

Hilbert College's First Year Students

Findings from the BCSSE, NSSE, CLA and Thriving Quotient Survey

July 9, 2013

Comparing Hilbert College data from 2010, 2011 & 2012 cohorts (n = 646) to BCSSE data from 90 Private, Baccalaureate colleges (n > 11,000).

BCSSE Scale	Hilbert mean	BCSSE mean	Level of Significance
High School Academic Engagement	5.2	5.7	P < .01
Expected Academic Engagement	6.1	6.4	P < .001
Expected Academic Perseverance	7.2	7.3	NS
Expected Academic Difficulty	4.3	4.9	p < .001
Perceived Academic Preparation	7.1	7.2	NS
Importance of Campus Environment	7.2	7.6	P < .001

Compared to students at other private, baccalaureate colleges, incoming Hilbert First-Years were less academically engaged in high school, expect to be less academically engaged in college, expect a lower degree of academic difficulty in their first year, and rate the importance of a challenging and supportive campus lower.

There were no significant differences in their certainty of being able to persist in the face of academic difficulty or their perceptions of their own academic preparation for college-level work.

High School Academic Engagement

The differences in High School Academic Engagement were most striking in that Hilbert first-years reported reading fewer assigned textbooks and other course materials, fewer numbers of hours per

week preparing for classes, asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions less often, preparing 2 or more drafts of a paper or assignment less often, and less often discussing ideas from readings and classes with others outside of classes.

During your last year of high school:

	Hilbert First-Years	BCSSE First-Years (private, baccalaureate)
Read assigned texts or other course materials <u>Quite a Bit</u> or <u>Very Much</u>	50%	72%
10 hours or less per week preparing for class	79%	54%
More than 20 hours per week preparing for class	4%	16%
<u>Often</u> or <u>Very Often</u> asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	67%	79%
<u>Often</u> or <u>Very Often</u> prepared 2 or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	37%	45%
<u>Often</u> or <u>Very Often</u> discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family, etc.)	38%	53%

Differences were much smaller in the frequencies of writing both short (5 or fewer pages)(73% vs. 77% Often or Very Often)) and longer (more than 5 pages)(35% vs. 32%) papers, and in how often they made class presentations (54% vs. 57%), discussed grades/assignments with teachers 53% vs. 52%), worked with others students on projects during (71% vs. 66%) or outside of class (34% vs. 39%), and discussed ideas from readings or class with teachers outside of class 29% vs. 32%).

Expected Academic Engagement

Although Hilbert’s incoming first-year students expect to spend considerably more time preparing for classes in college than they did in high school, their expectations of the hours per week they will spend are still well below the typical reports nationally of students entering private, baccalaureate colleges. Hilbert first-years also expect to more frequently work on assignments with classmates in class than outside of class, a finding reversed for their peers nationally. Finally, Hilbert’s first-years have lower expectations of discussing what they are learning with others outside of class.

During the coming school year:

	Hilbert First-Years	BCSSE First-Years (private, baccalaureate)
<u>10 hours or less</u> per week preparing for class	27%	12%
<u>More than 20 hours</u> per week preparing for class	46%	68%
<u>Often or Very Often</u> work with other students on projects DURING CLASS	70%	60%
<u>Often or Very Often</u> work with classmates OUTSIDE OF CLASS to prepare class assignments	67%	78%
<u>Often or Very Often</u> discuss ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family, co-workers, etc.)	54%	69%

Differences between Hilbert first-years and their peers nationally were less striking in terms of the percentages who expected to Often or Very Often: ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions (80% vs. 85%), make a class presentation (71% vs. 68%), discuss grades or assignments with an instructor (72% vs. 69%), and discuss ideas with faculty members outside of class (50% vs. 55%).

Expected Academic Difficulty

Perhaps consistent with their expectations of needing less time to prepare for classes than was reported by their national peers, Hilbert first-years also expected to have much less difficulty in learning class material or in managing their time during their freshman year of college.

During the coming school year:

Expects to be Difficult or Very Difficult	Hilbert First-Years	BCSSE First-Years (private, baccalaureate)
Learning class material	16%	31%
Managing their time	34%	46%
Getting help with school work	8%	8%
Interacting with faculty	6%	8%

Importance of Campus Environment

Continuing the theme of Hilbert’s entering first-years having lower high school academic engagement and lower expected college academic engagement, they also place less importance on having an academically challenging experience, having support to succeed academically, and on the college

providing campus events and activities than do other BCSSE respondents at private, baccalaureate institutions. They are comparable in the importance placed on opportunities to interact with others students of different backgrounds, of getting assistance in coping with non-academic responsibilities, and support in thriving socially.

