

# Summary of Key Evidence for UCORE: Student Learning at the First-Year and Senior Level 2014 & 2015 Combined National Survey of Student Engagement

*Prepared by the Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning (ATL)*

## **Introduction**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior student participation in activities and programs that promote their learning and personal development. NSSE has been in operation since 2000 and has been used at more than 1,500 colleges and universities in the US and Canada. More than 90% of participating institutions administer the survey on a periodic basis, generally every 2-3 years.

At WSU, questions on the NSSE survey provide indirect evidence of student learning on six of the Seven Learning Goals of the Baccalaureate (Critical & Creative Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy, Communication, Diversity, and Depth, Breadth & Integration of Learning). This document is intended to summarize selected NSSE results related to the WSU Learning Goals of the Baccalaureate.

## **Assessment**

NSSE assesses the extent to which first-year and senior students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development. At WSU, NSSE is offered to all first-year and senior students on all WSU campuses every other spring. With the census administration, students are recruited via email (i.e., students receive a survey invitation and reminders by email). The Office of Institutional Research (IR) coordinates the administration of NSSE at WSU.

The NSSE instrument, updated in 2013, collects information in five categories: (1) participation in dozens of educationally purposeful activities, (2) institutional requirements and the challenging nature of coursework, (3) perceptions of the college environment, (4) estimates of educational and personal growth since starting college, and (5) background and demographic information. Participating institutions may also append up to two Topical Modules – short sets of questions on designated topics that allow for deeper exploration of important areas based on campus needs.

*Note: NSSE provides participating institutions with a variety of reports. WSU's current and historic NSSE results are available on [IR's NSSE survey webpage](#). As with any voluntary survey, response rates and the presence of non-response bias should be considered when evaluating NSSE results. In other words, there is concern that those who did not respond (non-respondents) may have different views than those who did respond and therefore the results are not representative of the entire group.*

## **2014 & 2015 Combined NSSE Results**

**Context:** NSSE was administered at WSU in both 2014 and 2015, but is typically administered every other year on all campuses. In 2014 and 2015 combined, 2,048 seniors with certified majors and 1,157 first-year students responded to the survey at WSU. In cases where a student responded to the NSSE in both 2014 and 2015 (i.e. because they were a senior both spring semesters), only their most recent record was included in these results. The overall response rate was 19% in 2014 and 15% in 2015, compared to the average national response rate of 22% in 2014 and 20% in 2015 for participating institutions with undergraduate enrollments of 10,000 or more. Where survey results are displayed alongside a peer comparison, the peer comparison includes nearly 45,000 seniors from Carnegie classified "Research Universities-Very High Research Activity" institutions participating in NSSE in 2014 or 2015.

*Note: NSSE 2014 and 2015 results for WSU seniors include students who completed UCORE requirements along with students that completed the prior General Education Requirements (GERs), as UCORE was established beginning in 2012 for entering first-year students and 2013 for transfer students.*

## CRITICAL and CREATIVE THINKING

### **SENIORS:**

- **94%** of seniors reported having “very much” or “quite a bit” of confidence in their ability to complete tasks requiring ***critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information*** (Figure 1)
- **94%** of seniors reported having “very much” or “quite a bit” of confidence in their ability to complete tasks requiring ***creative thinking and problem solving*** (Figure 1)
- **84%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ***thinking critically and analytically*** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 2)

