



NSSE 2010 Executive Summary

Dalton State College – Freshmen

This summary identifies Dalton State College’s freshmen’s perceptions of the education they have received at Dalton State. All statements are derived from the 2010 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 521 respondents suggest the following:

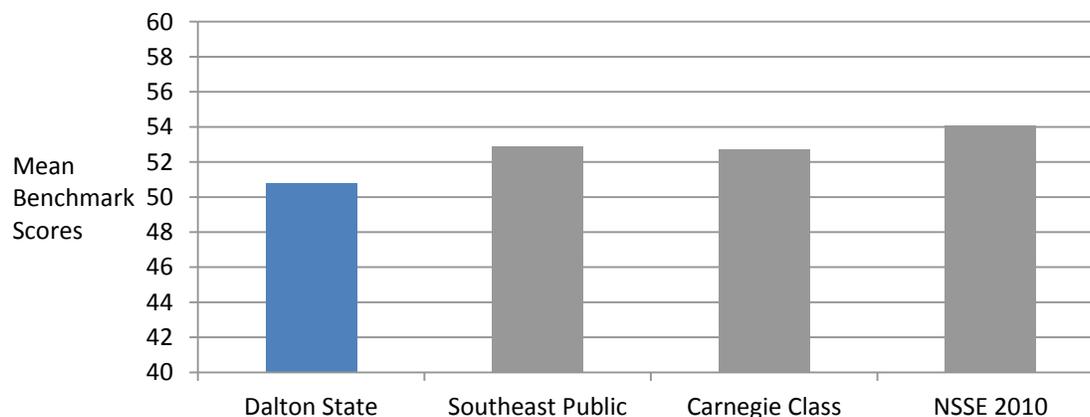
● Level of Academic Challenge

“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, Dalton State freshmen perceive the College as less academically challenging than do freshmen at other institutions.

- Our freshmen write fewer papers than other colleges—especially papers greater than five pages long.
- Freshmen believe that Dalton State classes do not emphasize enough the application of theories or concepts to practical problems or new situations.
- Freshmen think that Dalton State does not emphasize enough the skill of making judgments concerning the value of information, arguments, and methods, such as assessing how others gathered and interpreted data.
- Freshmen do not feel as though the College has taught them to solve complex, real-world problems.
- Freshmen believe that Dalton State faculty assigns fewer textbooks and books to students as part of coursework than other schools. However, our freshmen read more books for pleasure than do students at the average school.
- Dalton State’s freshmen are exceptionally poor at spending time preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, and other academic activities).
- This is explained in part by the fact that the number of freshmen who work off-campus is double the national average, and the number of freshmen who provide care for dependents is more than 220% higher than the national average.
- Freshmen students do, however, come to class without completing readings or assignments less often than freshmen at other institutions.

Overall Level of Academic Challenge Compared with Other Institutions



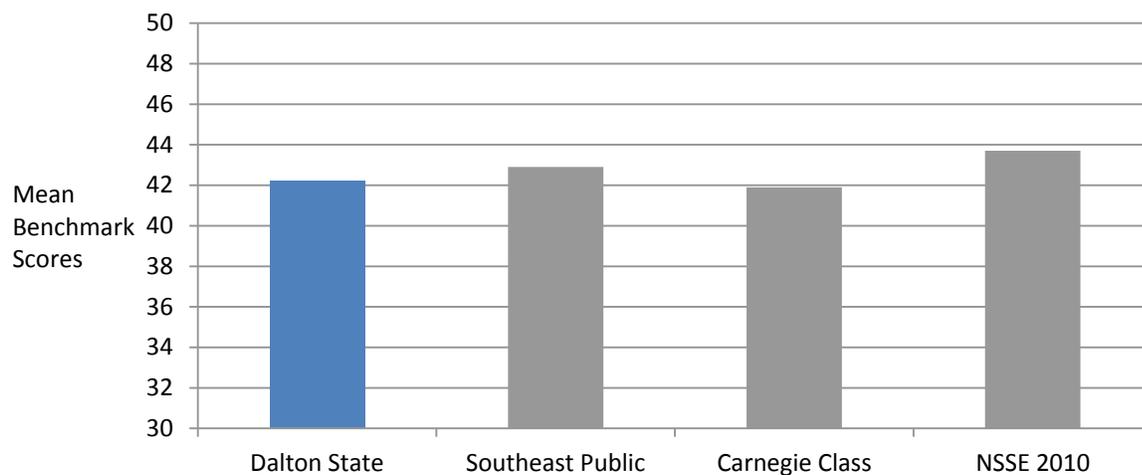
● Active and Collaborative Learning

“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.”

Freshmen as a whole do not perceive their institution as providing active and collaborative learning, and Dalton State’s ratings were slightly above the Carnegie Class institutions and only slightly below all others.

- Our freshmen work with other students on many projects *during* classes, but not enough with students *outside* of class time.
- Freshmen rarely participate in community-based projects (e.g. service learning) as part of their regular courses.
- Freshmen are weak at using electronic mediums (chat groups, instant messaging, email, etc.) to discuss or complete assignments.

