



College for
Financial Planning®
EDUCATING THE NATION'S TOP FINANCIAL ADVISORSSM

The College for Financial Planning **Graduate Student Engagement Survey Report**

Dr. Natalie Wright, Assessment Manager
Rebecca Henderson, Research Analyst

July 2017

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Method	3
Results	4
Correlations.....	5
References	7

Introduction

Student engagement is widely considered to be an important construct for understanding the student experience and for improving educational quality (Kuh, 2009). Although there have been numerous definitions of student engagement proposed, several definitions recognize that there are three major dimensions of engagement: *affective* (emotional reactions to educational experience, such as boredom and enjoyment), *behavioral* (student actions in response to education, such as studying and finding additional resources), and *cognitive* (mental effort put forth in educational experience, such as integration and reflection) (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Kahu, 2013; Mandernach, 2015). Motivational constructs have been recognized as important antecedents of student engagement (Kahu, 2013). Autonomy support (feeling in control of ones' own actions), relatedness (feeling connected to others), and competence (feeling capable of completing tasks) are prerequisites for intrinsic (i.e., self-directed) motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and are thus antecedents of student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Additionally, classroom structure and clarity of expectations, the presence of challenging course tasks, the relevance of course tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004), and useful feedback on coursework (Kuh, 2009) are also antecedents of student engagement. Student engagement can lead to positive outcomes such as retention and academic achievement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Kahu, 2013).

Many higher education institutions utilize the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to evaluate student engagement. However, this survey is targeted toward the traditional, on-campus undergraduate student, reducing its relevance for evaluating the engagement of non-traditional, online students (Price & Baker, 2012). The College's graduate student population is composed of adult learners, many of whom are employed full-time. Additionally, these students complete their coursework entirely online. As such, it was necessary to develop a student engagement survey sensitive to the College's unique student population, rather than relying on an off-the-shelf survey.

This report documents the development and administration of the College's second graduate student engagement survey. Results and recommendations are provided.

Method

A survey was written by the Assessment Manager to target the three dimensions of student engagement (affective, behavioral, and cognitive) and seven antecedents of engagement (autonomy, relatedness, competence, course structure, feedback provided, relevance of course tasks, and challenge of course tasks). The survey items can be found in Appendix A.

As mentioned previously, the survey measured three dimensions of student engagement. Each of these dimensions was broken up into multiple subscales as follows:

- Affective engagement: flow (2 items), enjoyment (2 items), value (6 items), interest (3 items), calm (2 items)
- Behavioral engagement: communication with instructor (2 items), communication with classmates (2 items), course participation (4 items), study habits (2 items)
- Cognitive engagement: integration (5 items), reflection (3 items), effort (2 items)

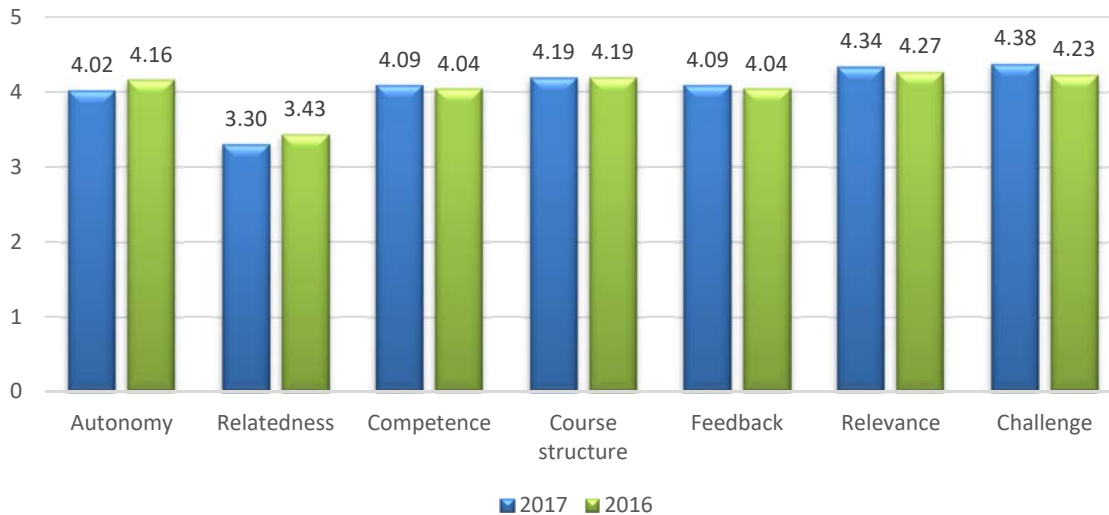
The survey was administered via SurveyMonkey to 130 active graduate students who had taken a master's course in 2017. There were a total of 19 responses (16 complete responses), representing a 14.6% response rate.

