Using NSSE Data in Accreditation and Quality Improvement Plans
Assessment Institute - October 31, 2011

Jillian Kinzie,
Associate Director
IU Center for Postsecondary Research, NSSE Institute

What is NSSE?
• NSSE annually gathers valid, reliable information on the extent to which students engage in and are exposed to proven educational practices that correspond to desirable learning outcomes.
  – Results provide estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from college.
  – NSSE items represent empirically confirmed ‘good practices’; behaviors associated with student learning and development.

NSSE’s Big Idea
• Ask students about their experience
• Focus on behavior: empirically confirmed effective practices

What is Student Engagement?
Student engagement is the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities — practices shown to be related to desired educational outcomes

OK, but what is Engagement?
• Challenging academic work
  – High expectations
  – Deep approaches to learning
• Quality involvement with faculty
• Enriching activities and high-impact practices
  – Active and collaborative learning
  – Powerful educational experiences
• Supportive peers, faculty, staff, campus
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
- Additional Reports (If Applicable)
- FSSE Report
- BCSSE Combined Report
- Data file (student-identified)
- User Resources
  - Using NSSE Data
  - Accreditation Toolkit
  - Facilitator’s Guide

NSSE Annual Results 2011 Coming November 17!!

- Sent to all current and past year participating institutions (and downloadable from website)
- Includes several recent accreditation examples:
  - Georgia State University
  - Tulane University
- NSSE Benchmark scores
  - Percentile distributions of benchmark student scores
  - Frequency distributions of items by Carnegie class
- Additional Reports (If Applicable)
- FSSE Report
- BCSSE Combined Report

Perspectives on NSSE and Accreditation

“Our NSSE results have provided us with a very meaningful framework for organizing our data and assessing our ongoing progress for our accreditation self study.”
— Mary J. Meehan, President, Alverno College

“NSSE is used more widely today than ever as an effective way to assess what both institutions and students themselves do to foster student success.”
— Belle S. Wheelan, President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Rationale for Using NSSE in Accreditation

- Measures educational effectiveness
- Systematically identifies areas of strength and needs for improvement
- Enables benchmarking against similar & aspirational comparison groups
- Results reveal information how students use institutional resources
- Participation in NSSE demonstrates ongoing evaluation, institutional improvement & effectiveness activities
- Results are accessible and understandable by various internal and external stakeholders

Types of Measures

Process Measures
- Evidence of effective educational activity by students and institutions

Outcome Measures
- Evidence of what students have learned or can do

NSSE Accreditation Toolkits

Guide to help maximize use of NSSE data for accreditation

- Background information on using student engagement in accreditation
- Customized to each of the six regional accrediting bodies (and several specialized accreditors)
- NSSE items mapped to accreditation standards
- Vignettes from other institutions on using NSSE in accreditation

DOWNLOAD Toolkits:
www.nsse.iub.edu
Click on: “Tools & Services”
### Connecting NSSE Data to Accreditation Standards (Example)

**Accreditation standard:** “Demonstrate effectiveness of student academic and social support services”

**Evidence for institutional self study:**
- Information about availability and student use of tutoring, writing support, peer study groups, counseling services
- NSSE indicates FY & SR believe institution emphasizes spending time studying and support for student success; 79% seniors tutored or taught peers; positive correlation between peer collaboration outside of class, satisfaction and first-year retention; data higher than peer institutions
- Positive student satisfaction data about support services
- Area for improvement - seniors indicate low gains in writing and completing drafts of papers; institution responds with examination of writing requirement in senior capstone and targets seniors for increased use of writing center

