

Assessing and Enhancing Student Engagement and Success

2009 Assessment Institute, Indianapolis

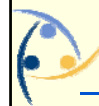


Jillian Kinzie

IU Center for Postsecondary Research, NSSE

Alexander C. McCormick

IU Center for Postsecondary Research, NSSE



Who's here? What do you know about NSSE?

- ♦ Who's here?
 - ♦ institutional research staff
 - ♦ faculty
 - ♦ administrators
 - ♦ assessment directors



- ♦ How familiar are you with NSSE?

← Very much – Quite a bit – Some – Very little →

- ♦ Do you actually "handle" your NSSE data?
- ♦ Could you explain NSSE to the person sitting next to you?



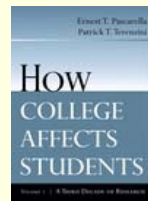
The NSSE Challenge

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 Results

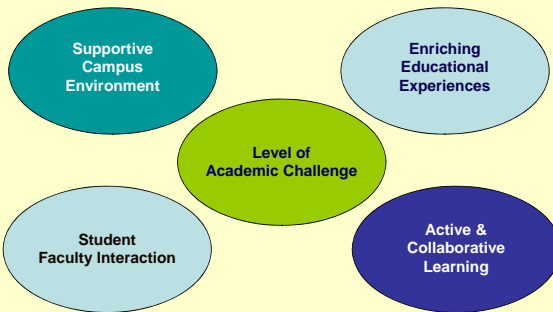
- ♦ Are diagnostic; to help institutions look holistically at undergraduate experience
- ♦ Help pinpoint aspects not in line with mission, or what institution expects
- ♦ Identify weaknesses and strengths in educational program
- ♦ Help institutions know what to focus on to improve student learning and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

Customized Institutional Report



- ✓ Overview
- ✓ Institutional data
- ✓ Means and frequencies
- ✓ First year students and seniors
- ✓ Customizable comparison groups
- ✓ National benchmarks
- ✓ Data use tips
- ✓ Student-level data, etc.
- ✓ And more!

NSSE Benchmarks - Five Clusters of Effective Educational Practice



NSSE Scaletts

(use in further analyses, and for particular focus)

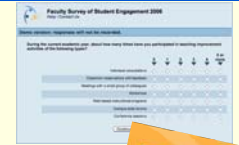
- **Course Challenge**
- **Writing**
- **Higher-Order Thinking Skills**
- **Integrative Learning**
- **Active Learning**
- **Collaborative Learning**
- **Course Interaction**
- **Out-of-Class Interaction**
- **Information Technology**
- **Diversity Experiences**
- **Support for Student Success**
- **Interpersonal Environment**

Recent NSSE Enhancements

- ♦ Up to 3 customized peer comparison groups (2007)
- ♦ Secure *Institutional Report* download (2007)
- ♦ *The Student Experience in Brief...* answers to NSSE Pocket Guide questions (2007, 2009)
- ♦ *Executive Snapshot* (2007)
- ♦ *Multi-year Benchmark Report* (2008)
- ♦ By Major reports (2009)
- ♦ CENSUS administration for Web mode schools (2010)
- ♦ New tools – Facilitator's Guide, Accreditation Toolkits, *Multi-year Data Analysis Guide* (2005-2009)

NSSE Suite of Assessment Instruments

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



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 Subgroups** 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...?

Checking Your Campus's Temperature

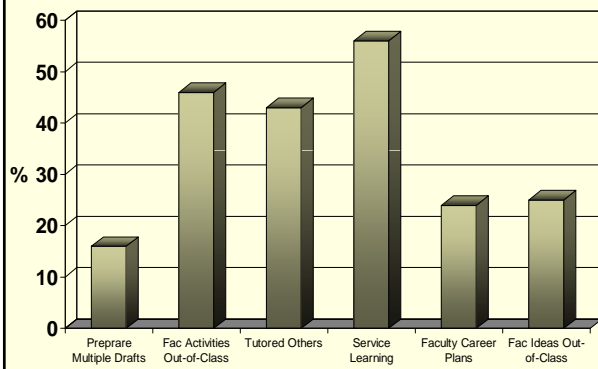


Are our FY students experiencing active learning?

- What percent of our First-Year students report that they **frequently** (often + very often) ask questions in class?
 - 25%
 - 36%
 - 52%
 - 68%
 (compared to 70% at Bac A&S)
- 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 size and expressed commitment to active learning in the first year?

14

Seniors Never Participating



FSSE Quiz

- What percentage of class time does the average faculty member spend lecturing?

23%



44%

55%

63%

16

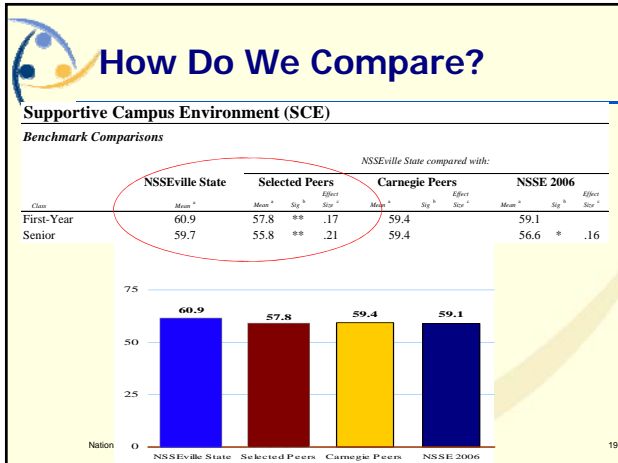


BCSSE-Faculty Interaction

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

17

Are We Better or Worse?



