

**Shippensburg University**

National Survey of  
Student Engagement Report  
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Prepared for:  
Academic Affairs Assessment Team

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Background:** A survey in 2005, 2008 and 2010 evaluated the level of Shippensburg students' engagement in academics with comparisons between PASSHE students and students across the country. Approximately 1000 freshman and 1000 seniors at Shippensburg responded each year.

**Strengths:** Shippensburg University excels at teaching its students to think beyond what is taught in class and synthesize the information from several courses. The university also provides them with opportunities to use computer technology in their academic pursuits. Seniors are engaging in more culminating experiences, such as capstones, theses, and projects. Overall, these are the same items that Shippensburg scored higher on than its peers within PASSHE and the national NSSE participants.

**Weaknesses/Recommendations:** Data have shown that the number of students enrolled in real-world experiences for course credit (e.g. internships, practicums, field experiences) has declined at Shippensburg University. This report recommends that faculty hold more seminars and presentations that highlight the benefits of real-world experiences. Student testimonials from those that have completed internships would also call attention to valuable knowledge and skills that are gained from real-world experiences.

Shippensburg University falls below its peers within PASSHE and NSSE regarding the incorporation of theories and ideas from different ethnicities and cultures into class assignments. Faculty should present projects and papers that allow students to explore theories and ideas from different ethnicities or cultures (course materials permitting). This will facilitate an enriched understanding of information in that particular field. Students may also be given course credit for attending cultural events and integrating information from these events into class assignments.

## **NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report was created to examine student perceptions of a variety of academic activities. The data produced by this research are generated on a tri-annual basis, and it is also used to compare Shippensburg University to other higher education institutions within the PASSHE system as well as other national institutions.

The NSSE gathers data based upon a number of different factors. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Academic and intellectual experiences
- Examinations
- Quality of relationships
- Time usage
- Educational and personal growth
- Additional collegiate experiences

These dimensions were created to structuralize important student experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. By facilitating research constructed on this criterion, Shippensburg University can establish its strengths regarding student activity as well as areas which may benefit from improvement. The NSSE is also utilized to compare Shippensburg University to other educational institutions, within the PASSHE system and also on a national scale.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Data were collected from freshman and senior students at Shippensburg University. In 2005, the freshman sample was 1,322 and the senior sample was 1,292. In 2008, the freshman sample was 1,528 and the senior sample was 1,308. The latest year NSSE has completed a report for Shippensburg University was 2010, when 2,041 freshman and 931 seniors participated.

The NSSE questionnaire is comprised of 85 questions. These questions are broken down into the follow dimensions: Academic and Intellectual Experiences, Mental Activities, Reading and Writing, Problem Sets, Examinations, Additional Collegiate Experiences, Enriching Educational Experiences, Quality of Relationships, Time Usage, Institutional Environment, Educational and Personal Growth, Academic Advising, and Satisfaction. Each section uses a Likert scale to evaluate students, some are a four point scale, some are a five point scale, and some are a seven point scale.

More information regarding the NSSE report including means comparison and respondent characteristics can be found at:

[http://www.ship.edu/IRP/NSSE\\_Results/](http://www.ship.edu/IRP/NSSE_Results/)

## **RESULTS**

For the purposes of this report, specific items within NSSE have been categorized to reflect the content that will be most relevant and salient for the Academic Affairs Assessment Team when deliberating assessment.

### **Changes at Shippensburg University (2005-2010 Reports)**

The data for each section will be presented in the following format: increasing trends, decreasing trends, fluctuation of data, and no pattern.

Trends and patterns were recognized by investigating means. For example, in the year 2005, on a scale from 0-4, if freshman reported a mean of 2.98 and seniors reported a mean of 3.13 then an increase of .152 would exist between freshman and seniors within that particular item for the year 2005. If a negative number is displayed then that item decreased from freshman respondents to senior respondents.

Essentially, these numbers have the following meaning: given the example “Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work” a positive value (e.g. .205 or 3.45) would mean that students spend increasing amounts of time on studying and academic work from freshman year to senior year. A negative value (e.g. -.205 or -3.45) would denote that students spend less time on studying and academic work from freshman year to senior year. Data regarding individual items in the report can be found in Tables 1 through 8 as well as the appendices.

### **Increasing Trends (See Table 1)**

#### *Courses and coursework*

Students at Shippensburg University exhibit an increase of conceptualizing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory. They are also having more culminating senior experiences (capstone course, thesis, project, comprehensive exam, etc.) as well as participate more community-based projects (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course.

More questions are being asked during class and more class discussion has occurs. Students also use more electronic mediums (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment. Lastly, students are being challenged more by examinations. They also believe that they have been spending more time studying and on academic work.

#### *Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*

Students compare and contrast ideas and theories more often. They also make judgments about the value of information more often. Applying theories or concepts to real world problems has also increased.

Students put together ideas or concepts from different courses. They also think critically and analytically, analyze quantitative problems, and learn effectively on their own. Diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) have been included more in class discussions or writing assignments.

*Extracurricular work related to academics or career development*

Students work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) more frequently.

*Work related to academics or future career*

Students continue to speak more clearly and effectively.

*Communicated about class materials*

Students are discussing more ideas from readings or class materials with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.). The university has also continued to provide the support necessary for students to succeed academically.

Table 1: Increasing Trends at Shippensburg University

<b>Increasing Trends</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>
<i>Courses and Coursework</i>			
• Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	.029	.287	.313
• Culminating senior experience (capstone course, thesis, project, comprehensive exam, etc.)	.303	.360	.380
• Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course	.103	.173	.176
• Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	.216	.332	.345
• Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	.157	.233	.347
• To what extent have your examinations during the current school year challenged you to do your best work?	-.245	-.084	-.020
• Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	-.142	-.134	-.005
<i>Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes</i>			
• Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	.095	.218	.264
• Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	.015	.165	.248
• Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	.152	.337	.385
• Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	.311	.363	.391
• Thinking critically and analytically	.161	.204	.302
• Analyzing quantitative problems	.120	.138	.227
• Learning effectively on your own	.116	.120	.284
• Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	-.049	.110	.137
<i>Extracurricular work related to academics or career development</i>			
• Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	.343	.364	.440
<i>Work related to academics or future career</i>			
• Speak clearly and effectively	.063	.076	.194
<i>Communicated about class materials</i>			
• Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	.169	.184	.189
• Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	-.124	-.082	.042

### Decreasing Trends (See Table 2)

#### *Courses and coursework*

Students work with others to complete projects during class.

#### *Work related to academics or future career*

Shippensburg students have observed a decrease in the number of real-world experiences for class credit (such as practicums, internships, field experience, etc).

#### *Communicated about academics outside of class*

Students discuss less academic material with faculty members outside of class.

Table 2: Decreasing Trends at Shippensburg University

<b>Decreasing Trends</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>
<i>Courses and coursework</i>			
• Worked with other students on projects during class	.236	.202	.178
<i>Work related to academics or future career</i>			
• Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	.521	.486	.475
<i>Communicated about academics outside of class</i>			
• Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	.331	.257	.256

### Fluctuating Trends (See Table 3)

#### *Courses and coursework*

Students work with others outside of the classroom on course work. They also express variability when working in formal programs where students take two or more classes together. Fluctuation is being conveyed in class preparation (e.g. studying, reading, doing homework, etc).

#### *Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*

Students solve complex real-world problems.

#### *Work related to academics and/or future career*

Foreign language coursework has fluctuated.

*Communicated about academics outside of class*

Students use e-mail to communicate with instructors. Discussion regarding grading or assignments has also fluctuated. Faculty members provide feedback on academic performance. Students have developed relationships with other students.

*Satisfaction*

When asked the question: “If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?” student answers have fluctuated.

Table 3: Fluctuating Trends at Shippensburg University

<b>Fluctuating Trends</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>
<i>Courses and coursework</i>			
• Working effectively with others	.467	.294	.520
• Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	.167	.254	.153
• Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	-.212	.055	-.081
<i>Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes</i>			
• Solving complex real-world problems	.184	.087	.362
<i>Work related to academics and/or future career</i>			
• Foreign language coursework	.327	.334	.229
<i>Communicated about academics outside of class</i>			
• Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	.319	.142	.238
• Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	.389	.205	.247
• Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)	.278	.173	.288
• Relationships with other students	.214	.034	.278
<i>Satisfaction</i>			
• If you could start over again, would you go to the <i>same institution</i> you are now attending?	.027	-.127	.039

### **No or Minimal Changes Detected (See Table 4)**

#### *Courses and coursework*

Students write clearly and effectively at a consistent rate. They have also memorized information to the point of being able to repeat it verbatim. Furthermore, papers and projects are being completed that required the integration of ideas and information from various sources. Minimal changes have been detected in the number of students who complete an independent study or self-designed major. Computer work has also exhibited few changes. Students have also acquired a broad general education.

#### *Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*

Students examine the strengths and weaknesses of their own views and ideas.

#### *Course work related to academics or future career*

Shippensburg students have worked harder than they believed that they could to meet a professor's standards. They also acquire job or work-related knowledge or skills. Furthermore, they use computer or information technology.

#### *Extracurricular work related to academics or career development*

Students work with a faculty member outside of class and program requirements.

#### *Communicated about academics outside of class*

Students and faculty members form academic relationships. Pupils have also worked effectively with others.

#### *Advising*

Students report that no major fluctuations or changes have occurred with academic advising quality.

### Satisfaction

Concerning students, no major changes have occurred with the overall educational experience at Shippensburg University.

Table 4: No or Minimal Changes at Shippensburg University

<b>No or Minimal Changes Detected</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>
<i>Courses and coursework</i>			
• Writing clearly and effectively	.105	.086	.179
• Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	-.117	-.224	-.155
• Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	.247	.212	.269
• Independent study or self-designed major	.050	.069	.057
• Using computers in academic work	.170	.089	.165
• Acquiring a broad general education	.036	-.008	.127
<i>Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes</i>			
• Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	.100	.213	.147
• <i>Course work related to academics or future career</i>			
• Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	.095	.075	.078
• Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	.432	.405	.456
• Using computing and information technology	.268	.157	.206
<i>Extracurricular work related to academics or career development</i>			
• Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	.108	.127	.109
<i>Communicated about academics outside of class</i>			
• Relationships with faculty members	.363	.396	.271
• Worked effectively with others	.243	.236	.328
<i>Advising</i>			
• Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?	-.140	-.194	-.082
<i>Satisfaction</i>			
• How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	.094	.007	.065

### **Within the PASSHE system (2010 report)**

Data for this section will be presented for freshman and senior respondents. For each class a mean for Shippensburg University will be presented and a mean for the PASSHE institutions will be presented. Only statistically significant means will be reported, and therefore some items may contain information only on freshman or only on seniors. All results were gathered from the 2010 NSSE report for Shippensburg University. Once again, items will be categorized to emphasize information important for the Academic Affairs Assessment Team.

#### **Items that Shippensburg scored higher on than other PASSHE institutions**

**(See Table 5)**

##### *Courses and coursework*

Shippensburg seniors analyze the basic concepts of an idea or theory more often than other PASSHE seniors. Shippensburg students, freshman and seniors, work on more papers or projects that require the integration of information from various sources than other PASSHE freshman and seniors. More freshman and seniors at Shippensburg work on class assignments with others outside of class as compared to other PASSHE freshman and seniors.

Seniors at Shippensburg have more culminating senior experiences (e.g. capstone, senior project, thesis, etc.) than other PASSHE seniors. Shippensburg freshman participate in more community based projects (e.g. services learning) than PASSHE freshman.

More Shippensburg seniors use electronic mediums (such as internet, chat groups or IMs) to discuss coursework than other PASSHE seniors. Seniors at Shippensburg typically use more computers to complete coursework than seniors at other PASSHE institutions.

*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*

Seniors at Shippensburg University apply concepts learned in class more than their PASSHE peers. Seniors at Shippensburg also think critically and analytically more than PASSHE seniors. Shippensburg seniors solve complex real world problems on a more frequent basis than PASSHE seniors.

*Course work related to academics or future career*

Shippensburg freshman speak clearly and more effectively than other PASSHE freshman.

*Communicated about academics outside of class*

Freshman at Shippensburg use e-mail to communicate with an instructor more than other PASSHE freshman. Seniors at Shippensburg University feel that they have the support they need to succeed academically more than PASSHE seniors feel. Shippensburg seniors work effectively with others more than their PASSHE peers.

Table 5 (Only statistically significant items are presented)

Items that Shippensburg scored higher on than other PASSHE institutions	Freshman		Seniors	
	Ship	PASSHE	Ship	PASSHE
<i>Courses and coursework</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components</li> </ul>			3.37	3.28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources</li> </ul>	3.17	3.05	3.44	3.35
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with classmates <b>outside of class</b> to prepare class assignments</li> </ul>	2.62	2.43	3.14	2.84
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culminating senior experience (capstone course, thesis, project, comprehensive exam, etc.)</li> </ul>			.40	.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course</li> </ul>	1.65	1.56		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment</li> </ul>			2.94	2.78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using computers in academic work</li> </ul>			3.50	3.40
<i>Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations</li> </ul>			3.43	3.32
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking critically and analytically</li> </ul>			3.49	3.37
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solving complex real-world problems</li> </ul>			2.99	2.81
<i>Course work related to academics or future career</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaking clearly and effectively</li> </ul>	3.01	2.92		
<i>Communicated about academics outside of class</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor</li> </ul>	3.30	3.19		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically</li> </ul>			3.10	2.97
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working effectively with others</li> </ul>			3.38	3.25

## **Items that Shippensburg scored lower on than other PASSHE institutions**

**(See Table 6)**

### *Courses and Coursework*

Shippensburg students, freshman and seniors engage in fewer formal programs where students take two or more classes together than PASSHE students, freshman and seniors. Fewer Shippensburg seniors have an independent study or self-designed major than PASSHE students.

### *Coursework related to academics or future career*

Freshman at Shippensburg take less foreign language courses than PASSHE freshman.

### *Communicated about academics outside of class*

Shippensburg freshman discuss class materials with others outside of class less frequently than PASSHE freshman.

### *Spirituality and wellness*

Shippensburg freshman feel that they have a lesser understanding of themselves than PASSHE freshman. Freshman at Shippensburg also feel that they have a lesser understanding of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds than other PASSHE freshman do. Shippensburg freshman also feel that they develop a personal code of values and ethics to a lesser extent than PASSHE freshman.

Table 6 (Only statistically significant items are presented)

Items that Shippensburg scored lower on than other PASSHE institutions	Freshman		Seniors	
	Ship	PASSHE	Ship	PASSHE
<i>Courses and coursework</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together</li> </ul>	.08	.22	.23	.32
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent study or self-designed major</li> </ul>			.08	.12
<i>Coursework related to academics or future career</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foreign language coursework</li> </ul>	.10	.15		
<i>Communicated about academics outside of class</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)</li> </ul>	2.61	2.74		
<i>Spirituality and wellness</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding yourself</li> </ul>	2.66	2.77		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds</li> </ul>	2.51	2.64		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a personal code of values and ethics</li> </ul>	2.52	2.62		

### Within all institutions NSSE evaluates (2010 report)

Results in this section will report on data collected from all institutions that NSSE has evaluated. Data for this section will be presented for freshman and senior respondents. For each class a mean for Shippensburg University will be presented and a mean for the NSSE institutions will be presented. Only statistically significant means will be reported, and therefore some items may contain information only on freshman or only on seniors. All results were gathered from the 2010 NSSE report for Shippensburg University. Once again, items will be categorized to emphasize information important for the Academic Affairs Assessment Team.

