

Using NSSE to Assess and Enhance Student Engagement and Student Success: Lessons from the Field

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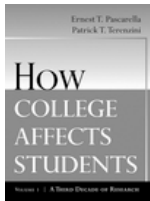
The NSSE Challenge

How might we more effectively use data about quality in undergraduate education to:

- ✓ provide evidence of student learning
- ✓ motivate and inspire effective educational practice
- ✓ strengthen the learning environment?



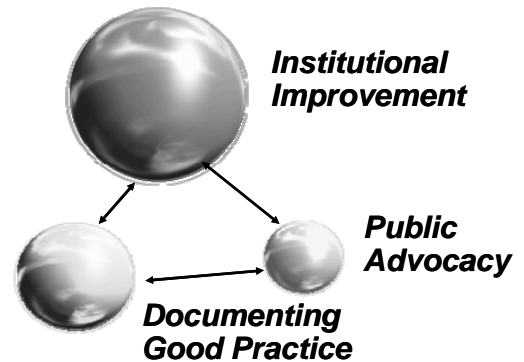
What Really Matters: Student Engagement



Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage *student engagement*.

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 602

NSSE Core Purposes



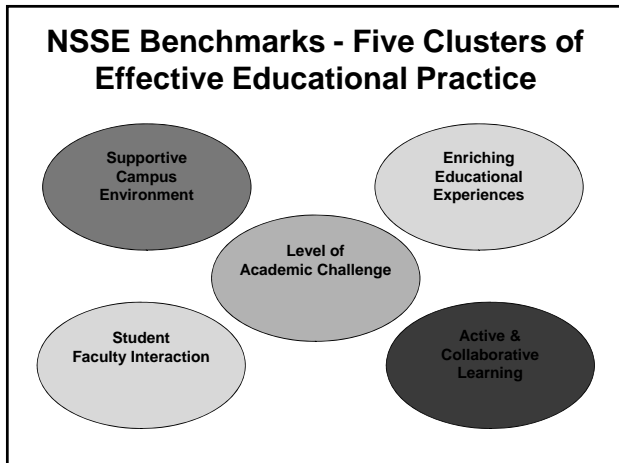
NSSE Results

- ◆ Are diagnostic; to help institutions look holistically at undergraduate experience
- ◆ Help pinpoint aspects not in line with mission, or what institution expects
- ◆ Identify weaknesses and strengths in educational program
- ◆ Help institutions know what to focus on to improve student learning and success

Customized Institutional Report



- ✓ Overview
- ✓ Institutional data
- ✓ Means and frequencies
- ✓ 1st year students and seniors
- ✓ Comparisons by peers, Carnegie, national
- ✓ National benchmarks
- ✓ Data use tips
- ✓ Student-level data, etc.
- ✓ And more!



- ### NSSE Scaletts
- (use in further analyses, and for particular focus)
- Course Challenge
 - Writing
 - Higher-Order Thinking Skills
 - Integrative Learning
 - Active Learning
 - Collaborative Learning
 - Course Interaction
 - Out-of-Class Interaction
 - Information Technology
 - Diversity Experience
 - Support for Student Success
 - Interpersonal Environment

- ### Reminder: Recent NSSE Enhancements
- Institutions create up to 3 customized peer comparison groups (2007)
 - All content of Institutional Report available for download from secure site (2007)
 - New Report "What Students are Saying..." based on NSSE Pocket Guide questions (2007)
 - Multi-year Benchmark Report (2008)
 - New Executive Snapshot Report (2007)
 - Increased sample sizes for web-based administration (2006)
 - New tools – Facilitation Guide, Accreditation Toolkit, Multi-year benchmark analysis guide (2005-2008)