Comparing Against Other Institutions

- ◆ Unlike NSSE...
 - FSSE and BCSE do not provide institution-versus-peer-group comparisons
- ◆ But....

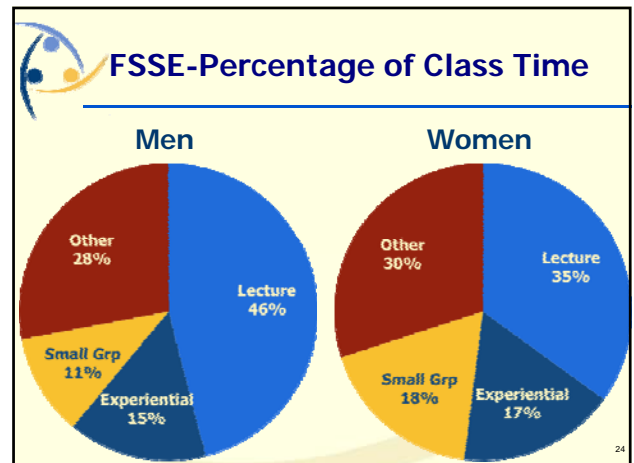
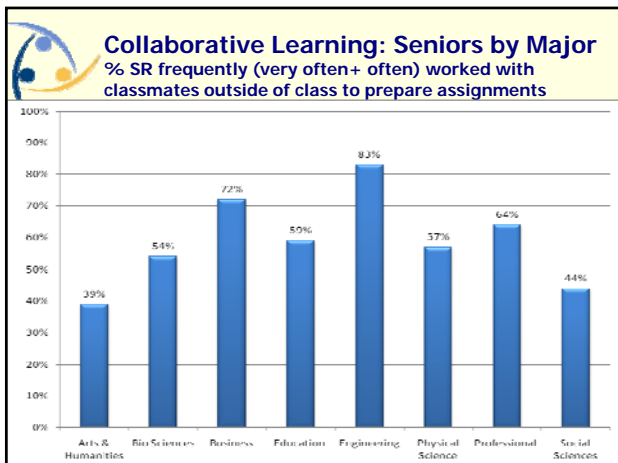
National Survey of Student Engagement 20

Grand Frequencies

- ◆ FSSE and BCSE results that can be used as reference points available at www.fsse.iub.edu and www.bcsse.iub.edu

21

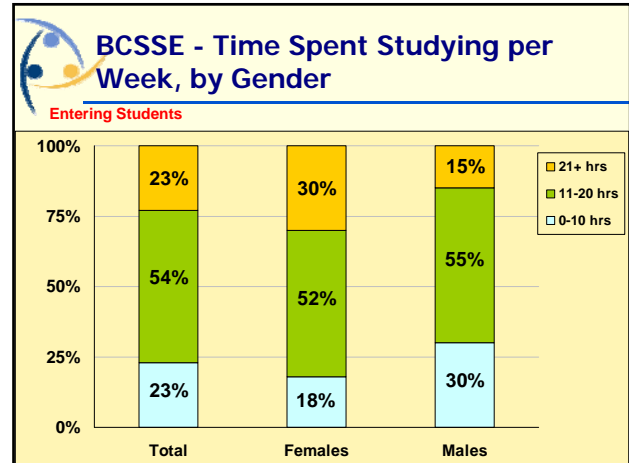
Looking Within and Comparing Subgroups



Answering Questions with BCSSE Data

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

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



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	1	.365**	.227**	.233**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	377	351	351	369
If you could start over again, would you go to the SAME INSTITUTION you are now attending?	Pearson Correlation	.365**	1	.608**	.547**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	351	351	351	351
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	Pearson Correlation	.227**	.608**	1	.487**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	351	351	351	351
Quality: Your relationships with other students	Pearson Correlation	.233**	.547**	.487**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	369	351	351	369

** . 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. 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.

Checking in:

- ♦ What else do you want to know about your students' experience? Your institutions' effectiveness?
- ♦ How might NSSE results inform your exploration?
- ♦ What other questions have you examined using NSSE results?



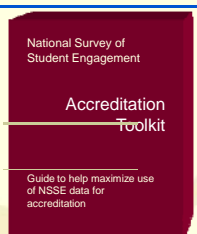
Putting NSSE Data to Use: Assessment and Accreditation

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

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 Toolkit
Guide to help maximize use of NSSE data for accreditation

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

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


Using NSSE to Enhance Student Engagement and Success: Institutional Examples

Institutional Example: Improving the Sophomore Experience

CASE STUDY: Pace University had long provided coordinated programs for first-year students to promote success. These efforts seemed effective - evidenced by a stabilized first-year retention rate of 76–77%. However, no special initiatives or programs addressed the needs of students in their sophomore year and there was growing concern over a retention rate that after two years dropped off by more than 9%. Motivated by this persistence data and the success of the first year experience, the “Sophomore Working Group,” comprised of faculty, academic administrators, & student affairs professionals, began to focus on developing a special program or “experience” for sophomores.

