

NSSE
national survey of student engagement

2011 Assessment Institute
Indianapolis, Indiana


**Assessing Engagement in the First Year:
Lessons from BCSSE and NSSE**

Presented by:
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BCSSE Project Manager NSSE Institute



Overview

- *Student success in the first year of college is no accident.*
- *Assessment results should inform first-year experience programs, retention initiatives, and other efforts that introduce students to expectations and values of the institution and help them achieve success.*




What do we know? What data inform the First Year Experience?

- Research on effective educational practices & expectations (Keup, 2007; Miller, Kuh, Schuh, 2005; AAC&U Greater Expectations, 2002; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2005; Schilling & Schilling, 2005; Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot, 2005)
- Resources from National Resource Center for the First Year Experience (University of South Carolina)
- Cooperative Institutional Research Program – 40 years of data on entering students; YFCY
- College Student Experience Questionnaire Research Program (CSXQ & CSEQ)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)
- Foundations of Excellence project
- Institutional data on entering students; gateway course success rates; persistence data; early alert statistics

Overview


Today we will cover:

- Overview of BCSSE
 - Purpose, Survey Content, Reports
- Overview of NSSE
 - Purpose, Survey Content, Reports
- Using BCSSE and NSSE Data to Understand Your Students
- Using BCSSE and NSSE Data to Assess Learning Communities and Service Learning Programs




Audience

- **What is your interest in this session?**
- **Who has NSSE results?**
- **Who has BCSSE results?**



Purpose


Purpose of BCSSE is to measure entering first-year students' pre-college academic and co-curricular experiences, as well as their expectations and attitudes for participating in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year.



Survey Content

There are 3 sections to the BCSSE survey


- 1) First section asks students about their high school experiences (Q's 1 – 12)
- 2) Second section asks students about their expectations and beliefs regarding their first-year of college (Q's 13 – 18 & 21 – 23)
- 3) The last section asks students about background characteristics (Q 19, 20, 24 - 32)



Administration

Paper, Web, or Mixed Modes


1. Paper group administration
 - Orientation, Welcome Week, etc.
2. Web group administration
 - While students are in computer lab, etc.
3. Web email administration
 - Web link emailed to students



Reports


Four reports are provided:

1. BCSSE Report (Summer/Fall 2010)
2. BCSSE Advising (Summer/Fall 2010)
3. Grand Frequencies and Means (Fall 2010)
 - a) Overall
 - b) Institution types
4. BCSSE/NSSE report (Summer 2011)



Survey Content


BCSSE Scales	
<i>High School Academic Engagement</i>	Engagement in educationally relevant behaviors during the last year of high school.
<i>Expected Academic Engagement</i>	Expected engagement in educationally relevant behaviors during the first year of college.
<i>Expected Academic Perseverance</i>	Student certainty that they will persist in the face of academic adversity.
<i>Expected Academic Difficulty</i>	Expected academic difficulty during the first year of college.
<i>Perceived Academic Preparation</i>	Student perception of their academic preparation.
<i>Importance of Campus Environment</i>	Student-rated importance that the institution provides a challenging and supportive environment.



Brief Description NSSE

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

- ❖ Collects data from first-year and senior students near the end of the academic year regarding their academic engagement.
- ❖ NSSE collects data regarding "good practices" in undergraduate education that reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college.



Brief Description NSSE

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

- ❖ Level of Academic Challenge
 - Time spend preparing for class (Q9a)
- ❖ Active and Collaborative Learning
 - Worked with other students on projects during class (Q1g)
- ❖ Student-Faculty Interaction
 - Talked about career plans with a faculty member (Q1o)
- ❖ Enriching Educational Experiences
 - Talking with students of a different race or ethnicity (Q1u)
- ❖ Supportive Campus Environment.
 - Campus provides support you need to help you succeed academically (Q10b)

NSSE Deliverables

- **Institutional Report**
 - **Comparison Reports**
 - Respondent characteristics (Demographic Information)
 - Means and Frequencies (item averages & response percentages)
 - Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice
 - Multi-year BM report
 - Major Field reports
 - Data file (student-identified)

Survey Content

Many of these questions are designed to be matched with NSSE data.

