

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Senior Survey

Class of 2011



THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH OFFICE

The University of Scranton
2011 College Senior Survey Report

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Introduction

The University of Scranton conducts an annual survey of graduating seniors. For the 2010-2011 academic year, the University administered the College Senior Survey (CSS) created by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). The CSS collects data about a range of student experiences from items about interactive learning experiences and faculty interaction to items about civic engagement and diversity.

As part of the University's participation in the CSS, we are provided with information for two comparison groups. For the 2011 survey the first comparison group is composed of Catholic Four-Year Colleges (Catholic 4-yr), and the second comparison group is composed of Nonsectarian, Catholic, and Other Religious Four-Year Colleges (Private 4-yr).

This report presents basic demographics, 14 constructs created by HERI, and selected data from the CSS. This data is valuable to the University as it allows insight into how well the University of Scranton is conforming to the tradition of excellence stated in our mission:

“The University of Scranton is a Catholic and Jesuit university animated by the spiritual vision and the tradition of excellence characteristic of the Society of Jesus and those who share its way of proceeding. The University is a community dedicated to the freedom of inquiry and personal development fundamental to the growth in wisdom and integrity of all who share its life.”

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the University of Scranton's accrediting body, describes the Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education using 14 Standards. Though the CSS data represent only the students' experiences and education outcomes, the results of the CSS help provide indirect evidence about the University's performance in meeting these standards. Additional information is available from the Institutional Research Office upon request.

Administration

Students were offered the chance to participate in the CSS at a university sponsored event for graduating seniors. Participants were given the paper version of the survey to complete, and returned surveys were then sent to the HERI for analysis.

Demographics

Three hundred three graduating seniors participated in the CSS, 34% of graduating seniors. Sixty-five percent of the respondents were female and 35% were male, consistent with the ratios of both comparison groups and similar to the 2007 CSS (68% female, 32% male). The University of Scranton respondents were less diverse than either of the comparison groups with 93% white compared to 84% white (Catholic 4-yr) and 82% white (Private 4-yr). See Figure 1, below, for a breakdown of student respondents by ethnicity. The percentages may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

Figure 1. Race/ethnicity of respondents.

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply) (total may add to more than 100%)	U of Scranton	Catholic 4-yr	Private 4-yr
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.0%	1.5%	1.6%
Asian American/Asian	2.0%	6.8%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3%	1.2%	0.9%
African American/Black	0.0%	3.4%	6.4%
Mexican American/Chicano	0.3%	3.8%	3.6%
Puerto Rican	3.3%	1.2%	1.0%
Other Latino	2.3%	3.2%	3.2%
White	92.7%	83.9%	81.9%
Other race/ethnicity	2.3%	2.9%	3.7%

As a Catholic and Jesuit university, part of the University of Scranton’s mission is to share the spiritual vision of the Society of Jesus. The majority of students, 71.9%, attending the University identified themselves as Roman Catholic compared to 52.6% of students in the Catholic 4-yr and 28.9% of students in the Private 4-yr comparison groups.

Figure 2. Current religious preference of respondents.

Your current religious preference:	U of Scranton	Catholic 4-yr	Private 4-yr
Baptist	1.4%	2.0%	7.2%
Buddhist	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%
Church of Christ	2.0%	1.6%	1.7%
Eastern Orthodox	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%
Episcopalian	0.3%	1.0%	1.4%
Hindu	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%
Jewish	2.0%	2.2%	2.8%
LDS (Mormon)	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Lutheran	2.0%	3.3%	4.3%
Methodist	2.0%	2.8%	4.0%
Muslim	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%
Presbyterian	1.4%	1.9%	3.2%
Quaker	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%
Roman Catholic	71.9%	52.6%	28.9%
Seventh Day Adventist	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
United Church of Christ/Congregational	0.0%	0.5%	0.8%
Other Christian	4.1%	9.0%	17.5%
Other Religion	0.3%	1.8%	2.9%
None	9.5%	18.1%	21.6%

College Senior Survey Constructs

Using a subset of the questions from the CSS, HERI created 14 construct means as a quick summary of how the University compares to the two comparison groups. The construct scores are created by weighting certain item responses on the CSS. Because each construct is created from different items and weights, maximum and minimum scores vary between the different constructs. In general the maximum possible construct score is between 60 and 80 while the minimum construct score is between 9 and 42. For Graph 1 the Y-axis is scaled according to approximate the maximum and minimum scores for the constructs shown, and the error bars represent the standard deviation.

