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Academic Engagement Differences by Honors Course Enrollment Status for Community College Students: A National Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In this investigation, the extent to which differences were present in scholastic and faculty engagement as a function of community college student honors course enrollment status was addressed using data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement. Statistically significant differences were revealed for all 7 measures of scholastic engagement: classroom participation, making presentations, completion of multiple drafts, synthesis of information from various sources for course papers, class preparation, in-class group project participation, and out-of-class group project participation. Statistically significant differences were also revealed for 6 measures of faculty engagement: frequency of e-mail communication, discussion of assignments or grades, out-of-class discussions of course concepts, receiving prompt written or verbal feedback, effort required to meet instructor expectations, and collaboration on non-course activities. Students who had been enrolled in an honors course were more engaged scholastically and interacted more with faculty than students who had not been enrolled in an honors course.

Keywords: *Academic engagement, class participation, community college, Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), faculty interaction, group work, honors students*

INTRODUCTION

Postsecondary education is both a defining characteristic of the United States and vital to the economic prospects of many individuals (Brint & Karabel, 2014). Postsecondary education and training will be required for 65% of jobs in the United States by 2020, an increase from 28% in 1973 (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). Community colleges provide an opportunity for students who may not have other avenues available to build skills or receive academic remediation, such as first generation students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Brint & Karabel, 2014). Upon degree or certificate completion, students enrolled in community colleges may obtain positions requiring specialized skills, including the healthcare and automotive fields (Dougherty, 2014). Earning prospects for students rise by 13% for males and 22% for females upon completion of an associate's degree (Belfield & Bailey, 2014). Students who attend community colleges and do not obtain a credential increase their earning power by 9% for males and 10% for females (Belfield & Bailey, 2014).

When analyzing the characteristics of students who enroll in community college, the background of community college students need to be examined, including reasons for enrollment. Approximately 45% of all undergraduate students enroll in community colleges in the United States to develop skills and gain knowledge (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). The goals for which students enroll in community colleges include obtaining an associate's degree, transferring to a university, or completing a certificate program (Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE], 2012).

Diversity is a hallmark of students enrolled in community colleges. The diversity is represented by both gender, with women comprising 57% of students, and by ethnicity/race, with 51% of students considering themselves ethnic/racial minorities (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). Additionally, 36% of community college students are first-generation college students. Within this diverse environment, students who vary culturally and academically can benefit from effective institutional practices (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), although the level of benefit may vary based on gender and

ethnicity/race (Sontam & Gabriel, 2012). Additionally, the manner in which institutional supports are promoted may influence student participation (Dudley, Liu, Hao, & Stallard, 2015).

Student engagement, an amalgamation of the institutional environment and student actions, is an area where faculty, staff, and administrators may support students as they strive to reach their goals (Astin, 1984; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007; Pace, 1984; Reeve, 2012; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). Specifically, Astin (1984) noted that interactions between students and faculty and collaborative learning were beneficial to the educational achievements of students. Further, scholars (e.g., Astin, 1984, 1991; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella, 2001; Pike, 2004) established that purposeful interactions with faculty and perceptions of a supportive and inclusive environment are associated with satisfaction, persistence, and development for students.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is comprised of questions related to student perspectives on collegiate engagement, involvement, and achievement. Insight into how students reflect on their learning and apply knowledge are captured through questions focused on active and collaborative learning (CCSSE, 2017b). An important element of achievement can be understood by reflecting on questions that elicit responses from students related to the amount of time and effort expended in completing academic tasks. The quality and quantity of student interactions with faculty can also provide an understanding of students' academic achievement and persistence (CCSSE, 2017b). Overall, exploring responses from students can provide insight into student perceptions of the collegiate environment and institutional policies and practices.

According to Chickering and Gamson (1987), hallmarks of active learning are marked by student discussions, writing projects, drawing connections, and application of concepts. However, simply incorporating active learning activities into instruction may not be sufficient. Cooperative learning activities designed without individual responsibility, accountability, and group equity may be less successful than tasks completed individually by students (Borrego, Karlin, McNair, & Beddoes, 2013; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991). The individual weight factor method, a peer assessment of individual group members that is factored into grading, is a strategy that can lead to increased individual accountability and increased individual satisfaction (Gatfield, 1999; Gupta, 2004). Astin (1993) observed that active learning had a negative effect on retention, which he theorized may be the result of poorly designed activities rather than active learning as an instruction technique. Overall, active learning techniques signaled an institutional commitment to students and had an overall positive influence on student persistence levels (Braxton, Jones, Hirschy, & Hartley, 2008).

