



## Spring 2023 National Survey of Student Engagement Assessment Committee Report November 2023

### Executive Summary

In Spring 2023, St. Olaf administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to first-years and seniors. Of those invited to complete the survey, 44% of first-years and 36% of seniors responded. We also received comparison data based on three custom institutional [comparison groups](#) (criterion-matched institutions, ACM/GLCA institutions, and private baccalaureate institutions).

#### Key Findings:

1. Respondents continue to report an [emphasis on equity and inclusion in the classroom](#), and first-year respondents especially view the institution's DEI efforts more favorably compared to 2021 respondents.
  - a. Seniors continue to perceive a stronger emphasis on DEI in the classroom compared to the institution as a whole, though their views on the institution were also more positive in 2023 compared to 2021 seniors. Additionally, senior respondents remained less likely than first-year respondents to perceive a supportive environment at St. Olaf for different types of diverse identities.
  - b. St. Olaf respondents were equally or more likely to respond positively in these areas compared to respondents at other institutions.
2. Students' [sense of belonging](#) remains an area of concern for several identity groups, whereas we saw improvements for others. Given the College's intentional, renewed focus on sense of belonging, these will be important metrics to continue tracking along with other sources of information in this area.
  - a. Respondents of color, senior international respondents, and senior respondents with disabilities were less likely to feel a sense of belonging than their peers, similar to respondents in 2021.
  - b. Senior first-generation respondents were also less likely to respond affirmatively to these statements about belonging, similar to respondents in 2021. By contrast, there were not the same disparities for first-year first-generation respondents that were present in 2021.

- c. Unlike 2021 respondents who identified as LGBTQ+, those in 2023 responded similarly to their peers on these statements about belonging.
3. **First-year respondents were more likely to respond positively about [academic advising](#) in 2023 compared to first-year respondents in 2021.**
    - a. In 2021, first-year respondents were significantly less likely to hold favorable views of advising than their peers at other institutions for most survey items, while in 2023 respondents were similarly likely or more likely than those at other institutions to endorse these same items. Together, these findings support the success of the new advising model implemented through For Every Ole.
    - b. However, respondents of color, international respondents, senior first-generation respondents, and first-year LGBTQ+ respondents were less likely to feel that those in advising cared about their overall well-being, actively listened to their concerns, and/or respected their identities and cultures.
  4. **St. Olaf respondents looked fairly similar to their peers at other institutions on the [NSSE Engagement Indicators](#) that examine other academic experiences (Higher-Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, Quantitative Reasoning, Collaborative Learning).**
    - a. There were few differences in these indicator scores when disaggregating across different demographic groups.
  5. **In [open-ended comments](#) at the end of the survey, students were asked to identify one area for improvement and one area where the College excels.**
    - a. Suggestions for improvement were more likely to be related to themes around the campus environment (such as climate and DEI efforts), while affirmations of things the College does well were more likely to focus on student support, with academics falling somewhere in the middle.

These findings affirm progress related to initiatives such as For Every Ole/St. Olaf Pathway and St. Olaf's work towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion, while also aligning with the College's current focus on students' sense of belonging:

1. **The St. Olaf Pathway** will continue to expand resources for advising and mentoring to deepen students' connections to faculty and staff, as well as to their peers and other resources for support and growth.
2. **ACM Mellon Academic Leadership Fellow** Professor Louis Epstein has launched a two-year project to identify and pilot classroom-based practices that best support students' sense of belonging.
3. **St. Olaf's strategic planning focus on thriving** includes and also extends beyond fostering a sense of belonging for students.

The NSSE will provide one way to continue to check our progress on this work, particularly when thinking about students who hold marginalized identities.

## Full Report

In Spring 2023, St. Olaf administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to first-years and seniors. Of those invited to complete the survey, 44% of first-years and 36% of seniors responded (see [Appendix A](#) for survey respondent demographics). The NSSE data reports also provided comparison data from other institutions that administered the survey in 2022 or 2023, with institutions selecting up to three different comparison groups from the list of participating institutions to include in their reports. St. Olaf defined a criterion-based comparison group, ACM/GLCA comparison group, and private baccalaureate comparison group (see [Appendix B](#) for more information). In addition to discussing St. Olaf's results, this report discusses comparisons between St. Olaf students' responses and those of their peers at other institutions.<sup>1</sup> Because we do not have access to detailed data from other institutions, these comparisons are focused at the aggregate level (i.e., all first-years, all seniors).

In addition to the main survey instrument, institutions could select up to two optional modules from a list of eleven to append to the NSSE. St. Olaf selected the [Academic Advising](#) and [Inclusiveness & Engagement with Cultural Diversity](#) modules, in order to compare responses to the 2021 NSSE where we administered the same modules. This report focuses on differences between the two survey years, as well as other items in the main NSSE survey that focus on [engagement across difference](#), [sense of belonging](#), and [academic engagement](#). Some sections focus on the NSSE Engagement Indicators, scales created by combining question items across a common theme (more on these indicators can be found in [Appendix C](#)). This report also discusses disaggregated results based on student demographics (race/ethnicity, ability status, first-generation status, and sexual orientation). The [final section](#) summarizes students' open-ended comments about institutional areas of improvement or excellence.

## Experiences and Engagement with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

### Engagement Across Difference

The Discussions with Diverse Others NSSE Engagement Indicator asks how often students engaged in discussions with peers whose racial/ethnic or economic backgrounds, religious beliefs, or political views differed from their own.

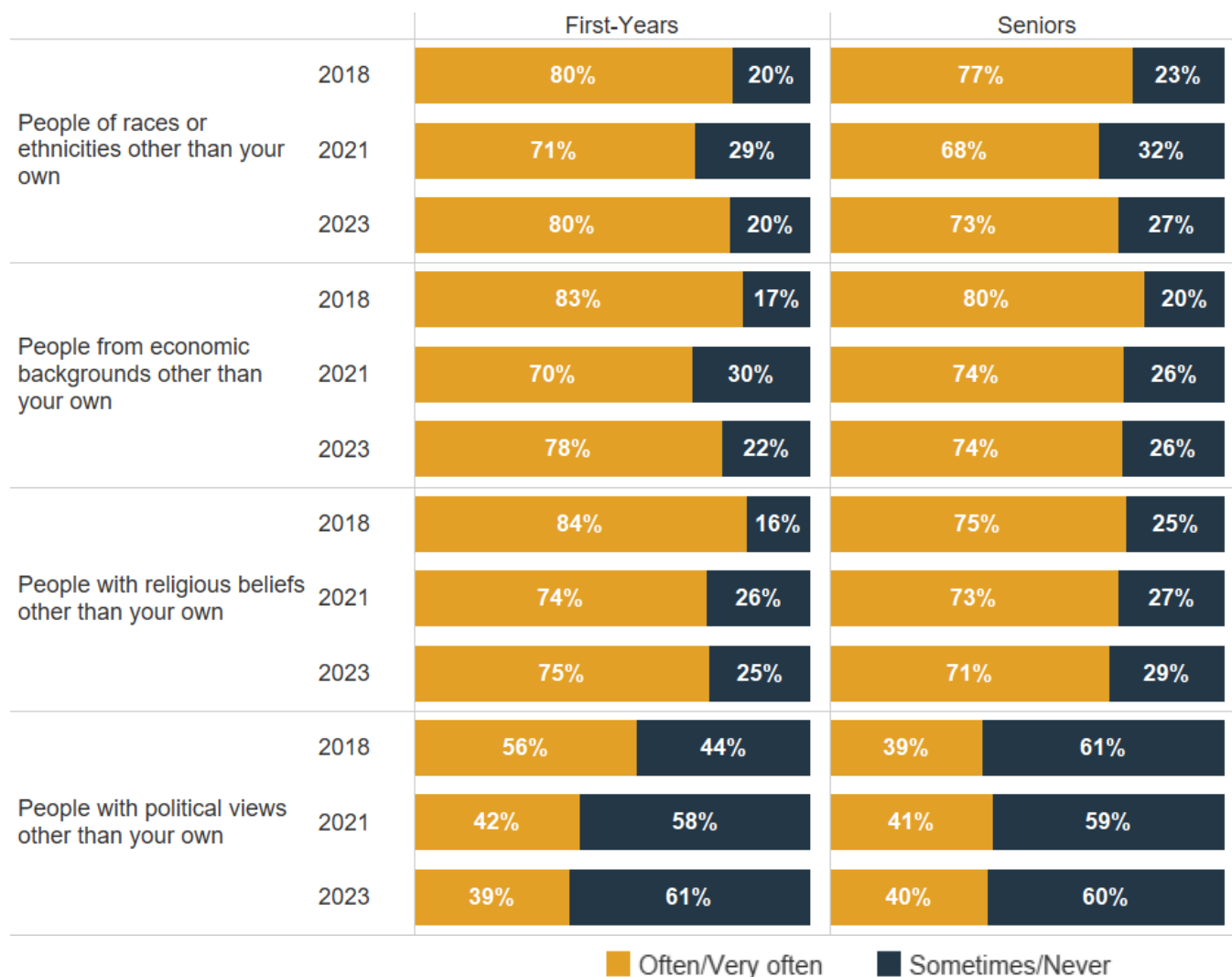
- While first-year respondents in 2021 scored significantly lower on this engagement indicator than peers at other institutions, first-year respondents scored similarly to peers in 2023 (as they also had in 2018).
- Senior respondents have remained similar to respondents at other institutions across survey years.
- For the 2023 NSSE, first year international respondents and first-year respondents with disabilities were significantly more likely than their peers at St. Olaf to engage with those

