

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of Institutional Research & Analysis

Initial Review of CCSSE Benchmark Results for Montgomery College
November, 2004

In Spring Semester, 2004, Montgomery College joined 151 other community colleges across the country (including nine other colleges in Maryland) in administering the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to a sample of students. Over 90,000 students nationwide participated in the survey.

The CCSSE was developed in 2001 by the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, under the direction of Kay M. McClenney. The 2004 survey was the second national administration of the instrument after two years of pilot testing activity. The survey is designed to be a tool to enable community colleges to better serve their students' needs and improve their institutional effectiveness as learning institutions by determining the extent to which students are "engaged" in "educationally sound activities" at their institution – that is, behaviors and activities that relate to effective teaching and student learning, retention, and success.

In addition to student demographic data, the results of the survey include student responses on five "benchmarks," or dimensions on which an institution can compare itself with other institutions or with itself over a period of time. These benchmarks are: *active and collaborative learning*, *student effort*, *academic challenge*, *student-faculty interaction*, and *support for learners*. To facilitate comparisons, the benchmark scores were all standardized so the nationwide sample had a mean score of 50.0, with a range of from 0 to 100.

Montgomery College respondents were very representative of the college's population by gender, race, and age. Like most of the other colleges, our full-time students were slightly overrepresented in the sample.

What did our students report on the benchmarks that reflect engagement items that contribute to effective teaching, learning, retention, and success? In brief, Montgomery College students reported above-average "*Student Effort*," "*Academic Challenge*," and "*Support for Learners*" perceptions, expectations, and experiences. "*Student-Faculty Interaction*" and the extent of "*Active and Collaborative Learning*" were rated slightly below average by MC students. These differences were true when we compared ourselves with the nationwide sample of 151 other community colleges, the nine other Maryland community colleges, and the 16 other "extra large community colleges" included in the national group.

The CCSSE program staff noted that the Montgomery College score on the "Student Effort" benchmark was exceptionally high for an "extra-large" college and asked for a one-paragraph anecdotal example. We submitted a brief description of the "student effort" required in Dr. Mary Furgol's "History of Victorian Women" course.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE):

Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

The five benchmarks encompass 38 engagement items from the survey that reflect many of the most important aspects of the student experience. These institutional practices and student behaviors are some of the more powerful contributors to effective teaching, learning, student retention, and student success.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaboration with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with the kinds of situations and problems they will encounter in the workplace, community, and their personal lives.

Student Effort

Students' own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will successfully attain their educational goals. "Time on task" is a key variable, and there are a variety of settings and means through which students may apply themselves to the learning process.

Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Components of this benchmark include the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the standards faculty members use to evaluate student performance.

Student-Faculty Interaction

The more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Personal interaction with faculty members strengthens students' connections to the college and helps them focus on their academic progress. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.