Figure 1

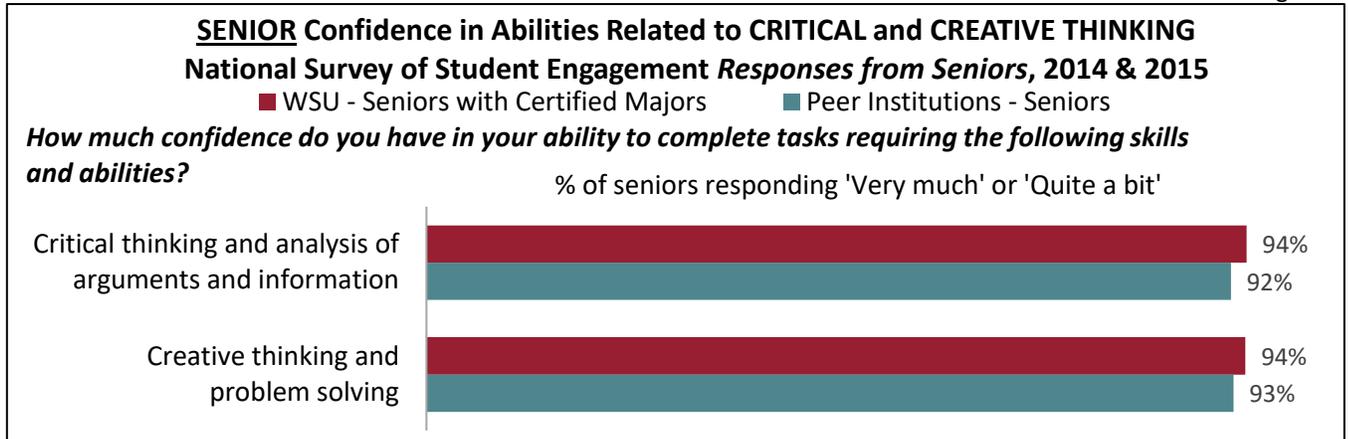
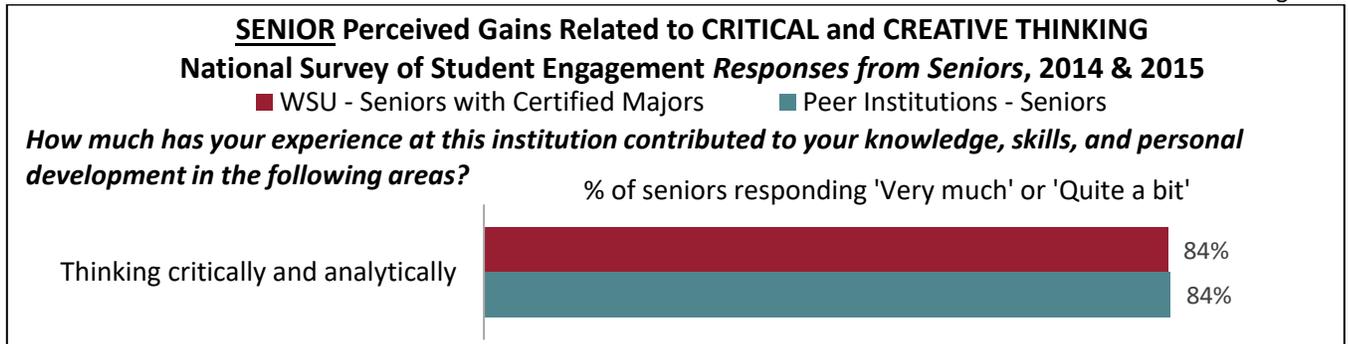


Figure 2



### **FIRST-YEAR:**

- **67%** of first-year students reported ***forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information*** “very much” or “quite a bit” during the current academic year (Table 1)

Table 1

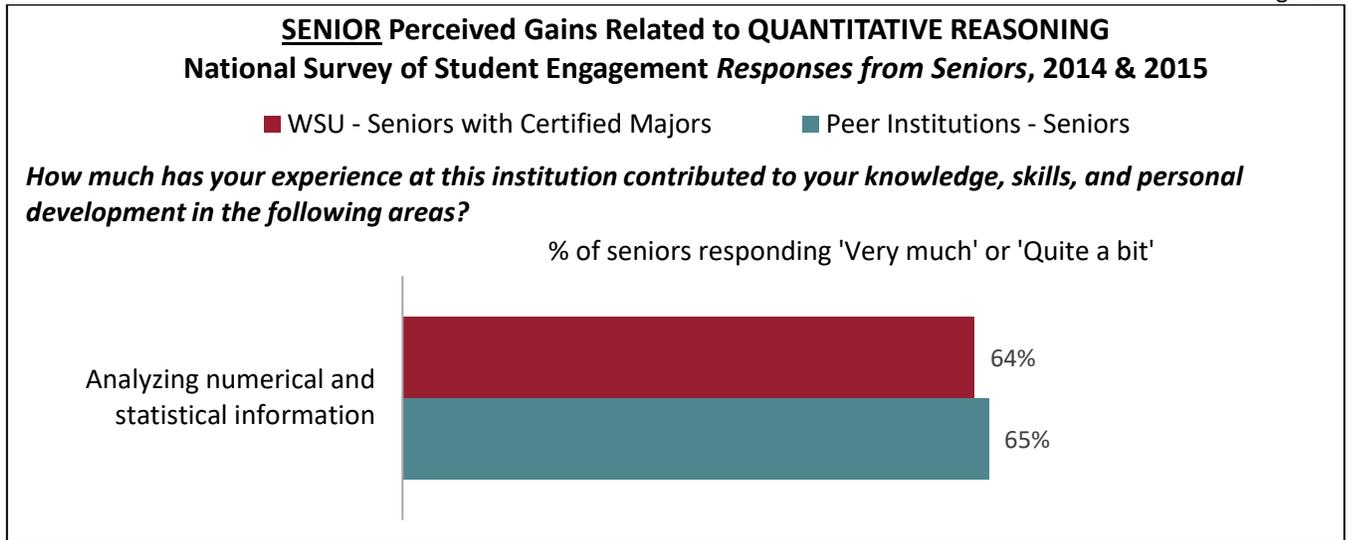
<b>FIRST-YEAR Skill Development Related to CRITICAL and CREATIVE THINKING</b>				
<b>National Survey of Student Engagement <i>Responses from First-Year Students, 2014 &amp; 2015</i></b>				
<b><i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?</i></b>	<b>% of first-year students</b>			
	<b>Very much</b>	<b>Quite a bit</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Very little</b>
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	25%	45%	27%	3%
Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	22%	46%	28%	4%
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	22%	45%	28%	5%
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	20%	48%	28%	4%

