



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
AIKEN

NSSSE



# The Outcomes of General Education at USC Aiken

Presented by  
Braden J. Hosch, Ph.D.  
Director of Institutional Effectiveness

October 3 and 11, 2006



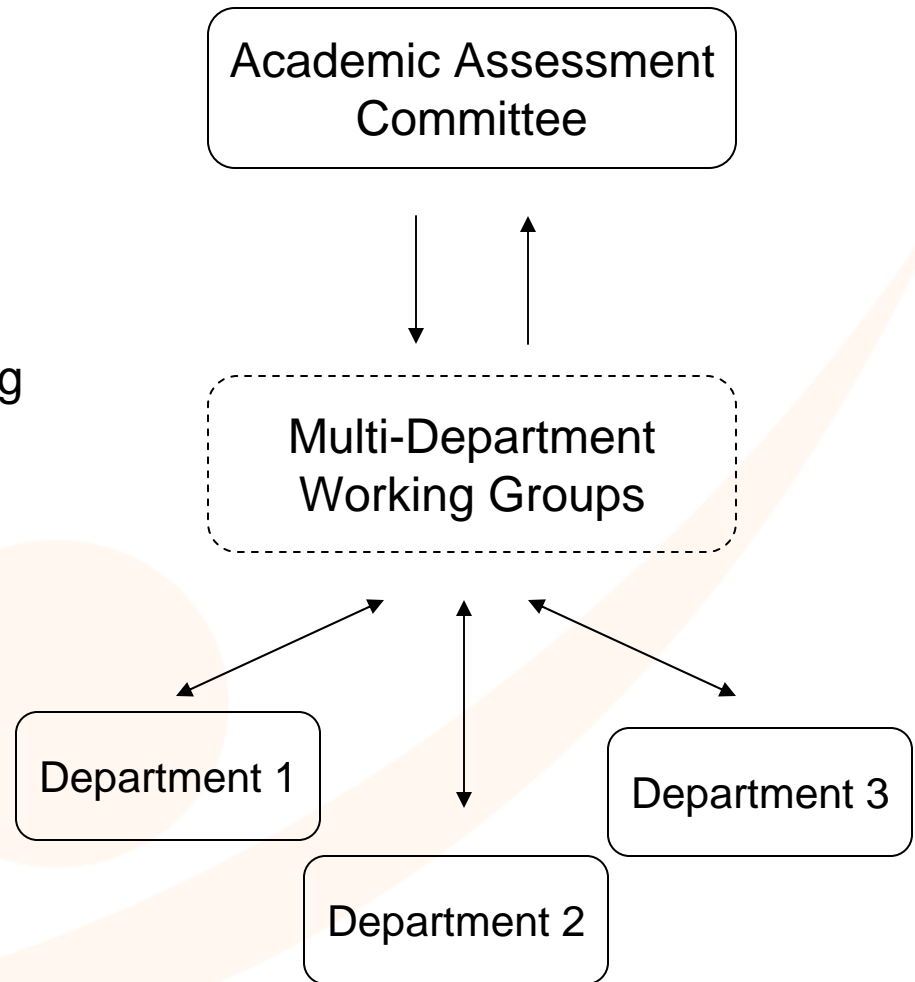
# General Education 2003-2006

- USC Aiken Strategic Plan (2003):
  - Assigns responsibility for measurement of learning to Departments
  - Charges Academic Assessment Cmte to monitor
- *SACS Principles of Accreditation* (2004)
  - 3.3.1. The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.
  - 3.5.1. The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.



# Outcomes

- Development & Articulation
  - Started by Academic Assessment Cmte Based on Charge from Strategic Plan
  - Begun Fall 2003, Completed Spring 2006
  - Project was *descriptive* – what are the outcomes of the current curricular requirements
  - Faculty from departments offering courses fulfilling general education requirements developed and approved outcomes
  - Outcomes reviewed and approved by Academic Assessment Cmte.





# Assessment Matrix

General Education Area	NSSE	Alumni Survey		Curricular Measurement
		% Above Avg., Outstanding	(Rank out of 11 outcomes)	
<b>Oral / Written Communication</b>				
- Reading Comprehension	NA	77.2	1	*
- Written Communication	+	67.0	5	x
- Oral Communication	+	60.0	6	*
<b>Mathematics, Statistics &amp; Logic</b>	+	52.6	8	*
<b>Foreign Language</b>	NA	11.9	11	x
<b>Natural Sciences</b>	NA	40.4	10	x
<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences</b>	+	73.9	2	*
<b>Humanities</b>	+	44.5	9	
<b>World Civilizations</b>	NA	59.1	7	*
<b>American Political Institutions</b>	+	68.3	3	x
<b>Cross Cultural Understanding</b>	+	59.1	7	

+ Above national mean on NSSE, x Data available, \* Data collected in 2007-08



# Respondent Characteristics

	USCA				All NSSE			
	2004		2006		2004		2006	
	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR
Response Rate					Inst. = 474		Inst. = 557	
Overall	32%		59%		38%		34%	
By Class	32%	32%	63%	54%	38%	40%	33%	36%
Number of Respondents	150	106	343	260	44,483	45,263	130,906	128,473
Gender								
Female	68%	68%	73%	69%	67%	66%	64%	64%
Male	32%	32%	27%	31%	33%	34%	36%	36%
Race/Ethnicity								
White	70%	73%	61%	70%	77%	77%	74%	74%
African American/Black	22%	17%	28%	18%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Other/Multi-racial	8%	10%	8%	8%	16%	15%	14%	14%
International/For'n Nat'l	2%	5%	5%	2%	5%	5%	5%	5%

