

## **NSSE 2001 and 2003 Institutional Benchmark Comparisons**

### **What is the NSSE?**

The NSSE (pronounced “nessie”) is a College student survey that assesses the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development. NSSE is supported by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts Co-sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and The Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning. In Spring 2001 and 2003, Texas A&M participated in NSSE. In both years, a random sample of first year and senior students was contacted and asked to complete the survey. The response rate was 45% in 2001 and 50% in 2003.

### **What are benchmarks?**

41 NSSE items are sorted by content into five clusters representing effective educational practices. Benchmarks are calculated on a 100-point scale for ease of interpretation. Benchmark analyses are based on data from more than 105,000 randomly selected students from 467 four-year schools.

### **The Five Benchmark Domains :**

- Level of Academic Challenge
- Active and Collaborative Learning
- Student Interactions with Faculty Members
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Supportive Campus Environment

**The NSSE items that comprise each of the domains.**

**Level of Academic Challenge**

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to your academic program).
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings.
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more.
- Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages.
- Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.
- Coursework emphasizes: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory.
- Coursework Emphasizes: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experience into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.
- Coursework Emphasizes: Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods.
- Coursework Emphasizes: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.
- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.

- Campus environment emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work.

**Active and Collaborative Learning**

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.
- Made a class presentation.
- Worked with other students on projects during class.
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.
- Tutored or taught other students.
- Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course.
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.).

**Student Interactions with Faculty Members**

- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor.
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class.

- Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.).
- Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral).
- Worked or planned to work with a faculty member on a research project outside of course or program requirements.

### **Enriching Educational Experiences**

- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, publications, student government, sports, etc.).
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment.
- Community service or volunteer work.
- Foreign language coursework & study abroad.
- Independent study or self-designed major.
- Culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.).
- Had serious conversations with students that have different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity.
- Used electronic technology (list-serve, chat group, internet, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment.

- Campus environment encourages contact among students from different economic, social and racial or ethnic backgrounds.

