

# Community College Survey of Student Engagement

Halifax Community College

**2015 Key Findings**

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# Key Findings: A Starting Point

The Key Findings report provides an entry point for reviewing results from your administration of the 2015 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The report provides college-specific data in an easy-to-share format including benchmark comparisons between the college, top-performing colleges, and the CCSSE cohort. It also highlights aspects of highest and lowest student engagement at the college, as well as results from five CCSSE special-focus items. Select faculty survey data are also highlighted.

## Assessment and Placement Practices

In each annual administration, CCSSE has included special-focus items to allow participating colleges and national researchers to delve more deeply into areas of student experience and institutional performance of great interest to the field. In the 2015 administration, some institutions opted to add special-focus items concentrated on community college students' experiences related to assessment and placement practices. These initial findings will allow colleges to learn critical information such as how students are preparing for placement tests and whether they feel they are assessed appropriately. The results of these findings are on pages 6-7 of this report.

## Benchmark Overview by Enrollment Status

Figure 1 below represents your institution's CCSSE benchmark scores by students' enrollment status.

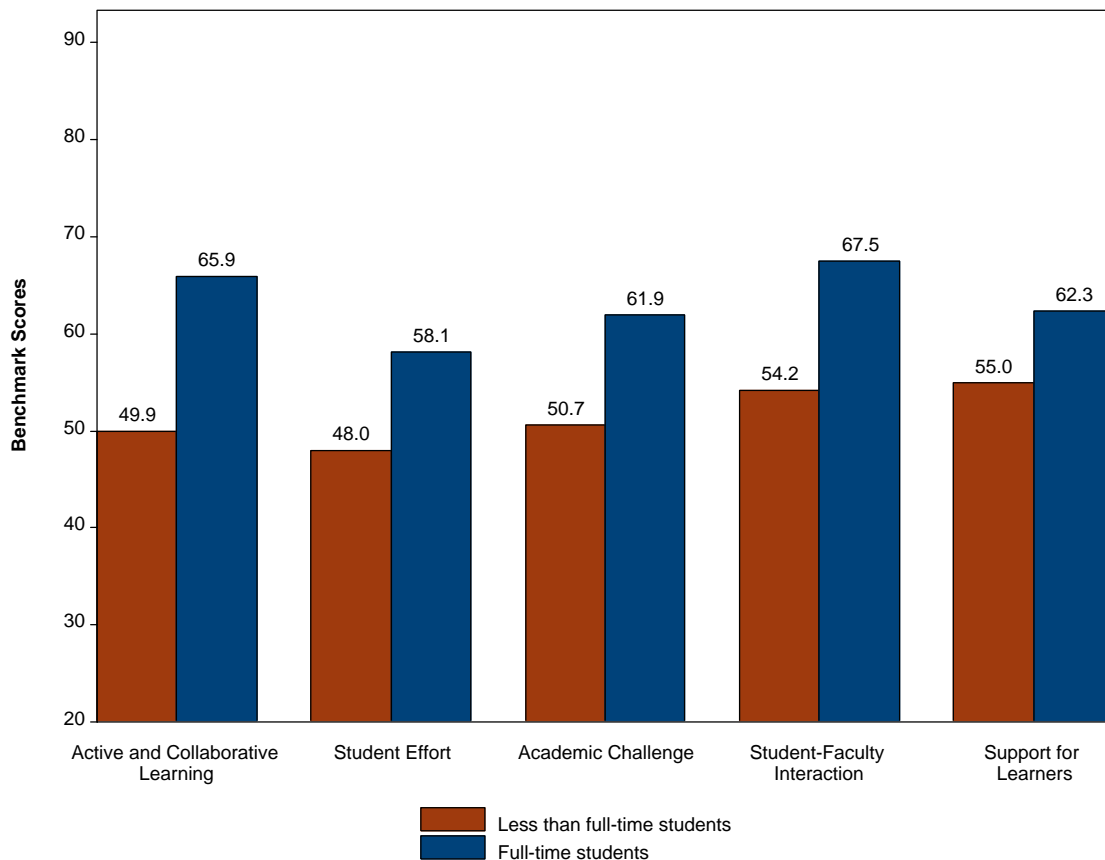


Figure 1

# Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

The *CCSSE* benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of student engagement. The five benchmarks denote areas that educational research has shown to be important to students' college experiences and educational outcomes. Therefore, they provide colleges with a useful starting point for looking at institutional results and allow colleges to gauge and monitor their performance in areas that are central to their work. In addition, participating colleges have the opportunity to make appropriate and useful comparisons between their performance and that of groups of other colleges.

