

**Commit to Living as an Engaged and Informed Citizen  
Assessment Summary Report  
2003-2004**

**Assessment Method I – NSSE**

**The NSSE and Scoring**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects information from undergraduate students at four-year colleges and universities to assess the extent that these students from across the country engage in various educational practices. The NSSE 2003 sample was comprised of about 348,000 first-year and senior students who were randomly selected from electronic data files provided by 437 participating four-year colleges and universities.

Mean scores are reported for each variable (item) of the NSSE. The mean is the arithmetic average of all responses on a particular item. Means are provided for Mercer, for the Mercer Carnegie 2000 Classification group, and for the NSSE 2003 national sample

More detailed information about the NSSE can be found on the NSSE web site:

<http://www.iub.edu/~nsse/>

**Sample**

The following table outlines some demographic information on the Mercer sample and offers comparisons with other Master's level institutions and with the NSSE 2003 sample.

<b>Respondent Characteristics NSSE 2003</b>						
	<b>Mercer U</b>		<b>Master's</b>		<b>NSSE 2003</b>	
	<b>FY</b>	<b>SR</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>SR</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>SR</b>
<u>Overall Response Rate</u> By Class	52%		41%		43%	
	53%	51%	39%	43%	42%	44%
<u>Sampling</u> Number of Respondents NSSE Sample Size Total FY and Senior Population	207 401 1,190		39,419 113,170 390,324		93,187 222,033 983,437	
<u>Student Characteristics</u>						
Mode of Completion – Paper	53%	64%	52%	65%	42%	55%
– Web	47%	36%	48%	35%	58%	45%
Gender – Female	61%	60%	70%	70%	66%	66%
– Male	39%	40%	30%	30%	34%	34%
Race/Ethnicity – African American	12%	21%	8%	8%	8%	8%
– Native American	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%
– Asian Amer./Pacific Islander	4%	4%	6%	4%	6%	6%
– Caucasian/White	78%	69%	77%	79%	78%	79%
– Hispanic	3%	3%	10%	10%	8%	8%
– Multiple	2%	1%	6%	6%	6%	6%
– International	4%	7%	4%	4%	5%	5%
<u>Class Level</u>	52%	48%	48%	52%	49%	51%
<u>Enrollment Status</u> Full-time Part-time	100% 0%	94% 6%	94% 6%	80% 20%	96% 4%	83% 17%
<u>Place of Residence</u> On-campus Off-campus	94% 6%	27% 73%	62% 38%	16% 84%	71% 29%	23% 77%

## Results

Mercer freshmen and seniors were expected to score at least .50 on each of the dimensions of a) community service or volunteer work, b) practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment, and c) study abroad. On the dimension of “voting in local,

state, or national elections” Mercer freshmen and seniors were expected to score at least 1.50. Mercer students were also expected to score higher than students at other Master’s level institutions and higher than the national NSSE 2003 group.

The student response rate on the NSSE was 52% with a total of 207 students completing the measure (401 Mercer students were contacted to participate). The student response rate is up 5% over last year. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the Mercer sample of students were freshmen and 48% were seniors. The demographic features of those responding were representative of the Mercer student population. The population included about 40% males and 60% females. Marked differences were noted with regard to race/ethnicity and class level. More African American and International students were present at the senior level.

The following table contains the mean scores of Mercer students, students at other Master’s level institutions, and the national NSSE 2003 group on four dimensions. Students were asked – “Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?” Means the proportion of students responding “Yes”.

Item	Mercer	Master’s Level	NSSE 2003
<b>Community service or volunteer work</b>			
Freshmen	.90	.74**	.75**
Seniors	.73	.63*	.66
<b>Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment</b>			
Freshmen	.85	.80	.81
Seniors	.68	.72	.72
<b>Study Abroad</b>			
Freshmen	.36	.33	.38
Seniors	.22	.14*	.18

\*p<.05  
\*\*p<.001

Students were asked to indicate on a four-point Likert scale the extent to which they participated in voting in local, state, or national elections. The scores of the Mercer freshmen and seniors were compared with freshmen and seniors at Master’s level institutions and the NSSE 2003 group. The results appear below:

Voting in local, state, or national elections			
Class	Mercer	Master’s Level	NSSE 2003
Freshmen	1.70	1.86	1.84
Seniors	1.70	1.85	1.85

## Conclusions

The expectations were not fully met. The results indicate that Mercer students scored at least a .50 on the dimensions of community service and practicum. However, for Study Abroad the freshmen and the seniors scored below this figure (.36 and .22, respectively). The Mercer scores related to Study Abroad were, however, higher than those of students at other Master's Level institutions. Mercer seniors outpaced the NSSE sample of seniors on this same dimension.