## QUANTITATIVE REASONING

### SENIORS:

- **64%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in **analyzing numerical and statistical information** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 3)

Figure 3



### FIRST-YEAR:

- **90%** of first-year students reported **reaching conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information** during the current academic year (Table 2)

Table 2

<b>FIRST-YEAR Skill Development Related to QUANTITATIVE REASONING</b>				
<b>National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2014 &amp; 2015</b>				
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	16%	39%	35%	10%
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	10%	29%	43%	18%

## INFORMATION LITERACY

### SENIORS:

- **84%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in **using information effectively** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 4)
- **81%** of seniors reported **using information from a variety of sources** “very often” or “often” during the current academic year (Figure 5)
- **63%** of seniors reported **assessing the conclusions of a published work** “very often” or “often” during the current academic year (Figure 5)

Figure 4

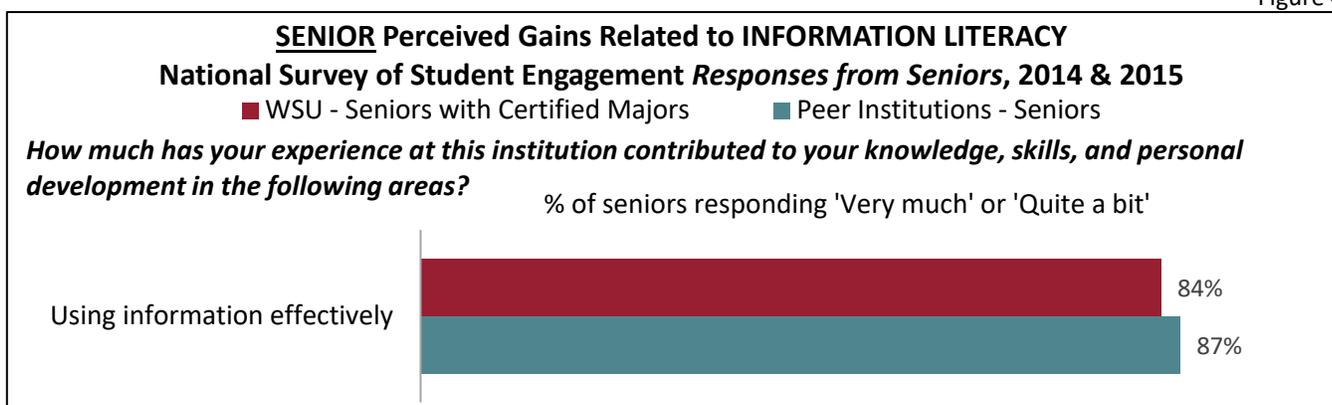
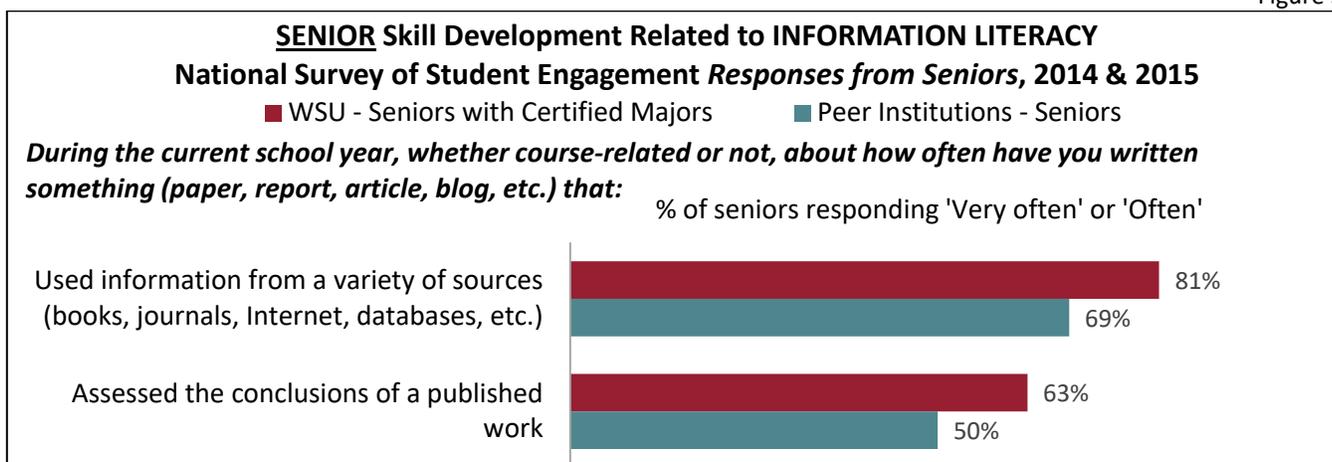


