

# NSSE 2011 Executive Summary

## Dalton State College – Senior Students



This summary identifies Dalton State College's seniors' perceptions of the education they have received at Dalton State. All statements are derived from the 2011 NSSE survey, with a particular emphasis on strengths, weaknesses, and comparisons between Dalton State's survey results and the mean results from comparative institutions.

*The survey results from approximately 264 respondents suggest the following.*

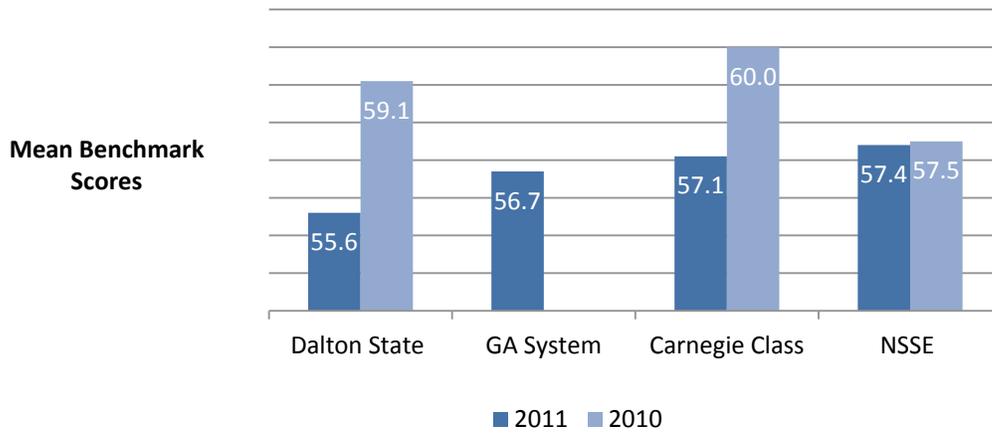
### • Level of Academic Challenge

*"Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance."*

Overall, scores for Dalton State seniors on the "Level of Academic Challenge" benchmark decreased from the previous year and remained somewhat lower than those of participating institutions.

- When asked to evaluate the extent of time spent in a typical 7-day week preparing for class, Dalton State's seniors reported less time than did seniors from comparative institutions.
- Again this year, our senior students reported fewer written papers than other colleges—especially papers greater than five pages long.
- Our seniors reported around the same emphasis on 'higher-level learning' as their peers (i.e., synthesizing information into new, more complex interpretations and relationships, making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, and the application of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations). Dalton State's benchmark ratings on *Mental Activities* as a whole were comparable with peer institutions.
- They also regularly include diverse perspectives in class discussions and writing assignments.
- Seniors at Dalton State report that they often work harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations. Again this year, seniors feel that our exams also push them to do their best work.
- Seniors also believe that the College has helped them write and speak clearly and effectively.
- Our seniors feel the College has made them more capable of thinking critically, analyzing quantitative problems, and using computing and information technology.

