

# WHAT ARE THE 5 CCSSE BENCHMARKS, AND HOW DOES MCC'S PERFORMANCE ON THEM COMPARE WITH THAT OF OTHER PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

**BENCHMARK A. 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 collaboration with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with the kinds of situations and problems they will encounter in the workplace, community, and their personal lives.

The seven survey items that contribute to this benchmark include: 4a: Asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions, 4b: Making a class presentation, 4f: Working with other students on projects during class, 4g: Working with classmates on assignments outside of class, 4h: Tutoring other students, 4i: Participating in a community-based project as a part of a course, and 4r: Discussing ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class.

**BENCHMARK B. STUDENT EFFORT:** Students' own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will attain their educational goals. "Time on task" is a key variable, and there are a variety of settings and means through which students may apply themselves to the learning process.

Associated with this benchmark are eight survey items, including: 4: Preparing two or more drafts of a paper before turning it in, 4d: Working on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources, 4e: Coming to class without completing readings or assignments, 6b: Using tutoring, 10a: Using skill labs, 13d1: Using a computer lab, 13e1: Reading books on one's own for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment, and 13h1: Number of hours spent in a typical week preparing for class.

**BENCHMARK C. ACADEMIC CHALLENGE:** Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality.

Ten items correspond to components of academic challenge including the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the standards faculty members use to evaluate students. They include: 4p: Working harder than one thought one could to meet an instructor's standards, 5b: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, 5c: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways, 5d: Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods, 5e: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or new situations, 5f: Using information read or heard to perform a new skill, 6a: Number of assigned textbooks, books, etc. read, 6c: Number of papers or reports written, 7: Examinations challenging one to do one's best, 9a: Degree to which this college encourages one to spend significant amounts of time studying.

*Table 1 MCC CCSSE Benchmark Comparisons*

Benchmark Name	MCC Score <sup>1</sup>	Group Comparisons		
		Means	Mid-Sized Colleges	All 2007 CCs
A. Active and Collaborative Learning	48.7	Score	49.7	50
		Difference	-1.0	-1.3
B. Student Effort	42.7 ↓	Score	50.1	50
		Difference	-7.3	-7.3
C. Academic Challenge	46.9	Score	50.1	50
		Difference	-3.1	-3.1
D. Student-Faculty Interaction	46.3 ↑	Score	49.9	50
		Difference	-3.5	-3.7
E. Support for Learners	45.1	Score	49.6	50
		Difference	-4.5	-4.9

<sup>1</sup>Arrows show direction of large changes from 2004 CCSSE.

**BENCHMARK D. STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION:** 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. Personal interaction with faculty members strengthens students' connections to the college and helps them focus on their academic progress. Working with an instructor lets students see first-hand how experts identify and solve practical problems, and faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides.

The six items in this benchmark include: 4k: Using email to communicate with an instructor, 4l: Discussing grades or assignments with an instructor, 4m: Talking about career plans with an instructor or advisor, 4n: Discussing ideas from your classes with instructors outside of class, 4o: Receiving prompt feedback from instructors on one's performance, and 4q) Working with instructors on activities other than coursework.

**BENCHMARK E. 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 different groups on campus. Community college students also benefit from services targeted to assist them with academic and career planning, academic skill development, and other issues that may affect both learning and retention.

The following items are associated with benchmark E: 9b: Providing the support needed to help one succeed at this college, 9c: Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds, 9d: Helping one cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.), 9e: Providing the support one needs to thrive socially, 9f: Providing the financial support one needs to afford education, 13a1: Using academic advising/planning services, and 13b1) Using career counseling services.

## ON WHICH ITEMS DO MCC RESPONSES DIFFER FROM THOSE OF OTHER PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

*Table 2 CCSSE Items for which MCC responses differ substantially from 2007 CCSSE averages for the entire CCSSE cohort, other Illinois colleges, and other medium colleges*

	Bnch-Mark <sup>1</sup>	Differences Found <sup>2</sup>		
		All CCSSE	IL colleges	Medium colleges
<b>4. During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?</b>				
4c. Prep. two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	<b>B</b>	-	-	-
4e. Came to class without completing readings or assignments	<b>B</b>		<b>+</b>	
4p. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	<b>C</b>	-	-	-
4s. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity		-	-	-
<b>9. How much does this college emphasize each of the following?</b>				
9c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, & ethnic backgrounds	<b>E</b>		-	
9f. Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	<b>E</b>	-	-	-
9g. Using computers in academic work		-	-	-
<b>10. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?</b>				
10a. Preparing for class	<b>B</b>	-		-
<b>12. How much has your college experience contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development?</b>				
12c. Writing clearly and effectively		-		-
12f. Solving numerical problems		-	-	-
12k. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds		-	-	-
<b>13. Please note your 1) frequency of use, 2) satisfaction with &amp; 3) importance rating of the following services.</b>				
13.1g. Frequency: Financial aid advising		-	-	-
13.1h. Frequency: Computer lab	<b>B</b>		-	
13.2e. Satisfaction: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)		-	-	-
13.2g. Satisfaction: Financial aid advising				-
13.3b. Importance: Career counseling		-		-
13.3c. Importance: Job placement assistance		-		-
13.3e. Importance: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)		-	-	-
13.3g. Importance: Financial aid advising		-	-	-
13.3h. Importance: Computer lab		-	-	-
<b>14. How likely is it that the following issues would cause you to withdraw from class or from this college?</b>				
14d. Lack of finances		-		-

<sup>1</sup>Items that are part of one of the 5 benchmarks are identified here by the benchmark. (See benchmark definitions on the reverse side of this page.)

<sup>2</sup>All differences identified in this table were significant at the 0.001 level (i.e., the chance that a score was achieved when no difference exists in the populations is less than 1 in 1000) and had a minimum effect size of 0.20 or more, making the differences sufficiently large to be practically as well as statistically significant.

"-" indicates MCC scores below reference group's average.

"+" indicates MCC scores above reference group's average.