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The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) documents dimensions of quality in undergraduate education and provides information and assistance to institutions and other organizations to improve student learning. Its primary activity is annually surveying college students to assess the extent to which they engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and personal development.

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From Promise to Progress: Exploring Engagement

By December of 1999, a team of researchers chaired by Peter Ewell had built and piloted the instrument. It seemed promising. But when the countdown came for the actual launch—inviting institutions to participate in the spring 2000 survey—most of us were holding our breath. We weren’t sure that enough colleges and universities would agree to participate to represent a national sample. Nor was it certain that enough students would actually complete the survey to constitute a valid sample.

As it turned out, 276 colleges and universities signed on for the first survey and the number has climbed ever since. Over the past three years, 618 different colleges and universities have participated in NSSE at least once (83 all three years), even as participation fees gradually increased and the Pew subsidy declined. Student response rates have been at a consistently respectable level—between 41-42%. Institutional results have been stable over the three years, attesting to the reliability of the survey. And along the way NSSE has not only served participating campuses but paved the way for leaders of the community college sector to launch a “daughter of NSSE”—the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The only disappointment in this picture has been the under-representation of our most prestigious institutions, especially private research universities.

Behind these accomplishments lies a truly amazing effort on the part of George Kuh and the NSSE staff, including the invention of a web-administered option for taking the survey; preparation of detailed, customized reports for each participating institution; preparation of these annual national reports; continuous efforts to cross-validate the evidence NSSE assembles; and appearances at countless meetings to represent and explain NSSE to interested parties.
But getting a broad sample of institutions and students to participate in the survey was only an intermediate goal. NSSE’s founders hoped that colleges and universities would not simply participate in the survey but actually use the findings as a catalyst for institutional improvement. Happily, as the numerous examples reported in these annual reports attest, this goal, too, is being advanced. NSSE results, delivered directly to participating institutions, are galvanizing all sorts of improvement efforts.

Indeed, so promising is this line of work that the NSSE project office has evolved a new arm—the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice—to work with institutions interested in using NSSE data as a stimulus to change. Impressed with this potential, the Lumina Foundation for Education has awarded NSSE a $1.3 million grant to strengthen the Institute and develop new services to institutions in partnership with the American Association for Higher Education and the Center for Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College. NSSE is no longer simply a survey; it is a vehicle for data-driven institutional improvement.

In a sense, this development brings us full circle. NSSE’s origins are in research about the conditions for student learning. Now, as campuses use their results for improvement, the time is right for further research that will help refine and complicate our understanding of “engagement” and its role in the kinds of learning we most value for our students.

We know, for instance, that students can be engaged in a range of effective practices and still not be learning with understanding; we know that students can be learning with understanding and still not be acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are related to effective citizenship. We need to learn more about the forms and conditions of engagement that relate to student competence and commitment in arenas of practice.

There are important questions, too, about engagement not as a means to an end (the premise of NSSE) but as an experience worth having in itself. We go to the symphony, after all, not to improve ourselves but to hear the music, to have the experience. Similarly, there are aspects of the college experience—participating in a seminar, for instance, or a role in student governance—that have a kind of value we have not yet learned to describe in detail or to document.

In short, NSSE’s pictures of student engagement reveal only a portion of the college anatomy. For a complete profile of institutional quality, we need pictures from many angles. Higher education must get much more sophisticated about how to capture the view from those angles and use what we see to enrich the lives and learning of our students.

NSSE is a big step in the right direction and a journey that promises to unfold in exciting directions. The Pew Charitable Trusts should be deeply satisfied with the return on its investment. We congratulate George Kuh and his hard working colleagues for the fantastic job they have done, and applaud all the institutions that have demonstrated both the courage and the foresight to participate in the journey.

Russell Edgerton
Director, Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning

Lee Shulman
President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

“We need to learn more about the forms and conditions of engagement that relate to student competence and commitment in arenas of practice.”
Russ Edgerton and Lee Shulman suggest in the Foreword, NSSE has settled into orbit, annually collecting student engagement information from more than 100,000 first-year and senior students at several hundred colleges and universities nationwide. The NSSE database now includes information from institutions that represent more than half (52 percent) of all undergraduates attending four-year colleges and universities. Our original goal was to enroll 250 schools per year. With 276 schools in 2000, 321 schools in 2001, and 366 schools participating in the 2002 national program, we’ve substantially exceeded the planned workscope. As I write, over 400 institutions are registered for 2003.