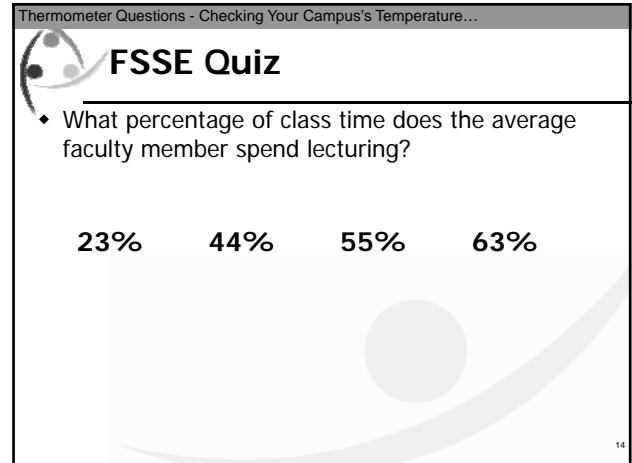
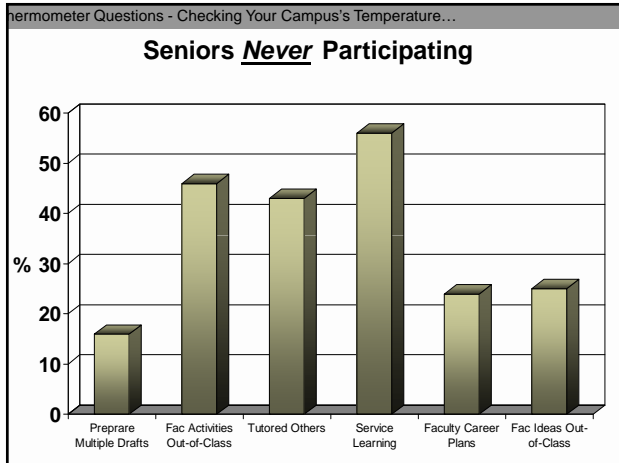
NSSE Suite of Assessment Instruments

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
- Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)

The slide includes three screenshots: a survey question about student engagement, a survey question about faculty engagement, and a brochure for the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE). The brochure is titled "Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement" and features a globe icon.

- Putting Data to Use: Informing Campus Dialogues
- ### Using NSSE, FSSE, BCSSE: What Kinds of Questions can be answered?
- "Thermometer" Questions
How many students/faculty...?
 - "How Do We Compare" Questions
Do we score above or below institutions like us?
 - "Looking Within - Comparing Groups" Questions
Do X and Y do certain things differently?
 - "Relationship" Questions
Are those who x more likely to y?
 - "Multiple Data Source" Questions
What do faculty and students say about...?

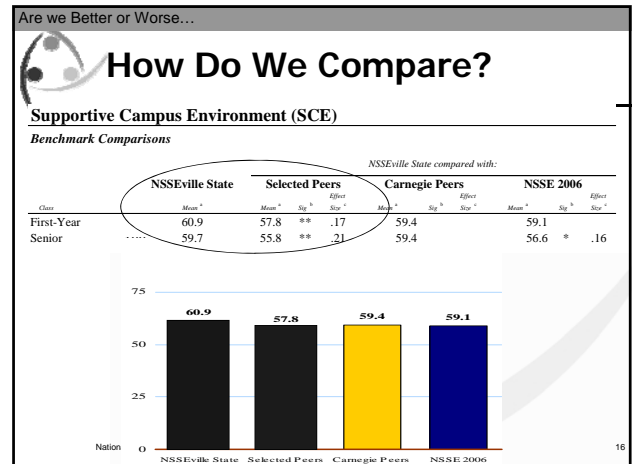
- Thermometer Questions - Checking Your Campus's Temperature...
- ### Are our FY students experiencing active learning?
- What percent of our First-Year students report that they frequently (often + very often) ask questions in class?
a). 25% b). 36% c). 52% d). 68%
(compared to 70% at Bac LACs)
 - Plus, only 42% of our First-Year students report that they frequently work with peers on projects in class...
 - Should this be higher given our institutional size, and expressed commitment to active learning in the first year experience?



Thermometer Questions - Checking Your Campus's Temperature...

BCSSE-Faculty Interaction

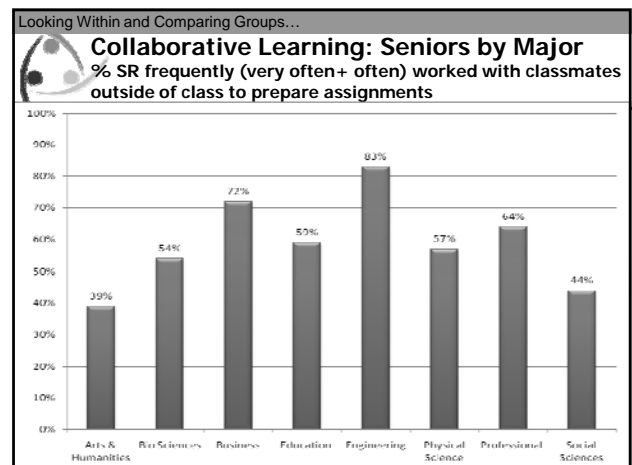
- What percent of students in high school report that they frequently (often + very often) interact with faculty outside of class?
 - a). 15% b). 26% c). 35% d). 42%
- What is the relationship between student reports of the extent to which they interact with faculty outside of class in high school and their expectation for doing this in college?

