What Have We Learned? Using NSSE Data 2001-2013: Lessons From The Field

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What are You Going to Learn Today?
Participants in this session will:
• Gain familiarity with the range of NSSE data use topics of featured institutional examples
• Learn about specific practices and strategies utilized by institutions
• Stimulate ideas for data use and encourage reflection on effective data use strategies employed in relation to campus data use

What is NSSE?
• Yes, an annual survey
  – More than 1,500 colleges & universities since 2000
  – Hundreds participated multiple years
• Diagnostic information to support the improvement of undergraduate education
  Actionable information based on valid & reliable measures
  – Meaningful comparisons

What Data Were Used for This Study?
120 Institutional Accounts in “Using NSSE Data” section of Annual Results 2003 – 2013

What Methods Were Used for This Study?
• Content analysis of a curated collection of institutional data use examples
• In-depth accounts were categorized in Excel by type of application of results, units and institutional actors involved, analyses conducted, and outcomes
• Common themes across examples were identified
• Multiple researchers = multiple callibrations
FINDINGS

### Themes in "Using NSSE Data" Stories, 2003 - 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Transfer Student Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Faculty Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Building community support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Non-declared students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Board of Regents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Response Rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 30 different themes
• Co-occurrence possible

### Methods

Counts of Methods in "Using NSSE Data" Stories, 2003 - 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extensive study approach</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked NSSE data to institutional research data</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify key indicators</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over sampling</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCSSSE and NSSE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed NSSE data</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison group</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSSE and FSSE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department level analysis or report</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaggregating</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group(s) and/or interview(s)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemented with internal/local survey(s)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing information</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitudinal analysis</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus committee</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSSE as a measure for improvement/growth</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple data sources and/or triangulation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The goal is to make appropriate changes in areas where students are under-engaged and where satisfaction can be enhanced. And the University is taking action and allocating resources to address its concerns.” (p. 22) 2003, University of Charleston

“BCSSE data showed that students were coming in well prepared. They had positive attitudes and were ready and excited to work in the classroom. However, NSSE data showed a mismatch between entering student attitudes and behaviors during the first year.” (p. 23) Black Hills State University, 2009

“One of the most important predictors of whether students in the cohort persisted to their junior year was the NSSE supportive Campus Environment benchmark. Knowing students’ scores on the items in this cluster can help predict if they are likely to persist at SCU or leave” (p. 23-24) Southern Connecticut State University, 2009

"NSSE has helped to encourage faculty interest in student learning processes and effective ways to contribute to student learning, as well as how faculty can further measure student engagement in the classroom", Norfolk State University 2011

Counts of Themes in "Using NSSE Data" Stories, 2003 - 13

Increasing Diversity: 7
Using Benchmarks: 7
Creating New Initiatives: 7
Service Learning: 7
Committee: 8
Study Abroad: 8
Advising: 8
Strategic Planning: 10
QEP: 10
Retention: 10
Further Analysis: 11
FYE: 11
Teaching & Learning: 13
Sharing Data on Campus: 21
Student Engagement: 30
Accred./Improv.: 45
Methods: Examples

“The first part of this multi-layer process was the release of the report Student Engagement Project—Statistical Summary (2010), a composite review of 2007 & 2008 NSSE results along with other information sources. The report outlines the beginning of a three-year Student Engagement Action Plan written by U of I’s NSSE Action Team. The plan provides a framework to move student engagement issues forward throughout the institution and represents a conscious effort to translate NSSE results into actionable steps” (p. 26).

University of Calgary, 2010

“Following NSSE’s recommendations for predictive validity studies (see NSSE’s Psychometric Portfolio), Wagner linked NSSE data with student SAT scores, enrollment records, and GPA. Results revealed that for most students across all five benchmarks, higher levels of engagement were associated with higher rates of retention after one year. For students with SAT scores in the low to middle range, engagement was a better predictor of retention than SAT scores” (p. 26).

Wagner College, 2012

Who Gets to See & Use Results?

With whom do you share NSSE results on your campus?

Data Sharing With and Use by Internal Institutional Audiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results shared with</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results implied with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSSE, biannual staff survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wagner College, 2012

Is NSSE Making a Difference?

Assertion: A central objective of the NSSE project is to encourage the use of student engagement results to assess and improve quality in undergraduate education.

Gads, how were NSSE results used and to what meaningful end???

What Motivated Data Use?*

MOTIVATION
1. Data concerning to campus, usually lower than expected in comparison
2. Accreditation
3. Quality improvement, program evaluation
4. New goals, priorities, strategic plan
5. Triangulation of results
6. Demonstrate distinction
7. State mandate/performance indicators
8. Interest in trend analysis
9. Grant application

What Resulted from Data Use?

1. Increased institutional support (junior, middle, senior)
2. Increased faculty development (junior, middle, senior)
3. Increased student development (junior, middle, senior)
4. Increased institutional support (junior, middle, senior)
5. Increased student development (junior, middle, senior)
6. Increased institutional support (junior, middle, senior)

Conclusion: Use Definitely Amounts to Something!!
A Shorter List of What Resulted from Data Use...

1. Justified creation of positions
2. Influenced adoption of engaging pedagogies
3. Increased expansion of diversity experiences, HPS, learning supports, etc.
4. Refined, revamped, expanded FYE, IC, capstones, writing, transfer, online learner supports, transfer transition, etc.
5. Identified strengths & where programs fall short
6. Advanced collaboration between AA & SA
7. Warranted resource allocation
8. Informed revisions to general education curriculum & experiences
9. Provided prompts for focus groups & input on educational quality
10. Informed campus studies
11. Included in accreditation (regional & program)
12. Included in Title III grant proposals, evidence of Carnegie Engaged Campus criteria
13. Informed renovations to student center
14. Guided new program creation (Sophomore, transfer experience)
15. Benchmarking (quality improvement, program review)
16. Norming student & parent behaviors at Orientation
17. Trend analysis on student success
18. Performance indicators for state funding
19. Evidence of program impact (IC, FYE, HPS, Service learning, Writing)
20. Established priorities in strategic planning
21. Informed faculty development workshop agenda

What Resulted from Data Use?

Informed Transfer Student Transition Project...
“Findings showed that transfer students were less likely to work with faculty outside of class, complete a field-based experience, carry out community service, or complete a culminating senior project—important goals of WMU’s strategic plan. Furthermore, transfer students were less likely to participate in co-curricular activities due to family responsibilities and time spent commuting to campus. These were important considerations for University programs and practices that support the nonacademic responsibilities of students. Recommendations included a range of initiatives to support transfer student transition, including more evening course offerings and expansion of WMU offerings at local community colleges to ensure smooth transfer.”

(p. 24) 2012, Western Michigan University

Recommendations for Using NSSE Data

1. Create a clear plan of action and follow through
2. Form questions about target areas of inquiry before you begin analysis
3. Include multiple constituents from the start

Recommendations for Using NSSE Data

1. Combine multiple data sources
2. Don’t rely solely on NSSE data
3. Contextualize your results by supplementing with internal surveys and student focus groups or interviews

Recommendations for Using NSSE Data

1. Create a sufficiently comprehensive plan of analysis that fits what you are trying get from your data
2. Identify who will oversee the use of results across campus
   - Who are your data use “champions”?
Recommendations for Using NSSE Data

- Take advantage of all possible motivators
- Connect NSSE to conversations on issues of concern on your campus

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What is Your NSSE Data Use Story?

www.nsse.iub.edu/html/institutionStory.cfm

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