Four factors contribute to NSSE’s success. First, the demand for meaningful and usable assessment data continues unabated. Most schools recognize the need for information that can help improve student and institutional performance and also responds to external demands for evidence of student learning.

Second, a superb crew at the Indiana University Center for Survey Research administers NSSE using state-of-the-art professional survey methods. Because the NSSE survey process is customized to a degree for each school, it’s the equivalent of annually sending out 300-plus different surveys to random samples of undergraduates.

Third, participating institutions give us high marks for the quality of reader-friendly NSSE reports and other products. The highly skilled, productive NSSE staff prepares and presents student engagement results in multiple formats so that faculty members, administrators, and others with different levels of understanding of assessment and institutional improvement approaches can meaningfully interpret and use their findings. In addition, we continually seek and incorporate suggestions for improving our processes and materials.

Finally, schools are profitably using their results. In large part this is because the survey questions have compelling face validity with different groups, tapping many of the behaviors faculty members and others know are important to student learning. Moreover, virtually all the NSSE items represent activities that research studies show are linked to desired outcomes of college. These factors, along with an increasingly inquisitive public searching for good information about colleges, make NSSE the right tool for the times.

NSSE is only one source of information about the student experience. Among its virtues is that NSSE is a window into areas of student and institutional performance that virtually all colleges and universities espouse to be important, but about which few have solid information. The concept of student engagement is accessible, understandable, and congenial with the language of teaching and learning. Moreover, NSSE results point to aspects of student and institutional performance where improvement is both desirable and possible, be it persistence, success in major field courses, and so on.

We’re proud to be a part of a growing national movement to re-focus talk and action on key aspects of the undergraduate experience that really matter to collegiate quality. Along with our partners in this worthwhile endeavor, we welcome your participation, support, and suggestions for strengthening institutional responsibility for student learning.

George D. Kuh
Chancellor’s Professor of Higher Education
Indiana University Bloomington
Survey Instrument
The College Student Report is available in paper and Web versions and takes about 15 minutes to complete.

Objectives
Provide data to colleges and universities to use for improving undergraduate education, inform state accountability and accreditation efforts, and facilitate national and sector benchmarking efforts.

Partners
Supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Lumina Foundation for Education, and the Center for Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College. Co-sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning.

Participating Colleges and Universities
More than 285,000 students at 618 different four-year colleges and universities thus far. More than 400 schools are registered for the spring 2003 program.

Consortium and State or University Systems
Numerous peer comparison groups (urban institutions, women’s colleges, research institutions, Christian colleges, engineering and technical schools, etc.) and state and university systems (California State University, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin) have asked additional mission-specific questions and shared aggregated data.

Data Sources
Randomly selected first-year and senior students from hundreds of four-year colleges and universities. Supplemented by other sources such as institutional records, results from other surveys, and data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Administration
Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning in cooperation with the Indiana University Center for Survey Research and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).

Validity and Reliability
The NSSE survey was designed by experts and extensively tested to insure validity and reliability and to minimize non-response bias and mode effects.

Response Rates
Average response rate for paper and web versions is about 41-42%.

Audiences
College and university administrators, faculty members, and governing boards; external authorities such as accreditors and government agencies; current and prospective students and their families; college advisors, institutional researchers, and higher education scholars.

Participation Agreement
Participating institutions agree that NSSE can use the data in the aggregate for national and sector reporting purposes and other undergraduate improvement initiatives; institutions can use their own data for institutional purposes, and that results specific to each institution and identified as such will not be made public except by mutual agreement.

Cost
Institutions pay a minimum participation fee ranging from $1,500 to $7,500 determined by undergraduate enrollment.

New Initiatives
Working with the American Association for Higher Education and other groups on two major initiatives, Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP) and Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS).

Special Services
Faculty survey, NSSE workshops, faculty and staff retreats, consulting, peer comparisons, norms data, and special analyses.