Most (81.3%) of the respondents were male, and the majority (95.8%) were White/Caucasian. The mean age of respondents was 46.8 years ($SD = 10.34$). The majority (81.3%) were enrolled in the M.S. in Personal Financial Planning program. Respondents were experienced with the College and its

courses, as they had taken an average of 4.81 courses ($SD = 2.74$) towards their degree at the College. Nearly one-third (31.6%) of respondents had worked in the financial services industry for more than 20 years. Over half (57.9%) spent 11-20 hours per week on course-related activities, and 63.2% spent at least 36 hours each week working in a job related to their field of study. More than half (63.2%) spent between 0 and 5 hours each week participating in non-work activities related to their field of study.

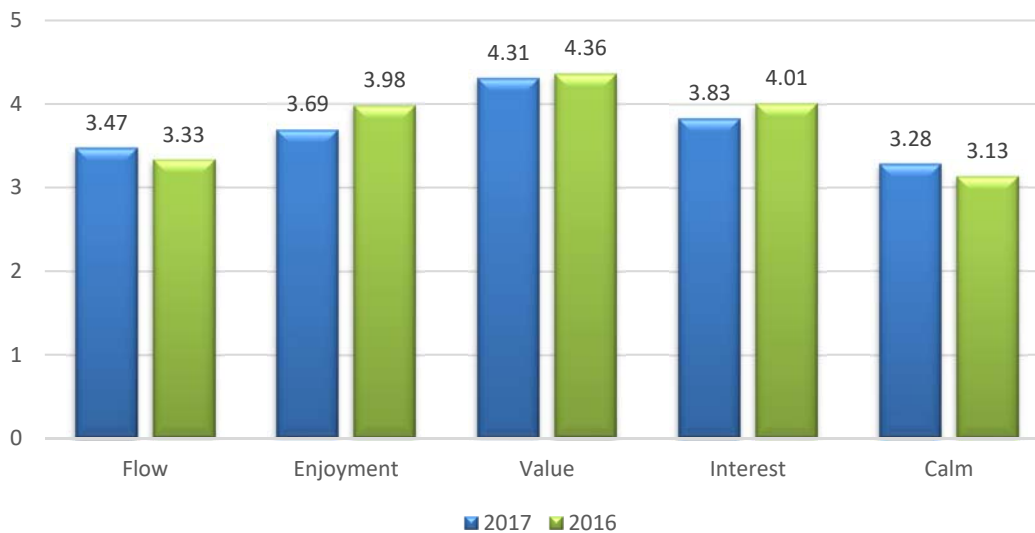
Results

Figure 1. Antecedents of engagement scale values



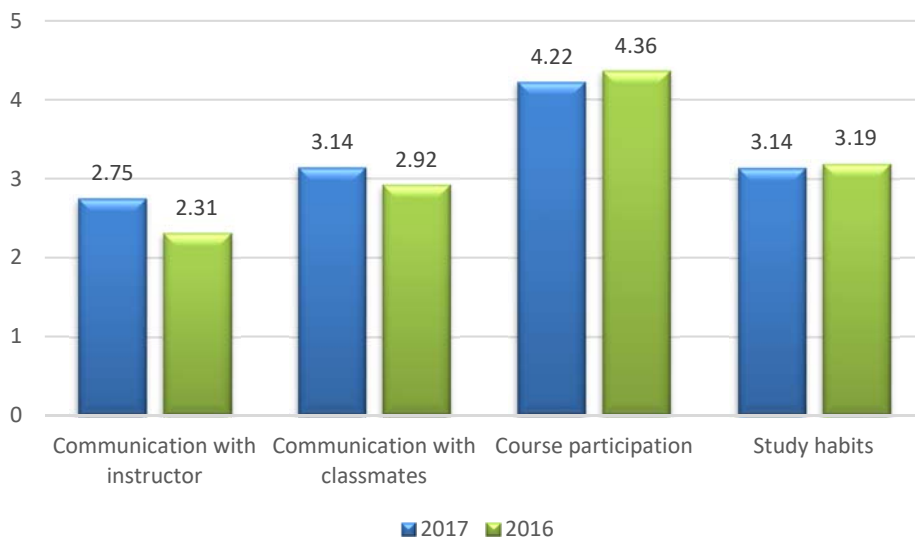
*Note. 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always