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<sup>1</sup> Details on comparison institutions' results can be found in the NSSE reports posted on the IE&A website: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/iea/nsse-results-and-reports/>

who were different from them, as measured by this indicator overall (see [Appendix C](#) for more details).

**During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups?**



- When looking at the individual items that make up this indicator, engagement with students who hold other religious beliefs has decreased for first-year respondents; other types of engagement (with those of other races or economic backgrounds) dipped in 2021 but have mostly returned to prior levels.
- For both first-year and senior respondents, engagement across political differences has remained lower compared to peers at other institutions. This rate was also at its lowest point for first-year respondents in 2023, compared to prior survey years.

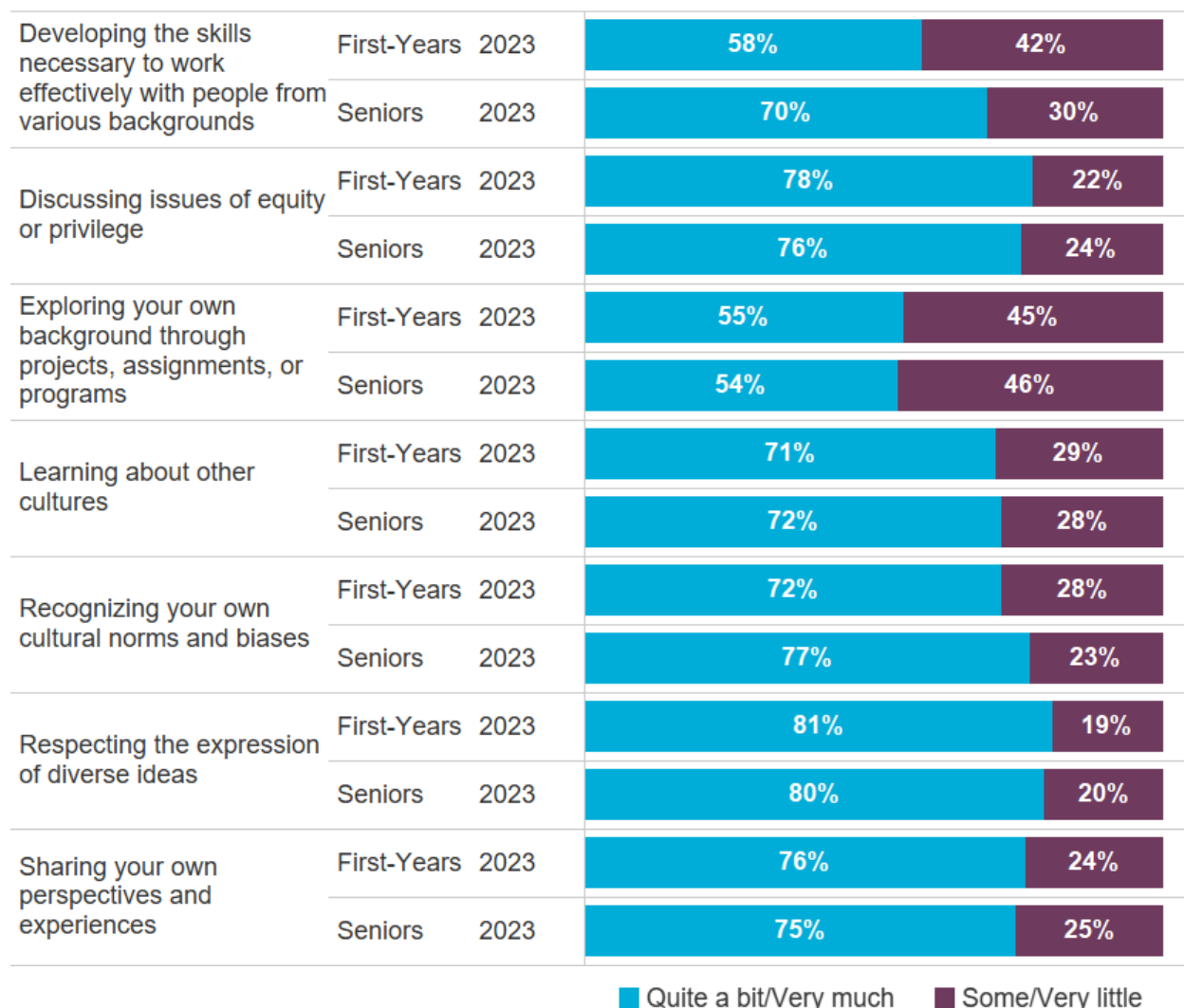
## Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity Module

The next three sections summarize results from the Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity Module on the NSSE. St. Olaf administered the Inclusiveness Module on the 2021 and 2023 NSSE.

### Experiences in the Classroom

- The majority of respondents (70% or greater) reported an emphasis in the classroom on discussing issues of equity and privilege, learning about other cultures, recognizing their own biases, respecting the expression of diverse ideas, and sharing their own experiences/perspectives.

**During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?**



- Only about half of respondents reported exploring their own background through classroom work or assignments, and senior respondents were more likely than first-years (70% vs. 58%) to say that their courses helped them develop skills to work effectively with people from various backgrounds.
- There were some increases compared to 2021 respondents, though overall patterns were similar in both years and therefore 2021 data are not shown here.
- St. Olaf respondents were generally more likely to report emphasis in these areas than respondents at other institutions. This was also true for first-year respondents in 2021, while senior respondents looked more similar to their peers at other institutions that year.

