

**Mercer University**  
**National Survey of Student Engagement Results by College/School**  
Office of Institutional Effectiveness/Office of Budget and Institutional Research

**Introduction**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) annually assesses the extent to which undergraduate students are involved in educational practices empirically linked to high levels of learning and development. Mercer participated in the NSSE assessment in 2002, 2003, and 2004 and has fared well when compared to other institutions. In 2004, Mercer rated in the top 10% in all NSSE benchmark categories when compared to other institutions in our Carnegie classification, Master's Colleges and Universities I. For details, see the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Web site at <http://mercer.edu/oie/nsse/index.htm>.

The purpose of this report is to review the NSSE results by student college/school. The NSSE results from 2002, 2003, and 2004 were combined and the following 16 focused measures (scalelets) were created to more efficiently analyze the results:

1. Course Challenge
2. Writing Experiences
3. Higher Order Thinking
4. Active Learning
5. Collaborative Learning
6. Course Interaction
7. Out-of-Class Interaction
8. Information Technology
9. Diversity Experiences
10. Support for Student Success
11. Interpersonal Environment
12. Gains in Practical Skills
13. Gains in General Education
14. Knowledge of Self
15. Ethical Development/Problem Solving
16. Civic Responsibility

**Methodology**

In the spring of 2002, 2003, and 2004, NSSE sent surveys to approximately 33% of Mercer's Macon campus undergraduate first-year (FY) and senior (SR) students. In 2002, 44% of surveyed students responded, in 2003 52%, and in 2004, 35%. In order to

obtain large enough sample sizes by college/school and student level, the results of all three survey administrations were combined to produce this report.<sup>1</sup>

Sixteen focused measures, scalelets, were created for this analysis. Scalelets are clusters of two to five NSSE questions expressed in 100-point scales. The scalelet methodology is patterned after the NSSE benchmark approach and has been shown to provide dependable measures with 25 to 50 respondents.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of variance statistical techniques were used to compare the mean scalelet scores; differences at the .05 level were considered significant.

Respondent characteristics by college/school are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**NSSE 2002, 2003, and 2004 Results**  
**Respondent Characteristics by College/School**

	SSBE		Tift		Engineering		CLA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FY	32	41.6%	8	36.4%	63	50.8%	159	54.5%
SR	45	58.4%	14	63.6%	61	49.2%	133	45.5%
Total	77	100.0%	22	100.0%	124	100.0%	292	100.0%
Female	42	54.5%	22	100.0%	50	40.3%	193	66.1%
Male	35	45.5%	0	0.0%	74	59.7%	99	33.9%

### Caveats

#### Small sample size for Tift College of Education

As can be seen in Table 1, the sample size for Tift is 22 (8 FY and 14 SR). The scalelet methodology may not be dependable on such a small group. The results for Tift are

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<sup>1</sup> Assignment to College/School:

The 2003 and 2004 results were attributed to the student's primary college of record from the Student Information System (SIS). Attributing the 2002 results to institutional records was not possible; survey results were disaggregated by college where possible based on student responses to a survey question regarding the field best describing their major.

#### Changes over Time in NSSE Results:

The only scalelet area with a significant difference over time for FY respondents was Information Technology (52.8 in 2002, 66.6 in 2003, and 69.1 in 2004). For SR respondents, areas with significant differences among years were Active Learning (54.4 in 2002, 50.8 in 2003, and 57.9 in 2004) and Out-of-Class Interaction (44.2 in 2002, 41.2 in 2003, and 55.6 in 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Pike, G. R. (2004). The Dependability of NSSE Scalelets for Program-Level Assessment. Paper presented at Association of Institutional Research Conference.

displayed, but the analysis on differences between and within colleges/schools excludes Tift.

The Tift sample is also exclusively female. When all colleges/schools are combined, the mean response from female respondents in most scalelet areas is slightly lower, but the only scalelet area with a significant difference between male and female respondents was Gains in Practical Skills (62.3 for females, 68.1 for males).

### Comparing scores

Scores from one scalelet area are not comparable to another scalelet. While all scalelets are on 100-point scale, no relative conclusions can be drawn by comparing scalelet scores.