Hyun, Ediger, and Lee (2017) reported that students felt more satisfied with their individual learning when they participated in active learning activities and with group learning when participating in cooperative tasks. Active and collaborative learning pedagogies have been used by faculty in a variety of disciplines and settings. Cooperative and collaborative learning benefited students in various disciplines including engineering (Prince, 2004), mathematics (Cavanagh, 2011), and an anatomy and physiology class in which the first language of students was not English (Termos, 2013). Engaging activities and cooperative tasks were also observed to be beneficial for undergraduate students from underrepresented populations with a higher risk of failure (Freeman et al., 2007). This result is consistent with Cejda and Hoover's (2010) observation that Hispanic students preferred working both actively and in small groups on projects rather than working individually.

Classroom engagement benefits students through the development of critical thinking skills (Garside, 1996) and an increased ability to retain information (Bransford, 1979; Lysne & Miller, 2017). Typically, a small group of students actively engage in classroom discussion (Howard, Short, & Clark, 1996), whereas the remainder of students do not participate due to factors including gender, age, class size, lack of preparation, emotions such as fear or lack of confidence (Howard et al., 2002), and the authority of faculty (Howard & Baird, 2000). Weaver and Qi (2005) established that students who interacted with faculty members outside of the classroom reported greater class participation, more confidence, and less fear of faculty criticism than students who had minimal interactions with faculty outside of the classroom.

The quantity and quality of interactions between students and faculty are influential in student success. Increases in interactions between students and faculty can raise the motivation and engagement of students (Chickering & Gamson,

1987; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Tinto, 2012). Researchers (Anaya & Cole, 2001; Cole, 2011; Flowers, 2004; Kim, Chang, & Park, 2009; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010; Tovar, 2015) have examined the influence of interactions between faculty and students in areas including academic achievement, collegiate persistence, and cognitive effects.

An increase in academic achievement, demonstrated through higher student GPAs, is positively influenced by the frequency of contact between students and faculty (Komarraju et al., 2010). For example, a positive linkage between frequency of contact and an increase in GPA was also demonstrated for Black students (Anaya & Cole, 2001), Hispanic students (Tovar, 2015), and Asian American students (Kim et al., 2009). Interactions where faculty provided support and encouragement (Cole, 2011), as well as occassions where students challenged faculty ideas (Kim et al., 2009), were also connected to increases in student GPA. The benefits of faculty interactions extended to students enrolled in community colleges (Tovar, 2015).

Barnett (2011) and Crisp (2010) contended that persistence rates of college students are positively influenced by increased interactions with faculty. The positive benefits of outside of classroom interactions with faculty has been established at both 4-year universities (DeAngelo, 2014) and at community colleges (Barnett, 2011). Although the most interactions were deemed positive, an area where interactions were negative for persistence related to students receiving critical feedback from faculty (Chang, Cerna, Han, & Saenz, 2008).

Students at 4-year universities benefited cognitively from frequent interactions with faculty (Flowers, 2004; Kim & Lundberg, 2016). Positive influences on cognitive outcomes were also seen among community college students who had frequent interactions with faculty (Lundberg, 2014). When the quality, rather than the quantity of interactions were examined, Lundberg (2010) documented similiarly positive outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students attending community colleges have a variety of opportunities to explore courses, engage in academically related tasks inside and outside the classroom, and interact with instructors and their peers. Community college leaders have opportunities to develop policies and programs that help students reach their academic goals and encourage students engagement (Kuh et al., 2007), but leaders must choose the most most influential initiatives due to limited resources (Alfred, Shults, Jacquette, & Strickland, 2009). An opportunity available to students at approximately half of all community colleges in the United States is the oppportunity to enroll in honors courses (Beck, 2003).

