

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

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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.

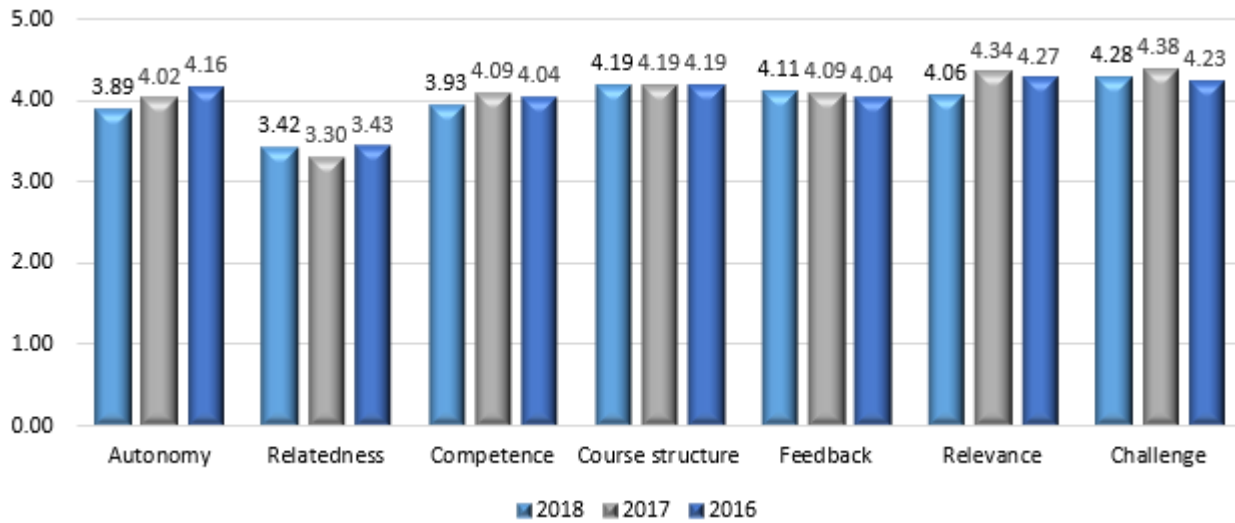
Many higher education institutions utilize the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to evaluate student engagement. However, that survey is targeted toward the traditional, on-campus undergraduate student, reducing its relevance for evaluating the engagement of non-traditional, online students (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.

The College's student engagement survey measured three dimensions of student engagement (affective, behavioral, and cognitive) and seven antecedents of 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)
- Antecedents of engagement: autonomy, relatedness, competence, course structure, feedback provided, relevance of course tasks, and challenge of course tasks.

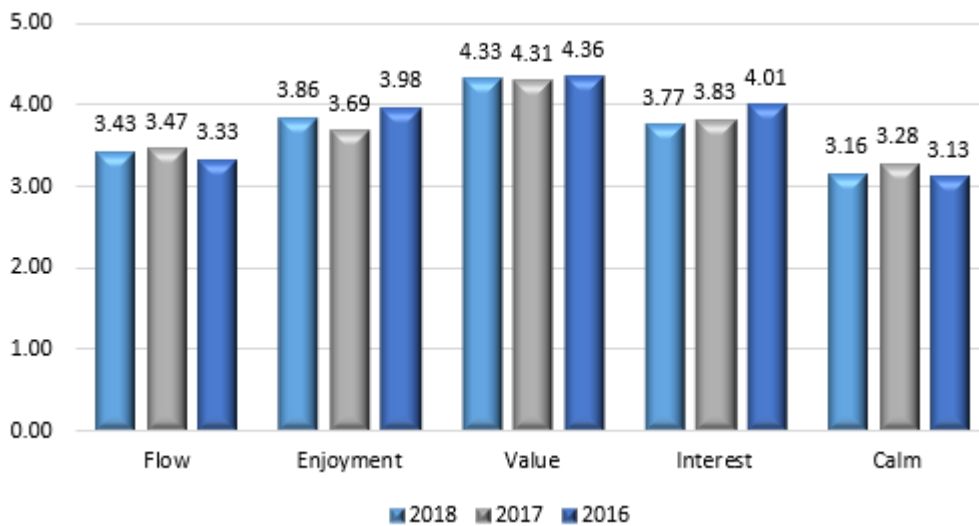
Results

Figure 1. Antecedents of engagement scale values



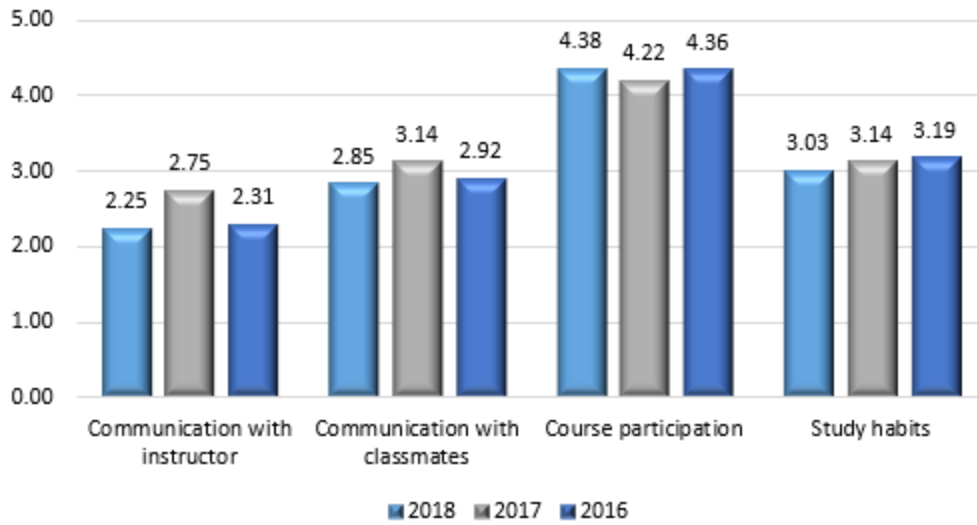
*Note. 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always

