December 2008 • Student Academic Engagement  The Office of Student Engagement works to assess and encourage student engagement in curricular and co-curricular educational activities that enhance their learning, academic success and involvement on campus. To determine the level of academic engagement among students, the office, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance, coordinates the biannual administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a survey of first-year and senior students. Read on to learn about some of the most recent NSSE findings.

Active and collaborative learning  Students at the University are actively involved in their education, either by participating in class or by helping their peers. The NSSE survey showed that 53% of students tutored or taught other students during 2006-2007. Students are also actively engaging in learning by contributing to class discussions and making presentations.

Campus provides support to students  In the 2007 NSSE survey, 79% of first-year students and 69% of seniors said that the University provides a significant amount of the support they need to succeed academically. Also, 84% of seniors said they would choose the University again if they could start their college career over.

Level of academic challenge  The University’s level of academic challenge is measured by factors such as the number of assigned textbooks or the amount of time students prepare for a class. According to NSSE, 75% of first-year students feel that the University places substantial emphasis on academics, and most said they have worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor’s expectations.

Educational experiences for students  By senior year, 57% of seniors have completed a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience or clinical assignment. Other enriching activities such as volunteering also drew high student participation. According to the survey, 69% of seniors and 63% of first-year students have participated in community service or volunteer work.

Student-faculty interaction  According to the 2007 NSSE, student-faculty interactions are strong. In the survey, 61% of first-year students and 75% of seniors reported that they frequently receive prompt feedback from faculty members. Additionally, by senior year 20% of students have conducted research with a faculty member.

First-year programs at the University strong among peer institutions  The NSSE indicates that South Carolina’s programs, which include University 101, are better than programs at other schools at improving the academic experiences of first-year students. For example, the level of collaborative learning of first-year students at South Carolina was 43.2, while the level at peer institutions was 39.4.

All data is from the 2007 NSSE. For more information and for pdf files of current and past issues go to www.sa.sc.edu/publications.htm.
Resources to help make our students better students.

**Office of Student Engagement**  
www.sc.edu/studentengagement

The Office of Student Engagement collaboratively to develop, implement and assess initiatives to encourage students’ engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities that facilitate their learning and academic success.

The Office’s offerings include:
- Service-learning
- Interdisciplinary linked-course communities
- Sophomore-year initiatives

**Study Abroad**  
www.sa.sc.edu/sa

The Study Abroad office provides information about study-abroad options and helps students navigate the process of studying abroad.

The Office of Study Abroad offers:
- Programs to intern, teach, research, work, study or volunteer in more than 35 countries in six continents.
- Resources to help faculty design study-abroad programs specific to their disciplines.

**Student Success Center**  
www.sa.sc.edu/ssc

The Student Success Center, housed in the Thomas Cooper Library, is the central campus location for academic-support services.

The center’s offerings include:
- Supplemental Instruction
- Scholarship retention programs
- Early intervention programs

**Service Learning**  
www.sc.edu/servicelearning

Service Learning integrates meaningful community service with academic coursework and purposeful reflection, in an effort to create an out-of-the-classroom experience that enhances academics and benefits the community and students.

To enhance the University’s service-learning activities, the Carolina Service-Learning Initiative offers:
- Resources to help faculty set up academic service-learning courses.
- Guidance on developing learning outcomes for service-learning activities.
- Online resources for implementing service-learning in established courses.

**Undergraduate Research**  
www.sc.edu/our

The Office of Undergraduate Research promotes inquiry, discovery and creativity in all disciplines through faculty-student mentoring relationships and research, scholarship, and creative activities.

The Office of Undergraduate research:
- Manages the Magellan Scholar fellowship program.
- Provides venues such as Discovery Day for undergraduates to present their research.
- Sponsors seminars for students to learn skills necessary for becoming successful researchers.

---

For your reference file
For additional copies, call 777.4172 or e-mail gudridge@sc.edu.

Comments
Your comments and suggestions for future issues of “Causerie” are welcome. Please e-mail saas@mailbox.sc.edu.