

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

**REPORT ON UOIT RESULTS
FOR 2006**

January 2007

Office of the Provost
www.uoit.ca

Introduction

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was developed by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (IUCPR) in the late 1990s and has been used throughout the U.S. since 2000. Although several Canadian universities have participated in the past, all 19 publicly-assisted Ontario universities took part in the NSSE survey in 2006 as part of their commitment to the Ontario government to improve accountability and focus on the quality of the student's learning experience.

NSSE focuses on the nature of first-year and senior students' undergraduate experience. The questions allow institutions to measure how successful they are at engaging students in activities and programs that they provide for students' academic and personal development. This information allows UOIT to improve its processes and policies resulting in a higher quality educational experience.

The survey was sent to students by email in February and March 2006. At that time, UOIT was in its third year of operation and there were no senior students to survey. The entire first year population of 1,410 students was surveyed. Of the survey population, 564 students responded, resulting in a response rate of 40%. This rate was similar to the overall response rate experienced by all Ontario universities.

NSSE provides data for specific comparison groups including the Ontario Consortium (combined results of all Ontario universities, excluding UOIT), a selected U.S. peer group (public institutions in selected U.S. states that compete with Ontario.) and the entire NSSE population (consisting of 557 institutions in Canada and the U.S.).

The following report provides an overview of UOIT's results with some results from the comparator groups. The report begins with a look at some general characteristics of the survey respondents followed by the summary scores of the five benchmarks created by IUCPR. It then looks at some individual questions that are of particular interest to UOIT including overall student satisfaction, computers and technology, collaborative learning, teaching quality, student motivation and the student extracurricular experience. Finally, the report will discuss the implications of NSSE and next steps.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 compares characteristics of UOIT's survey population to the Ontario consortium (ONT), the selected Peer group (Peer) and the entire NSSE group (NSSE). The table shows that female students were more likely than male students to complete the online questionnaire. Female students amounted to 52% of respondents compared to their representation of 41% in the first-year UOIT student population. On-campus students accounted for 39% of respondents even though that group accounts for only 12% of first-year students. This result was likely caused by a phone message that was left for all residence students reminding them of the survey.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics – First year students only

	UOIT	ONT	NSSE
Gender			
Female	52%	63%	64%
Male	48%	37%	36%
Enrolment Status			
Full-time	93%	96%	95%
Less than full-time	7%	4%	5%
Place of Residence			
On-campus	39%	51%	66%
Off-campus	61%	49%	34%
Age			
Non-traditional (24 or older)	14%	7%	6%
Traditional (24 or less)	86%	93%	94%

Note: Respondent characteristics data for the U.S. Peer group was not provided.

NSSE Benchmarks

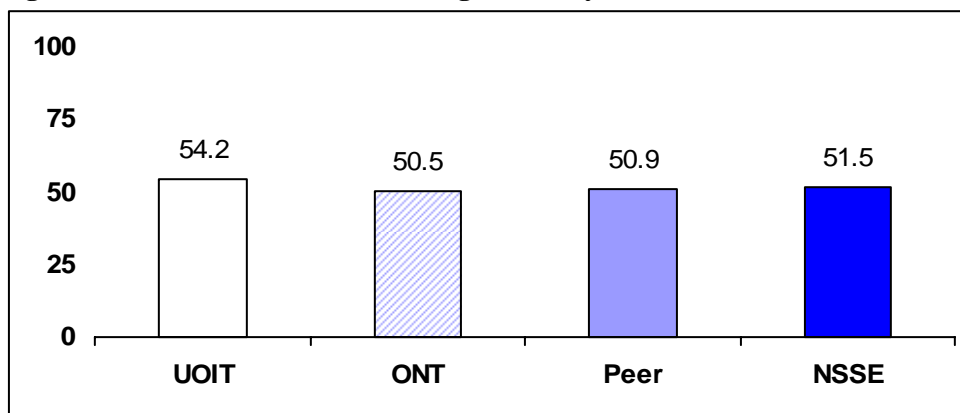
NSSE groups a number of key questions into five broad categories called the Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice. They include Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences and Supportive Campus Environment.

In order to calculate the benchmarks, each question is first converted to a 100 point scale and then the mean of each student’s score is used to create student-level benchmark scores. Finally, the weighted average is calculated for the student-level benchmark scores to create institutional benchmarks.