The University scored higher than the comparison groups on Overall Satisfaction and Sense of Belonging while it scored lower than the comparison groups on Positive Cross-Racial Interaction and Academic Disengagement (a low score in Academic Disengagement represents students reporting fewer *negative* activities and can be interpreted as a *positive* result for the University). For the remainder of the constructs the University differed little from the comparison groups.

Figure 3. Mean construct scores from the College Student Survey.

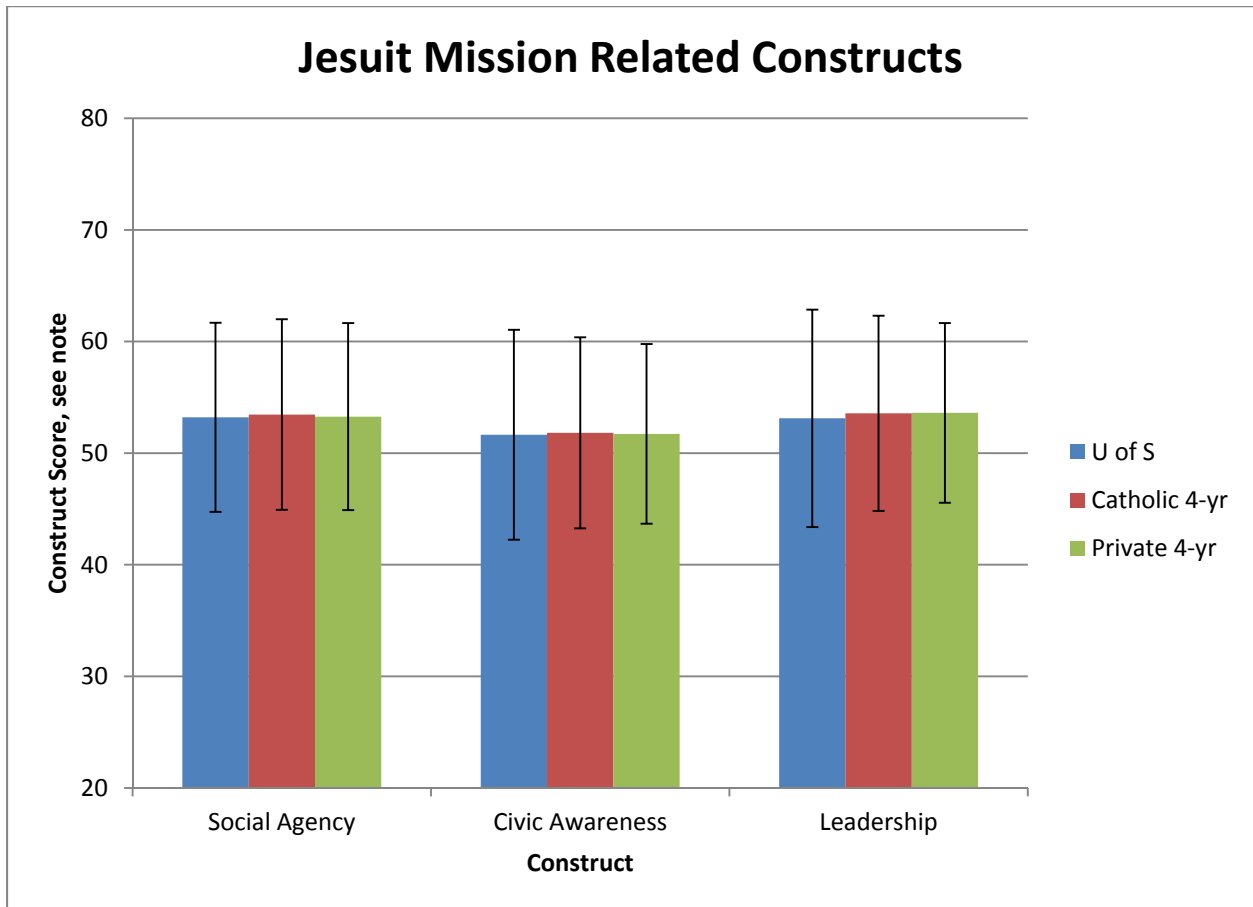
Construct	U of Scranton	Catholic 4-yr	Private 4-yr
Habits of Mind	50.7	51.6	52.2
Academic Disengagement	49.6	51.0**	51.1**
Faculty Interaction: Mentorship	53.0	51.7*	52.2
Satisfaction with Coursework	52.8	51.6*	51.8
Overall Satisfaction	54.3	51.1***	51.2***
Sense of Belonging	53.2	50.0***	49.7***
Academic Self-Concept	49.7	50.3	50.2
Social Self-Concept	53.1	53.1	52.8
Pluralistic Orientation	50.6	50.7	50.8
Positive Cross-Racial Interaction	49.3	51.2***	52.0***
Negative Cross-Racial Interaction	52.2	51.7	51.9
Social Agency	53.2	53.5	53.3
Civic Awareness	51.7	51.8	51.7
Leadership	53.1	53.6	53.6

