



Using the BCSSE to Explore Engagement Expectations in Newly Admitted Students Attending a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Commuter-Campus, along the US-Mexico Border

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BACKGROUND

SDSU-Imperial Valley (SDSU-IV) has existed in the rural, southeastern border region of Imperial County for 60 years. The campus began as a teaching university and has since expanded to meet the professional growth demands of the community through the addition of 9 bachelor degrees, a number of specialized teaching credentials, and 2 masters programs. As a 100% commuter campus and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), SDSU-IV has developed a quasi-cohort learning model that is aligned to the educational needs of both traditional and non-traditional students. At present, the campus continues to address the community growth by reestablishing the full-time freshman program and exploring the possibility of adding new undergraduate majors.

This project is a continuation of the full-scale evaluation of our current student population as outlined by the CSU Chancellor's Office-Graduation Initiative 2025. The analysis from the 2018-2019 data champion's team established baseline data for the Imperial Valley campus that centered on the following 2025 initiative goals:

- Increase the four-year and six-year graduation rate for first-time freshman (FTF)
- Increase the two-year and four-year graduation rate for transfer students
- Eliminate the achievement and equity gap for low-income and underrepresented students

Based on the data, the team determined that further assessment was needed and that analysis should focus on newly admitted SDSU-IV students for the Fall 2019 academic year. This included both freshmen and transfer students. The specific variables of interest were identified as: Student academic engagement, student perseverance and college expectations. The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) was identified by the CSU Chancellor's Office as the best instrument to measure these variables. SDSU-IV received funding for the survey and decided to offer it to all newly admitted students during the Fall 2019 new student orientation.

Survey Administration: Center for Postsecondary Research at the Indiana University School of Education, in cooperation with the Indiana University Center for Survey Research

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the findings from the 2019 BCSSE Survey?
2. What are the 2019 FTF cohort's characteristics, background and perceived engagement using BCSSE survey?
3. What factors determine or have a high positive correlation for student engagement?
4. How does SDSU-IV differ from other universities? (ex. Rural location, unemployment rate, 100% commuter population, about 98% latinx/hispanic student population)
5. What sets us apart?

METHODS

Sample/Population: Undergraduate students admitted Fall 2019

Freshmen: First Time Freshmen & Imperial Valley University Partnership
Transfer Students

Instrument: Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)

Survey Focus:

- 1) The time and effort entering, first-year students devoted to educationally purposeful activities in high school and expect to devote during their first year of college, and
- 2) what these entering first-year students expect SDSU-IV to provide them regarding opportunities and emphasis.

BCSSE Scales:

Expected Student-Faculty Interaction
Expected Academic Difficulty
Importance of Campus Environment

Analysis of Data: Confirmatory factor Analysis (CFA), a multivariate statistical procedure will be used to assess the fit between observed data and a prior conceptualized, theoretically grounded model that specifies the hypothesized causal relations between the latent factors and their observed indicators. **Descriptive statistics** will show the central tendency and variability of the data.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Information about SDSU-IV new students from the BCSSE Survey

Label and Values	Man	Woman	Another gender identity	I prefer not to respond			
What is your gender identity?	83	210	0	0			
	A	B	C	Below C			
What are your expected grades during the coming year? (Select only one)	142	144	3	0			
	None	1	2	3	4 or more		
How many of your close friends will attend this institution during the coming year?	83	41	55	35	78		
	First choice	Second choice	Third choice or lower				
The institution was your:	245	38	9				
	Did not finish high school	High school diploma or GED	College degree	Master's degree or higher			
Regarding your parents (or those who raised you), what is the highest level of education completed by either of them?	89	118	68	16			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Middle Eastern or North African	White	Another race or ethnicity
How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply.)	2	4	1	276	1	30	2