## **Results by College**

### **Differences among Colleges/Schools**

For each scalelet the underlying questions and a graph by college/school and student level are provided on the following pages. Significant differences in the mean scalelet scores among colleges/schools are provided in Table 2. (The Tift College of Education is excluded from the analysis because of the small sample sizes). Students in Engineering had the highest scores in Gains in Practical Skills and Collaborative Learning, CLA students out-scored SSBE and Engineering in Diversity Experiences, and CLA and SSBE tended to out-score Engineering in Gains in General Education and Writing Experiences.

**Table 2**  
**Scalelets with Significant Differences among Colleges/Schools**

	CLA	SSBE	Engineering
<b>FY (First-Year)</b>			
Writing Experiences	48.9	49.2	41.4
Diversity Experiences	68.0	61.1	57.1
Gains in Practical Skills	55.2	58.3	68.4
Gains in General Education	72.5	68.8	61.6
<b>SR (Senior)</b>			
Collaborative Learning	52.3	55.6	61.5
Gains in Practical Skills	63.8	72.3	84.5
Gains in General Education	81.1	78.0	73.1

## Differences within Colleges/Schools

In all schools/colleges, SR scores tended to be higher than FY respondents. Differences between FY and SR students were most pronounced in Engineering with SR students higher than FY in 10 of the 16 scalelet areas, and least pronounced in SSBE. Scalelets areas with significant differences between FY and SR:

### CLA

- Diversity Experiences (FY 11.9 points higher)
- Support for Student Success (FY 9.7 points higher)
  
- Out-of-Class Interaction (SR 11.4 points higher)
- Course Interaction (SR 9.0 points higher)
- Gains in Practical Skills (SR 8.6 points higher)
- Gains in General Education (SR 8.6 points higher)

### SSBE

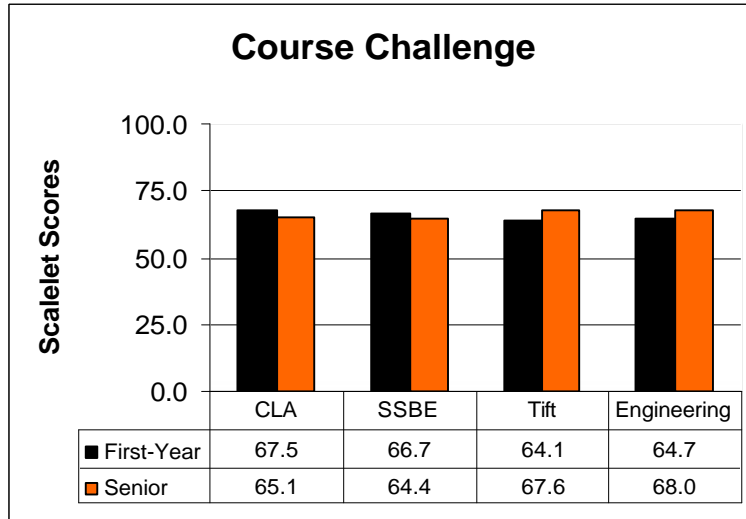
- Gains in Practical Skills (SR 14.0 points higher)
- Gains in General Education (SR 9.2 points higher)
- Collaborative Learning (SR 7.4 points higher)

### Engineering

- Interpersonal Environment (FY 5.1 points higher)
  
- Ethical Development /Problem Solving (SR 17.0 points higher)
- Gains in Practical Skills (SR 16.1 points higher)
- Out-of-Class Interaction (SR 13.9 points higher)
- Course Interaction (SR 13.7 points higher)
- Information Technology (12.6 points higher)
- Gains in General Education (SR 11.4 points higher)
- Writing Experiences (SR 9.3 points higher)
- Higher Order Thinking (SR 9.8 points higher)
- Active Learning (SR 7.0 points higher)
- Collaborative Learning (SR 6.2 points higher)