Note: Significance * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The University's Jesuit Mission

While all of the constructs relate to the general goal of higher education, through its Jesuit mission the University of Scranton is dedicated to the development and learning of students who will “set the world on fire.” Three important constructs related to this goal are Civic Awareness, Leadership, and Social Agency. As can be seen on the graph below the University scored similarly to both the Catholic 4-yr comparison group and the Private 4-yr comparison group.

Graph 1. Jesuit mission related constructs.



Note: Social Agency, maximum: 79.3, minimum: 24.8; Civic Awareness, 64.7, 18.9; Leadership, 67.7, 21.8.

On the Social Agency construct the University of Scranton had a score of 53.2 compared to scores of 53.5 for the Catholic 4-yr comparison group and the Private 4-yr comparison group. It was comprised of how important students thought the following actions were: “Participating in a community action program,” “Helping to promote racial understanding,” “Becoming a community leader,” “Keeping up to date with political affairs,” “Influencing social values,” and “Helping others who are in difficulty.”

The Civic Awareness construct was based on student responses to three items asking how they would describe their understanding of national, global, and local community issues as seniors as compared to when they entered college. The University’s mean construct score was 51.7 while the construct scores for the Catholic 4-yr and Private 4-yr comparison groups were 51.8 and 51.7, respectively.

