Civic Engagement on College Campuses
Implications from NSSE and FSSE

Thomas F. Nelson Laird
Mahauganee D. Shaw
Eddie R. Cole

Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

Presentation at the American College Personnel Association Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD March 29, 2011
Presentation Outline

• Overview of NSSE and FSSE
• Purpose of our work
• Civic Engagement items
• Results and Small Group Discussions
• Implications, feedback, campus approaches, and more
What’s NSSE?

• National Survey of Student Engagement
  • Annual spring survey to FYS and SRs
  • Hundreds of institutions participate
  • Assesses exposure to and participation in effective educational practices

• Goal: To query undergraduates directly about their educational experiences
What’s FSSE?

• Faculty Survey of Student Engagement
  - Annual spring survey of faculty members
  - ~150 institutions participate each year
  - Assesses faculty perceptions and encouragement of student engagement

• Goal: to provide additional information for the improvement of undergraduate education
Our Purpose

• To better understand...
  • Students’ civic engagement

• Faculty encouragement of civic engagement

• Institutions’ emphasis on civic engagement
NSSE and FSSE 2010 Civic Engagement Items
Students were asked, which of the following activities they had done or plan to do:

- Run for an elected campus leadership position (e.g., in student government, a club or Greek chapter)
- Volunteer to work on a political issue or campaign
- Manage or provide leadership for a university/college club or organization

Student responses: Done, Plan to do, Do not plan to do, Have not decided
Students were asked, about how often they did each of the following:

- Attended a speech about political or social issues that was **not** a part of a class assignment
- Supported a political or social cause by organizing, petitioning, or protesting
- Attended a meeting where students discussed campus issues or policies among themselves
- Contributed to a political blog or other electronic form of political action

Student responses: Very often, Often, Sometimes, Never
Students were asked, about how often they did each of the following:

Proposed ideas at a meeting where students discussed campus issues or policies among themselves

Learned more about how local, state or national government functions through coursework

Attended a meeting where administrators or faculty discussed campus issues or policies with students

Refused to buy a product because of the policies of the company that produced it

Student responses: Very often, Often, Sometimes, Never
Faculty were asked, whether they encouraged students to do the activities listed on the three previous slides

Faculty responses: Yes, No

Note: 2 activities were only asked of students
Students and faculty were asked to what extent does their institution emphasize each of the following?

Resolving controversies with civility

Being aware of global, political, and social issues

Weighing the pros and cons of different positions on political or social issues

Developing strategies for political and social action

Organizing people for political and social action

Responses: Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little
Student Civic Engagement
## Student Civic Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% FY Plan to Do</th>
<th>% FY Done</th>
<th>% SR Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage or provide leadership for a club or organization</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run for an elected campus leadership position</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to work on a political issue or campaign</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned more about how local, state or national government functions</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through coursework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to buy a product because of the policies of the company that</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>produced it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a speech about political or social issues that was <strong>not</strong></td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a part of a class assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a meeting where students discussed campus issues or policies</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among themselves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Responding “Sometimes” or “Often” or “Very often”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>FY</th>
<th>SR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended a meeting where administrators or faculty discussed campus issues or policies…</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed ideas at a meeting where students discussed campus issues or policies…</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported a political or social cause by organizing, petitioning, or protesting</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to a political blog or other electronic form of political action</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Responding “Sometimes” or “Often” or “Very often”
Some Additional Findings

- **Male** students more likely to be civically engaged than females
- **FT** students more likely to be civically engaged than PT
- Students at **Baccalaureate inst** more likely to be civically engaged than those at other types of inst
Small Group Discussion 1

• Anything surprising?
• Is this enough engagement?
• If you were going to try to change something, where would you start? How?
Faculty Encouragement of Civic Engagement
## Faculty Encouragement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% LD Yes</th>
<th>% UD Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage or provide leadership for a club or organization</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run for an elected campus leadership position</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to work on a political issue or campaign</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Encouragement (cont.)</td>
<td>% LD Yes</td>
<td>% UD Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a speech about political or social issues that was not a part of a class assignment</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a meeting where administrators or faculty discussed campus issues or policies...</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a meeting where students discussed campus issues or policies among themselves</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty Encouragement (cont.)

- Learn more about how local, state or national government functions through coursework: 32% LD, 35% UD
- Support a political or social cause by organizing, petitioning, or protesting: 20% LD, 19% UD
- Refuse to buy a product because of the policies of the company that produced it: 19% LD, 18% UD
Some Additional Findings

- **Women** faculty more likely to encourage civic engagement than men
- **FT** faculty much more likely to encourage civic engagement than PT
- Faculty at **baccalaureate** inst more likely to encourage civic engagement than those at research inst
Small Group Discussion 2

• Anything surprising?

• What should faculty encourage more? Less?

• Which activities do you and your colleagues encourage? How? More than faculty?
Institutional Climate for Civic Engagement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Emphasis</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolving controversies with civility</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being aware of global, political, and social issues</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighing the pros and cons of different positions on political or social issues</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing strategies for political and social action</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing people for political and social action</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Responding “Quite a bit” or “Very much”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Emphasis</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolving controversies with civility</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being aware of global, political, and social issues</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighing the pros and cons of different positions on political or social issues</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing strategies for political and social action</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing people for political and social action</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Responding “Quite a bit” or “Very much”
Some Additional Findings

- **FT** students report greater inst emphasis on civic engagement than PT

- Most other student, faculty, and inst differences seem small or non-existant
Small Group Discussion 3

• What explains changes from first 2 items to last 2 items?

• What should student affairs professional emphasize?

• How do these types of civic engagement connect to your institutional mission?
Implications & Ideas for Moving Forward
Implications

- Room for increased participation
- Faculty reluctance
- Better connect PT students and PT faculty to civic engagement
- Climate/culture for civic engagement
- ???????
Moving Forward

• Looking at add’l group and inst diff
• Relationships with other engagement
• Survey of student affairs professionals?
• Programs to promote encouragement of civic engagement?
• ????????
Thank you!!

fsse@indiana.edu