Honors courses are generally designed by community colleges to promote increased engagement through small classes and a greater emphasis on classroom interactivity (Otero, Spurrier, & Lanier, 2011). Critics of honors courses have stated that courses require higher instructional expenditures, while serving a small cadre of high achieving students (Galinova, 2005). Higher expenditures for instruction, however, have been observed to have a positive relationship to graduation rates (Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Leinbach, & Kienzl, 2006). College leaders must consider the role of honors courses in a setting where the mission of the institution and the complexity of the organization have expanded but funding has become more limited (Alfred et al., 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which differences were present in scholastic engagement activities and in faculty engagement activities between students who had been enrolled in an honors course and students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Specifically addressed were the relationship of honors course enrollment with in classroom participation, completion of class presentations, writing of multiple drafts of papers, engagement in course papers or projects, class preparation, participation in in-class projects, and participation in out-of-class projects by honors course enrollment status. Also examined were the relationship of honors course enrollment and student interactions with instructors including e-mail communication, discussion of assignments or grades, out-of-class discussions of courses or course readings, receiving prompt written or verbal feedback on performance, perceived effort to meet instructor expectations, and work on non-course activities by honors course enrollment status.

Significance of the Study

Data sets from community colleges are used in less than 10% of higher education research (McClenney & Marti, 2006). Within the subset of community college research, few published

works exist specifically related to honors education in the community college setting (Achterberg, 2004; Holman & Banning, 2012). A large scale study of honors education has not been conducted since the late 1990s (Outcalt, 1999). According to Achterberg (2004), research investigations into honors courses and their effects in community colleges within individual institutions and across multiple institutions should be a high priority. Quantitative or mixed methods methodologies were specifically recommended by Holman and Banning (2012) upon examination of honors related dissertations and publications. Studies of honors education could be used by community college leaders and administrators to make policy decisions and allocate resources. Examination community colleges may be used for bench marking the performance of individual colleges.

Research Questions

In this empirical investigation, one overarching research question was addressed: What is the difference in scholastic engagement activities and in faculty engagement activities between students who had been enrolled in an honors course and students who had not been enrolled in an honors course? Specific sub-questions under this overarching research question were:

- What is the difference in classroom participation by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in completing class presentations by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in writing multiple drafts of a paper by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in synthesis of information from various sources for course papers or projects by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in lack of class preparation by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in participation in in-class group projects by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in participation in out-of-class group projects by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in e-mail communication with instructors by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in discussion of assignments or grades with instructors by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in out-of-class discussions of ideas from courses or course readings with instructors by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in receiving prompt written or verbal feedback on performance from instructors by honors course enrollment status?;
- What is the difference in effort required beyond perceived capability to meet instructor expectations by honors course enrollment status?; and
- What is the difference in collaboration on non-course activities with instructors by honors course enrollment status?

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, a non-experimental, causal-comparative research design was used (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The independent variable cannot be manipulated in this type of non-experimental causal comparative research. In this empirical investigation, the independent variable was the honors course enrollment status of students who participated in the CCSSE survey.

Honor course enrollment status consisted of two groups of community college students: those students who had been enrolled in an honors course and those students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. As such, the independent variable in this archival data represented events that had already occurred (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The dependent variables in this investigation were the scholastic engagement activities and faculty engagement activities of community college students who participated in the survey. Accordingly, both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already taken place.

Participants and Instrumentation

Archival data consisting of a 25% random sample of the 2014 three-year CCSSE cohort (2012 through 2014) were obtained from CCCSE. The sample included responses from 108,509 community college students who completed the CCSSE survey. Approximately 7,000 of these students indicated they had

previously enrolled in an honors course at a community college.

The cohort included students from 684 institutions located in 48 states, the District of Columbia, three Canadian provinces, Bermuda, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands (CCSSE, 2017c). Institutional enrollment varied, with 296 community colleges with less than 4,500 credit students; 168 colleges with 4,500 to 7,999 credit students; 141 colleges with 8,000 to 14,999 credit students; and 79 colleges with 15,000 or more credit students. College settings also varied, with 147 institutions in urban settings, 149 institutions in suburban settings, and 395 institutions in rural settings (CCSSE, 2017a).

The survey instrument was comprised of 38 questions developed to ascertain student perceptions of the academic and nonacademic environment. From the instrument, data on 13 survey items was used in this article. A variety of question types were present and included Likert scales, ratings, and multiple choice questions. The instrument was determined to provide reliable scores between the first and second survey administrations and to provide valid scores in measuring community college student engagement (Marti, 2008). Included in these data were responses from students about class participation, interactions with classmates, and learning outside of the classroom which are classified as active and collaborative learning; academic preparation, time expended for learning, and use of student services which is classified as student effort; and communication between students and faculty regarding course work, academic performance, and career plans which is classified as student faculty interaction (CCSSE, 2017d). Participants answered questions about class discussions, class presentations, multiple paper drafts, research and synthesis of information, lack of class preparation, in-class group work, and out-of-class group work. In addition, responses were collected from students about faculty engagement including e-mail correspondence, discussion of assignments or grades, out-of-class discussions about course material, feedback on academic performance, instructor expectations, and interacted in non-course activities. Students responded to the 13 questions on a Likert scale with 4 choices: Very Often, Often, Sometimes, and Never. These responses were coded numerically so they could be analyzed statistically.