Figure 2. Affective engagement scale values



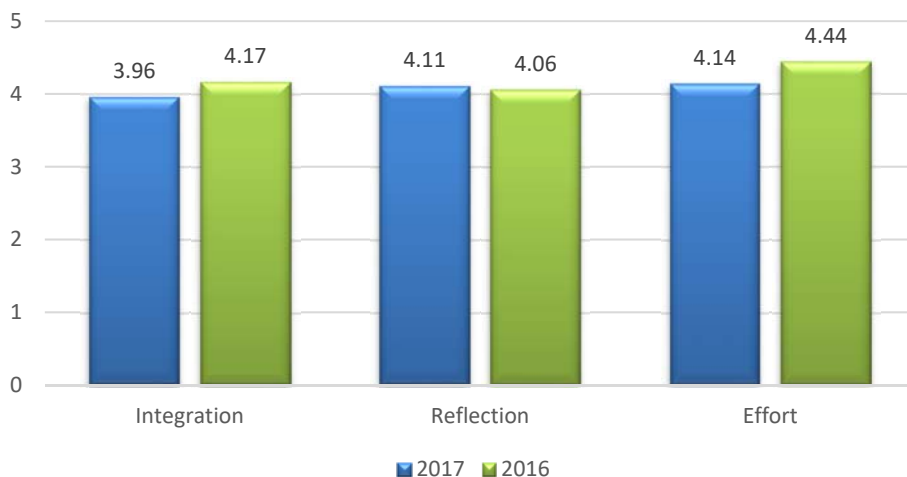
*Note. 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always

Figure 3. Behavioral engagement scale values



*Note. 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always

Figure 4. Cognitive engagement scale values



*Note. 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always

Correlations

Correlational analyses were conducted to investigate patterns of relationships between course engagement, its antecedent conditions, age, and graduate program. Results can be found in Table 2. The number of marginally significant and statistically significant relationships is notable, particularly given the small sample size. Clearly, the various antecedents to and facets of student engagement are not isolated and unrelated constructs. In particular, note that value, interest, integration, autonomy, relatedness, structure, and feedback are correlated with many of the other scales included in the survey. This suggests that these variables may be key drivers (autonomy, relatedness, structure, feedback) and components (value, interest, integration) of student engagement.

Table 2. Scale correlations

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1. Courses	-																				
2. Age	.19	-																			
3. Flow	.04	.36	-																		
4. Enjoyment	.24	-.01	.28	-																	
5. Value	.27	.30	.55	.58	-																
6. Interest	.31	.38	.47	.47	.81	-															
7. Calm	-.21	-.35	-.31	.32	-.01	.15	-														
8. Instructor communication	.16	.50	.09	.20	.24	.47	.20	-													
9. Course participation	.06	.25	.06	.44	.37	.25	.11	.17	-												
10. Classmate communication	-.29	.08	.35	.59	.58	.51	.45	.20	.39	-											
11. Study habits	.32	.39	.31	.11	.47	.64	-.48	.28	.26	.03	-										
12. Integration	.26	.16	.32	.56	.59	.72	-.05	.33	.09	.38	.61	-									
13. Reflection	.13	-.04	.43	.50	.49	.39	.05	-.18	-.02	.19	.08	.52	-								
14. Effort	-.03	-.06	.20	.41	.57	.55	.45	.07	.29	.42	.08	.07	.30	-							
15. Relatedness	.03	-.15	.16	.46	.39	.59	.66	.10	-.14	.57	-.12	.38	.46	.52	-						
16. Autonomy	.36	.13	.46	.77	.75	.72	.27	.13	.30	.69	.19	.59	.41	.43	.68	-					
17. Competence	.20	-.39	.24	.61	.25	.25	.38	-.37	.12	.43	-.15	.29	.52	.40	.61	.65	-				
18. Structure	.33	.27	.42	.66	.68	.62	.20	.06	.19	.54	.06	.52	.68	.33	.70	.84	.55	-			
19. Feedback	.30	.29	.36	.41	.53	.68	.40	.45	.01	.33	.06	.35	.46	.38	.74	.60	.20	.75	-		
20. Relevance	-.08	.17	.45	-.20	.41	.42	-.15	.14	-.32	.15	.23	.42	.30	.13	.15	.13	-.03	.10	.13	-	
21. Challenge	-.25	.48	.32	-.15	.41	.46	-.03	.41	-.18	.21	.25	.29	.33	.26	.19	-.04	-.33	.17	.35	.71	-

Note. Finance program coded as 1. Red values indicate $p < .05$, purple values indicate $p < .10$.

References

- Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C., & Paris, A.H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 74*, 59-109.
- Kahu, E.R. (2013). Framing student engagement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education, 38*(5), 758-773.
- Kuh, G.D. (2009). The National Survey of Student Engagement: Conceptual and empirical foundations. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 141*, 5-20.
- Mandernach, B.J. (2015). Assessment of student engagement in higher education: A synthesis of literature and assessment tools. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 12*(2), 1-14.
- Price, K., & Baker, S.N. (2012). Measuring students' engagement on college campuses: Is the NSSE an appropriate measure of adult students' engagement? *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 60*, 20-32.
- Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68-78.