Performing as well as the national average or a peer-group average may be a reasonable initial aspiration, but it is important to recognize that these averages are sometimes unacceptably low. Aspiring to match and then exceed high-performance targets is the stronger strategy.

Community colleges can differ dramatically on such factors as size, location, resources, enrollment patterns, and student characteristics. It is important to take these differences into account when interpreting benchmark scores—especially when making institutional comparisons. The Center for Community College Student Engagement has adopted the policy “Responsible Uses of *CCSSE* and *SENSE* Data,” available at [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org).

*CCSSE* uses a three-year cohort of participating colleges in all core survey analyses. The current cohort is referred to as the 2015 *CCSSE* Cohort (2013-2015) throughout all reports.

## CCSSE Benchmarks

### ★ Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaborating with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with real-life situations and problems.

### ★ Student Effort

Students' own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will successfully attain their educational goals.

### ★ Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. These survey items address the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the rigor of examinations used to evaluate student performance.

### ★ Student-Faculty Interaction

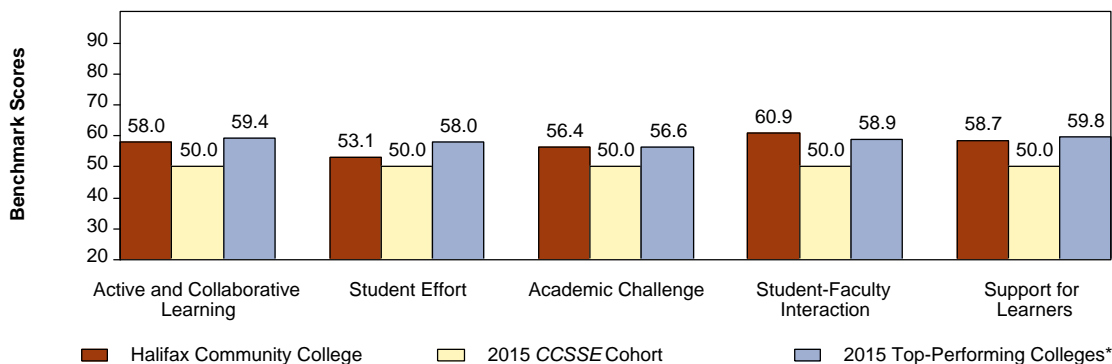
In general, the more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.

### ★ Support for Learners

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that provide important support services, cultivate positive relationships among groups on campus, and demonstrate commitment to their success.

For further information about *CCSSE* benchmarks, please visit [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org).

Figure 2



\*Top-Performing colleges are those that scored in the top 10 percent of the cohort by benchmark.

Notes: Benchmark scores are standardized to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 25 across all respondents. For further information about how benchmarks are computed, please visit [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org).

## Aspects of Highest Student Engagement

Benchmark scores provide a manageable starting point for reviewing and understanding *CCSSE* data. One way to dig more deeply into the benchmark scores is to analyze those items that contribute to the overall benchmark score. This section features the five items across all benchmarks (excluding those for which means are not calculated) on which the college scored highest and the five items on which the college scored lowest relative to the 2015 *CCSSE* Cohort.

The items highlighted on pages 4 and 5 reflect the largest differences in mean scores between the institution and the the 2015 *CCSSE* Cohort. While examining these data, keep in mind that the selected items may not be those that are most closely aligned with the college’s goals; thus, it is important to review all institutional reports on the *CCSSE* online reporting system at [www.ccse.org](http://www.ccse.org).

Figure 3 displays the aggregated frequencies for the items on which the college performed most favorably relative to the 2015 *CCSSE* Cohort. For instance, 34.9% of Halifax Community College students, compared with 24.8% of other students in the cohort, responded *often* or *very often* on item 4g. It is important to note that some colleges’ highest scores might be lower than the cohort mean.

