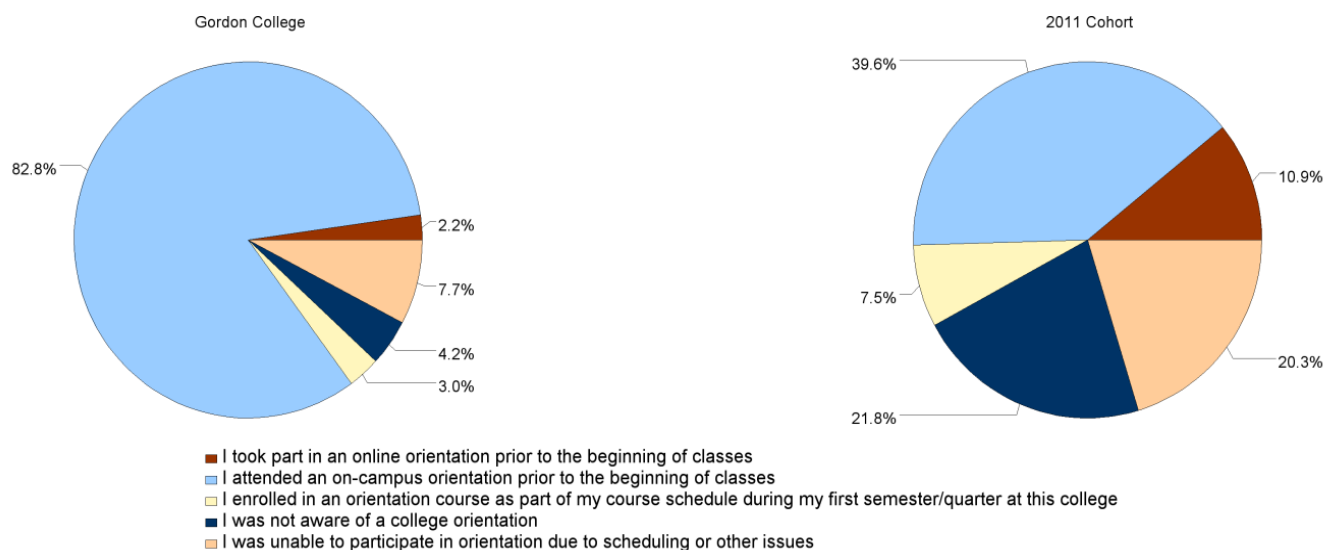


Figure 5

During my first semester/quarter at this college, I participated in a structured experience for new students (sometimes called a “freshman seminar” or “first-year experience”).

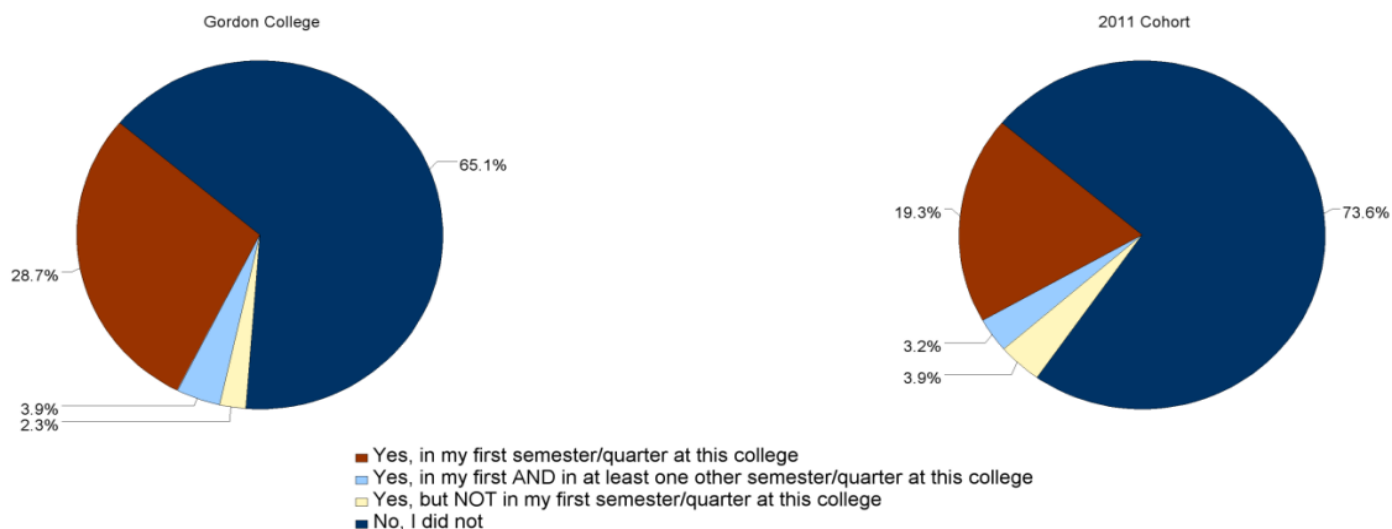


Figure 6

During my first semester/quarter at this college, I enrolled in an organized “learning community” (two or more courses that a group of students take together).

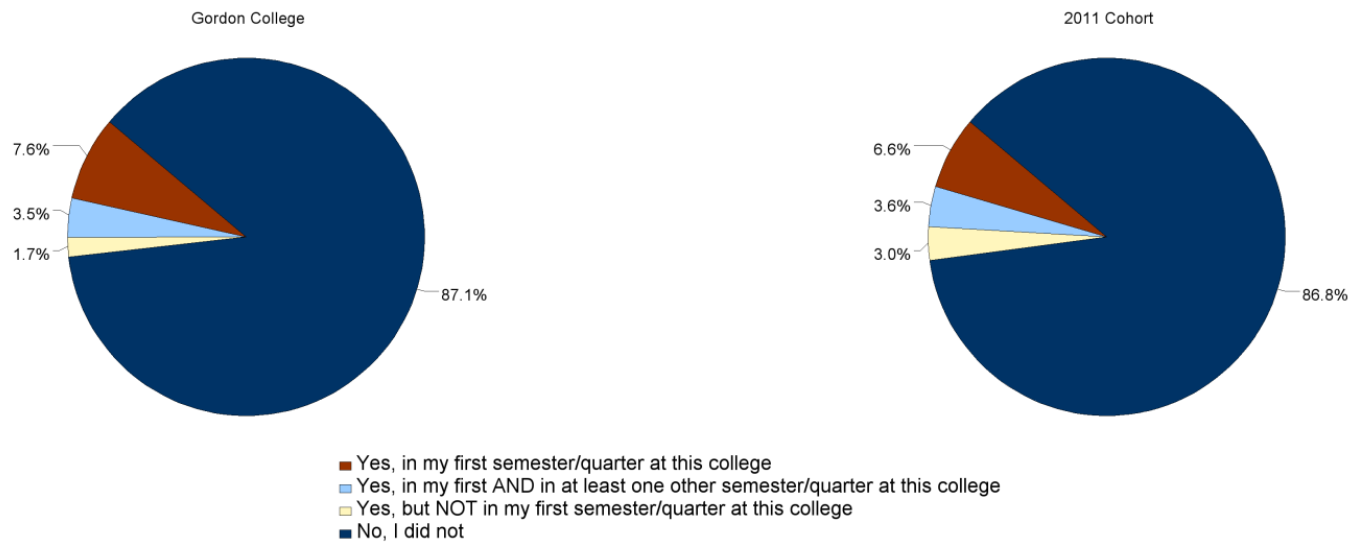


Figure 7

During my first semester/quarter at this college, I enrolled in student success course (such as a student development, extended orientation, study skills, student life skills, or college success course).