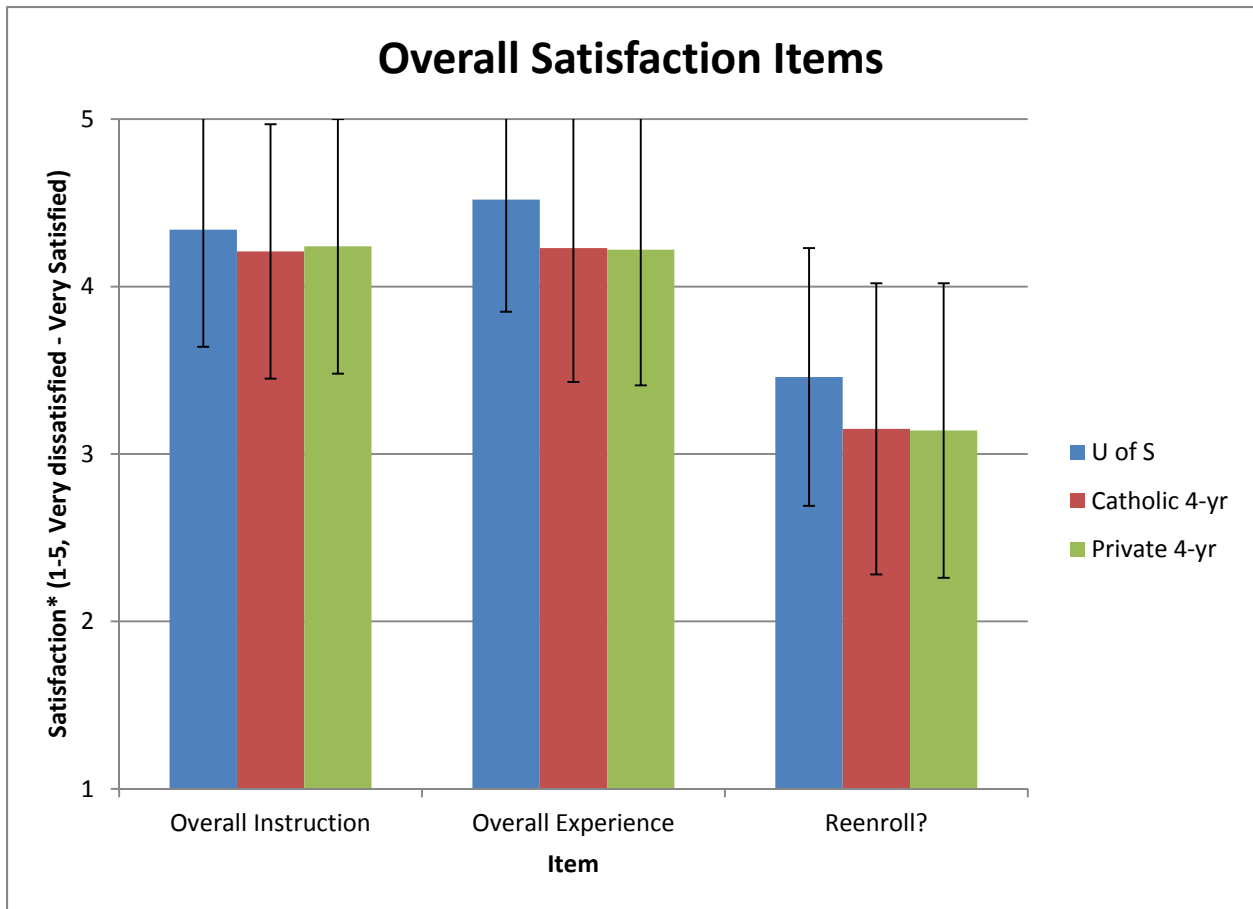
Leadership, representing students’ leadership experience and their beliefs about their leadership abilities was based on 5 items: whether the student had “been a leader in an organization,” if the student thought they had “effectively led a group to a common purpose,” if the student had “participated in leadership training,” the student’s “self-rating in leadership ability,” and the student’s rating of their “change in leadership ability.” The University again scored similarly to both comparison

groups with a mean of 53.1 compared to 53.6 and 53.6, even though the students had a small but significant increase in their “change in leadership ability rating.”

Student Satisfaction and Belonging

Though the University of Scranton performed similarly to comparison groups in the previous three constructs, the University of Scranton excelled in the student Sense of Belonging and Overall Satisfaction constructs. The University of Scranton scored significantly better (54.3) on Overall Satisfaction than both the Catholic 4-yr (51.1, $p = .001$, $d = .39$) and Private 4-yr (51.2, $p = .001$, $d = .38$) comparison groups. As shown in graph below, University students responded more positively to items about their satisfaction with overall instruction, their overall experience, and whether or not they would choose to enroll at the University of Scranton if given the chance to make their choice over.

Graph 2. Overall satisfaction item ratings.



