



THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA NSSE 2015 CIVIC- ENGAGEMENT SURVEY ITEMS ANALYSIS REPORT

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Executive Summary

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), administered to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's (UHM) freshmen and seniors in 2015, provides valuable insights into students' self-reported learning experiences. The campus identified six survey items related to civic engagement.

Overall, **the survey revealed substantial civic engagement opportunities** that students experience at the UHM. **A majority of freshmen and seniors¹ reported that they participated in at least one potential civic engagement activity.** Specifically:

1. **81% of the seniors** (1012 out of 1255) **reported participating in at least one civic activity²**, including field experience³ (e.g., internship), community service, volunteer work, or co-curricular activity, such as joining a student club.
2. About two-thirds of the seniors reported opportunities to apply their learning to societal problems (65%) and to take courses that included a community-based project (64%).
3. Slightly more than half of the seniors participated in a field experience (52%) and community service (55%).
4. Proportionally, more seniors reported participating in field experience and in community service than their freshmen counterparts did.

Background

UHM administered the NSSE in spring 2015 to 5,677 students. A total of 1820 students responded to the survey, including 469 freshmen and 1351 seniors, yielding a high response rate of 32%. NSSE data provide a valuable source of information on students' self-reported learning experiences.

¹ Seniors and freshmen in this report refer to those students who were sampled and responded to the survey.

² For the majority of the students, field experience and co-curricular activities constitute civic activities. However, we recognize that this might not have always been the case.

³ Field experience includes internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, and clinical placement.



The Institutional Learning Objectives Implementation Committee (ILOIC) is a campus-wide committee composed of both faculty and administrators in academic and co-curricular leadership positions. They are the group on campus most familiar with institutional learning objectives (ILOs) and how the ILOs manifest in curricular and co-curricular activities. In spring 2017, ILOIC members aligned the 2015 NSSE items with the UHM Undergraduate ILOs⁴. (Hill [2019] described the alignment process in detail.) In particular, the group identified the following six NSSE items as indicators of student experience and learning related to civic engagement:

- A. During the current school year, about how often have you connected your learning to societal problems or issues? Response options: Very often, Often, Sometimes, Never (NSSE 2015 Item 2)
- B. Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate? Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement. Response options: Done or in progress, Plan to do, Do not plan to do, Have not decided (NSSE 2015 Item 11a)
- C. About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)? Response options: All, Most, Some, None (NSSE 2015 Item 12)
- D. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)? Response options: 0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, More than 30 (NSSE 2015 Item 15b)
- E. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing community service or volunteer work? Response options: 0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, More than 30 (NSSE 2015 Item 15e)
- F. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in being an informed and active citizen? Response options: Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little (NSSE 2015 Item 17j)

Analysis and Results

We created a composite *civic participation* variable using the responses to Item B, D, and E⁵. The item-by-item analysis is in Appendix 1. When examining the overall participation rate, regardless of the activity type, we found that **81% percent of the seniors (1012 out of 1255) reported that they participated in at least one civic engagement activities**, whereas 65% of the freshmen (152 out of 435) did so (Figure 1). The results on participation in each type of activities (also shown in Figure 1) are as follows:

- Co-curricular activities: About equal proportion of freshmen (56%) and seniors (55%) claimed participation in co-curricular activities.

⁴ ILOIC supports the inclusion of field experiences and co-curricular participation as part of community engagement. In many cases, students were not paid for their field experience as part of the course requirement. When students participate in co-curricular activities, they are in various ways serving the members of their community outside of their academic requirement.

⁵ A response was coded as “yes” on the composite *civic participation* variable, if the student selected the following:

Item B (Field experience): Done or in progress

Item D (co-curricular activities) and Item E (community service/volunteer work): 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, More than 30