RESULTS

Data were analyzed to determine the extent to which differences were present in scholastic and faculty engagement as a function of student honors course enrollment status. Pearson chi-square statistics were calculated for participant responses to the 13 questions based on honors course enrollment status. Frequency data were present for the honors course enrollment variable and for the 13 survey items (i.e., Very Often, Often, Sometimes, and Never). As such, the Pearson chi-square procedure was an appropriate statistical procedure (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). The available sample size was at least five per cell and respondents had checked one response per survey item; therefore, the assumptions were met for using the Pearson chi-square procedure. Results will now be discussed in order of the research questions.

Table1. *Frequencies and Percentages of Classroom Participation by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Classroom Participation	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(*n* = 2,776) 41.3%	(*n* = 21,519) 29.7%
Often	(*n* = 2,375) 35.3%	(*n* = 25,356) 35.0%
Sometimes	(*n* = 1,470) 21.9%	(*n* = 23,590) 32.6%
Never	(*n* = 106) 1.6%	(*n* = 1,920) 2.7%

Research Question One

The focus of the first question was on whether differences were present in classroom participation by honors course enrollment status. The Pearson chi-square procedure revealed the presence of a statistically significant difference in class participation by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 518.84$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). More than 41% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported participating in class Very Often, compared to 29.7% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. The percentage of students who reported they Never participated in class was higher for the students who had not been enrolled in an honors course, 2.7%, than for students who had been enrolled in an honors course who reported that they Never participated in class, 1.6%. Frequencies and percentages for this analysis by student honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 1.

Research Question Two

The second research question was n making classroom presentations by honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present in making class presentations by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 968.66$, $p < .001$.

The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .11 (Cohen, 1988). More than 18% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported making class presentations Very Often compared to only 10.5% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and who reported that they made presentations Very Often. Although almost 25% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course Never made presentations, only 12.5% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported Never making presentations. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table2. *Frequencies and Percentages of Classroom Presentations by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Classroom Presentation	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 1,215) 18.1%	(n = 7,059) 9.8%
Often	(n = 2,082) 31.0%	(n = 16,621) 23.0%
Sometimes	(n = 2, 582) 38.4%	(n = 30,929) 42.8%
Never	(n = 838) 12.5%	(n = 17,577) 24.3%

Research Question Three

The third research question was on the preparation of two or more drafts of a paper or assignment by student honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present in preparing multiple drafts by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 476.82$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). In the preparation of multiple drafts of papers or assignments, 20% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and almost 30% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course responded Very Often to preparation of multiple drafts, while 20.1% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and 13.2% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Never preparing multiple paper drafts. Frequencies and percentages by honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 3.

Table3. *Frequencies and Percentages of Multiple Paper Draft Preparation by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Preparation of Multiple Drafts	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 1,992) 29.9%	(n = 14,376) 20.0%
Often	(n = 2,073) 31.1%	(n = 21,301) 29.6%
Sometimes	(n = 1,723) 25.8%	(n = 21,792) 30.3%
Never	(n = 884) 13.2%	(n = 14,444) 20.1%

Research Question Four

The fourth research question was on the synthesis of information from various sources for course papers or projects by honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present in this survey item by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 655.29$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). More than 40% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported synthesizing information from various sources for papers and projects Very Often, whereas less than 28% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported synthesizing information from various sources for papers and projects Very Often. Approximately 8% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Never synthesizing information from various sources for papers and projects. That statistic was almost twice as high as the percentage, 4%, of students who had been enrolled in an honors course and who reported Never synthesizing information from various sources for papers and projects. Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table4. *Frequencies and Percentages of Synthesis of Information for Course Papers or Projects by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Synthesis of Information	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 2,723) 40.7%	(n = 19,859) 27.6%
Often	(n = 2,503) 37.4%	(n = 27,677) 38.4%
Sometimes	(n = 1,172) 17.5%	(n = 18,629) 25.9%
Never	(n = 287) 4.3%	(n = 5,859) 8.1%

Research Question Five

The fifth research involved the lack of class preparation by student honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present in this survey item by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 112.34$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .04 (Cohen, 1988). Regarding a lack of class preparation, 4% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and 5.7% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course responded Very Often to lack of class preparation. At the other end of the spectrum, 31.3% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and 34.7% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported Never for lack of class preparation. Frequencies and percentages by honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 5.

