Summary of Mission Perception Study

In the spring of 2008, Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Catholic College Consortium. We also administered the Consortium’s additional questions on mission to the Survey’s first-year and senior students. Of 289 total survey respondents, there were 131 first-year students and 158 seniors. The overall response rate was 51%, with 46% for first-year students and 56% for seniors.

Of the 35 institutions participating in the 2008 NSSE Catholic College Consortium, 29 schools chose to share data and participated in the Mission Perception Study. A total of 5 benchmarks were developed based on a combination of NSSE regular questions and the additional NSSE mission items. These five benchmarks are: religious practice, sense of mission, mission perception, respect for diversity, and beliefs and values.

In this summary, the items that constructed each benchmark are listed. Benchmark mean comparisons between OLLU and Consortium group are presented in the bar graphs. The graphs compare OLLU first-year and senior means to Consortium group means on the study’s five benchmarks. The survey items were rated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) on 4 of the 5 benchmarks. For benchmark “religious practice”, the rating was either 1 or 2 (1 = No, 2 = Yes).

As can be seen from Figures 1 to 5, both OLLU’s first-year and senior respondents gave higher ratings than the Consortium group did on all five benchmarks.
Religious Practice

- Within the past week, have you participated in a religious service?
- Within the past week, have you spent time in private prayer or meditation?

![Figure 1. Religious Practice](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLLU</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sense of Mission

- Social and personal development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution.
- Ethical and spiritual development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution.
- This institution offers opportunities for volunteering and community service.
- This institution offers opportunities for developing leadership skills.
- As a result of your experience here, you are more aware of your own personal values.
- The heritage of the founding religious community of this institution is evident here.
- The mission of this institution is widely understood by students.
- The mission of this institution is reflected in its course offerings.
- The faculty at this institution discusses the ethical implications of what is being studied.
- At this institution there are opportunities for students to strengthen their religious commitment.

**Figure 2. Sense of Mission**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OLLU</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mission Perception**

- The faculty, staff, and students here are respectful of people of different religions.
- The faculty, staff, and students here are respectful of people of different races and cultures.
- Students feel free to express their individual spirituality here.
- People of different sexual orientations are accepted socially here.
- The environment here encourages students to develop an appreciation of diversity.
- How important it you accomplish the following objectives?
  - Volunteering in community service
  - Influencing social values
Figure 3. Mission Perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OLLU</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respect for Diversity

- The faculty, staff, and students here are respectful of people of different religions.
- The faculty, staff, and students here are respectful of people of different races and cultures.
- Students feel free to express their individual spirituality here.
- People of different sexual orientations are accepted socially here.
- The environment here encourages students to develop an appreciation of diversity.
Beliefs and Values

- Institutional emphasis: Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Institutional emphasis: Providing the support you need to thrive socially
- Institutional contribution: Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments
- Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own
- Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)
- Community service or volunteer work
- Developing a personal code of values and ethics
- Contributing to the welfare of your community
- Developing a deepened sense of spirituality
Figure 5. Beliefs and Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OLLU</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSSE Catholic College Consortium

Assumption College Worcester, MA
Avila University Kansas City, MO
Barry University Miami, FL
Belmont Abbey College Belmont, NC
Benedictine University Lisle, IL
Briar Cliff University Sioux City, IA
Cardinal Stritch University Milwaukee, WI
Chaminade University of Honolulu Honolulu, HI
College of Our Lady of the Elms Chicopee, MA
College of Saint Scholastica, The Duluth, MN
Edgewood College Madison, WI
Gwynedd Mercy College Gwynedd Valley, PA
La Roche College Pittsburgh, PA
Lewis University Romeoville, IL
Madonna University Livonia, MI
Manhattan College Bronx, NY
Marywood University Scranton, PA
Mount Marty College Yankton, SD
Newman University Wichita, KS
Niagara University Niagara University, NY
Our Lady of the Lake University-San Antonio, San Antonio, TX
Saint Anselm College Manchester, NH
Saint John's University-New York Queens, NY
Saint Josephs College Rensselaer, IN
Saint Xavier University Chicago, IL
Seton Hill University Greensburg, PA
Siena College Loudonville, NY
Southern Catholic College Dawsonville, GA
Stonehill College Easton, MA
Thomas More College Crestview Hills, KY
University of Great Falls Great Falls, MT
University of Mary Bismarck, ND
University of St. Thomas Houston, TX
University of St. Thomas Saint Paul, MN
Walsh University North Canton,