### Perception of institutional emphasis on DEI

How much does your institution emphasize the following?

|   |      | First-Years |     | Seniors |     |
|---|------|-------------|-----|---------|-----|
| Creating an overall sense of community among students   | 2021 | 57%         | 43% | 51%     | 49% |
|   | 2023 | 77%         | 23% | 60%     | 40% |
| Demonstrating a commitment to diversity   | 2021 | 56%         | 44% | 42%     | 58% |
|   | 2023 | 80%         | 20% | 60%     | 40% |
| Ensuring that you are not stigmatized because of your identity (racial/ethnic, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, etc.) | 2021 | 56%         | 44% | 42%     | 58% |
|   | 2023 | 83%         | 17% | 58%     | 42% |
| Helping students develop the skills to confront discrimination and harassment   | 2021 | 57%         | 43% | 34%     | 66% |
|   | 2023 | 59%         | 41% | 45%     | 55% |
| Providing information about anti-discrimination and harassment policies   | 2021 | 67%         | 33% | 51%     | 49% |
|   | 2023 | 78%         | 22% | 65%     | 35% |
| Providing students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in a multicultural world  | 2021 | 55%         | 45% | 35%     | 65% |
|   | 2023 | 72%         | 28% | 64%     | 36% |
| Taking allegations of discrimination or harassment seriously  | 2021 | 55%         | 45% | 40%     | 60% |
|   | 2023 | 73%         | 27% | 58%     | 42% |

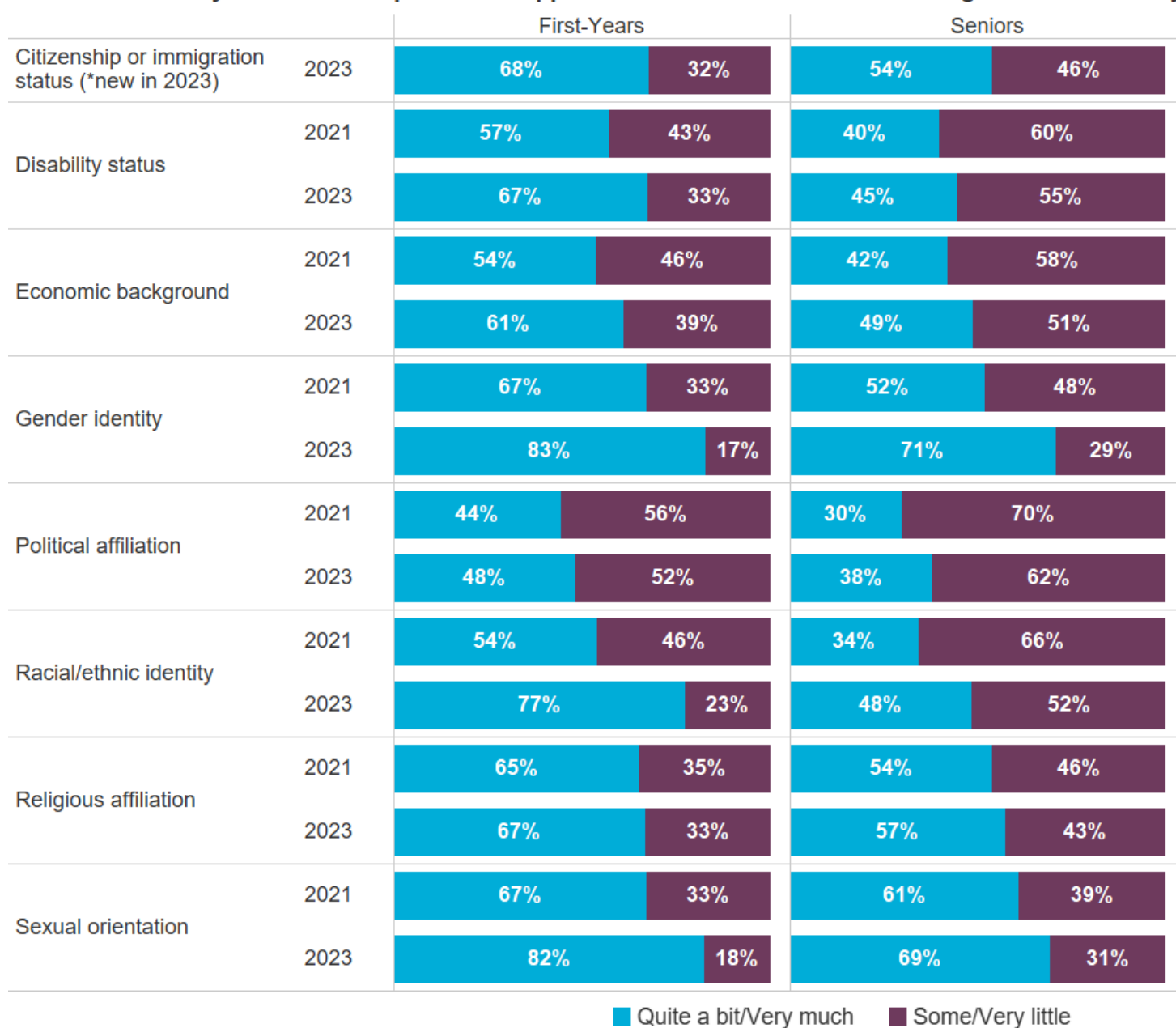
■ Quite a bit/Very much    ■ Some/Very little

- Whereas the 2021 NSSE showed a difference between first-year respondents' experiences in the classroom and their perception of the institution as a whole, first-year respondents in 2023 held similarly favorable views of DEI emphasis at the institutional and classroom levels.
- Senior respondents, while generally more likely to endorse these items than seniors in 2021, were still less likely to view the institution favorably (about 60-65% felt there was emphasis in most of these areas) compared to the classroom (where 70-80% responded favorably).
- In 2023, both groups of respondents were least likely to say that St. Olaf helped them develop skills to confront discrimination and harassment (first-years: 59%, seniors: 45%); this item stood out from the rest due to smaller gains between 2021 and 2023 respondents.
- In 2023, first-year respondents at St. Olaf were generally more likely than first-year respondents at other institutions to report an emphasis on DEI at their institution, while senior respondents answered similarly to those at other institutions.

### **Supportive Environment**

- While positive perceptions of support increased among 2023 respondents compared to 2021 respondents, first-year respondents remained more likely than senior respondents to perceive a supportive environment at St. Olaf for different identities.
- In 2023, both groups were most likely to perceive support for students with diverse gender identities (first-years: 83%, seniors: 71%) or sexual orientations (first-years: 82%, seniors: 69%), and least likely to perceive support for students with diverse political affiliations (first-years: 48%, seniors: 38%).
- Only about 50% of 2023 senior respondents felt that St. Olaf provided a supportive environment for other forms of diversity (citizenship status, disability status, economic background, racial/ethnic identity, or religious affiliation). By contrast, about two-thirds or greater of 2023 first-year respondents felt this way.
- Additionally, first-year respondents frequently answered more favorably compared to their peers at other institutions, while seniors' responses were similar to those at peer institutions.

**How much does your institution provide a supportive environment for the following forms of diversity?**



## Sense of Belonging

Overall, responses to the three questions related to students’ sense of belonging remained similar to 2021 respondents and to peer institutions; 74% or greater felt valued, like part of the community, and that they could be themselves at St. Olaf (see [Appendix C](#) for more details and disaggregated results). However, some areas of concern remain for certain identity groups.