Survey Content

BCSSE

14 During the coming school year, about how often do you expect to do each of the following?

	Very often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Make a class presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NSSE

a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions

b. Made a class presentation

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Using BCSSE and NSSE Data

What can your campus learn about first year students and the quality of the first year experience using your BCSSE and NSSE reports?

Sample Framing Questions: Using BCSSE & NSSE to Assess the First Year Experience

1. What is the support students need to be successful? What did they do in high school and what do they expect in college?
2. What is the experience of students in the first year related to active learning – *how much are they doing?*
3. Do our FY students experience a more supportive climate than comparison institutions?
4. How do First Generation students fare?
5. Has our Learning Community had an impact?

BCSSE Reports and Academic Preparation

To what extent do entering students think they are prepared for college level work?

Academic Preparation
 Self-reports of academic preparedness may signal a student's likelihood of success. This scale measures the degree of confidence students have in their academic abilities. Items include how prepared students are to:

- Write clearly and effectively
- Speak clearly and effectively
- Think critically and analytically
- Analyze math or quantitative problems
- Use computing and information technology
- Work effectively with others
- Learn effectively on your own

BCSSE and Academic Preparation

% of entering students at "BCSSEville Univ" that report lacking preparation...

- **Analyze math or quantitative problems** **49%**
- **Write clearly and effectively** **26%**
- **Use computing and information technology** **24%**
- **Speak clearly and effectively** **21%**
- **Think critically and analytically** **18%**
- **Learn effectively on your own** **15%**
- **Work effectively with others** **8%**

What does this suggest for FY practice??

BCSSE Report – Expectations for Time Spent Studying

13. During the coming school year, about how many hours do you think you will spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	0 hours per week	4	0%
	1-5 hours per week	52	3%
	6-10 hours per week	276	18%
	11-15 hours per week	446	30%
	16-20 hours per week	379	25%
	21-25 hours per week	221	15%
	26-30 hours per week	77	5%
	More than 30 hours per week	49	3%
	Total	1,504	100%

79%

The majority of incoming students expected to spend at least 11 hours per week preparing for class.

Using NSSE Data


What can your campus learn about first year experience using your NSSE reports?

A few NSSE examples:

- ❖ Engagement in practices that matter in the first year
- ❖ Perceptions of institutional environment
- ❖ Impact of a program

Experiences that Matter in the First Year

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment
- **Worked with other students on projects during class**
- **Worked with classmates outside of class on assignments**
- Tutored or taught other students
- Participated in a community-based project as part of course
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from readings/classes with faculty outside class
- **Received prompt feedback on your academic performance**
- Worked harder than you thought
- Worked with faculty on activities outside coursework (committees, student life, etc.)
- Discussed ideas from readings/classes with others
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity and those who differ from you - religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values



Using NSSE Data

First-Year Students

		NSSEville	Urban Univ.	Carnegie Class	Asp Peers
Worked with other students on projects during class	Never	8%	9%	14%	12%
	Sometimes	42%	39%	42%	44%
	Often	36%	37%	31%	31%
	Very often	14%	16%	12%	12%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	Never	22%	18%	10%	15%
	Sometimes	41%	42%	42%	42%
	Often	28%	27%	32%	31%
	Very often	9%	13%	15%	13%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Using NSSE Data

	NSSEville	Urban Univ.	Carnegie Class	Asp Peers
Worked with other students on projects during class	FY 2.56	2.59	-.04	2.41
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	FY 2.24	2.36	-.13	2.53

What do these results suggest about collaborative learning at NSSEville?


Using NSSE Data

		First-Year Students			
		NSSEville	Urban Univ.	Carnegie Class	Asp Peers
Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance	Never	8%	8%	8%	7%
	Sometimes	41%	38%	39%	35%
	Often	31%	36%	39%	38%
	Very often	20%	18%	14%	20%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%

Are these results concerning?
Top 10% NSSE schools = 65% "often + very often"

Why is Prompt Feedback important to student learning and success?