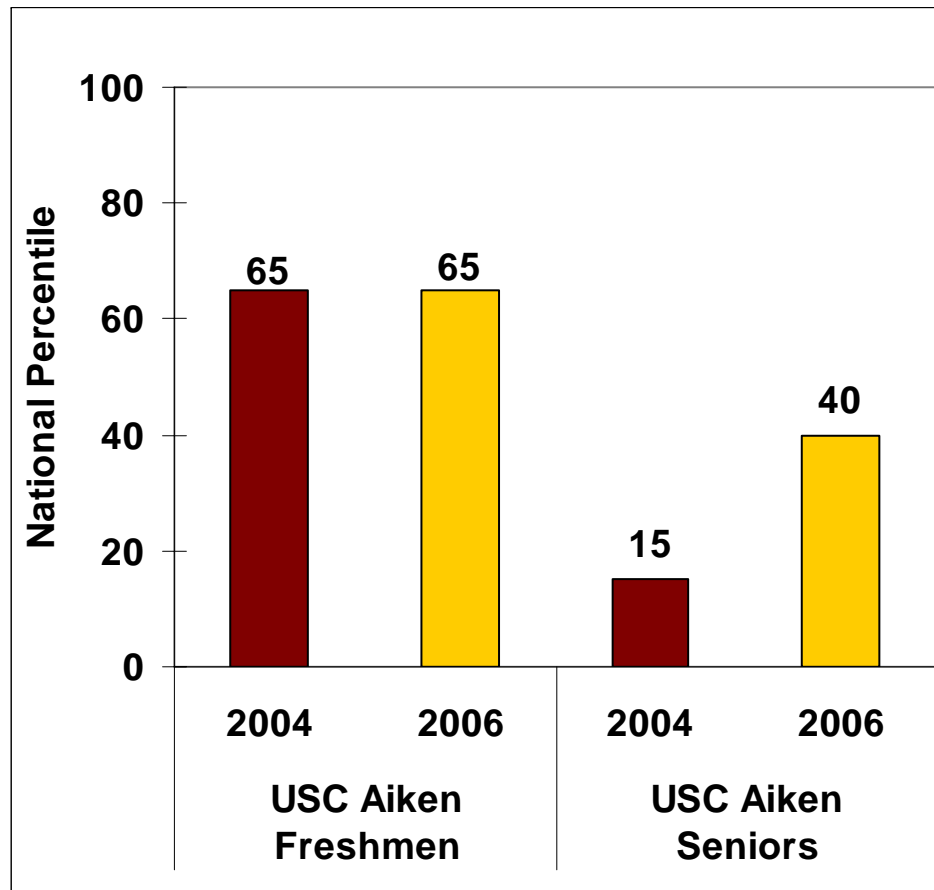


# Respondent Characteristics

	USCA				NSSE			
	2004		2006		2004		2006	
	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR	FY	SR
Class Level			57%	43%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Enrollment Status								
Full-time	99%	80%	95%	90%	96%	85%	95%	86%
Part-time	1%	20%	5%	10%	4%	15%	5%	14%
Place of Residence								
On-campus	29%	8%	49%	9%	69%	24%	71%	20%
Off-campus	71%	92%	51%	91%	31%	76%	29%	80%
Transfer Students	10%	47%	6%	48%	8%	38%	9%	39%
Age								
Non-traditional (24+)	3%	35%	2%	40%	6%	31%	6%	31%
Traditional (<24)	97%	65%	98%	60%	94%	69%	94%	69%



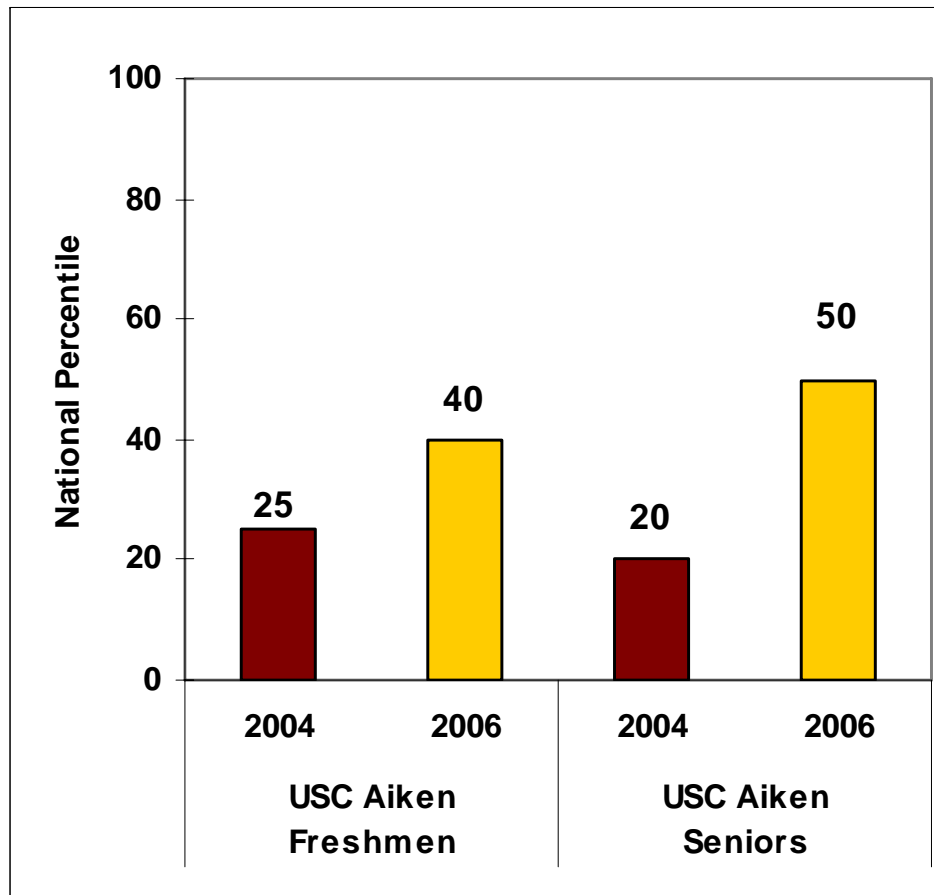
# Level of Academic Challenge



- Time spent preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, etc. related to academic program)
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more; number of written papers or reports of between 5 and 19 pages; and number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizing analysis of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory
- Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- Coursework emphasizing the making of judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizing applications of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Working harder than you thought you could to meet an instructors standards of expectations
- Campus environment emphasizing time studying and on academic work



## Enriching Educational Experiences

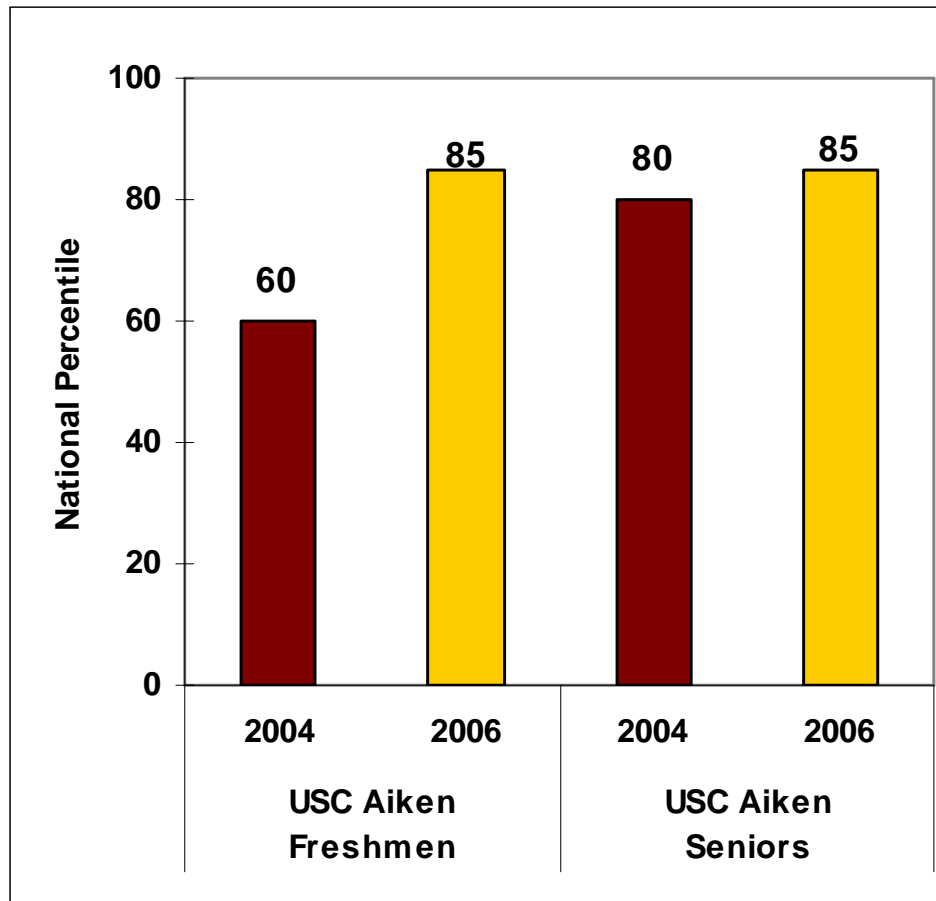


- Participating in co-curricular activities
- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- Community service or volunteer work
- Foreign language coursework & study abroad
- Independent study or self-designed major
- Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam)
- Serious conversations with students of different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
- Serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity
- Using electronic technology to discuss or complete an assignment
- Campus environment encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Participate in a learning community