Table5. *Frequencies and Percentages of Lack of Class Preparation by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Lack of Class Preparation	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 380) 5.7%	(n = 2,871) 4.0%
Often	(n = 721) 10.8%	(n = 7,085) 9.9%
Sometimes	(n = 3,249) 48.8%	(n = 39,412) 54.8%
Never	(n = 2,311) 34.7%	(n = 22,490) 31.3%

Research Question Six

The sixth research question was on in-class group project participation by honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present in this survey item by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 279.44$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .06 (Cohen, 1988). More than 22% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported Very Often for in-class group project participation, whereas 16% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Very Often for in-class group project participation. Approximately 7% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course and 11% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported never for in-class group project participation. Table 6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table6. *Frequencies and Percentages of In-Class Group Project Participation by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

In-Class Project Participation	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 1,475) 22.2%	(n = 11,527) 16.1%
Often	(n = 2,456) 37.0%	(n = 24,654) 34.4%
Sometimes	(n = 2,273) 34.2%	(n = 27,938) 38.9%
Never	(n = 440) 6.6%	(n = 7,616) 10.6%

Research Question Seven

The seventh research question was on out-of-class group project participation by student honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present for out-of-class group project participation by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 1038.83$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .12 (Cohen, 1988). Approximately 15% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported Very Often for participation in out-of-class group projects. That statistic was more than twice as high as the percentage, 7%, of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and who reported Very Often for participation in out-of-class group projects. Almost 22% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course and more than 36% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Never for participation in out-of-class group projects. Frequencies and percentages by honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 7.

Table7. *Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-Class Group Project Participation by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Out-of-Class Project Participation	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 993) 14.9%	(n = 5,258) 7.3%
Often	(n = 1,672) 25.1%	(n = 12,196) 17.0%
Sometimes	(n = 2,565) 38.5%	(n = 28,499) 39.6%
Never	(n = 1,440) 21.6%	(n = 25,965) 36.1%

Research Question Eight

The eighth research question was on e-mail communication with instructors by honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present in this survey item by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 601.49$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Almost 46% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported Very Often for e-mail communication with instructors, whereas less than 33% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Very Often for e-mail communication with instructors. Approximately 6% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Never for e-mail communication with instructors. That statistic was almost twice as high as the percentage, 3%, of students who had been enrolled in an honors course and who reported Never for e-mail communication with instructors. Table 8 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table8. *Frequencies and Percentages of E-Mail Communication with Instructors by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

E-Mail with Instructors	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 3,048) 45.6%	(n = 23,351) 32.5%
Often	(n = 2,134) 32.0%	(n = 23,604) 32.8%
Sometimes	(n = 1,299) 19.5%	(n = 20,566) 28.6%
Never	(n = 197) 2.9%	(n = 4,345) 6.0%

Research Question Nine

The ninth research question involved discussion of assignments or grades with instructors by honors course enrollment status. The Pearson chi-square procedure revealed a statistically significant difference was present in this survey item by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 693.69$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). More than 30% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported discussions of assignments or grades with instructors Very Often, compared to approximately 19% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course.

The percentage of students who reported they Never participated in discussions of assignments or grades with instructors was higher for the students who had not been enrolled in an honors course, 8.3%, than for students who had been enrolled in an honors course who reported that they Never participated in discussions of assignments or grades with instructors, 5.1%. Frequencies and percentages for this analysis by student honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 9.