Important or Very Important that college provides:	Hilbert First-Years	BCSSE First-Years (private, baccalaureate)
A challenging academic experience	44%	65%
Support to help you succeed academically	79%	87%
Opportunities to attend campus events and activities	61%	70%
Opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds	57%	62%
Assistance coping with non-academic responsibilities	45%	46%
Support to help you thrive socially	51%	54%

Perceived Academic Preparation

Hilbert’s entering first-year students perception of their academic preparation for college did not differ significantly from that of their peers overall. Two areas in which they did report feeling less well prepared are in thinking critically and analytically (52% vs. 61% Prepared or Very Prepared) and in analyzing math quantitative problems (36% vs. 46%).

Expected Academic Perseverance

Hilbert’s entering students were overall also no less certain that they would be able to persist in the face of academic adversity than were students entering other private baccalaureate colleges. Two specific areas in which their confidence was lower were in being certain or very certain that would: study when there are other interesting things to do (30% vs. 43%) and finding additional information for course assignments when they did not understand the material (56% vs. 65%). On the other hand, Hilbert’s first-years a great sense of certainty that would they would be able to stay positive even when doing poorly on a test or assignment (65% vs. 55%).

Summary of Aggregated BCSSE Findings

Hilbert’s BCSSE results from the entering 2010, 2011 and 2012 cohorts show that compared to entering students at private, baccalaureate institutions elsewhere in the U.S., our students reported a lower experience of academic engagement during their last year of high school that appeared to carry over

into lower expectations for academic engagement in their first year of college. Although they expected to spend more time on preparing for classes in college than they did in high school, their expectations were still less than those of students at comparable colleges. Furthermore Hilbert's entering classes also expected less academic difficulty in their first year and placed less importance on the rigor and challenge of the academic environment for their first year of college. At the same time, they perceived their own academic preparedness and ability to persevere at levels similar to other first-year students and expected to have even less difficulty being academically successful than did others. Finally the BCSSE results also indicated that Hilbert's first-years students arrived in college with fewer expectations about being engaged in campus events and activities than was typical for students elsewhere.

These BCSSE findings underscore the critical importance of Hilbert's First-Year-Experience program in recalibrating the expectations of entering students in order to prepare them to be successful in achieving their academic goals.

Academic Preparation as Measured by the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA):

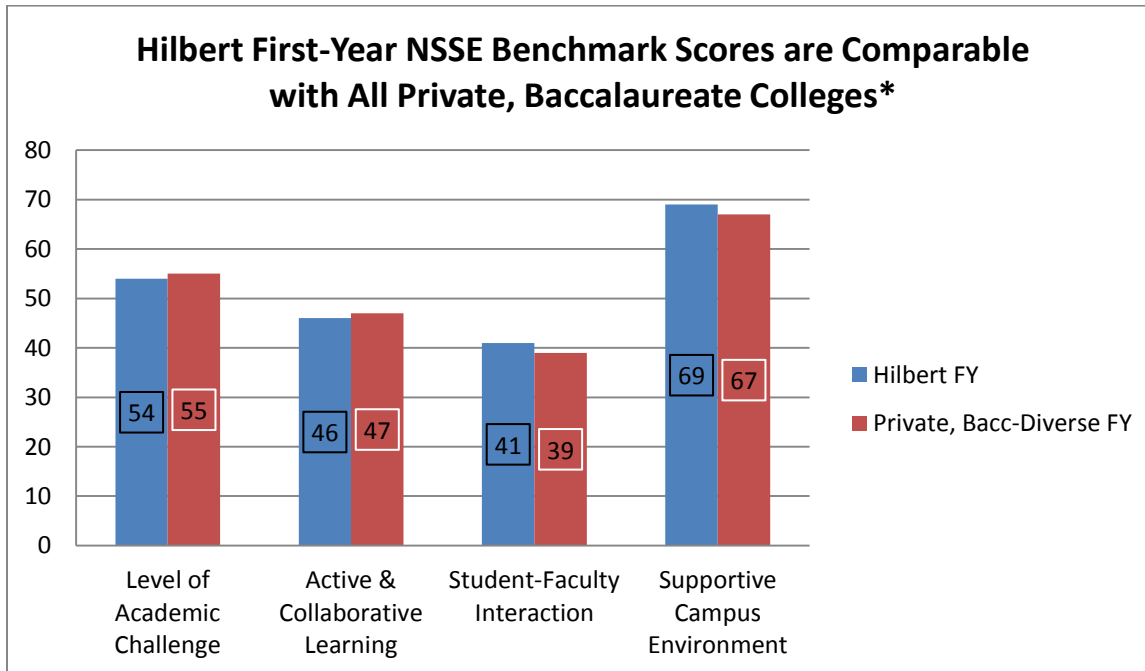
As seen above, Hilbert's incoming first-year students expressed lower confidence in how well prepared they were to think critically and analytically. Evidence from the 2009 and 2010 administrations of CLA indicates that their concerns are well-founded. The CLA provides performance based measures of students' skills in the areas of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication. For first-year students taking the CLA in the fall of 2009 and the fall of 2010 the composite CLA scores were well below the 50th percentile for freshmen nation-wide (20th and 39th percentiles respectively). CLA scores are adjusted for students Entering Academic Ability as measured by a composite of SAT Math and Verbal scores or by scores on the Scholastic Level Exam. The mean Entering Academic Ability for Hilbert freshmen in the fall of 2009 was at the 12th percentile and in the fall of 2010 the mean EAA was at the 13th percentile.