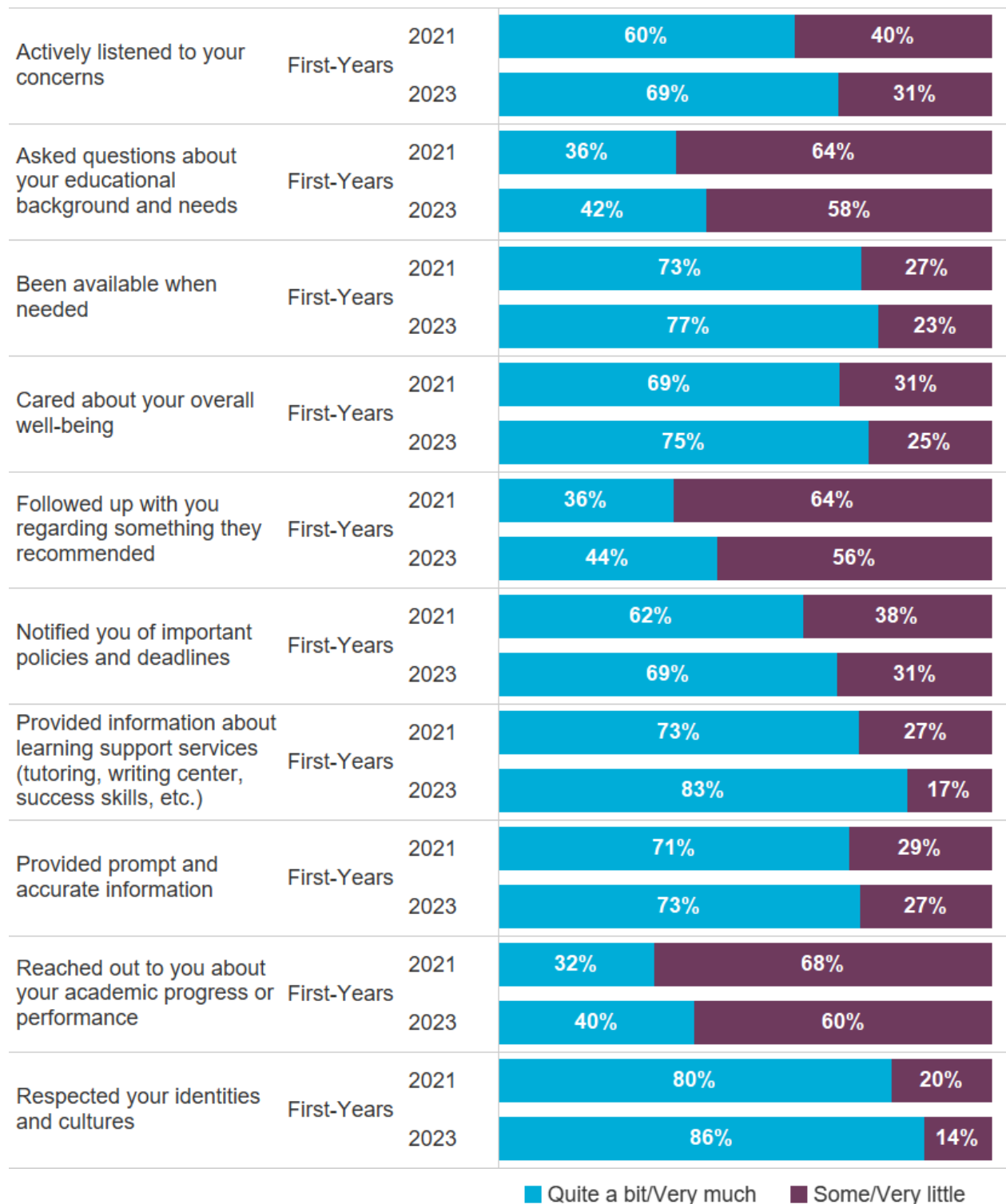
- Respondents of color and senior international respondents remained generally less likely to feel a sense of belonging.
  - About three-quarters of respondents of color (first-years and seniors) and senior international respondents in 2023 felt that they could be themselves at St. Olaf, compared to nearly 90% of all respondents in each class.
  - Additionally, 70% of first-year respondents of color, 65% of senior respondents of color, and 61% of senior international respondents felt like part of the St. Olaf community, compared to 79% of all respondents in each class.
  - There were smaller gaps for these groups when asked whether they felt valued by St. Olaf.
- Senior respondents with disabilities remained less likely to feel a sense of belonging than their peers, while there were generally no differences between first-year respondents, similar to 2021.
  - Specifically, 64% of senior respondents with disabilities felt valued by St. Olaf and 72% felt like part of the community, compared to 74% and 79%, respectively, of all senior respondents.
- Senior first-generation respondents were also less likely to respond affirmatively to these statements about belonging, similar to 2021, while there were not the same disparities for first-year respondents that were present in 2021.
  - For senior respondents, these gaps were largest when asked if they were comfortable being themselves (74% of first-generation respondents agreed compared to 89% of all senior respondents) or felt like part of the community (60% vs. 79%).
  - First-year first-generation respondents were still less likely to feel like part of the community compared to all first-year respondents (72% vs. 79%), but were similarly or more likely than their peers to agree with the other statements about belonging.
- Unlike 2021, respondents who identified as LGBTQ+ responded similarly to their peers on these statements about belonging.

## Academic Advising

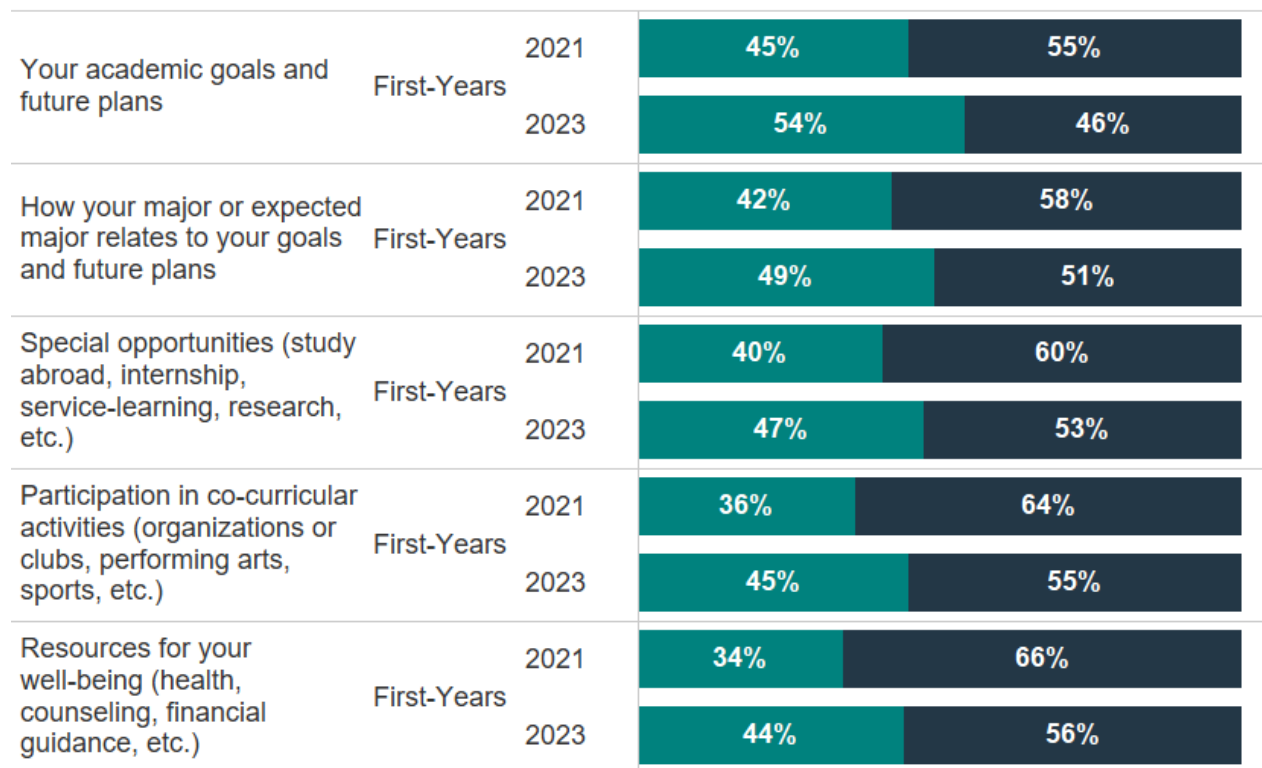
First-year respondents were more likely to respond positively about academic advising on the 2023 NSSE compared to 2021, particularly that those in advising:

