

# Research & Analysis

A service of the offices of Strategic Planning, Institutional Research, Management Information Systems  
Hillsborough Community College, November 2004-02

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## **DID I LEARN? - A STUDENT ASSESSMENT: RESULTS OF THE 2004 CCSSE ADMINISTRATION**

*SACS Comprehensive Requirement 3.5, The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.*

Ostensibly the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) seeks to measure its namesake – “student engagement.. CCSSE is predicated on research demonstrating an association between educational engagement and learning outcomes. CCSSE does not measure student outcomes per se.

However, unique to the instrument, survey question #12 asks that respondents rate the level of knowledge gained as a consequence of their engagement. Though this does not constitute direct evidence of learning outcomes, self-assessment does provide an important indirect measure; that is - do students think they learned.

### ***Question #12, a Self-Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes***

The catalog of Hillsborough Community College (HCC) states “General Education provides a foundation upon which a student’s learning experience is built. It offers students the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to have a broad understanding of a changing world (p.75).”

Question #12 asks “how much has YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THIS COLLEGE contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?” The question is followed by 15 items pertaining to general education outcomes which parallel those identified in the college catalog. The respondent is asked to rate each item using the following scale:

1 = very little, 2 = some, 3 = quite a bit, 4 = very much

This brief will examine the mean college response to each item within question #12. Comparisons will be made to the state, nation, and “extra-large” colleges. The latter is a category defined by CCSSE as those institutions with an enrollment exceeding 15,000

credit students of which HCC belongs. Furthermore the results will be disaggregated by HCC student ethnicity and campus location.

## The Results

The table below displays the mean results of all items for question #12. Results are shown for HCC, the Extra-Large Colleges (XL, n=17), all Florida community colleges (n=28), and all 152 participating institutions across the nation.

### Mean Ratings of 15 Items Addressing CCSSE Question #12, Comparisons of HCC to Extra-Large Community Colleges, all Florida Community Colleges, and all National Participating Institutions, 2004

Survey Item	HCC	XL	State	Nation
1. Acquiring a broad general education	2.87	2.91	2.94	2.91
2. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.18*	2.44	2.38	2.49
3. Writing clearly and effectively	2.59	2.67	2.70	2.64
4. Speaking clearly and effectively	2.51	2.57	2.57	2.54
5. Thinking critically and analytically	2.78	2.80	2.80	2.81
6. Solving numerical problems	2.57	2.56	2.65	2.55
7. Using computing and information technology	2.59	2.65	2.68	2.65
8. Working effectively with others	2.50	2.60	2.58	2.64
9. Learning effectively on your own	2.80	2.85	2.82	2.85
10. Understanding yourself	2.42	2.54	2.47	2.52
11. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.26	2.36	2.25	2.30
12. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.16	2.26	2.22	2.26
13. Contributing to the welfare of your community	1.80	1.91	1.88	1.92
14. Developing clearer career goals	2.41	2.57	2.52	2.56
15. Gaining information about career opportunities	2.19*	2.48	2.42	2.45

\* Mean differences are significant at  $p < 0.001$  and an effect size equal to or greater than 0.2.

The mean responses for all groups fall between 2 “some” and 3 “quite a bit,” with one exception (item #13, contributing to the welfare of the community).

In almost all instances the scores of HCC fall below those of the comparison groups with two exceptions. The first exception is for item #6 in which HCC exceeded the mean score of extra-large colleges and the nation. The second exception is item #11 for which HCC exceeded the mean score of the state.

Importantly, the scores at HCC were only found to have a statistically significant difference below the means on items #2 and #15, “acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills” and “gaining information about career opportunities.”

CCSSE has a two component definition of statistical difference. The probability value must be less than 0.001 and the effect size must be equal to or greater than 0.2. The intent is to identify those items having both statistical and practical difference with the comparison groups.

### *Disaggregation by Ethnicity*

*Trendline 2004*, the college Fact Book, reveals that 40% of the student body consists of minority racial/ethnic groups (p. 37). CCSSE respondents are roughly representational of the student body as a whole with 47% reflecting minority populations.