### Items that Shippensburg has scored higher on than NSSE institutions (See Table 7)

*Courses and Coursework*

Shippensburg seniors analyze the basic concepts of a theory or idea more often than other NSSE institution seniors. Seniors at Shippensburg have more culminating experiences (senior project or thesis, capstone course, etc.) than seniors at other NSSE institutions. Shippensburg seniors work with other students on projects during class more often than seniors at other NSSE institutions. Shippensburg freshman and seniors work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments more often than NSSE institution freshman and seniors. Shippensburg seniors are more likely than seniors from other NSSE institutions to work on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.

*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*

Shippensburg seniors are more likely than seniors from other NSSE institutions to apply theories or concepts to practical problems or new situations. Shippensburg seniors think critically and analytically more often than seniors from other NSSE institutions. Seniors at Shippensburg are more likely than seniors at NSSE institutions to solve complex real-world problems. However, freshmen at Shippensburg are less likely to solve complex real-world problems than freshmen at other NSSE institutions.

*Course work related to academics or future career*

Both freshman and seniors at Shippensburg University have more opportunities to speak clearly and effectively than NSSE freshman and seniors. Seniors at Shippensburg acquire more job related knowledge and skills compared to NSSE seniors.

*Extracurricular work related to academics or career development*

Seniors at Shippensburg work on committees, orientation, and student activities with faculty more than other seniors within NSSE. In addition, Shippensburg seniors discuss future career plans with advisors more often than NSSE seniors. Furthermore, seniors at Shippensburg

University receive more prompt feedback on academic performance as compared to NSSE seniors. Seniors at Shippensburg feel that they work more effectively with others as compared to NSSE seniors.

*Communicated about academics outside of class*

Seniors at Shippensburg feel that their institution provides the support they need to succeed academically more so than NSSE seniors.

Table 7 (Only statistically significant items are presented)

Items that Shippensburg scored higher on than other NSSE institutions	Freshman		Seniors	
	Ship	NSSE	Ship	NSSE
<i>Courses and coursework</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components</li> </ul>			3.37	3.29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culminating senior experience (capstone course, thesis, project, comprehensive exam, etc.)</li> </ul>			.40	.33
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with other students on projects during class</li> </ul>			2.68	2.56
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments</li> </ul>	2.62	2.45	3.14	2.78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources</li> </ul>			3.44	3.35
<i>Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations</li> </ul>			3.43	3.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking critically and analytically</li> </ul>			3.49	3.38
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solving complex real-world problems</li> </ul>	2.62	2.72	2.99	2.83
<i>Coursework related to academics or future career</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaking clearly and effectively</li> </ul>	3.01	2.89	3.20	3.02
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills</li> </ul>			3.23	3.03
<i>Extracurricular work related to academics or career development</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)</li> </ul>			2.07	1.85
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talked about career plans with a faculty member</li> </ul>			2.61	2.43
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)</li> </ul>			2.99	2.83
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working effectively with others</li> </ul>			3.38	3.19

<i>Communicated about academics outside of class</i>				
• Providing the support you need to thrive socially			3.10	2.98

**Items that Shippensburg has scored lower on than NSSE institutions**

(See Table 8)

*Courses and coursework*

Freshman at Shippensburg participate less in formal programs where students take two or more classes together than NSSE freshman. Shippensburg seniors feel that they spend less time preparing for class (e.g. reading, studying, doing homework, etc.) than NSSE seniors. Seniors at Shippensburg spend less time studying abroad as compared to NSSE seniors. Furthermore, Shippensburg seniors are enrolled in less independent studies and self-designed majors than NSSE seniors.

*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*

Freshman at Shippensburg are asked to synthesize ideas and information into new interpretations and relationships less often than NSSE freshman. Freshmen also make fewer judgments about the value of information, arguments and methods compared to NSSE freshman. Shippensburg freshman have a lesser feeling of their ability to learn on their own as compared to NSSE freshman. Shippensburg students, both freshman and seniors, are asked to examine their own work for strengths and weaknesses less often than NSSE students, freshman and seniors.

*Coursework related to academics or future career*

Both freshman and seniors at Shippensburg are required to take less foreign language coursework than NSSE freshman and seniors.

*Communicated about academics outside of class*

Shippensburg freshman and seniors discuss class materials with others outside of class (students, family members, friends, etc.) less than NSSE freshman and seniors.

*Spirituality and Wellness*

Shippensburg freshman feel that they have a lesser understanding of themselves as compared to their NSSE peers. However, seniors at Shippensburg gain a better understanding of themselves as compared to NSSE seniors. Freshman at Shippensburg feel that they do not understand people of racial and ethnic backgrounds other than their own as well as freshman at other institutions evaluated by NSSE. Freshmen develop a lesser code of their own values and beliefs at Shippensburg than at other NSSE institutions.

Table 8 (Only statistically significant items are presented)

Items that Shippensburg scored lower on than other NSSE institutions	Freshman		Seniors	
	Ship	NSSE	Ship	NSSE
<i>Courses and coursework</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together</li> </ul>	.08	.17		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)</li> </ul>			4.09	4.29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study abroad</li> </ul>			.05	.14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent study or self-designed major</li> </ul>			.08	.17
<i>Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships</li> </ul>	2.85	2.94		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions</li> </ul>	2.86	2.94		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning effectively on your own</li> </ul>	2.87	2.95		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue</li> </ul>	2.44	2.63	2.85	2.73
<i>Coursework related to academics or future career</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foreign language coursework</li> </ul>	.10	.33	.21	.41
<i>Communicated about academics outside of class</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)</li> </ul>	2.61	2.77	2.80	2.90
<i>Spirituality and Wellness</i>				
Understanding yourself	2.66	2.84	2.97	2.86
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.51	2.70		
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.52	2.73		

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Shippensburg University continues to give students the opportunity to critically and analytically think about course materials, this occurs both in and out of class. Therefore, faculty should continue to offer assignments and projects that facilitate the synthesis and analysis of classroom materials (e.g. research projects, essays, presentations, etc.). These exercises also promote students to incorporate theories and ideas from other courses into their work, another trend that is rising at Shippensburg.

Furthermore, students have also been increasing the completion of coursework through use of computers, and have been using computers more to communicate with peers and instructors. Comparatively, Shippensburg University uses computer technology more than all institutions evaluated by NSSE. This practice should continue to be followed, and instructors should continue to support and advocate computer based work and communication when it is practical and useful for learning course content.

The number of real-world experiences (e.g. internships, practicums, field experiences) being completed for class credit has decreased at Shippensburg University. Faculty should advocate these real-world experiences by holding seminars or presentations that highlight all of the beneficial qualities of on the job learning. Once students understand real-world learning is important to build academic and career success they will be more likely to enroll in these kinds of courses and programs. Another avenue to promote real-world experiences may be to present testimonials from current students who are part of an internship, practicum, etc. or students who have completed one of those items. These testimonials will provide students with peer based feedback regarding the benefits of real-world experiences.

Shippensburg falls behind other institutions in terms of students' understanding of different ethnicities and cultures. Faculty can incorporate theories and ideas that are uncommon in the normal teaching routine into their lectures and assignments. By exposing students to nontraditional viewpoints they may continue to obtain an enriched understanding of classroom materials and be able to synthesize a broader range of material. Another method of revealing different ethnicities and cultures to students is by offering extra credit to students that attend events on campus that are culturally diverse. These events should also facilitate cultural tolerance and understanding.

Students at Shippensburg have engaged in a lesser number of independent studies and self-designed majors than students at other universities. In courses that reach a large number of students (such as a research methods or theory and practice course) faculty should facilitate some self-taught learning so that students can gain this ability and potentially use it to engage in independent studies and self-designed majors. Dispersal of information (e.g. seminars, workshops, presentations) regarding independent studies and majors may also be beneficial avenue.

Shippensburg has observed a decrease in the number of projects that require students to work with others. Therefore, faculty should integrate more group based projects into their courses, this will allow students to work together toward a common goal and learn how to work effectively with others. Facilitating class discussion will also help students to get to know one another and portray their own views on class related materials. This in turn may encourage students to work in synchrony on projects, homework, studying for exams, etc.

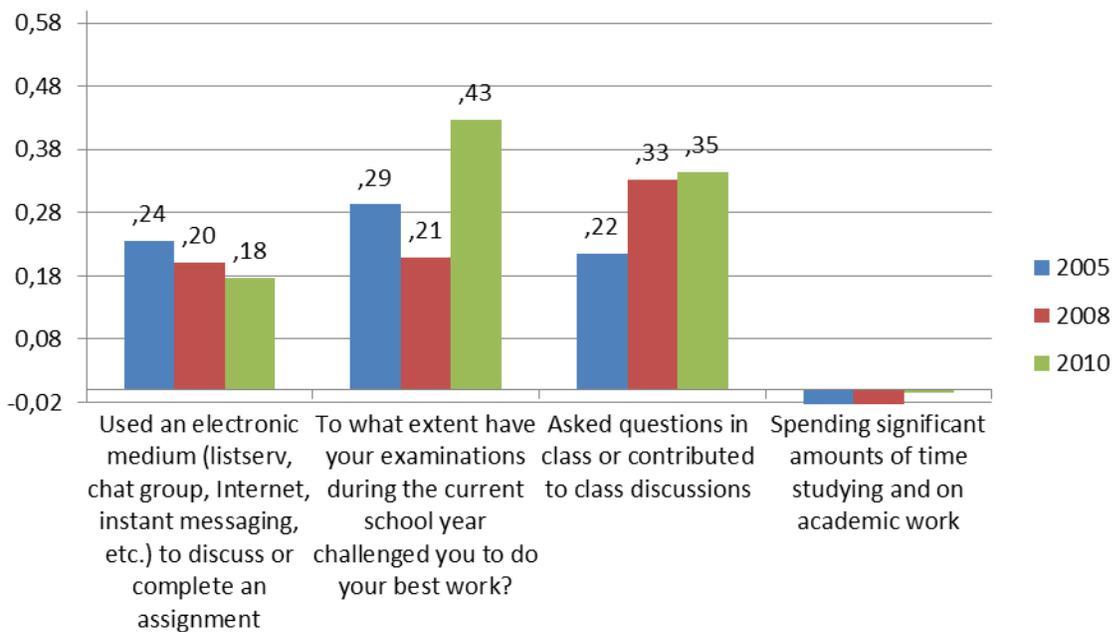
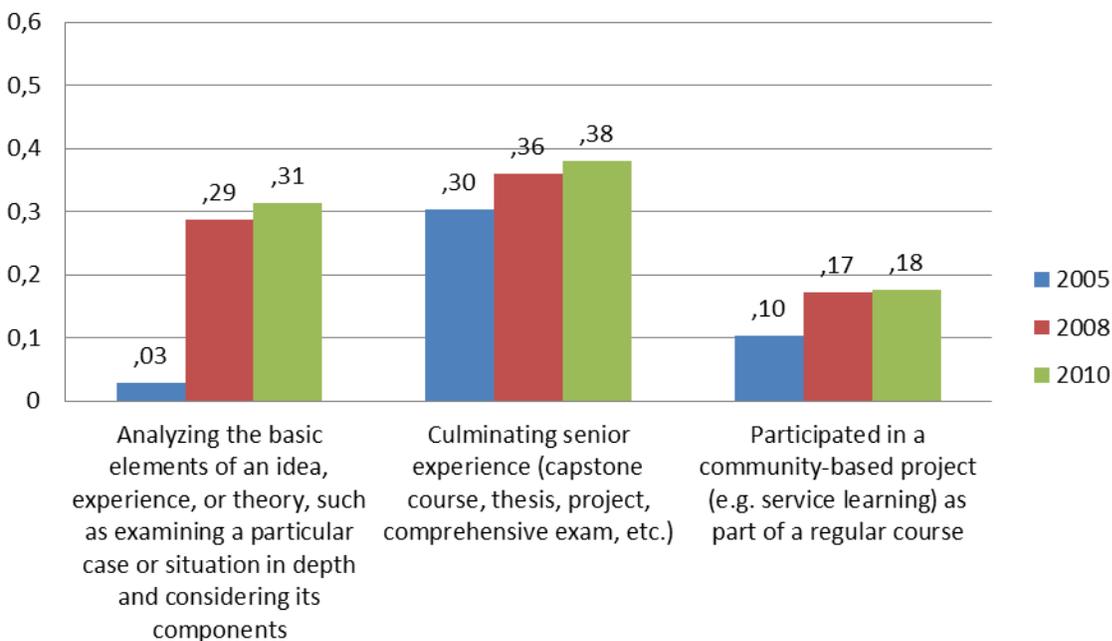
The number of complex real-world problems that are solved by students at Shippensburg University has varied within the last seven to eight years. This pattern can be made more

consistent by having faculty examine real-world problems within the classroom. Any jobs that can be obtained with a degree in the specified field can be used as an example such that students will get an understanding of what kinds of problems they may face when they achieve employment within their field of study.

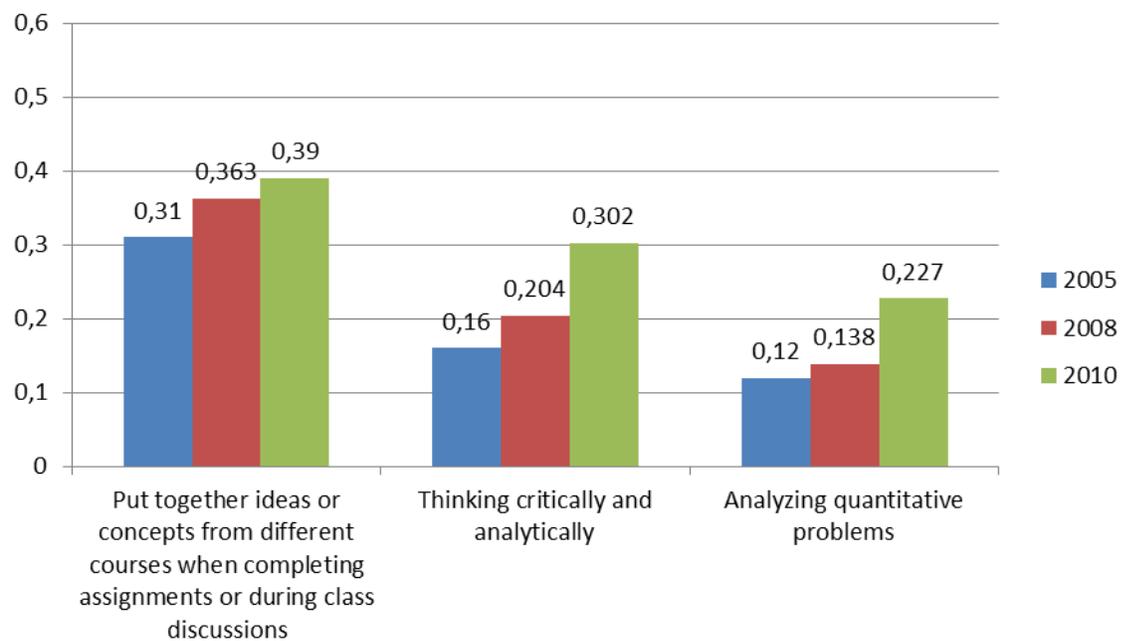
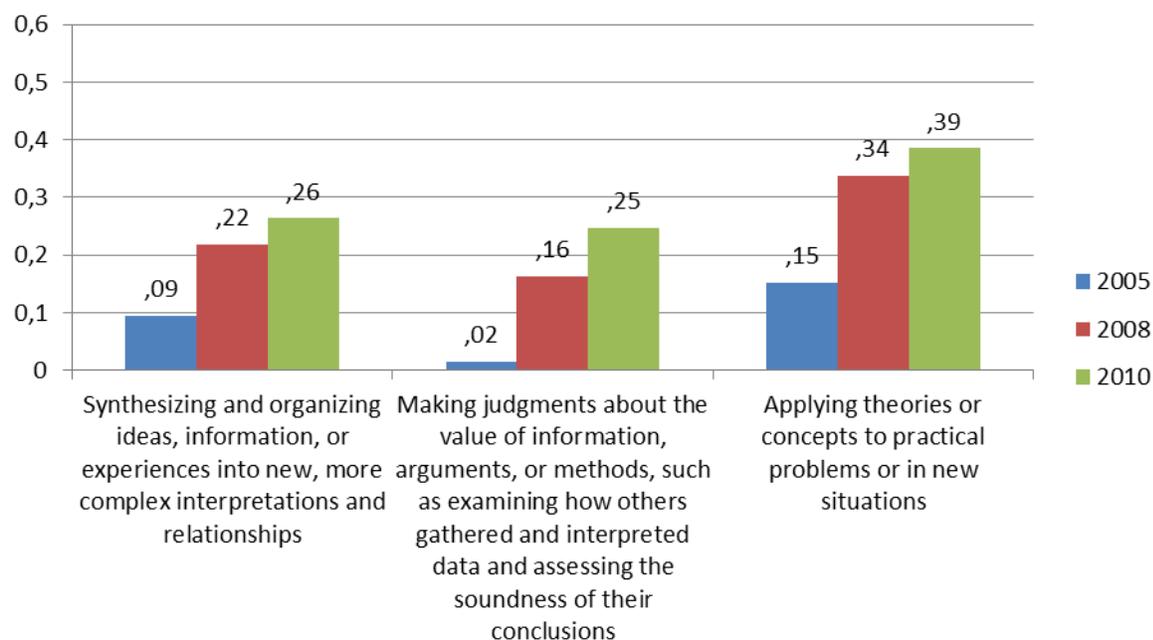
## Appendix A: Graphs for Within Shippensburg (2005-2010)

