Pre-college students expectations and attitudes regarding their first-year of college

Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

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Overview

- Student High School Engagement and Expectations for First-Year Engagement
- Description of BCSSE
- Objectives
- Results
- Discussion
Mind the Gap: Expectations vs. Experiences in the First Year

- Consequences for unmet expectations are high. Disappointed students fail to optimize their college experience, leave institutions, and sometimes abandon higher education altogether.

- Institutions must explore students’ expectations and focus more on communicating their expectations of students than on meeting student expectations, and challenge educators to refocus on helping students develop more appropriate expectations and on working to meet those expectations.

Why Student Engagement Matters

- Time on task (Tyler, 1930s)
- Quality of effort (Pace, 1960-70s)
- Student involvement (Astin, 1984)
- Social, academic integration (Tinto, 1993)
- Good practices (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)
- Student engagement (Kuh, 2001, 2003)
BCSSE Purpose

- To measure entering first-year students’ pre-college academic and co-curricular experiences.
- As well as their expectations and attitudes for participating in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year.
BCSSE Content

• High school academic and co-curricular engagement.
• High school academic preparation (e.g., AP courses).
• 5 scales
  • High School Academic Engagement
  • Expected First-Year Academic Engagement
  • Academic Persistence
  • Academic Preparation
  • Importance of Campus Environment
What we can learn from BCSSE?

- Do high school experiences and engagement relate to expectations for the first-year of college?
- Do student expectations for academic engagement and attitudes vary by institution type, gender, and high school achievement level?
BCSSE Respondents

- 59% females
- 44% reported being ‘A’ students in HS
- Avg. SAT/ACT = 1104
- Prepare for class: 9 hrs/week
- Relax and socialize: 13 hrs/wk
- Approx 44,000 students enrolled at 88 institutions
- 17% Baccalaureate; 43% Masters; 29% Res/Doctoral
Research Questions

Do high school experiences and engagement relate to expectations for the first-year of college?
Grades

High School

- B's: 56%
- A's: 44%

Expect A's: 22% (57%)
Expect B's: 78% (43%)
Meeting Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exp. grade</th>
<th>Achieved Expected Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a BCSSE05/NSSE06 data
Class Preparation

- Expect >10 hrs: 98%
- Expect <11 hrs: 2%

High School:
- <11 hrs: 70% (24% expect <11 hrs)
- >10 hrs: 30% (76% expect >10 hrs)
Meeting Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HS more or less 10 hrs</th>
<th>Expectation More/Less</th>
<th>Hrs/week preparing for class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>More</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>More</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a BCSSE05/NSSE06 data
Class Presentations

High School

N/S = Never/Sometimes
O/VO = Often/Very Often

N/S = 49%
O/VO = 51%

Expect O/VO
Expect N/S

44% 56%
74% 26%
Faculty Interaction

N/S = Never/Sometimes       O/VO = Often/Very Often

High School

N/S
- 74% (Expect N/S: 61%)

O/VO
- 26% (Expect O/VO: 39%)

74% 26%
Interact w/Different Students

N/S = Never/Sometimes
O/VO = Often/Very Often
BCSSE Scale

- High School Academic Engagement
  - 12 items; $\alpha = .778$
Academic Engagement

High School

- Expect High: 54%
- Expect Low: 46%

- Total: 100%

- High: 85%
- Low: 15%

- Total: 100%
Summary

- Students who report high levels of activity generally expect to maintain behavior in college.
- Overall, 20% of students indicate low levels of HS academic engagement and expect to continue this low level of academic engagement their first-year of college.
Research Questions

Do student expectations for academic engagement and attitudes vary by institution type, gender, and high school achievement level?
Institutional Differences

Institutions categorized into one of three categories:
1) Baccalaureate
2) Masters (smaller to larger)
3) Research and Doctoral
### High School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>SAT/AC</th>
<th>Grades (A’s)</th>
<th>Acad. Engage</th>
<th>Prepare for class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacc</td>
<td>1104.8</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>9 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>1096.8</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doc/Res</td>
<td>1120.9</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>9 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BCSSE Scales

- **Expected First-Year Academic Engagement**
  - 8 items; $\alpha = .771$

- **Academic Persistence**
  - 6 items; $\alpha = .801$

- **Academic Preparation**
  - 7 items; $\alpha = .795$

- **Importance of Campus Environment**
  - 6 items; $\alpha = .809$
## Institutional Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Expected Engag.</th>
<th>Academic Persistence</th>
<th>Academic Preparation</th>
<th>Campus Env.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.07&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.04&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.89&lt;sup&gt;2,3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.32&lt;sup&gt;2,3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.06&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.11&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.02&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.45&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doc/Res</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>7.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>2</sup> Significantly different than Masters (p<.05)

<sup>3</sup> Significantly different than Doc/Research (p<.05)
Institutional Differences

Summary

- Little difference between institution type and high school academic background
- In addition, also little difference between institutions and first-year college expectations
- One exception may be expectation for academic engagement.
# Gender Differences

## High School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>Grades (A’s)</th>
<th>Acad. Engage</th>
<th>Prepare for class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1118.6</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>8 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1096.0</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>10 hrs</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Gender Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>T</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expected Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>11.68*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Persistence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>17.60*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Preparation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance Campus Env.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>36.73*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.001
Gender Differences

Summary

- Males report higher SAT/ACT scores
- Females report higher high school grades, academic engagement, and hours spent preparing for class
- Females also report significantly higher expectation to be engaged their first-year of college, higher levels of academic persistence, and importance of campus support.
Achievement Differences

Students categorized into one of three Achievement levels based on SAT/ACT and grades:
1) Low
2) Medium
3) High
## Achievement Differences

### High School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>SAT/ACT</th>
<th>Acad. Engage</th>
<th>Prepare for class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>888.0</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>7 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>998.4</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>7 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1198.9</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>10 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Achievement Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Expected Engage.</th>
<th>Academic Persistence</th>
<th>Academic Preparation</th>
<th>Campus Env.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.13&lt;sup&gt;2,3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.95&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.62&lt;sup&gt;2,3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.29&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>6.95&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.82&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.29&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>7.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>2</sup> Significantly different than Masters (p<.05)

<sup>3</sup> Significantly different than Doc/Research (p<.05)
Achievement Differences

Summary

- Low achieving students expect to be more engaged their first year of college.
- High achieving students reported higher levels of engagement in high school, but lower levels in college.
- Also, high achieving students reported higher levels of persistence, preparation, and importance of campus environment.
Discussion

Given these results, what can institutions, faculty, advisors, and other college staff do to help students be successful?
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