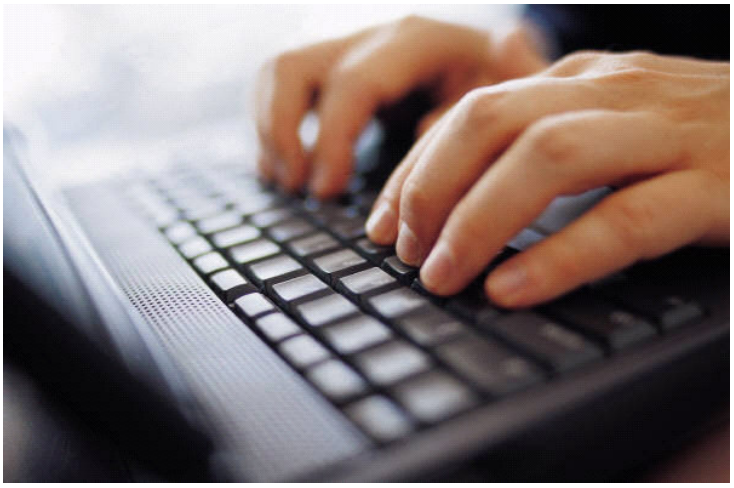

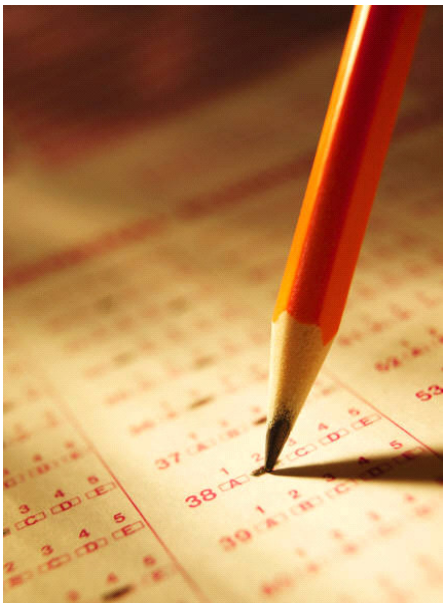

04_05 assessment annual

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE _ ST. PAUL, MN

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2004 Freshmen Data

Demographic Information

The ***Cooperative Institutional Research Project [CIRP]*** of the Higher Education Research Institution [HERI] at UCLA is one of the most significant national research studies of undergraduate education. This annual survey of incoming college freshmen covers an array of demographic, experiential, and attitudinal issues. The questionnaire also covers degree aspirations, major and career plans, and expectations about college.

As a part of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities [CCCU] cooperative assessment and retention initiatives, Northwestern College administers the ***CIRP*** to incoming freshmen every other year. Responses of NWC freshmen in 2004 are compared with NWC freshmen of previous years, as well as freshmen enrolled in 81 colleges and universities in the CCCU and a HERI sample of students in private colleges.

For most incoming freshmen, Northwestern was their first choice of colleges to attend. More than one third did not apply anywhere else.

Northwestern was the first choice of most incoming freshmen

Over 86 percent of incoming freshmen reported that Northwestern College was their first college choice. This number was substantially higher than the National Private college sample of 71.6 percent and somewhat higher than the CCCU sample of 82.6 percent (Chart 1). Thirty-six percent of NWC freshmen did not apply at any other institution compared with 16 percent in the National Private sample and 29.7 percent in the CCCU sample.

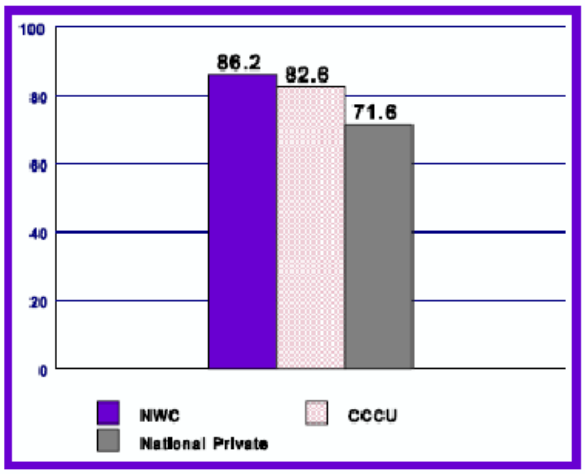

CHART 1: Northwestern College as first choice

The percentage of minority students entering NWC increased in 2004

The percentage of incoming freshmen reporting a racial background other than White/Caucasian was substantially higher in 2004; however, Northwestern's incoming class represented less racial diversity than those of the CCCU (10.6 percent) or students in National Private colleges (20.7 percent) (Chart 2).

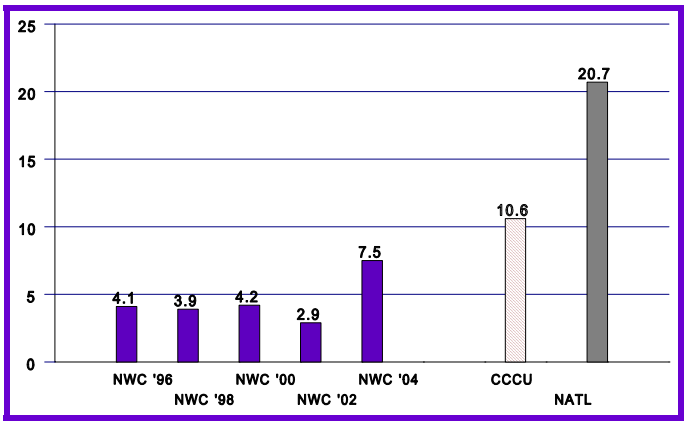

CHART 2. Racial background of incoming freshmen

Incoming NWC freshmen reported higher high school grades than the CCCU and National Private college samples.

High school grades

The percentage of freshmen reporting high school grades in the "A" range remained over 60 percent in 2004, higher than grades reported by freshmen in the CCCU (56.0 percent) and the National Private college samples (34.6 percent) (Chart 3).

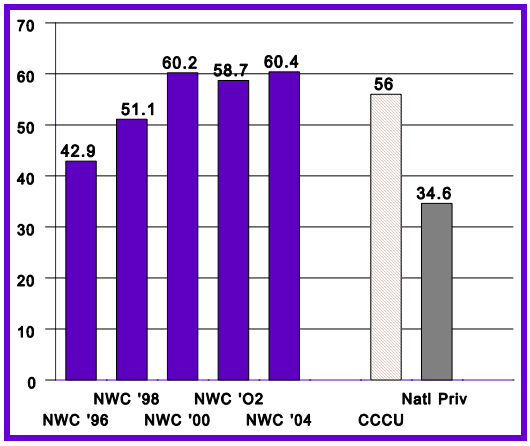

CHART 3. Percentages earning an "A" average in high school

Parents' education, income and marital status

Fathers of over one third of incoming freshmen have completed a college degree and 22.6 percent have earned a graduate degree. These numbers are 36.8 percent and 9.5 percent for mothers of incoming freshmen.