### Overall Level of Academic Challenge Compared with Other Institutions



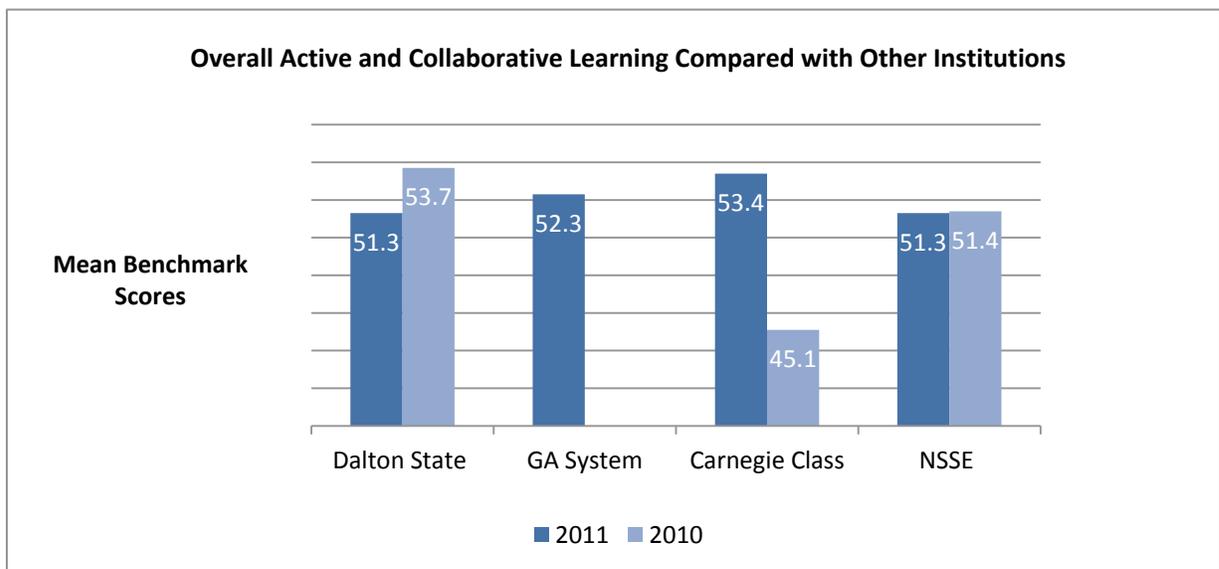
*The USG System was added as a comparison in 2011.*

## • Active and Collaborative Learning

*“Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the complex, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.”*

Seniors’ ratings were slightly less positive than last year. Our scores ranked the same as the average NSSE institution, but we also ranked lower than the other schools in our Carnegie class.

- Similar to last year, Dalton State seniors felt they participated in class and contributed to class discussions.
- When asked whether Dalton State students work with other students on projects *during* class, senior response ratings were higher than those of all NSSE participating institutions. However, participation was still less than those of their peer groups when asked about work they do together *outside* of class.
- There has been a notable decrease in participation ‘in a community-based project as part of a regular course,’ according to Dalton State senior respondents. Moreover, ratings were less than those of their peer groups.



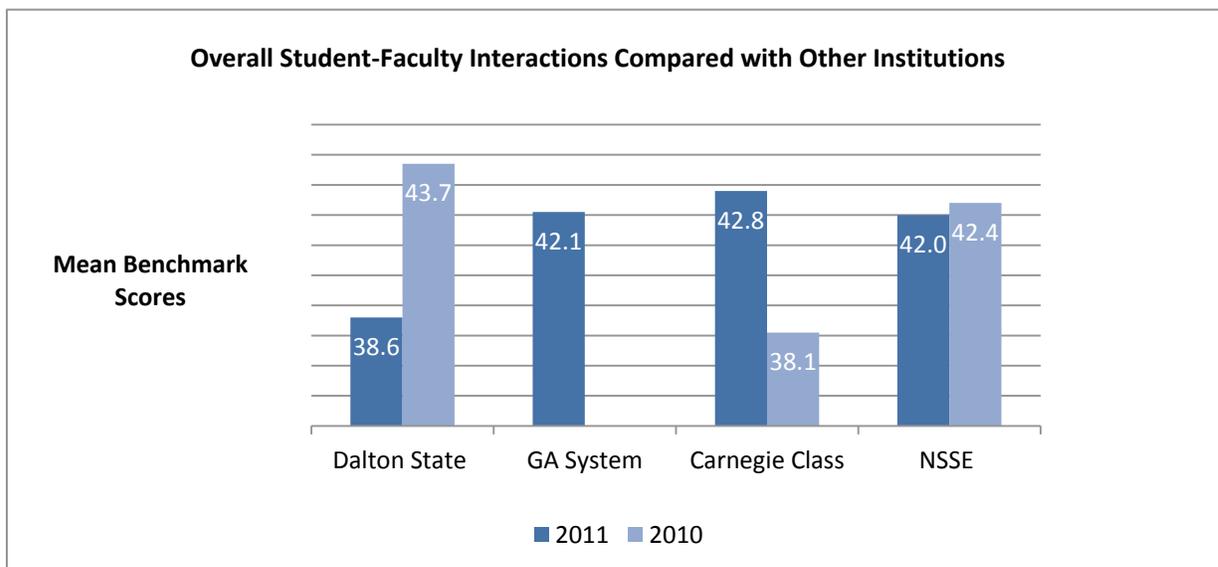
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## ● Student-Faculty Interactions