Figure 5



### FIRST-YEAR:

- **99%** of first-year students reported **completing an assignment using an information source other than required readings** during the current academic year (Table 3)

Table 3

<b>FIRST-YEAR Skill Development Related to INFORMATION LITERACY</b>				
<b>National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2014 &amp; 2015</b>				
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Completed an assignment that used an information source other than required course readings	42%	43%	14%	1%
Completed an assignment that used the library's electronic collection of articles, books, and journals	37%	31%	27%	5%
Received feedback from an instructor that improved your use of information resources	28%	39%	27%	6%

## COMMUNICATION, WRITTEN

### SENIORS:

- **90%** of seniors reported having “very much” or “quite a bit” of confidence in their ability to complete tasks requiring **clear writing** (Figure 6)
- **73%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in **writing clearly and effectively** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 7)

Figure 6

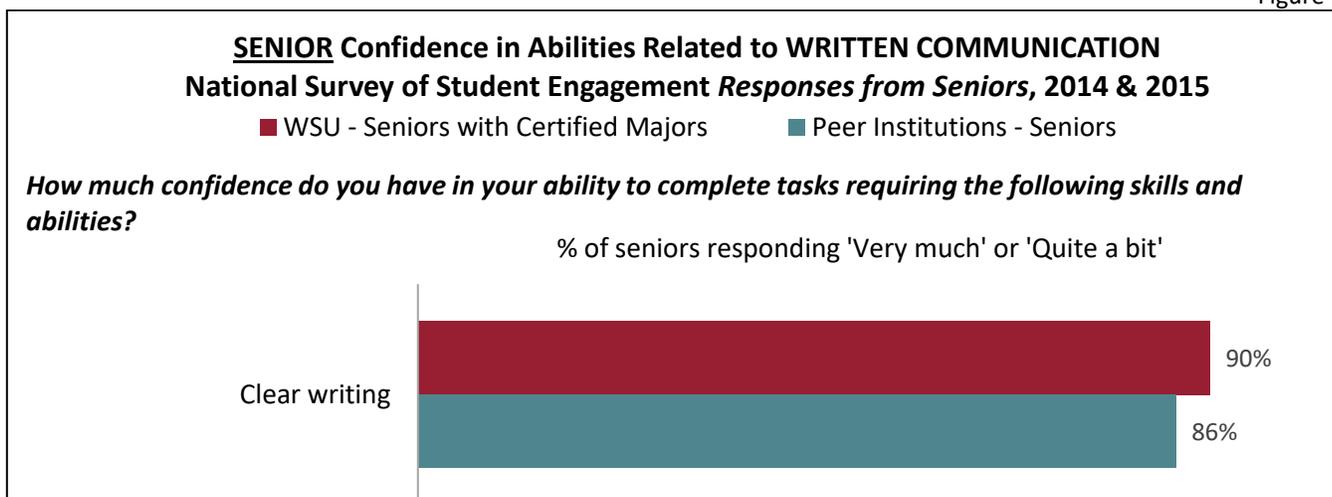
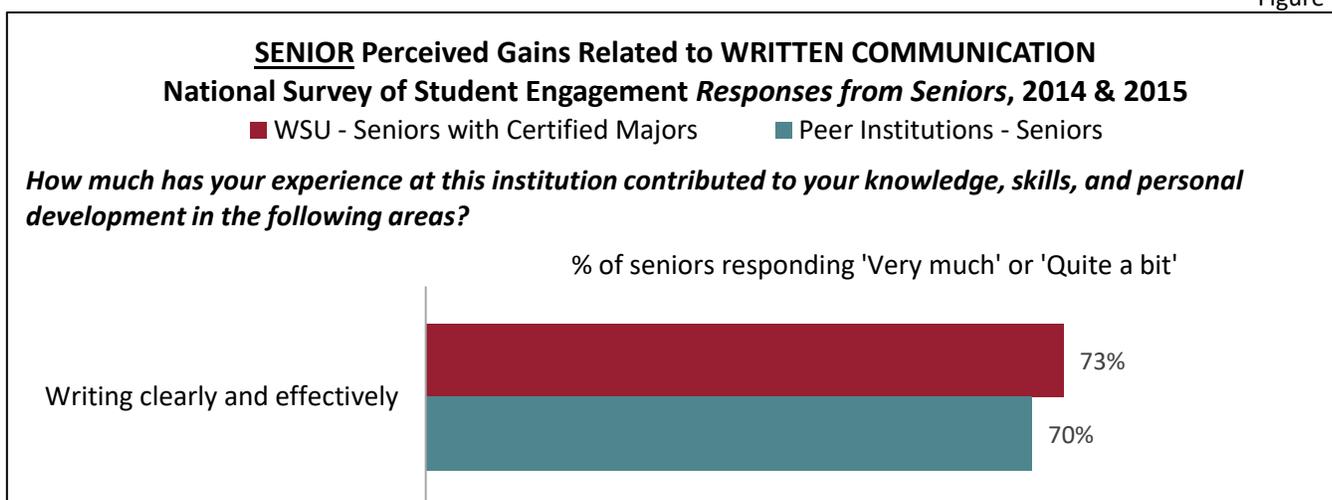


Figure 7



### FIRST-YEAR:

- **86%** of first-year students reported being assigned three or more **papers, reports, or other writing tasks** of up to 5 pages in length during the current academic year (Table 4)

Table 4

<b>FIRST-YEAR Skill Development Related to WRITTEN COMMUNICATION</b> National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2014 & 2015				
<i>During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following lengths have you been assigned?</i>	% of first-year students			
	More than 10 papers	6-10 papers	3-5 papers	Less than 3 papers
Up to 5 pages	26%	31%	29%	14%
Between 6 and 10 pages	2%	5%	27%	65%
11 or more pages	2%	2%	3%	93%

## COMMUNICATION, ORAL

### SENIORS:

- **71%** of seniors reported having “very much” or “quite a bit” of confidence in their ability to complete tasks requiring ***persuasive speaking*** (Figure 8)
- **63%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ***speaking clearly and effectively*** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 9)