Freshmen estimates of family income are comparable with those of freshmen in the CCCU, but lower than the National Private sample. Fifty-six percent of NWC freshmen estimate family income of over $50,000, while this percentage is 55.4 for the CCCU freshmen and 68.4 for National Private sample.

In the families of Northwestern freshmen, 11.4 percent have parents who are divorced or living apart compared with 15.6 percent in the CCCU sample and 24.6 percent in the National Private sample.

Academic reputation declined in 2004 as a reason for selecting NWC

The top reasons for selecting NWC have remained the same over the last several years, with **religious orientation** and **size of the college** consistently the major reasons. The percentage selecting **academic reputation** was the lowest ever reported while **grads go to top graduate schools** increased somewhat as a reason for selecting NWC in 2004 (Table 2).

Reason for Selecting NWC	2004	2002	2000	1998	1996
Religious orientation	**87**	84.9	86.8	80.8	85.2
Size of the college	**49.2**	47.1	50.3	47.4	58.2
Academic reputation	**42.5**	44.4	54.5	46.8	46.9
Financial assistance offered	**37.2**	35.6	31.7	37.3	37.0
Good social reputation	**26.4**	21.7	37.6	30.8	22.3
Live near home	**16.6**	14.5	13.9	14.5	14.6
Grads go to top grad schools	**8.4**	4.0	9.2	12.1	7.1

TABLE 1. Percent selecting reasons for choosing NWC

Freshmen consistently report "religious orientation" as their top reason for selecting Northwestern College.

Over one half of freshmen plan to complete graduate degrees in the future

Over one half of the 2004 freshmen reported planning to complete graduate degrees in the future. This percentage is lower than reported by the CCCU sample (61.5 percent) and the 72.4 percent reported by the National Private college sample.

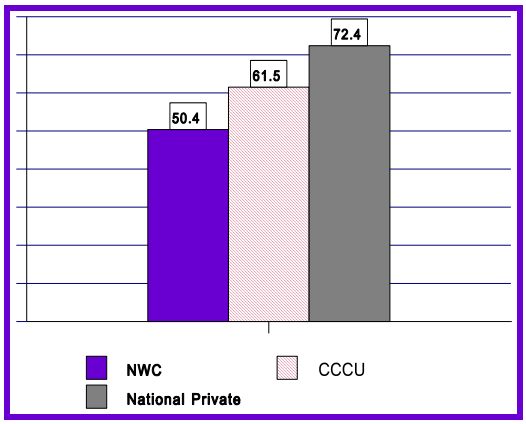

CHART 4: Percent of freshmen planning to attend graduate school

Freshmen self-rating of traits and abilities

The ***CIRP Freshmen Information Form*** asks freshmen to rate themselves on a number of abilities and traits. Table 2 shows the percentage of freshmen in 2004 who ranked themselves as *Above Average* compared to other college freshmen.

2004 freshmen ranked themselves highest in spirituality, compassion, and cooperativeness.

Trait or Ability	%
Spirituality	75.4
Compassion	75.3
Cooperativeness	73.8
Understanding of others	69.7
Academic ability	67.1
Drive to achieve	62.7
Creativity	61.0
Leadership ability	59.9
Emotional health	55.2
Self-confidence (intellectual)	54.4
Self-confidence (social)	51.2
Writing ability	49.6
Self-understanding	46.2
Physical health	41.3
Public speaking ability	40.9
Artistic ability	37.7
Mathematical ability	36.5
Computer skills	26.6

TABLE 2: Rated self *Above Average* in trait or ability

Freshmen self-rating of traits and abilities by gender

Reported self-ratings of abilities and traits show marked differences between male and female incoming students. Female students rated their **drive to achieve**, ability to **understand others**, and **writing skills** higher than did male students. For all other traits and abilities, male freshmen rated themselves higher than did females, most notably, **computer skills**, **physical health** and **intellectual self-confidence** (Chart 4).

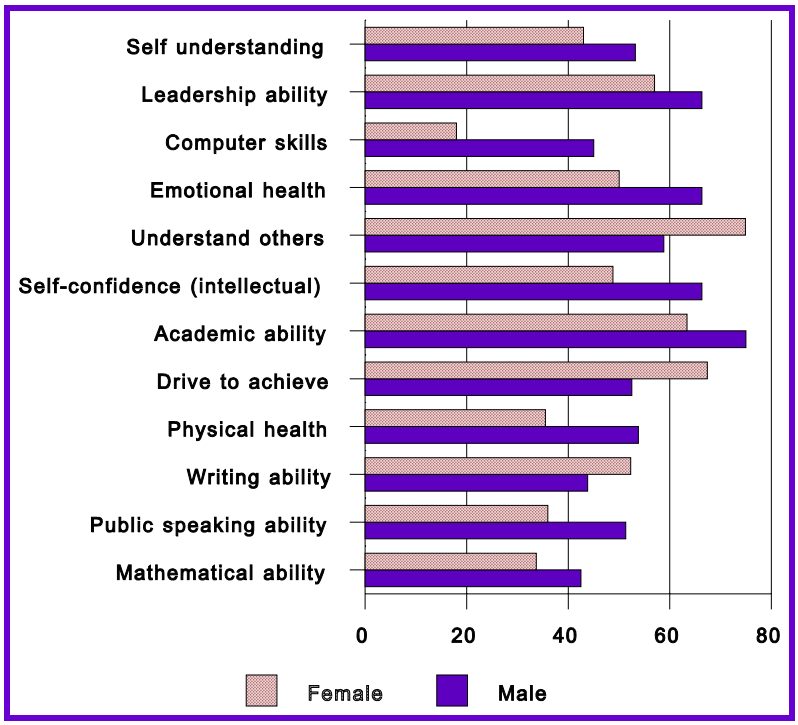

CHART 5: Perceived abilities of incoming freshmen

For a number of traits and abilities, gender differences are striking.

Most freshmen are close to home

Over 93 percent of 2004 freshmen reported that Northwestern College is within a days drive from home (500 miles). More than half (58.2 percent) of their families live within 100 miles of the College, higher than the CCCU sample of 44.9 percent.

Political orientation

Incoming freshmen were asked how they characterized their political position and their views on a number of political issues. NWC freshmen have characterized themselves increasingly more conservative over the years, however, their political views on issues do not necessary match their reported position. Table 3 compares 2004 freshmen responses with those of previous years and the 2004 CCCU sample.

NWC freshmen report a conservative political orientation, however, some opinions reflect a more moderate view.