Mercer students (freshmen and seniors) scored higher than the Master's level and NSSE groups on community service and volunteer work. Mercer freshmen scored higher than the other freshman groups on practicum, etc. Mercer students (freshmen and seniors) scored below other Master's level students and the NSSE group on voting in local, state, or national elections.

### *Assessment Method II – Mercer University Adult Learner Survey 2004*

Data not available.

### *Assessment Method III – Mercer University Graduation Application and Survey 2003-2004*

#### Graduation Survey 2003-2004 and Scoring

The Graduation Survey is a local measure designed to assess (1) student perceptions of personal growth/development in both academic and personal areas and (2) general levels of student satisfaction. All undergraduate graduating seniors on the Macon campus, Atlanta campus and in the Regional Academic Centers (RAC) complete the survey electronically as part of their graduation application.

Various items on the Graduation Survey use a three-, four-, or five-point Likert scale. The specific items included as part of this investigation use a three-point scale (1 = very much, 2 = somewhat, 3 = very little). Mean scores are determined for each item for Macon students, Atlanta students, and RAC students.

#### Sample

A total of 554 Macon graduating seniors enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts, Stetson School of Business and Economics, School of Engineering, and the Tift College of Education completed the survey (not all completed every item of the survey). The sample was distributed as follows:

CLA	283
SSBE	150
EDU	31
EGR	90
<b>Total Macon</b>	<b>554</b>

A total of 83 Atlanta graduating seniors enrolled in the Stetson School of Business and Economics and the College of Nursing completed the survey. The sample was distributed as follows:

SSBE	16
NUR	67
<b>Total Atl.</b>	<b>83</b>

A total of 545 graduating seniors completing their degrees at the Regional Academic Centers completed the survey. These students are enrolled in the Stetson School of Business and Economics, the Tift College of Education and the College of Continuing and Professional Studies (including Organizational Leadership). The following represents the sample distribution.

SSBE	69
EDU	184
CCPS	292
<b>Total RACs</b>	<b>545</b>

Results

It was expected that graduating seniors would indicate that their educational experience at Mercer “very much” or “somewhat” contributed to their personal growth in a) the development of a commitment to community service, b) relating well to people of different races and religions, and c) pursuing a socially useful and self-fulfilling vocation. On each of the three dimensions students located in Macon, Atlanta, and the RACs were expected to score 1.50 or lower. The results appear below:

<p align="center"><b>Mean Scores of Colleges/Schools on the Macon Campus, the Atlanta Campus, and in the Regional Academic Centers</b>  on item:  <b>“Educational Experience at Mercer Contributed to Personal Growth/Development in the Commitment to Community Service”</b></p>											
Macon CLA	Macon SSBE	Macon EGR	Macon EDU	<b>Macon Total</b>	Atl SSBE	Atl NUR	<b>Atl Total</b>	RAC SSBE	RAC EDU	RAC CCPS	<b>RAC Total</b>
1.97	1.92	1.92	2.03	<b>1.95</b>	2.07	1.70	–	1.83	1.74	1.75	<b>1.75</b>

<p align="center"><b>Mean Scores of Colleges/Schools on the Macon Campus, the Atlanta Campus, and in the Regional Academic Centers</b>  on item:  <b>“Educational Experience at Mercer Contributed to Personal Growth/Development in Relating Well to People of Different Races and Religions”</b></p>											
Macon CLA	Macon SSBE	Macon EGR	Macon EDU	<b>Macon Total</b>	Atl SSBE	Atl NUR	<b>Atl Total</b>	RAC SSBE	RAC EDU	RAC CCPS	<b>RAC Total</b>
1.61	1.50	1.74	1.73	<b>1.61</b>	1.43	1.67	–	1.45	1.50	1.53	<b>1.51</b>