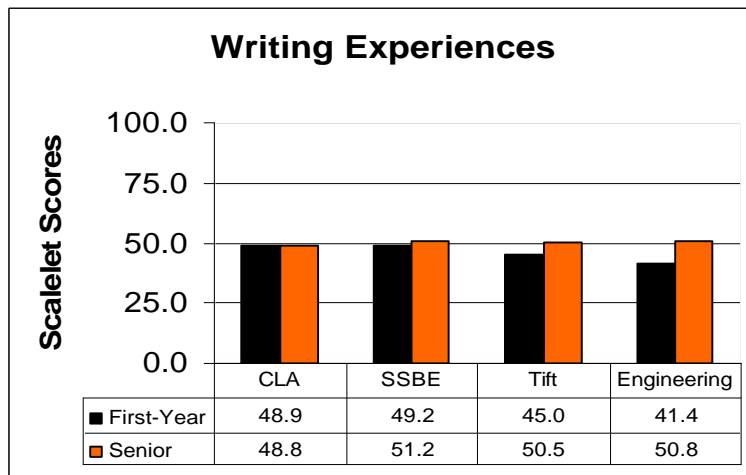
### Course Challenge

- How often have you worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations?
- How often have you come to class without completing readings or assignments? [reverse scored]
- To what extent have your examinations during the current school year challenged you to do your best work?
- How many hours a week do you spend preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to you academic program)?
- To what extent does your institution emphasize spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work?



### Writing Experiences

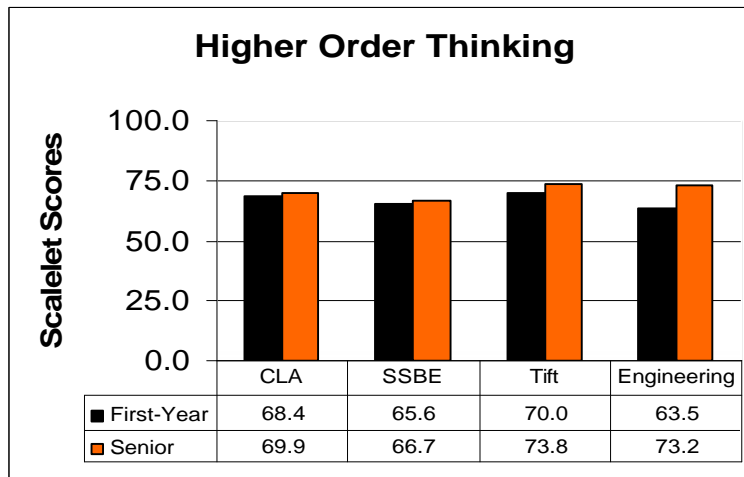
- How often have you prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in?
- How often have you worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources?
- During the current school year ... number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more?
- During the current school year ... number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages?
- During the current school year ... number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages?



## Higher Order Thinking Skills

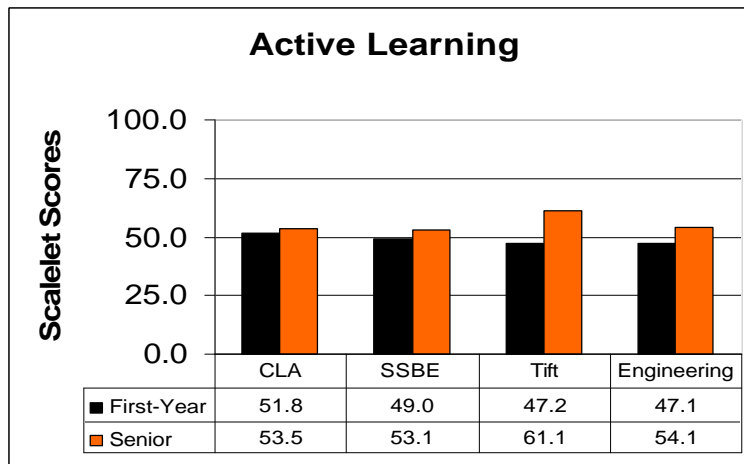
During the current school year, to what extent has your coursework emphasized ...

- memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form? [reverse scored]
- analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components?
- synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships?
- making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions?
- applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations?