Support for Learners

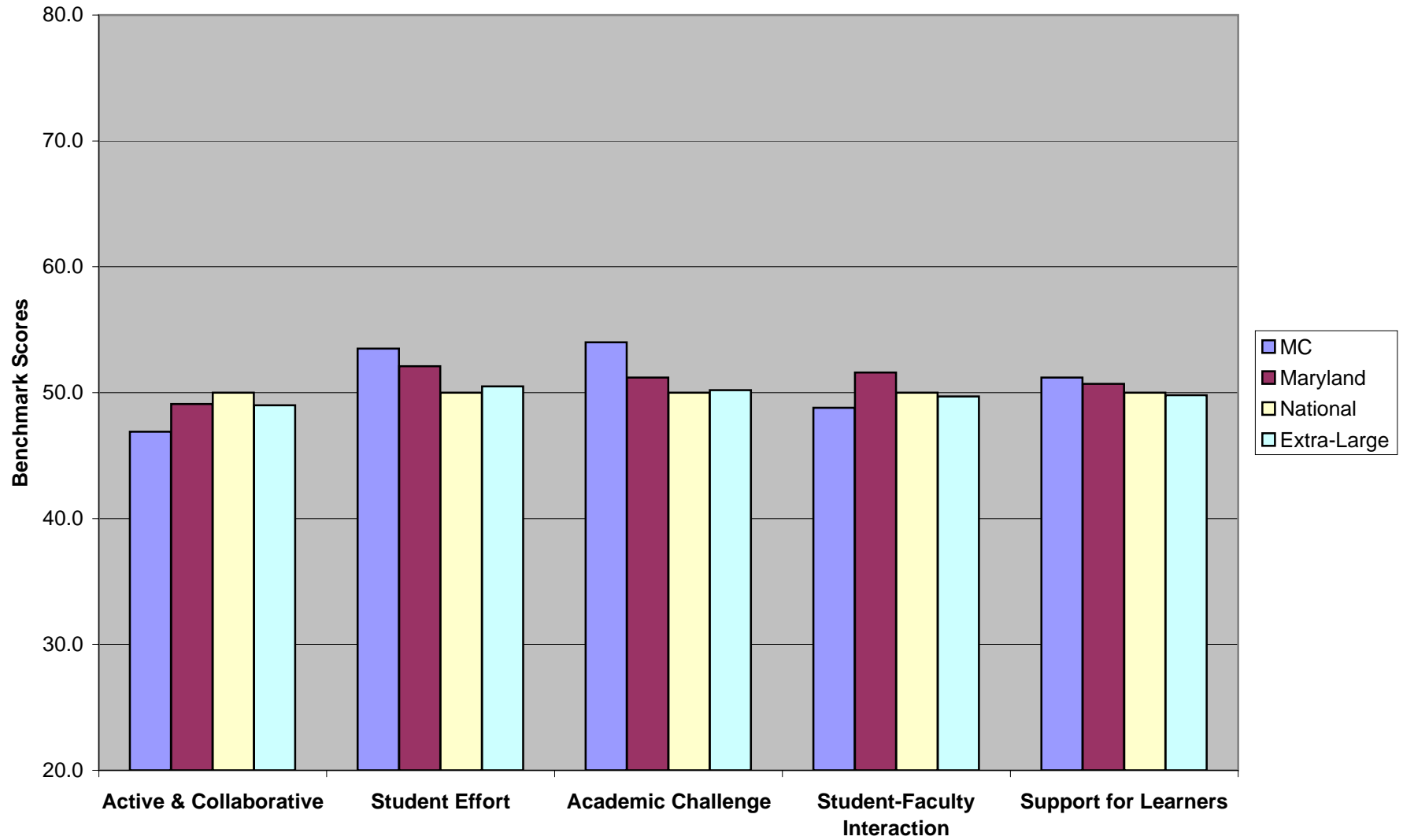
Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relationships among different groups on campus. Community college students also benefit from services targeted to assist them with academic and career planning, academic skill development, and other issues that may affect both learning and retention.