# Supportive Campus Environment



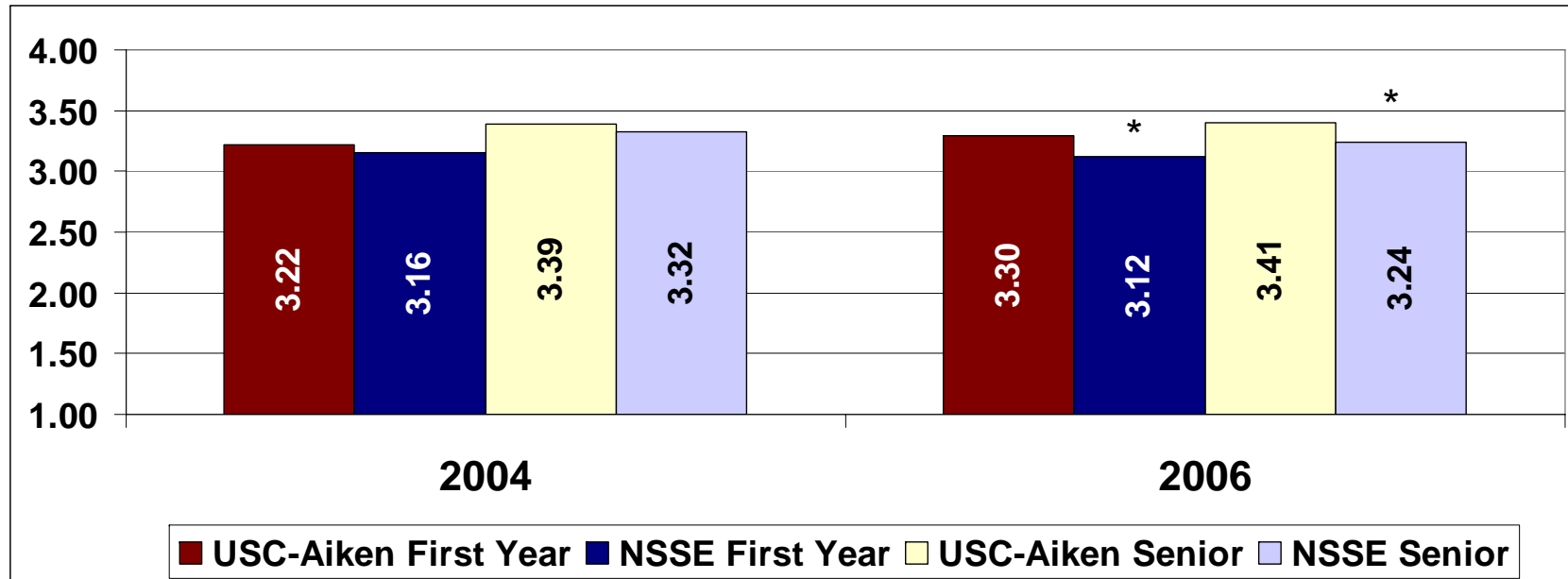
- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices



## Overall General Education: NSSE Results

Acquiring a broad general education

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

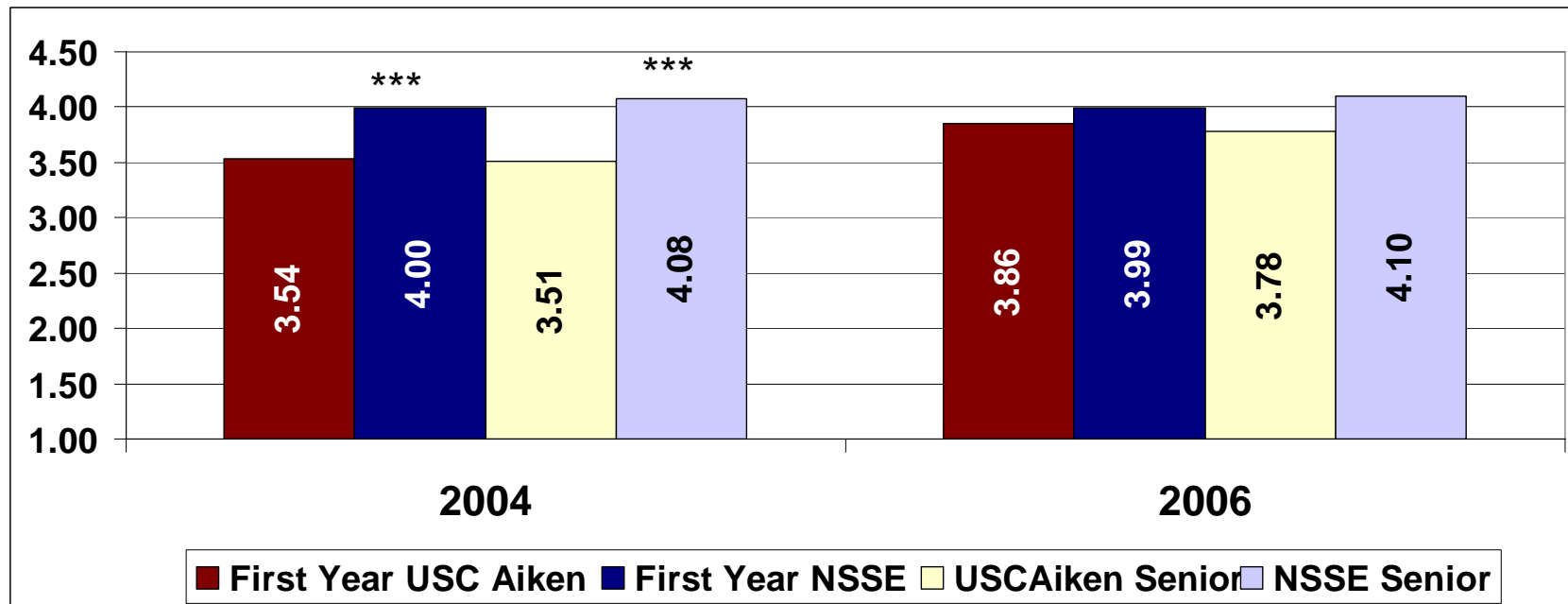


# Time Usage

Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)

About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

(1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=more than 30 hrs/wk)