	2004 NWC n=256	2002 NWC n=390	2000 NWC n=359	2004 CCCU n=11,432
Political Orientation				
far left	**1.3**	0.3	0.3	1.0
liberal	**3.2**	3.0	4.0	6.9
middle of the road	**17.4**	25.3	28.3	31.4
conservative	**68.4**	66.8	63.2	56.0
far right	**10.1**	4.7	4.3	4.7
Percent Agree Strongly - Somewhat Agree				
prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus	**78.5**	73.6	80.3	73.4
too much concern for criminals	**66.1**	74.8	80.6	64.5
prohibit homosexual relations	**77.5**	70.4	71.3	68.8
fed govt should do more to control handgun	**69.2**	63.2	71.1	69.8
affirmative action in admissions should be abolished	**39.9**	50.3	46.3	48.0
wealthy should pay more taxes	**46.6**	48.5	51.0	46.8
military spending should be increased	**50.2**	48.4	—	44.7
abolish death penalty	**27.9**	33.3	31.4	26.5
married women best in home	**24.2**	29.5	26.3	24.7
racial discrimination no longer problem	**20.3**	16.8	19.0	25.4
individual can do little to change society	**15.2**	13.6	11.8	19.6
marijuana should be legalized	**5.6**	9.6	6.3	12.3
abortion should be legal	**3.1**	4.0	3.7	12.1
same sex couples should have the right to marital status	**2.4**	4.0	3.4	11.9

TABLE 3: Freshmen political orientation and views on issues

Spirituality heads list of life objectives considered essential by freshmen

The most essential life objective reported by NWC freshmen was to **integrate spirituality into my life**. Other objectives that were viewed as essential were **raising a family, helping others in difficulty, develop a philosophy of life** and **influence social values.** These objectives have remained the most essential for Northwestern freshmen since the survey was first given in 1994.

There are significant differences between Northwestern, CCCU institutions and other National Private colleges on several items, notably the importance of **become authority in my field** and **be well-off financially** (Table 4).

Essential Life Objectives	NWC	CCCU	NATL
Integrate spirituality into my life	**94.8**	88.0	39.4
Raise a family	**85.9**	85.5	74.5
Help others in difficulty	**78.5**	74.7	56.2
Influence social values	**57.7**	52.6	38.0
Develop a philosophy of life	**54.4**	46.2	44.1
Improve my understanding of other cultures	**48.4**	46.9	39.2
Become authority in my field	**34.7**	46.8	59.6
Become a community leader	**29.0**	32.1	33.4
Keep up-to-date with politics	**27.4**	30.2	38.1
Be well off financially	**24.2**	42.4	71.7
Become an accomplished performer	**23.4**	17.3	16.3
Help promote racial understanding	**20.2**	24.1	28.9
Have administrative responsibility	**19.1**	27.2	39.3
Participate in community action	**19.0**	21.7	19.3
Create artistic work	**17.7**	13.8	16.2
Involved in environmental clean-up	**10.9**	10.1	17.5

TABLE 4: Life objectives viewed as essential

Being well-off financially was rated significantly lower in importance for NWC freshmen than for the other sample groups.

The majority of freshmen expect to be satisfied

Over three-fourths of 2004 freshmen indicated they plan to **be satisfied with [NWC].** This percentage is the highest ever reported and is higher than the CCCU sample percentage of 65.3 and the National Private colleges sample of 48.2 percent. A higher percentage of NWC freshmen expect to have to **get a job to help pay expenses**, **get at least a B average,** and **participate in volunteer or community service** than reported in the CCCU or National Private colleges samples.

Freshmen concerns about finances

The percentage of freshmen indicating that financing their college education was a *Major Concern* increased in 2004. The percent reporting they have *No Concern* decreased while the percentage with *Some Concern* remained similar to previous years. Northwestern freshmen report more concern with finances than freshmen in the CCCU sample.

	2004	2002	2000	1998	CCCU 2004
No Concern	18.5	21.8	22.4	18.5	28.3
Some Concern	59.8	59.8	56.8	55.6	54.6
Major Concern	21.7	18.4	20.7	25.9	17.1

TABLE 5: Percent reporting levels of concern about financing college

Freshmen reporting that financing their college education was a "Major Concern," was the highest since 1998.

Freshmen Beliefs and Values

In 2003, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA began a major multi-year research project to examine the spiritual development of undergraduate students during their college years. Funded by the John Templeton Foundation, the study is designed to enhance our understanding of how college students conceive spirituality, the role it plays in their lives, and how colleges and universities can be more effective in facilitating students' spiritual development.

The fall ***2004 College Students Beliefs and Values (CSBV) Survey*** was administered to entering first-year students. The ***2004 CIRP/CSBV*** freshman survey included approximately 160 items which pertained directly to students' perspectives and practices with respect to spirituality and religion. While the complete results of the survey are available in the Assessment Office, category scores for the Northwestern freshmen are compared below with responses of freshmen attending colleges which have identified themselves as evangelical and with the sample group from all baccalaureate colleges.

A new national survey looks at college student beliefs and values.

For this survey, researchers developed three measures of **Spirituality** (Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, and Equanimity), five measures of **Religiousness** (Religious Commitment, Religious Engagement, Religious/Social Conservatism, Religious Skepticism, and Religious Struggle), and four measures of other dimensions related to **Religious Actions** (Charitable Involvement, Compassionate Self-Concept, Ethic of Caring, and Ecumenical Worldview).

Spirituality

On this instrument there were three measures of spirituality with a number of questions on the survey related to this area. The table below shows the percentage of freshmen who were "high scorers" in each of the areas identified as measures of spirituality: *Spirituality* (importance of spiritual life, variety of spiritual experiences); *Spiritual Quest* (search for meaning in life, discuss meaning of life with friends); and *Equanimity* (feeling at peace, thankful, find meaning in times of hardship).

	NWC	Evangelical Colleges	All Baccalaureate Institutions
Spirituality	63.0	48.1	17.2
Spiritual quest	30.6	31.3	25.0
Equanimity	43.0	38.4	22.4

TABLE 6: Percent "high scorers" on items related to spirituality

Religiousness

There were five categories of questions which contributed to a "Religiousness" score: *Religious Commitment* (importance of religion in student life); *Religious Engagement* (acting out religion through prayer, worship, etc.) *Religious/Social Conservatism* (social beliefs related to religious conservatism such as legality of abortion, God as father-figure); *Religious Skepticism* (negative views of God and the sacred); *Religious Struggle* (questioning beliefs, disillusioned, feeling distant from God).

Self-reported Religious Commitment and Religious Engagement is high among incoming Northwestern freshmen, as is Social Conservatism.