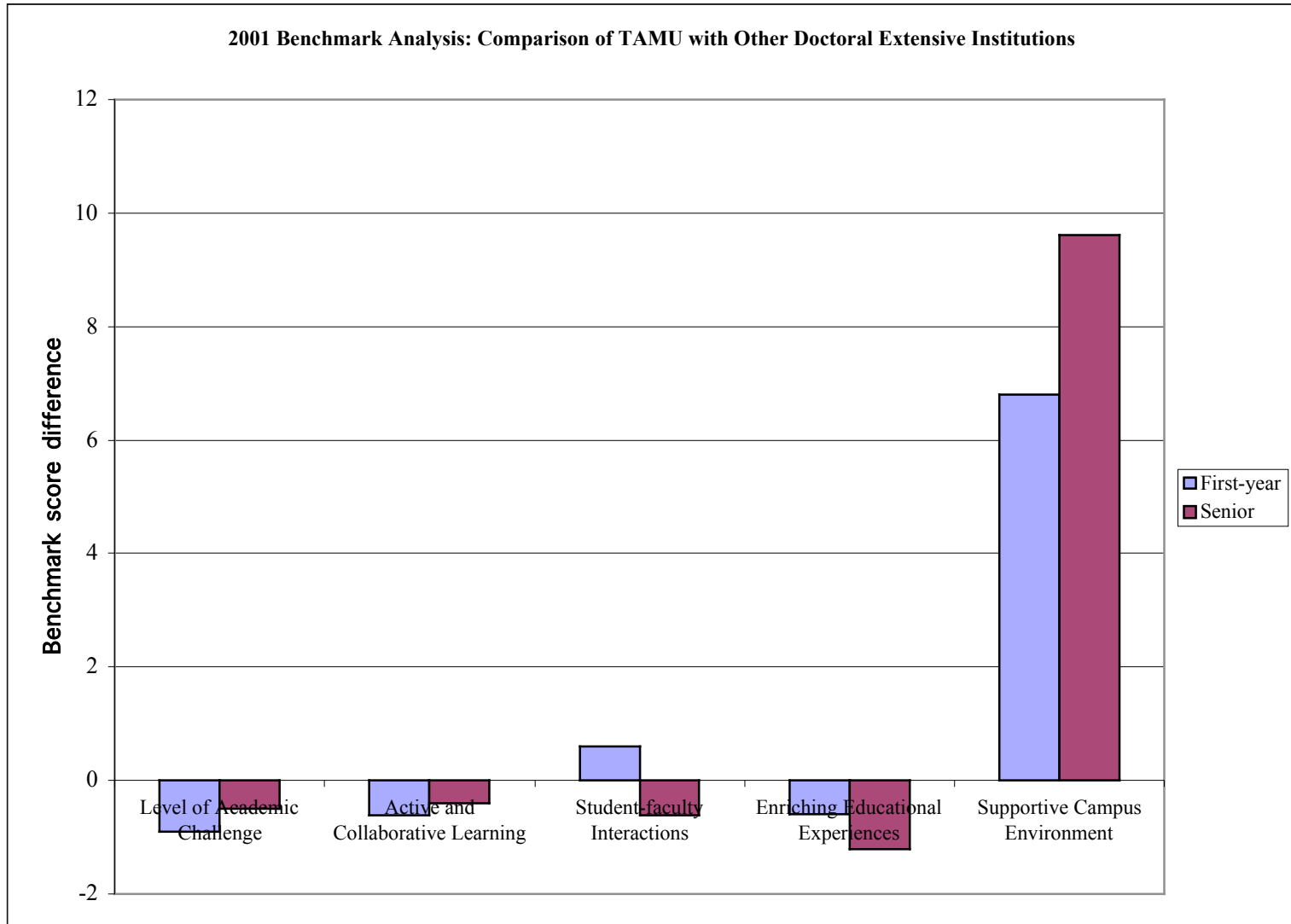
### **Supportive Campus Environment**

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically.
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.).
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially.
- Quality of relationships with other students.
- Quality of relationships with faculty members.
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices.

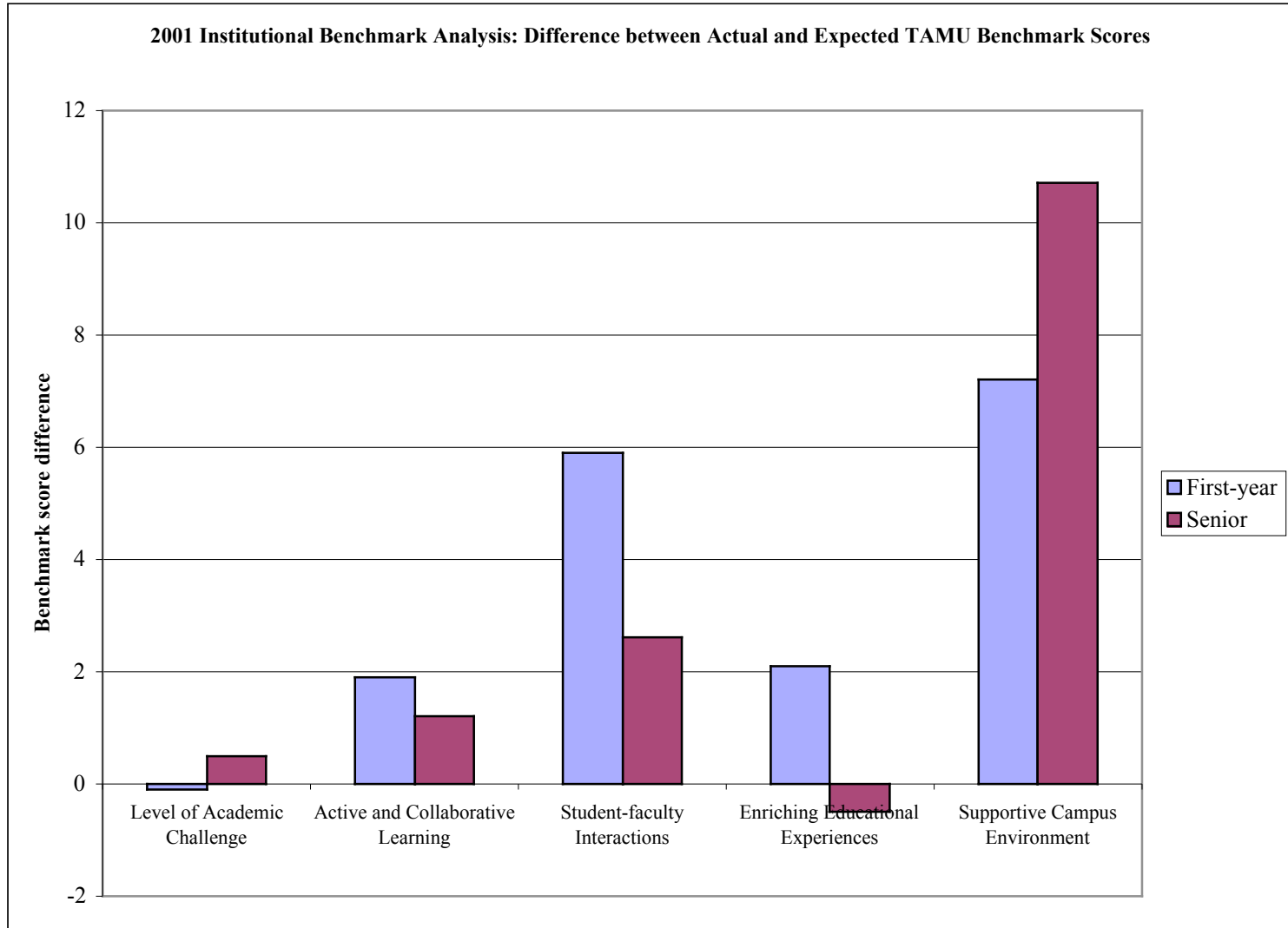
**TAMU Benchmark Results for 2001 and 2003**