Overall Active and Collaborative Learning Compared with Other Institutions



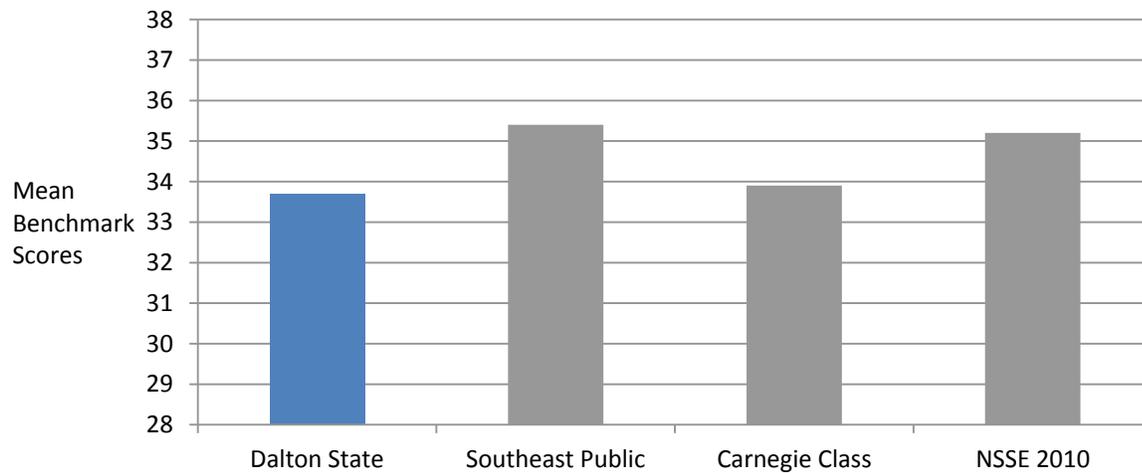
● Student-Faculty Interactions

“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 lower on overall student-faculty interaction.

- Our freshmen students rarely work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.). They do, however, often discuss grades and assignments with instructors.
- The quality of freshmen relationships with faculty members is slightly above average.

Overall Student-Faculty Interactions Compared with Other Institutions



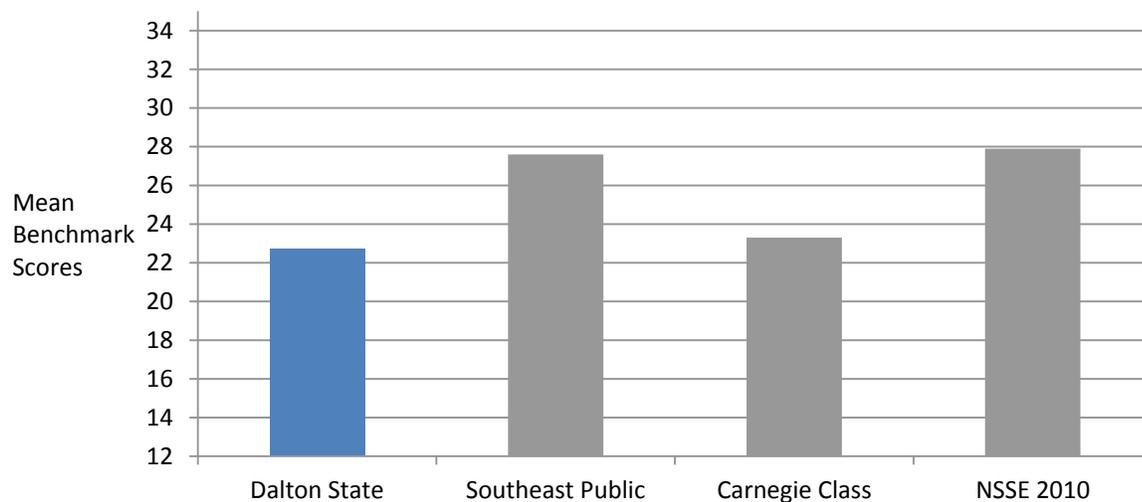
● Enriching Educational Experiences

“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.”

In comparison with the other institutions in this study, overall, Dalton State ranked lower on providing enriching educational experiences.

- Freshmen do not think they include many diverse perspectives in classroom discussions and reading assignments.
- Freshmen do not feel as though the College has helped them develop a personal code of values and ethics.
- Freshmen students seldom participate in foreign language coursework.
- Our freshmen rarely attend art exhibits, plays, dances, music, theater, or other cultural performances.
- Our freshmen do not often participate in physical fitness activities.
- They also do not often participate in community services or volunteer work.
- Our freshmen report spending less time relaxing and socializing than do freshmen at other schools, as well.
- Freshmen spend much less time participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, etc.) and campus events than other schools. This is, again, in part due to the fact that many of our freshmen students are non-traditional, with significant work and family responsibilities.
- However, our freshmen feel they are taught to write and speak clearly and effectively.
- Our freshmen students also vote in state, local, and national elections more often than freshmen in other schools.

Overall Enriching Educational Experiences Compared with Other Institutions



• 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.”

In comparison to the other institutions in the study, Dalton State ranks above the Carnegie Class institutions and slightly below all others providing a supportive campus environment.

- Our freshmen commute to class at a higher rate than do students at other schools.
- The quality of freshmen relationships with administrative personnel is slightly above average.
- The freshmen students feel in general that other students are friendly and supportive.
- The freshmen think the College provides adequate support to succeed academically.

Overall Supportive Campus Environment Compared with Other Institutions