Access to education by the under-represented has long been a hallmark of the community college. Attainment of education by the under-represented is the desired outcome of access. The table below displays the mean scores of self-assessed learning attainment from students sampled at HCC by ethnicity.

#### **Mean Ratings of 15 Items Addressing CCSSE Question #12, Comparisons by Ethnicity Within Hillsborough Community College, 2004**

Survey Item	State	HCC	Asian (n=43)	Black (n=159)	White (n=516)	Hispanic (n=176)	Other (n=66)
1. Acquiring a broad general education	2.94	2.87	3.02	2.87	2.88	2.83	2.75
2. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.38	2.18	2.27	2.29	2.13	2.16	2.28
3. Writing clearly and effectively	2.70	2.59	2.41	2.73	2.57	2.56	2.68
4. Speaking clearly and effectively	2.57	2.51	2.47	2.70	2.46	2.46	2.66
5. Thinking critically and analytically	2.80	2.78	2.62	2.83	2.79	2.75	2.66
6. Solving numerical problems	2.65	2.57	2.46	2.59	2.56	2.58	2.53
7. Using computing and information technology	2.68	2.59	2.36	2.83	2.55	2.54	2.69
8. Working effectively with others	2.58	2.50	2.48	2.64	2.43	2.52	2.69
9. Learning effectively on your own	2.82	2.80	2.68	2.81	2.77	2.96	2.78
10. Understanding yourself	2.47	2.42	2.43	2.64	2.32	2.53	2.40
11. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.25	2.26	2.24	2.38	2.22	2.26	2.32
12. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.22	2.16	2.20	2.30	2.06	2.28	2.33
13. Contributing to the welfare of your community	1.88	1.80	1.69	1.98	1.73	1.81	1.99
14. Developing clearer career goals	2.52	2.41	2.37	2.67	2.34	2.37	2.49
15. Gaining information about career opportunities	2.42	2.19	1.93	2.53	2.10	2.21	2.26

In general, the Black respondent group had the highest scores in assessing the degree to which the college contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development.

- The scores for all 15 items exceeded or equaled the college means
- 11 scores exceeded the state means
- 10 scores exceeded the means of all other ethnic groups within the college

Overall the White respondent group provided the lowest scores.

- 13 scores fell below the college means
- All 15 scores fell below the state means
- 6 scores were the lowest among all ethnic groups within the college

The Asian respondent group also had low scores.

- 11 scores fell below the college means
- 14 scores fell below the state means

- 7 scores were the lowest among all ethnic groups within the college
- The Hispanic respondent group provided a varied assessment.
- 7 scores fell below the college means (and 1 tied the college means, #11)
  - 11 scores fell below the state means
  - 1 score was the lowest among all ethnic groups (tie with Whites, #4)
  - 1 score was the highest among all ethnic groups (#9)

Notably the general patterns did not correlate with the response to item #1 which serves as the most overarching – “acquiring a broad general education” with Asian respondents providing the highest rating followed by Whites, Blacks, Hispanics and Others.

### *Disaggregation by Campus*

Although the college aspires to a common set of learning outcomes for its programs independent of location; instructional delivery will vary by campus, program, course, class, faculty member.

The table below displays the mean scores of self-assessed learning attainment from students per each campus and the MacDill center.

### **Mean Ratings of 15 Items Addressing CCSSE Question #12, Comparisons by Campus Within Hillsborough Community College, 2004 \***