Figure 1: Boxplots of BCSSE Scales

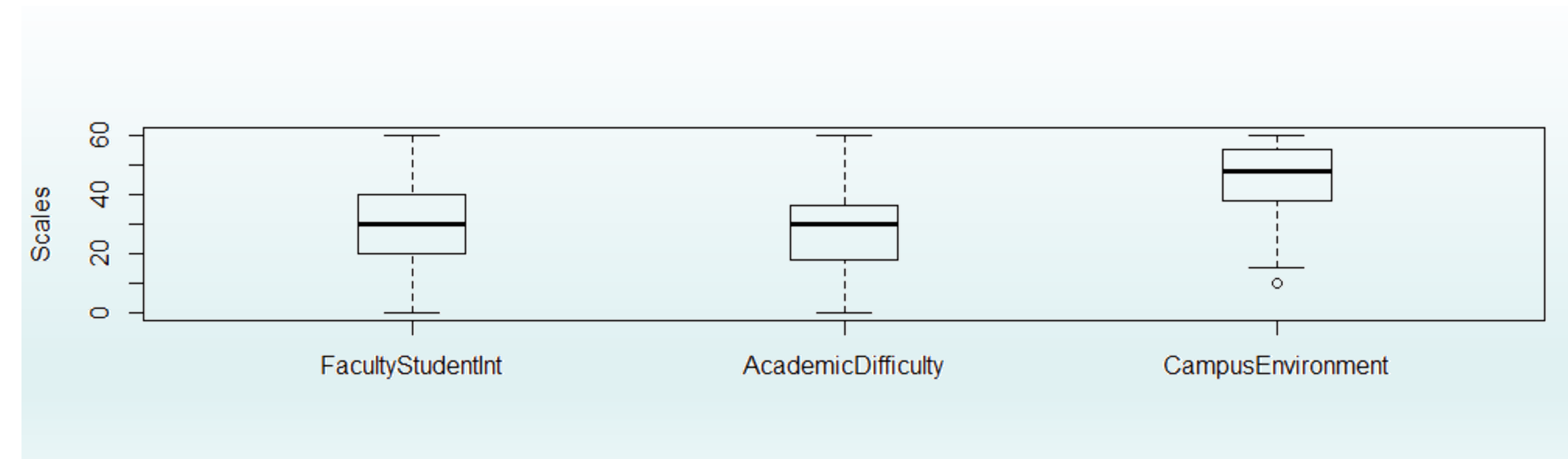
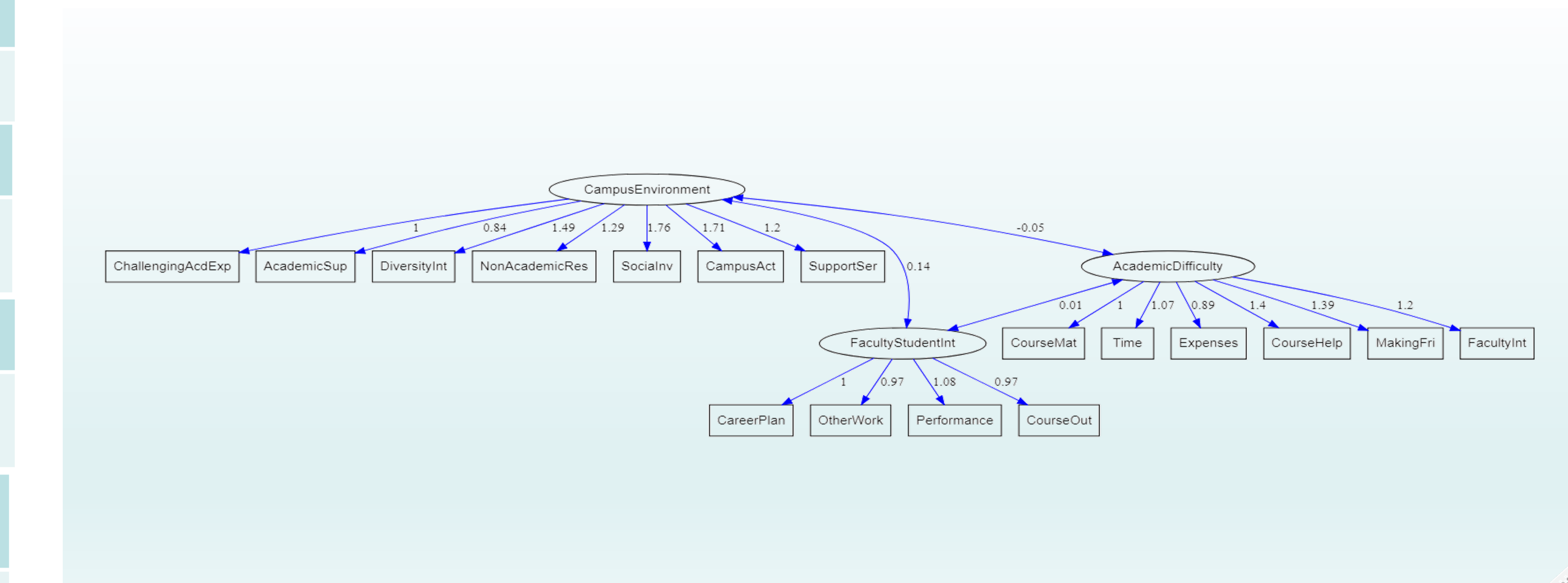