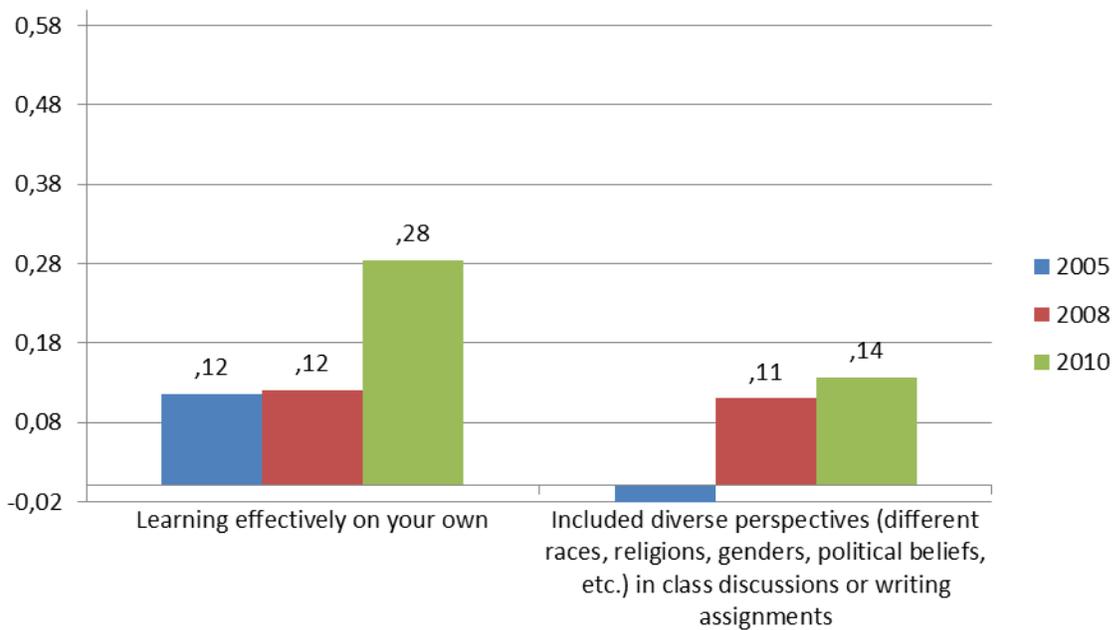
### Increasing Trends

#### *Courses and coursework*

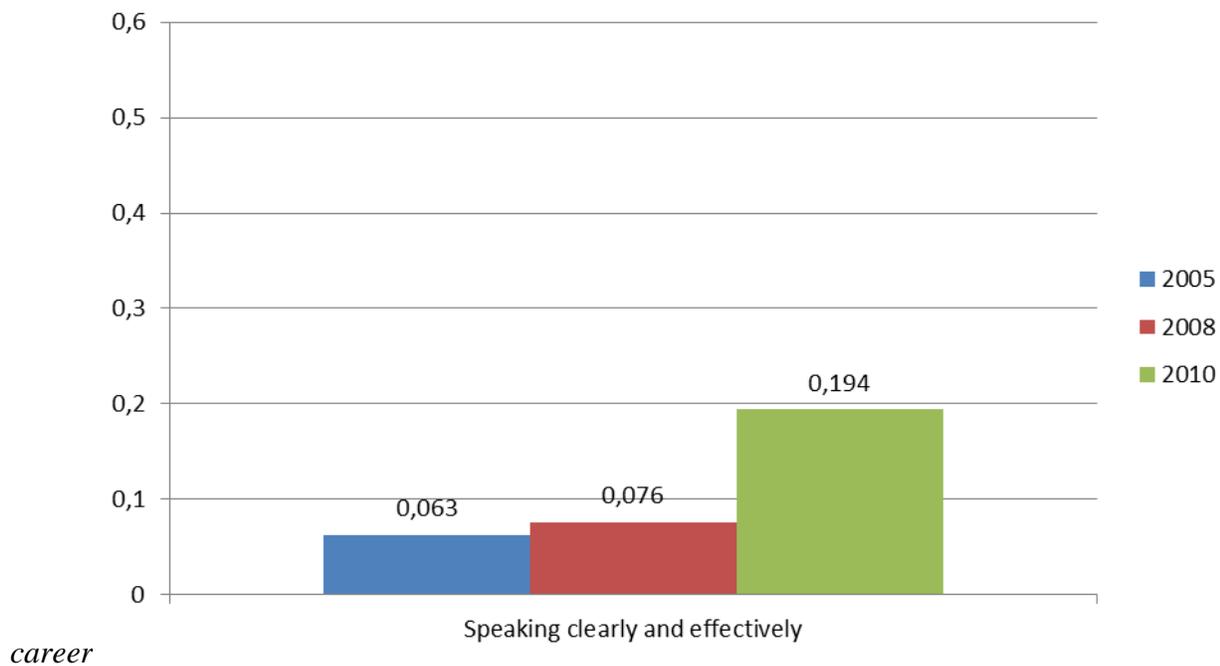


*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*

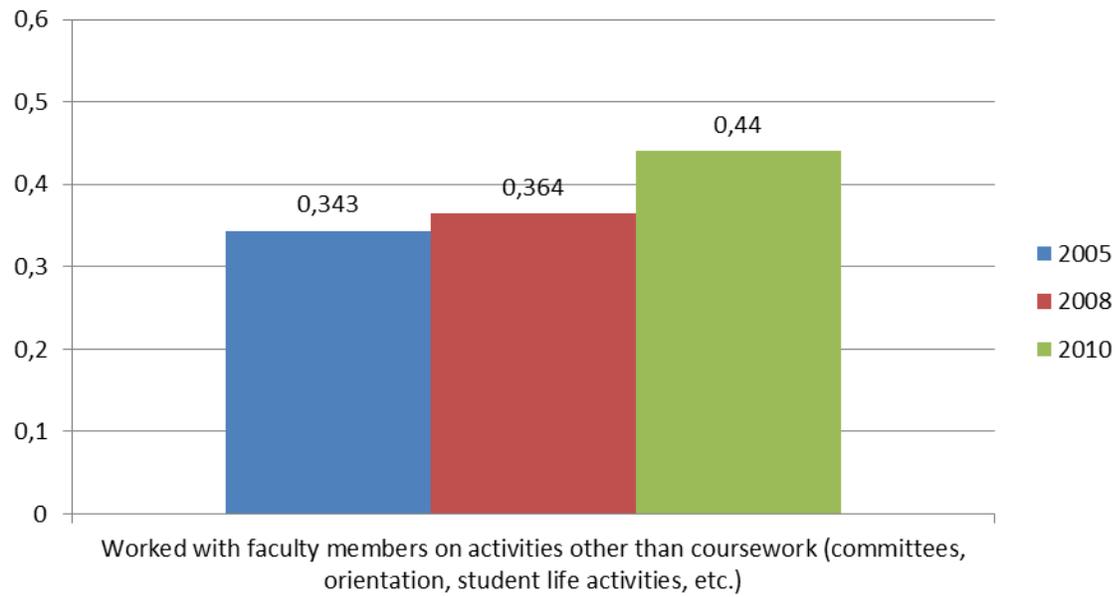




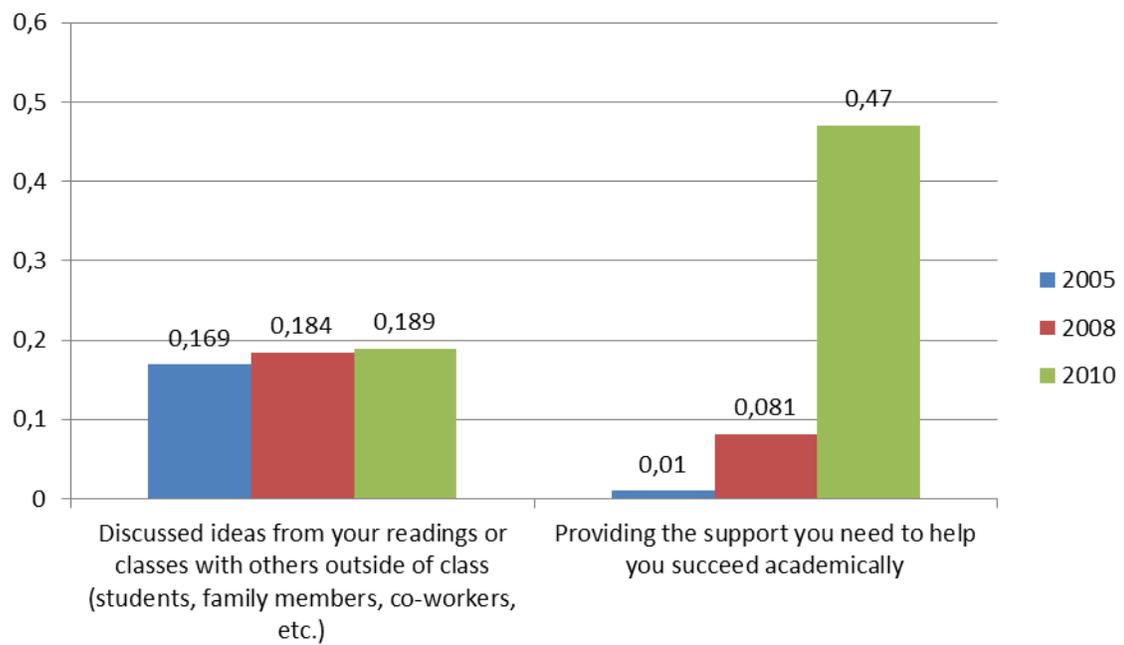
*Course work related to academics or future*



*Extracurricular work related to academics or career*



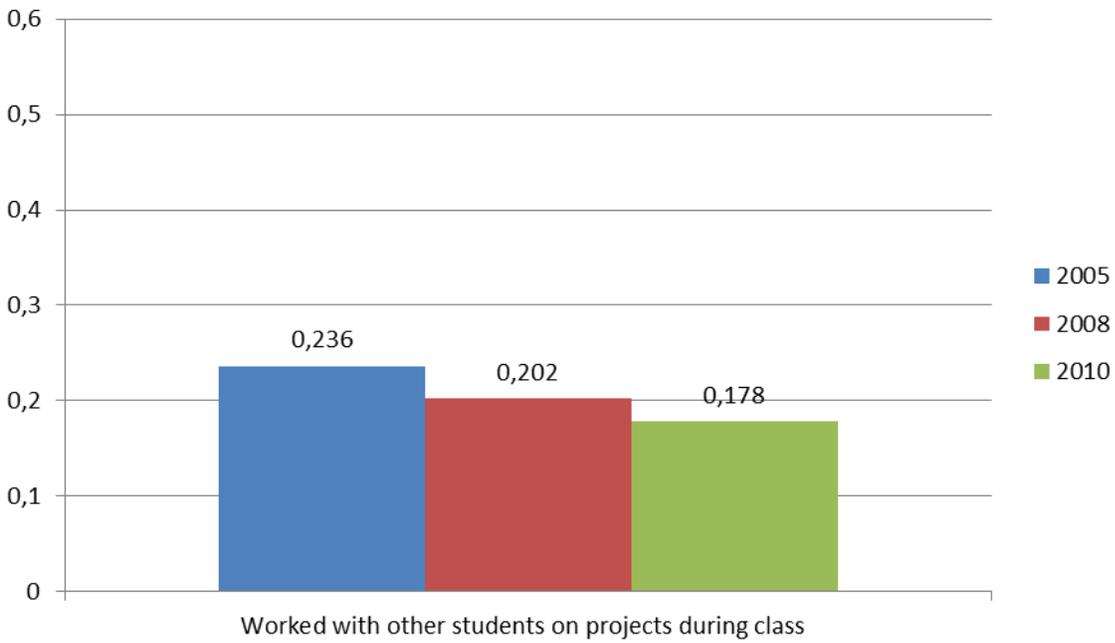
*Communicated about academics outside of*