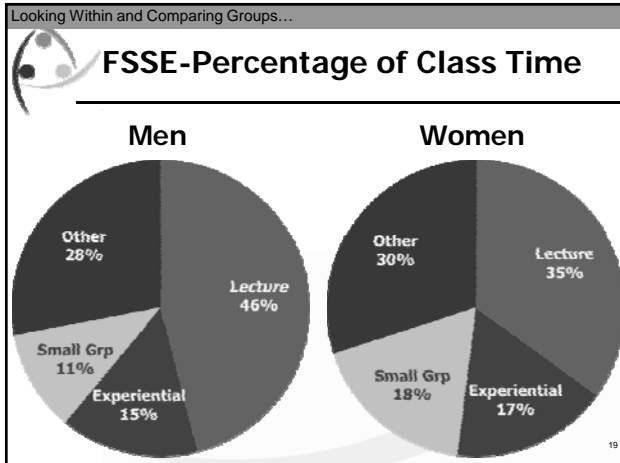


Are we Better or Worse...

Comparing Against Other Institutions

- Unlike NSSE... **FSSE and BCSSE do not provide institution-versus-peer-group comparisons**
- But...
- Find FSSE and BCSSE "Grand Frequency" results that can be used as reference points at www.fsse.iub.edu and www.bcsse.iub.edu





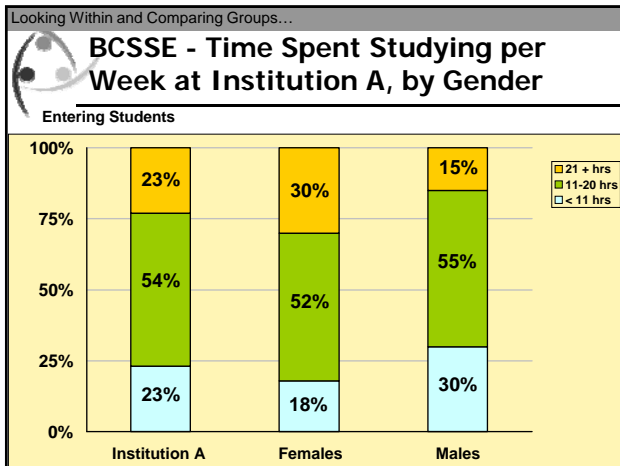
Looking Within and Comparing Groups...

Answering Questions with BCSSE Data

- What do we know about entering students expectations about studying?
- BCSSE asks of entering college students:

“During the coming school year, about how many hours do you think you will spend in a typical 7-day week preparing for your class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)?”
- Does this differ by gender?

National Survey of Student Engagement



Are Those Who...Also...?

Predicting Retention at Elon University

- Students' relationship with peers predictive of retention. Elon considering programs/services to foster these relationships, checking published findings & best practice.

		Retention	If you could start over again, would you go to the SAME INSTITUTION you are now attending?	How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	Quality: Your relationships with other students
Retention	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.261**	.227**	.253**
	N	267	267	267	267
If you could start over again, would you go to the SAME INSTITUTION you are now attending?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.261**	1	.205**	.253**
	N	267	267	267	267
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.227**	.205**	1	.260**
	N	267	267	267	267
Quality: Your relationships with other students	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.253**	.253**	.260**	1
	N	267	267	267	267

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Don't We Have Data from...on That too?

Improvement Initiative: Co-curricular Involvement in the First Year

- Interpreting NSSE results for Institution A:

“About half of our FY students spend no time on co-curricular activities. This seems really low. What did our students do in high school?”
- Institution reviews CIRP data. Their entering students are lower than the norm. Admissions confirms most new students worked part-time jobs in high school, likely limiting co-curricular involvement.