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

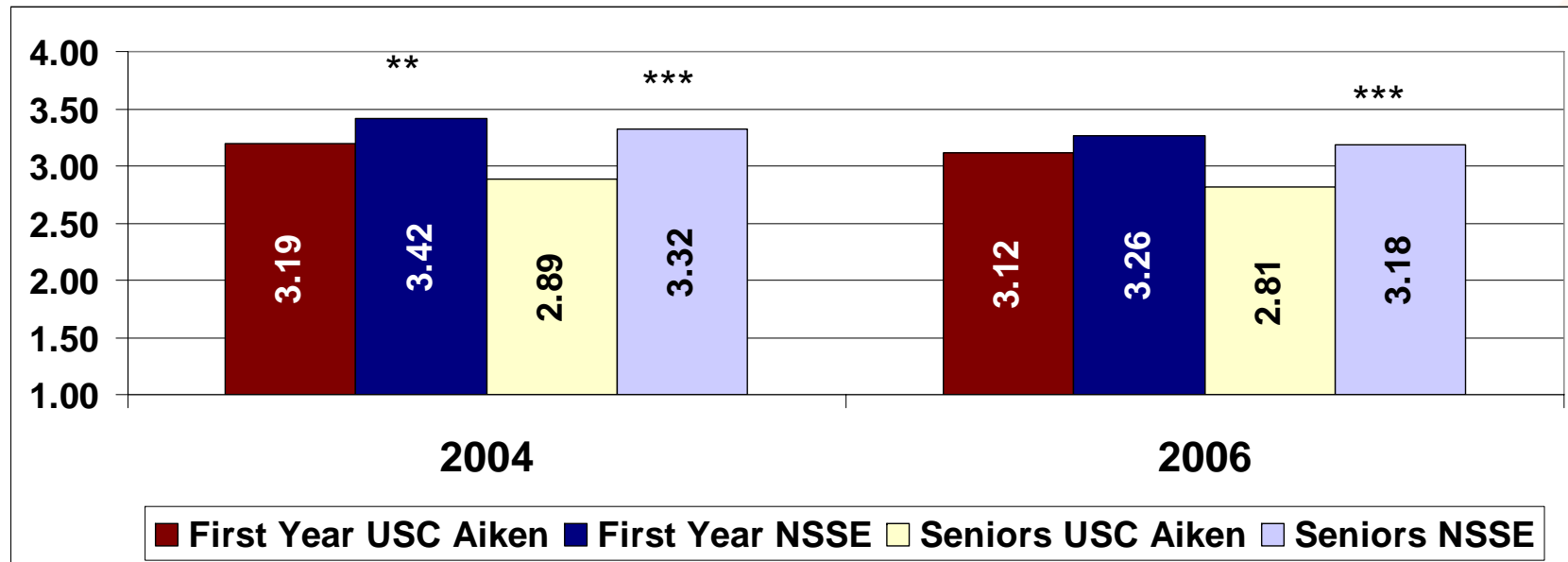


# Reading & Writing

Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings

*During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?*

*(1=none, 2=between 1 and 4, 3=between 5 and 10, 4=between 11 and 20, 5=more than 20)*



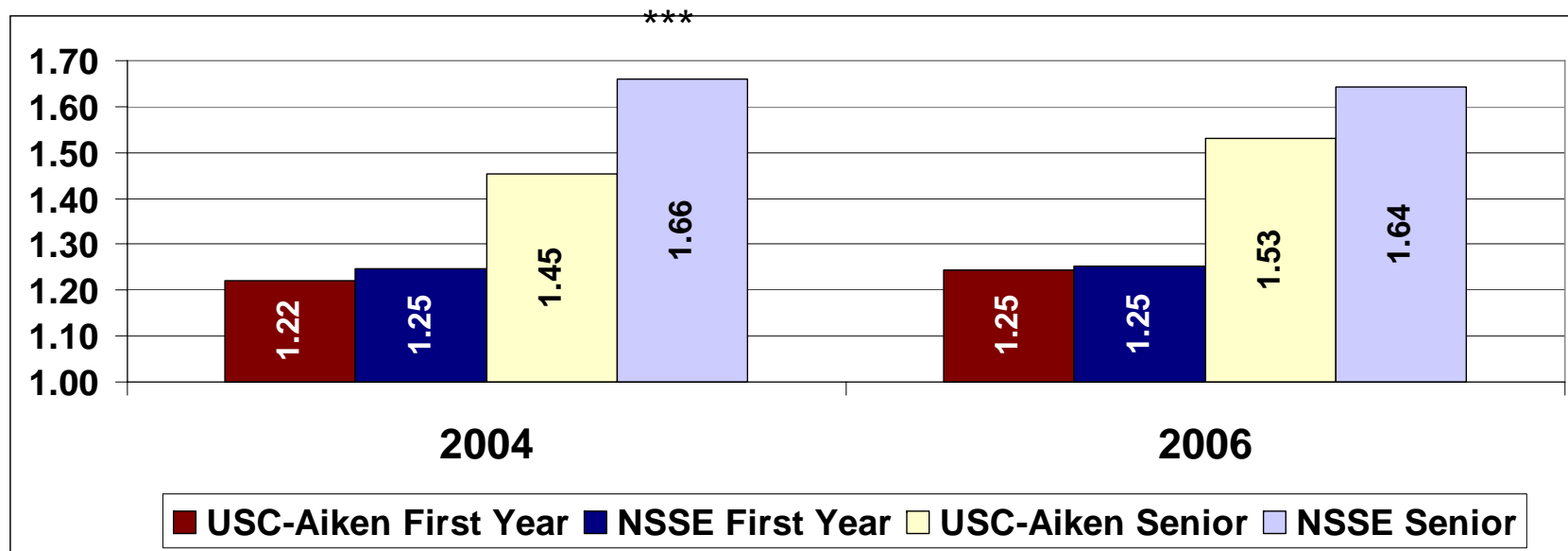
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



# Reading & Writing

Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more

(1=none, 2=between 1 and 4, 3=between 5 and 10, 4=between 11 and 20, 5=more than 20)



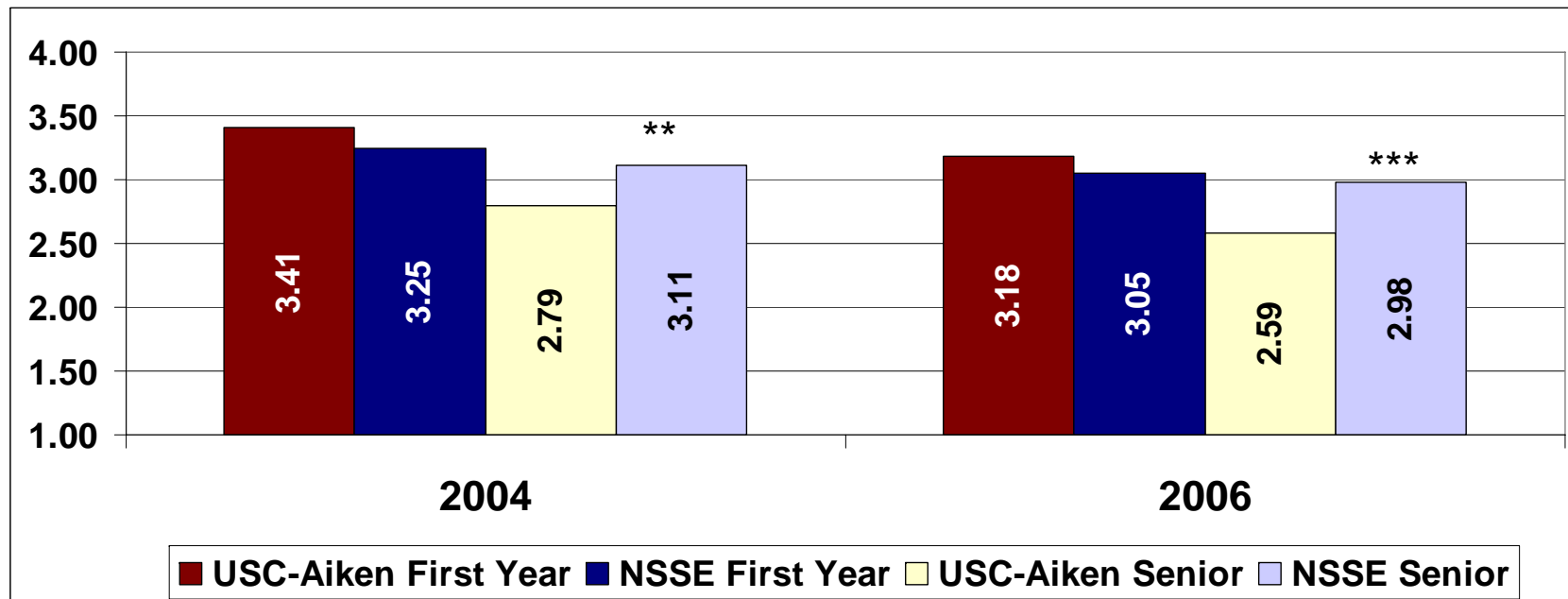
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



# Reading & Writing

Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages

(1=none, 2=between 1 and 4, 3=between 5 and 10, 4=between 11 and 20, 5=more than 20)



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



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## Oral and Written Communication

**Drawing upon a foundation of critical thinking skills, students will listen and read with understanding and communicate effectively in speech and in writing.**

- Reading Comprehension
- Oral Communication
- Written Communication





# Oral and Written Communication

- Reading Comprehension

Assessment Results	NSSE	Not Applicable
	Alumni Survey Understanding written information	Ranked 1st out of 11 general education outcomes 77.2% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates
	Curricular Measures	Data expected in 2006-07
Actions Taken	Additional emphasis on and measurement of reading comprehension and analysis of written materials have been added to English 101 and 102 in 2005. Course specific assessment data are expected in 2006-07.	





