# Interpreting the Means Comparison Report

**Sample**

The Means Comparison report is based on the responses of students at your institution, as well as the students at the other participating FET colleges.

**Statistical Significance**

Items with mean differences that are larger than would be expected by chance alone are noted with one, two, or three asterisks, referring to three significance levels (*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001).

The smaller the significance level, the smaller the likelihood that the difference is due to chance.

*Statistical significance does not guarantee the result is substantive or important.* Large sample sizes tend to generate more statistically significant results even though the magnitude of mean differences may be inconsequential. **It is recommended to consult effect sizes to judge the practical meaning of the results.**

**Variable Name**
The name of each variable appears in the third column for easy reference to your data file.

**Variable**
The items from the CSSE survey appear in the second column in the same order and wording as they appear on the instrument.

| | | Variable Name | Bench-mark | College X Mean | All Colleges | Significance[a] | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4** | **Academic and Intellectual Experiences** | ***In your experiences at this college during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?*** *1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often* | | | | | |
| a | Asked questions in class | clquest | ACL | 2.50 | 2.29 | | .27 |
| b | Contributed to class discussions | cldisc | ACL | 2.25 | 1.54 | ** | .86 |
| c | Made a class presentation | clpresen | ACL | 2.95 | 2.27 | ** | .74 |

**Benchmark**
Items that make up the five "Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice" are flagged by the following codes:

**ACL** Active and Collaborative Learning
**SE** Student Effort
**AC** Academic Challenge
**SSI** Student-staff Interaction
**SL** Support for Learners

**Mean**
The mean is the arithmetic average of student responses on a particular item.

Means are provided for the students at your college, as well as for all the participating FET colleges.

**Effect Size**
Effect size indicates the "practical significance" of the difference between your college and the other participating colleges. It is calculated by dividing the mean difference by the standard deviation of the groups being compared.

In practice, an effect size of 0.2 is considered small, 0.5 moderate, and 0.8 large. A positive sign indicates your college's mean was greater and a negative sign indicates your college lags behind the rest of the participating FET colleges.