Putting NSSE Data to Use: Assessment and Accreditation

Rationale for Using NSSE in Accreditation

- Student engagement results are a **direct indicator** of what students put into their education, and because the survey measures participation in various types of effective educational practices it provides an **indirect measure of student gains**
- NSSE results indicate areas for improvement and are “actionable” – thus, appropriate for inclusion in quality improvement plans

Putting NSSE Data to Use: Assessment and Accreditation

NSSE Accreditation Tool-kit

1. Background information on using student engagement in accreditation
2. Customized to each of the six regional accrediting bodies; and specialized accreditors AACSB, ABET, NCATE
3. Complete map of NSSE items to accreditation standards
4. Vignettes from other institutions on using NSSE in accreditation

National Survey of Student Engagement

Accreditation Tool-kit

Guide to help maximize use of NSSE data for accreditation

DOWNLOAD Toolkit:
www.nsse.iub.edu
Click on: "Reports & Services"

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Putting NSSE Data to Use: Assessment and Accreditation

NSSE in your assessment plan

- ◆ How often should I administer NSSE?
 - ◆ **Every Year:** Gives you a snapshot of each class
 - ◆ **Every Three Years:** Gives you a picture of a cohort at the beginning and the end of their college experiences; time to implement initiatives in response
 - ◆ **Every Five Years:** Works well with most accreditation cycles (Accreditation and Interim Reports)
- ◆ Other factors to consider
 - ◆ Establishing a baseline
 - ◆ Costs (using all core surveys)
 - ◆ Additional Surveys/Sources of Data
 - ◆ Time to absorb results, make changes

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Pace University: An Overview



- ◆ Urban/suburban university
- ◆ Size: 12,600 Students
9,000 FTE
- ◆ Major metro area: NYC 11.7 million
- ◆ Carnegie Class: Doctoral Research University
- ◆ *US News* Ranking: 3rd Tier National
- ◆ Four Campuses and seven sites in NY metropolitan region
- ◆ Two-thirds undergraduate and one third graduate/professional
- ◆ Six Schools/College
 - Arts and Sciences
 - Business
 - Computer Science/Information Systems
 - Education
 - Law
 - Nursing

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Five Years of NSSE Data at Pace University

The Challenge of Student Satisfaction

Results from 2002-2006


- ◆ 1078 First-year students
- ◆ 1030 Seniors

Five Year Improvement Trends

- ◆ **Student – Faculty Interactions**
 - * Discussing grades with instructors
 - * Talking about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
 - * Working with faculty members on activities other than coursework
 - * Receiving prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance



Improvement Trends: Active and Collaborative Learning

- ◆ Asking questions in class or contributing to class discussions
- ◆ Working with other students on projects during class
- ◆ Participating in a community- based project



The Challenge of Improving Student Satisfaction

- ♦ How would you evaluate your entire experience at this institution?
- ♦ If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?





Unambiguously Satisfied Students

- ♦ Students who chose overall educational experience "good" or "excellent"

And also chose

- ♦ Would "probably" or "definitely" come back to the same institution




NSSE Five Year Study

- ♦ Which engagement activities do you think were most closely related to satisfied students?



Top Ten Engagement Activities Strongly Correlated with Satisfied Students


1. Quality of academic advising
2. Provided support to succeed academically
3. Quality of relationships with faculty members
4. Coursework contributed to acquiring a broad general education
5. Quality of relationships with administrative offices



Top Ten Engagement Activities Strongly Correlated with Satisfied Students


Coursework contributed to:

6. Writing clearly and effectively
7. Speaking clearly and effectively
8. Thinking critically and analytically
9. Acquiring job or work-related skills
10. Solving complex real-world problems




What We Did With This Information

- ♦ Results to President and Provost
- ♦ Results to Academic Deans
- ♦ Results presented at Executive Council
- ♦ University Assessment Committee developed Five Year NSSE Newsletter sent to all faculty through Provost's listserv.
- ♦ Five Year Study presented at annual Pace University Faculty Institute




The Impact of This Information

- ◆ **Quality of Academic Advising**
- ◆ Hiring Freeze – further evaluation of positions by President and Provost
- ◆ Assisted Academic Deans to help determine priorities
- ◆ Provided evidence to support Associate Provost for Student Success in the First-Year Seminar Restructuring Project and proposed Comprehensive Freshman Advising Program




The Impact of This Information

- ◆ **Relationships with administrative offices and personnel**
- ◆ Focus on the Office of Student Assistance – “one stop services”
- ◆ Centralization of Student Problem Solving
- ◆ Service Ethics Programs
- ◆ Process Change Initiatives




The Need

- ◆ *Unlike Freshman Year, there were no initiatives or programs that addressed needs of sophomores.*





- ◆ *While Freshman retention remained stable, Sophomore retention dropped by 9 percentage points each year.*