Comparison of Montgomery College Benchmark Scores With Other Colleges Surveyed

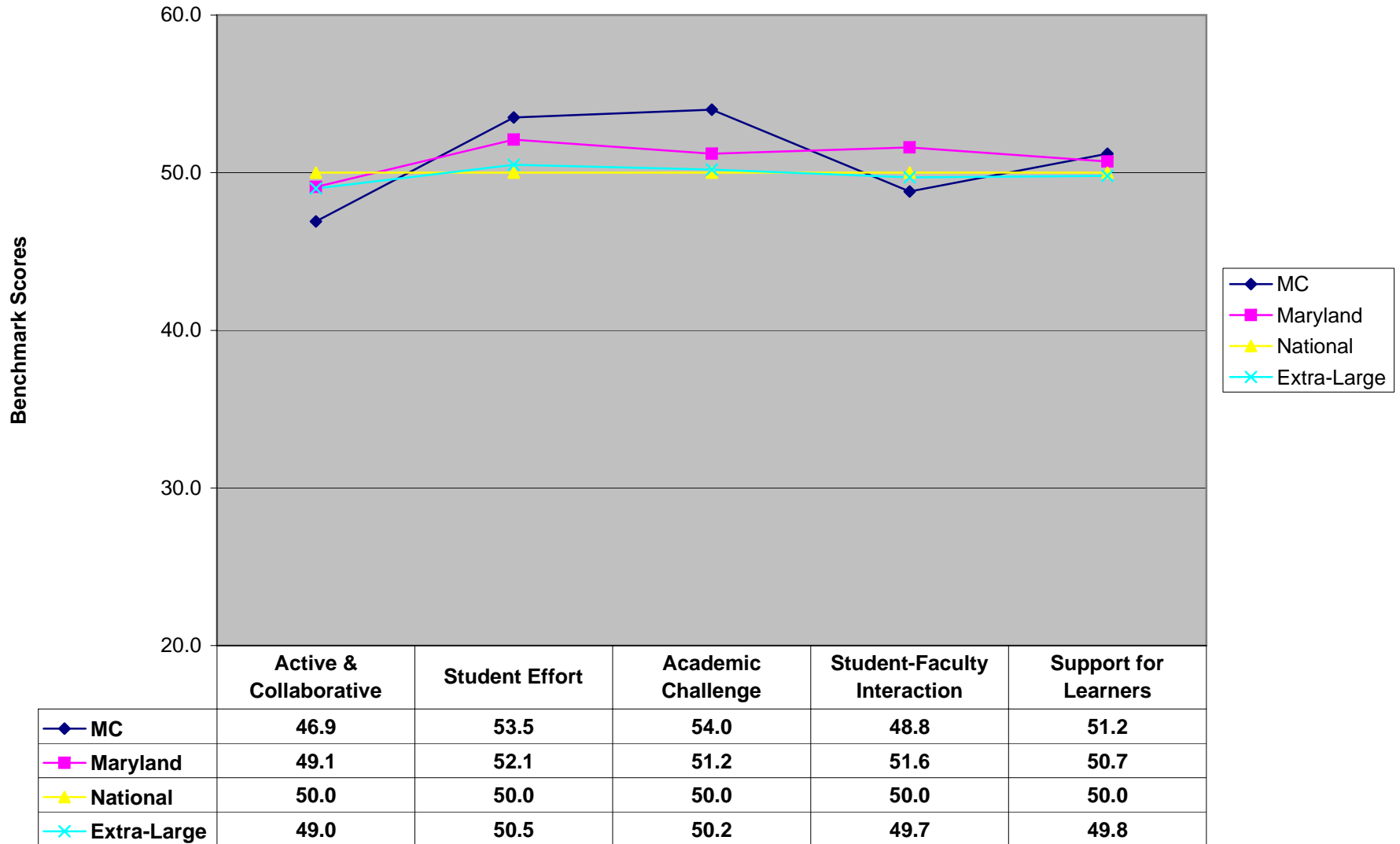
[Benchmarks are standardized on a scale of 0-to-100, with a national mean=50.0]

<u>Benchmark</u>	<u>MC</u>	<u>Maryland Colleges</u> (n=10)	<u>Nationwide</u> (n=152)	<u>National XL Colleges</u> (n=17)
Active & Collaborative Learning	46.9	49.1	50.0	49.0
<i>Asked questions in class</i>				
<i>Worked with classmates in/out of class</i>				
<i>Made a class presentation</i>				
<i>Tutored or taught other students</i>				
<i>Participated in community-based project</i>				
<i>Discussed ideas with others outside class</i>				
Student Effort	53.5	52.1	50.0	50.5
<i>Prepared 2 or more drafts of a paper</i>				
<i>Paper/project required integrating ideas/info</i>				
<i>Came to class unprepared [reversed]</i>				
<i>Books read on your own (unassigned)</i>				
<i>Preparing for class</i>				
<i>Frequency of using skill/computer labs or tutoring</i>				
Academic Challenge	54.0	51.2	50.0	50.2
<i>Synthesize & organize ideas/info in new ways</i>				
<i>Making judgments about value of information/arguments</i>				
<i>Number of assigned books, readings</i>				
<i>Using information to perform a new skill</i>				
<i>Number of written papers, reports, or assigned readings</i>				
<i>Worked harder than thought could to meet standards</i>				
<i>Analyzing basic elements of idea, experience, or theory</i>				
<i>Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or situations</i>				
<i>Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying</i>				
Student-Faculty Interaction	48.8	51.6	50.0	49.7
<i>Use e-mail to communicate with instructor</i>				
<i>Discussed grades or assignments</i>				
<i>Discussed career plans with instructor/advisor</i>				
<i>Discussed ideas from readings with instructors outside class</i>				
<i>Prompt feedback from instructors on performance</i>				
<i>Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework</i>				
Support for Learners	51.2	50.7	50.0	49.8
<i>Providing support you need to help you succeed</i>				
<i>Helping you cope with non-academic responsibilities</i>				
<i>Providing financial support you need to afford education</i>				
<i>Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds</i>				
<i>Providing support you need to thrive socially</i>				
<i>Frequency of academic advising or career counseling</i>				