- Actively listened to their concerns (60% in 2021 vs. 69% in 2023); first set of responses below
- Provided information about learning support services (73% vs. 83%); first set of responses below
- Frequently discussed their academic goals and future plans (45% vs. 54%), participation in co-curricular activities (36% vs. 45%), and resources for their well-being (34% vs. 44%); second set of responses below

**Thinking about academic advising, how much have people and resources at your institution done the following?**



**Thinking about academic advising, about how often did someone at your institution discuss the following with you?**



■ Often/Very often  
■ Sometimes/Rarely/Never

- In 2021, first-year respondents were significantly less likely to hold favorable views of advising than their peers at other institutions for most survey items, while in 2023 respondents were similarly or more likely than their peers to endorse these same items.
  - This, combined with the overall increase in the percentage of positive responses about advising, supports the success of the new advising model implemented through For Every Ole (now the St. Olaf Pathway).
- Senior respondents' experiences were not notably different in 2023 compared to 2021 respondents, and they remained similar to those at peer institutions.
- Overall, St. Olaf respondents were still least likely (35-45%) to say that advisors asked questions about their educational backgrounds and needs, followed up with them regarding something they recommended, or reached out to them about their academic progress or performance.
- There were disparities for some students from underserved backgrounds among St. Olaf respondents ([Appendix C](#)):
  - Overall, 69% of first-year respondents and 72% of senior respondents felt that advisors actively listened to their concerns.

- Senior international respondents (56%), senior first-generation respondents (64%), and first-year LGBTQ+ respondents (62%) were less likely to feel this way.
  - Overall, 86% of first-year respondents and 85% of senior respondents felt that advisors respected their identities and cultures.
    - Respondents of color (first-years: 78%, seniors: 71%), first-year international respondents (72%), and senior first-generation respondents (66%) were less likely to feel this way.
  - Overall, 75% of first-year respondents and 80% of senior respondents felt that advisors cared about their overall well-being.
    - Senior respondents of color (60%), international respondents (first-years: 67%, seniors: 69%), and senior first-generation respondents (64%) were less likely to feel this way.
  - These reflected similar patterns to 2021 for respondents of color, first-year LGBTQ+ respondents, and senior first-generation respondents. Gaps were larger in 2023 for international respondents, but smaller for respondents with disabilities and senior LGBTQ+ respondents.

## Additional Academic Experiences

Five Engagement Indicators on the NSSE relate to academic engagement. These indicators incorporate items on the NSSE that ask students whether their coursework emphasized analyzing and evaluating information (Higher-Order Learning); how often they made connections to prior knowledge, across courses, and to current issues (Reflective & Integrative Learning); their engagement in effective learning strategies such as reviewing and summarizing what they learned in class (Learning Strategies); how often they analyzed and used numerical information (Quantitative Reasoning); and how often they sought help from and worked with peers on assignments and to prepare for exams (Collaborative Learning).

St. Olaf respondents in 2023 looked fairly similar to their peers at other institutions on these Engagement Indicators, and only a few differences emerged when disaggregating across different demographic groups at St. Olaf (see [Appendix C](#) for more details):

- Senior respondents with disabilities and senior LGBTQ+ respondents scored significantly higher on average on the Higher-Order Learning and Reflective & Integrative Learning EIs.
  - Senior respondents with disabilities also scored significantly higher on the Learning Strategies EI.
- Senior first-generation respondents scored significantly lower on the Collaborative Learning EI.
- First-year LGBTQ+ respondents and respondents with disabilities scored significantly lower than their peers on the Quantitative Reasoning EI. First-year international student respondents scored significantly higher than both domestic white respondents and respondents of color on this same indicator.

## Open-Ended Responses

At the end of the survey, institutions could choose from one of four open-ended prompts to collect student comments. In 2023, students were given the following open-ended prompt: “What one change would most improve the educational experience at this institution, and what one thing should not be changed?” Overall, 277 students (43% of all survey respondents) answered this question (270 mentioned at least one improvement, and 159 described at least one aspect of St. Olaf that shouldn’t change). As might be expected when asking a large and diverse group of students about their experiences, comments from each side focused on similar areas and were thus grouped into broader categories and themes. Suggestions for improvement were more likely to be related to themes around the campus environment (such as climate and DEI efforts), while affirmations of things the College does well were more likely to focus on student support, with academics falling somewhere in the middle. Below is a summary of responses, and several examples of student quotes for each theme and sub-topic can be found in a separate report posted on the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment [website](#).<sup>2</sup>

### **Campus Environment (41% of suggestions for improvement and 21% of positive comments)**

- **Targets for improvement:**
  - Campus climate, including additional support for/inclusion of students with particular identities or perspectives and de-emphasizing the “busy-ness culture” on campus
  - Increasing diversity on campus
  - Opportunities for students to provide feedback or for student feedback to be taken seriously; greater transparency from leadership
  - More opportunities to socialize and build community
- **Strengths/what should not be changed:**
  - Sense of community on campus
  - Emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion

### **Student support (26% of suggestions for improvement and 41% of positive comments)**

- **Targets for improvement:**
  - Mental/physical health support, including more academic breaks
  - Academic advising
  - Support from faculty/staff
  - Career development/discernment
  - Accessibility for students with disabilities
  - General support/information about resources
- **Strengths/what should not be changed:**
  - Academic support and other resources

<sup>2</sup> <https://wp.stolaf.edu/iea/files/2023/08/NSSE-2023-open-ended-response-summary.pdf>

- Relationships with faculty/staff (some students even named particular faculty and staff)
- Academic advising
- Piper Center
- Financial aid

### **Academics (23% of suggestions for improvement and 27% of positive comments)**

- **Targets for improvement:**
  - Adding to the variety of areas of study offered, options for majors/concentrations (several mentioned the option for a language concentration), or increasing the diversity of content covered within disciplines
  - Reducing or changing the general education requirements
  - More opportunities to apply learning in practical and relevant ways (e.g., research/service-learning opportunities, other real-world experiences), moving beyond traditional lecture-based learning
  - Greater support for particular departments or areas
  - Changes to the SOAR program
- **Strengths/what should not be changed:**
  - Course offerings/requirements
  - The structure of the academic year
  - Rigor of courses
  - Class sizes/low student-to-faculty ratio

### **Some topics were more unique to either suggestions for improvement or what should remain unchanged, rather than falling across both categories.**

- **Targets for improvement:**
  - Housing (6% of comments), specifically more opportunities to live off-campus
  - Food (6% of comments)
- **Strengths/what should not be changed:**
  - Co-curricular offerings (9% of comments), especially study-abroad

## **Summary and Recommendations**

### **There are several highlights to celebrate from the Spring 2023 NSSE results:**

- Respondents continue to report an emphasis on equity and inclusion in the classroom, and first-year respondents especially view the institution's DEI efforts more favorably compared to 2021 respondents. In addition, 2023 St. Olaf respondents were equally or more likely to respond positively in these areas compared to respondents at other institutions.
- Pointing to the success of the new advising model implemented through For Every Ole/ the St. Olaf Pathway, first-year respondents were more likely to respond positively about

academic advising in 2023 compared to 2021 first-year respondents. They were also similarly likely or more likely than their peers at other institutions to endorse these same items, a reversal from the 2021 respondent group.

- More broadly, many respondents mentioned student support resources as one of the strengths of St. Olaf in their open-ended comments.
- St. Olaf respondents looked fairly similar to their peers at other institutions on the NSSE Engagement Indicators that examine other academic experiences (Higher-Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, Quantitative Reasoning, Collaborative Learning). Additionally, there were few differences when disaggregating indicator scores across different demographic groups.