Figure 8

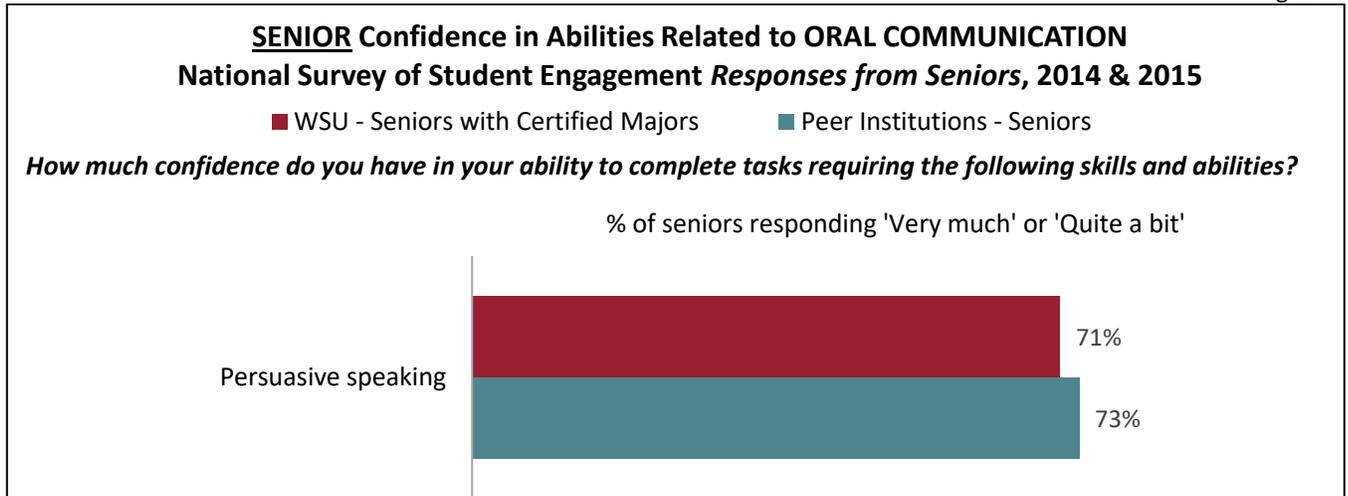
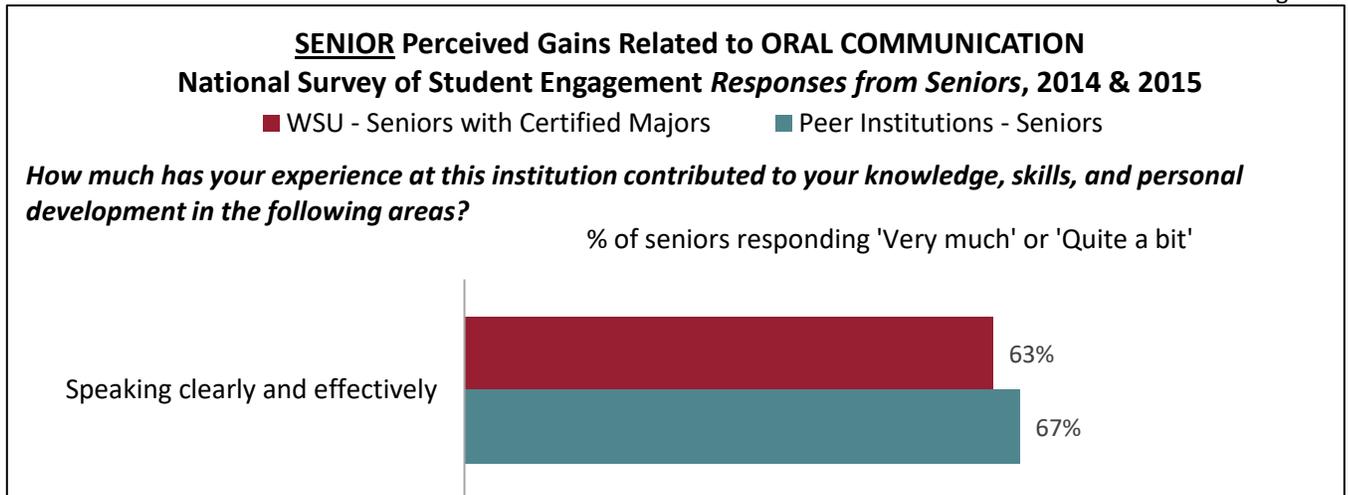


Figure 9



### FIRST-YEAR:

- **74%** of first-year students reported ***giving a course presentation*** during the current academic year (Table 5)

