

Using NSSE Results to Foster Collaboration on Assessment and Retention

NASPA IARC New Orleans
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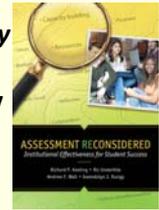
Jillian Kinzie, Indiana University, NSSE Institute

slides available: www.nsse.iub.edu
(see, papers & presentations)



Converting Data into Action

- The use of assessment data should emerge out of a desire to **know more about** and **improve** the quality and effectiveness of higher education.
- *External demands for accountability and internal commitments to enhancing student learning* amplify the need for **comprehensive** assessment practices emphasizing student success.



Comprehensive Assessment

1. One characteristic of comprehensive approach to assessment is **collaboration among stakeholders** to examine & improve undergraduate education.
2. Moreover, institutions can demonstrate greater responsibility for establishing higher educational standards by demonstrating **collaboration between student and academic affairs around assessment**.
3. Student and academic affairs educators must use assessment data to shape undergraduate education and improve retention and success.

Session Objectives

- Briefly introduce NSSE as a tool for assessment in student affairs
- Understand potential applications of results to examine quality in undergraduate education, promote collaboration between student & academic affairs, and institutional research offices
- Highlight effective institutional examples of converting data into action and using NSSE (and BCSSSE) results
- Discuss challenges and insights to using data

National Survey of Student Engagement
(pronounced "nessie")

Community College Survey of Student Engagement
(pronounced "cessie")



College student surveys that assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development



NSSE Survey Item Organization

- ❖ Q.1 – Academic activities
- ❖ Q.2 – Learning mental activities
- ❖ Q.3 – Reading & writing
- ❖ Q.4 – Homework
- ❖ Q.5 – Academic challenge
- ❖ Q.6 – Co-curricular activities
- ❖ Q.7 – Enriching educational experiences
- ❖ Q.8 – Campus relationship
- ❖ Q.9 – Time usage
- ❖ Q.10 – Institutional emphasis
- ❖ Q.11 – Gains
- ❖ Q.12-14 – Satisfaction



NSSE Results

- A window into the undergraduate experience
- Discover strengths and weaknesses in educational program
- Identify areas that need attention to improve student learning and success
- Help pinpoint aspects not in line with mission, or what institution expects
- Link with other institutional data



Student Life Questions Answered with NSSE Data

- Indicators about the quality of the learning environment.
 - How **many hours per week** do first-year students spend studying? **Do women study more than men?**
 - Do our FY students **work more frequently with classmates on assignments outside of class** than their counterparts at **peer institutions**? Do they spend enough time in co-curriculars?
- Description of student-faculty interaction outside of class.
 - What % of seniors **work with faculty members on activities other than coursework**? How frequently do students discuss ideas with faculty outside of class? Does this differ by major?



Student Life Questions Answered with NSSE Data cont'd

- Progress Indicators: Since expanding diversity programming, has our **diversity scale score** changed?
- **Retention issues**: Are **FY who withdraw** from the institution different in terms of engagement than students who stay? What key experiences are our FY students not having?

Using NSSE to Shape Educational Experiences and Document Outcomes



Evidence about *quality* of student experience

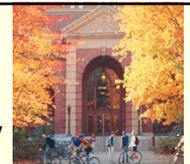
- Indicators at item level
 - Student participation in tutoring peers (1j)
 - Institutional emphasis on attending campus events (10 f)
- Hours spent on co-curricular activities (9d)
- Scales - Diversity Experiences (1 e, u, v)

Compare differences by gender, race-ethnicity, students in learning communities, place of residence, work on campus, by hours of co-curricular involvement etc.

EXAMPLE -- Institutional Case Study: NSSE results on Participation in Internships

- **NSSE Results related to Internships**:
 - Internships: 78% FY “Plan to do”; only 45% Seniors report “done”; **more FY plan to**, and **fewer SR** participate than at **peer comparison schools (gap?)**
 - FY & SRs report low gains in “acquiring work related knowledge”
 - **Conclusion**: Students want to participate in internships, but fewer did
- **Campus Action**:
 - Used NSSE data to advocate hiring staff dedicated to overseeing this area of growth
 - Increased campus advertising and focus on the internship program

Examining Participation in Internships



- Do you know the proportion of your first-year students who report that they **“plan to do an internship”**?
- What proportion actually do an internship? Are there differences by gender, race-ethnicity, major?? Do you think you’re higher or lower than peer schools? So what?
- If your Seniors are **below** the NSSE 2008 norm group (53% “done”), what might you do?
- What other information, or corroborating data, might you have on your campus about internships and students educational goals about “acquiring work knowledge”?
- What might these data suggest in terms of shaping student engagement?

Exercise: Civic Engagement important to NSSEville campus mission

What do we know about the quality of students' experience?

Percent of NSSEville's full-time students have participated (sometimes + often + very often) in a *service-learning* course.