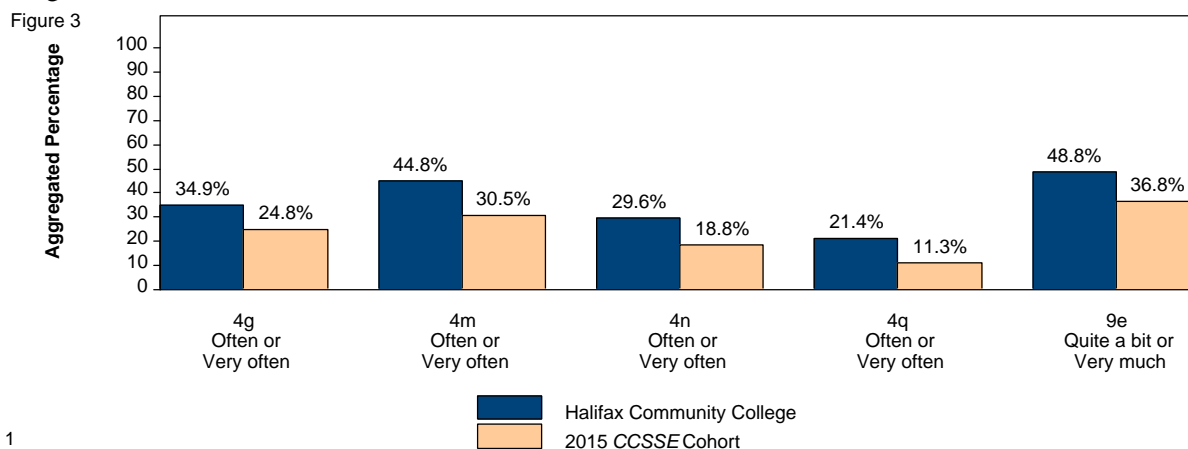


Table 1

Benchmark	Item Number	Item
Active and Collaborative Learning	4g	Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
Student-Faculty Interaction	4m	Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor
Student-Faculty Interaction	4n	Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class
Student-Faculty Interaction	4q	Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework
Support For Learners	9e	Providing the support you need to thrive socially

Notes:

For Item(s) 4 (except 4e), *often* and *very often* responses are combined.

For Item(s) 9, *quite a bit* and *very much* responses are combined.

## Aspects of Lowest Student Engagement

Figure 4 displays the aggregated frequencies for the items on which the college performed least favorably relative to the 2015 CCSSE Cohort. For instance, 48.1% of Halifax Community College students, compared with 51.0% of other students in the cohort, responded *often* or *very often* on item 4c. It is important to note that some colleges' lowest scores might be higher than the cohort mean.

Figure 4

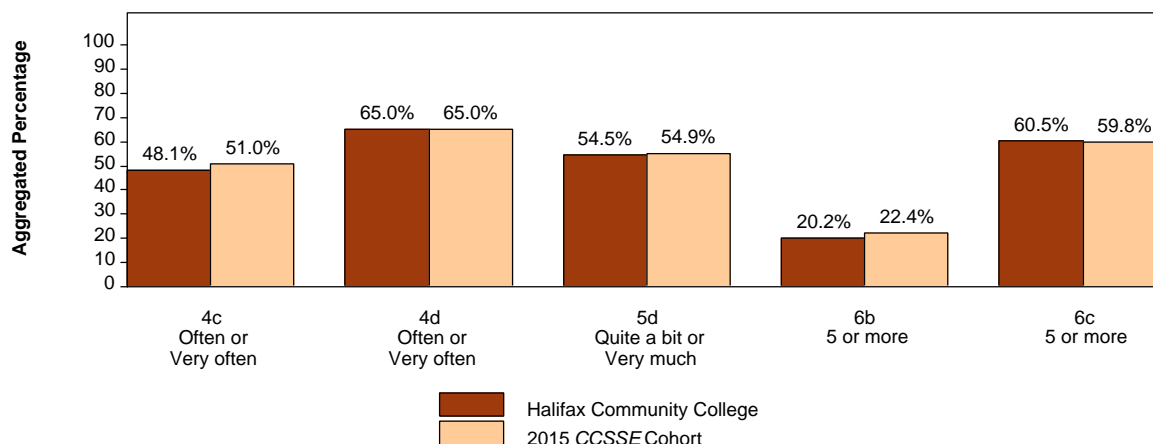


Table 2

Benchmark	Item Number	Item
Student Effort	4c	Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
Student Effort	4d	Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources
Academic Challenge	5d	Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods
Student Effort	6b	Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment
Academic Challenge	6c	Number of written papers or reports of any length

Notes:

For Item(s) 4 (except 4e), *often* and *very often* responses are combined.

For Item(s) 5, *quite a bit* and *very much* responses are combined.

For Item(s) 6, 5 to 10, 11 to 20, and *more than 20* responses are combined.