Profile of 2000-2002 Participating Colleges and Universities against National Pool

Quick Facts

Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice
- Level of Academic Challenge
- Active and Collaborative Learning
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Supportive Campus Environment
Colleges and universities cannot accurately judge their effectiveness in the absence of good information about what students do and the quality of the student experience. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) annually assesses the extent to which students take part in educationally sound activities and the institutional policies and practices that induce students to take part in such activities. Specifically, NSSE focuses on five clusters of activities that research studies show are linked to desired outcomes of college. They are: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.

NSSE’s primary focus is gathering, reporting, and interpreting student engagement data, with an eye toward enhancing student learning and promoting student success. The NSSE Institute was created to document educational practices that seem to work in a variety of different settings with different groups of learners. Toward this end, the Institute helps faculty members, administrators, governing board members, and others implement effective mechanisms for linking information about student experiences to efforts to improve academic programs and support services. In addition, NSSE champions effective educational practice as a compelling, meaningful indicator of collegiate quality. In this regard, NSSE is refocusing the national conversation about what constitutes quality in the undergraduate experience.

What We’ve Learned So Far
Engaging in effective educational practices benefits all students. Some students are more engaged than others, so it’s important to discover how particular groups of students are performing in order to take appropriate action. For example:

- Students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds appear to engage in effective educational practices at comparable levels.
- International students are generally more engaged in various college experiences than American students, particularly in the first year.
- Senior transfer students interact less with peers and faculty members and are less involved in campus activities and programs, but perform academically on par with non-transfer students.
- Diversity-related experiences are positively related to many other effective educational practices.
- Learning communities are positively linked to a variety of other educationally purposeful activities and desired outcomes.
- Engagement and grades go hand-in-hand in that GPA is positively related to all five benchmark scores and nearly all of the effective educational practices represented on the NSSE survey.
Next Steps

NSSE is now established as a valid, reliable assessment tool. Building on this foundation, NSSE is working with an expanding cadre of partners with similar goals and values to further strengthen institutional accountability for student learning.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) at the University of Texas at Austin and NSSE envision a number of collaborative efforts, such as examining student engagement at two-year and four-year campuses within a single state or university system and tracking the movement and performance of students between the two sectors.

NSSE Institute’s Project DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practice) will discover and document promising practices at educationally effective institutions and bring together groups from institutional consortia committed to using student engagement data to promote student success and enhance institutional performance. Partners in DEEP include the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), the Wabash College Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, and Lumina Foundation for Education along with such organizations as the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

NSSE also is working with AAHE and the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education on the BEAMS Project (Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students) in an effort to help reduce the national gap in educational attainment for African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans by increasing the number of students from these groups who earn a bachelor’s degree (www.aahhe.org/BEAMS).

This expanded workscope is transforming NSSE from an annual survey of undergraduates into a national movement for using data to improve the undergraduate experience.

“Schools are using their NSSE results in many different productive ways:

- Assessment and improvement
- Curricular reform
- Benchmarking
- Alumni outreach
- Accountability
- Advising
- Grant writing
- Institutional research
- Institutional advancement
- Accreditation
- Self-studies
- Retention
- State system performance reviews

Lessons Learned

Student engagement results appear to have the best chance of guiding institutional change efforts when:

1. Faculty and staff understand the concept of student engagement
2. Enough results are available to use the information at the department or unit level
3. Institutions understand what student engagement data represent and use the results wisely
4. Institutional performance is reported in a responsible way
5. Results are placed in the proper context and interpreted carefully
6. Results are examined from multiple perspectives
7. Results are linked to other information about the student experience and institutional performance
8. Institutions form consortia or other collaborative arrangements to work on improvement initiatives

““The National Survey of Student Engagement is probably the single most important major step in understanding quality in undergraduate education in the last decade. It focuses our attention on the things that really matter and gets our attention off the things that probably don’t matter.”

—Ernest T. Pascarella, Mary Louise Peterson Chair in Higher Education, University of Iowa
Student Engagement

The Right Idea at the Right Time

Occasionally an idea comes along that seems to clarify complex issues and potentially resolve fundamental problems in a given line of endeavor. Such is the connection between student engagement and collegiate quality.

Student engagement represents the intersection of the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in such activities. It’s a deceptively simple premise: the more students do something, the more proficient they become. For example, the more students study a subject, the more they learn about it. Likewise, the more students practice a skill—reading, writing, or problem solving—the more adept they become at the respective activity. Faculty members and administrators in all types of colleges and universities know this. And students realize it as well. Moreover, decades of research studies show that college students learn more when they direct their efforts to a variety of educationally purposeful activities, inside and outside the classroom.