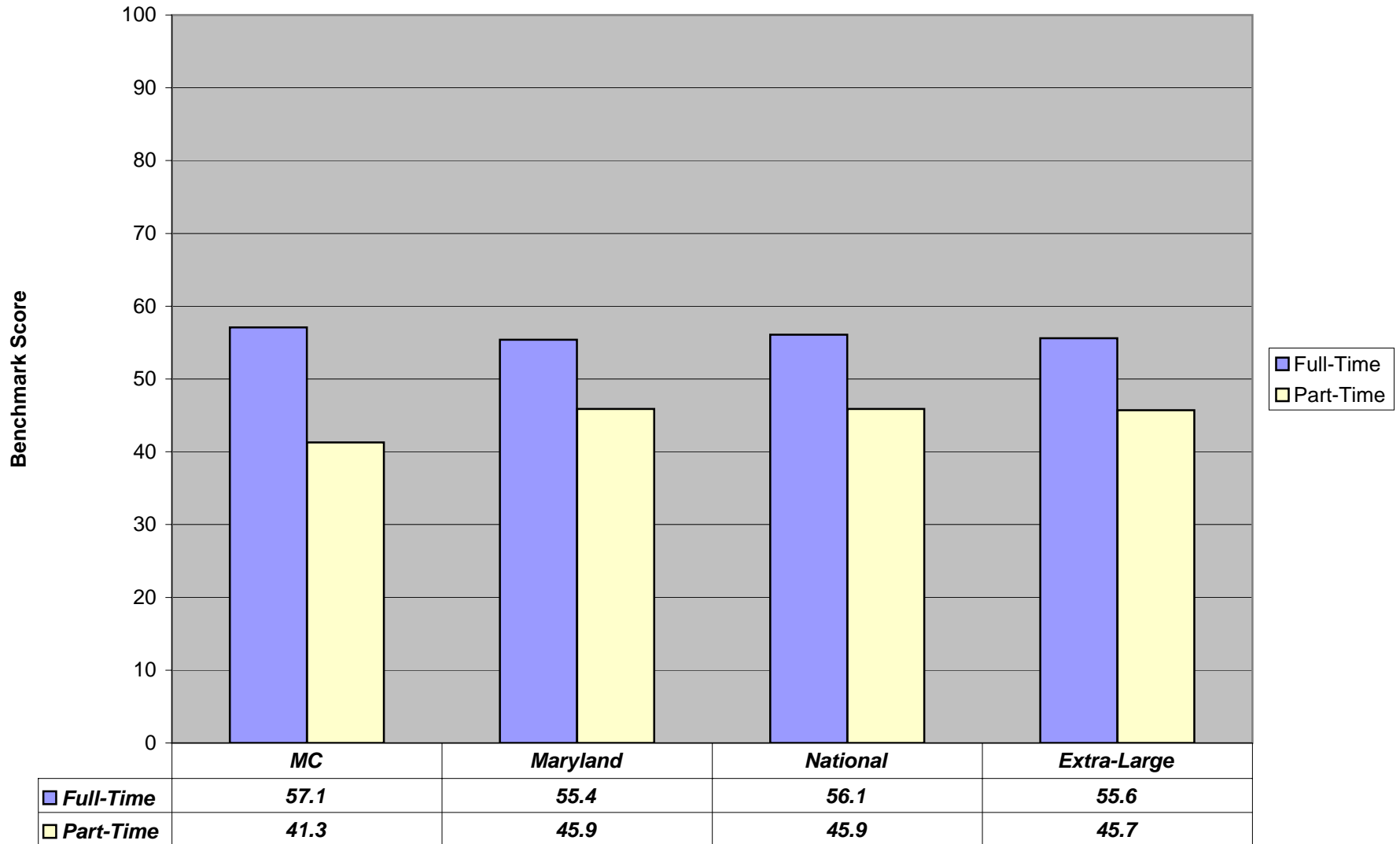
MC and Other Colleges' Benchmarks