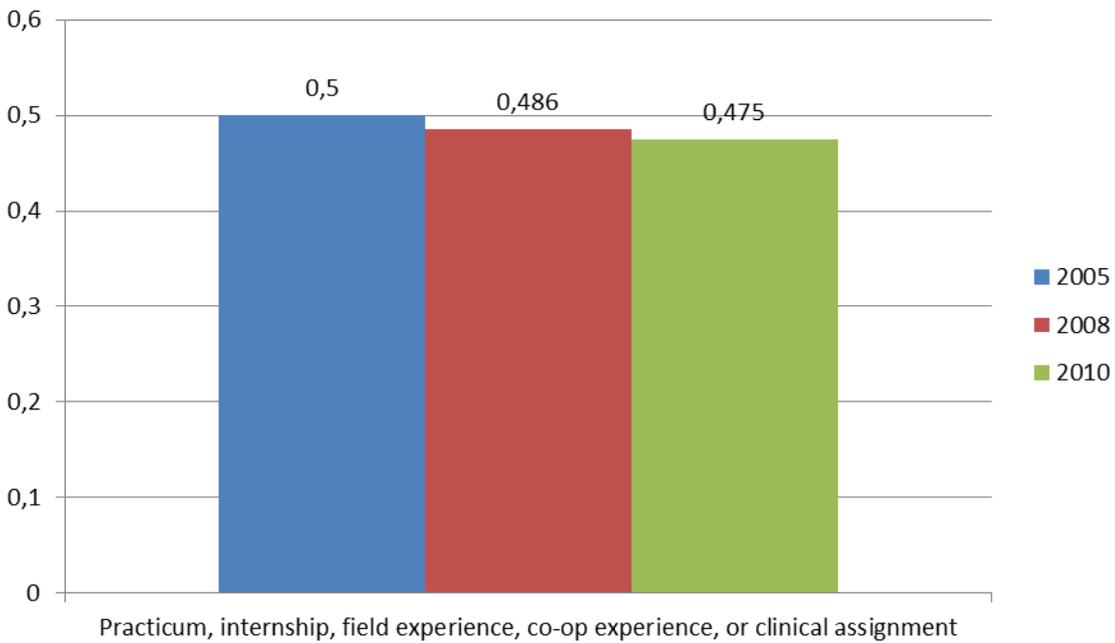
*class*

## Decreasing Trends

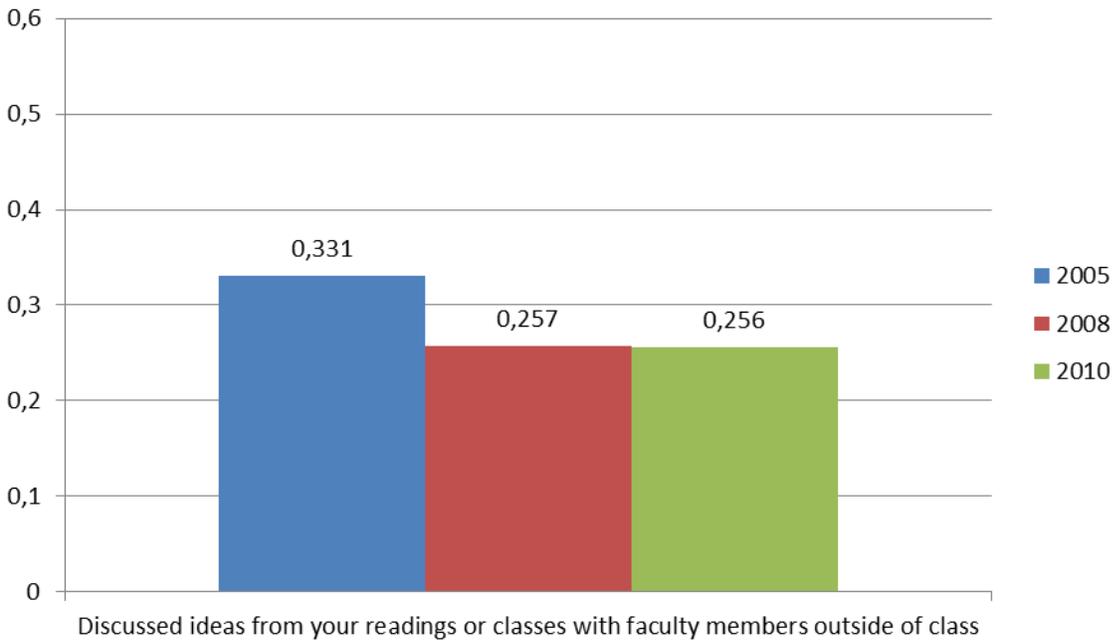
### *Courses and coursework*



### *Coursework related to academics or future career*

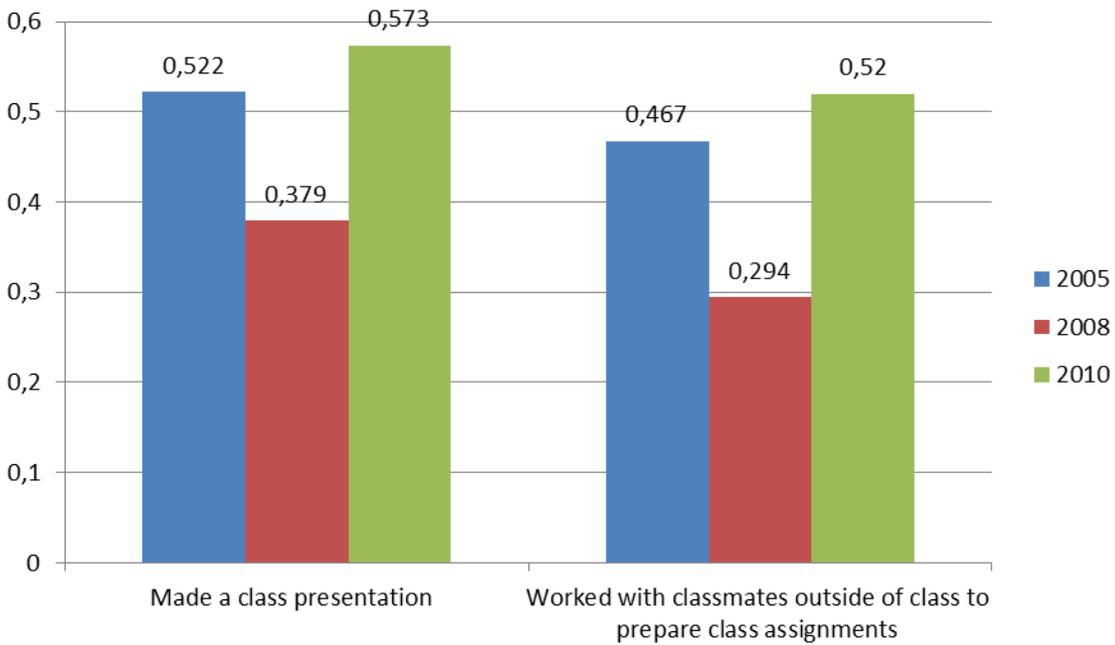


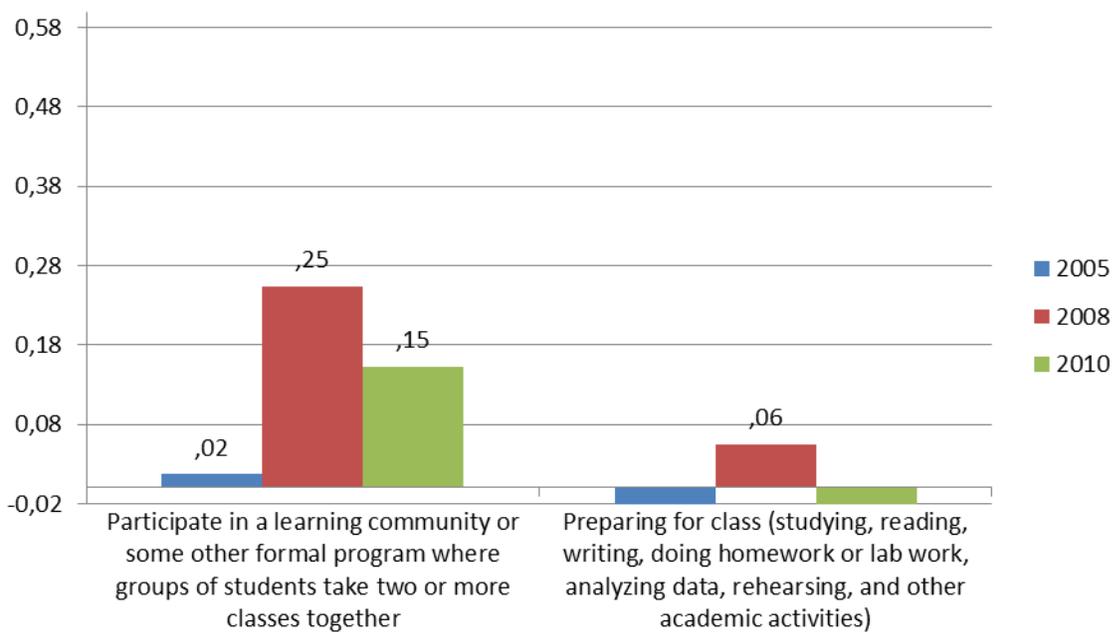
*Communicated about academics outside of class*



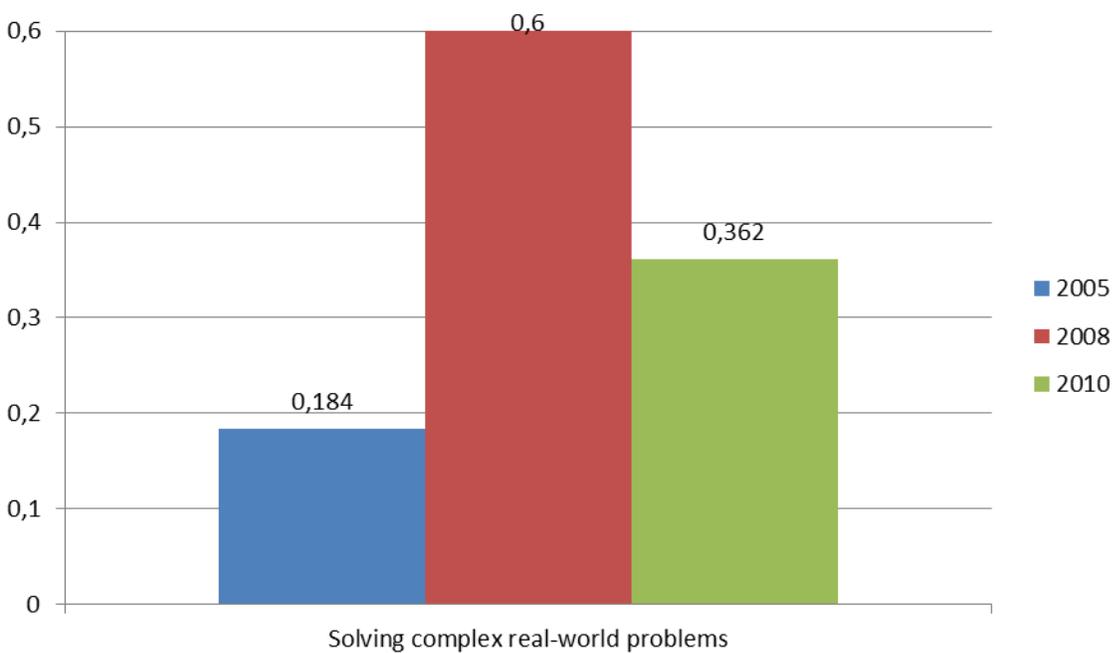
**Fluctuating Trends**

*Courses and coursework*

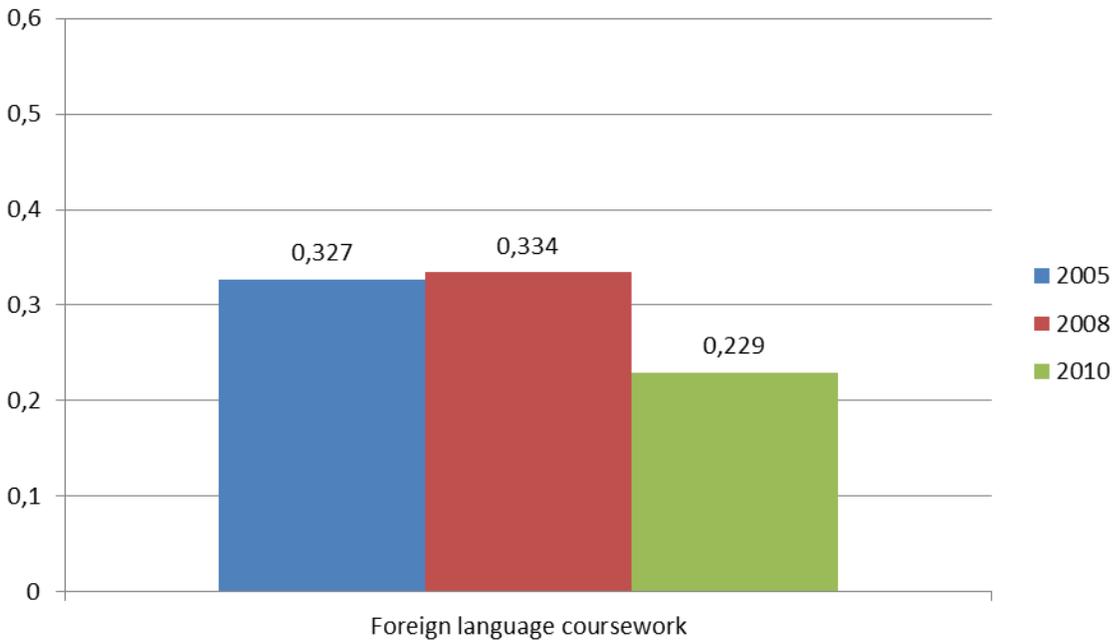




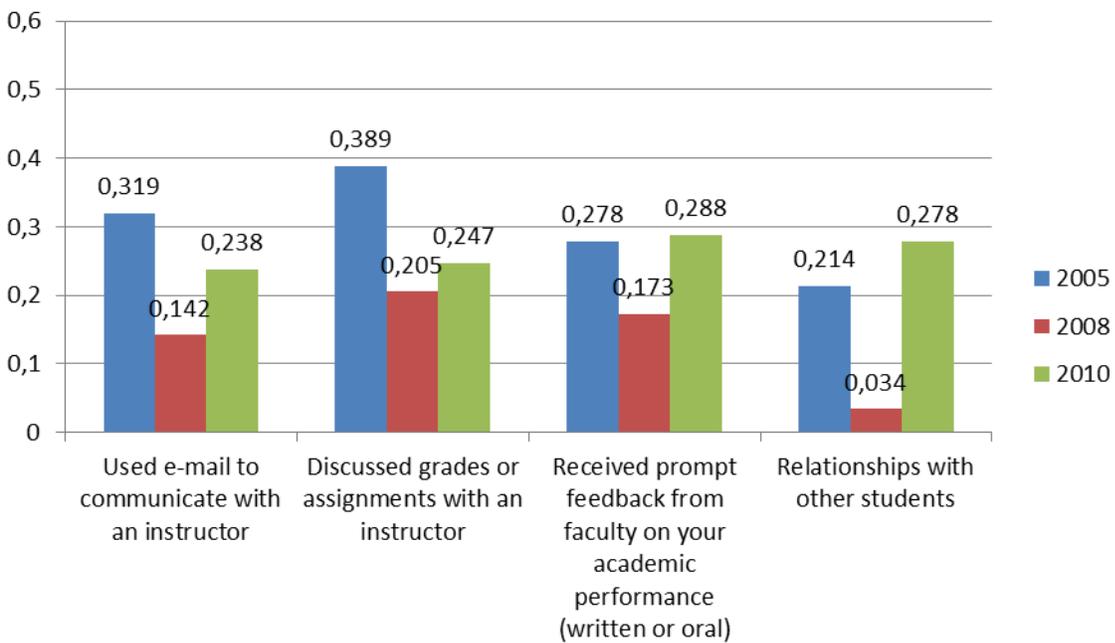
*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*