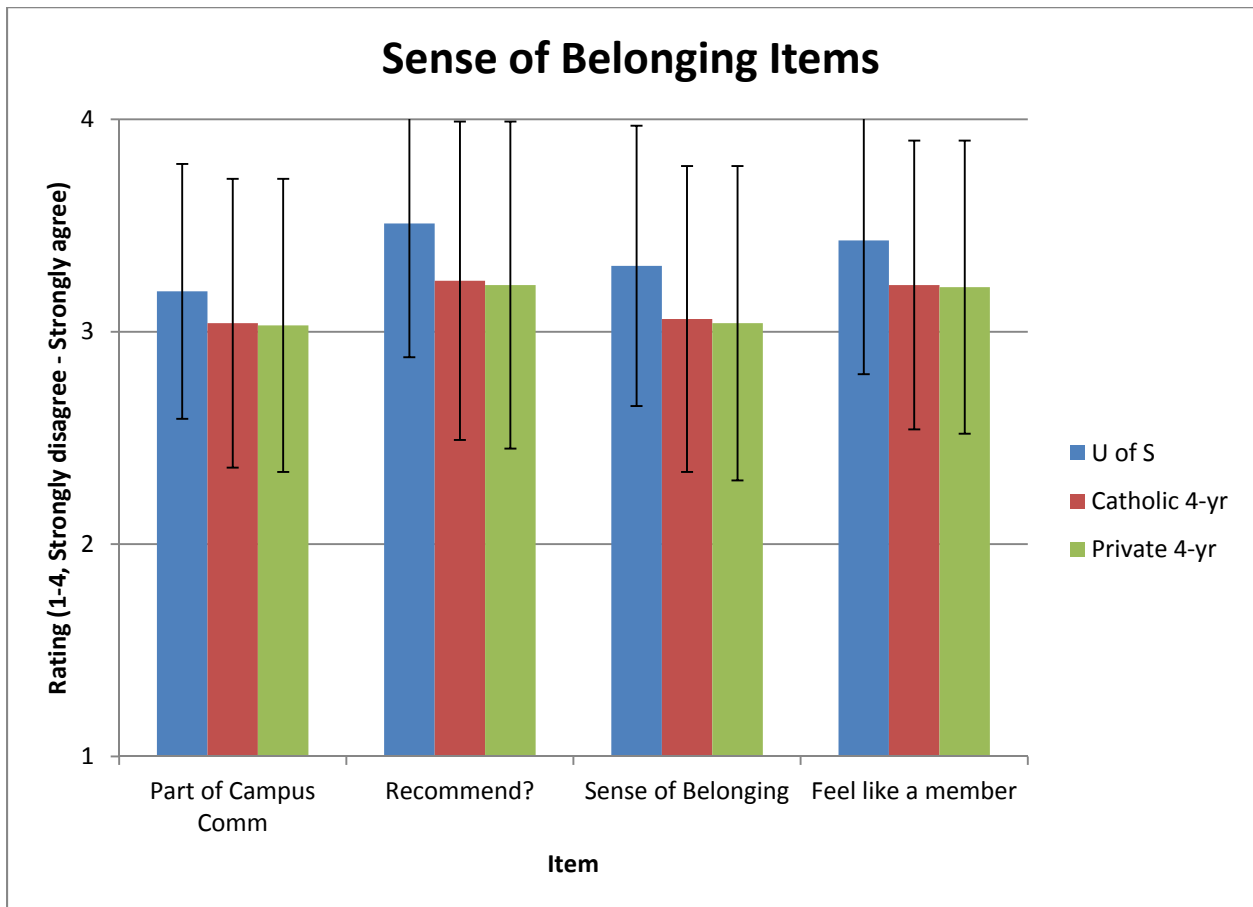
*Reenroll? was measured on a scale from 1, Definitely no, to 4, Definitely yes.

On overall instruction, University of Scranton students reported an average rating of 4.34 compared to ratings of 4.21 and 4.24 at Catholic 4-yr and Private 4-yr schools. While this difference was significant, the effect size was small ($d = .17$ and $d = .13$).

Students, on average, rated their overall experience at the University as a 4.52 significantly higher than the two comparison groups, 4.23 and 4.22, respectively. This satisfaction is also evident in their responses to the question: “If you could make your college choice over, would you still choose to enroll at your current college?” Sixty point six percent of the students selected that they would reenroll, an average of a 3.46 overall, compared to 41.4% ($M = 3.15$) and 40.7% ($M = 3.14$) of students at Catholic 4-yr and Private 4-yr groups. This suggests that students entering the University found its advertised mission, services, and culture to be a good match for them and that their experiences at the University met and exceeded their expectations.

On the related construct, Sense of Belonging, the University received an average rating of 53.2, versus 50.0 for the Catholic 4-yr comparison group and 49.7 for the Private 4-yr comparison group. The high Sense of Belonging ratings may help explain why students are satisfied with the University. Sense of Belonging is drawn from 4 survey items where students rated how much they agreed with the following four items from 1, Strongly disagree, to 4, Strongly agree: “I feel I am a member of this college.”, “I feel a sense of belonging to this college.”, “I see myself as part of the campus community.”, and “If asked, I would recommend this college to others.”

Graph 3. Sense of belonging item ratings.