Colleges and universities can intentionally modify policies and practices so that students expend more effort on productive activities. For example, collaborative learning strategies promote peer interaction which, in turn, can stimulate individual and group learning as students work together to seek answers and solve problems. Students are often motivated to work harder and tend to learn more in the company of peers.

There are two ways to think about student engagement. The first is as a proxy for collegiate quality, reflecting the degree to which students take advantage of the learning opportunities their institution offers. The second is that student engagement is itself an important outcome of college. Taking part in educationally purposeful activities builds the foundation for acquiring and integrating other essential skills, such as learning how to learn, being able to independently identify problems, developing and testing potential solutions, and synthesizing and applying information. Thus, students who are involved in a variety of educationally purposeful activities during college are developing the habits of the mind that enlarge their capacity for continuous learning.

Given the importance of student engagement, it’s gratifying that the concept is finally gaining the attention it deserves and is at the forefront of public discussions about collegiate quality.

The National Survey of Student Engagement

Surveys record how people think or feel about certain topics and events. Surveys don’t often aim to change the way people talk and behave. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is different in that NSSE is both an ongoing data collection effort and a strategy to improve undergraduate education. As a survey, NSSE annually gathers information directly from students about the extent to which they engage in sound educational practices. In this regard, the NSSE project documents and describes key dimensions of quality in undergraduate education.

NSSE also aims to improve the college experience. Because the survey results point to things that an institution can do something about—almost immediately—NSSE data create an occasion for talking about and helping campuses focus on what matters to student learning.

“Assessment in higher education remains controversial. But NSSE’s solid foundation clearly shows faculty and administrators that it is possible to systematically assess student learning. Future developments in assessment in higher education will build on but not replace NSSE.”

—Roger Benjamin, President, Council for Aid to Education

“It is always instructive to listen carefully to the voices of those ‘in the trenches.’ The National Survey of Student Engagement is long overdue and will surely in time affect parents’ perceptions of what is best for their youngsters.”

—Deborah Wadsworth, President, Public Agenda
With these ends in mind, NSSE’s core activities can be depicted as a triangle. The different size sections represent the relative emphasis NSSE gives to the respective activity. NSSE devotes its largest share of time and resources to gathering, reporting, and interpreting student engagement data, with an eye toward enhancing student learning and promoting student success. The next part of this report illustrates how colleges and universities are using their student engagement results to identify what they are doing well and to determine areas where improvement is desired.

The second set of core activities is discovering and reporting educational practices that seem to work in a variety of different settings with different groups of learners. This is the focus of NSSE’s recently formed Institute for Effective Educational Practices. We’ll say more later about the Institute’s workscope and near-term activities.

Finally, NSSE champions effective educational practice as a compelling, meaningful indicator of collegiate quality. In this regard NSSE is refocusing the national conversation about what constitutes quality in the undergraduate experience. There’s growing evidence of NSSE’s influence on the national discourse about undergraduate education as student engagement is being mentioned with increasing frequency.

Forging a Philosophy of Educational Quality

An early strategic decision by NSSE was to reduce the survey’s several dozen questions about empirically confirmed effective educational practices to a handful of concepts. Our objective was to make it easier for people on and off the campus to more easily grasp and talk about student engagement and its importance to student learning, collegiate quality, and institutional improvement. With this in mind we created five benchmarks of effective educational practices:

- Level of academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Enriching educational experiences
- Supportive campus environment

Each year NSSE calculates scores for these benchmarks to monitor performance at the national, sector, and institutional levels. The Summary Statistics section contains the 2002 NSSE national and sector benchmarks. Results from individual institutions are not disclosed, though schools can do so if they wish.

Another meaningful measure of the impact of the NSSE project is the number of schools that are using their student engagement results as baselines for improvement—reference points that can be moved by intentional action and changes in policies and practices. In fact, for the past two years, the most common question posed to NSSE staff is “How are schools using their results?”