NSSE: First Year Results 2010, 2011 & 2012

Having seen that Hilbert's entering first students expect a lower level of academic engagement and difficulty than do students at similar colleges nationally, what was their experience after almost two semesters at Hilbert? To address this question we can look at the mean benchmark scores aggregated across the 2010, 2011 and 2012 spring semester NSSE administrations (n = 205) as compared to the mean scores for all private, baccalaureate/diverse participating institutions nationally for the same time period (6,463 students at approximately 70 institutions). The NSSE provides four benchmark scores to measure effective educational practices engaged in by first-year students. A fifth benchmark, "Enriching Educational Experiences," is not included here as it measures participation in many activities not typically completed by first-year students (internships, study-abroad, capstone courses, etc.).

As shown in the chart below, there were no statistically significant differences between the NSSE Benchmark scores of entering Hilbert first-year students and those of first-year students at over 70 comparable, private, baccalaureate-diverse colleges nationwide.

Overall, it appears that despite beginning with considerably lower academic preparation and expectations, by the second semester at Hilbert, first-year students have experienced a Level of Academic Challenge comparable to students elsewhere. Almost two-thirds of first-year students (63%) reported that they had “Often” or “Very Often” worked hard than they thought they could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations. Similarly their experiences in regard to Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and a Supportive Campus Environment are also comparable.



* Hilbert FY means based on 205 respondents aggregated from 2010, 2011 & 2012 results. Private, Baccalaureate-Diverse means are from aggregated 2010, 2011 & 2012 results for 6,463 students at over 70 institutions from the same years.

While these comparisons are encouraging, it should be noted that the extent to which Hilbert first-year students are being challenged academically may still be less than they expected when they began college. As previously seen in the BCSSE results, only 27% of incoming students expected to spend 10 hours or fewer per week preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework, etc.). When asked on the NSSE how many hours per week they had typically spent on these activities, over half (60%) reported fewer than 10 hours and only 7% reported more than 20 hours per week. As shown below Hilbert first-year students were much more likely to report spending 10 hours or less per week preparing for class than were students elsewhere.

Hours per week preparing for class	Hilbert First-Years	First-Years at All Private, Baccalaureate-Diverse Colleges
10 hours or less	60%	36%
11 – 20 hours	33%	40%
More than 20 hours	7%	19%

Hilbert students reported writing a comparable number of mid-length (5-19 paged) and long (20+ paged) papers as did students elsewhere and actually reported a larger number of short (fewer than 5 paged) papers in their first year. The number of textbooks, books or book-length packets assigned appears to be reasonable comparable although Hilbert students were more likely to report 4 or less per semester (31%) than were students elsewhere (22%). The same percent of students reported 11 or more assigned books per semester (35% from both Hilbert and at all private, baccalaureate-diverse colleges).

Hilbert first-year students and those elsewhere were comparable in reporting that their coursework emphasized Analyzing (77% vs. 81%), Synthesizing (71% vs. 71%), Evaluating (77% vs. 73%) and Applications (73% vs. 77%).

Involvement in Campus Events and Activities

From the BCSSE data we saw that incoming Hilbert students had expectations of less involvement in campus events and activities than was reported for students at similar institutions. What does the NSSE data tell us about those students' actual involvements during their first year at Hilbert? The tables below indicates that students do indeed appear to participate somewhat less in campus activities and events, especially those intended to enhance spirituality.