Survey Item	State	HCC	BR (n=224)	DM (n=420)	PC (n=108)	YC (n=204)	MC (n=17)
1. Acquiring a broad general education	2.94	2.87	2.82	2.92	2.92	2.76	2.97
2. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.38	2.18	2.14	2.20	2.07	2.22	2.28
3. Writing clearly and effectively	2.70	2.59	2.54	2.62	2.53	2.60	2.89
4. Speaking clearly and effectively	2.57	2.51	2.60	2.51	2.31	2.53	2.42
5. Thinking critically and analytically	2.80	2.78	2.74	2.71	3.00	2.82	3.00
6. Solving numerical problems	2.65	2.57	2.52	2.60	2.93	2.36	2.42
7. Using computing and information technology	2.68	2.59	2.67	2.57	2.56	2.59	2.50
8. Working effectively with others	2.58	2.50	2.44	2.51	2.51	2.55	2.39
9. Learning effectively on your own	2.82	2.80	2.73	2.81	2.80	2.89	2.67
10. Understanding yourself	2.47	2.42	2.28	2.45	2.39	2.51	2.61
11. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.25	2.26	2.15	2.28	2.14	2.39	2.25
12. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.22	2.16	2.10	2.20	2.13	2.17	2.22
13. Contributing to the welfare of your community	1.88	1.80	1.73	1.83	1.75	1.83	1.67
14. Developing clearer career goals	2.52	2.41	2.28	2.43	2.48	2.46	2.31
15. Gaining information about career opportunities	2.42	2.19	2.07	2.20	2.30	2.28	1.78

\* BR = Brandon, DM = Dale Mabry, PC = Plant City, YC = Ybor City, MC = MacDill

### Ybor City

Students at Ybor City self-assessed higher than the college mean for 12 of 15 items. One item, #7 “using computing and information technology” was equal to the college mean. The two items in which students at Ybor scored lower are #1 “acquiring a broad general education” and #6 “solving numerical problems.”

Four items were scored higher than the state average. They included #5 “thinking critically and analytically,” item #9 “learning effectively on your own,” #10 “understanding yourself,” and #11 “understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.”

- 12 items above the college mean
- 11 items below the state mean

### Dale Mabry

Students at Dale Mabry self-assessed higher than the college mean for 12 of the 15 items. The score on item #4, “speaking clearly and effectively” was equal to the college mean. The two items below the college mean were #5 “thinking critically and analytically” and #7 “using computer and information technology.”

Item #11, “understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds” was scored higher than the state mean.

- 12 items above the college mean
- 14 items below the state mean

### Plant City

Students at Plant City self-assessed higher than the college mean for six of 15 items. The score for item #9 “learning effectively on your own” was identical to the college average.

Two items scored higher than the state, #5 and 6 “thinking critically and analytically” and “solving numerical problems.” Plant City and MacDill posted the highest score on any single item on #5 at 3.00. Given that Plant City has instructional jurisdiction for MacDill, the similarity of the scores may not be coincident.

- 9 items below the college mean
- 13 items below the state mean

### Brandon

Students surveyed at Brandon self-assessed higher than the college mean for items #4 “speaking clearly and effectively” and #7 “using computing and information technology.” The score for #4 was also higher than the state score. All other items were below the college and state mean.

- 13 items below the college mean
- 14 items below the state mean

### MacDill

Though the sample size of 17 students at MacDill is small, the responses were different from other locations in notable ways. Students at MacDill self-assessed higher than the college mean for six of 15 items.

Four items were scored higher than the state by students at MacDill. They included #1 “acquiring a broad general education,” #3 “writing clearly and effectively,” #5 “thinking critically and analytically,” #10 “understanding yourself.” Two items scored equal to the state mean, they are #11 “understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds” and #12 “developing a personal code of values and ethics.”

- 9 items below the college mean
- 9 items below the state mean

## **Conclusion**

In general, the scores from students attending Hillsborough Community College are statistically no different from the average response of the state and nation for items on Question #12. The two items in which a statistically significant difference were found both related to career knowledge (“acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills” and “gaining information about career opportunities”). Disaggregation by ethnicity and by campus may provide insights into areas where attention can be directed to enhance student perceptions.

Question #12 does provide some measure of the extent to which students assess their attainment of general education competencies. This must be coupled with assessments that, in fact, demonstrate student learning. Indeed, SACS comprehensive requirement 3.5 requires evidence that students have attained general education competencies.

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11/4/04