**Other results point to areas of concern:**

- Senior respondents in 2023 were less likely than first-year respondents to perceive a supportive environment at St. Olaf for different types of diverse identities, similar to senior respondents in 2021. They also remained less likely to view the institution's DEI efforts favorably compared to similar efforts in the classroom.
- Respondents of color, senior international respondents, senior first-generation respondents, and senior respondents with disabilities were less likely to feel a sense of belonging than their peers, similar to respondents in 2021.
- Respondents of color, international respondents, senior first-generation respondents, and first-year LGBTQ+ respondents were less likely to feel that advisors actively listened to their concerns, respected their identities and cultures, and/or cared about their overall well-being.
- These themes were mirrored in respondents' open-ended comments, where students frequently cited suggestions for improvement related to the campus climate.

**In line with these findings, many current College-wide efforts focus on areas related to student belonging and thriving:**

- The St. Olaf Pathway will continue to expand resources for advising and mentoring to deepen students' connections to faculty and staff, as well as to their peers and other resources for support and growth.
- Professor Louis Epstein, named an ACM Mellon Academic Leadership Fellow beginning in 2023-24, has launched a two-year project to identify and pilot classroom-based practices that best support students' sense of belonging.
- One of the key facets of St. Olaf's strategic planning process is thriving, which includes and also extends beyond fostering a sense of belonging for students.
- The NSSE will provide one way to continue to check our progress with these initiatives, particularly when thinking about students who hold marginalized identities.



## Appendix A: Survey Respondent Demographics

| NSSE 2023 Respondent and Survey Population Demographics |                                 |                                |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Demographic   | Survey Respondents <sup>3</sup> | Survey Population <sup>4</sup> |
| <b>First-Years</b>                                      |                                 |                                |
| Total   | 398                             | 901                            |
| Domestic Students of Color                              | 87 (22%)                        | 207 (23%)                      |
| Domestic White, non-Hispanic Students                   | 264 (66%)                       | 597 (66%)                      |
| International Students                                  | 45 (11%)                        | 89 (10%)                       |
| Unknown/Did not disclose                                | 2 (1%)                          | 8 (1%)                         |
| Continuing-Generation Students                          | 317 (80%)                       | 724 (80%)                      |
| First-Generation Students                               | 81 (20%)                        | 177 (20%)                      |
| LGBTQ+ Students   | 130 (33%)                       | N/A                            |
| Non-LGBTQ+ Students                                     | 166 (42%)                       | N/A                            |
| Unknown/Did not disclose                                | 102 (26%)                       | N/A                            |
| Students With Disabilities                              | 88 (22%)                        | N/A                            |
| Students Without Disabilities                           | 191 (48%)                       | N/A                            |
| Unknown/Did not disclose                                | 119 (30%)                       | N/A                            |
| <b>Seniors</b>  |                                 |                                |
| Total   | 250                             | 703                            |
| Domestic Students of Color                              | 41 (16%)                        | 149 (21%)                      |
| Domestic White, non-Hispanic Students                   | 185 (74%)                       | 478 (68%)                      |
| International Students                                  | 23 (9%)                         | 75 (11%)                       |
| Unknown/Did not disclose                                | 1 (<1%)                         | 1 (<1%)                        |
| Continuing-Generation Students                          | 212 (85%)                       | 576 (82%)                      |
| First-Generation Students                               | 38 (15%)                        | 127 (18%)                      |
| LGBTQ+ Students   | 73 (29%)                        | N/A                            |
| Non-LGBTQ+ Students                                     | 127 (51%)                       | N/A                            |
| Unknown/Did not disclose                                | 50 (20%)                        | N/A                            |
| Students With Disabilities                              | 64 (26%)                        | N/A                            |
| Students Without Disabilities                           | 128 (51%)                       | N/A                            |
| Unknown/Did not disclose                                | 58 (23%)                        | N/A                            |

<sup>3</sup> Those who responded to at least one survey question; response counts varied across questions.

<sup>4</sup> All individuals invited to complete the survey. Some demographic information is available for the survey respondents only and not collected by IE&A.



## Appendix B: NSSE Comparison Groups

St. Olaf selected the following comparison groups from among the other institutions that also administered the NSSE in 2023 or the previous year:

### Group 1: Criterion-Based

A group of institutions selected based on the criteria defined by the PLT and Board of Regents, altered slightly where necessary to match the [Carnegie Classification definitions](#)<sup>5</sup> available and include a decent sample size:

- IPEDS Sector – Private, not-for-profit
- Baccalaureate – Arts & Sciences focus
- More selective (four-year, full-time, more selective, lower transfer-in)
- Highly residential
- Enrollment: small/medium

29 institutions:

- Allegheny College (Meadville, PA)
- Bucknell University (Lewisburg, PA)
- Centre College (Danville, KY)
- Colby College (Waterville, ME)
- Colgate University (Hamilton, NY)
- College of the Holy Cross (Worcester, MA)
- Denison University (Granville, OH)
- Dickinson College (Carlisle, PA)
- Furman University (Greenville, SC)
- Gettysburg College (Gettysburg, PA)
- Grinnell College (Grinnell, IA)
- Hamilton College (Clinton, NY)
- Kenyon College (Gambier, OH)
- Lawrence University (Appleton, WI)
- Lewis & Clark College (Portland, OR)
- Macalester College (Saint Paul, MN)
- Muhlenberg College (Allentown, PA)
- Saint Anselm College (Manchester, NH)
- Sarah Lawrence College (Bronxville, NY)
- Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs, NY)
- The University of the South (Sewanee, TN)
- Trinity University (San Antonio, TX)
- Union College (Schenectady, NY)
- University of Richmond (Richmond, VA)
- Ursinus College (Collegeville, PA)
- Vassar College (Poughkeepsie, NY)
- Washington and Lee University (Lexington, VA)
- Wheaton College (Norton, MA)
- Whitman College (Walla Walla, WA)

### Group 2: ACM/GLCA membership group

These institutions belong to the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (of which St. Olaf is a member) or the Great Lakes Colleges Association (which is often combined with ACM to form a larger comparison group).

11 institutions:

- Allegheny College (Meadville, PA)
- Beloit College (Beloit, WI)

<sup>5</sup> <https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/carnegie-classification/classification-methodology/>

- Denison University (Granville, OH)
- Grinnell College (Grinnell, IA)
- Hope College (Holland, MI)
- Kalamazoo College (Kalamazoo, MI)
- Kenyon College (Gambier, OH)
- Lawrence University (Appleton, WI)
- Macalester College (Saint Paul, MN)
- Monmouth College (Monmouth, IL)
- Ohio Wesleyan University (Delaware, OH)

### Group 3: All private, Baccalaureate - Arts & Sciences institutions

92 institutions:

- Agnes Scott College (Decatur, GA)
- Allegheny College (Meadvile, PA)
- Aquinas College (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Augustana College (Rock Island, IL)
- Austin College (Sherman, TX)
- Bard College (Annandale-On-Hudson, NY)
- Beloit College (Beloit, WI)
- Bethany College (Bethany, WV)
- Bethany Lutheran College (Mankato, MN)
- Bethune-Cookman University (Daytona Beach, FL)
- Birmingham-Southern College (Birmingham, AL)
- Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, VA)
- Bucknell University (Lewisburg, PA)
- Centenary College of Louisiana (Shreveport, LA)
- Central College (Pella, IA)
- Centre College (Danville, KY)
- Colby College (Waterville, ME)
- Colgate University (Hamilton, NY)
- The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University (Saint Joseph, MN)
- College of the Atlantic (Bar Harbor, ME)
- College of the Holy Cross (Worcester, MA)
- Concordia College at Moorhead (Moorhead, MN)
- Covenant College (Lookout Mountain, GA)
- Lewis & Clark College (Portland, OR)
- Linfield University (McMinnville, OR)
- Lycoming College (Williamsport, PA)
- Macalester College (Saint Paul, MN)
- Marymount Manhattan College (New York, NY)
- Meredith College (Raleigh, NC)
- Millsaps College (Jackson, MS)
- Monmouth College (Monmouth, IL)
- Muhlenberg College (Allentown, PA)
- Oglethorpe University (Atlanta, GA)
- Ohio Wesleyan University (Delaware, OH)
- Pitzer College (Claremont, CA)
- Presbyterian College (Clinton, SC)
- Randolph-Macon College (Ashland, VA)
- Roanoke College (Salem, VA)
- Rust College (Holly Springs, MS)
- Saint Anselm College (Manchester, NH)
- Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, IN)
- Saint Michael's College (Colchester, VT)
- Sarah Lawrence College (Bronxville, NY)
- Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs, NY)
- Southern Virginia University (Buena Vista, VA)
- Southwestern University (Georgetown, TX)
- Spelman College (Atlanta, GA)
- St. John's College Annapolis (Annapolis, MD)