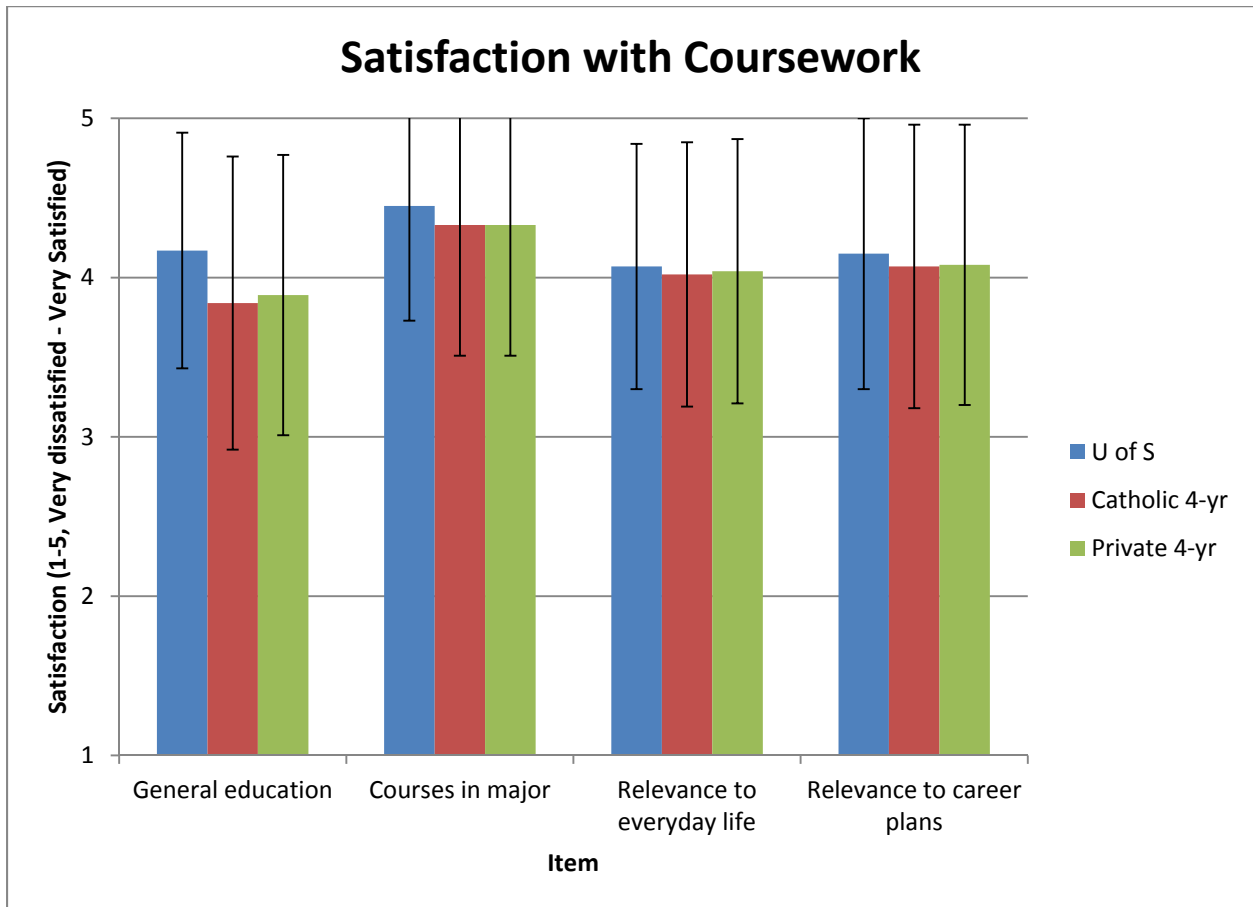
As can be seen on the graph above, University of Scranton students rated their agreement significantly higher on all four items than students in the Catholic 4-yr and Private 4-yr comparison groups. “I see myself as part of the campus community,” had the lowest rating, an average of 3.19, compared to an average of 3.04 and 3.03 in comparison groups. “I feel a sense of belonging to this campus,” and “I feel I am a member of this college,” had the next highest average ratings of 3.31 and 3.43 better than the Catholic 4-yr comparison group ($M = 3.06$, and $M = 3.22$, respectively), and the Private 4-yr comparison group ($M = 3.04$ and $M = 3.21$). University students ranked themselves highest on “If asked, I would recommend this college to others,” with an average of 3.51 while students in the Catholic 4-yr comparison group and the Private 4-yr comparison group ranked their agreement at 3.24 and 3.22. Only 5.7% of students responded that they would not recommend the University of Scranton if asked. For the two comparison groups this response rate was 12.5% and 13.9%.