### NSSE Items Mapped to HLC – NCA Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009 NSSE Questions</th>
<th>HLC-NCA</th>
<th>AQI P 2008</th>
<th>AQI P 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. Asked questions in class/contributed to class discussion</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>1R1, 1R2, 1R3, 1R6</td>
<td>1R1, 1R2, 1R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Made a class presentation</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>1R1, 1R2, 1R3, 1R6</td>
<td>1R1, 1R2, 1R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. Included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments</td>
<td>3c, 4c</td>
<td>1R1, 1R2, 1R3, 1R6</td>
<td>1R1, 1R2, 1R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To what extent have exams during the current year challenged you to do your best work?</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>1R1, 1R2, 1R3, 1R6</td>
<td>1R1, 1R4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Connecting NSSE Data to Accreditation Standards (Example)

**Accreditation standard:** “Demonstrate effectiveness of student academic and social support services”

**Take a look at the NSSE survey:**
- What NSSE items relate to this standard?
- What analyses could help demonstrate effectiveness on this standard?
Mapping NSSE to Accreditation Standards

1. Begin with audit of evaluation practices and extent data that can be used for accreditation
2. Always use multiple sources of data
3. NSSE can be linked as evidence of meeting certain accreditation standards
4. NSSE is most meaningful when coupled with other forms of formative & summative data

Using NSSE to Demonstrate Institutional Improvement Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Register for NSSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Administer NSSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Review NSSE results; develop action plans and areas of focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Refine and implement your action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Register for 2014 NSSE to assess action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Administer NSSE; determine impact/changes on area of focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategy for demonstrating use of results for improvement:
- Two NSSE administrations, prior to completing self-study.
- Yr 1 NSSE = baseline
- Yr 2 review results, plan action
- Yr 3 implement
- Yr 4 NSSE = impact

NSSE and Regional Accreditation Timelines

**EXAMPLE:** Standard Reaffirmation SACS

30 year cycle

- 4 years = planning: review accreditation standards, past reaffirmation materials; prepare report; administer NSSE
- 5 years = impact report due from previous reaffirmation
- 6 years = orientation of accreditation leadership team
- 7 years = compliance certification due; off-site peer review
- 8 years = quality enhancement plan due
- 9 years = reaffirmation decision
- 10 years = impact report due

Washington State University

- To support its 2009 Self-Study prepared for the NWCCU, WSU used NSSE scores over multiple years to show evidence of the impact of several programs initiated to improve student engagement and learning.
- Programs included:
  - First-year living-learning community titled “Freshmen Focus”
  - Integrated residence hall programming and co-curricular activities
  - Implementation of a new foreign language requirement for the Honors program as well as an elective for general education studies
  - Residence hall tutoring services
  - Increased emphasis on experiential learning

“Preliminary data from NSSE indicates that the pilot projects have begun to impact the student experience.”


- NSSE scores from 2004, 2005, and 2006 on diversity, study abroad, and taking a foreign language were not at desired levels. The 10 goals of the QEP focused on strengthening leadership, financial, and infrastructure commitments to global learning.
- NSSE will be used biennially to assess gains in targeted areas as well for trend analysis.

NSSE & Accreditation

**How does your institution use NSSE in accreditation and quality improvement plans?**
Final Thoughts: Accreditation Tips

• Student engagement results provided by NSSE are a direct indicator of what students put into their education and an indirect indicator of what they get out of it.

• NSSE items can be used to analyze resources and appraise the effectiveness of the institution in fulfilling its mission.

• NSSE data are actionable

• Share NSSE results widely to expand the audience’s view of the accreditation data.

• Use FSSE to identify areas of strength and to stimulate discussions related to improving teaching and learning

• Share NSSE results with appropriate campus community members

• NSSE results can help assess the degree to which the institution encourages contact among students

NSSE 2.0 (Coming in 2013)

• Development started in 2009—spring 2013 launch

• Preserves what NSSE does well, but will integrate what we have learned over the past decade

• Goals: refines existing measures, adds new measures, removes outdated terminology, improves item clarity and applicability

• Consider what this means for your participation cycle

For more information about NSSE 2.0, see nsse.iub.edu/nsse2013 or email nsse2013@indiana.edu