# Oral and Written Communication

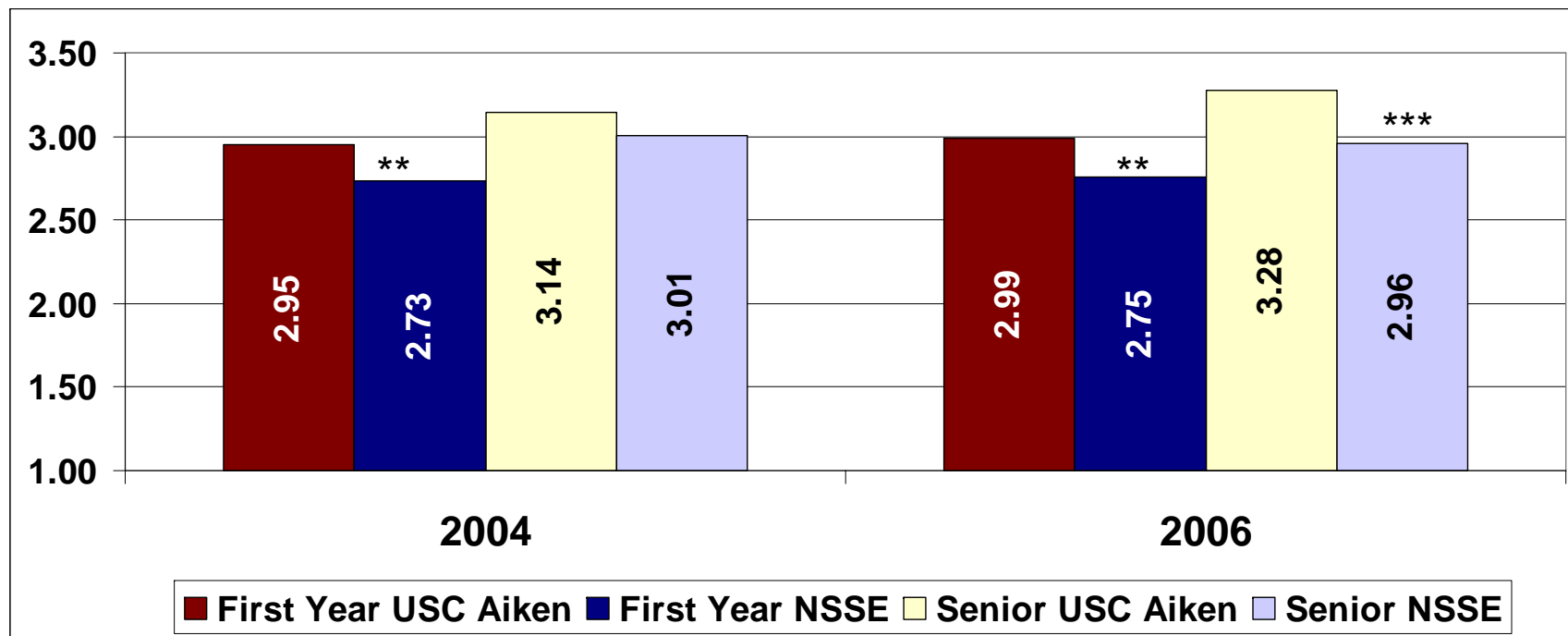
- Oral Communication

Assessment Results	NSSE	11d. Speaking clearly and effectively: above national benchmark for freshmen and seniors (2006). Effect size = small.
	Alumni Survey Speaking effectively	Ranked 6th out of 11 general education outcomes 60.0% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates
	Curricular Measures	Data expected in 2006-07
Actions Taken	Faculty in the Communications Department are refining a rubric to be used in ACOM 241 Public Speaking and ACOM 201 Interpersonal Communications. Preliminary data will be available for analysis in 2006-07.	



# Oral Communication NSSE Results

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\* Significant at  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* Significant at  $p < 0.001$