Table 5

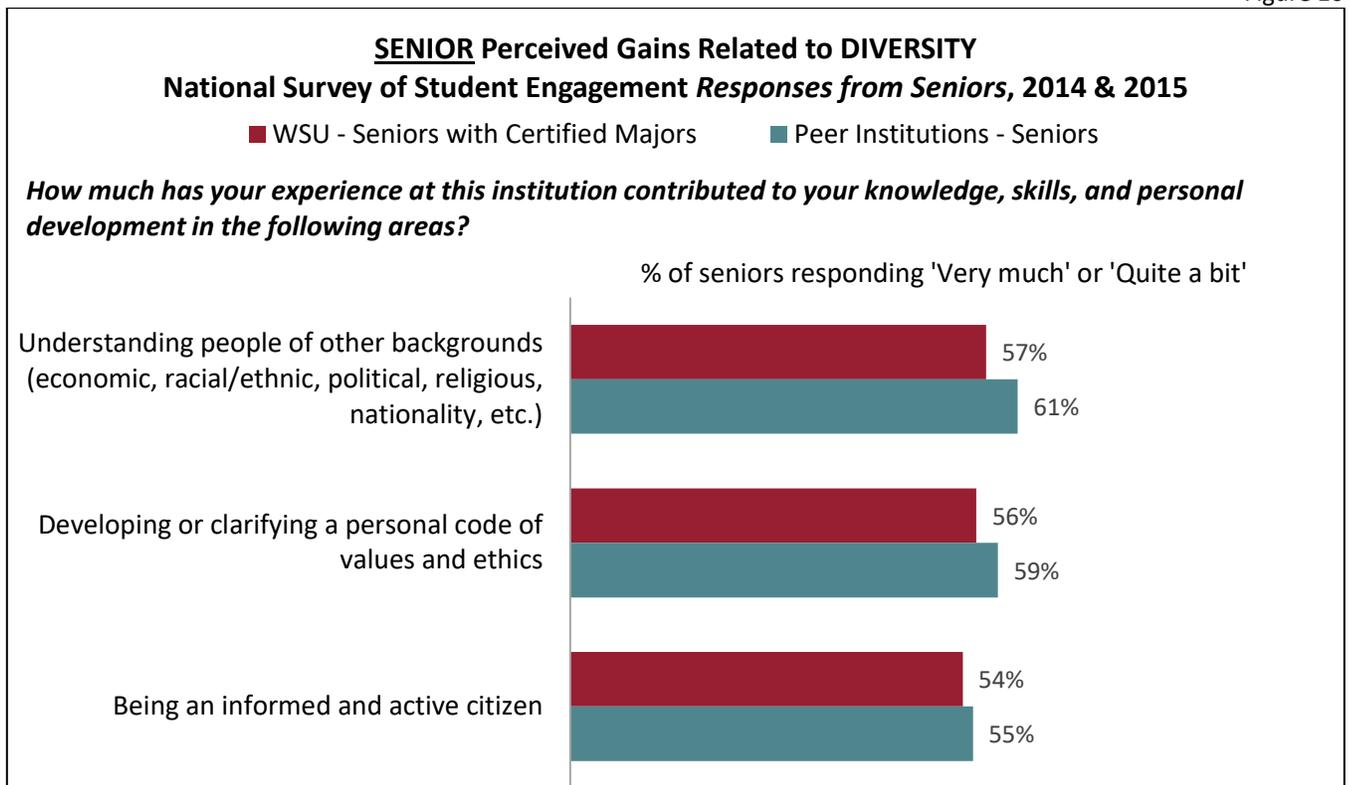
<b>FIRST-YEAR Skill Development Related to ORAL COMMUNICATION</b>				
<b>National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2014 &amp; 2015</b>				
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Gave a course presentation	8%	18%	49%	26%
Made a speech to a group (whether course-related or not)	7%	20%	44%	29%

## DIVERSITY

### SENIORS:

- **57%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ***understanding people of other backgrounds*** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 10)
- **56%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ***developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics*** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 10)
- **54%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ***being an informed and active citizen*** “very much” or “quite a bit” (Figure 10)

Figure 10



### FIRST-YEAR:

- **97%** of first-year students reported ***trying to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective*** during the current academic year (Table 6)