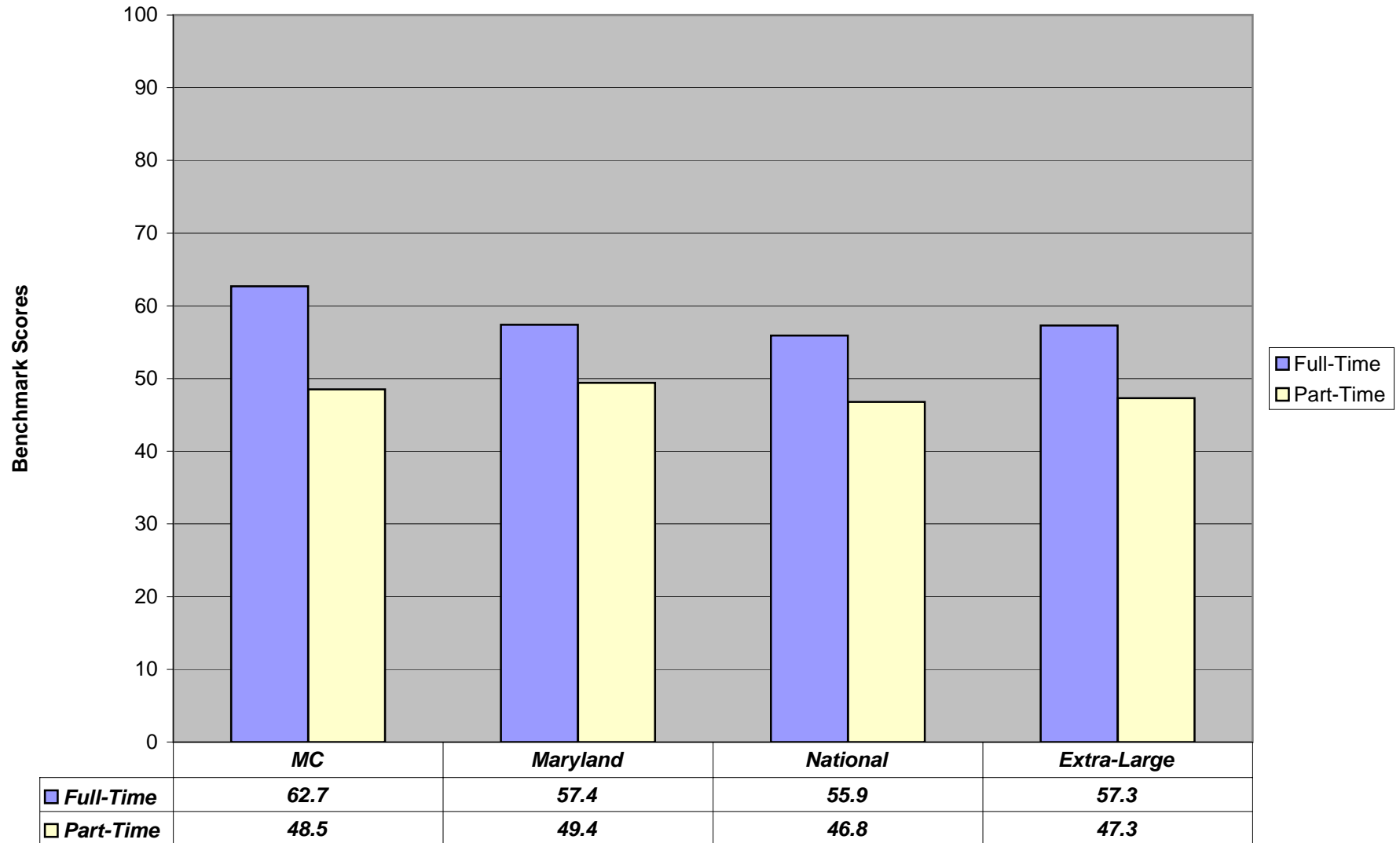
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