# Oral and Written Communication

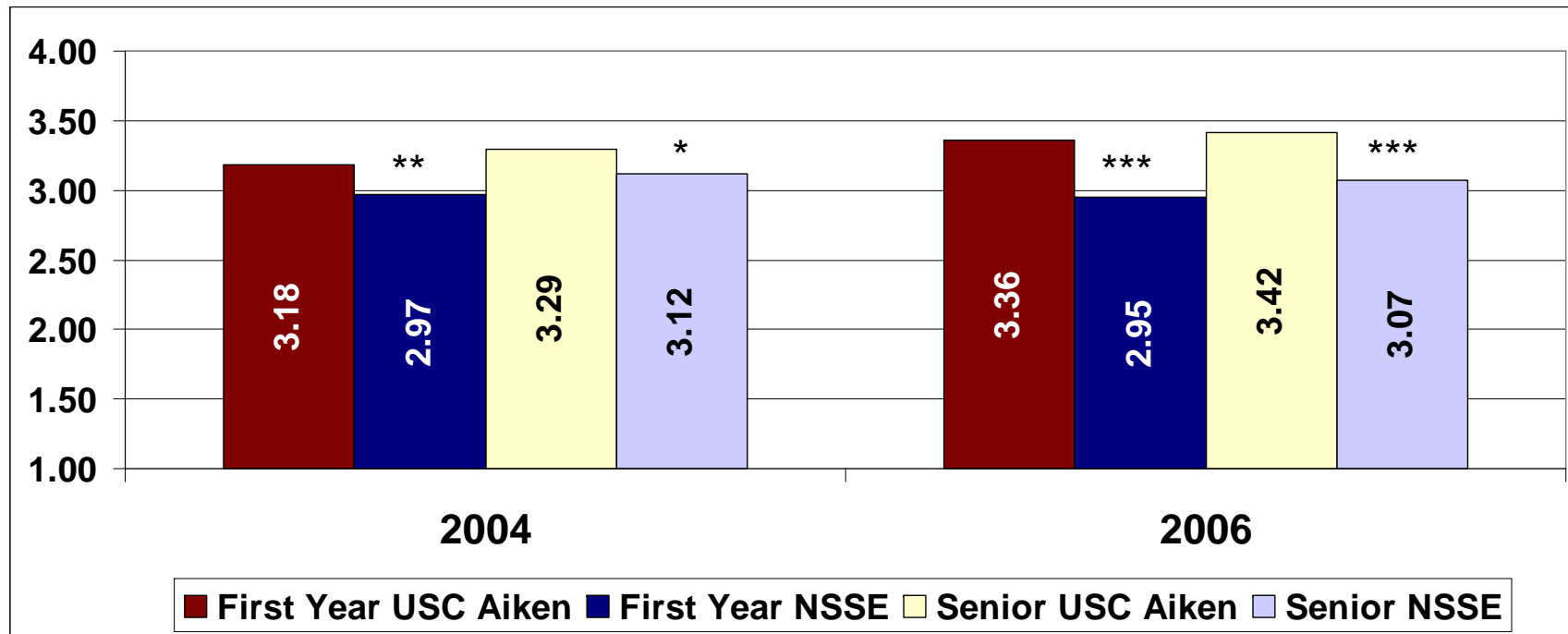
- Written Communication

Assessment Results	NSSE	11d. Writing clearly and effectively: above national benchmark for freshmen and seniors (2006) Effect size = medium					
	Alumni Survey Writing effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ranked 5th out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>•67.0% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>					
	Curricular Measures	<p>Junior Writing Portfolio. Skill Ranking (2003-06):</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1. Clarity of Purpose, 3.47</td> <td>4. Lang. &amp; Style, 3.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Quality of Thought, 3.46</td> <td>5. Use of Sources, 3.22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Org. of Content, 3.43</td> <td>6. Grammar, 3.18</td> </tr> </table>	1. Clarity of Purpose, 3.47	4. Lang. & Style, 3.30	2. Quality of Thought, 3.46	5. Use of Sources, 3.22	3. Org. of Content, 3.43
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2. Quality of Thought, 3.46	5. Use of Sources, 3.22						
3. Org. of Content, 3.43	6. Grammar, 3.18						
Actions Taken	<p>Emphasis on Use of Sources and research methods throughout the curriculum in several majors beginning in 2004 has increased the mean score for Use of Sources. Departments and Schools use this indicator to monitor student writing ability, and some units have set passage of this portfolio as a pre-requisite for selected upper-level classes.</p>						



## Written Communication NSSE Results

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\* Significant at  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* Significant at  $p < 0.001$



# Mathematics, Statistics & Logic

Students will exhibit computational competence and employ mathematical and logical thinking to solve abstract and applied problems relevant to a dynamic global environment.

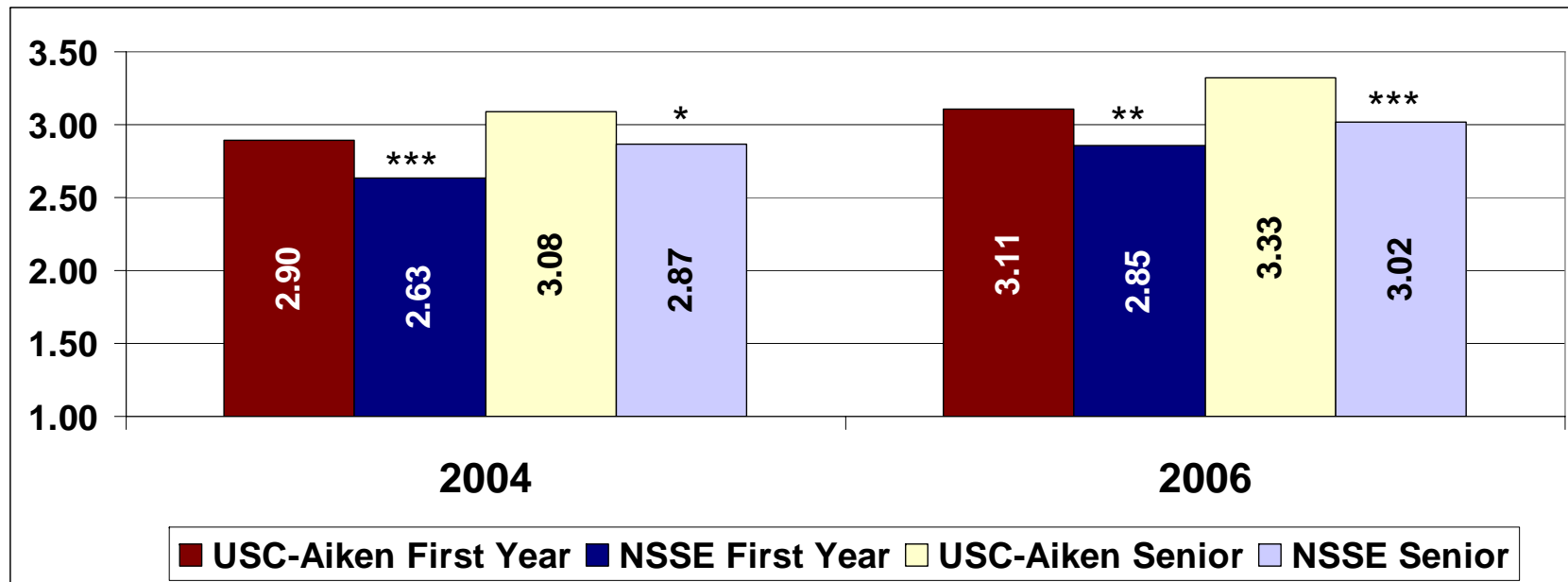
Assessment Results	NSSE	11f. Analyzing Quantitative Problems: above national benchmark for freshmen and seniors (2006) Effect size = small
	Alumni Survey Using Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 8th out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 52.6% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>
	Curricular Measures	• Initial data collected in Spring 2006; data collection will be ongoing and analysis will begin in 2006-07
Actions Taken	Assessment data and a high DFW rate in some math courses has prompted more focused assessment activities. A common final exam was adopted for all sections of Math 108 College Algebra in Spring 2006.	



# Mathematics: NSSE Results

Analyzing quantitative problems

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



# Foreign Language

*Students will demonstrate proficiency at the introductory level in the target language consistent with ACTFL standards for foreign language education.*

Assessment Results	NSSE	Not Applicable					
	Alumni Survey Speaking a Second Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 11th out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 11.9% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>					
	Curricular Measures	<table> <tr> <td>1. Reading, 3.78</td> <td>4. Speaking, 3.51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Listening, 3.60</td> <td>5. Culture, 3.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Writing, 3.55</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1. Reading, 3.78	4. Speaking, 3.51	2. Listening, 3.60	5. Culture, 3.28	3. Writing, 3.55
1. Reading, 3.78	4. Speaking, 3.51						
2. Listening, 3.60	5. Culture, 3.28						
3. Writing, 3.55							
Actions Taken	Because this assessment has just been implemented, coordinated actions have not been taken. The faculty review of initial data from Fall 2005 revealed that faculty members were surprised that students' weakest performance was in the area of culture						



# Natural Sciences

*Successful students will demonstrate the ability to apply principles of science to show their understanding of the biological and physical world.*

	NSSE	Not Applicable
Assessment Results	Alumni Survey Understanding and applying scientific principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 10th out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 40.4% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>
	Curricular Measures	<p>87% Understand the difference between data or observations and interpretation.</p> <p>76% Use representative nomenclature and define appropriate terminology.</p> <p>65% Describe applicable principles, processes, phenomena, or theories.</p> <p>64% Use appropriate formulas to solve problems</p>
Actions Taken	<p>Because this assessment program is in a pilot stage, a coordination plan of action has not been adopted. Initial findings were reported at a faculty professional development workshop in May 2006. More faculty in the sciences will participate in data collection in 2006-07.</p>	





# Social and Behavioral Sciences

*Students will describe and understand basic principles of human behavior and evaluate how their application can explain everyday occurrences.*