*“Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.”*

In comparison with the other institutions in this study, Dalton State ranked below on student-faculty interactions.

- Significantly more Dalton State seniors reported receiving prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on academic performance this year.
- However, our seniors reported working on research projects with faculty members outside of course or program requirements less often than do seniors at other institutions’ again this year.
- Dalton State seniors were less likely to talk about career plans with a faculty member or advisor than last year.
- The quality of senior relationships with faculty members is around average in comparison with other institutions in this study.



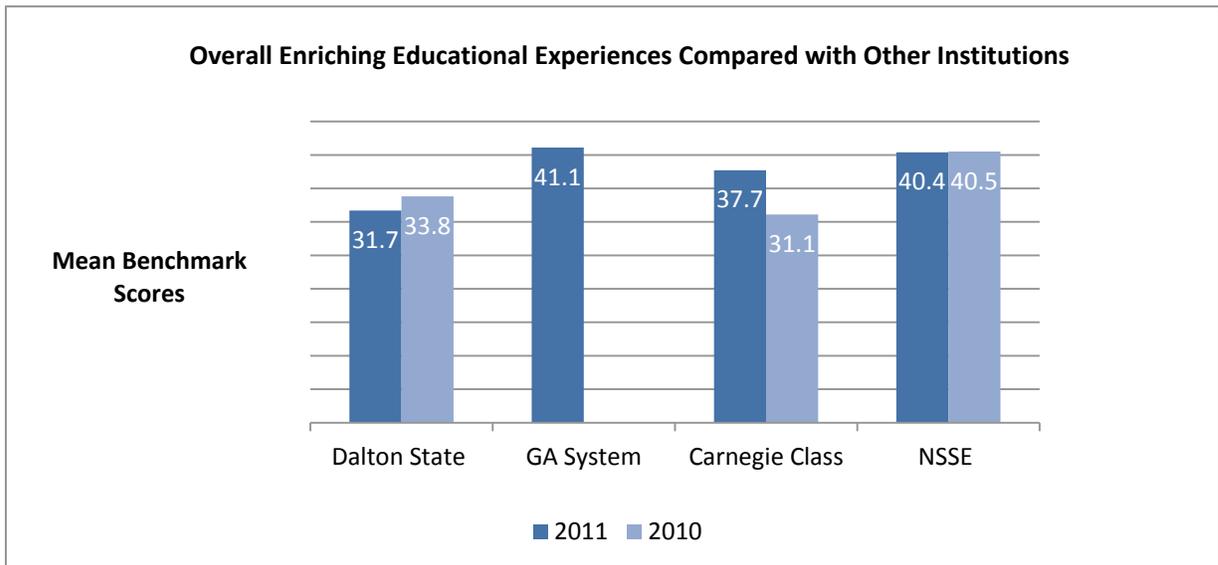
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## ● Enriching Educational Experiences

*“Complementary learning opportunities in and out of class augment academic programs. Diversity experiences teach students valuable things about themselves and others. Technology facilitates collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge.”*

Overall, Dalton State seniors ranked lower than seniors at other institutions on their “NSSE 2011 Enriching Educational Experiences” benchmark scores.