	NWC	Evangelical Colleges	All Baccalaureate Institutions
Religious commitment	89.1	74.3	37.4
Religious engagement	94.0	72.2	19.5
Religious/social conservatism	87.9	70.6	23.3
Religious skepticism	.0	2.1	17.2
Religious struggle	2.3	9.4	10.8

TABLE 7: Percent "high scorers" on items related to religiousness

Religious Actions

There were four categories of questions which related to what are considered religious or spiritual action: *Charitable Involvement* (helping others in need, donating time and money); *Compassionate Self-Concept* (self-ratings of kindness, generosity, compassion, forgiveness); *Ethic of Caring* (reducing pain and suffering in the world, desire to change things that are unfair, influencing social values); *Worldview Perspectives* (belief in the goodness of people, respect for diverse perspectives, interest in different religious traditions).

	NWC	Evangelical Colleges	All Baccalaureate Institutions
Charitable Involvement	20.0	20.4	15.4
Compassionate Self-concept	34.6	30.3	29.8
Ethic of Caring	7.1	11.4	13.1
Worldview Perspectives	1.6	7.3	13.6

TABLE 8: Percent "high scorers" on items related to religious actions

Educational Outcomes

Written Communication

Objective: Northwestern College seniors will demonstrate written communication skills sufficient to express ideas clearly and to communicate them effectively.

The majority of graduating seniors reported NWC influenced their writing ability

Seniors who graduated in 2005 were asked to complete the ***Northwestern College Senior Survey***. As part of this survey, graduates were asked to indicate the extent of Northwestern College's contribution to the achievement of a number of educational outcomes on a scale of *Very Much* to *None.*

Over 70 percent of seniors graduating in 2005 reported that Northwestern had *Very Much or Much* influence on their attainment of the outcome to **express ideas clearly in writing**. These results are compared to those obtained from NWC graduates in 2000, 2001 and 2003 in Chart 6.

The percentage of graduates who reported NWC had influenced their writing skills increased in 2005.

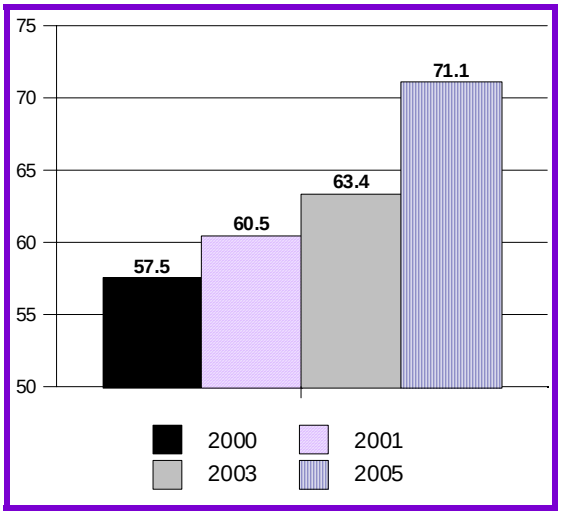

CHART 6: Self-rated "Above Average" in writing ability

Writing skills of students in WCE courses reached benchmark ratings

NWC instructors teaching upper-level courses designated as having a Written Communication Emphasis [WCE] judged the writing samples of students in four areas. Each area included several items developed to evaluate college-level writing. Table 9 shows the percentage of papers judged to be either *Strong, Adequate,* or *Weak* in the four focus areas. The goal of 60 percent *Strong* ratings was reached for all areas. Table 10 shows the rating for each of the criteria evaluated.

NWC professors judged upper-level writing skills to be the strongest in mechanics.

Criteria	Strong	Adequate	Weak
Content	70.1	25.7	4.2
Style	71.3	25.9	2.8
Mechanics	63.4	30.6	6.0
Documentation	70.0	22.9	7.1

TABLE 9: Percent of upper-class papers in each of the WCE writing skills criteria

Content	Strong	Adequate	Weak
Clear thesis or controlling idea(s)	69.1	25.7	5.1
Major ideas or components of composition clear and related to thesis or controlling idea(s)	65.7	28.0	6.3
Specific, accurate evidence or relevant, effective details	66.3	29.7	4.0
Coherent sequence and transitions between points	67.0	27.8	5.1
Correct type (genre) for the assignment	84.0	15.4	.6
Style			
Appropriate word choice for the audience	76.7	21.6	1.7
Appropriate variety of sentence complexity for assignment/Audience	72.2	24.4	3.4
Proper tone and mood for the audience and assignment	71.6	27.3	1.1
Mechanics			
Correct spelling	68.8	26.7	4.5
Proper use of commonly confused words	73.1	24.0	2.9
Suitable punctuation	51.1	38.1	10.8
Grammatically acceptable usage	60.6	33.7	4.7
Documentation	**Strong**	**Adequate**	**Weak**
Sufficient documentation	67.1	27.1	5.9
Correct documentation	72.9	18.8	8.2

TABLE 10: WCE rating

The vast majority of students passed the NWC Editing Competency Exam on the first attempt

All students completing *ENG1105 College Composition* and *ENG1825 Honors College Composition* are required to take the ***NWC Editing Competency Exam*** as a prerequisite for *ENG2205 Argumentative Research Writing*. All incoming transfer students are also required to take this exam.

The goal of 80 percent passing the examination on the first attempt was reached for both semesters. All students completing *Honors College Composition* (ENG1825) passed the exam on the first attempt in 2004-2005 (Table 11).

Over 86 percent of transfer students taking the ECE through the ALPHA Center passed the exam on the first attempt.

Course	1999-2000		2000-2001		2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005	
	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S
ENG1105	71.2	79.5	84.3	68.1	82.5	82.2	90.3	88.0	85.5	84.4	85.9	83.1
ENG1825	92	95.7	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	93.8	100	100

TABLE 11: Percentage passing the NWC Editing Competency Exam

Oral Communication

Objective: Northwestern College students will demonstrate oral communication skills sufficient to express ideas clearly and to communicate them effectively.

Graduates report Northwestern had a positive impact on their speaking ability

The ***Northwestern College Senior Survey*** measures the extent of the College's influence on the attaining of educational outcomes. The percentage that indicated the College had *Very Much* or *Much* influence on **speaking clearly and effectively** has increased each of the last three administrations of the survey. Results met the benchmark of 60 percent.

For the fifth year, results of the PRCA show speech anxiety is reduced for students completing SPE1075.

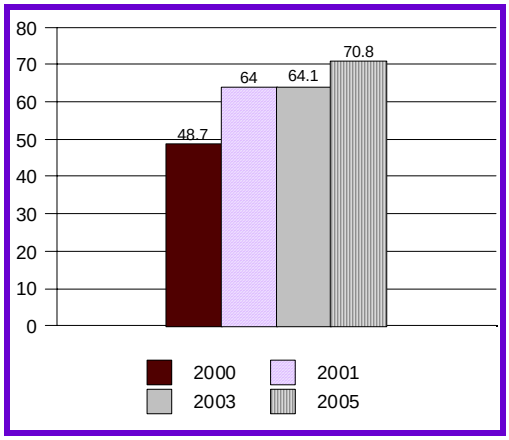

CHART 7: College influence on *Speaking Clearly and Effectively*

Speech anxiety decreased significantly for students completing required speech course

There was a statistically significant (p> .001) decrease in reported speech anxiety for students completing *SPE1075 Foundations of Communication* as measured by the ***McCroskey Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA)*** survey. The PRCA was administered as a pre-test at the beginning of *SPE1075* and again at the end of the course. Scores on the table below measure levels of anxiety. The lower the score, the less reported anxiety (Table 12).

