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The most interesting result is that it looks as though **students who perceive SAU as placing less emphasis on academics have lower academic achievement**. Since the sample size used in making this conclusion is small, I'd like to study this further.

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NSSE Results I've noticed thus far:

- The institutions participating in the Catholic Colleges & Universities Consortium have significantly changed from 2006. Only 10 institutions (out of 24) from 2006 remain in the 2009 sample. Also, only 10 of the institutions in the Consortium have the same Carnegie Classification as SAU. For these reasons (and because the Consortium norms changed so much from 2006-09), I don't think we should use the Consortium as a comparison group. We can use this Consortium to compare the extra questions added at the end of the survey.

- I fed the data into some automated charts I prepared last spring. The results are similar to what we've come to expect from the NSSE.
- Seniors rate SAU higher in all the benchmarks except "Supportive Campus Environment."
- 2009 freshmen benchmarks increased from the 2006 sample
- 2009 seniors rated SAU significantly lower in "Student Faculty Interactions" than the 2006 seniors. The other benchmarks didn't change much
- SAU tends to see larger (positive) differences between senior and freshmen ratings in any given year. For example, our students perceive a much larger increase in academic challenge (as they move from freshmen to seniors) than students at Carnegie Peer institutions.

- Stata has some new logistic regression margin estimation commands, so it's much easier to determine which factors influence a student's ratings.
- Students perceiving a lower level of academic challenge are more likely to be: female (+10% chance), Caucasian (+13% chance), or transfer students (+10% chance)
- Female athletes are 10% more likely to rate SAU low in "active and collaborative learning" (I don't know why this would be)
- Transfer students are 25% more likely to rate SAU low in "student faculty interaction" (this one makes sense to me)
- Students with lower ACT scores are more likely to rate SAU low in "enriching educational experiences." I need to look at these questions again -- I can't remember if they are rating themselves low in this area or if they are rating the university's offerings. A student with an ACT of 18 has a 62% chance of scoring low on this benchmark. A student with an ACT of 22 has only a 40% chance of rating low in this benchmark.

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Here are the more detailed findings:

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Academic Challenge:

We score well in the "low-challenge" academic areas. For example, we outscore our peers in:

- Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- Number of problem sets that take you less than an hour to complete
- We scored lower than our peers in the number of times freshmen prepared 2+ drafts of a paper/assignment before turning it in.

We do not score well in how students perceive our contribution to their educational and personal growth. For example:

- We score equal to or slightly lower than our peers in contributing to the following skills:
 - Acquiring a broad general education
 - Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills
 - Writing clearly and effectively
 - Speaking clearly and effectively
 - Thinking critically and analytically
 - Analyzing quantitative problems
 - Working effectively with others
 - Voting in local, state, or national elections
 - Learning effectively on your own
 - Understanding yourself
 - Solving complex real-world problems
 - Developing a personal code of values and ethics
 - Contributing to the welfare of your community
- We do score higher than our peers (but lower than the Catholic Schools Consortium) in "Developing a deepened sense of spirituality."

It looks as though our 2009 seniors had less time for co-curricular and relaxation activities than they did when they were freshmen in 2006. In moving from 2006 freshmen to 2009 seniors, our students scores went down in these areas:

- Participating in co-curricular activities
- Number of problem sets that take you less than an hour to complete
- Relaxing and socializing
- Attending campus events and activities

- Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities
- Attended an art exhibit, gallery, play, dance, or other theatre performance
- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together
- (SAU provides) the support you need to thrive socially
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
- (SAU provides) the support you need to help you succeed academically

The 2009 seniors did spend more time on academics and working. In moving from 2006 freshmen to 2009 seniors, our students scores went up in these areas:

- Working for pay off campus (increased much more than freshmen-to-seniors at our peer institutions)
- Providing care for dependents living with you
- Time spent preparing for class
- Time spent commuting to class
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more

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Enriching Educational Experiences:

Our freshmen have many enriching educational experiences; our seniors do not participate in as many opportunities. For example:

- We score significantly higher than our peers in a couple enriching experiences for freshmen (56% participate in community service; 44% participate in a learning community)
- We score similarly (or slightly below) our peers in those same experiences for seniors (54% participate in community service; 37% participate in a learning community)
- Our freshmen report attending more campus events and activities than our seniors
- In 2006, an average of 20% of freshmen participated in the enriching experiences. In 2009, an average of 36% of those same students participated in those activities (as seniors).