Table 6

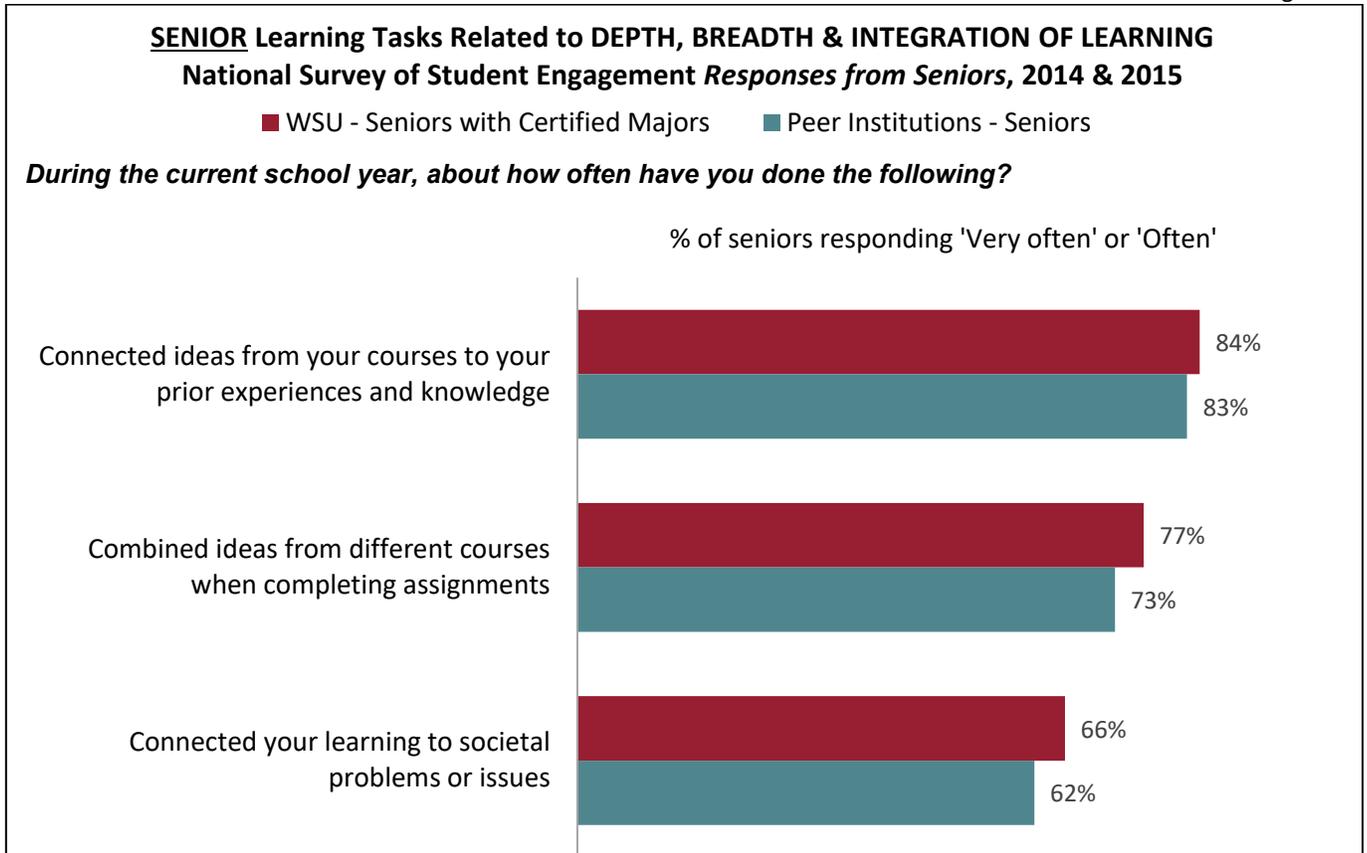
<b>FIRST-YEAR Skill Development Related to DIVERSITY</b>				
<b>National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2014 &amp; 2015</b>				
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	20%	42%	35%	3%
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	16%	45%	34%	5%
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	13%	38%	42%	7%

## DEPTH, BREADTH and INTEGRATION OF LEARNING

### SENIORS:

- **84%** of seniors reported **connecting ideas from their courses to prior experiences and knowledge** “very often” or “often” during the current academic year (Figure 11)
- **77%** of seniors reported **combining ideas from different courses when completing assignments** “very often” or “often” during the current academic year (Figure 11)
- **66%** of seniors reported **connecting their learning to societal problems or issues** “very often” or “often” during the current academic year (Figure 11)

Figure 11



### FIRST-YEAR:

- **93%** of first-year students reported **writing something that included ideas from more than one academic discipline** during the current academic year (Table 7)

Table 7

<b>FIRST-YEAR Skill Development Related to DEPTH, BREADTH and INTEGRATION OF LEARNING</b>				
<b>National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2014 &amp; 2015</b>				
<i>During the current school year, whether course-related or not, about how often have you written something (paper, report, article, blog, etc.) that:</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Included ideas from more than one academic discipline	30%	33%	29%	7%
Presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	26%	33%	34%	7%