NSSE Provides Clues


- ◆ *Freshman NSSE results provide a context for understanding students' experiences as they enter their sophomore year.*

NSSE Clues



- ◆ Quality of Relationships with Faculty
- ◆ Quality of Relationships with Other Students
- ◆ Quality of Relationships with Administrative Personnel and Offices
- ◆ Academic Challenge
- ◆ Supportive Campus Environment
- ◆ Student Satisfaction




Connecting Research on Sophomores to Pace University NSSE Results

- ◆ The Sophomore Working Group read the monograph *Visible Solutions for Invisible Students: Helping Sophomores Succeed* edited by Laurie A. Schreiner and Jerry Pattengale (2000).
- ◆ Members learn about “Sophomore Slump.”


Further Investigation of NSSE Responses

- ◆ Sophomore Survey
- ◆ Sophomore Focus Groups




Results of Work Thus Far

- ◆ Creation and piloting of the "Pace Plan"
- ◆ Development of a Career Exploration Course
- ◆ Sophomore Kick-off Day
- ◆ Transfer, Exploring and Commuter Student Outreach
- ◆ Restructuring of registration, bursar and financial aid offices




Results of Work Thus Far

- ◆ Sophomore Advising
- ◆ Lambda Sigma Honor Society
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ E-Portfolio
- ◆ Academic Enrichment
- ◆ Registration E-Blast
- ◆ Four Year Plan



E-Source

- ◆ "NSSE and the Pace University Sophomore-Experience Survey," *E-Source for College Transitions*, National Resource Center on the First Year Experience and College Transitions, University of South Carolina, Vol. 4. No. 1., September 2006: 1-3.
- ◆ http://appserv.pace.edu/emplibary/esource_sep_t06.pdf



Using NSSE Results for Strategic Plan Assessment

- ◆ 2003-2008 Pace University Strategic Plan
- ◆ Core Objective II – Reinforce Commitment to be a Student-Centered University

2. Implement programs, training and administrative reorganization where necessary to emphasize quality in all student, staff and faculty contacts.

NSSE Survey Results

		2002-03	2003-04	2005-06*
Supportive campus environment (100 point scale)	Pace Freshman	58.8	55.1	55.5
	Doctoral Intensive	58.4	59.1	56.2
	Pace Seniors	54.2	53.5	55.2
	Doctoral Intensive	54.8	55.3	53.8
Quality of relationships with faculty (7 point scale)	Pace Freshman	5.06	4.96	4.98
	Doctoral Intensive	5.37	5.37	5.04
	Pace Seniors	5.21	5.37	5.34
	Doctoral Intensive	5.5	5.48	5.26
Quality of relationships with administrative offices/personnel (7 point scale)	Pace Freshman	4.64	4.21	4.06
	Doctoral Intensive	4.92	4.92	4.39
	Pace Seniors	4.6	4.3	3.97
	Doctoral Intensive	4.59	4.62	4.35


*2004-2005 was a local administration of NSSE, the results are not provided

Other Ways NSSE and Results are Used at Pace


- ◆ Faculty Development/Colloquia
- ◆ Assess effectiveness of revised Core Curriculum
- ◆ Comparing Groups – e.g. Transfer vs. Native students, Residents vs. Commuters
- ◆ Target populations – Experiences of First Generation Students
- ◆ Local administration for schools/college oversampling
- ◆ Incorporated in accreditation/re-accreditation Self-Studies, e.g. NCATE, AACSB, ABET, 2009 Middle States visit

Institutional Example: Focus on desired pedagogy

- ◆ First-year students less involved in service learning than JMU desired.
- ◆ Workshops conducted to encourage faculty to adapt courses to include service learning
- ◆ Studied change in participation of students and instructional practice




Institutional Example: Improving teaching & learning




- ◆ NSSE and CIRP pointed to problems with first year students' academic engagement, but WTAMU desired more holistic picture of students' experience
- ◆ Conducted "Student Engagement Audit Focus Groups" – 2 focus groups per college to discover what **faculty** and **students** found educationally engaging and identify classroom experiences that were engaging and disengaging

Institutional Example: Results Support Action




NSSE results showed need for improvement in academic advising:

- ◆ Implemented professional advisors in residence halls
- ◆ Based on NSSE and internal survey, 50% faculty were interested in advising workshop
- ◆ Recommendation to provide faculty with regular workshops and advising newsletter
- ◆ VP of Academic Affairs to carry out comprehensive assessment of advising on campus