<p align="center"><b>Mean Scores of Colleges/Schools on the Macon Campus, the Atlanta Campus, and in the Regional Academic Centers</b>  on item:  <b>“Educational Experience at Mercer Contributed to Personal Growth/Development in Pursuing a Socially Useful and Self-fulfilling Vocation”</b></p>											
Macon CLA	Macon SSBE	Macon EGR	Macon EDU	<b>Macon Total</b>	Atl SSBE	Atl NUR	<b>Atl Total</b>	RAC SSBE	RAC EDU	RAC CCPS	<b>RAC Total</b>
1.58	1.57	1.65	1.57	<b>1.59</b>	1.53	1.61	–	1.55	1.46	1.52	<b>1.50</b>

## Conclusions

The graduating seniors on the Macon campus, Atlanta campus, or those in the Regional Academic Centers do not believe that their educational experience at Mercer contributed to their personal growth/development in the commitment to community service. The expected mean score (1.50 or below) was not reached for Macon campus students (1.95), for Atlanta campus students (2.07/1.70), nor for students in the Regional Academic Centers (1.75). None of the individual Colleges/Schools met the expectation.

The graduating seniors at the three major locations do not believe that their educational experience at Mercer contributed to their ability to relate well to people of different races and religions (However, RAC students came close). The expected mean score (1.50 or below) was not reached for Macon campus students (1.61), nor for students in the Regional Academic Centers (1.51). The expectation was met by students in the Stetson School of Business and Economics at all three locations. The expectation was also met by the RAC students graduating from the Tift College of Education.

Graduating RAC seniors believe that their educational experience at Mercer contributed to their pursuit of a socially useful and self-fulfilling vocation (1.50). Graduating seniors in Macon (1.59) and Atlanta (1.53/1.61) did not. The expectation was met by RAC students in the Tift College of Education.

## Assessment Method IV – Alumni Survey 2003-2004

### Alumni Survey 2003-2004 and Scoring

The Alumni Survey 2003-2004 is a local measure designed to assess alumni perceptions of Mercer's contribution to their personal growth/development in both academic and personal areas.

### Sample

Mercer alumni who graduated in 2002 (one year out) and 1998 (five years out) were administered the survey. Surveys were mailed to approximately 2075 alumni.

A total of 60 Alumni Surveys were completed. This figure is almost half the number completed in 2002-2003. A higher percentage of women completed the surveys than men (25% males, 75% females). Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents earned an undergraduate degree at Mercer (17% earned Master's degrees). With regard to race and ethnicity 76% of the surveys came from Caucasians/Whites and 14% came from African-Americans/Blacks. The return rate by College/School indicates the following:

1.	College of Liberal Arts	51.7%
2.	School of Business & Economics	25.0%
3.	College of Education/CCPS	13.3%
4.	School of Engineering	10.0%
5.	College of Nursing	0.0%

All respondents were located on the Macon campus.

### Results

On this measure 70% of the Mercer alumni were expected to indicate that their educational experience at Mercer "very much" or "somewhat" contributed to their personal growth in a) the development of a commitment to community service, b) relating well to people of different races and religions, and c) pursuing a socially useful and self-fulfilling vocation. In actuality, 73.3% indicated that their educational experience at Mercer "very much" or "somewhat" contributed to their personal growth in the development of a commitment to community service. As many as 85.7% indicated that their educational experience at Mercer contributed to their personal growth in relating well to people of different races and religions while 84.0% indicated that Mercer contributed to their pursuing a socially useful and self-fulfilling vocation.

### Conclusions

The expectations were met according to the results of the Alumni Survey 2003-2004. However the number of completed surveys was extremely low and approximately 20% of the alumni

population consisted of post-baccalaureate students. Therefore, the results must be viewed with great caution.

After two consecutive attempts to use the Alumni Survey in the assessment of general education, it has been concluded that this measure will not produce the adequate sample size needed. Therefore, the measure will be discontinued for this purpose.

### **Recommendations/Use of Results**

Following the assessment of citizenship in 2003-2004 the following has occurred:

- For CCPS students, Composition I and Composition II courses have been revised and are now two linked liberal studies courses (LBST 175, LBST 180). The themes of these courses center around vocation and education.
- More emphasis is being placed on volunteerism and service learning. These once separate areas are now under the auspices of one person. Rather than have two Coordinators addressing volunteerism and service learning separately, we now have one Director of Community Service and Volunteerism. Also, this unit now exists under the umbrella of Mercer Student Success.
- Courses with a service learning component will now be clearly identified in the schedule of classes. This will more precisely convey course expectations to students and it will assist in the collection of service learning data.
- Service learning is presented as an option for an “engaged community of learning” in the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).