	Pre	Post
Group discussions	2.31	2.14
Meetings	2.54	2.27
Conversation	2.28	2.15
Public speaking	2.96	2.75
Total	2.52	2.35

TABLE 12: Mean scores: PRCA speech anxiety scale

Professors evaluate upper-level oral communication skills

NWC instructors teaching courses designated as having an Oral Communication Emphasis [OCE] judged the oral skills of students based on four criteria. Each criteria included several items developed to evaluate the ability to communicate effectively. Table 13 shows the percentage of oral presentations judged to be either *Strong*, *Average* or *Weak* on the four criteria. A goal of 60 percent *Strong* was set for each criteria. This goal was reached for **Thesis/Purpose, Organization** and **Support Material**, however evaluations revealed **Delivery** to be an area needing further attention.

Thesis/Purpose	Strong	Average	Weak
Message is appropriate to the audience	89.5	10.5	.0
Purpose/thesis is clearly presented	79.4	19.6	1.0
Organization			
Ideas are clear, logical and effectively arranged	73.4	21.3	5.2
Includes relevant introduction and conclusion	71.0	25.0	4.0
Support Material			
Specific, credible, relevant sources used as appropriate	72.1	22.6	5.3
Delivery			
Manner is confident	52.9	44.1	2.9
Body language is appropriate (i.e., gestures, movements)	48.7	40.5	10.9
Makes visual connections	56.1	34.2	9.6
Use of voice is effective (voice inflections such as tone, cadence, rate, etc. are appropriate)	50.0	41.7	8.3

TABLE 13: Percent of presentations falling into each of the OCE criteria

Professors rated speaking highest on "message appropriate for audience," lowest on "body language."

Other general education outcomes

The extent of the College's influence on the attainment of a variety of educational outcomes was measured on the ***Northwestern Senior Survey***. For nearly all of the items, the percentage of graduates reporting Northwestern's influence to be *Much* or *Very Much* increased over previous years. Highest increases were in **learning to use technology, developing leadership skills**, **developing openness to new ideas**, **learning to think critically,** and **ability to perform research.**

Overall gains were reported for Northwestern's impact on graduates attaining of most educational outcomes.

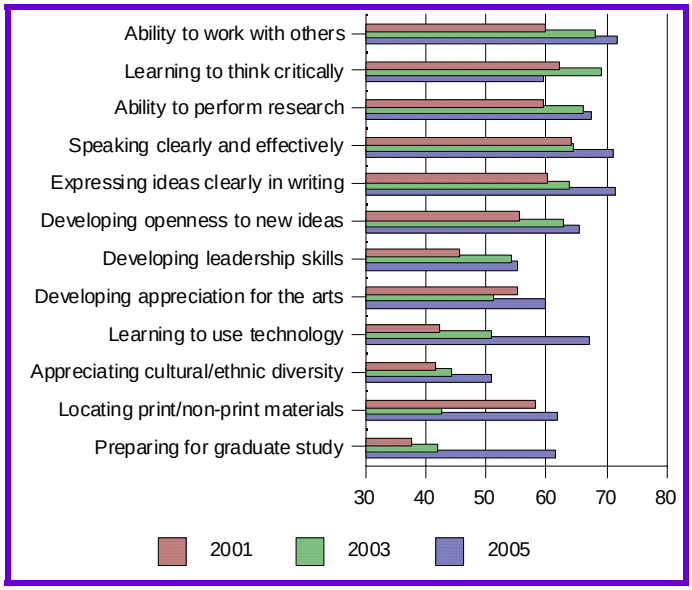

CHART 8: Percent reporting *Much Stronger* abilities and skills

GRE scores of NWC alumni

The ***Graduate Record Examinations (GRE)*** compares NWC alumni completing the exam with graduates from institutions of all types throughout the country. Mean scores achieved by Northwestern graduates and alumni have exceeded the benchmark of the 50 percentile since 2000 (Chart 9).

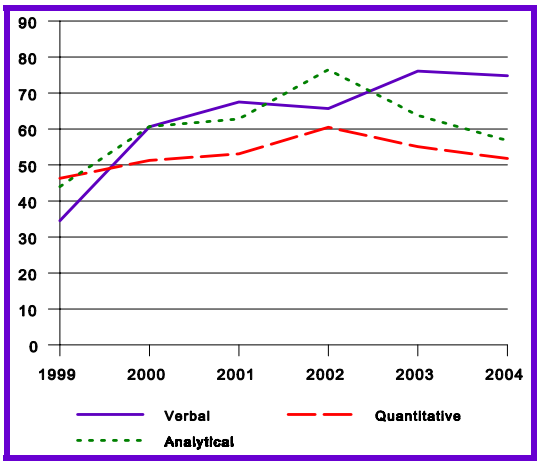

CHART 9: Mean scores for GRE exams

Satisfaction with Campus Life

Overall graduate satisfaction with the NWC experience remains high

Approximately 90 percent of graduating seniors have consistently reported satisfaction with the **overall college experience** at Northwestern. While the percentage has differed only slightly since 2000, the 87.5 percent in 2005 is somewhat lower than in recent years.

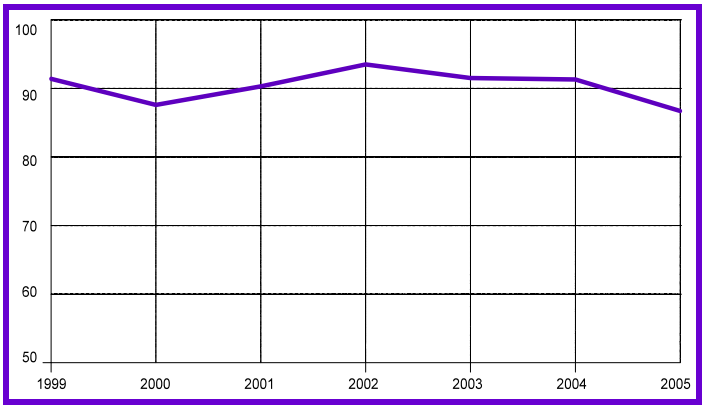

CHART 10: Satisfaction with overall College experience

Satisfaction with leadership and service opportunities shows increase

Graduate satisfaction with **student housing** declined in 2005 to the lowest levels ever reported. Satisfaction with the **sense of community on campus** also dropped in 2005. The percentage reporting satisfaction with **service/volunteer opportunities, leadership opportunities,** and **rules governing student conduct** rose somewhat in 2005.