Curriculum and Perceived Change

As an institution of higher learning part of the University of Scranton’s mission is to provide all students with a meaningful quality education to assist in their personal development and growth in wisdom. Following in Jesuit tradition The University provides a liberal general education curriculum. The satisfaction with coursework construct allows an indirect assessment of the University’s educational offerings and general education curriculum. As an indirect assessment of student learning, the CSS asks students to rate their perceived change in skills and abilities.

For the satisfaction with coursework construct the University of Scranton scored an average 52.8 similar to the Private 4-yr comparison group’s average 51.8. Compared to Catholic 4-yr comparison group’s average, 51.6, the University scored significantly higher ($p < .05$) however the size of the effect was marginal ($d = .13$).

Graph 4. Satisfaction with coursework items.



Looking at the individual items that comprised the satisfaction with coursework construct, University of Scranton students did not differ from those in either of the comparison groups in how they rated their satisfaction with the relevance their coursework to their everyday life and to their career plans. Students across all three groups rated the relevance of their coursework to their everyday life highly with average scores of 4.07, 4.02, and 4.04 with approximately 80% of students responding that they were satisfied or very satisfied. Likewise, around 80% of students at the University of Scranton and the two comparison groups also responded that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the relevance of their coursework to their future career plans with average scores of 4.15, 4.07, and 4.08. These ratings suggest that the University is doing a good job at providing students with educational offerings that aid in their personal growth and career plans.

In regard to their satisfaction with courses in their major field and their satisfaction with the general education curriculum, University of Scranton students responded with higher ratings than the Catholic 4-yr and Private 4-yr comparison groups. For courses in their major field, University students rated their satisfaction on average as 4.45 slightly higher than the average rating of 4.33 for Catholic 4-yr and Private 4-yr comparison groups ($p < .05$, $d = .15$). On the general education curriculum, the average satisfaction rating from the University of Scranton students, 4.17, was higher than the Catholic 4-yr average rating, 3.84, and the Private 4-yr rating, 3.89 ($p < .001$, $d = .36$ and $d = .32$ respectively). These

high satisfaction ratings for general education affirm the University of Scranton’s commitment to its Jesuit mission of a strong liberal education.

Asked about their perceived change in skills and abilities, students rated themselves as “much weaker,” 1, to “much stronger,” 5. In nearly every area they rated, University of Scranton students perceived their abilities and skills to be “stronger” or “much stronger” than when they entered college. The only exception to this trend was the students’ perceived change in their foreign language ability where 55.4% of students responded that they perceived “no change.” On perceived change in foreign language ability, University of Scranton students averaged only 3.24 compared to the Catholic 4-yr group which averaged 3.38 and the Private 4-yr group which averaged 3.39.

Figure 4. Percent of students reporting they are “much stronger” in a skill or ability.

Skills and abilities	U of Scranton	Catholic 4-yr	Private 4-yr
Knowledge of a particular field or discipline	73.3	72.2	72.9
General knowledge	55.4	51.5	50.5
Critical thinking skills	51.8	45.1*	45.9
Leadership abilities	50	43.5*	44.3*
Problem-solving skills	49.2	43.4**	43.7*
Preparedness for graduate or advanced education	48.2	42.9	43
Interpersonal skills	46.7	33***	32.7***
Ability to manage your time effectively	44.9	35.4***	34.1***
Preparedness for employment after college	41.6	39.1	38.7
Ability to get along with people of different races/cultures	31.7	27.4	28.6
Understanding of global issues	28.7	28.2	28.4
Knowledge of people from different races/cultures	24.3	25	27.6**
Understanding of national issues	24.1	22.9	23
Understanding of the problems facing your community	23.8	25.2	25.8
Foreign language ability	13.5	14.5*	15.3**

Note: Significance * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

University of Scranton students rated their perceived change most highly in regard to their, “knowledge of a particular field or discipline,” “general knowledge,” “critical thinking skills,” “problem-solving skills,” and “leadership abilities.” Students from the Catholic 4-yr and Private 4-yr comparison groups also rated their change in these areas highly. While there were some significant differences on these five items (see Figure 4, below), the largest effect size—between the University of Scranton and Catholic 4-yr on the perceived change in problem-solving skills—was marginal ($d = .15$).

