

Enhancing Student Success: Using NSSE & BCSSE Data to Shape Student Engagement

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 Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (jikinzie@indiana.edu)
 Alexei Matveev, Associate Director Institutional Effectiveness, Norfolk State University (agmatveev@nsu.edu)



"We value what we measure"

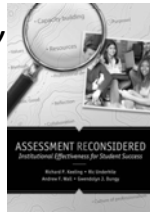
Wise decisions are needed about *what* to measure in the context of campus mission, values, and desired outcomes.



"If you don't measure it, you can't manage it..."

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.*



National Survey of Student Engagement

Overview



- Overview NSSE & BCSSE
- Example of using NSSE results to shape engagement
- Example of BCSSE Findings: Academic confidence and the First Year
- Fostering high self-efficacy and academic confidence
- BCSSE- NSSE One Schools Story: Norfolk State University
- Discussion

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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 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

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.

ASK: *To what extent are our students engaged in activities important for their learning?*

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

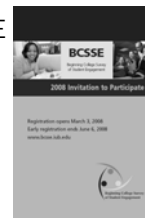


- Do you know the proportion of your first-year students who report that they “plan to do an internship”?
- What proportion actually do an internship? Are there differences by gender, race-ethnicity, major?? Do you think you’re higher or lower than peer schools? So what?
- If your Seniors are below the NSSE 2007 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?

BCSSE: Pre-College Experiences, Expectations Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement

Register Now for 2008

- BCSSE (pronounced “bessie”)
 - Designed as a companion to NSSE
 - Pilots in 2004-2006; 127 BCSSE schools in 2007!
- Purpose:
 - Measure entering first-year students’ pre-college academic and co-curricular experiences.
 - Expectations and attitudes for participating in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year.



BCSSE Content



- High school academic and co-curricular engagement.
- High school academic preparation (e.g., AP courses).
- 6 scales
 - High School Academic Engagement
 - Expected First-Year Academic Engagement
 - Academic Persistence
 - Expected Transition Difficulty
 - **Academic Preparation/Confidence**
 - Importance of Campus Environment

Questions to Answer with BCSSE

- What expectations do our entering students have for their first year in college?
- Where are the gaps between our students HS experiences and college expectations and our hopes for their engagement in college?
- What do our entering students believe about their academic preparation, persistence in the face of difficulty, and institutional support?
- To what extent do student experiences, attitude and expectations for academic engagement vary by gender, first-generation status, and high school achievement level?
- When combined with NSSE, BCSSE data can help identify expectation – college experience gap

Answering Questions with BCSSE Data

- 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 "Institution A" 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??

Academic Confidence and the First Year

Academic confidence is an indicator of Academic Self-Efficacy

"People who have strong beliefs in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. Such an affirmative orientation fosters interest and engrossing involvement in activities"

Bandura, 1997, p. 39

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Engagement Expectations

- Consequences for unmet expectations are high. Disappointed students fail to optimize their college experience, leave institutions, and sometimes abandon higher education all together.
- Students set in place in their first semester the pattern of time, effort allocation & study habits that will serve them across their years in college
- Educators need to detail the specific activities that will lead to success in college.

Miller, T., Kuh, G. D., & Schuh, J. H. (2005). *Promoting Reasonable Expectations: Aligning Student and Institutional Views of the College Experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Exploring Academic Confidence using BCSSE 2007 Data