- Most useful feedback is timely, apt - provides opportunity for students to use information to improve performance
- New students need immediate feedback to understand what is expected
- Feedback in **first 3 weeks** to modify behaviors accordingly

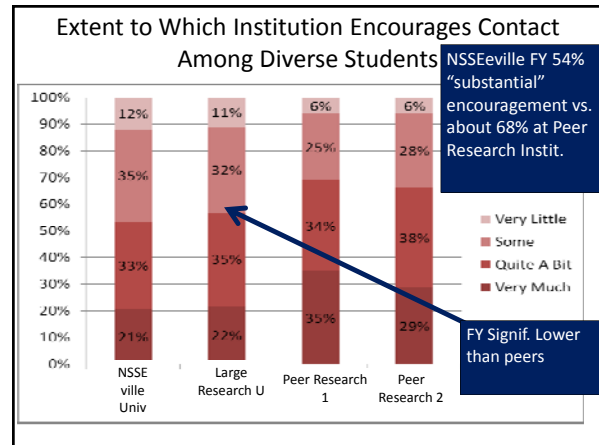


Expectations for High Impact Practices

Percentage of students who "plan to" participate in...

	NSSEville	NSSE 2011
Internship, Practicum, Field Exp.	78%	76%
Study Abroad	15%	43%
Undergraduate Research	13%	36%

What do these results suggest?



Use of BCSE-NSSE Reports

BCSE/NSSE Report	BCSE ¹				NSSE ²			
	High School		Expected FY		First Year		First Year	
How many hours in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Preparing for class (studying, doing homework, rehearsing, etc.)	None	28	2	0	0	2	1	
	1-10	904	63	154	11	166	42	
	11-20	386	27	636	45	189	42	
	More than 20	119	8	636	45	78	16	
	Total	1,437	100	1,426	100	435	100	
Participating in co-curricular activities (arts, clubs, athletics, etc.)	None	94	7	51	4	155	37	
	1-10	474	33	748	52	176	40	
	11-20	613	43	464	32	67	14	
	More than 20	255	18	165	12	37	9	
	Total	1,436	100	1,428	100	435	100	
Working for pay	No	477	33	548	38	212	49	
	Yes	961	67	879	62	223	51	
	Total	1,438	100	1,427	100	435	100	

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- ### EX: BCSE/NSSE: Selected Findings
- **Gaps** between incoming student expectations and first-year experiences. E.g.,
 - Received prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance
 - BCCSE= 77%; NSSE= 50% (“often” and “very often”)
 - Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
 - BCCSE= 79%; NSSE= 61% (“often” and “very often”)
 - Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
 - BCCSE= 73%; NSSE= 52% (“often” and “very often”)

Activity

Have a look at the surveys.

Develop a question you can ask of the data that would be useful to the assessment of the first year experience at your campus.



Learning Communities

NSSEville State is in its fourth year of offering a learning community (LC). Two important goals of the learning community program is to provide additional support and resources for those students that display low confidence in their academic abilities and for those students who expect a difficult academic transition during their first year.

Learning Communities

		Learning Com		
		No	Yes	
High school grades	A	58%	62%	Students in LC were slightly more likely to report A's in high school, read more, and intend to graduate. Interestingly, also slightly more likely to be first generation.
	B	42%	38%	
Read on their own	S +	66%	69%	
	N/V/L	34%	31%	
High school studying	6 +	62%	63%	
	0-5	38%	37%	
Intention to graduate	Yes	86%	91%	
First generation	Yes	31%	35%	
Ethnicity	Asian	5%	4%	
	Black	7%	10%	
	Caucasian	74%	78%	
	Hispanic	6%	5%	
	Other	8%	3%	