*Coursework related to academics or future career*

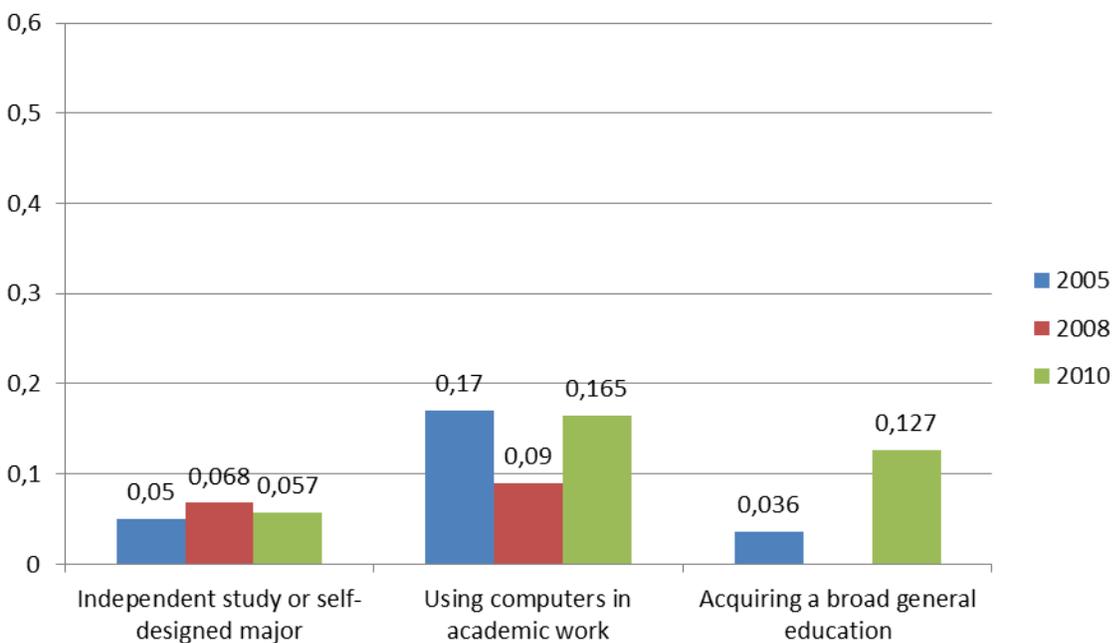
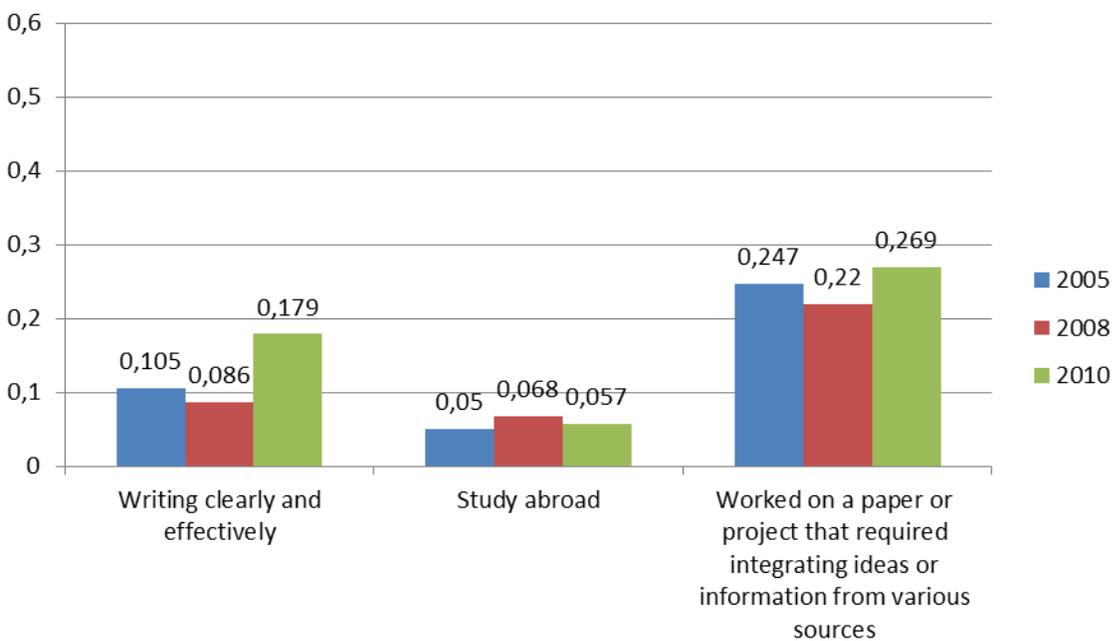


*Communicated about academics outside of class*

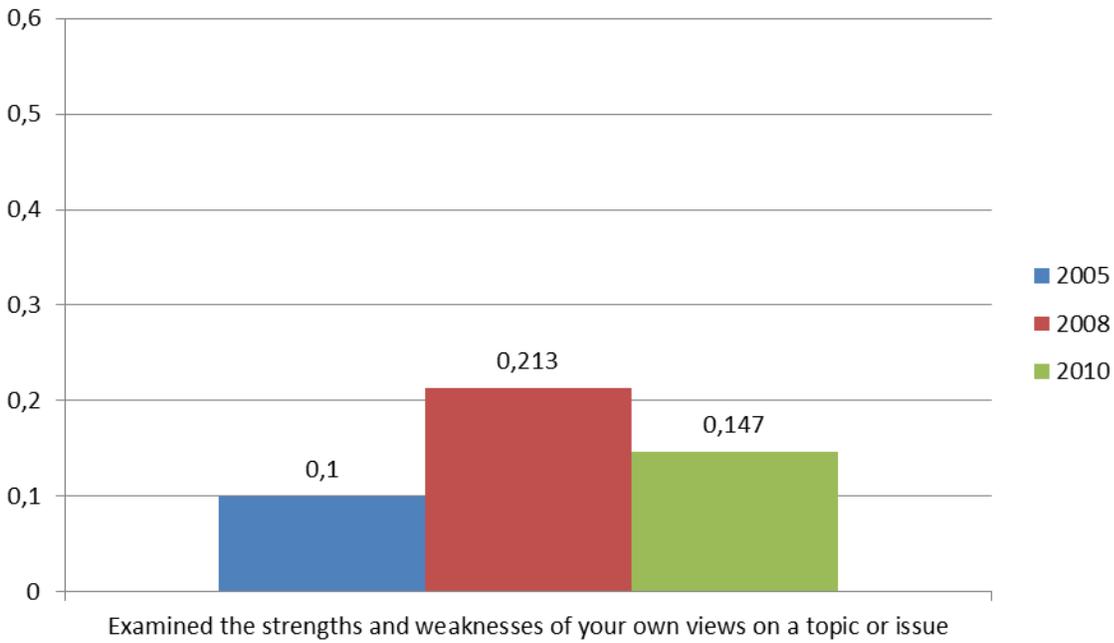


## No Changes or Minimal Detected

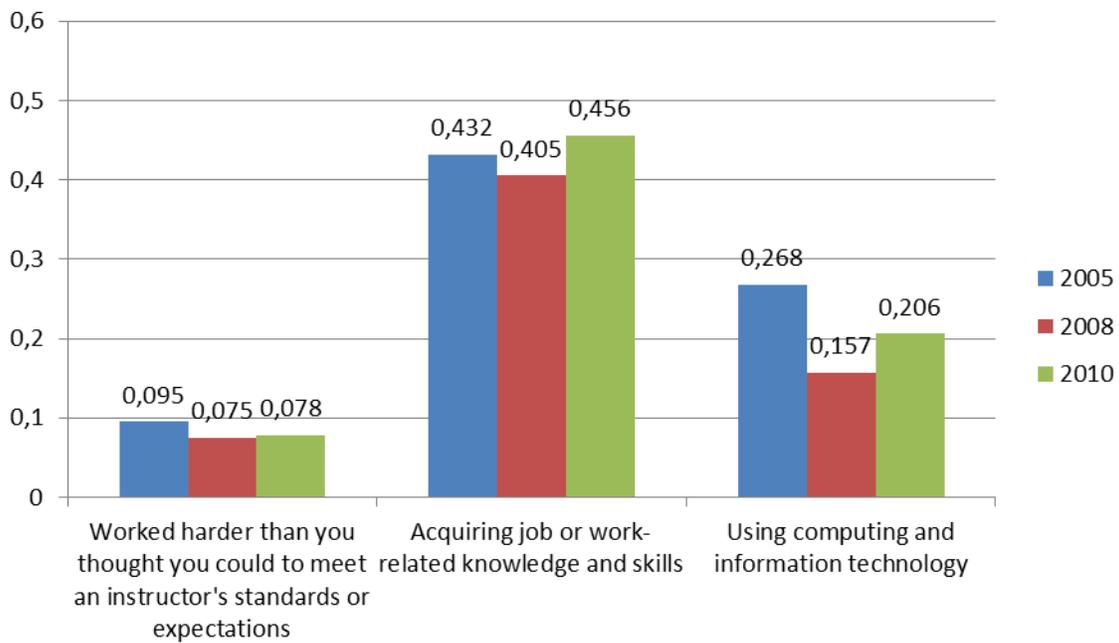
### *Courses and Coursework*



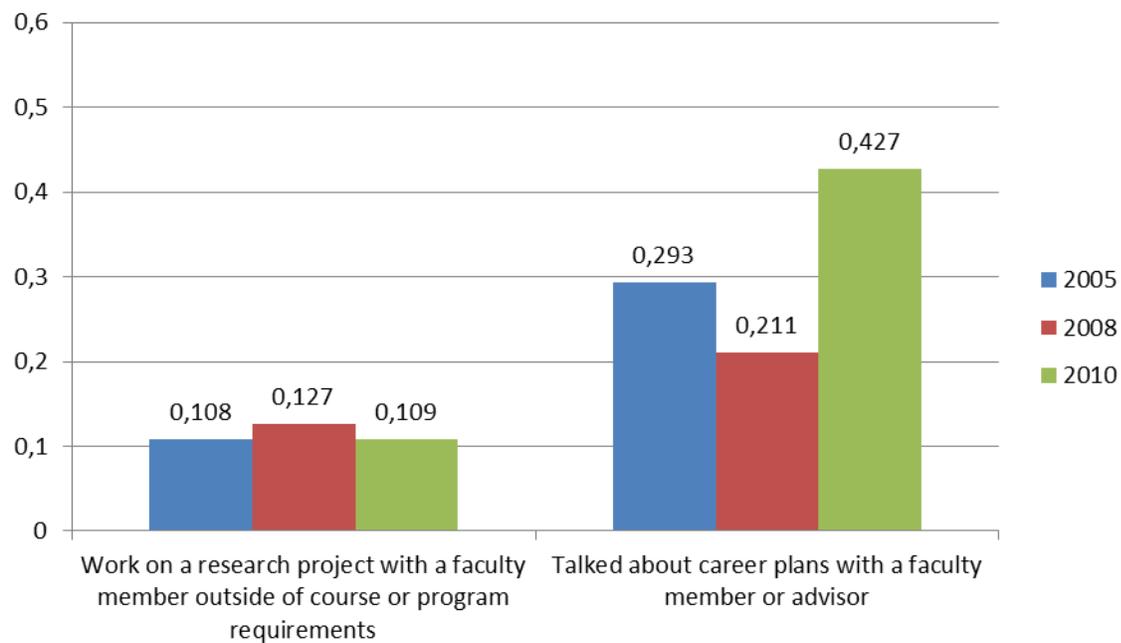
*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*



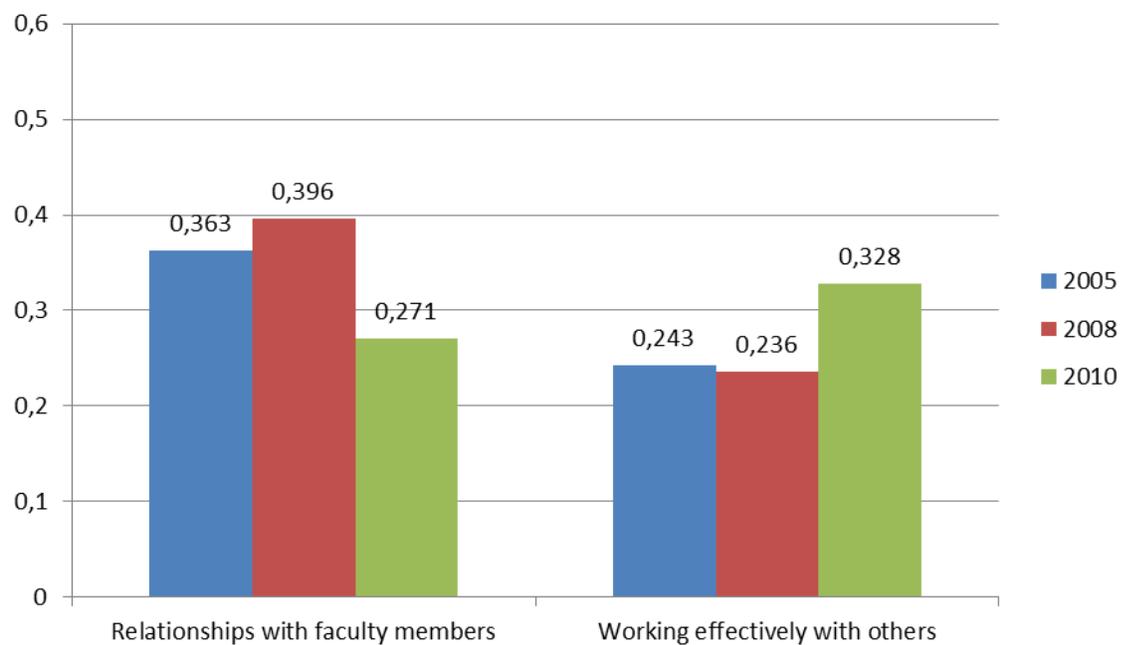
*Course work related to academics or future career*