We are still weak in the diversity areas. In comparing our results to our Carnegie peers, we score significantly lower in each of the following items:

- Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own
- Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective

We are weak in IT usage. For example, we scored significantly lower than our peers in:

- Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment
- Our freshmen rate us significantly below our peers in contributing to their skills in using computing and information technology

In moving from 2006 freshmen to 2009 seniors, our students seemed to become more engaged. For example, scores went up in:

- Made a class presentation
- Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions

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Student-Faculty Interactions:

Our faculty outscore our Carnegie peers in interacting with students. For example:

- Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance
- Relationships with faculty members
- Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?

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Catholicism:

We do not compare favorably to the 2009 Catholic Schools Consortium. We did not outscore this consortium in any of the consortium-specific items. For example, we scored significantly lower than those schools in:

- The mission of this institution is widely understood by students

- Ethical and spiritual development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution
- This institution offers opportunities for volunteering and community service
- Social and personal development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution
- This institution offers opportunities for developing leadership skills
- Preparation for a career is an important part of the mission of this institution
- The heritage of the founders/founding religious community of this institution is evident here
- The faculty and staff here are respectful of people of different religions
- The students here are respectful of people of different religions
- Students at this institution feel free to express their individual spirituality
- People of different sexual orientations are accepted socially here
- The environment here encourages students to develop an appreciation of diversity
- At this institution, there are opportunities for students to strengthen their religious commitment
- The mission of this institution is reflected in its course offerings
- As a result of my experience here, I am more aware of social justice (fairness and equality) issues in the world
- The faculty at this institution discuss the ethical implications of what is being studied
- As a result of my experience here, I am more aware of my own personal values

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First-year:

It looks as though our freshmen continue to be more engaged. Looking at the trend from 2001 to 2006 to 2009, freshmen scores increased consistently in:

- Academic challenge
- Active/collaborative learning
- Enriching experiences
- Supportive campus environment
- The student-faculty interactions benchmark remains virtually unchanged since 2001

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Even though the resulting sample size was low (n=24), I got some interesting results in merging the 2006 NSSE data with the MAPP results. First, I attempted to see if any of the NSSE benchmarks could be used to predict MAPP performance. My hypothesis was that higher "Academic Challenge" and "Active/Collaborative Learning" might correspond to higher MAPP scores. I threw all the benchmarks into a robust linear prediction (with sampling weights) as predictors of MAPP scores and found the only significant predictor was "Academic Challenge," accounting for about 15% of the variance in MAPP scores.

That result wasn't surprising, but the sign of the coefficient of that predictor was. The regression equation was found to be: $MAPP = 477 - .54(\text{Academic Challenge})$. So students with lower "Academic Challenge" scores had higher MAPP scores.

Seeing as how this didn't make much sense, I looked at which items made up the "Academic Challenge" benchmark. 10 of the 11 items in the benchmark represented things such as the number of assigned readings/papers completed by the student, the emphasis SAU placed on memorization vs higher-level thinking skills, how often a student has worked hard, and the number of hours a student spends per week preparing for class. If those variables had negative correlations with MAPP scores, I'd be depressed. The last item in the benchmark, however, asked students to rate their perception of how much SAU emphasizes spending significant amount of time studying and on academic work.

So I put these items into the regression analysis and found only one item significantly predicted MAPP scores. That item was the perceived emphasis SAU places on spending time on academic work. This perception accounts for 36% of the variance in MAPP scores. The prediction equation was found to be: $MAPP = 483 - 11(\text{emphasis on academics})$. **So students who perceive SAU as placing less emphasis on academics have lower MAPP scores.** This fits with the whole self-fulfilling prophecy of low-expectations thing.