Learning Communities

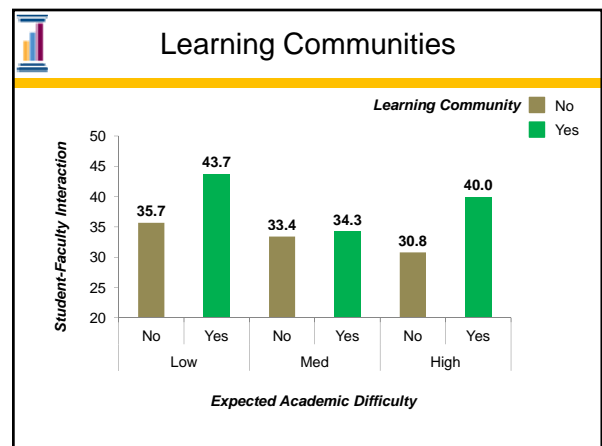
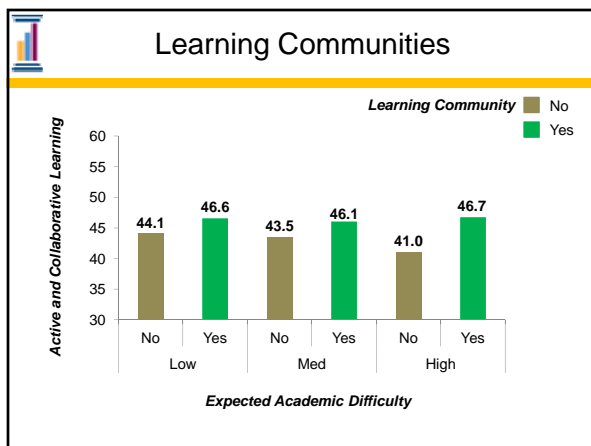
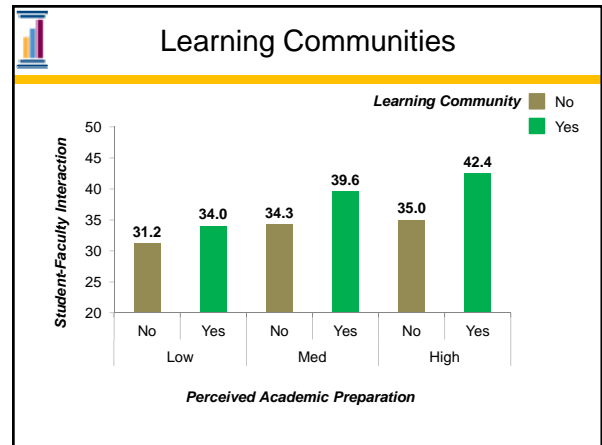
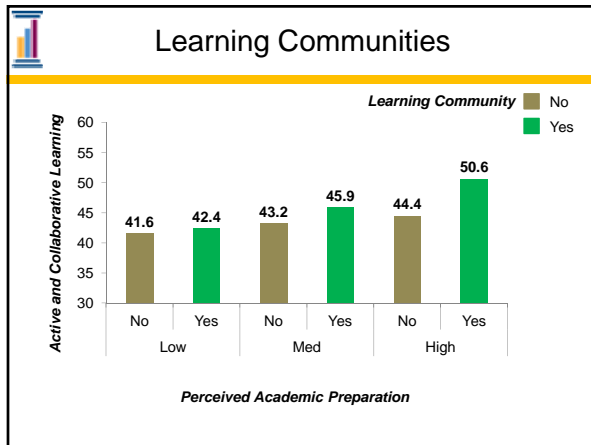
		Learning Com	
		No	Yes
High School Engagement	Mean	5.3	5.7 ¹
Expected FY Engagement	Mean	6.1	6.5
Expected Academic Perseverance	Mean	7.1	7.2
Expected Academic Difficulty	Mean	4.9	5.0
Perceived Academic Preparation	Mean	6.9	7.0
Importance of Campus Support	Mean	7.4	7.6

¹ p<.05

Learning Communities

Since the Director is particularly interested in students with low academic confidence and/or those who expect to experience a difficult academic transition, they used two scale measures from BCSSE: Expected Academic Difficulty and Perceived Academic Preparation.

To identify those with low confidence or high expectations for transition difficulties, students were group into categories of low, medium, and high for each measure.



Learning Communities

Two primary conclusions:

- ❖ One is that students with higher levels of academic self confidence appear to be benefiting the most from participation in a learning community compared to their peers with low confidence.
- ❖ Second, students who expect higher degree of academic difficulty seem to be benefiting from learning communities.