First years (FY) = 30%
Seniors (SR) = 42%

Compared to: 46% FY and 55% SR in Similar Carnegie group

Additional Civic Engagement data at NSSEville

- **38% FY** students have "done" community service and **44% FY** report they "plan to do" service
- **CIRP data show moderate pre-college service; interest among FY**
- FY & SRs living on campus; women; Education & Business students do more service than others...
- **NSSEville's Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) results show 55% faculty teaching FY think "community service" is "important" but, less than 25% do "service-learning" in their FY courses.**



If you were at NSSEville, what would you make of these results?

- What do these data suggest about service-learning and civic engagement?
- What do these data suggest for student affairs units?
 - Advising?
 - Residence Life?
 - Orientation?
- What might this suggest for student - academic affairs partnerships?



NSSE Institutional Examples

Using NSSE Results to Foster Collaboration on Assessment and Retention

1. **NAU First-Year Student Success Task Force** - composed of SA & SA members, using multiple measures to review first-year students' success
2. **U of North Carolina Wilmington Enhancing Career Services** - Student Affairs – Academic Affairs partnership to address
3. **Elon University Retention study** – partnership with IR to analyze data, student and academic affairs action
4. **Norfolk State University Entering Student Study** – using NSSE, BCSE and student interviews to understand entering student experience

Northern Arizona University



- NAU's IR Office disseminates results to Student Affairs in short, accessible formats
- **FY taskforce, a joint-committee of academic & student affairs staff, established to review first-year students' success**
 - Results from NSSE, YFCY, CIRP surveys used to gauge students' progress.
 - Taskforce examines FY experience, reviews program evaluations, and outcomes-based assessments.
- **Residence Life used results of NSSE oversample of students in learning communities to monitor program success**



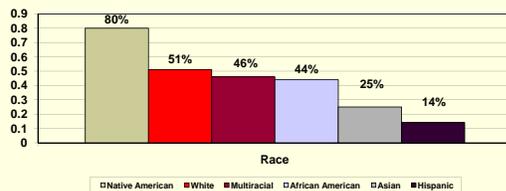
University of North Carolina Wilmington - Enhancing Career Services

- Two NSSE items related to career services:
 - In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor?
 - To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills?

Contact: Nathan K. Lindsay, Ph.D., Director of Student Life Assessment, UNCW

UNCW - Demographic Differences: Race

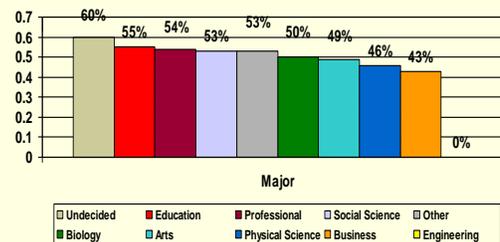
- Under half of most students of color have consulted a faculty member or advisor regarding their career plans.



Contact: Nathan K. Lindsay, Ph.D., Director of Student Life Assessment, UNCW

UNCW - Demographic Differences: Major

- Students who report either often or very often consulting with a faculty member or advisor are in the following majors (rank ordered):



UNCW - Action Steps for Career Services

- Recruited staff of color to meet the needs of students of color
- Developed the Minority Mentor Program
- Developed staff positions to reach students in physical sciences/engineering, as well as undecided students.

University of Minnesota, Morris

The hallmarks of the liberal arts in a public setting.

- Rigorous integrated student experience
- 'Not so big' human-scaled campus ≈ 1700 students
- Nationally distinctive niche
 - Baccalaureate Colleges - Arts and Sciences Carnegie Classification
 - 274 institutions • 37 are public colleges
- High portion of first generation students, PELL eligible students, American Indian students.

Contact: Sandy Olson-Loy, VP/SA, olsonloy@morris.umn.edu

Renewable, sustainable education.



NSSE - A Collaboration: Student Affairs & Academic Affairs

- Focus on student learning and engagement.
- Bringing the Morris experience to life.
 - Board of Regents, and others
- Strategic positioning: advancing core engagement areas for transformational student learning.
 - Baseline information
 - A strong vision for the future
- Organizational change efforts.
- Accreditation – NSSE mapping.

Renewable, sustainable education.



A Collaboration: Student Affairs & Academic Affairs

- VC for Student Affairs, VC for Academic Affairs, and Institutional Research lead presentations
- Governance Committees: Assessment of Student Learning, Curriculum, Student Services, Student Government; open meeting for faculty and staff.
 - Benchmarks, strengths, concerns, opportunities for growth
- Strong results for Seniors historically; First Year Students not at desired levels.
 - Disappearing Task Force on the First Year

Renewable, sustainable education.



Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)

Measures entering first-year student:

- pre-college academic and co-curricular experiences
- expectations and attitudes for participating in educationally purposeful activities

BCSSE was primarily designed as a companion survey to the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*

Administered during Orientation, before classes begin

BCSSE – NSSE Survey Content

Expected First Year Experiences

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

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

Elon University: Studying Retention

- Conducted BCSSE-NSSE Gap Analysis on Student Faculty Interaction (4 items match) then examined what predicts retention
- Merged 3 data points on new students – BCSSE, NSSE, retention
- BCSSE → NSSE → local database (retention outcome)
(Summer 2007) (Spring 2008) (did not return Fall 2008)

Effect size Significant

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^a
Corrected Model	13.369 ^a	5	2.674	4.023	.002	.070	20.114	.949
Intercept	247.850	1	247.850	372.958	.000	.581	372.958	1.000
APFacleedbx	13.369	5	2.674	4.023	.002	.070	20.114	.949
Error	176.190	269	.655					
Total	3217.000	275						
Corrected Total	192.167	274						

a. R Squared = .070 (Adjusted R Squared = .052)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

Elon University: Studying Retention

Dependent Variable: AC_Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Definitely no	1.6000	.99561	15
Probably no	1.8102	1.00847	22
Probably yes	2.4831	1.05850	89
Definitely yes	2.6625	1.10963	160
Total	2.4800	1.11677	286

11 did not come back

- At Elon, faculty time with students outside of class appears to have a positive impact on academic challenge and retention...
 - Implications for planning, processes, and procedures
 - Sensitive Topics – such as grade distributions, accountability measurements, research and teaching,
- Information shared with the first-year experience committee

Norfolk State University Entering Student Study

Overview:

- Multiple measures: NSSE, FSSE & BCSSE results, student written response, focus groups
- Examined Gaps between BCSSE – NSSE and FSSE- NSSE results
- Shared items with largest gaps with students and with faculty and student affairs staff for interpretation
- Asked students to respond in writing to prompt: "If you were asked to talk with a group of incoming freshman about what to expect in their first year of college, what would you tell them and why?"
- Identified implications for Enrollment Management, Students, and Faculty Action

2007 BCSSE/NSSE: Selected Findings

- Gaps between incoming student expectations and first-year experiences. E.g.,
 - Received prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance
 - BCSSE= 77%; NSSE= 50% ("often" and "very often")
 - Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
 - BCSSE= 79%; NSSE= 61% ("often" and "very often")
 - Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
 - BCSSE= 73%; NSSE= 52% ("often" and "very often")
 - Participating in campus co-curricular activities
 - BCSSE= 22%; NSSE=40% (0hrs/wk)

2007 BCSSE/FSSE: Selected Findings



- *Gaps* between incoming student expectations and faculty perceptions/perspectives. E.g.,
 - Participating in campus co-curricular activities
 - BCCSE= 22%; FSSE=4% (0 hrs/wk)
 - Working with other students on projects during class
 - BCCSE= 73% ; FSSE= 23% (“often” and “very often”)
 - Working with faculty members on activities other than coursework
 - BCCSE= 51%; FSSE=16% (“often” and “very often”)

Interpretations:



Observed Gaps

- Gaps between incoming student expectations and first-year experiences
 - Indication that expectations of first year students are unmet during the first year of college (or that the expectations are unrealistic)?
- Gaps between incoming student expectations and faculty perceptions/perspectives
 - Indication that FY faculty underestimate/overestimate expectations of incoming freshmen (and are likely to structure educational experiences according to their estimates)?

Student characterizations of experience - First Year of College is...

“Hardest adjustment that one will make in life”; “A juggling act”; “Gigantic roller coaster of emotions”; “A video game that you cannot start over. So, if you screw up your score, you just have to deal with it”

Bridging Gaps: Summer-Fall 2008 Faculty Actions



- Joint Recruitment Team
 - Recruitment messages
- Creation of Freshman Orientation *Week*
 - “Conversations with a professor”
- Enhancement of major-specific UNI 101 “Introduction to University Life” course
 - Revised curriculum
 - Faculty development

NSSE Use Study:

Lessons for Student Affairs

(Ahren, Ryan, Massa-McKinley, 2008, *About Campus*)

- **Collaborate and communicate results to create a shared vision**
 - Relationship with IR and faculty pivotal
- **Triangulate data sources to corroborate and deepen initial impressions**
 - Inventory all data sources, combine to review NSSE in tandem with other results; Link NSSE data to student information & outcomes
- **Use NSSE results to learn more about your students**
 - Examine subpopulations, use results to challenge assumptions
- **Use data to set targets and monitor progress**



Discussion and Comments: NSSE and Student Affairs

- **Do you have access to NSSE and other institutional data? If yes, how do you use it in conjunction with other internal/national data to advocate for change, assess organization, program, project? How do you use it as development tool for area, division, **collaboration with academic affairs?****
- **Share an example of NSSE use on your campus.**
- **What questions do you have about using NSSE for assessment, accreditation, on your campus?**
- **What **action** might you take with your NSSE data?**

Resources

- Ahren, C., Ryan, H.G., Massa-McKinley, R. (2008). Assessment matters – The why and how of cracking open and using assessment results. *About Campus*, 13(2), 29-32.
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