Benchmark scores are calculated for TAMU First Year Students and TAMU Seniors. Similar benchmark scores are calculated for students at other Doctoral Research Extensive Universities. Figures 1 and 3 depict the differences between TAMU benchmark scores and those of other Doctoral Research Extensive Universities, for the years 2001 and 2003, respectively. In addition, a certain level of performance as indicated by an expected benchmark score can be predicted statistically based on characteristics such as a school's size, institution type, and type of students served. The difference between TAMU's actual benchmark scores and the scores expected for it based on its size, type, and student characteristics are presented in figures 2 and 4 for the years 2001 and 2003, respectively.

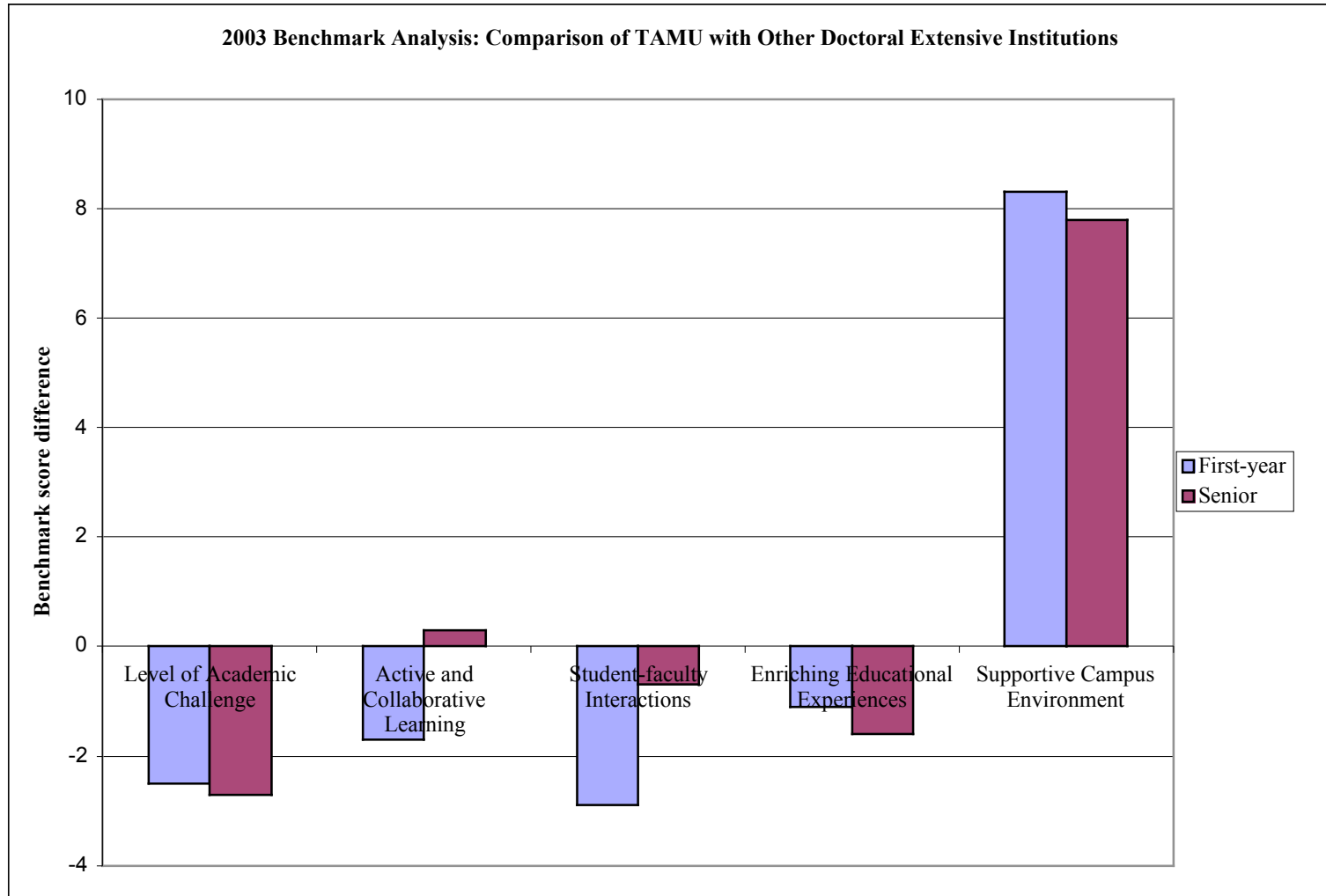
**Figure 1.**



**Figure 2.**



**Figure 3.**



**Figure 4.**