Table9. *Frequencies and Percentages of Discussion of Assignments or Grades with Instructors by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Discussion of Assignments or Grades with Instructors	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 2,030) 30.3%	(n = 13,634) 18.9%
Often	(n = 2,299) 34.4%	(n = 22,412) 31.1%
Sometimes	(n = 2,018) 30.2%	(n = 29,950) 41.6%
Never	(n = 343) 5.1%	(n = 5,970) 8.3%

Research Question Ten

The tenth research question was on whether differences were present in out-of-class discussions of course concepts with instructors by student honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present for out-of-class discussions of course concepts with instructors by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 1501.24$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Approximately 12% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported Very Often for participation in out-of-class discussions of course concepts with instructors. That statistic was more than twice as high as the percentage, 5%, of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and who reported Very Often for participation in out-of-class discussions of course concepts with instructors. Almost 46% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and more than 27% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported Never for participation in discussions of out-of-class discussions of course concepts with instructors. Frequencies and percentages by honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 10.

Table10. *Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-Class Discussions of Course Concepts with Instructors by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Out-of-Class Discussions with Instructors	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 793) 11.9%	(n = 3,455) 4.8%
Often	(n = 1,437) 21.6%	(n = 8,409) 11.7%
Sometimes	(n = 2,590) 38.9%	(n = 26,958) 37.5%
Never	(n = 1,841) 27.6%	(n = 32,977) 45.9%

Research Question Eleven

The eleventh research question was on receiving prompt written or verbal performance feedback from instructors by honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present in this survey item by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 374.29$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .07 (Cohen, 1988).

More than 28% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported receiving prompt written or verbal performance feedback from instructors Very Often, whereas 19% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported receiving prompt written or verbal performance feedback from instructors Very Often. Approximately 4% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course and 7% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Never receiving prompt written or verbal performance feedback from instructors. Table 11 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table11. *Frequencies and Percentages of Receiving Prompt Written or Verbal Performance Feedback from Instructors by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Prompt Performance Feedback from Instructors	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 1,883) 28.2%	(n = 13,966) 19.4%
Often	(n = 2,685) 40.2%	(n = 28,597) 39.8%
Sometimes	(n = 1,827) 27.3%	(n = 24,359) 33.9%
Never	(n = 286) 4.3%	(n = 4,968) 6.9%

Research Question Twelve

The twelfth research question involved effort required beyond perceived capability to meet instructor expectations by honors course enrollment status. The Pearson chi-square procedure revealed a statistically significant difference was present in this survey item by honors course enrollment status, $\chi2(3) = 575.29$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Approximately 28% of students who had enrolled in an honors course reported that effort was required beyond perceived capability to meet instructor expectations Very Often, compared to approximately 17% of students who had not enrolled in an honors course. More than 7% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course and 9% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported that effort was Never required beyond perceived capability to meet instructor expectations. Frequencies and percentages for this analysis by student honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 12.

Table12. *Frequencies and Percentages of Effort Required Beyond Perceived Capability to Meet Instructor Expectations by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Effort Required Beyond Perceived Capability to Meet Expectations	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 1,842) 27.6%	(n = 12,348) 17.2%
Often	(n = 2,505) 37.5%	(n = 25,587) 35.6%
Sometimes	(n = 1,846) 27.6%	(n = 27,250) 37.9%
Never	(n = 486) 7.3%	(n = 6,726) 9.4%

Research Question Thirteen

The thirteenth question was on collaboration on non-course activities with instructors by student honors course enrollment status. A statistically significant difference was present for collaboration on non-course activities with instructors by honors course enrollment status, $\chi^2(3) = 1701.69$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). More than 8% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported collaboration on non-course activities with instructors Very Often. That statistic was more

than twice as high as the percentage, 2.7%, of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course and who reported Very Often for collaboration on non-course activities with instructors. Almost 47% of students who had been enrolled in an honors course and more than 68% of students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported Never for collaboration on non-course activities with instructors. Frequencies and percentages by honors course enrollment status are presented in Table 13.

Table13. *Frequencies and Percentages of Collaboration on Non-Course Activities with Instructors by Honors Course Enrollment Status*

Engagement in Non-Course Activities with Instructors	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Very Often	(n = 559) 8.4%	(n = 1,923) 2.7%
Often	(n = 966) 14.6%	(n = 4,948) 6.9%
Sometimes	(n = 2,014) 30.4%	(n = 15,839) 22.2%
Never	(n = 3,084) 46.6%	(n = 48,650) 68.2%

DISCUSSION

In this investigation, the degree to which differences were present in scholastic engagement and faculty engagement between students who had been enrolled in an honors course and students who had not been enrolled in an honors course was addressed using national data from more than 108,000 students who completed the CCSSE survey. Inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences between the two groups for all seven survey items related to scholastic engagement and for all six survey items related to faculty engagement.