- Denison University (Granville, OH)
- Dickinson College (Carlisle, PA)
- Drew University (Madison, NJ)
- Emmanuel College (Boston, MA)
- Franklin College (Franklin, IN)
- Furman University (Greenville, SC)
- Georgetown College (Georgetown, KY)
- Gettysburg College (Gettysburg, PA)
- Goucher College (Baltimore, MD)
- Grinnell College (Grinnell, IA)
- Hamilton College (Clinton, NY)
- Hampden-Sydney College (Hampden-Sydney, VA)
- Hanover College (Hanover, IN)
- Hartwick College (Oneonta, NY)
- Harvey Mudd College (Claremont, CA)
- Hendrix College (Conway, AR)
- Hollins University (Roanoke, VA)
- Holy Cross College at Notre Dame, IN (Notre Dame, IN)
- Hope College (Holland, MI)
- Houghton University (Houghton, NY)
- Illinois College (Jacksonville, IL)
- Juniata College (Huntingdon, PA)
- Kalamazoo College (Kalamazoo, MI)
- Kenyon College (Gambier, OH)
- Lawrence University (Appleton, WI)
- St. John's College Santa Fe (Santa Fe, NM)
- Stonehill College (Easton, MA)
- Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, PA)
- Sweet Briar College (Sweet Briar, VA)
- The University of the South (Sewanee, TN)
- Trinity University (San Antonio, TX)
- Union College (Schenectady, NY)
- University of Puget Sound (Tacoma, WA)
- University of Richmond (Richmond, VA)
- Ursinus College (Collegeville, PA)
- Vassar College (Poughkeepsie, NY)
- Wartburg College (Waverly, IA)
- Washington & Jefferson College (Washington, PA)
- Washington and Lee University (Lexington, VA)
- Washington College (Chestertown, MD)
- Westminster College (Fulton, MO)
- Westmont College (Santa Barbara, CA)
- Wheaton College (Norton, MA)
- Whitman College (Walla Walla, WA)

### Comparison Group for Academic Advising Module

A subset of the Carnegie comparison group (Group 3) was also used for the two optional modules (institutions could only select one of their three comparison groups to use for both modules).

32 institutions:

- Beloit College (Beloit, WI)
- Bethany College (Bethany, WV)
- Bethany Lutheran College (Mankato, MN)
- Birmingham-Southern College (Birmingham, AL)
- Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, VA)
- Bucknell University (Lewisburg, PA)
- Central College (Pella, IA)
- Colgate University (Hamilton, NY)
- The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University (Saint Joseph, WI)
- Pitzer College (Claremont, CA)
- Presbyterian College (Clinton, SC)
- Rust College (Holly Springs, MS)
- Saint Michael's College (Colchester, VT)
- Southwestern University (Georgetown, TX)
- Spelman College (Atlanta, GA)
- Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, PA)
- Trinity University (San Antonio, TX)
- Ursinus College (Collegeville, PA)

- MN)
- Denison University (Granville, OH)
- Drew University (Madison, NJ)
- Franklin College (Franklin, IN)
- Grinnell College (Grinnell, IA)
- Juniata College (Huntingdon, PA)
- Lycoming College (Williamsport, PA)
- Monmouth College (Monmouth, IL)
- Oglethorpe University (Atlanta, GA)
- Ohio Wesleyan University (Delaware, OH)
- Wartburg College (Waverly, IA)
- Washington & Jefferson College (Washington, PA)
- Washington College (Chestertown, MD)
- Westmont College (Santa Barbara, CA)
- Whitman College (Walla Walla, WA)

### Comparison Group for Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity Module

28 institutions:

- Centenary College of Louisiana (Shreveport, LA)
- Centre College (Danville, KY)
- Colby College (Waterville, ME)
- The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University (Saint Joseph, MN)
- Denison University (Granville, OH)
- Dickinson College (Carlisle, PA)
- Emmanuel College (Boston, MA)
- Franklin College (Franklin, IN)
- Hamilton College (Clinton, NY)
- Hartwick College (Oneonta, NY)
- Harvey Mudd College (Claremont, CA)
- Illinois College (Jacksonville, IL)
- Kenyon College (Gambier, OH)
- Lawrence University (Appleton, WI)
- Lewis & Clark College (Portland, OR)
- Macalester College (Saint Paul, MN)
- Millsaps College (Jackson, MS)
- Ohio Wesleyan University (Delaware, OH)
- Presbyterian College (Clinton, SC)
- Randolph-Macon College (Ashland, VA)
- Roanoke College (Salem, VA)
- Saint Anselm College (Manchester, NH)
- Stonehill College (Easton, MA)
- Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, PA)
- Trinity University (San Antonio, TX)
- Union College (Schenectady, NY)
- University of Richmond (Richmond, VA)
- Ursinus College (Collegeville, PA)

## Appendix C: Additional Data Details

### NSSE Engagement Indicators

The following tables show the NSSE Engagement Indicators highlighted in the main report, with scores disaggregated to compare domestic respondents of color, domestic White, non-Hispanic respondents, and international respondents; first-generation and continuing-generation respondents; LGBTQ+ identifying respondents and non-LGBTQ+ respondents; and respondents with disabilities compared to those without. In general, these indicators convert question response items (such as Never, Sometimes, Often, and Very Often) into scores of 0, 20, 40, and 60, respectively, and then average student responses across all questions in the EI. Thus, an average of 0-20 indicates that respondents are having experiences or engaging in a particular behavior very infrequently, while averages of 40-60 indicate that they are frequently encountering or engaging in these behaviors and experiences. Scores in the middle range (20-40) indicate somewhat frequent engagement. For all tables, bold numbers with an asterisk (\*) indicate a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between one or more groups.

### Engagement Indicator Survey Questions

Below are the survey questions that make up each Engagement Indicator discussed in this report.

#### *Discussions with Diverse Others:*

- During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups?
  - People from a race or ethnicity other than your own
  - People from an economic background other than your own
  - People with religious beliefs other than your own
  - People with political views other than your own

#### *Higher-Order Learning:*

- During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?
  - Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
  - Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
  - Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source
  - Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information

#### *Reflective and Integrative Learning:*

- During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?
  - Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
  - Connected your learning to societal problems or issues

- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
- Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
- Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

*Learning Strategies:*

- During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?
  - Identified key information from reading assignments
  - Reviewed your notes after class
  - Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials

*Quantitative Reasoning:*

- During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?
  - Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
  - Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
  - Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information

*Collaborative Learning:*

- During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?
  - Asked another student to help you understand course material
  - Explained course material to one or more students
  - Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
  - Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

**Disaggregated Engagement Indicator Scores**

| <b>NSSE 2023: Discussions with Diverse Others</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>NSSE Engagement Indicator (EI):</b>            | <b>Discussions with Diverse Others</b> |
| <b>First-Year Respondents</b>                     |  |
| All respondents                                   | 39.9                                   |
| Domestic respondents of color                     | <b>38.8*</b>                           |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents          | <b>39.0*</b>                           |
| International respondents                         | <b>48.3*<sup>6</sup></b>               |
| Continuing-generation respondents                 | 40.0                                   |
| First-generation respondents                      | 39.2                                   |
| LGBTQ+ respondents                                | 39.4                                   |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents                            | 40.7                                   |
| Respondents with disabilities                     | <b>41.6*</b>                           |
| Respondents without disabilities                  | <b>38.5*</b>                           |
| <b>Senior Respondents</b>                         |  |
| All respondents                                   | 38.8                                   |
| Domestic respondents of color                     | 36.3                                   |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents          | 39.1                                   |
| International respondents                         | 39.5                                   |
| Continuing-generation respondents                 | 38.6                                   |
| First-generation respondents                      | 38.6                                   |
| LGBTQ+ respondents                                | 37.0                                   |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents                            | 39.6                                   |
| Respondents with disabilities                     | 38.3                                   |
| Respondents without disabilities                  | 38.7                                   |

<sup>6</sup> International respondents scored significantly higher on the Discussions with Diverse Others Engagement Indicator compared to both domestic white respondents and respondents of color.