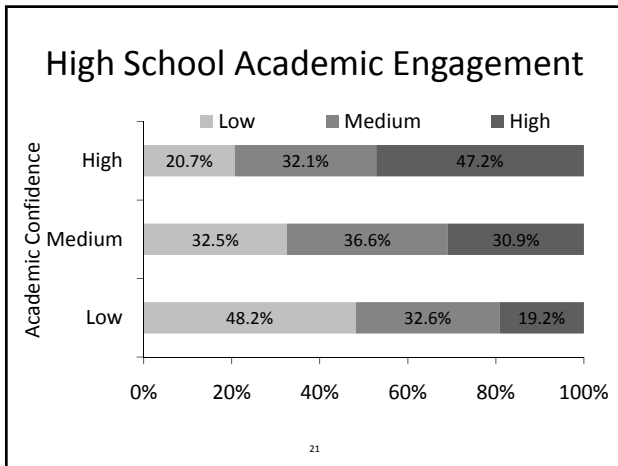
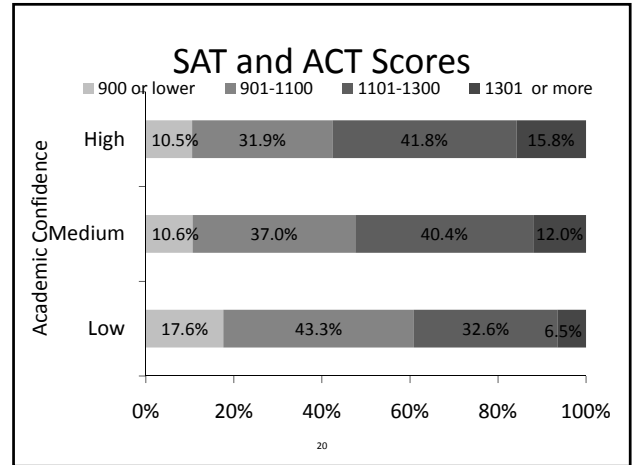
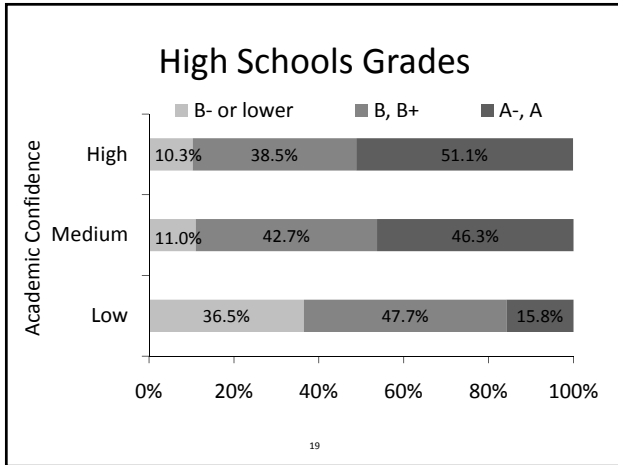
- 67,040 respondents at 127 institutions
 - 58% female
 - 69% Caucasian; 11% Black/African American; 7% Asian American; 5% Hispanic/Latino
 - 39% first Generation
 - 93% graduated HS in 2007
 - 84% graduated from a public high school
- Created 3 groups: **low, medium, and high** academic confidence; Approximately 1/3 in each category

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Findings

What types of high school academic experiences are associated with students' academic confidence?