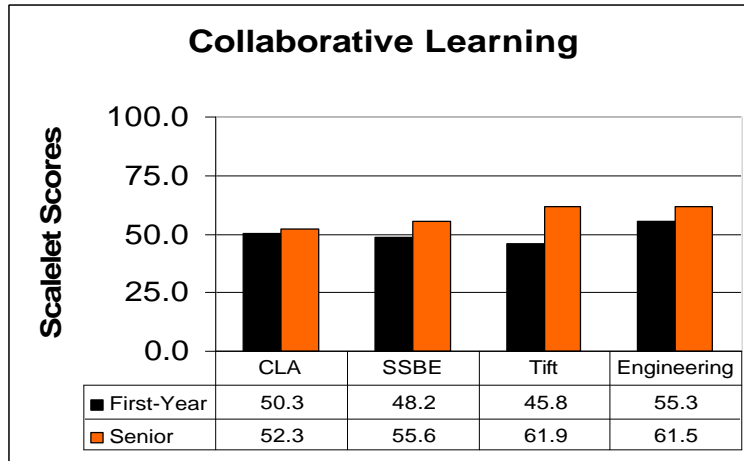
## Active Learning

- How often have you asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions?
- How often have you made a class presentation?
- How often have you participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course?



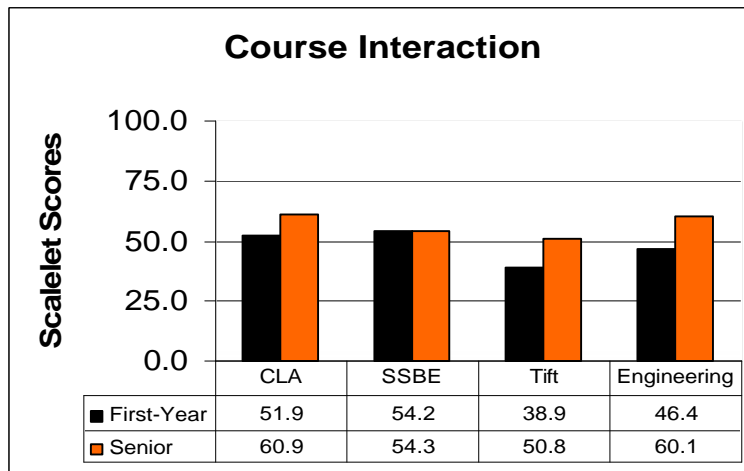
## Collaborative Learning

- How often have you worked with other students on projects during class?
- How often have you worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments?
- How often have you tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)?
- How often have you discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.)?



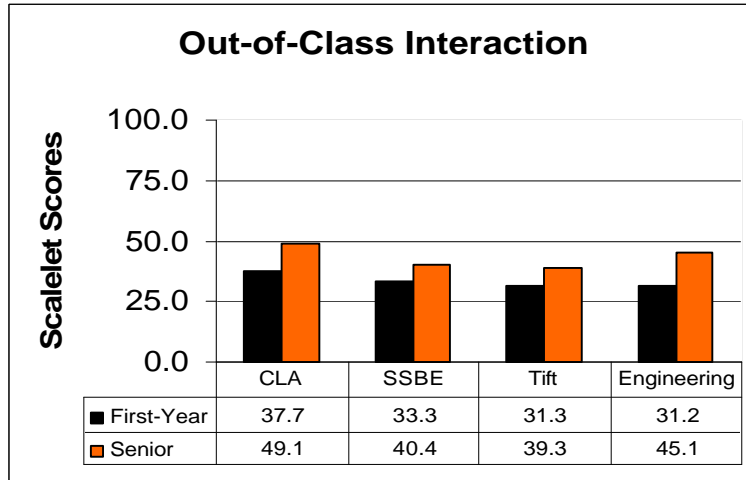
## Course Interaction

- How often have you discussed grades or assignments with an instructor?
- How often have you discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class?
- How often have you received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)?



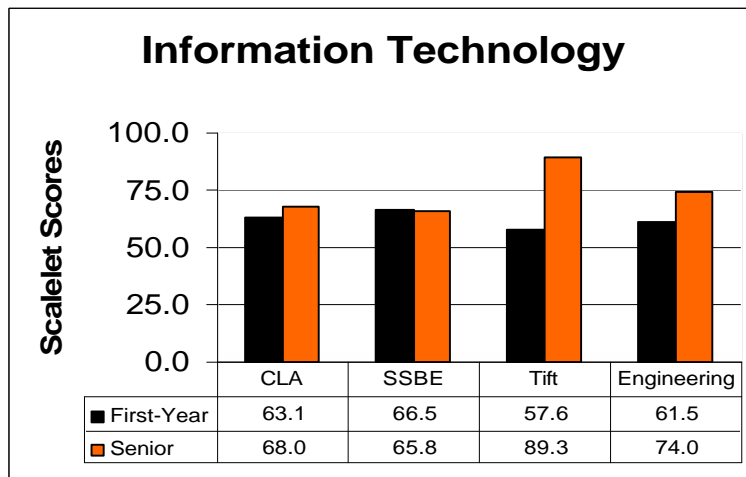
### Out-of-Class Interaction

- How often have you talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor?
- How often have you worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)?