**NSSE 2023: Academic Engagement**

| NSSE Engagement Indicator (EI):          | Higher-Order Learning | Reflective & Integrative Learning | Learning Strategies | Quantitative Reasoning   | Collaborative Learning |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>First-Year Respondents</b>            |                       |                                   |                     |                          |                        |
| All respondents                          | 41.9                  | 39.5                              | 38.0                | 30.5                     | 33.7                   |
| Domestic respondents of color            | 40.5                  | 37.5                              | 37.0                | <b>30.7*</b>             | 31.9                   |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents | 42.1                  | 40.1                              | 37.8                | <b>29.4*</b>             | 34.1                   |
| International respondents                | 43.8                  | 40.8                              | 41.3                | <b>37.6*<sup>7</sup></b> | 35.5                   |
| Continuing-generation respondents        | 42.0                  | 39.8                              | 38.3                | 29.9                     | 34.2                   |
| First-generation respondents             | 41.6                  | 38.6                              | 36.9                | 33.2                     | 31.8                   |
| LGBTQ+ respondents                       | 41.8                  | 40.5                              | 37.7                | <b>27.9*</b>             | 32.8                   |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents                   | 42.3                  | 39.0                              | 38.5                | <b>32.5*</b>             | 35.1                   |
| Respondents with disabilities            | 40.6                  | 40.4                              | 37.8                | <b>28.2*</b>             | 34.0                   |
| Respondents without disabilities         | 42.4                  | 39.0                              | 38.2                | <b>31.8*</b>             | 34.0                   |
| <b>Senior Respondents</b>                |                       |                                   |                     |                          |                        |
| All respondents                          | 42.2                  | 40.2                              | 36.4                | 32.5                     | 35.7                   |
| Domestic respondents of color            | 40.3                  | 37.8                              | 33.8                | 30.2                     | 33.3                   |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents | 42.9                  | 40.9                              | 37.4                | 32.0                     | 36.3                   |
| International respondents                | 41.3                  | 40.5                              | 35.1                | 35.8                     | 35.9                   |
| Continuing-generation respondents        | 42.6                  | 40.7                              | 37.2                | 32.6                     | <b>36.5*</b>           |
| First-generation respondents             | 40.3                  | 38.0                              | 33.5                | 28.8                     | <b>31.1*</b>           |
| LGBTQ+ respondents                       | <b>44.9*</b>          | <b>43.4*</b>                      | 38.3                | 32.7                     | 37.6                   |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents                   | <b>40.4*</b>          | <b>37.8*</b>                      | 35.8                | 32.4                     | 35.2                   |
| Respondents with disabilities            | <b>45.1*</b>          | <b>44.0*</b>                      | <b>38.9*</b>        | 32.7                     | 36.5                   |
| Respondents without disabilities         | <b>41.2*</b>          | <b>38.5*</b>                      | <b>35.0*</b>        | 31.8                     | 35.7                   |

<sup>7</sup> International respondents scored significantly higher than both domestic white respondents and domestic respondents of color on the Quantitative Reasoning EI.



**Sense of Belonging: Disaggregated Responses**

| <b>NSSE 2023: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?<sup>8</sup></b> |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  | <b>I feel comfortable being myself at this institution</b> | <b>I feel valued by this institution</b> | <b>I feel like part of the community at this institution</b> |
| <b>First-Year Respondents</b>  |  |  |  |
| All respondents  | 88%  | 81%                                      | 79%  |
| Domestic respondents of color  | 76%  | 76%                                      | 70%  |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents   | 92%  | 83%                                      | 82%  |
| International respondents  | 94%  | 81%                                      | 78%  |
| Continuing-generation respondents  | 89%  | 80%                                      | 81%  |
| First-generation respondents   | 85%  | 87%                                      | 72%  |
| LGBTQ+ respondents   | 92%  | 78%                                      | 77%  |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents   | 85%  | 82%                                      | 80%  |
| Respondents with disabilities  | 93%  | 78%                                      | 80%  |
| Respondents without disabilities   | 86%  | 84%                                      | 81%  |
| <b>Senior Respondents</b>  |  |  |  |
| All respondents  | 89%  | 74%                                      | 79%  |
| Domestic respondents of color  | 77%  | 74%                                      | 65%  |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents   | 94%  | 75%                                      | 84%  |
| International respondents  | 72%  | 67%                                      | 61%  |
| Continuing-generation respondents  | 92%  | 75%                                      | 83%  |
| First-generation respondents   | 74%  | 69%                                      | 60%  |
| LGBTQ+ respondents   | 88%  | 71%                                      | 79%  |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents   | 90%  | 79%                                      | 82%  |
| Respondents with disabilities  | 89%  | 64%                                      | 72%  |
| Respondents without disabilities   | 91%  | 80%                                      | 85%  |

<sup>8</sup> Shows percentage of respondents who said “agree” or “strongly agree”

## Academic Advising: Disaggregated Responses

| <b>NSSE 2023: Thinking about academic advising, how much have people and resources at your institution done the following?<sup>9</sup></b> |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  | <b>Actively listened to your concerns</b> | <b>Respected your identities and cultures</b> | <b>Cared about your overall well-being</b> |
| <b>First-Year Respondents</b>  |   |   |  |
| All respondents  | 69%                                       | 86%   | 75%  |
| Domestic respondents of color  | 65%                                       | 78%   | 73%  |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents   | 70%                                       | 91%   | 77%  |
| International respondents  | 70%                                       | 72%   | 67%  |
| Continuing-generation respondents  | 69%                                       | 87%   | 75%  |
| First-generation respondents   | 70%                                       | 83%   | 78%  |
| LGBTQ+ respondents   | 62%                                       | 83%   | 71%  |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents   | 74%                                       | 90%   | 79%  |
| Respondents with disabilities  | 65%                                       | 90%   | 79%  |
| Respondents without disabilities   | 71%                                       | 86%   | 75%  |
| <b>Senior Respondents</b>  |   |   |  |
| All respondents  | 72%                                       | 85%   | 80%  |
| Domestic respondents of color  | 70%                                       | 71%   | 60%  |
| Domestic white, non-Hispanic respondents   | 74%                                       | 89%   | 85%  |
| International respondents  | 56%                                       | 81%   | 69%  |
| Continuing-generation respondents  | 73%                                       | 90%   | 83%  |
| First-generation respondents   | 64%                                       | 66%   | 64%  |
| LGBTQ+ respondents   | 74%                                       | 89%   | 79%  |
| Non-LGBTQ+ respondents   | 72%                                       | 85%   | 82%  |
| Respondents with disabilities  | 73%                                       | 86%   | 78%  |
| Respondents without disabilities   | 72%                                       | 85%   | 82%  |

<sup>9</sup> Shows percentage of respondents who said “quite a bit” or “very much”