Table 2: Showcase of Item-level Distributions

Variable	Response Options	Count	%	Mean	SD
About how often do you expect to discuss your academic performance with a faculty member?	1=Never	7	2.3%	2.8	0.8
	2=Sometimes	109	37.2%		
	3=Often	114	38.9%		
	4=Very Often	63	21.5%		
How difficult do you expect to get help with schoolwork?	1=Not at all difficult	42	14.3%	3.1	1.4
	2	69	23.5%		
	3	59	20%		
	4	75	25.5%		
	5	40	13.6%		
	6=Very difficult	9	3.1%		
How important is it to you that your institution provides opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)?	1=Not important	6	2.0%	4.84	1.21
	2	3	1.0%		
	3	33	11.3%		
	4	66	22.5%		
	5	68	23.2%		
	6=Very important	117	39.9%		

Figure 2: Scale-Level Parameter Estimates and Model Covariance



- Among three boxplots in Figure 1, the Scale CampusEnvironment has the highest mean, which shows that students expect highly that the SDSU-IV can provide (1) a challenging academic experience; (2) support to help students succeed academically; (3) opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds; (4) help managing non-academic responsibilities; (5) opportunities to be involved socially; (5) opportunities to attend campus activities and events; and (7) learning support services.
- As expected, the item-level indicators all showed significant positive factor loadings; estimated coefficients are labeled on the edges of the plot in Figure 2.
 - CampusEnvironment: students feel opportunities to attend campus activities and events are comparatively more important than other indicators.
 - FacultyStudentInt: students expect to discuss their academic performance with a faculty member more frequently than other Faculty-Student interactions.
 - AcademicDiff: students expect it is more difficult to get help with schoolwork than other listed academic difficulties.
- Model Fit: The model fit was good with a TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) of 0.950 and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) of 0.58.

CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The 2019 BCSSE Survey revealed that the entering 100% commuter students were largely female, Hispanic/Latino, have parents with a high school diploma GED, have close friends attending the institution, chose SDSU-IV as their first-choice institution and expect to earn B's.

Students reported expecting to discuss academic importance with faculty members often, expect getting help with schoolwork somewhat difficult, and that it is very important that SDSU-IV provides opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds.

When exploring **faculty/student interaction, academic difficulty, and campus environment, students selected opportunities to attend campus activities & events as most important.**

The survey revealed that SDSU-IV has a unique student body compared to the main campus. The rural-border feel is attractive to students who apply. Students come in knowing other students, but still find it important to interact with students from other backgrounds. The survey provided insight into what students perceive they need for a campus environment to welcome and engage them, what they perceive to be helpful in terms of faculty/student interactions and that they perceive it will be somewhat difficult to get help with schoolwork.

Future Direction: Use the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to compare actual versus perceived BCSSE results. This project was timely considering the expansion of undergraduate programs and COVID-19 situation, which required SDSU-IV to transition to a completely virtual format.

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