Level of Academic Challenge

The nine questions included in the Level of Academic Challenge benchmark measure students’ academic effort and institutional expectations of students. First-year students at UOIT scored higher than the Ontario Consortium, their U.S. Peer group and NSSE as a whole on this benchmark.

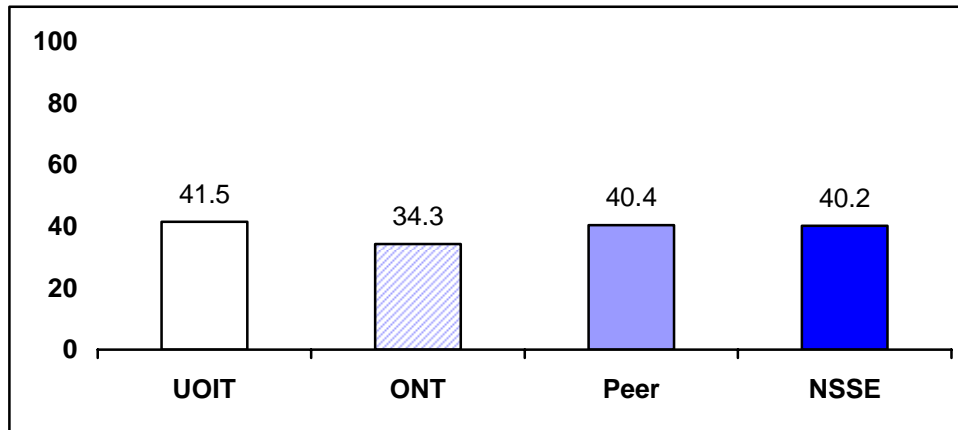
Figure 1: Level of Academic Challenge – First-year students (out of 100)



Active and Collaborative Learning

This benchmark measures the extent to which students are participating in their education including the degree to which students are collaborating with others. First-year students at UOIT had significantly higher scores on this benchmark compared to other Ontario universities. There were no significant differences between UOIT and the U.S. Peer group or the NSSE group as a whole.

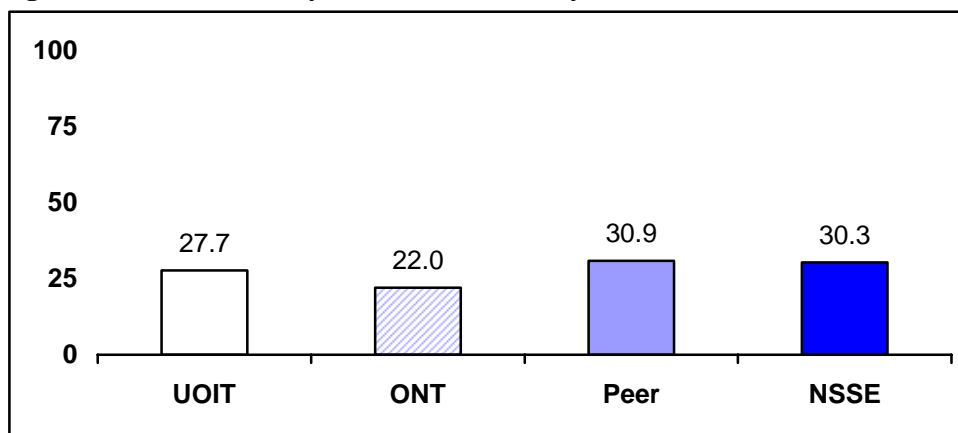
Figure 2: Active and Collaborative Learning – First-year students (out of 100)



Student-Faculty Interaction

The Student-Faculty Interaction benchmark measures the extent to which students engage in discussions with faculty members and work with faculty members on activities outside of their coursework. First-year students at UOIT reported higher scores for Student-Faculty Interaction than the Ontario Consortium. However, Ontario universities were significantly below the average score for Student-Faculty Interaction in the U.S. Peer group and the NSSE group as a whole. Although first-year students at UOIT are reporting that they spend more time interacting with faculty members compared to other Ontario universities, there is still room for improvement.