About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week participating in co-curricular activities (campus organizations, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)?

Hours/week in co-curricular activities	Hilbert First-Years	All Private, Baccalaureate-Diverse Colleges
0	41%	35%
1-10	42%	43%
11-20	12%	14%
More than 20	4%	7%

This perhaps reflects the somewhat more commuter-based student population as compared to many other undergraduate private colleges.

During the current school year, how often have you:

Often or Very Often	Hilbert First-Years	All Private, Baccalaureate-Diverse Colleges
Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater or other performance?	27%	33%
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities?	53%	63%
Participated in activities to enhance spirituality?	16%	41%

In regard to first-year students' sense of spirituality, while the above results indicate a low level of participation in spiritual enhancement activities, the NSSE data also show somewhat more comparable results for a question about much their experience at the institution has contributed to developing a deepened sense of spirituality. Of Hilbert first-years, 43% responded "Quite a bit" or "Very much," while 53% of first-years elsewhere responded in the same manner.

If first-year students said they were not spending as much time preparing for class or participating in on-campus activities as did students elsewhere, in what other ways were they spending their time? Several NSSE items ask about time spent in the following activities:

Percent who reported more 16 or more hours per week spent:

	Hilbert First-Years	All Private, Baccalaureate-Diverse Colleges
Working for pay OFF CAMPUS	40%	16%
Relaxing or socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.)	25%	24%
Providing care for dependents living with you (parents, children, spouses, etc.)	11%	9%
Commuting to class	8%	4%

It would appear that Hilbert first-year students were remarkable in spending greater proportions of their time each week working off-campus and to a lesser extent in commuting than was true for typical first-year students. This is also consistent with results from the aggregated BCSS data which showed that more than twice the percent of incoming Hilbert students expected to work 16 hours or more (47%) as did incoming students elsewhere (20%).

The Thriving Quotient Survey

In the spring semester of 2013 Hilbert College participated in an administration of The Thriving Quotient (TQ) survey, an instrument developed to measure the academic, social and psychological aspects of a student's college experience that are most predictive of academic success, institutional fit, satisfaction with college, and ultimately graduation. The survey consists of 26 items clustered into 5 scales and is administered online. In the spring 2013 administration invitations to participate were sent to 919 students of whom 330 completed the survey for a response rate of 36%. Of those who completed the survey, 69 were first-year students or 37% of the 186 enrolled first-year students.

At the time of this report the scale scores and comparison data from other participating institutions were not yet available. What follows are summary findings obtained from analyses of the aggregated responses of Hilbert students. Compared to the spring 2013 population of first-year students the sample of TQ respondents was more likely to be female (77% vs. 45%) but otherwise was highly comparable as seen in the table below.

	2013 First-Year Students	TQ First-Year Respondents
Female	45%	77%
First Generation	34%	36%
Resident	40%	42%
Full-time	97%	99%
White	68%	73%

Among the spring 2013 first-year population 56% had a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher while 85% of TQ respondents stated that they were getting B's or higher on assignments at the time of the survey toward the end of the spring semester. This might reflect a sample bias toward higher achieving students among respondents or it might be a consequence of a tendency to overestimate one's performance.

Thriving or Surviving

A key outcome question on the TQ survey asks:

“We are interested in what helps students thrive in college. Thriving is defined as getting the most out of your college experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying the college experience. Given that definition, to what extent do you think you are THRIVING as a college student this semester?”

Among the first-year students, 77% responded that they were thriving at least somewhat (i.e., “Thrivers”) with one-half (51%) seeing themselves as thriving most or all of the time, while the other 23% could be considered as “Survivors.”

	Frequency	Percent
Not even surviving	0	0
Barely surviving	5	7%
Surviving	11	16%
Somewhat thriving	17	25%
Thriving most of the time	30	43%
Consistently thriving	6	9%

Satisfaction

Several questions on the TQ survey ask students how satisfied on a 1 to 6 scale they are with various aspects of their college experience.