Institutional Example: More Analysis



Three Targeted Analyses:

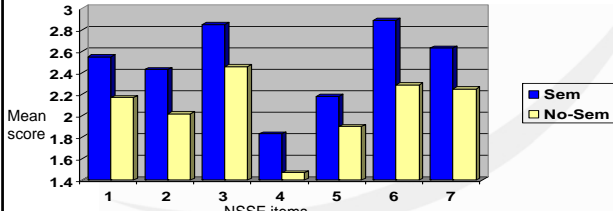
- Comparison of SR students' responses to education and personal growth items with peers at other institutions and NSSE cohort to assess performance on general learning objectives
- Comparison of responses of minority and non-minority students on items related to diversity
- Comparison of students' responses on mental activities, study abroad, undergraduate research, and capstone project with peers and NSSE cohort




Institutional Example: UW Green Bay Fall 2006 Freshman Seminar Pilot Study

Compare NSSE scores on 7 items - Freshman Seminar students VS. non-Seminar students:


1. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.
2. Worked with other students on projects DURING CLASS.
3. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor.
4. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor.
5. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.
6. Coursework emphasized: APPLYING theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.
7. Coursework emphasized: MAKING JUDGMENTS about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions



NSSE Item	Sem (Mean Score)	No-Sem (Mean Score)
1	2.5	2.2
2	2.4	2.1
3	2.8	2.5
4	1.8	1.5
5	2.2	1.9
6	2.8	2.3
7	2.6	2.3






Institutional Example



Drake University is using its NSSE data to:

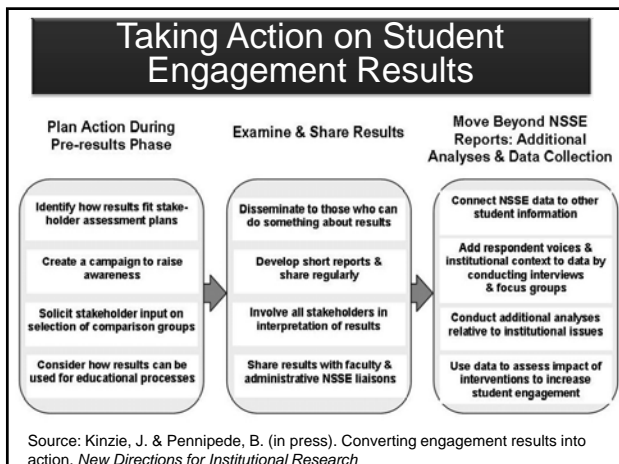
- Assess its general education curriculum, especially in the areas of service learning, multicultural understanding, and critical thinking skills
- Inform the review of capstone courses and other culminating experiences
- Combine with BCSSE results to provide insight into the review of undergraduate advising



Using NSSE Data: Lessons Learned

1. **Make sure faculty and staff understand the concept of student engagement**
2. **Collect enough data to use results at department/unit level**
3. **Understand what engagement data represent and use and report results wisely**
4. **Distribute responsibility for performance fairly (e.g., transfers)**
5. **Examine the results from multiple perspectives**
6. **Link results to other information about the student experience and complementary initiatives**
7. **Don't allow the numbers to speak for themselves**
8. **Manage the message and the media**




NSSE Virtues

- ❖ Research based
- ❖ Random sampling
- ❖ Focus on educationally purposeful activities
- ❖ Targeted sampling
- ❖ Results point to areas where improvement is desirable
- ❖ Flexibility: consortium question, modules
- ❖ Compelling face validity
- ❖ Contributes to value-added estimates when linked to BCSSE, CLA, other outcomes measures
- ❖ Established psychometrics
- ❖ Transparent operations
- ❖ Benchmarks for peer, national and other comparisons
- ❖ Third party administration

NSSE Cautions

- ❖ **Only one source of information**
- ❖ **Corroborate results**
- ❖ **Engagement skeptics**
- ❖ **Not an outcomes measure**
- ❖ **Denial in face of less-than-desirable results**
- ❖ **Eschew rankings**



Discussion and Questions

- ♦ Can you share an example of NSSE use on your campus?
- ♦ What questions do you have about using NSSE for assessment, accreditation, and/or retention studies?
- ♦ What action might you take with your NSSE data?
- ♦ What other data do you have that might link to NSSE data?

For More Information
www.nsse.iub.edu