- Again this year, seniors ranked lower than the seniors at our peer institutions in participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.).
- This year there has been a notable decrease in participation in practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, and clinical assignments among Dalton State respondents.
- Seniors don’t often attend art exhibits, plays, dances, music, theater, or other performances.
- They also seldom participate in physical fitness activities.
- The percentage of seniors who have not done any community service or volunteer work is greater than at other institutions.
- A greater-than-average percentage of our seniors have not taken any foreign language coursework.
- They also have not engaged in Study Abroad as often as seniors at other schools.
- A higher percentage of our seniors report that they have not completed a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.) than do seniors of other institutions.
- Our students also spend less time relaxing and socializing than do students at other schools.
- They also commute more often than other institutions’ seniors.
- A major factor in our seniors’ extracurricular inactivity is that 67% of Dalton State seniors report being non-traditional and working off-campus. The percentage of seniors who care for dependents is also far greater than the percentage at other institutions.
- When asked whether Dalton State students vote in state, local, and national elections, senior responses remain higher than those of their peers in all participating institutions.



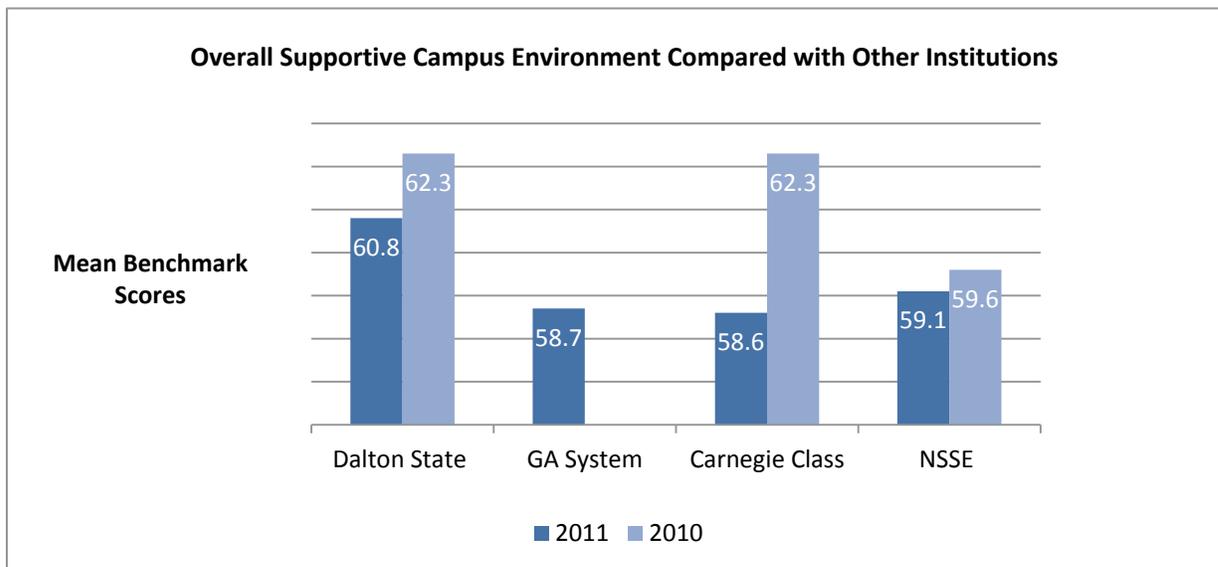
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## • Supportive Campus Environment

*“Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.”*

Similar to the pattern seen last year, Dalton State overall scores on the *Supportive Campus Environment* benchmark continue to surpass those of the comparison groups.

- Dalton State seniors continue to positively rate their interactions with other students and faculty.
- Significantly more seniors reported that Dalton State provided the support needed to help them succeed academically.
- Again this year, senior responses place the College’s administrative personnel and offices as slightly more helpful, considerate, and flexible than the peer group’s administration.
- Seniors continue to positively evaluate their entire educational experience at Dalton State, 82% of seniors would choose Dalton State if they could start their college career over again.



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