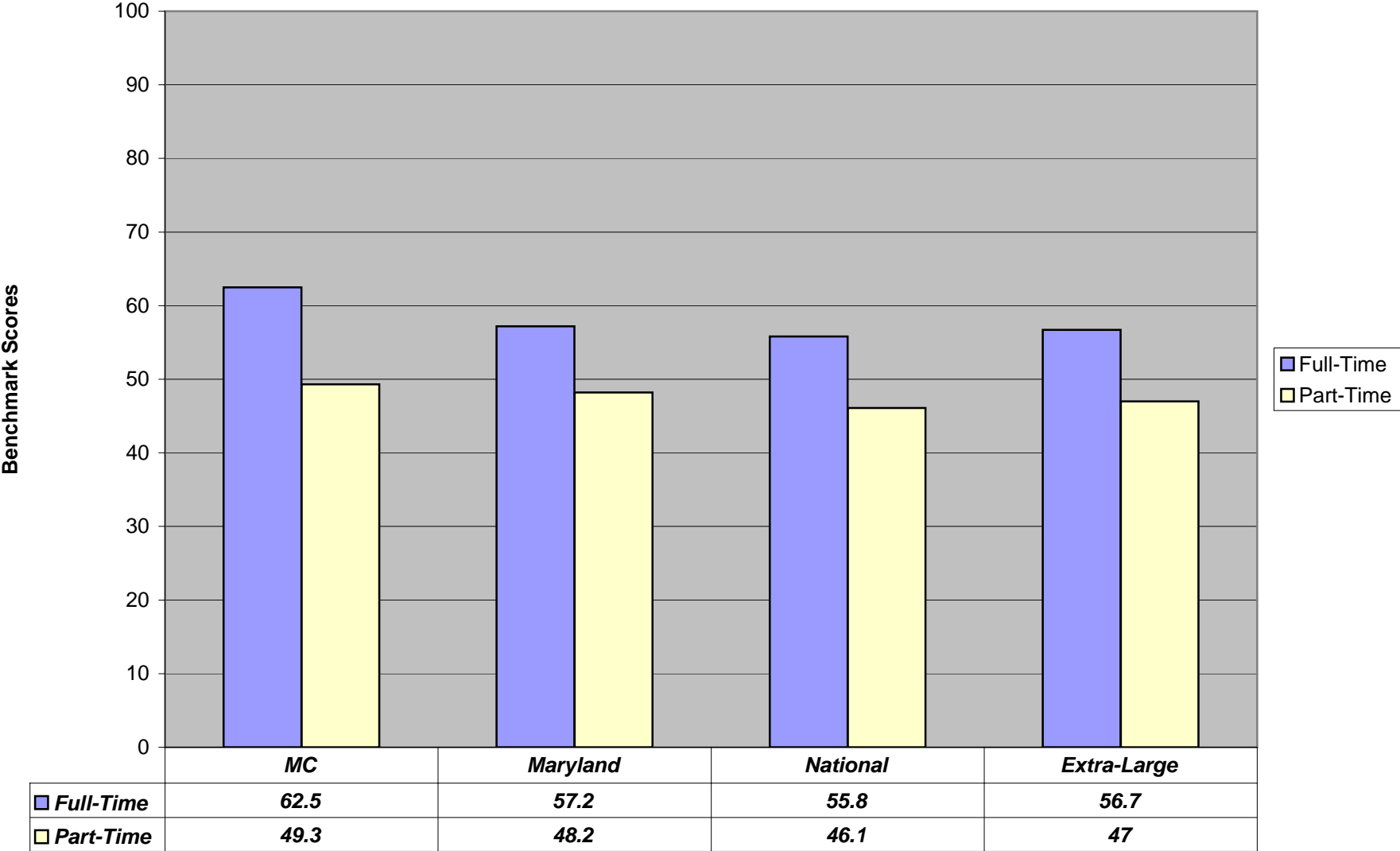
Active & Collaborative Learning



