

Student Engagement at Grinnell College: College Student Experience Questionnaire Results

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The College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) is a nationally available survey that asks students to report on their own activities during the previous semester. The CSEQ is the parent instrument of NSSE (the National Survey of Student Engagement), and gathers similar but much more extensive information.

Grinnell administered the CSEQ in Fall 1997 to a stratified random sample consisting of one third of the student body. We received a 45% response. The sample was representative with respect to sex. First-years were over-represented (44%) and juniors, who are more likely to be on off-campus study, were underrepresented (9%). The same survey was given at Grinnell in 1989 and received 263 responses. Both years of data are reported below. Grinnell will probably administer the CSEQ again in 2004-05.

Academic Activities

Courses (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Took detailed notes in class	90%	94%
Saw how facts and ideas fit together	88%	91%
Participated in class discussions	79%	Not asked
Integrated ideas from various sources	79%	80%
Underlined major points in readings	75%	79%
Thought about practical applications	75%	79%
Summarized major points and information	66%	66%
Explained material to another student	60%	62%
Made outlines from notes or readings	28%	31%
Did additional readings	16%	15%

Workload	1997	1989
Spent 40+ hours per week on schoolwork	67%	60%
Read more than 10 assigned books	52%	82%
Wrote more than 10 term papers or written reports	41%	57%
Read more than 10 non-assigned books	21%	22%
Took more than 10 essay exams	4%	29%

Writing (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Thought about grammar while writing	85%	87%
Wrote and revised a rough draft	78%	82%
Spent 5+ hours writing a paper	76%	84%
Used a dictionary or thesaurus	67%	75%
Revised a paper two or more times	48%	49%
Asked others to read something they wrote	47%	47%
Asked instructor for advice on writing	33%	29%
Referred to a style book or grammar manual	30%	31%
Made appointment to talk about criticism	28%	27%
Submitted something for publication	6%	9%

Science (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Memorized formulas, definitions, and terms	57%	56%

Did an experiment using scientific method	47%	Not asked
Expressed relationships in mathematical terms	45%	41%
Explained a principle to another student	43%	29%
Practiced using lab equipment	22%	17%
Explained an experimental procedure	21%	19%
Explained the scientific basis for concerns	21%	Not asked
Showed a classmate how to use equipment	18%	16%
Read about scientific theories or concepts	16%	16%
Went to an exhibit of a scientific device	7%	6%

Library (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Developed a bibliography	59%	41%
Used card catalogue or computer	55%	37%
Used library to read or study	43%	50%
Read in reserve or reference section	31%	41%
Checked out books	24%	Not asked
Used indexes to journal articles	21%	21%
Checked citations in things read	20%	17%
Found material by browsing in stacks	17%	21%
Read basic references or documents	13%	11%
Asked a librarian for help	12%	7%

Faculty Interaction (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Talked with a faculty member	85%	86%
Asked for information related to a course	63%	66%
Made office appointment	54%	59%
Visited informally after class	49%	50%
Discussed term paper or project	44%	47%
Asked for comments or criticism about work	37%	28%
Discussed career plans	28%	34%
Worked with faculty on research project	9%	9%
Had coffee or snacks together	9%	10%
Discussed personal problems	5%	6%

Other Activities

Art, Music, Theater (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Talked about music with other students	68%	68%
Attended some music event	59%	69%
Participated in some music activity	31%	26%
Talked about art with other students	29%	30%
Talked about theater with other students	26%	30%
Went to an art exhibit on campus	20%	34%
Went to a college theater performance	19%	32%
Participated in some art activity	16%	21%
Read or discussed opinions of art critics	11%	7%
Read or discussed opinions of music critics	9%	8%
Participated in theater productions	6%	12%
Read or discussed opinions of drama critics	3%	5%

Athletics (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Followed regular schedule of exercise	45%	54%
Did individual athletics indoors	44%	45%
Set goals for some skill performance	43%	48%
Were spectators at college athletic events	30%	Not asked
Did group athletics indoors	27%	30%
Did individual athletics outdoors	23%	29%
Did group athletics outdoors	21%	34%
Had instruction to improve performance	20%	23%
Kept a record of skill progress	11%	9%
Played on an intramural team	11%	24%