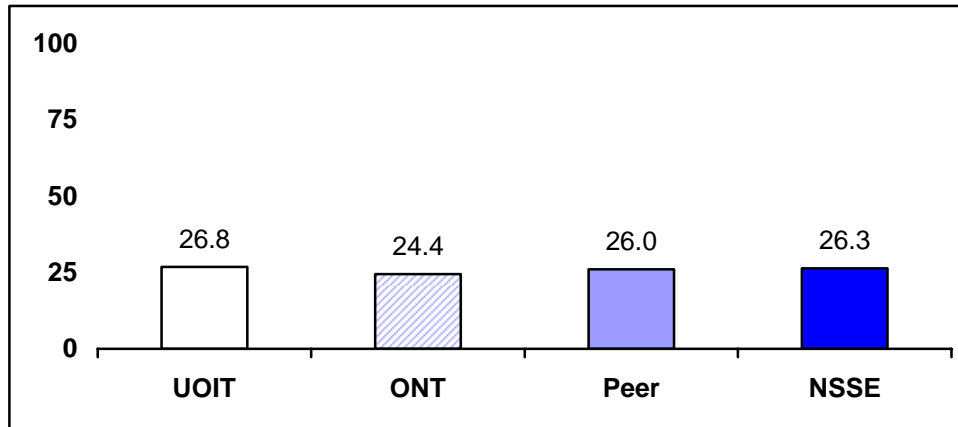
Figure 3: Student-Faculty Interaction – First-year students (out of 100)



Enriching Educational Experiences

The Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark looks at complementary learning activities. First-year students at UOIT had higher scores than the Ontario Consortium for this benchmark. There were no significant differences between UOIT and the U.S. Peer group or the NSSE group as a whole.

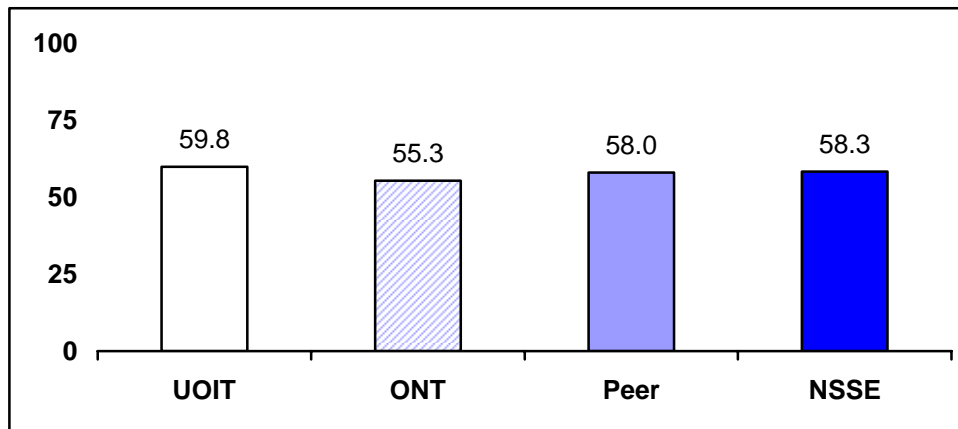
Figure 4: Enriching Educational Experience – First-year students (out of 100)



Supportive Campus Environment

The Supportive Campus Environment benchmark measures the quality of relationships that students have with those around them and whether the University supports them academically and socially. According to our first-year students, UOIT provides a more supportive campus environment compared to other Ontario universities. There were no significant differences between the results for UOIT and the U.S. Peer group or the NSSE group.

Figure 5: Supportive Campus Environment – First-year students (out of 100)



Other Areas of Interest

Overall Satisfaction

The NSSE survey asks students several questions about their overall satisfaction with the university. Figure 6 shows that a large majority of students rate their overall educational experience at UOIT as good or excellent. Similarly, Figure 7 shows that 85% of first-year students report that, if they could start over, they would probably or definitely go to UOIT again.

Figure 6: Overall Experience

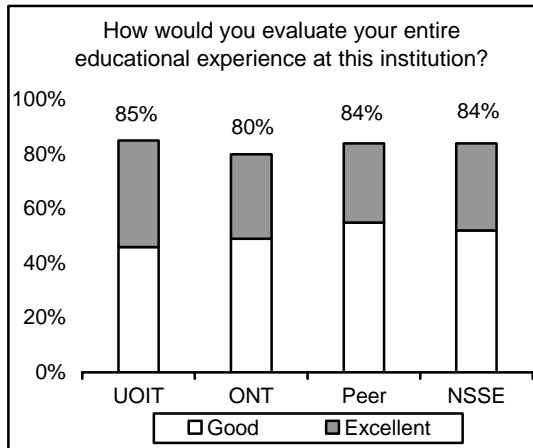
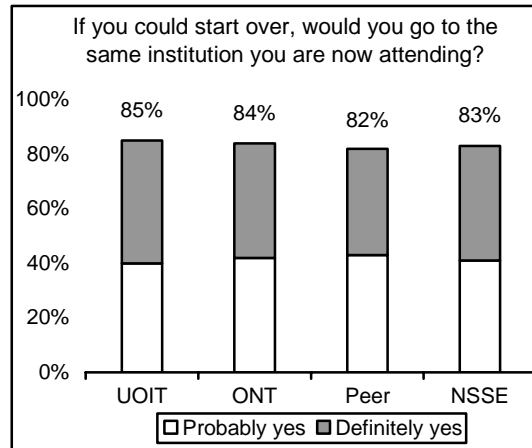