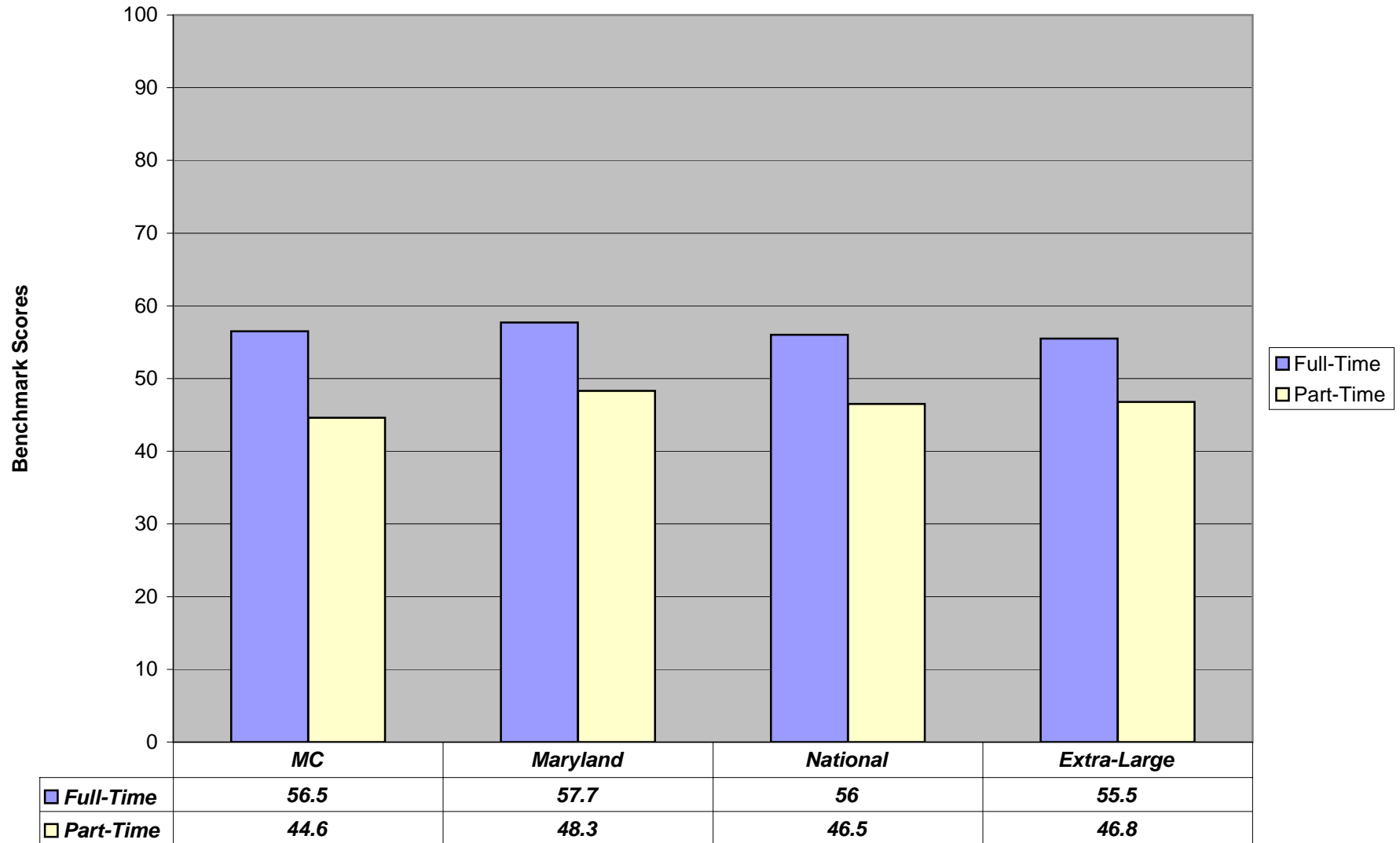
Student Effort



Academic Challenge



Student-Faculty Interaction



Support for Learners