Conversation Topics (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Discussed different lifestyles	67%	63%
Discussed major social problems	53%	72%
Discussed other people's ideas and values	47%	44%
Discussed fine arts	47%	26%
Discussed current events in the news	39%	63%
Discussed social and ethical dimensions of science	38%	57%
Discussed the economy	34%	Not asked
Discussed scientific theories and experiments	29%	23%
Discussed international relations	23%	Not asked
Discussed computers and technology	21%	20%

Conversational Information (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Referred to knowledge from reading	67%	75%
Explored different ways of thinking	66%	68%
Referred to what a professor said	50%	57%
Read something related to the topic	30%	33%
Persuaded others to change their minds	23%	22%
Changed your opinion after the discussion	22%	24%

Personal (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Told one friend about your reaction to another friend	74%	81%
Sought a friend's help with a personal problem	63%	68%
Identified with a character in a book or movie	60%	62%
Discussed why some groups got along	55%	68%
Took a course dealing with human behavior	36%	35%
Talked about yourself in a group	34%	29%
Asked a friend his/her opinion of you	26%	24%
Read about personal adjustment	20%	33%
Discussed problems with a counselor	10%	12%
Took an ability, interest, or aptitude test	10%	17%

Diversity (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Made friends with different majors	87%	90%
Made friends with different backgrounds	81%	79%
Made friends with different interests	69%	76%
Discussed different philosophies and values	62%	68%

Discussed different religions	56%	59%
Made friends of different races	54%	66%
Made friends from another country	50%	56%
Made friends of different ages	47%	51%
Discussed different political opinions	36%	55%
Discussed different countries	31%	50%

Residential (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Had lively dinner conversation	88%	90%
Offered help to another student	55%	70%
Had late night discussions	55%	57%
Asked others for assistance	47%	48%
Went out for late night snacks	46%	55%
Attended dorm social events	41%	57%
Studied with others in the dorm	38%	33%
Borrowed from others in the dorm	36%	42%
Helped plan or organize an event	14%	29%
Worked on a service project with others in the dorm	10%	11%

Clubs (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Looked for notices in student newspaper	69%	81%
Read or asked about club	56%	57%
Attended program put on by a student group	55%	62%
Attended meeting of a club	49%	48%
Discussed policies and issues	48%	63%
Voted in student elections	38%	66%
Worked in some student organization	33%	37%
Discussed the success or failure of meetings	31%	38%
Worked on a committee	28%	32%
Met with the faculty advisor of a club	12%	18%

Student Union (did often or very often)	1997	1989
Ate at the student union	58%	46%
Looked for notices on bulletin board	56%	64%
Saw film or event at union	52%	68%
Met friends at the student union	50%	55%
Talked at the union about classes or activities	49%	45%
Attended a social event at the union	40%	45%
Used the lounge to meet with other students	33%	31%
Heard a speaker at the union	27%	44%
Played games available at the union	26%	29%
Used the lounge to relax or study alone	25%	32%

Views of Grinnell College

Satisfaction	1997	1989
Would probably or definitely go to Grinnell again	89%	91%
Liked college or were enthusiastic about it	85%	93%
Rated own satisfaction with the college as 7 or 8 on an 8-point scale	67%	67%

Views of the Grinnell College Environment	1997	1989
Strong emphasis on academic scholarly qualities	96%	96%
Strong emphasis on being critical and evaluative	84%	86%
Strong emphasis on expressing creative qualities	52%	47%
Strong emphasis on personal relevance, practical values	27%	27%
Strong emphasis on vocational competence	11%	10%
Relations with other students are friendly, not competitive	69%	80%
Faculty are approachable rather than remote	71%	81%
Administrative personnel are helpful rather than rigid	49%	33%

Students Said They Gained a Lot in:	1997	1989
Broad general education	89%	92%
Awareness of other philosophies	87%	87%
Ability to learn on one's own	77%	88%
Understanding other people	76%	84%
Writing clearly and effectively	76%	77%
Ability to put ideas together	75%	85%
Ability to think analytically	75%	76%
Understanding oneself	74%	85%
Familiarity with computers	69%	72%
Specialization for further education	67%	76%
Developing one's own values and ethics	64%	82%
Acquaintance with literature	57%	55%
Career information	57%	72%
Seeing the importance of history	55%	Not asked
Ability to be team members	49%	50%
Knowledge about the world	48%	Not asked
Quantitative thinking	45%	48%
Understanding science	42%	39%
Understanding of the arts	41%	43%
Awareness of technology	33%	39%
Understanding technology	32%	30%
Developing health and fitness	29%	44%
Vocational training	12%	22%