

# THE MVC STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN BRIEF



Each year the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students at hundreds of colleges and universities to reflect on the time they devote to various learning activities. The topics explored are linked by previous research on student success in college.

Results from NSSE can provide prospective students with insights into how they might learn and develop at a given college. To help in the college exploration process, NSSE developed *A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College* to provide students and parents key questions to ask during campus visits.



The following responses were provided by 305 Valley students on the 2009 NSSE survey.

## ACADEMIC CHALLENGE

**To what degree is studying and spending time on academic work emphasized?**

72% of first year students feel that Missouri Valley places substantial emphasis on academics.

**Do faculty hold students to high standards?**

59% of first year students frequently work harder than they thought they could to meet faculty expectations.<sup>2</sup>

**How much time do students spend on homework each week?**

16% of first year students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class; 34% spend 5 hours or less.

**What types of thinking do assignments require?**

First-year students report substantial emphasis on the following activities:

Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods: 67%  
Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 67%  
Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 63%  
Making judgments about value of information: 71%  
Applying theories or concepts: 70%

**How much writing is expected?**

6% of first year students write more than 10 papers between 5 and 19 pages; 29% have written a paper more than 20 pages in length.

**How much reading is expected during the school year?**

28% of first year students read more than 10 assigned books and packs of course readings; 34% read fewer than 5.

**Do exams require students to do their best work?**

37% of first year students report that their exams strongly challenge them to do their best work.<sup>3</sup>

## ACTIVE LEARNING

**How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?**

53% of first year students frequently discuss readings or ideas from coursework outside of class.

**Do students work together on projects – inside and outside of class?**

59% of first year students frequently work with other students on projects in class; 52% work with peers on assignments outside of class.

**How often do students make class presentations?**

49% of first year students report making frequent presentations in class.

**How many students participate in community-based projects in regular courses?**

14% of first year students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects during a given year; 63% never took part in such activities.

**How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?**

By their senior year, 63% of Missouri Valley students have participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

**Do students have opportunities to tutor or teach other students?**

25% of seniors frequently assist their fellow students by tutoring or teaching them.

## STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION

**Are faculty members accessible and supportive?**

49% of first year students say Missouri Valley faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic.

**How many students work on research projects with faculty?**

By their senior year, 24% of Valley students have done research with a faculty member.

**Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?**

59% of first year students indicate they frequently get prompt verbal or written feedback from faculty members.

**How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?**

90% of seniors at least occasionally discuss career plans with faculty, while only 10% never talk with a faculty member about their career plans.<sup>4</sup>

**Do students and faculty members work together on committees and projects outside of course work?**

60% of first year students at least occasionally spend time with faculty members on activities other than coursework.



**ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

**What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?**

During their first year, 11% of students participate in a learning community. By their senior year, 29% of students have taken an independent study class.

**How often do students interact among peers with different social, political, or religious views?**

53% of first year students say they frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs.

**How often do students interact with peers from different racial or ethnic backgrounds?**

66% of first year students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race or ethnicity.

**How many students study in other countries?**

By their senior year, 10% of Missouri Valley students have studied abroad.

**Do students participate in activities that enhance their spirituality?**

28% of first year students frequently engage in spiritually enhancing activities such as worship, meditation, or prayer.

**What percentage of students participate in community service?**

By their senior year, 62% of Valley students have participated in community service or volunteer work.

**SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT**

**How well do students get along with other students?**

56% of first year students report peers as friendly, supportive, and help them feel as if they belong.

**Are students satisfied with their overall educational experience at Missouri Valley?**

80% of first year students report a favorable image of Valley; 67% of seniors would choose Valley again if they could start their college career over.

**How much time do students devote to co-curricular activities?**

26% of first year students spend more than 15 hours a week participating in co-curricular activities; 24% spend no time participating in co-curricular activities.

**How well do students get along with administrators and staff?**

45% of first year students find administrative personnel and offices helpful, considerate, and flexible.

**To what extent does Missouri Valley help with student academic and social needs?**

70% of first year students felt Valley has a substantial commitment to their academic success. 55% feel well-supported by Valley regarding their social needs.

*A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College* is available at [www.nsse.iub.edu/html/pocket\\_guide\\_intro.cfm](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/html/pocket_guide_intro.cfm)

**Notes:**

1. "Substantial" emphasis is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very much" and "Quite a bit."
2. "Frequently" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often" and "Often."
3. "Strongly challenge" is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is "Very little" and 7 is "Very much."
4. "Occasionally" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often," "Often," and "Sometimes."

**Data source:** National Survey of Student Engagement 2009

**National Survey of Student Engagement**

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