Figure 7: Choose same institution again



Computers and Technology

UOIT’s strength in computers and technology is highlighted by the NSSE results. Figure 8 shows that almost 90% of first year students report that UOIT has contributed quite a bit or very much to their knowledge, skills and personal development in using computing and information technology. The comparable figure for other Ontario universities is 61%.

Figure 9 shows that 87% of first year students have used an electronic medium often or very often to discuss or complete an assignment and Figure 10 shows that 95% of students have reported that UOIT often or very often emphasizes using computers in academic work. These figures are both significantly higher than the results of the comparator groups.

Figure 8: Computing and IT

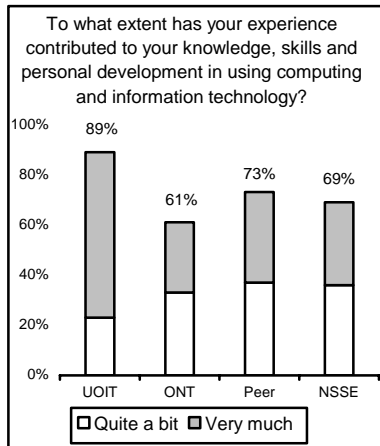


Figure 9: Used electronic medium

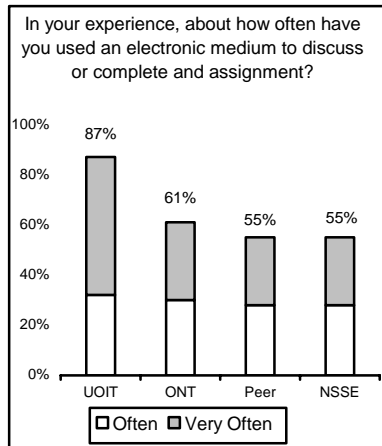
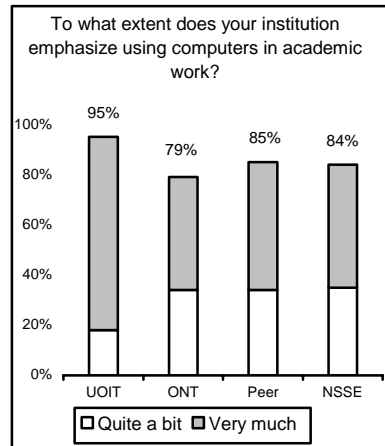


Figure 10: Computers to work



Collaborative Learning

The use of laptops at UOIT has also influenced the degree to which students work with other students outside of the class to prepare class assignments: almost three-quarters of first-year students report that they engaged in this activity often or very often, compared to less than half of students at other Ontario universities. Similarly, 41% of first year UOIT students worked with classmates on projects during class compared to only 26% at other Ontario universities.

Figure 11: Worked with others outside of class

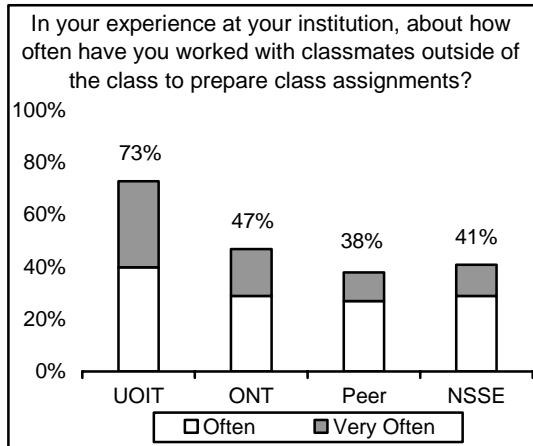
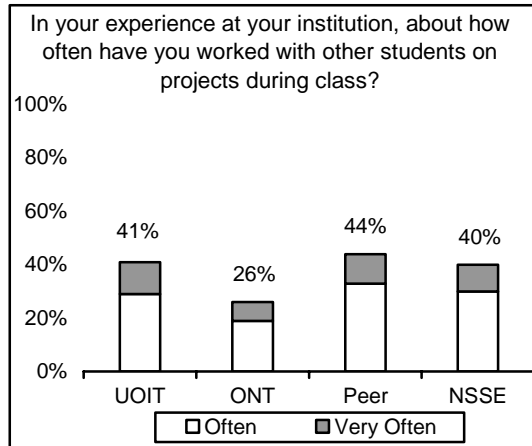