There were two items where the University’s students perceived themselves as having changed much more than students in the comparison groups: “interpersonal skills” and “ability to manage your time effectively.” On interpersonal skills, 46.7% University of Scranton students rated themselves as being “much stronger” compared to 33% in the Catholic 4-yr and 32.7% in the Private 4-yr comparison groups.

On average, University students rated themselves at 4.35 compared to the Catholic 4-yr comparison group, 4.17, and Private 4-yr comparison group, 4.16 ($p < .001$, $d = .25$ and $d = .27$, respectively). The growth of interpersonal skills represents a realization of the University's dedication to the personal development of its students.

Summary

The CSS asks students a wide range of questions regarding their university from satisfaction with faculty, facilities, and coursework to student learning and involvement. On 10 of the 14 constructs created by HERI, the institute that conducted the CSS, the University of Scranton scored similarly to a comparison group of Catholic 4-yr schools and a comparison group of Private 4-yr schools. Three of these ten constructs, where the University matched our comparison groups, Social Agency, Leadership, and Civic Awareness, relate to the University's Jesuit mission to educate students to be leaders in the community and "set the world on fire." The University scored lower than our comparison groups on the constructs of Positive Cross-Racial Interaction and Academic Disengagement (the Academic Disengagement construct measures negative activities, so a low score represents a positive result).

The University of Scranton scored higher than comparison groups on Overall Satisfaction and Sense of Belonging. The high scores on these constructs represent the supportive and welcoming community that exists at the University. Students that attend the University feel like they belong here and that they are a part of the college community.

Further reinforcing the students' Overall Satisfaction, between 80% and 93% of University of Scranton students rated themselves satisfied or very satisfied with the general education curriculum, courses in their major field, relevance of their coursework to everyday life, relevance of their coursework to their future career plans. In regard to specific skills and abilities, over 50% students perceived that they had much stronger skills and abilities in their knowledge of a particular field or discipline, general knowledge, critical thinking skills, and leadership abilities.

Appendix I: Catholic Four-Year Colleges¹

Catholic Four Year Colleges

Albertus Magnus College
College of Saint Mary
Creighton University
Emmanuel College
Fairfield University
Gonzaga University
Holy Names University
Marywood University
Mount St. Mary's College
Mount St. Mary's University
Saint Martin's University
Saint Mary's College of California
Saint Norbert College
Saint Vincent College
Santa Clara University
University of Scranton
Wheeling Jesuit University

¹ Note: Catholic Four-Year Colleges are the first comparison group (Catholic 4-yr) and also comprise part of the second comparison group (Private 4-yr).

Appendix II: Nonsectarian and Other Religious Four-Year Colleges

Nonsectarian Four-Year Colleges

Becker College
Cazenovia College
Claremont McKenna College
Dickinson College
Harvey Mudd College
Illinois Wesleyan University
Knox College
Laguna College of Art and Design
Marymount Manhattan College
Mills College
Moore College of Art and Design
Principia College
Rhode Island School of Design
Rollins College
Southern New Hampshire University
Sweet Briar College
The College of New Rochelle
University of Redlands
Wabash College
Wheaton College-Norton
Wilkes University

Other Religious Four-Year Colleges

Agness Scott College
Azusa Pacific University
Bluffton University
California Baptist University
Carthage College
Chapman University
Elon University
Erskine College and Seminary
Ferrum College
George Fox University
Georgetown College
Gustavus Adolphus College
Huntingdon College
Iowa Wesleyan College
Lafayette College
McPherson College
Moravian College and Moravian Theological
Seminary
Mount Vernon Nazarene University
Newberry College
North Central College
Northwest Nazarene University
Northwestern College
Palm Beach Atlantic University-West Palm
Beach
Shaw University
Tabor College
Vanguard University of Southern California
Warren Wilson College
Waynesburg University
Williams Baptist College
Wofford College

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