How satisfied are you this semester with:	Very Dissatisfied or Dissatisfied (1 – 2)	(3 – 4)	Satisfied or Very Satisfied (5 – 6)
The amount you are learning in your classes	3%	23%	74%
The grades you are earning so far	4%	28%	68%
Your overall experience on this campus	6%	29%	65%
The amount of contact you have had with faculty	1%	35%	64%
The academic advising you have received	10%	25%	65%
The kinds of interactions you have had with other students	6%	32%	62%
The quality of interactions with faculty	3%	33%	64%
Your current living situation	7%	28%	65%
Your physical health	6%	26%	68%
Interactions with students of different ethnic backgrounds	6%	27%	67%
Amount of money you personally have to pay to attend college here	29%	37%	34%
Faculty sensitivity to the needs of diverse students	4%	31%	65%
Interactions with people with whom you share your living space	17%	28%	55%

In comparing the mean responses to the above items between residential and commuter students only the question about satisfaction with interactions with students of different ethnic backgrounds showed a significant difference with residential students expressing a higher average level of satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 5.2$) than did commuter students ($\bar{X} = 4.6$), $t(65) = 2.17$, $p = .034$.

There were no significant differences in the means of these satisfaction items between majority/White respondents and minority/non-White respondents.

Sense of “Fit”

Other questions asked respondents to agree or disagree with statements reflecting their sense of “fit” as a student at Hilbert.

	Strongly Disagree or Disagree (1 – 2)	(3 – 4)	Agree or Strongly Agree (5 – 6)
I feel I belong here	10%	29%	61%
Being a student here fills an important need in my life	9%	36%	55%
I feel proud of the college I have chosen to attend	4%	29%	67%
I am confident that the amount of money I'm paying for college is worth it in the end	17%	39%	43%
I intend to reenroll here next year	7%	9%	84%
I intend to graduate from Hilbert	7%	9%	84%
If I had it to do, I would choose a different college	52%	34%	14%
I really enjoy being a student here	4%	29%	67%

There were no significant differences in mean scores for the above items when comparing scores for resident versus commuter first-years or when comparing majority/White versus minority/non-White first-years.

Spirituality

Responses to items addressing the importance of spirituality or religious beliefs in students' lives are summarized below.

	Strongly Disagree or Disagree (1 – 2)	(3 – 4)	Agree or Strongly Agree (5 – 6)
My spiritual or religious beliefs provide me with a sense of strength when life is difficult.	20%	35%	44.9%
I gain spiritual strength by trusting in a higher power beyond myself.	28%	30%	42%
My spiritual or religious beliefs are the foundation of my approach to life.	32%	39%	29%

When asked how often they attended religious services or activities on campus, 51% responded "never", while 22% of responses could be characterized as "sometimes" to "frequently."

Activities and Campus Events

Responses to items asking students to indicate how often they participated in campus events and activities including interacting with faculty outside of the classroom are summarized below. Not surprisingly, residential students indicated greater frequency of participation in the general category of campus events or activities ($\bar{X} = 4.6$) than did commuter students ($\bar{X} = 3.1$), $t(64) = 4.34$, $p < .001$. Likewise residents reported greater frequency of leadership in student organizations ($\bar{X} = 3.3$) than did commuters ($\bar{X} = 2.4$), $t(65) = 2.26$, $p = .03$.

The only significant mean difference by ethnicity was that minority/non-White first-years reported a greater average frequency score for attending campus events or activities (4.3) than did majority/Whites (3.4), $t(65) = 2.07, p = .04$. However it is also noted that first-year, minority/non-White students are somewhat more likely to be residential (59%) than majority/White first-years (37%). So there is a degree of overlap in these findings.

How often:	Never to Rarely (1 – 2)	(3 – 4)	Often to Frequently (5 – 6)
student organizations on campus	46%	33%	21%
campus events or activities	25%	43%	32%
leadership of student organizations	49%	32%	19%
interaction with faculty outside of class	43%	40%	17%
music or theater performance groups on campus	68%	19%	13%
community service	52%	26%	22%
campus ethnic organizations	70%	16%	14%

Significant Predictors of Thriving Among First-Years

- Working less than 20 hours per week.
- Feeling that you are good at juggling the demands of college life.
- Having close friends who encourage you to continue attending Hilbert.
- Having your family approve of you attending Hilbert.
- Feeling as though you are learning things that are worthwhile to you as a person.
- Being able to find ways to apply what you are learning to something else in your life.
- Feeling like you belong here.
- Feeling proud of Hilbert.
- In general, feeling like Hilbert is a “good fit” for you.
- In general feeling more satisfied with:
 - How much you are learning in classes
 - Your grades
 - The amount and of contact and quality of interactions you have with faculty
 - The kinds of interactions you have with other students
 - The interactions with students from different ethnic backgrounds