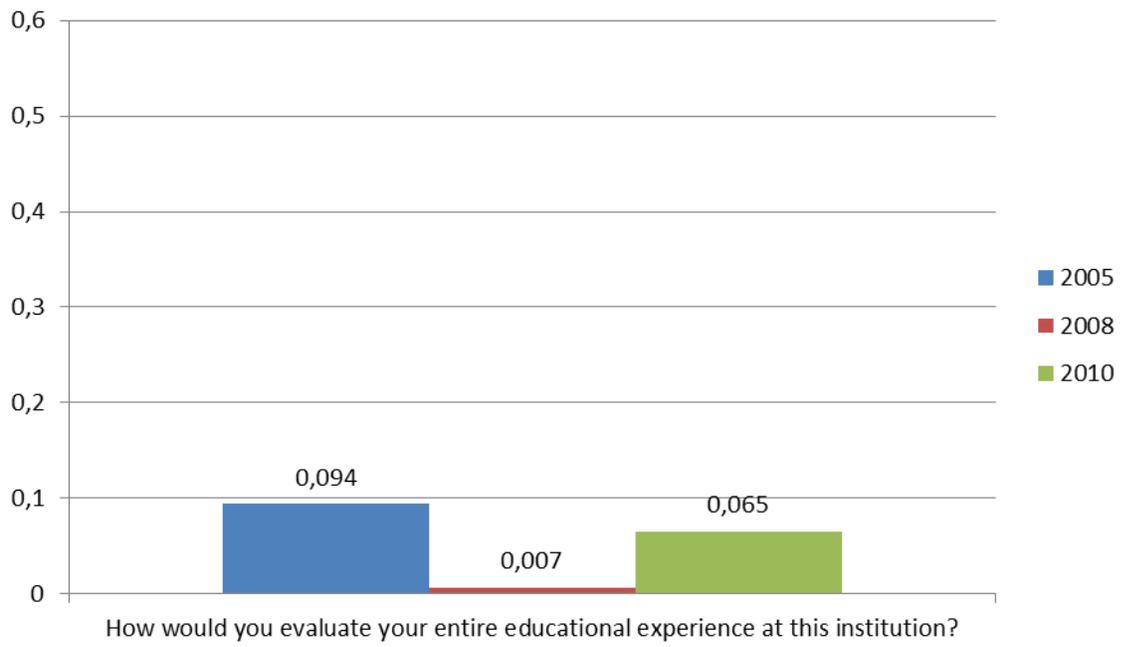


*Extracurricular work related to academics or career development*



*Communicated about academics outside of class*

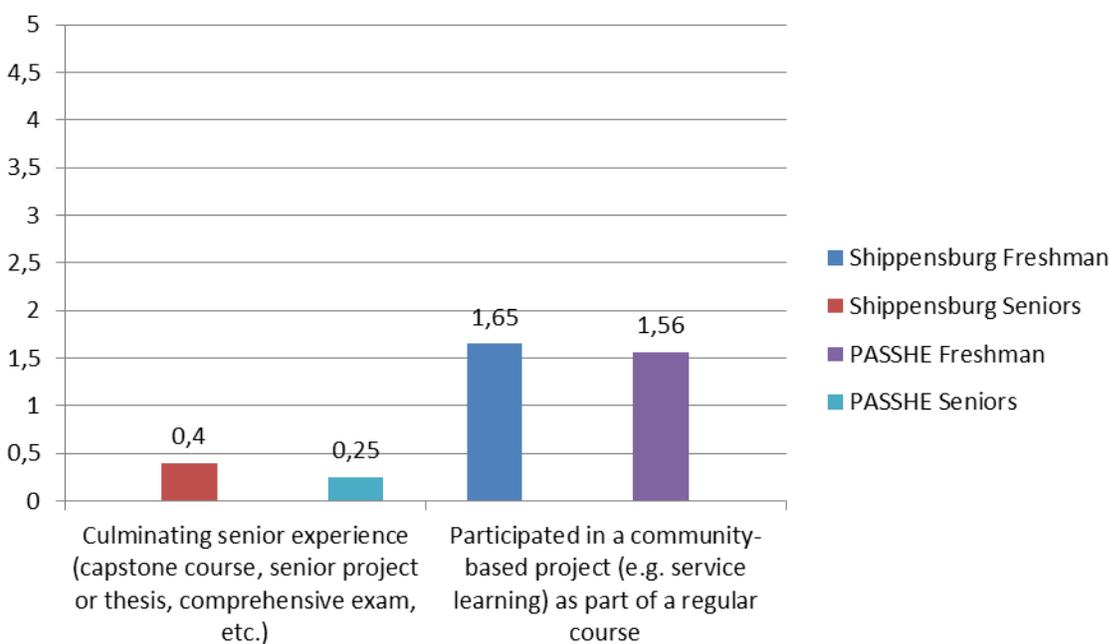
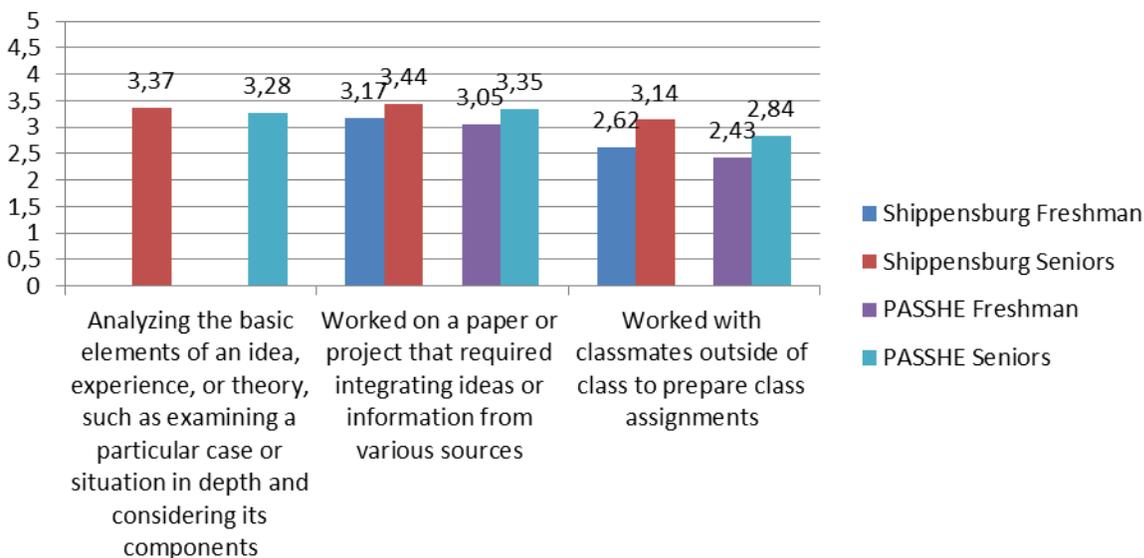


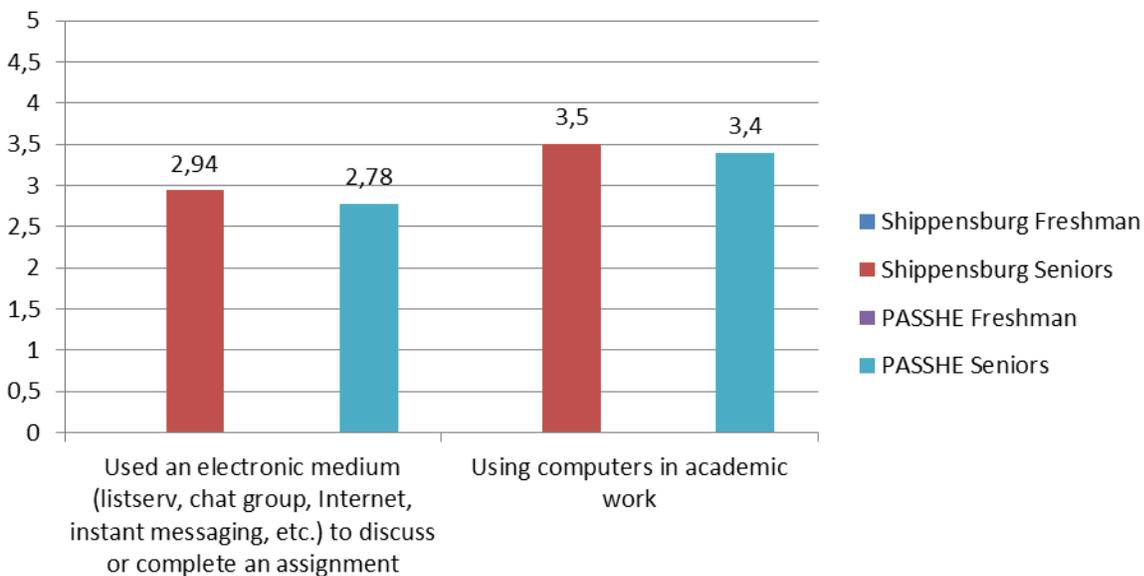
*Satisfaction*

## Appendix B: Comparison with Other PASSHE Members (All reported findings were statistically significant)

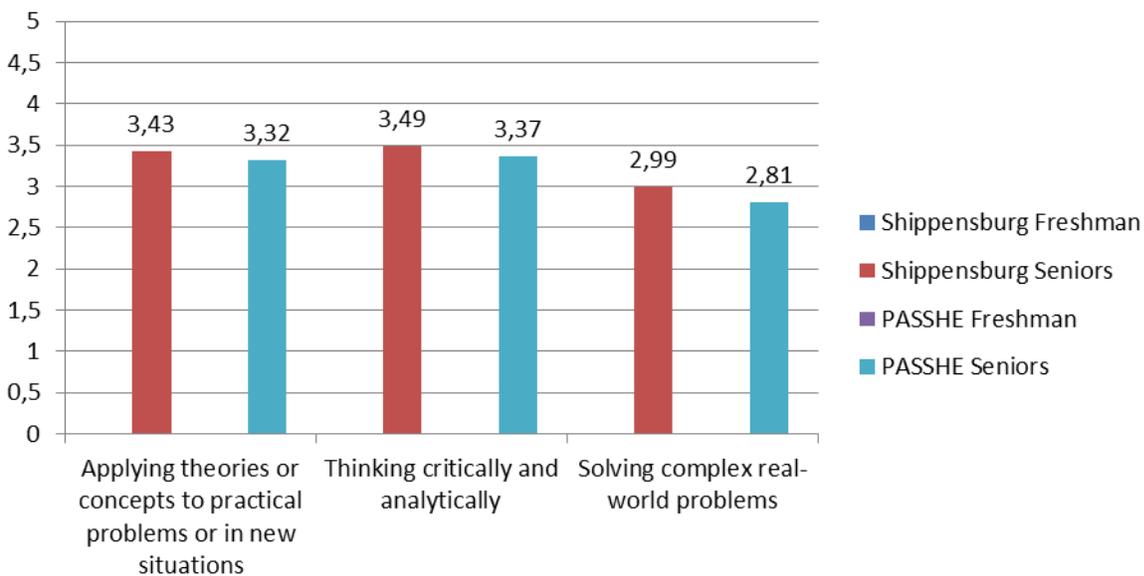
### *Items that Shippensburg scored lower on than other PASSHE institutions*

#### *Courses and coursework*

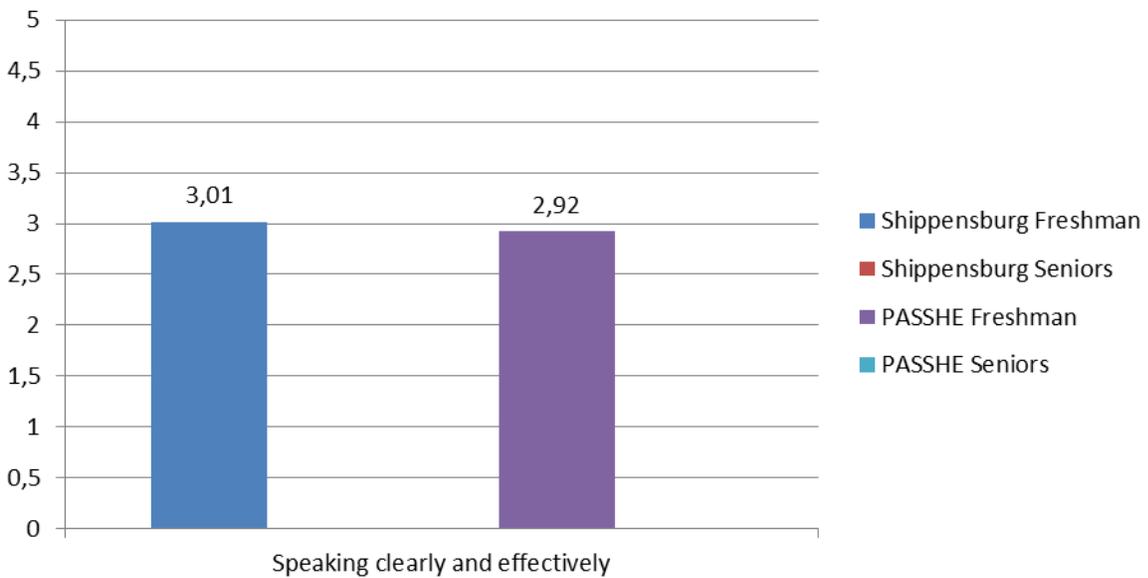




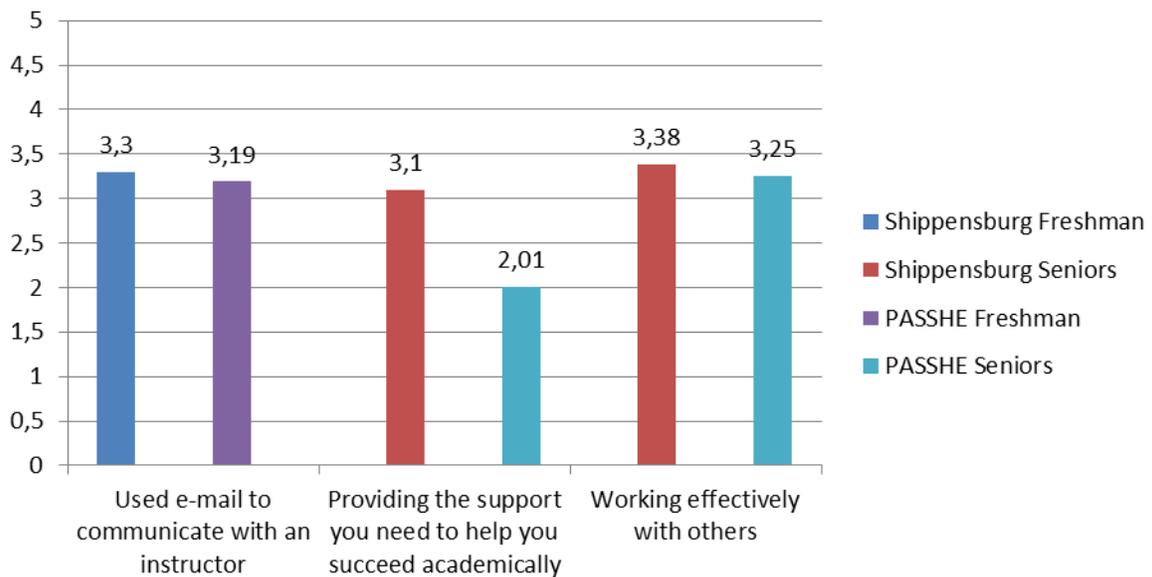
*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*