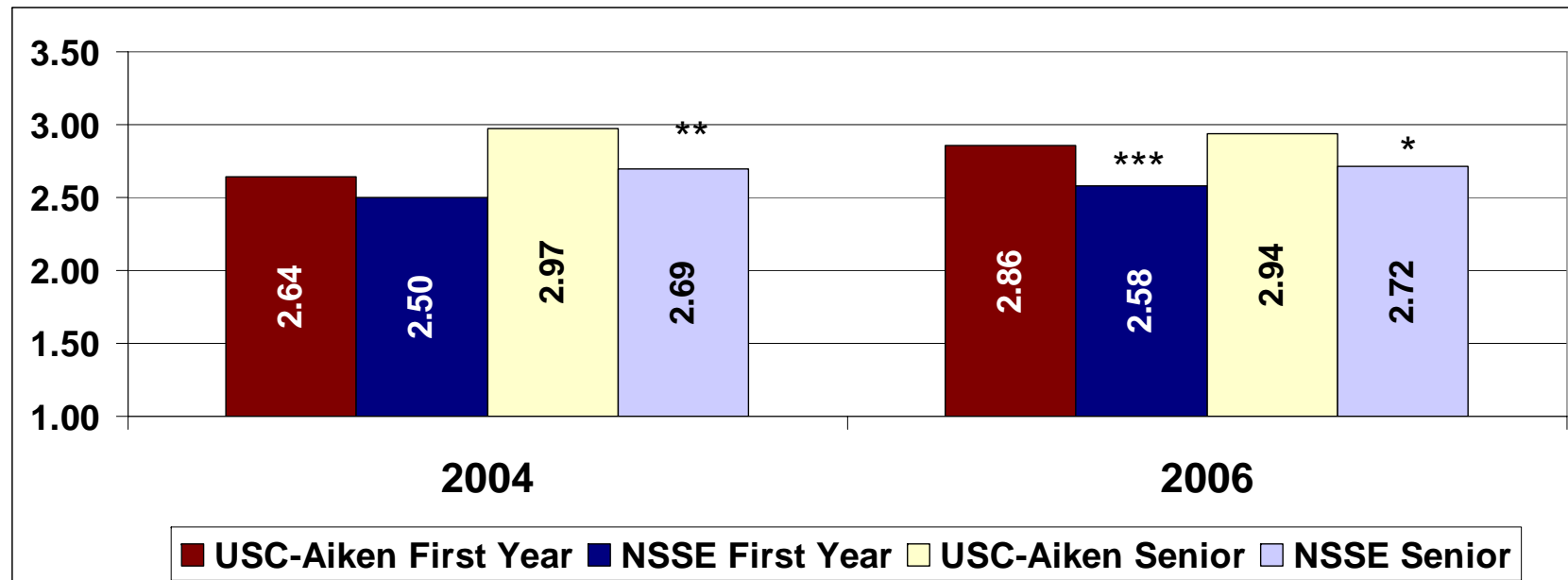
Assessment Results	NSSE	11m. Solving Complex Real-World Problems: above national benchmark for freshmen and seniors (2006) Effect size = small
	Alumni Survey Understanding and applying scientific principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 2nd out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 73.9% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>
	Curricular Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data expected in 2006-07</li> </ul>
Actions Taken	Common learning outcomes for all disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences were developed and approved in 2005-06. Curricular-based measurement will begin in 2006-07 and be monitored for consistency with self-reported assessment measures.	



## Social Sciences: NSSE Results

Solving complex real-world problems

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



# Humanities

*Students will think critically and creatively about what it means to be human through analysis, interpretation, contextualization, and evaluation of what they study in the humanities.*

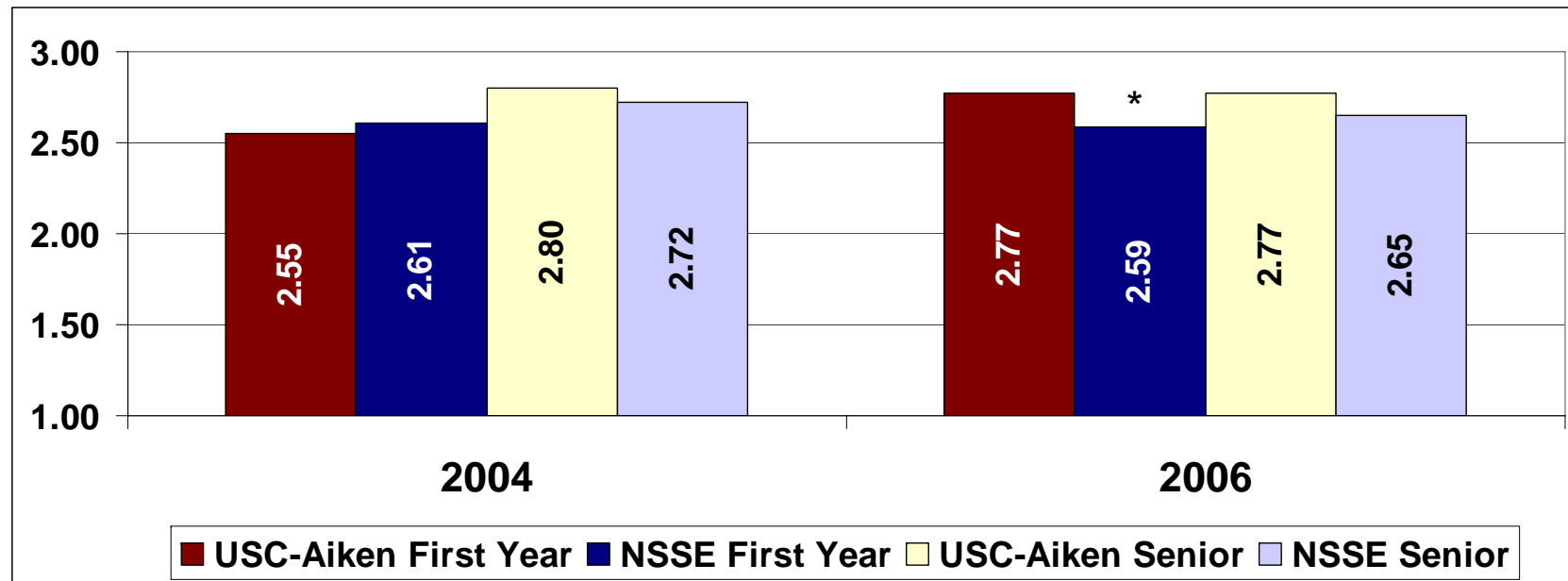
Assessment Results	NSSE	11n. Developing a personal code of values and ethics: above national benchmark for freshmen, at benchmark for seniors (2006). Effect size = small
	Alumni Survey Understanding and appreciating the arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 9th out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 44.5% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>
	Curricular Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data expected in 2006-07</li> </ul>
Actions Taken	Common learning outcomes for all disciplines in the humanities were developed and approved in 2005-06. Curricular-based measurement will begin in 2006-07 and be monitored for consistency with self-reported assessment measures.	



# Humanities: NSSE Results

Developing a personal code of values and ethics

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



# World Civilizations

*Students will demonstrate an awareness of and appreciation for the cultural, political, social, and economic forces in the past that have been instrumental in the evolution of world civilizations.*

Assessment Results	NSSE	Not available.
	Alumni Survey Understanding and appreciating the arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 7th out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 59.1% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>
	Curricular Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data expected in 2006-07</li> </ul>
Actions Taken	Common learning outcomes for courses fulfilling the World Civilizations requirement were developed and approved in 2005-06. Reporting of curricular-based measurement will begin in 2006-07 and be monitored for consistency with self-reported assessment measures.	