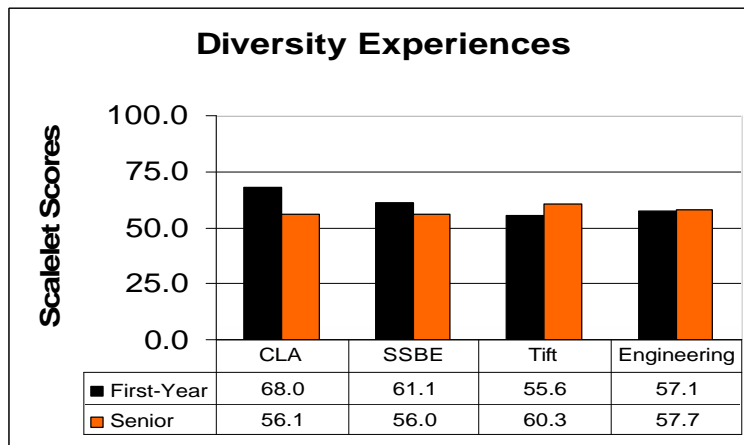
### Information Technology

- How often have you used an electronic medium (list-serv, chat group, Internet, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment?
- How often have you used e-mail to communicate with an instructor?
- To what extent does the institution emphasize using computers in academic work?



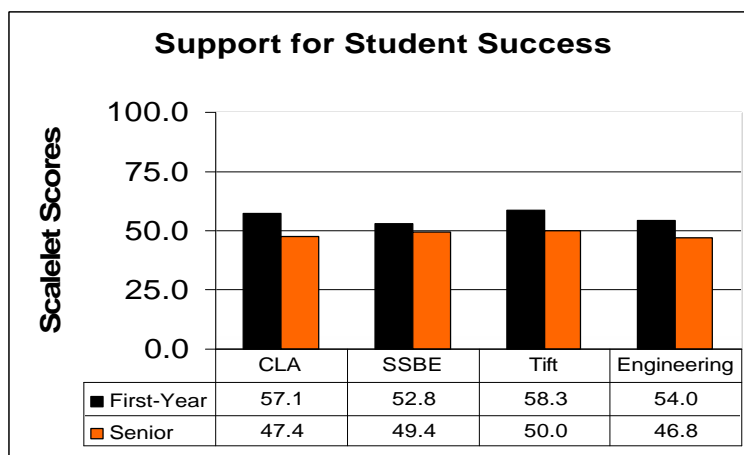
## Diversity Experiences

- How often have you had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own?
- How often have you had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values?
- To what extent does your institution emphasize encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds?



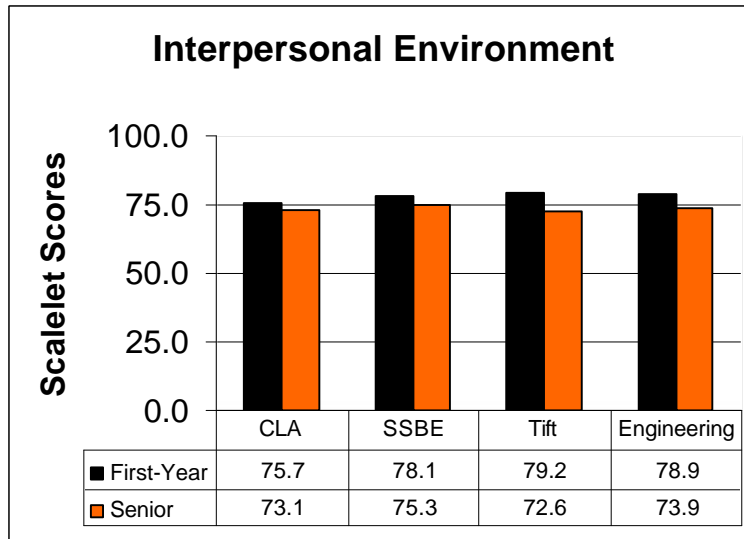
## Support for Student Success

- To what extent does your institution emphasize providing the support you need to help you succeed academically?
- To what extent does your institution emphasize helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)?
- To what extent does your institution emphasize providing the support you need to thrive socially?