*Course work related to academics or future career*

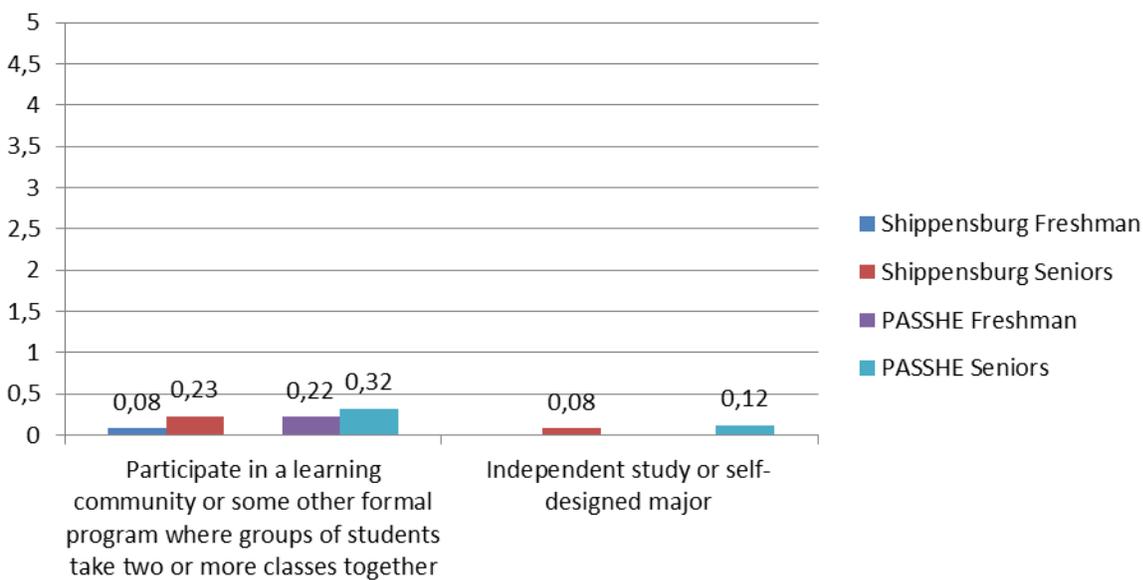


*Communicated about academics outside of class*

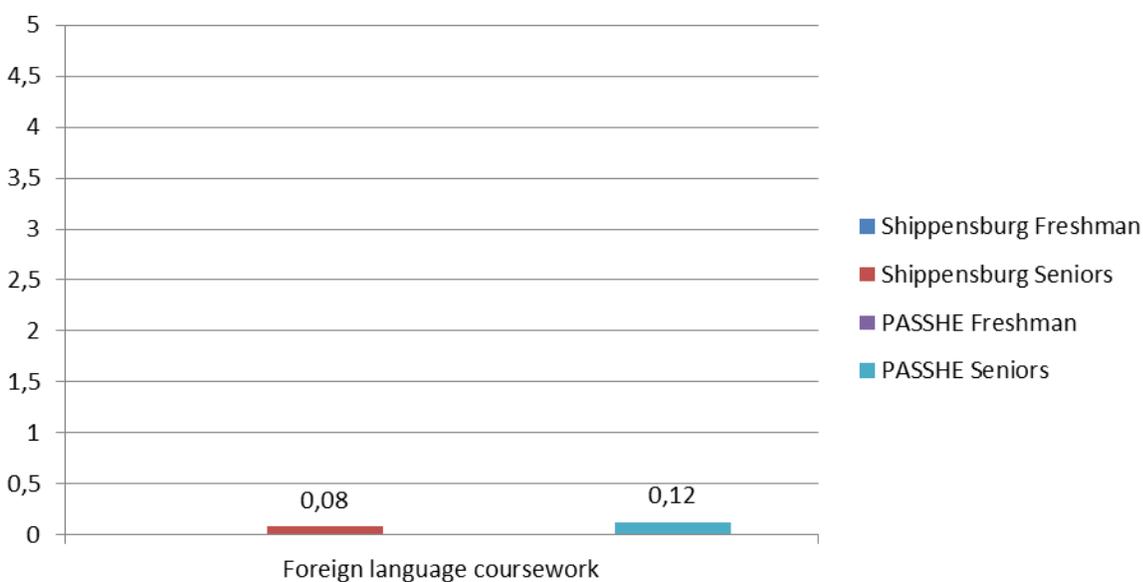


*Items that Shippensburg scored lower on than other PASSHE institutions*

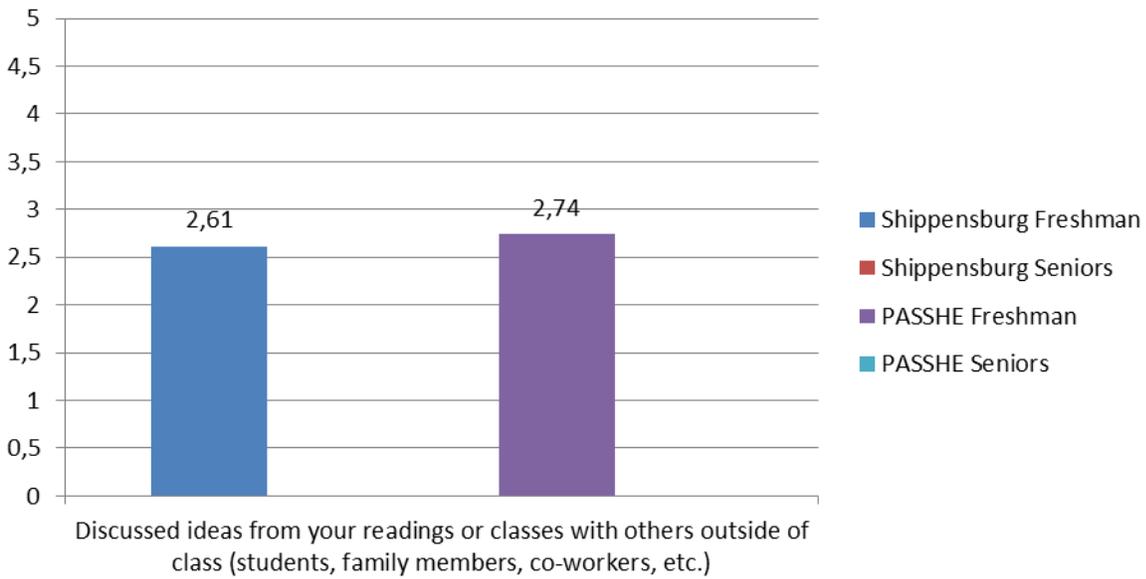
*Courses and coursework*



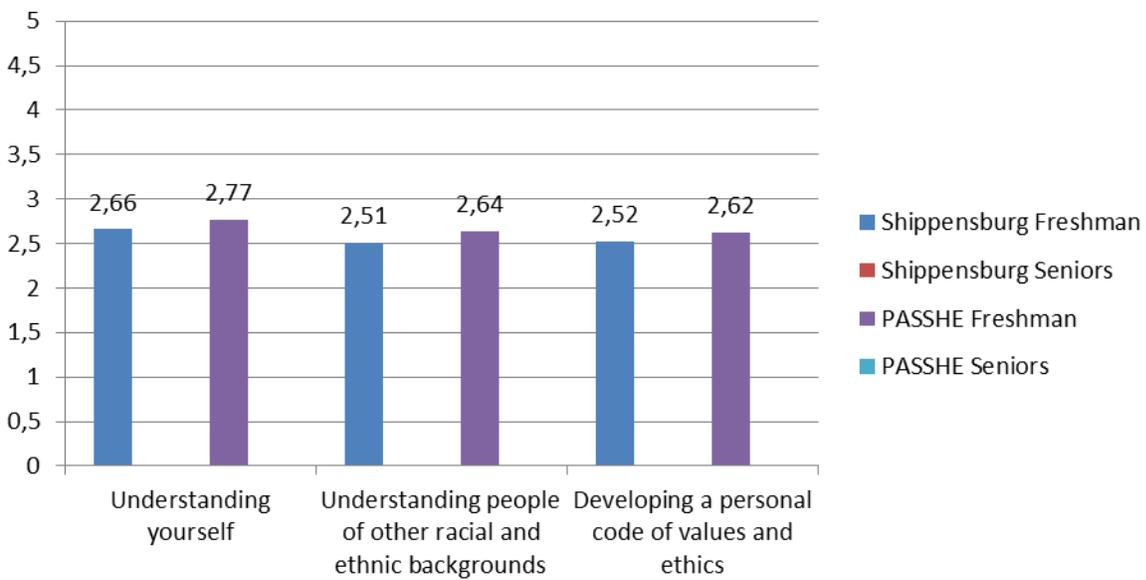
*Coursework related to academics or future career*



*Communicated about academics outside of class*



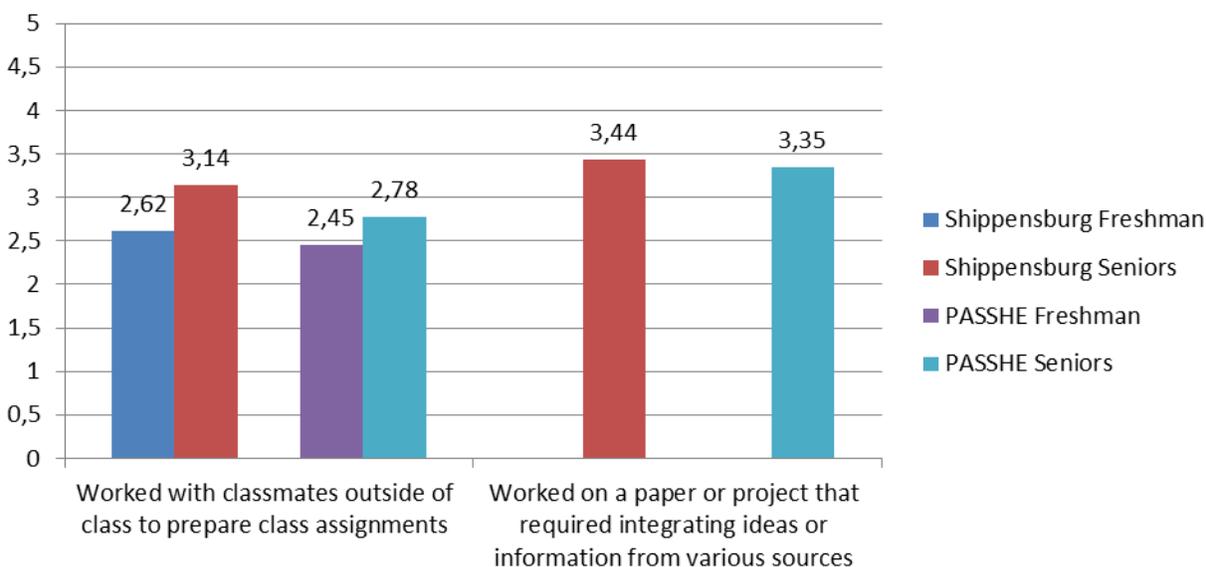
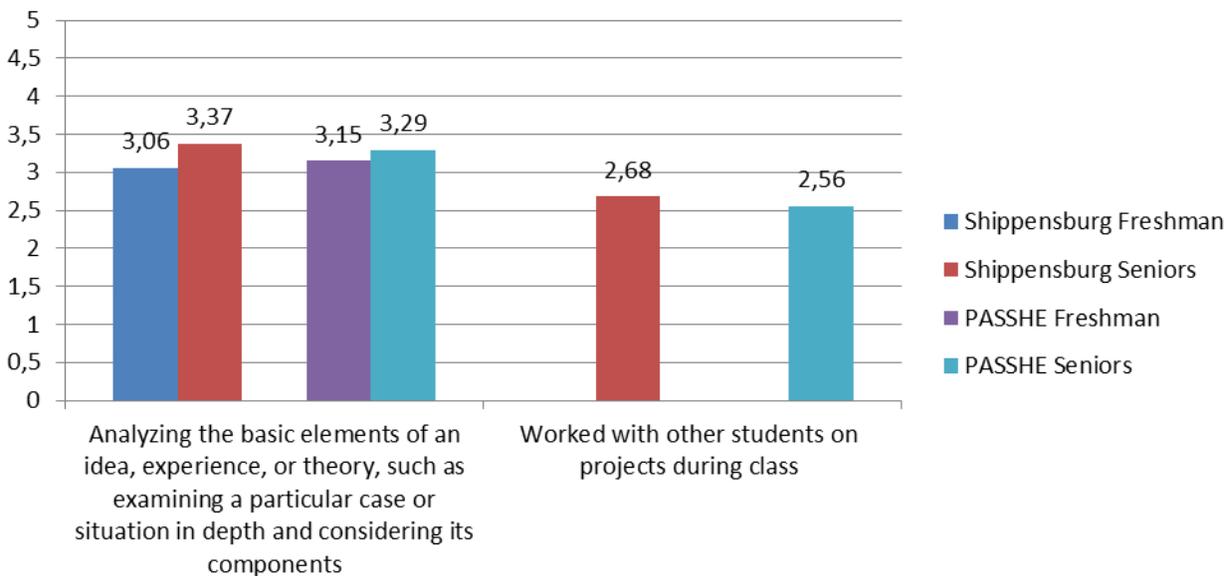
*Spirituality and wellness*



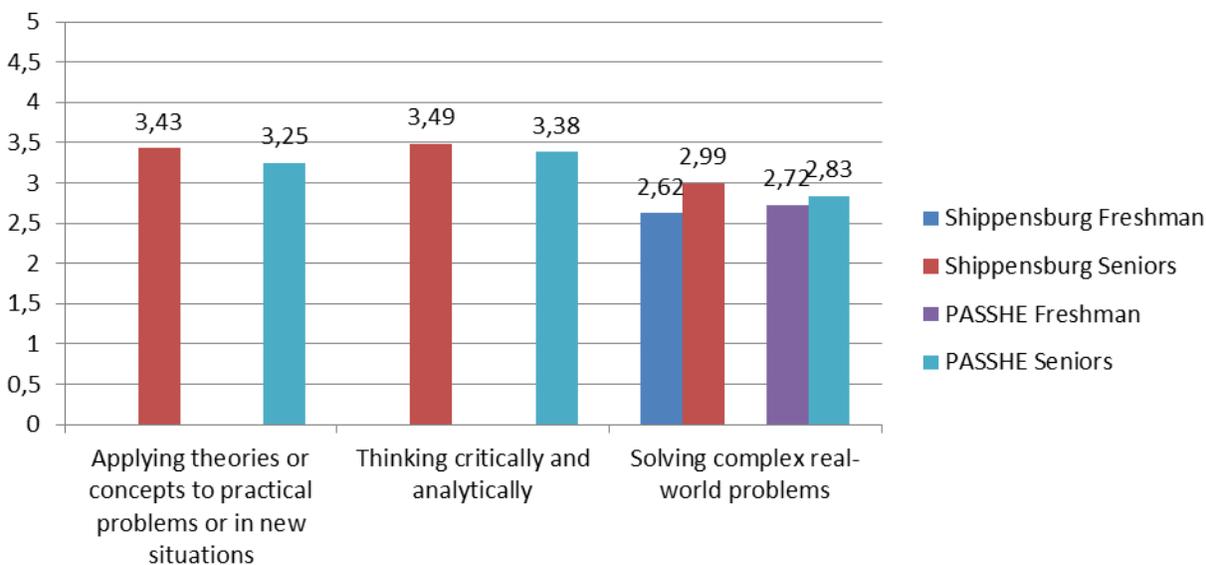
**Appendix C: Other Institutions Assessed by NSSE (All reported findings were statistically significant)**

*Items that Shippensburg has scored higher on than NSSE institutions*

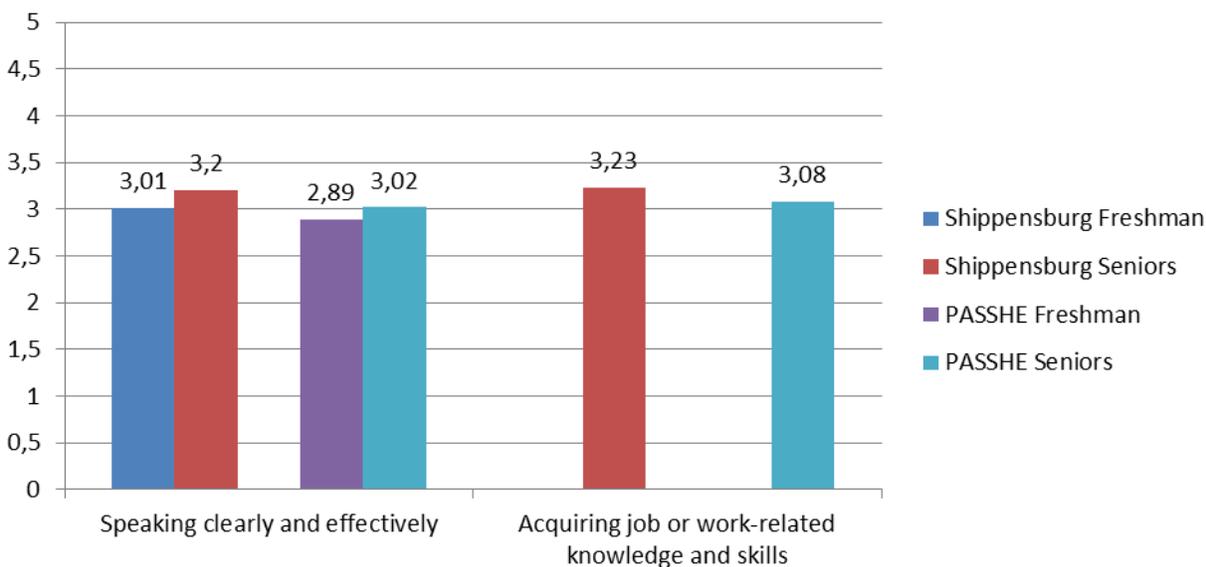
*Courses and coursework*



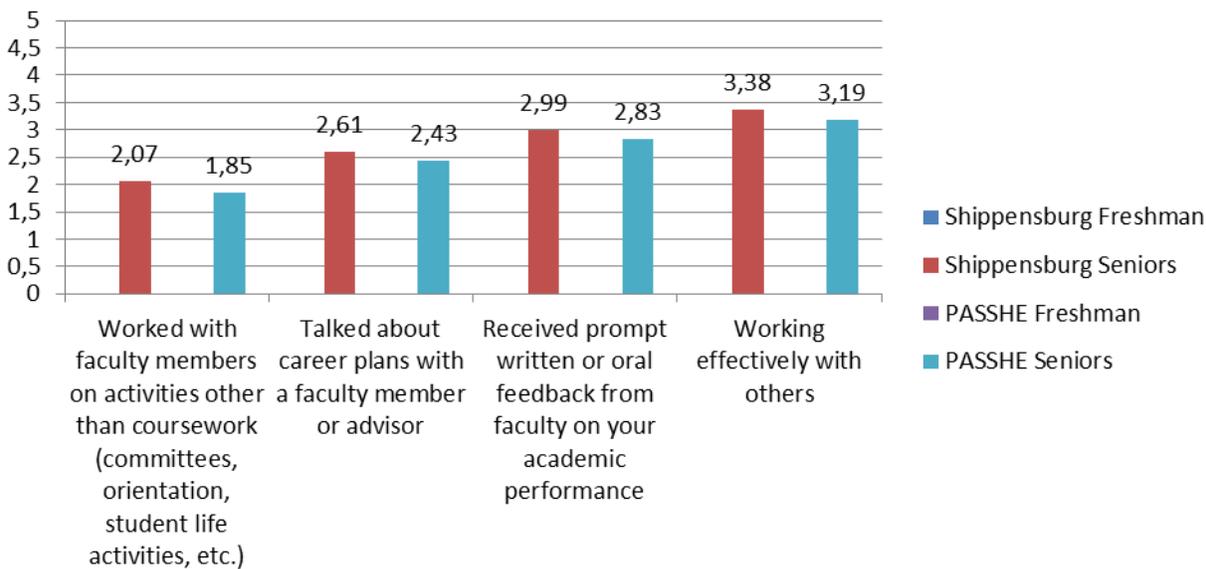
*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*