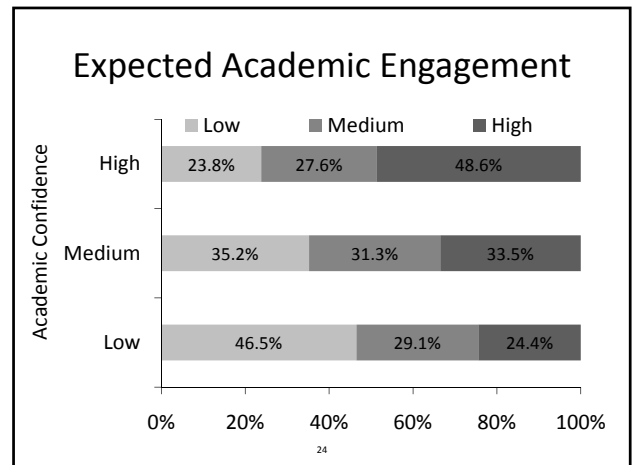
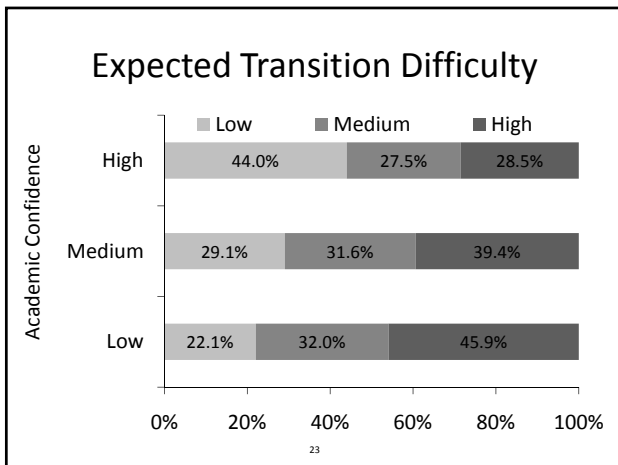
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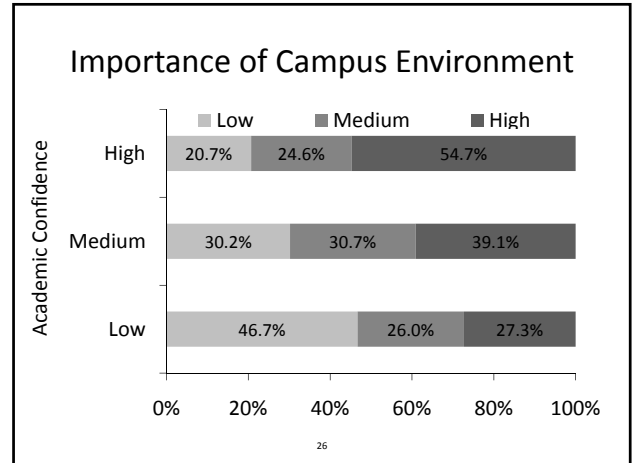
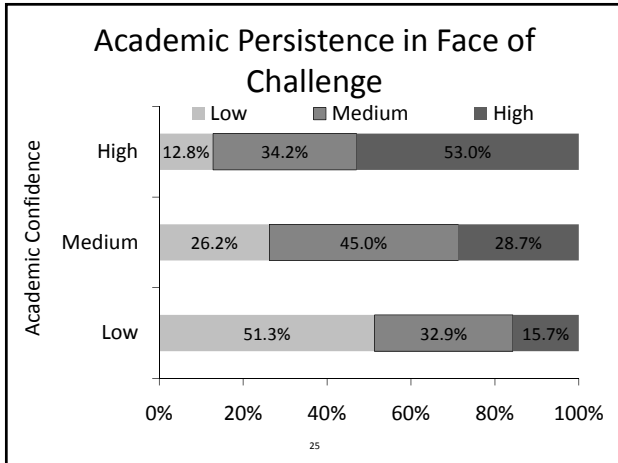


Findings

How does a students' academic confidence relate to their expected academic engagement, academic persistence, expected transition difficulties, and importance of supportive campus environment?

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Summary of Findings

Students With Low Academic Confidence:

- Enter college with lower academic skills and experiences out of high schools; and
- Expect to be less engaged in college, have more transition difficulties, less likely to persist when faced with adversity, and less likely to place importance on a supportive campus environment.

Students With High Academic Confidence:

- Essentially, just the opposite.

Distinct patterns for low, middle and high levels of self-confidence.

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How do we use this information to effectively help students entering college with low confidence?

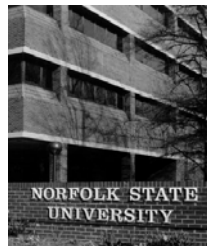

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Fostering High Self-Efficacy and Academic Confidence

- Promote competence
- Social models
- Promote learning challenging tasks at a mastery level
- Define success in terms of improvement for that individual
- Point out errors/mistakes to students in a broader context of what they did well
- Emphasize the importance of early, meaningful feedback to improve performance

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Using NSSE & BCSSE to Improve Advising

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Norfolk State University (NSU)

- Founded in 1935
- Located in the downtown Norfolk, Virginia
- One of the largest HBCUs in the nation
- More than 6,000 culturally diverse students
- A wide variety of undergraduate and graduate programs for students seeking access to an affordable high-quality education

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NSU: Surveys of Student Engagement