## Interpersonal Environment

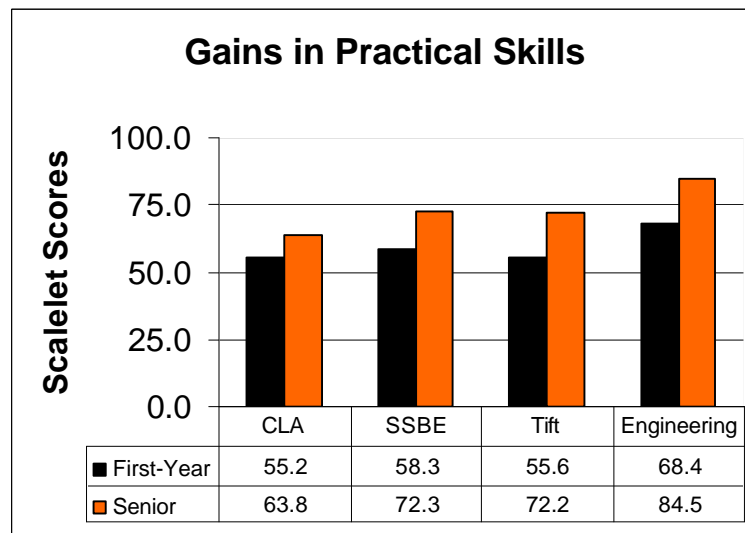
- Quality of your relationships with other students?
- Quality of your relationships with faculty members?
- Quality of your relationships with administrative personnel and offices?



## Gains in Practical Skills

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in ...

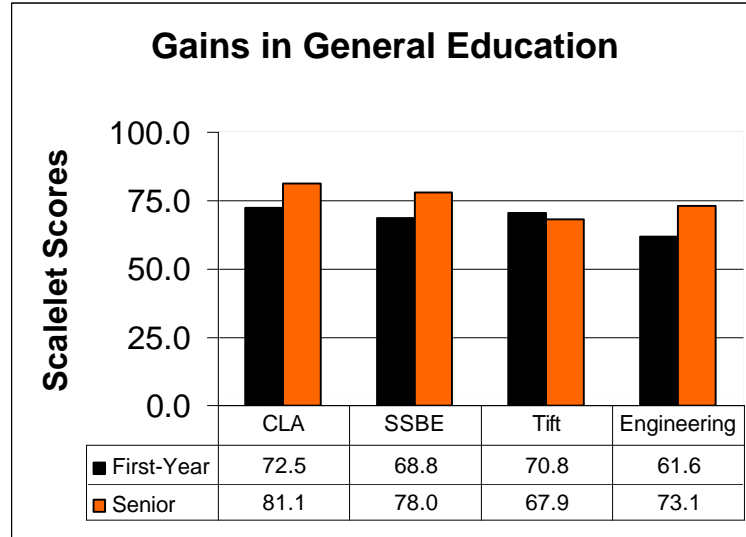
- using computing and information technology?
- analyzing qualitative problems?
- acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills?



### Gains in General Education

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in ...

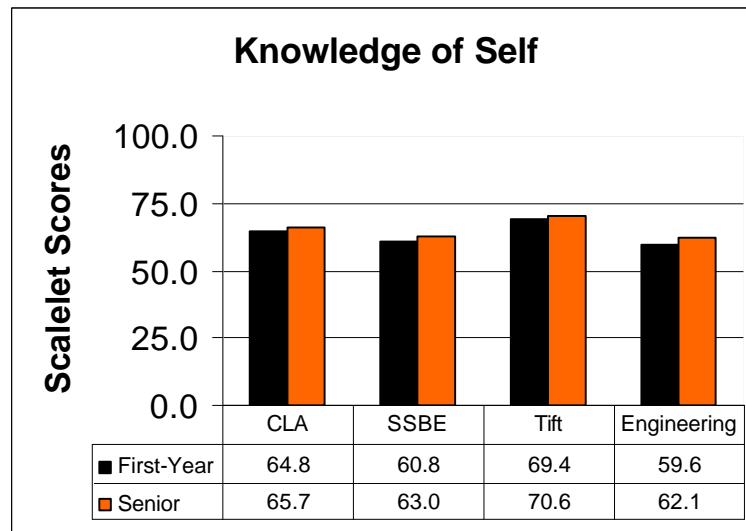
- writing clearly and effectively?
- speaking clearly and effectively?
- thinking critically and analytically?
- acquiring a broad general education?