Campus Life	2005	2003	2001	2000	1999
Student housing	**78.6**	88.4	85.3	84.5	82.7
Service/volunteer opportunities	**79.3**	78.2	76.4	79.0	75.4
Sense of community on campus	**75.1**	81.6	73.0	67.5	67.0
Leadership opportunities	**77.7**	74.4	72.9	76.4	72.4
Rules governing student conduct	**61.0**	57.5	NA	51.5	62.5

TABLE 14: Percent who were *Satisfied* or *Very Satisfied* with campus life

Reported senior satisfaction with student housing declined in 2005.

The majority of graduates expressed satisfaction with campus services

On the *Northwestern Senior Survey* graduates were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction concerning a number of services offered on campus. Graduates expressed highest satisfaction with **attitudes of staff toward students** (Chart 11).

Graduates reported high satisfaction with the attitude of staff toward students.

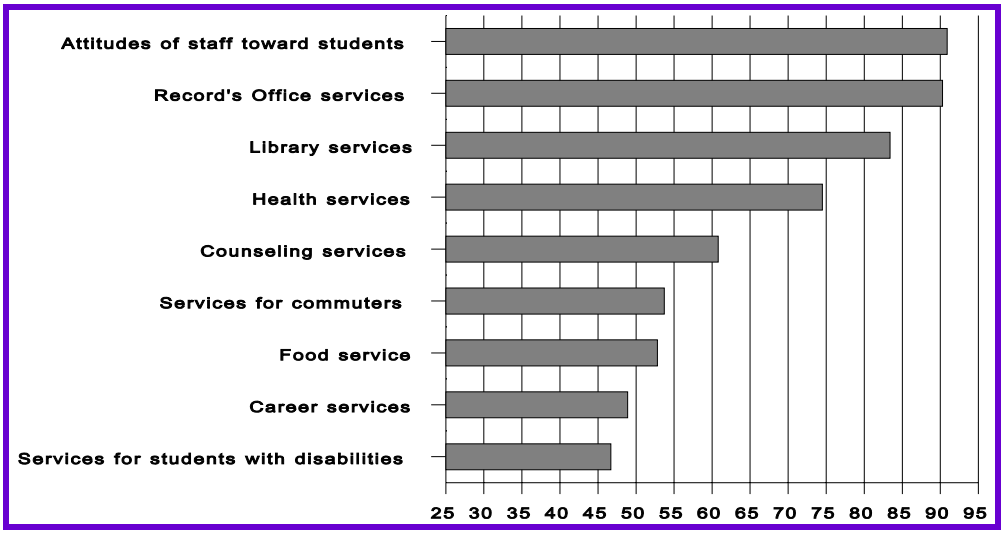

CHART 11: Percent satisfied with campus services

Spiritual and Ethical Outcomes

Seniors report Northwestern has greatest impact on biblical knowledge and spiritual formation

When asked the extent of the College's influence on the attainment of educational outcomes, those related to the spiritual distinctives of Northwestern College have consistently been rated highest among graduating seniors. The ***Northwestern College Senior Survey*** results indicate that Northwestern made a strong contribution to student's **development of a Christian worldview, relating their faith to their major**, and **developing maturing personal faith in Jesus Christ**. Since the survey was first administered, seniors have rated faith-related outcomes in the top five of the 31 educational outcomes measured each year (Table 15).

NWC graduating seniors rated spiritual/ethical outcomes in the top five of the 31 educational outcomes measured each year.

	2005	2003	2001	2000	1999
Developing a Christian worldview	**1**	2	2	3	1
Relating my faith to my major	**4**	3	3	1	3 (T)
Developing a maturing faith in Christ	**2**	4	4	5	2

(T = tie)

TABLE 15: Rank of 31 Educational Outcomes

Satisfaction with campus spiritual life

Satisfaction with **chapel experiences**, **College-sponsored missions experiences**, **spiritual life experiences on campus** and the **College's spiritual climate** declined over responses in 2003. However, nearly two-thirds of seniors indicated they were *Satisfied* or *Very Satisfied* with these areas of campus life (Chart 12).

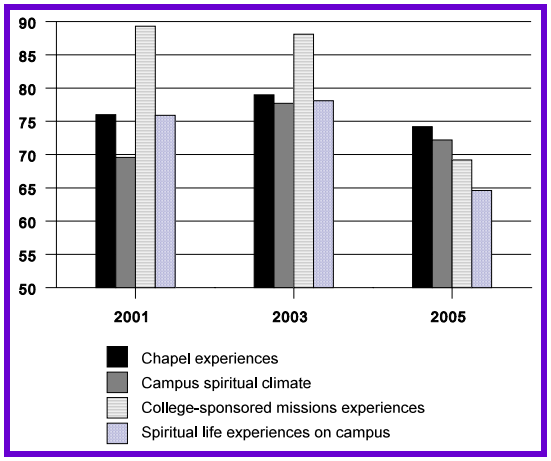

CHART 12: Satisfaction with spiritual life on campus

Graduates committed to supporting local churches

Survey results indicated that graduating seniors have a commitment to a local church, both through regular attendance and financial support (Chart 14).

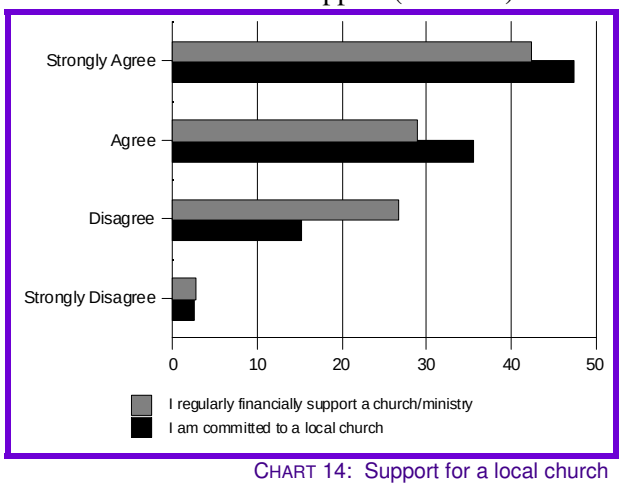

CHART 14: Support for a local church

Seniors' response to: How often do you attend a local church?

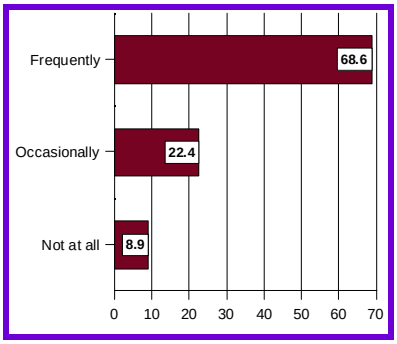

CHART 13: Attendance at local churches

Graduates report accountability to another person played a role in their spiritual life

Over seventy-five percent of seniors reported they participated, at least occasionally, in an accountability relationship with another student. Over forty-six percent reported they were involved in this type of relationship with a faculty or staff member. These responses were increases over those of previous years (Table 16).