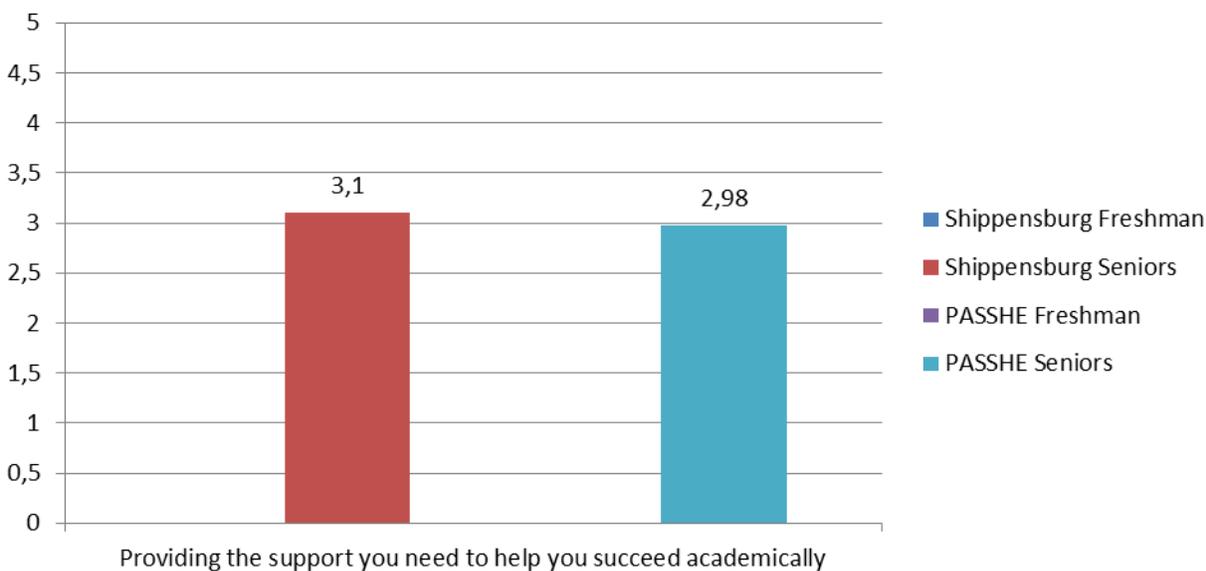
*Course work related to academics or future career*



*Extracurricular work related to academics or career development*

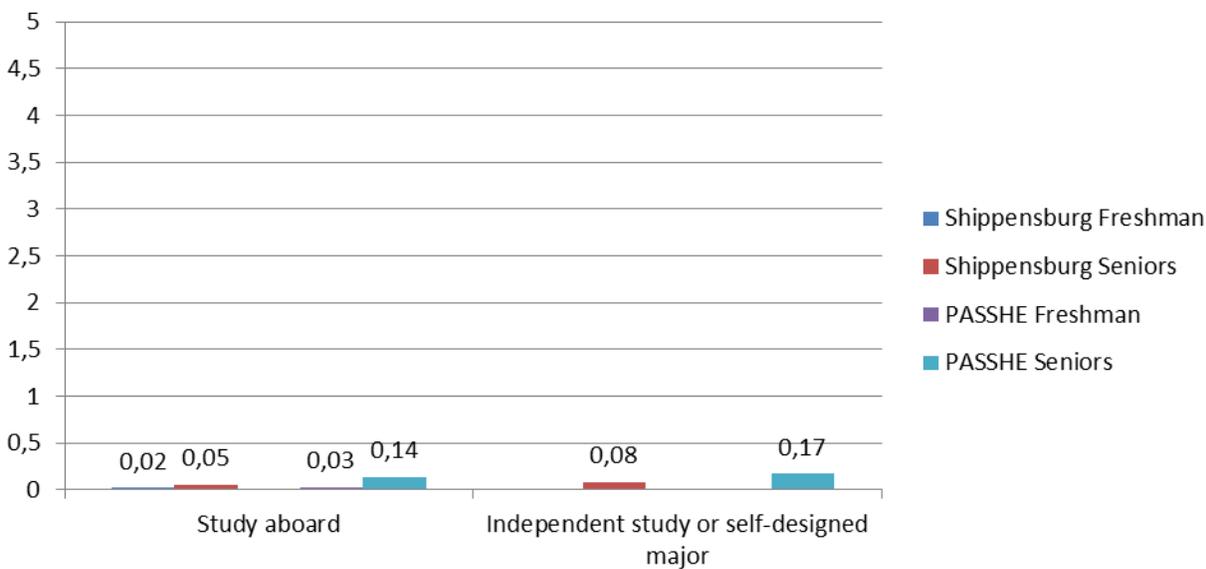
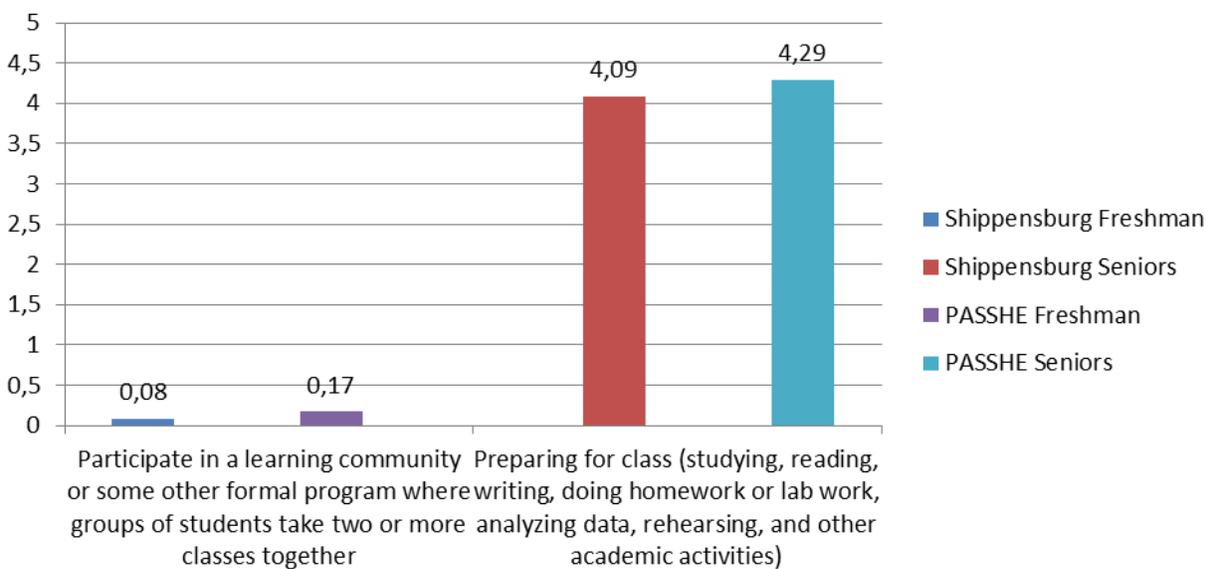


*Communicated about academics outside of class*

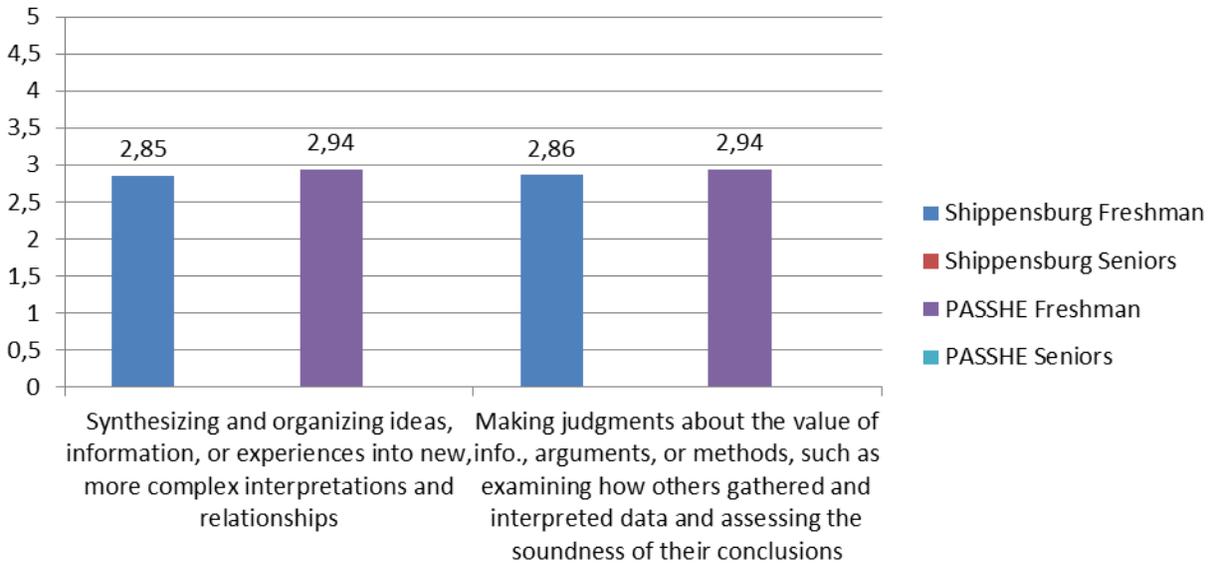


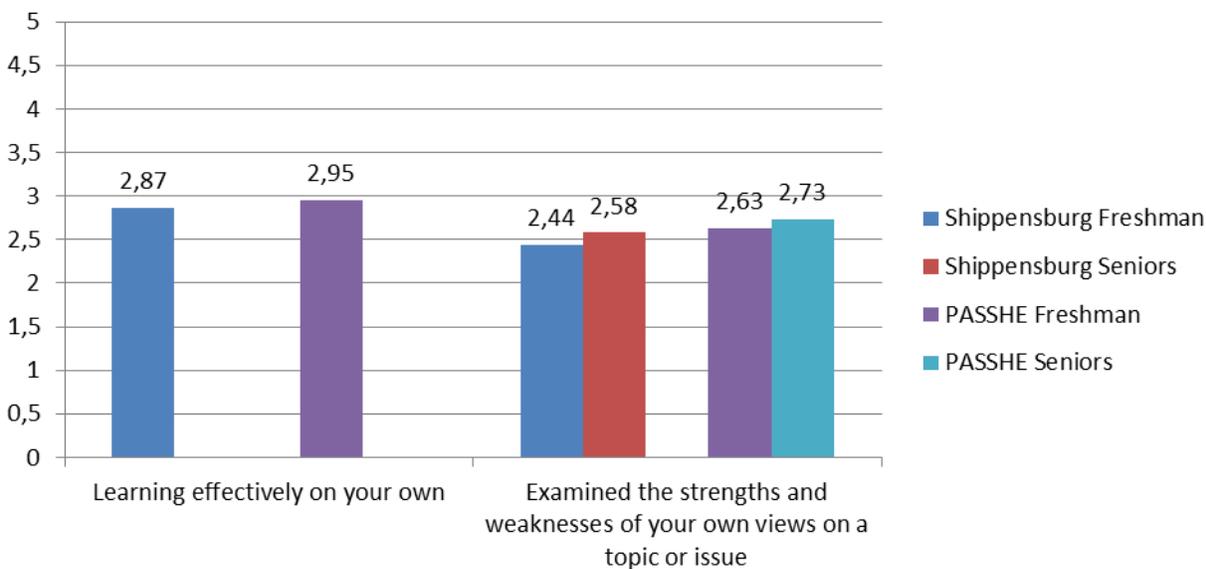
*Items that Shippensburg has scored lower on than NSSE institutions*

*Courses and coursework*

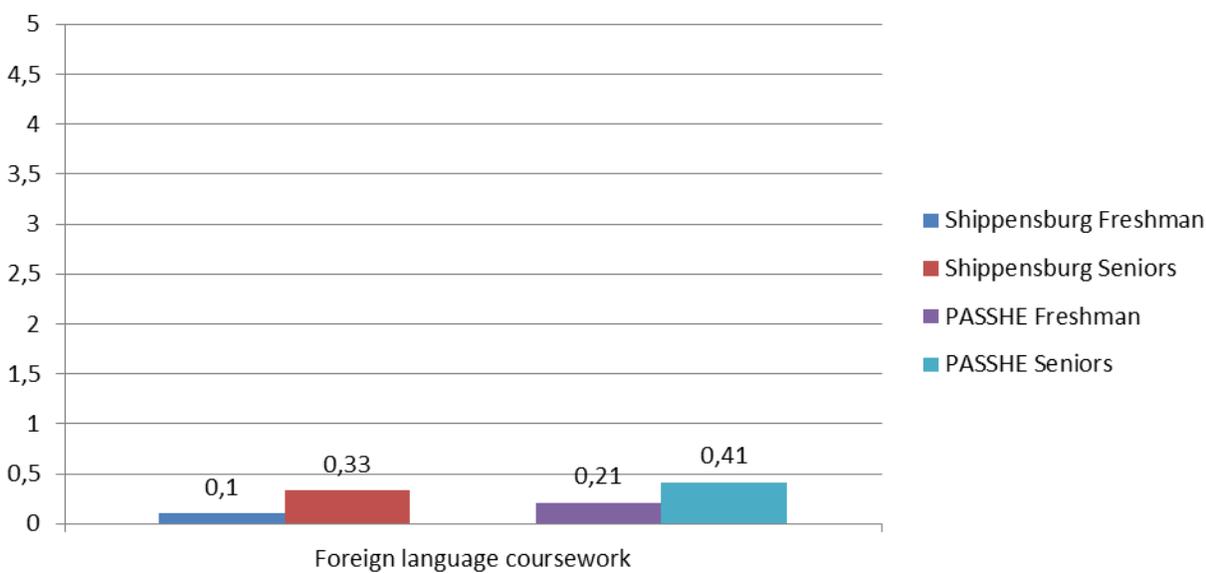


*Think beyond classroom materials and/or synthesize information from other classes*





*Coursework related to academics or future career*



*Communicated about academics outside of  
class*