### Knowledge of Self

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in ...

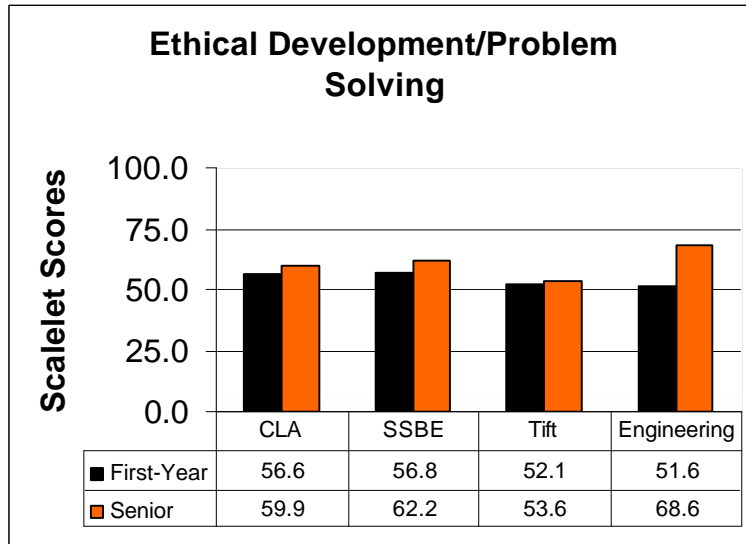
- understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds?
- understanding yourself?
- working effectively with others?



### Ethical Development/Problem Solving

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in ...

- developing a personal code of values and ethics?
- solving complex real-world problems?



### Civic Responsibility

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in ...

- contributing to the welfare of your community?
- voting in local, state, or national elections?

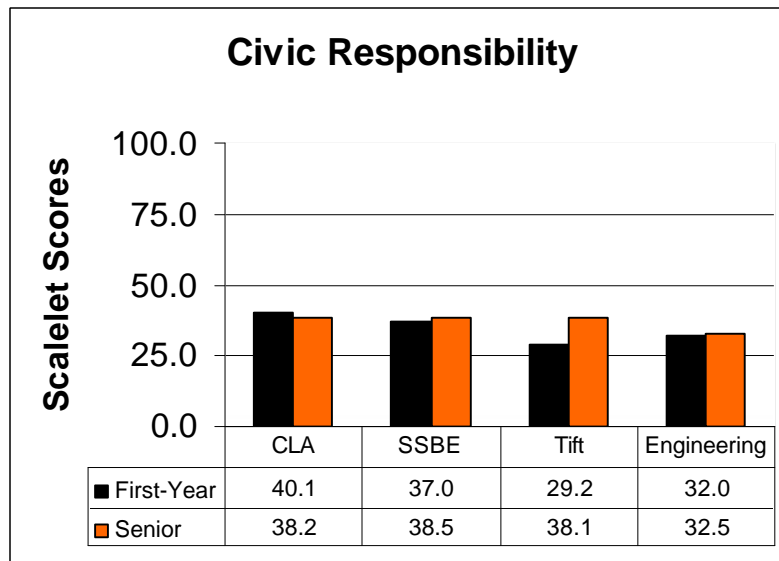


Table 3 provides responses by college/school and student level to satisfaction related NSSE questions.

**Table 3**  
**General Satisfaction Questions**

	<b>CLA</b>		<b>SSBE</b>		<b>Tift</b>		<b>Engineering</b>	
	<b>FY</b>	<b>SR</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>SR</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>SR</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>SR</b>
Entire educational experience was good/excellent	91%	89%	97%	93%	100%	100%	94%	95%
If I could start over, I would probably/definitely go to Mercer	87%	86%	84%	78%	88%	86%	95%	87%
Overall, the quality of academic advising was good/excellent	86%	80%	84%	73%	63%	72%	89%	84%