Met in accountability relationship	2005	2003	2001
With student	75.1	59.8	61.9
With faculty or staff	46.2	32.9	35.3

TABLE 16: Percent participated in an accountability relationship

Seniors report consistent engagement in spiritual disciplines

Over 80 percent of graduating seniors reported they engage in the spiritual disciplines of daily, personal devotions and participated in small group Bible study and prayer (Chart 15).

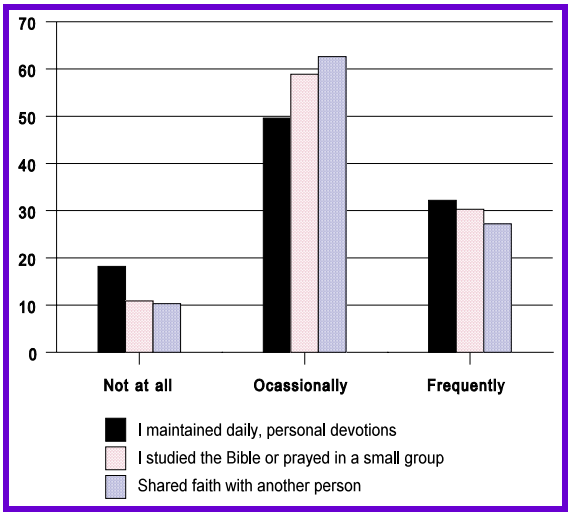

CHART 15: Engagement in spiritual disciplines

Graduates reported being involved in College-sponsored missions trips and off-campus ministries

During their years at Northwestern College, 41.9 percent of seniors participated in a College-sponsored missions trip, and over 50 percent reported being involved in a local off-campus ministry while a student. (Chart 16).

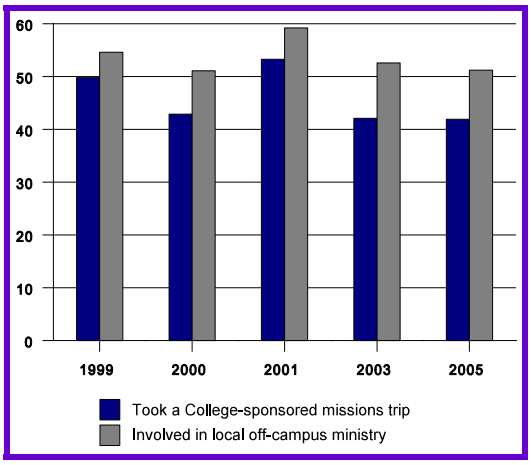

CHART 16: Involvement in missions

Graduates report involvement in on- and off-campus missions while a student at Northwestern College.

Freshmen indicate strong interest in missions

As part of the ***FYI Course Evaluation Survey*** given during FYI (First-Year-In Freshmen Seminar), all freshmen were asked whether they hoped to participate in a missions trip while at Northwestern. Nearly 85 percent responded positively. This percentage has been consistent over the past several years.

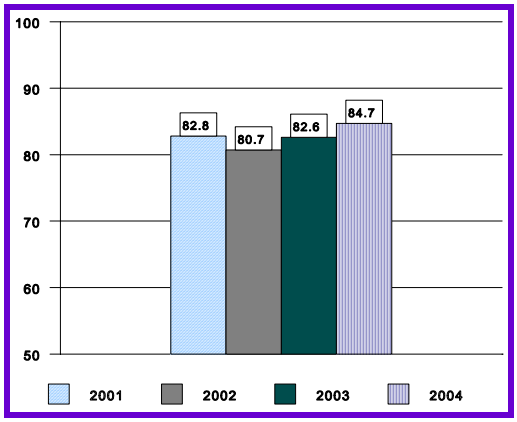

CHART 17: Participate in missions trip while at NWC

Nearly 85 percent of freshmen reported they intend to participate in a missions trip while at Northwestern.

Freshmen self-rating of spiritual commitment strong

A series of locally-generated questions were added to the ***CIRP*** asking freshmen to rate their level of agreement with statements related to their faith commitment. A high percentage of incoming freshmen were in agreement with each of these statements (Table 17).

	2004	2002	2000
I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.	97.9	98.8	97.7
My relationship with God contributes to my sense of well-being.	97.8	98.3	98.9
The way I do things from day to day is often affected by my relationship with God.	97.8	96.0	96.8
I feel like I need to be open to consider new insights and truths about my faith.	92.0	93.8	93.2
Even if the people around me were opposed to my Christian convictions, I would still hold fast to them.	89.5	97.2	98.5

Table 17: Percent who selected *Agree or Strongly Agree* for statements of faith commitment

Freshmen were also asked on the ***CIRP*** to report the frequency of their participation in spiritual life activities (Table 18). The choices they were given for each of the items was *Often*, *Sometimes*, or *Never*.

	2004	2002	2000
Attended religious services	89.8	91.5	92.4
Maintained daily, personal devotions	49.2	50.6	44.0
Studied the Bible or prayed in a small group	48.3	53.7	48.8
Shared my faith with another person	28.1	35.8	30.2

Table 18: Percent who selected *Often* - participation in spiritual life activities

Satisfaction with Academic Life

The majority of graduates report satisfaction with instruction

On the ***Northwestern College Senior Survey***, the percentage of graduates reporting they were *Satisfied* or *Very Satisfied* with the **overall quality of instruction** has remained near 90 percent or higher each year. Satisfaction with **instruction in the major field** has consistently been between 80 and 90 percent.

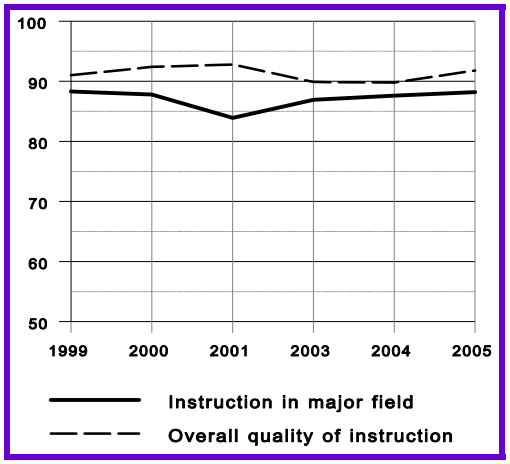

CHART 18: Satisfaction with overall instruction

Northwestern graduates reported higher levels of satisfaction with overall instruction than seniors in the CCCU and the National Private college samples.