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
 - 2002-2008
- Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
 - 2004 and 2007
- Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)
 - 2004, 2006-2008

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Surveys of Student Engagement

- Indirect Assessment Methods
- Triangulation
- Interpretation

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Fall 2007 BCSSE

- Paper format
- UNI 101 "Introduction to University Life"
- N=496
- Approximately 60% response rate

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2007 BCSSE/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")

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2007 BCSSE/NSSE: Selected Findings (Cont'd)

- *Gaps* between incoming student expectations and first-year experiences. E.g.,
 - Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
 - BCCSE= 6%; NSSE= 28% ("never")
 - Participating in campus co-curricular activities
 - BCCSE= 22%; NSSE=40% (0hrs/wk)
 - Working for pay (off-campus)
 - BCCSE= 61%; NSSE=44% (>0hrs/wk)

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2007 BCSSE/FSSE: Selected Findings

- *Gaps* between incoming student expectations and faculty perceptions/perspectives. E.g.,
 - Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion
 - BCCSE=83%; FSSE= 62% (“often” and “very often”)
 - Make a class presentation
 - BCCSE= 2%; FSSE= 23% (“never”)
 - Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
 - BCCSE=82% ; FSSE=51% (“often” and “very often”)

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2007 BCSSE/FSSE: Selected Findings (Cont'd)

- *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”)

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Observed Gaps: Triangulation

- Student in-depth essays responding 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?* (N=67)
 - “None of the information [provided to incoming freshmen] is set up to discourage the students. ...Some of the information is left out until you meet the professor. That is when the students really become oriented.”
 - “I wish so badly that someone would have warned me about real college life.”

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Observed Gaps: Why?

Influence on College Expectations (Scale: (1)= not at all, (6)=a lot)	% of NSU UNI 101 students indicating significant influence (5-6 on the scale)
1. Family members*	57%
2. High school teachers/administrators	42%
3. Friends/students in high school	40%
4. Friends/students already attending NSU	38%
5. High school guidance counselors	38%
6. College orientation	37%
7. Campus visits (excluding orientation)	36%
8. College recruiters/admissions	35%
9. College website / materials (brochures)	31%
10. External publications (guidebooks, rankings)	21%

*Only 40% of NSU FY students indicate that at least one of their parents or legal guardians completed a four-year college degree or more (2006 BCSSE) 40
Source: 2006 BCSSE

Observed Gaps: Interpretation

- 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)?

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Observed Gaps: Implications for Student FY Experience

- First Year of College is
 - “Challenge”
 - “Hardest adjustment that one will make in life”
 - “Word of confusion”
 - “Eye opener”
 - “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”

(From NSU student essays)

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Observed Gaps: Implications for Enrollment Management

- “As I stepped across the threshold of my first class on the first day of my college experience, reality smacked me right in my face. I was terrified.” (From an NSU student essay)
- “Perception versus reality...What will happen when the reality sets in? Disillusionment? Disgust? Despair? Will they learn their lessons, will they begin to face reality, or will they simply leave?” (From an NSU faculty member essay analyzing BCCSE data)

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Bridging Gaps: Students

- During the coming school year, how certain are you that you will ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments?
 - 77% very certain (5+6, 1=not at all certain, 6=very certain)
- During the coming school year, how difficult do you expect the following to be: Interacting with faculty?
 - 10% very difficult (5+6, 1=not at all difficult, 6=very difficult)

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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

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Student Engagement: Beginning of College Experience

“My entrance into [higher education] was like a baby’s entrance into this world. My eyes were open, but uncomprehending, and I was sensitive to every touch and sound. And like a developing child, it took me a whole year before what I was experiencing began to make sense” (From an NSU student essay)

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Conclusions: Expectations, Engagement and Success in College

- ***Students set in place in their first semester of college the pattern of time allocation and study habits that will serve them across their years in college***
- **Educators need to detail the specific activities that will lead to success in college**



Discussion and Comments

Jillian Kinzie
NSSE Institute
jikinzie@indiana.edu

Alexei Matveev
Norfolk State University



www.nsse.iub.edu