Students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported higher levels of scholastic engagement (i.e., greater class participation, delivering more presentations, greater opportunities to work on group projects, and more often being prepared for class) than their peers who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Engagement with faculty (i.e., effort required to meet instructor expectations, collaboration on non-course activities, communication with faculty via e-mail, in-class and out-of-class discussions, and through written and verbal feedback) were also greater for students who had been enrolled in an honors course than for their peers who had not been enrolled in an honors course.

Connections with Existing Literature

In the CCSSE survey, students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported being more academically engaged through classroom participation, presentations, synthesis of information, and participation in group projects than their peers who had not been enrolled in an honors course. According to Hyun et al. (2017), active learning and group learning activities increased the satisfaction students felt about their individual learning. Price and Tovar (2014) concluded that active and collaborative learning also had predictive values for institutional graduation rates. Engaging activities and cooperative learning were also demonstrated to be beneficial for students from underrepresented populations (Freeman et al., 2007). Educational techniques that engage students from diverse backgrounds are an important consideration in community college settings where many first generation college students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds choose to enroll (Brint & Karabel, 2014).

The results from this examination were consistent with Ross and Roman (2009) who documented the presence of greater engagement among students who had been enrolled in an honors course when compared to students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Similar to the results of this study, Ross and Roman (2009) established that students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported higher levels of class participation, academic preparation, synthesis of information, and expending more effort to meet instructor expectations than students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Some results differed between the two investigations. Contrary to this inquiry, however, Ross and Roman (2009) observed that students who had not been enrolled in an honors course reported higher levels of engagement with faculty including e-mail communication, discussion of grades or assignments, and out-of-class discussions than their peers who had been enrolled in an honors course.

Implications for Policy and for Practice

Based upon the results of this empirical investigation, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported greater scholastic engagement than

students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Active and collaborative learning, the development of critical thinking skills, and rigorous academic standards are common in honors courses (National Collegiate Honors Council, 2013; Otero et al., 2011). Many students enrolled in community colleges may benefit intellectually and personally from classes where strategies and characteristics of honors courses are adopted.

Second, students who had been enrolled in an honors course reported greater faculty engagement than students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Smaller class sizes are a distinguishing factor of honors courses (National Collegiate Honors Council, 2013; Otero et al., 2011) and may contribute to greater classroom engagement, participation, and comfort with faculty and the collegiate environment (Howard & Baird, 2000; Howard et al., 2002; Howard et al., 1996). Educational leaders and policymakers have an opportunity through resource allocation and policy prioritization to replicate the honors course model by making small class sizes, active and collaborative learning, and increased faculty collaboration and communication a common facet of every student's community colleges experience.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings of this study, several recommendations for future research can be suggested. First, opportunities exist for further investigation as researchers have only focused on community college honors programs in a small number of published studies (Achterberg, 2004; Holman & Banning, 2012). Specifically, it is important to complete more empirical investigations, as few quantitative studies of honors courses in community colleges have been published.

Second, researchers are encouraged to use more current data to replicate this quantitative study. A third opportunity for researchers is to use data from the National Survey of Student Engagement to extend this investigation to 4-year university students. Fourth, an analysis of the student support service use between students who had been enrolled in an honors course and their peers who had not been enrolled in an honors course is recommended.

Fifth, an examination of benchmark scores derived from CCSSE data can provide researchers with insight into the extent to which differences might exist between students who had been enrolled in an honors course and their peers who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Sixth, research on the effectiveness of community college programs or initiatives where a deliberate attempt has been made to simulate the honors course environment through small class sizes, active and collaborative learning, and undergraduate research is also recommended. Lastly, future research is encouraged regarding the demographic and scholastic background of academically prepared students who enroll in an honors course or join honors programs in community colleges. Such research investigations might provide insight into why well prepared students choose to attend community colleges rather than universities.

Conclusion

In this nationwide investigation, the extent to which differences were present in scholastic engagement and faculty engagement between students who had been enrolled in an honors course and students who had not been enrolled in an honors course was examined. Statistically significant differences were revealed in scholastic engagement and faculty engagement activities between students who had enrolled in an honors course and students who had not enrolled in an honors course. Students who had been enrolled in an honors course were more engaged scholastically and interacted more with faculty than students who had not been enrolled in an honors course. Community college leaders and policymakers may examine ways in which strategies used in honors courses can be applied generally to all courses.

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