Figure 12: Worked with others during class



Quality Teaching and Student Motivation

NSSE gives us some insight into the motivation of students and the quality of teaching. Forty-four percent of students responded that they received prompt feedback often or very often from faculty members on their academic performance. Although UOIT outperforms other Ontario universities, there is still significant room for improvement; UOIT performs significantly poorer in terms of receiving feedback compared to similar institutions in the U.S. According to figure 14, about half of first-year students reported

that they often or very often worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.

Figure 13: Feedback from faculty

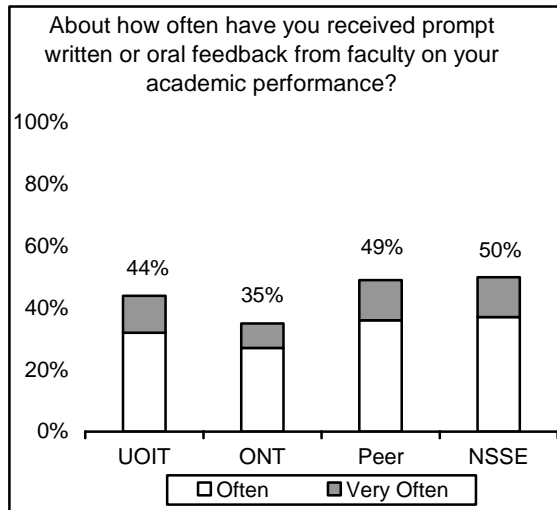
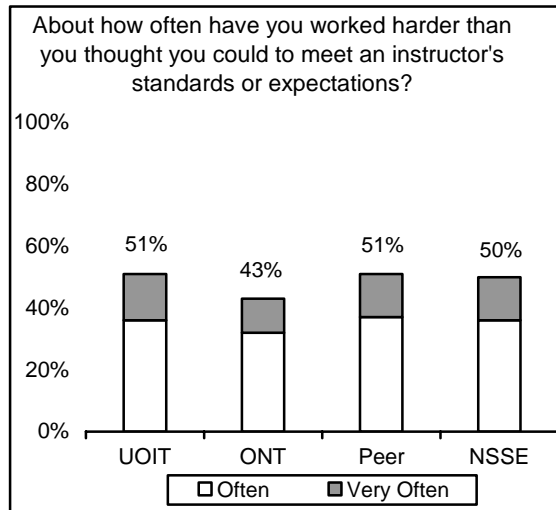


Figure 14: Worked hard to meet expectations



Quality of Relationships

The survey asks students to rank the quality of their relationships with faculty members and other students. On a 7 point scale, 75% of students rate the quality of their relationships with faculty members at 5 or higher. Similarly, 81% of first-year students report that the quality of their relationships with other students are relatively friendly, supportive and provide them with a sense of belonging.