Institutional Example: Improving the Sophomore Experience


- ♦ How could the “Sophomore Working Group” at Pace use NSSE data as they strive to improve the sophomore experience? What measures might they consider?
- ♦ What other assessment measures would be valuable to use in addition to NSSE?



NSSE Clues for Pace U

First-Year NSSE results provide a context for understanding students' experiences as they enter their sophomore year.

- ♦ 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



Institutional Example: Improving the Sophomore Experience

- ♦ **Using First-Year Results**
- ♦ **Literature:** The Sophomore Working Group read the monograph “Visible Solutions for Invisible Students: Helping Sophomores Succeed” edited by Laurie A. Schreiner and Jerry Pattengale (2000).
- ♦ **More Information: Sophomore Survey; Sophomore Focus Groups**
- ♦ **“The Pace Plan”**

What Pace University did... 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



Pace University: Results of Work Thus Far

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





Institutional Example: Active Learning

Viterbo University (WI)

- Faculty participated in intensive active learning workshops during university in-service and out-service weeks from 2004 to 2008.
- All had access to a Title III "Coach" who was trained in active learning teaching strategies and who reviewed faculty projects, observed their teaching, and finally evaluated the faculty member's practice.
- NSSE results from both 2006 and 2007 reinforce the effectiveness of active learning strategies at Viterbo.



Institutional Example: Advising

University of North Carolina, Wilmington

- Students of color and those majoring in physical sciences and engineering indicated that they were less likely to consult with faculty or advisors about their career plans.
- The Division of Student Affairs recruited more career advisors of color, developed a mentoring program for minority students, and increased staffing to reach out to physical sciences and engineering majors.



Institutional Example: Student Persistence

Southern Connecticut State University

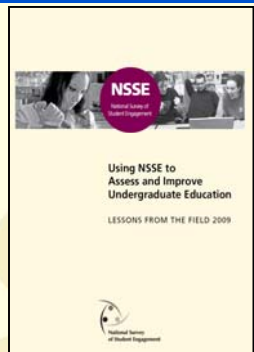
- Following cohorts of students who completed both BCSSE and NSSE to learn more about their experiences.
- Non-returning students had a different level of relationships with faculty members, peers, and administrative personnel and offices than did the returning students.
- Supportive Campus Environment benchmark



Lessons from the Field

Using NSSE to Assess and Improve Undergraduate Education: Lessons from the Field 2009, highlights approaches different types of institutions have taken to use their NSSE results to improve the undergraduate experience.

Copies are available for download from the NSSE Web site, www.nsse.iub.edu/links/lessons.



Faculty and Assessment Activities (results from FSSE)

To what extent do faculty report that their institution was substantially (quite a bit+ very much) involved in assessment efforts?

- a. 45% b. 56% c. 75% d. 84%


75% of faculty respondents indicated that their campuses were involved "Quite a bit" or "Very much."

However, only about a third of faculty members viewed the dissemination and usefulness of the assessment findings positively.




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)**



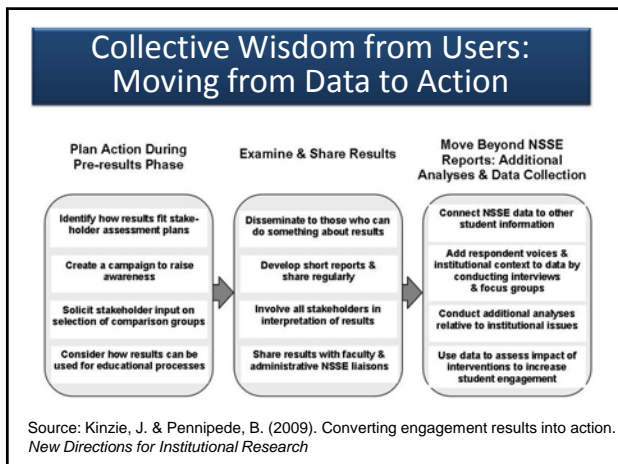
Using NSSE Data: Lessons Learned

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




Converting Results to Action

- ♦ Assessment information should be actionable
- ♦ If assessment doesn't help improve teaching and learning activities and ultimately, student success... *why bother with it?*
- ♦ Implementing large-scale, transformational change in colleges and universities is difficult
- ♦ Campuses that maximize their results, in that action is taken to improve the quality of the undergraduate experience, and student engagement and success is enhanced, *do the following....*



Lessons Learned: Taking Action on Results

1. Find relevancy and entice with results
2. Continuously disseminate data in small doses
3. Appoint NSSE ambassadors
4. Connect student engagement results to the study of real campus problems
5. Infuse data into continuous improvement processes
6. Dig deeper into results
7. Improvement may begin in small ways, but accumulates over time



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