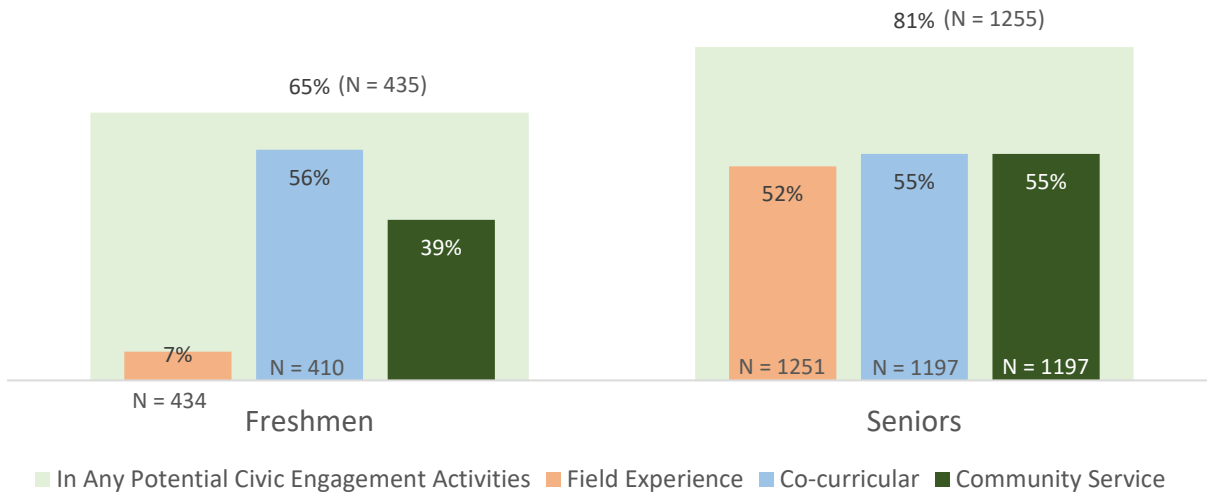


Figure 1. Participation in civic engagement activities among seniors and freshmen

In terms of learning opportunities, 64% of seniors reported taking courses that include a community-based project, whereas, 51% of the freshmen reported so (Figure 2). Proportionally, more seniors (65%) reported that they connected their learning to societal problems *often* or *very often* compared to their freshmen counterparts (57%) (Figure 3).

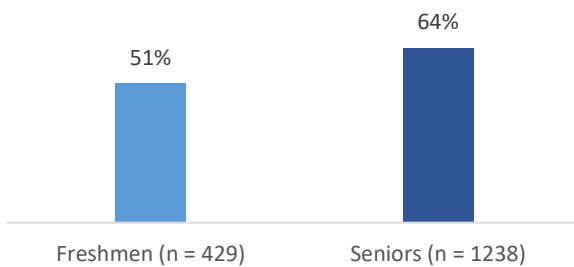


Figure 2. Percent of freshmen and seniors who reported that *all, most, or some courses* that they took included a community-based project

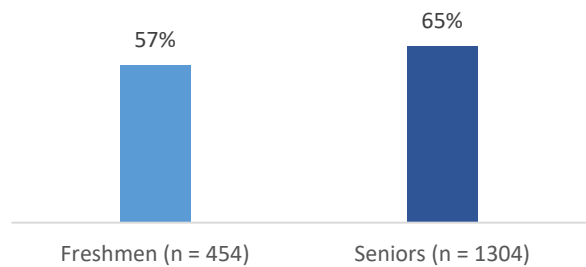


Figure 3. Percent of freshmen and seniors who reported that they connected their learning to societal problems or issues *often* or *very often*

About one out of two seniors and two out of five freshmen reported that the institution contributed *very much* or *quite a bit* in regards to being an informed and active citizen.



Overall, the survey revealed substantial civic engagement opportunities that students experience at the UHM. A majority of freshmen and seniors reported that they participated in at least one potential civic engagement activity.

Reference

Hill, Y. Z. (2019, Spring). Using NSSE for student learning outcomes assessment: Validation through expert-panel judgment. *The Intersection of Assessment and Learning*, 14-18.
https://www.aalhe.org/assets/docs/Intersection_Spring_2019_AAL.pdf



Appendix 1. UHM Response Summary Tables of Each Civic-Engagement Related 2015 NSSE Items

Item A. During the current school year, about how often have you connected your learning to societal problems or issues?

Response	Freshman (1st year) N = 454	Senior (4th year) N = 1304
Very often	18%	28%
Often	40%	36%
Sometimes	38%	29%
Never	5%	6%

Item B. Have you done or do you plan to participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement before you graduate?

Response	Freshman (1st year) N = 434	Senior (4th year) N = 1251
Done or in progress	7%	52%
Plan to do	77%	27%
Have not decided	11%	9%
Do not plan to do	4%	13%

Item C. How many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?

Response	Freshman (1st year) N = 429	Senior (4th year) N = 1238
All	1%	2%
Most	5%	9%
Some	44%	53%
None	49%	36%
Grand Total	100%	100%



Item D. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)

Response	Freshman (1st year) N = 410	Senior (4th year) N = 1197
0 hrs	44%	45%
1-5 hrs	34%	28%
6-10 hrs	11%	12%
11-15 hrs	3%	7%
16-20 hrs	4%	4%
21-25 hrs	1%	2%
26-30 hrs	1%	1%
More than 30 hrs	1%	2%

Item E. Doing community service or volunteer work

Response	Freshman (1st year) N = 410	Senior (4th year) N = 1197
0 hrs	61%	45%
1-5 hrs	28%	32%
6-10 hrs	7%	12%
11-15 hrs	2%	4%
16-20 hrs	1%	3%
21-25 hrs	0%	1%
26-30 hrs	0%	1%
More than 30 hrs	0%	1%

Item F. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in being an informed and active citizen?

Response	Freshman (1st year) N = 406	Senior (4th year) N = 1190
Very much	14%	22%
Quite a bit	28%	30%
Some	42%	30%
Very little	17%	18%

Composite Civic Participation Item (recoded from Item B, D, and E).

Response	Freshman (1st year) N = 435	Senior (4th year) N = 1255
Did not participate in any	35%	19%
Participate in 1 or more types of civic activities	65%	81%