## 2015 CCSSE Special-Focus Items

The Center adds special-focus items to the core survey each year to assist participating colleges and the field at large in further exploring specific areas of student engagement. The 2015 special-focus items elicited new information about students' experiences associated with assessment and placement practices, such as preparing for a placement test and enrolling in a developmental education class based on placement test results. Frequency results from five of these items for your college and for the Assessment and Placement item-set respondents are displayed across pages 6 and 7.

Figure 5: Before enrolling at this college, I prepared for this college's placement test in the following way:

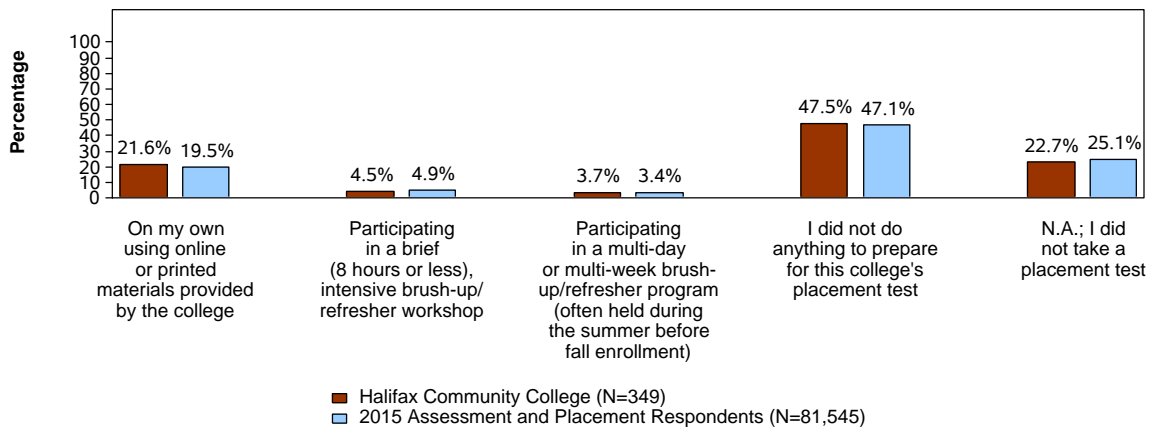


Figure 6: The results of the placement test I took at this college indicated that I needed to take a developmental/basic skills/college prep course...

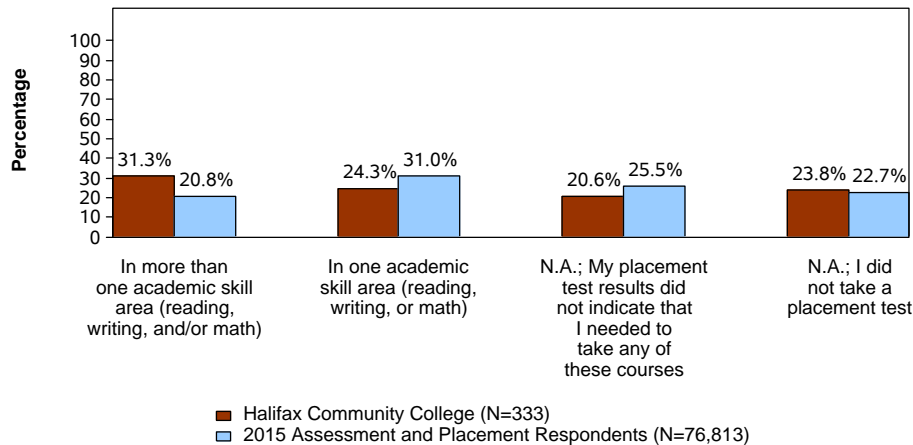


Figure 7: I enrolled in the English course indicated by my placement test results, and I felt that the course level was...