Comparison with CCCU and National Private colleges

Over 92 percent of 2005 NWC graduates reported they were S*atisfied* or *Very Satisfied* with **overall instruction**. This percentage was higher than levels of satisfaction reported by seniors in the CCCU and National Private college samples on a similar survey question.

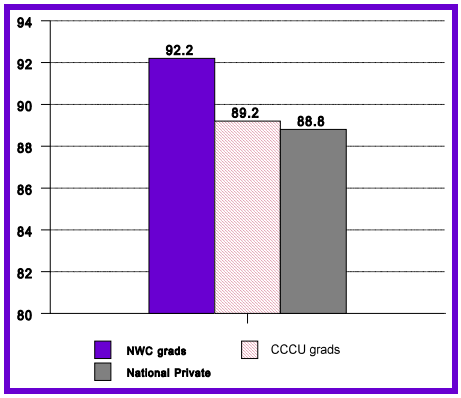

CHART 19: Satisfaction with overall instruction

The majority of NWC graduates have a positive view of faculty in their major field

On the ***Northwestern College Senior Survey***, seniors were asked their agreement with statements related to faculty in their major field. Results indicate high levels of agreement on a variety of faculty traits and behaviors. Chart 20 shows the percentage who *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* with each statement.

The majority of graduates reported that faculty in their major field were role models of Christian maturity.

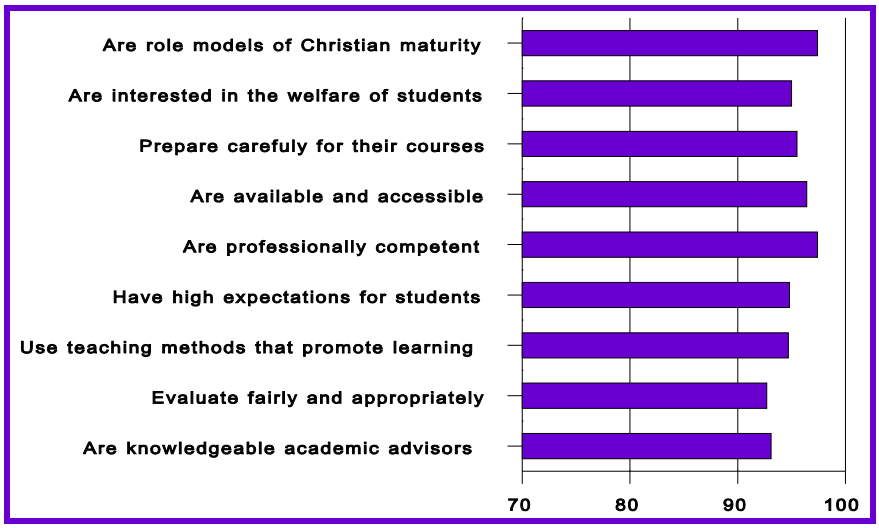

CHART 20: Graduate perceptions of faculty

Senior perspectives on their academic major

Seniors were asked their agreement with statements regarding their major field. Table 17 indicates the percentage who responded *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*.

	Mean Score	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
My major integrates biblical perspectives	**3.42**	46.7	**49.3**	3.3	**.7**
My major encourages critical thinking	**3.39**	46.6	**47.2**	5.2	**1.0**
My major provides relevant and appropriate for preparation in the field	**3.34**	41.5	**51.3**	6.5	**.7**
My major is academically demanding	**3.28**	37.3	**55.6**	5.2	**2.0**

TABLE 19: Senior perceptions of their academic major

Alumni view NWC as a safe, close-knit community, with personal attention from faculty, and an excellent Bible program

In the fall of 2004, a ***College Survey*** of 100 alumni was conducted by Public Opinion Strategies. Alumni were asked whether a certain trait described Northwestern College based on their experience.

	Very well	Somewhat well	Not that well	Does not describe	Don't know/ Refuse
An established college with a long historical tradition	72	24	3	0	1
A college that provides personal attention from faculty and staff	80	18	1	0	1
A college that is a close-knit community	69	28	2	0	1
A college that has state-of-the-art facilities and classrooms	23	56	14	1	6
A college that is affordable and a good value	12	62	22	1	3
A college with a nice, safe campus	75	25	0	0	0
A college with a strong liberal arts education program	49	43	5	1	2
A college that prepares students for the future	52	45	2	1	0
A college with a rigorous academic program	47	49	2	1	1
A college that has an excellent Bible program	70	19	1	2	8

TABLE 20: Percent alumni response to items related to NWC

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR COLLEGE WRITING (WCE)

This form is a locally designed instrument developed to measure levels of student attainment of objectives in upper-level courses with a Written Communication Emphasis (WCE) designation.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR ORAL COMMUNICATION (OCE)

This instrument was developed by the Communication Department to measure levels of student attainment of oral communication objectives in upper-level courses with an Oral Communication Emphasis (OCE) designation.

COLLEGE STUDENTS BELIEFS AND VALUES SURVEY

Survey developed by the Higher Education Research Institute [HERI] as part of a research project to examine the spiritual development of undergraduate students during their college years. Administered to incoming freshmen.

COLLEGE SURVEY

Survey conducted by the consulting group Public Opinion Strategies who interviewed, among other target audiences, a random sample of 100 Northwestern College alumni.

EDITING COMPETENCY EXAMINATION

This instrument was developed by the English Department as a test of editing competency. The instrument has been positively correlated with the ***Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) Writing Exam***.

FRESHMEN INFORMATION FORM

The ***Freshmen Information Form*** was developed as a part of the **Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP)** by the Higher Education Research Institute. The form provides data on incoming freshman opinions, perceptions, goals, and experiences.

FYI COURSE EVALUATION SURVEY

This survey is administered to incoming freshmen at the completion of FYI (First-Year-In), a required freshmen seminar.

GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION

The ***Graduate Record Examination*** is produced and processed by the Educational Testing Service. GRE results compare Northwestern graduates with national norms in Verbal, Quantitative, Analytical Writing areas.

MC CROSKEY PERSONAL REPORT OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

This instrument measures reported apprehension to speaking in public and private settings. It is given as a Pre and Post self-rating of public speaking anxiety in the required general education speech course.

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE EXITING SURVEY

This locally developed instrument is completed by all full-time students voluntarily leaving Northwestern College. The survey was designed to determine the purpose for entering Northwestern College, re-enrollment plans, and reasons for choosing to leave Northwestern College. The survey is given to non-returning and withdrawing students.

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE SENIOR SURVEY

This locally developed instrument was designed to survey vocational information, student plans, activities, levels of satisfaction with NWC programs and services, and perceived College outcomes. Questions have been tailored to the distinctives of Northwestern College.

2004-2005 Assessment Steering Committee

Dr. Barbara Lindman, Chair
Dr. Paul Chara
Dr. Joe Hansen
Dr. Cheryl Kelley
Mr. Ryan Lewis
Mr. Michael O'Brien
Mr. John Printy