# American Political Institutions

*Students will also understand the workings of the American political process and recognize their role in American society.*

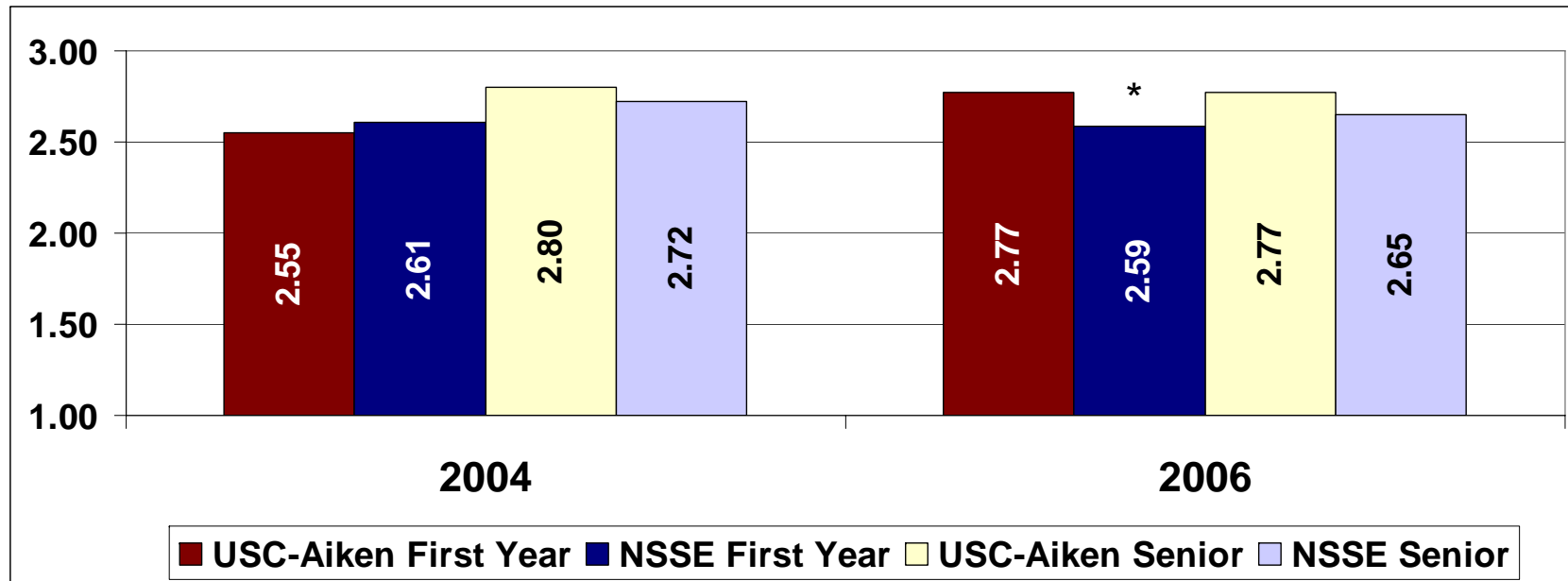
Assessment Results	NSSE	11i. Voting in local, state, or national elections. Above national benchmark for seniors, at benchmark for freshmen (2006). Effect size = small.
	Alumni Survey Understanding Your Rights Responsibilities and Privileges as a Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 3rd out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 59.1% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>
	Curricular Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally developed pre-/post-tests taken by over 2,000 students as of Summer 2005.</li> </ul>
Actions Taken	Each year the results are computer analyzed and results made available to faculty teaching the American government class. Results from assessment in this area have appeared in a peer-reviewed journal (Botsch & Botsch, 2001).	



# Amer. Political Inst.: NSSE Results

Voting in local, state, or national elections

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



# Non-Western

*Students will exhibit a sense of cross-cultural understanding, understand a variety of perspectives, and become effective participants and contributors in a dynamic global society. \*\*\* Placeholder outcome – not approved \*\*\**

Assessment Results	NSSE	11I. Understanding people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Above national benchmark for freshmen and seniors (2006). Effect size = small.
	Alumni Survey Understanding Philosophies and Cultures Different from Your Own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked 7th out of 11 general education outcomes</li> <li>• 59.1% of alumni reported being above average or outstanding compared to other college graduates</li> </ul>
	Curricular Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes for this area are under development</li> </ul>
Actions Taken	Objective-level outcomes for this area of general education are still under development.	

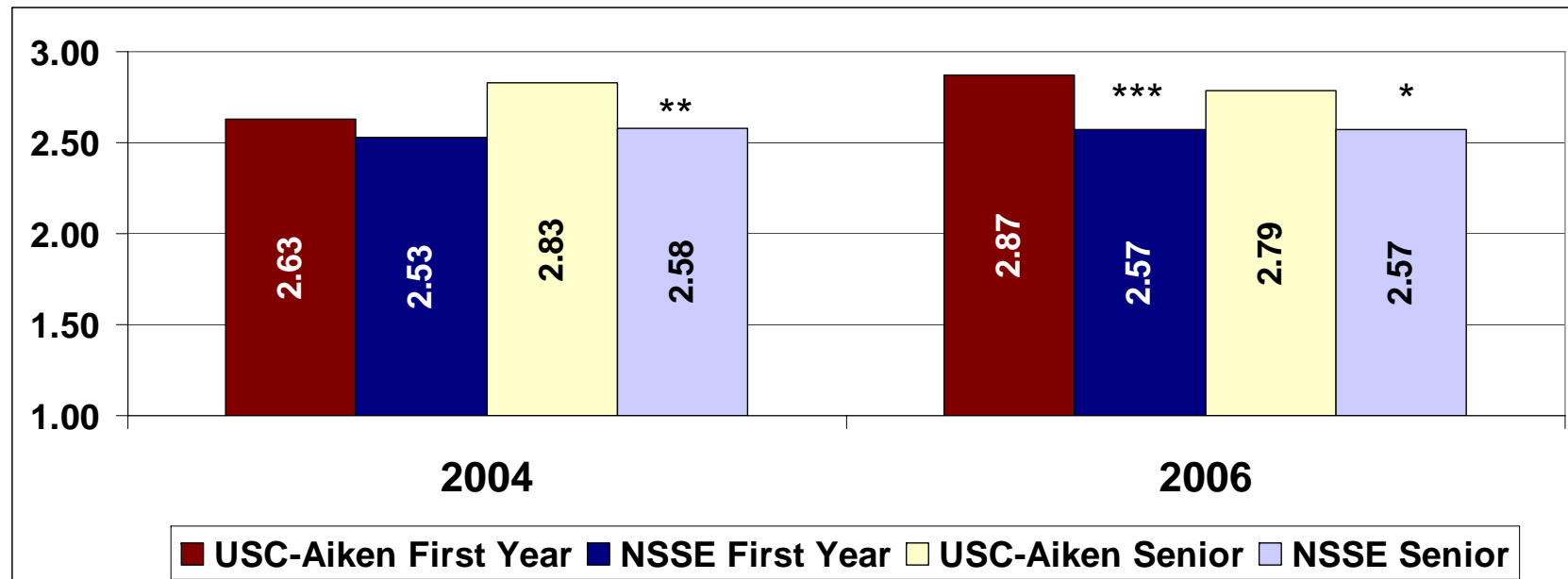




# Non-Western: NSSE Results

Voting in local, state, or national elections

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)*



\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



## Wrap-Up

- Presentation today has focused on fairly generic outcomes and begs the question what *should* USC Aiken students be able to do as a result of general education?
- Identification of curricular requirements (learning processes) should follow identification of appropriate outcomes (what students know, do, think, feel, or believe).