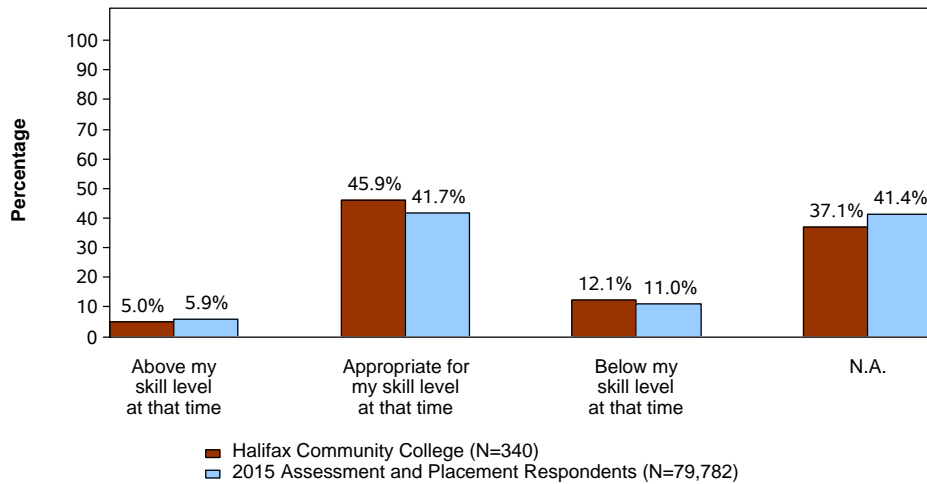


Figure 8: I enrolled in the math course indicated by my placement test results, and I felt that the course level was...

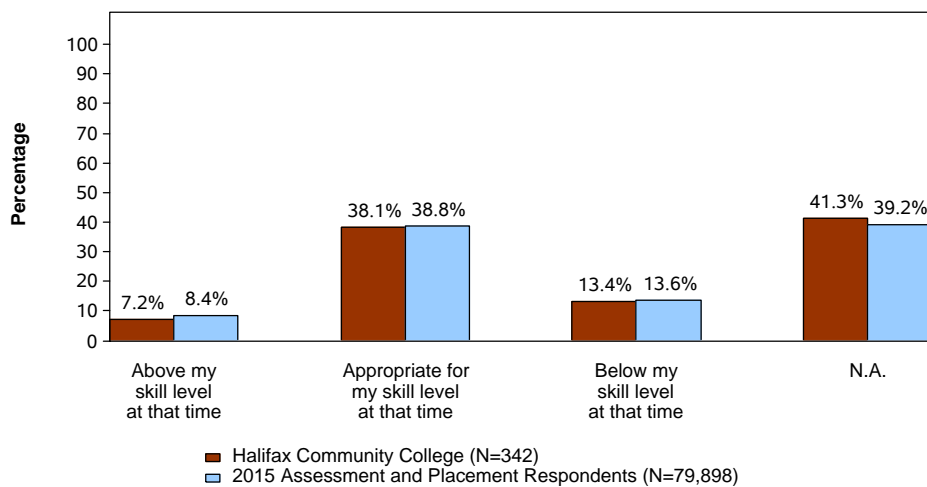
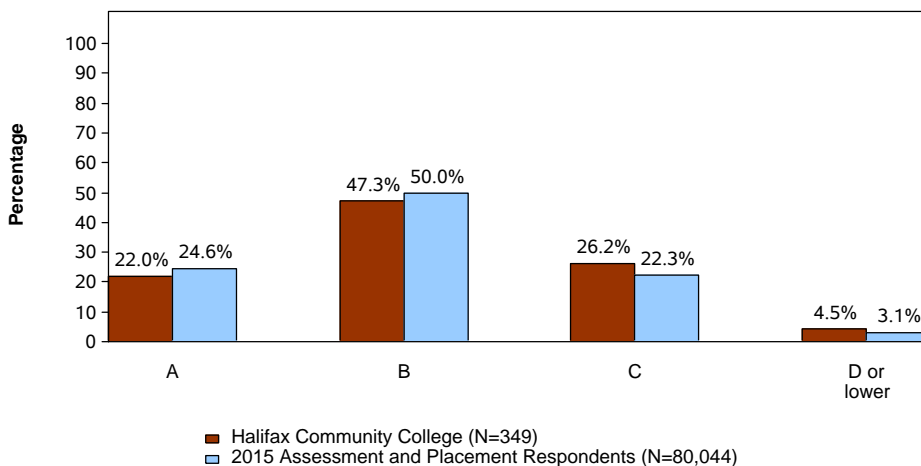


Figure 9: In what range was your overall high school grade point average (GPA)?



# CCFSSE

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), designed as a companion survey to CCSSE, elicits information from faculty about their teaching practices; the ways they spend their professional time, both in and out of class; and their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences. Many of these results can be viewed alongside the corresponding CCSSE item results to reveal interesting differences between students' reported experiences and faculty members' perceptions of those experiences—and can serve as an excellent starting point to engage faculty in conversations about engagement.