Figure 15: Relationships with Faculty Members

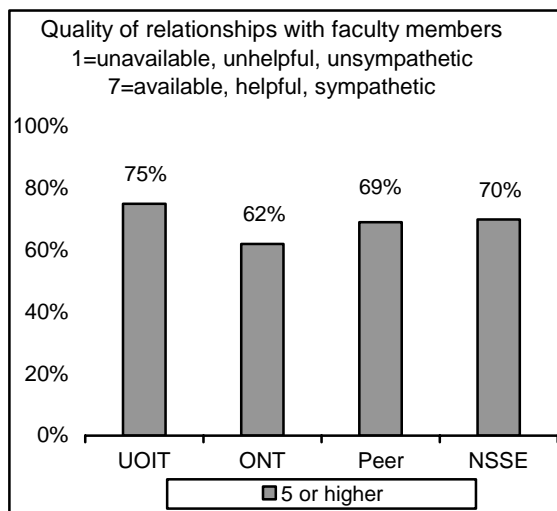
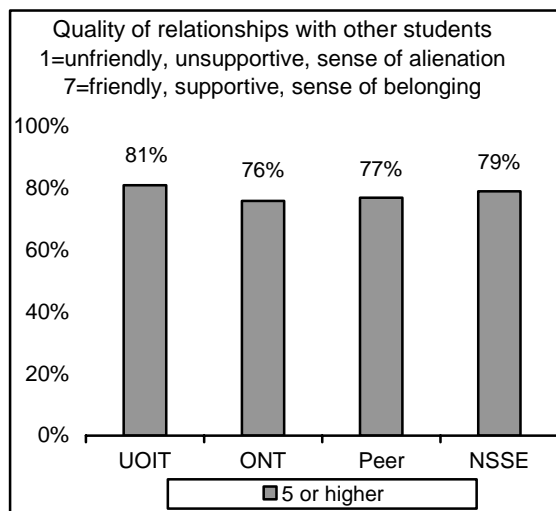


Figure 16: Relationships with Other Students



Student Extracurricular Experience

One of the goals in UOIT's Strategic Plan is to enrich the overall student extracurricular experience. Figure 17 shows that 61% of first-year students report that they did not spend any time participating in co-curricular activities such as organizations, campus publications, student government or intercollegiate or intramural sports. The completion of the new Campus Athletic Centre should result in greater extracurricular involvement for students.

Figure 18 shows that only 8% of UOIT first-year students attended an art exhibit, gallery, play, dance, or other theatre performance during their school year.

Figure 17: Participation in co-curricular activities

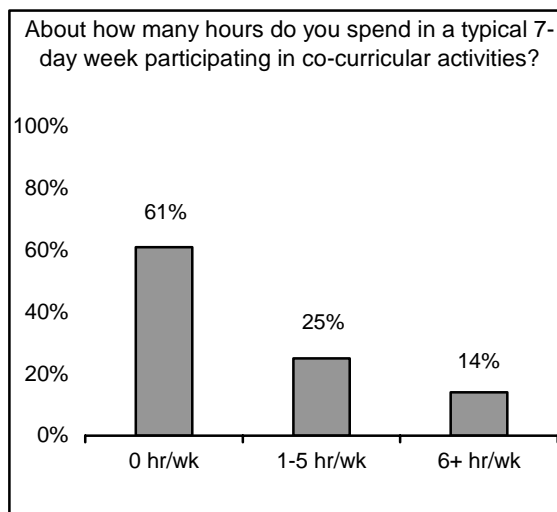
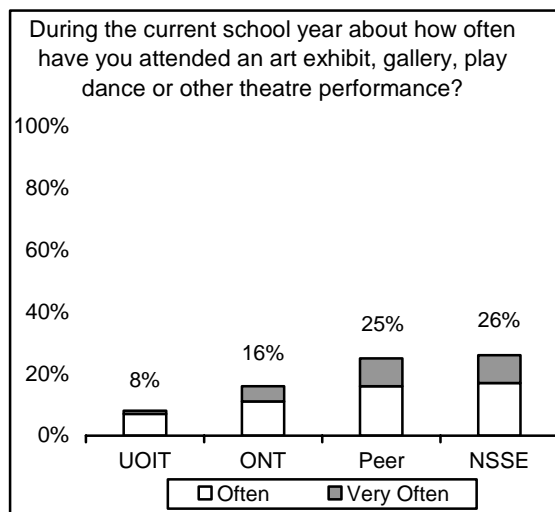


Figure 18: Attended local events



Implications and Next Steps

The NSSE results show that, on average, UOIT outperforms or performs as well as other Ontario universities. Other universities score higher in engaging their first-year students in extracurricular activities or participating in co-curricular activities.

All Ontario universities will administer NSSE again in the 2007-08 winter semester. The 2008 report will allow UOIT to determine if efforts to improve engagement, including the new Campus Athletic Centre, will improve the results. It will also provide data on senior students and their level of engagement at UOIT.

In the 2007 winter semester, UOIT will be participating in the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC), surveying its first year students and graduating students. The CUSC surveys measure the level of student satisfaction with various aspects of the university experience. Together with NSSE, this information will be very helpful in evaluating the student experience and identifying areas for improvement.