Figure 2. Affective engagement scale values



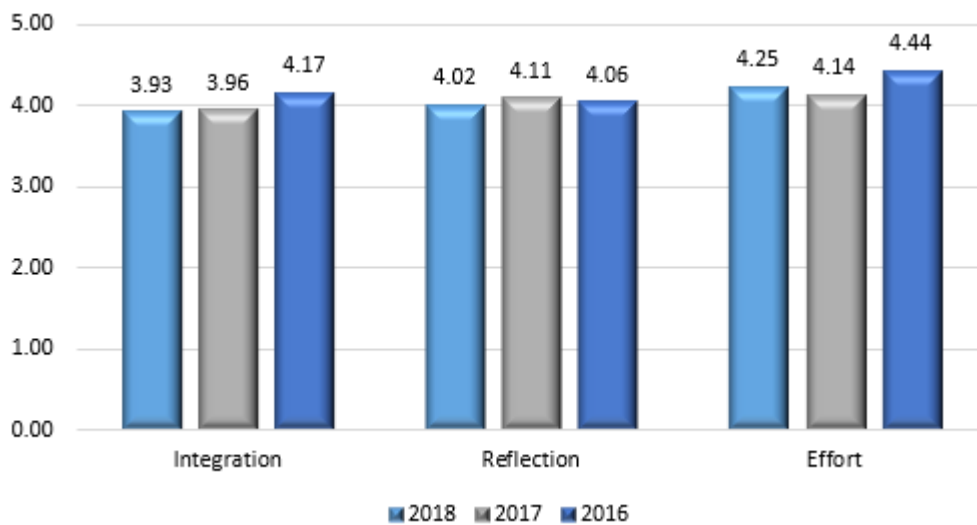
*Note. 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always

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 using its antecedent conditions, age, and graduate program. Results can be found in Table 2. The number of 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, relatedness, enjoyment and relevance are correlated with many of the other scales included in the survey. This suggests that these variables may be key drivers and components of student engagement.

Table 1. 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. Graduate Program	-																				
2. Age	-.13	-																			
3. Autonomy	-.21	-.04	-																		
4. Relatedness	-.38	.35	.64*	-																	
5. Competence	-.19	-.09	.32	.40	-																
6. Structure	-.42	.46	-.04	.34	.00	-															
7. Feedback	-.50	.27	.29	.46	.01	.71**	-														
8. Relevance	-.20	-.24	.71**	.65**	.51	-.09	.16	-													
9. Challenge	.14	.07	.02	-.03	-.11	.19	.16	-.09	-												
10. Flow	-.45	-.56*	.23	-.03	.16	-.03	.06	.37	-.30	-											
11. Enjoyment	-.44	-.20	.68**	.55*	.38	.15	.42	.68**	-.04	.32	-										
12. Value	-.50	.11	.56*	.54*	.22	.07	.36	.52*	.03	.22	.63*	-									
13. Interest	-.48	.09	.51	.69**	.37	.39	.60*	.72**	.05	.19	.80**	.67**	-								
14. Calm	-.49	.14	.16	.45	.33	-.01	.24	.48	-.53*	.10	.53*	.53*	.63*	-							
15. Instructor communication	.13	.04	-.11	-.23	-.34	-.47	-.27	-.32	.31	-.08	-.13	.13	-.31	-.18	-						
16. Classmate communication	.08	.15	.03	.23	-.27	-.28	-.22	.07	.26	-.28	.17	.18	.14	.14	.66**	-					
17. Course participation	-.16	.05	-.03	.15	-.22	.06	.25	.11	.58*	-.08	.23	.45	.43	.10	.50	.65**	-				
18. Study habits	-.24	.10	-.30	-.09	-.17	.07	-.19	-.05	.19	.08	.12	-.07	.15	.15	.35	.63*	.49	-			
19. Integration	-.25	-.63*	.34	.32	.26	-.15	-.05	.55*	-.17	.50	.69**	.39	.41	.32	-.03	.25	.15	.14	-		
20. Reflection	.28	-.29	.50	.28	-.05	-.35	-.19	.41	.05	.10	.34	.37	.05	-.06	.31	.40	.17	-.12	.55*	-	
21. Effort	.35	-.31	-.09	-.18	-.08	-.24	.13	-.02	.26	-.04	.23	.04	.15	.00	.46	.35	.51	.10	.17	.19	-

Note. Finance program coded as 1. Red values indicate $p < .01$, purple values indicate $p < .05$.

References

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