Figure 10

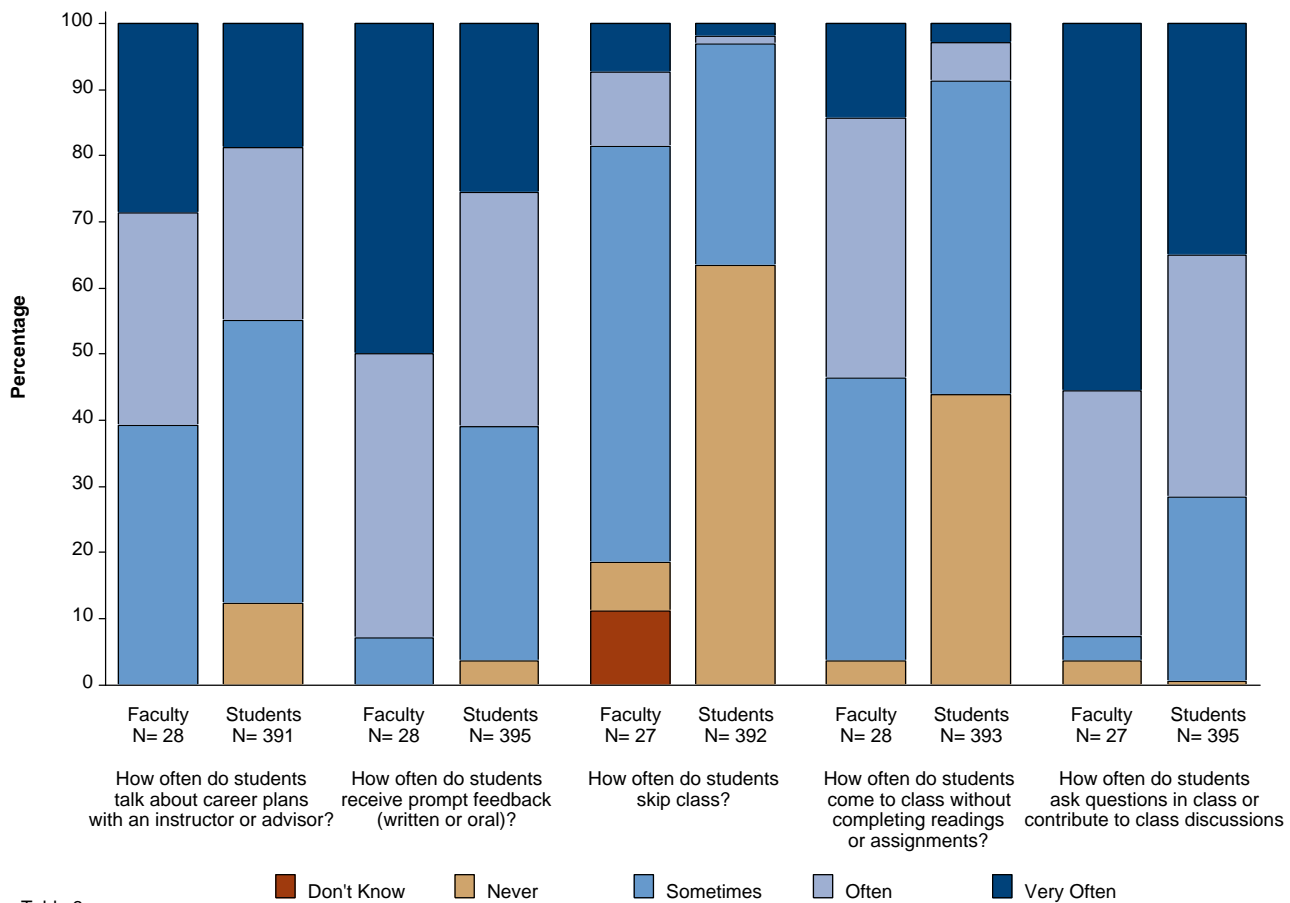


Table 3

Response	How often do students talk about career plans with an instructor or advisor?		How often do students receive prompt feedback (written or oral)?		How often do students skip class?		How often do students come to class without completing readings or assignments?		How often do students ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions?	
	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student
Don't Know	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Never	N/A	12.3%	N/A	3.6%	7.4%	63.5%	3.6%	44.0%	3.7%	0.6%
Sometimes	39.3%	42.9%	7.1%	35.5%	63.0%	33.3%	42.9%	47.4%	3.7%	27.8%
Often	32.1%	26.1%	42.9%	35.4%	11.1%	1.2%	39.3%	5.6%	37.0%	36.6%
Very Often	28.6%	18.8%	50.0%	25.6%	7.4%	2.0%	14.3%	3.0%	55.6%	35.0%

Faculty responses reference a selected course. Student responses are weighted and reference the entire year.