Examples of Data Use in the First Year

Using NSSE to Assess the First-Year Experience

California Lutheran University (CLU) participates in numerous external and internal surveys to gather direct and indirect evidence of educational effectiveness at every level of the university. The Provost and other senior administrators actively assess and respond to CLU's campus conditions and makes adjustments as part of the Foundations of Excellence process using NSSE, Assessment Committee review, the First-Year Experience program as part of the Foundations of Excellence process using NSSE, BCSE, and BCSE-NSSE combined results. The Office of Student Life has reviewed NSSE results and noticed a gap in the co-curricular engagement of transfer and commuter students. This finding prompted an increase in programs focused on the needs of commuter students and the creation of a peer mentor program for transfer students.

California State University, Chico
Chico State's Freshman Year Experience Plan, and its creation of and commitment to Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, Chico State analyzed student responses on selected NSSE items to determine whether or not the results were being met and if the commitment was being met that addressed student leader. NSSE results have been used to help measure and if the commitment was being met that addressed student leader. NSSE results have been used to help measure and if the commitment was being met that addressed student leader. NSSE results have been used to help measure and if the commitment was being met that addressed student leader.

California Lutheran University

- CLU's Assessment Committee reviewed The First-Year Experience program as part of the Foundations of Excellence process using NSSE, BCSE, and BCSE-NSSE combined results.
- Office of Student Life staff noticed a gap in NSSE results for co-curricular engagement of transfer and commuter students.
- Finding prompted an increase in programs focused on the needs of commuter students and the creation of a peer mentor program for transfer students.

First Year Students and High Impact Practices

HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES

- Focused effort to expand two HIPs – **service learning and study abroad** – salient to HWS mission.
- HWS examined several years of NSSE results and other institutional data to identify which students were less likely to participate in these experiences.
- Determined males & low-income students UNDERREPRESENTED in these experiences and involved **faculty & student affairs staff** in devising approaches to make experiences more possible.

Southern Connecticut State University

Impact of FY Experience

No First Year Experience in 2007; 50% students in FYE in 2007; All in FYE in 2009

FYE components:

- Orientation
- Common read
- Learning communities
- Inquiry 101 seminar
- Academic tracking & early intervention
- Student success workshops
- Academic support workshops & study groups
- FYE program office

Student-Faculty Interaction

Year	Student-Faculty Interaction
2005	35.8
2006	34.5
2007	37.1
2008	39.8
2009	46.0

www.southernct.edu/academics/academicaffairs/assess/ 47

Franklin Pierce University

Assessing FY Seminar IC 101

- Revised seminar in 2008. Seminar's requirement for hours of civic and community engagement activities, introduces university mission of "preparing students to become active, engaged citizens and leaders of conscience."
- NSSE results showed: first-year and seniors involvement in community service and volunteer work far exceeded students at comparison institutions; used to confirm learning goal of active involvement in the community and for strengthening students' responsibility toward and contribution to community.

To Stimulate NSSE, BCSSE Data Use...

- **RELEVANCY.** Share data that are most compelling for your audience.
- What **campus initiatives** (retention, learning community creation, writing center) might benefit from BCSSE/NSSE data? Feed them results!
- Use **comparison group data** to motivate reflection and action on results – requires careful selection of peer groups
- Look at your results relative to past performance and absolute standards – **can you commit to getting better?**
- What other **institutional data can you link** to results?
- Which results warrant **further exploration?**

NSSE Suite of Surveys



Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement

- ♦ Annual survey of first-year students
- ♦ Administered prior to start of classes, usually at orientation or welcome week
- ♦ 320 institutions, about 130 annually
- ♦ Census - response rates 50-80%

National Survey of Student Engagement

- ♦ Annual survey of first-year and senior students
- ♦ Administered during spring term
- ♦ 1,500 institutions
- ♦ 40% response rate


Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

- ♦ Parallel survey to measure faculty expectations for student engagement
- ♦ Administered during spring term
- ♦ 550 institutions, about 150 annually
- ♦ 50% response rate


2011 Assessment Institute
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Any discussion, questions, or comments?




Thank you!

Copy of this and past presentations can be found at:
<http://bcsse.iub.edu/pubs.cfm>

Feel free to contact us with any questions regarding BCSSE & NSSE.

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