“I’ve reviewed most of NSSE’s technical reports and analyses and it’s a very impressive set of evidence.”
—Patrick T. Terenzini, Senior Scientist and Professor of Higher Education, Penn State University

“The benchmark data really help you understand the larger picture, what is happening all across America and to put your own efforts in context. A campus can more effectively communicate with its own publics if it understands the national picture as well.”
—Elaine El-Khawas, Professor of Higher Education, The George Washington University
Level of Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

Activities and conditions:

■ Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to your academic program)
■ Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations
■ Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
■ Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more
■ Number of written papers or reports between five and 19 pages
■ Number of written papers or reports fewer than five pages
■ Coursework emphasizes: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
■ Coursework emphasizes: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences
■ Coursework emphasizes: Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
■ Coursework emphasizes: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
■ Campus environment emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work

Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are asked to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students to deal with the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.

Activities:

■ Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
■ Made a class presentation
■ Worked with other students on projects during class
■ Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
■ Tutored or taught other students
■ Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
■ Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)

Student-Faculty Interactions

Students learn first hand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.

Activities:

■ Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
■ Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
■ Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with faculty members outside of class
■ Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)
■ Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance
■ Worked with a faculty member on a research project
Enriching Educational Experiences

Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augment the academic program. Experiencing diversity teaches students valuable things about themselves and other cultures. Used appropriately, technology facilitates learning and promotes collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide students with opportunities to synthesize, integrate, and apply their knowledge. Such experiences make learning more meaningful and, ultimately, more useful because what students know becomes a part of who they are.

**Activities and conditions:**
- Talking with students with different religious beliefs, political opinions, or values
- Talking with students of a different race or ethnicity
- An institutional climate that encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Using electronic technology to discuss or complete assignments
- Participating in:
  - Internships or field experiences
  - Community service or volunteer work
  - Learning communities
  - Foreign language coursework
  - Study abroad
  - Independent study or self-designed major
  - Culminating senior experience
  - Co-curricular activities

Supportive Campus Environment

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.

**Conditions:**
- Campus environment provides support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices
Imagine flying a plane across the Atlantic without navigational instruments. Fortunately, nobody has to fly “blind” anymore. Nor should colleges and universities make judgments about the effectiveness of their policies and practices in the absence of student engagement data or some comparable source of information about the quality of the student experience.

NSSE is a compass that can help determine whether student behavior and institutional practices are headed in the right direction. Indeed, one of the most gratifying aspects of the NSSE experience after three years is that many colleges and universities are putting their student engagement results to use in a variety of productive ways:

- Assessment and improvement
- Curricular reform
- Benchmarking
- Alumni outreach
- Accountability
- Advising
- Grant writing
- Institutional research
- Institutional advancement
- Accreditation
- Self-studies
- Retention
- State system performance reviews

To learn more about how schools are using their results, we periodically canvas users via e-mail and convene groups of colleagues at meetings and workshops around the country. In addition, last spring we conducted interviews with representatives from 84 institutions that administered NSSE in 2000 or 2001.

In this section we highlight some of what we’re discovering by featuring five colleges and universities and two state systems that are using their student engagement results for various purposes. Scores of other institutions are also using NSSE data and examples of these can be found on NSSE’s Web site.

Promoting Student-Faculty Interaction

- The University of Montana-Missoula involves faculty directly in identifying priorities for action by issuing an annual RFP for “Engagement Awards.” Academic departments apply for up to $3,000 for projects that enhance students’ academic experience. The projects are also supposed to lead to permanent changes in faculty and student behavior in at least three of the five areas of effective educational practice, one of which must be student-faculty interaction. Units get $2,000 up front with the remaining $1,000 coming after assessing the impact of the award. In the first two years, full awards have been made to four departments and partial awards to two others, including the following:

  - Biological sciences faculty members and students participated in mentoring training and developed a mentoring Web page, a mentoring handbook, and online video clips on effective mentoring (See http://ibscore.dbs.umt.edu/mentor.htm for more information).
  - Social work faculty members and students evaluated the quality of various practicum experiences on campus. Written and web-based materials developed as part of this activity have already been integrated into the Social Work curriculum.
  - Geology students and faculty members created additional student-faculty research opportunities, hosted a mini-conference open to all undergraduates in the state, and planned a field trip—“Rocky Mountain GeoDays.” As a result, 60 undergraduate students are engaging in faculty-led research, and the Geology Club has been revitalized (see www.cs.umt.edu/geology.).

NSSE data have stimulated efforts to promote more student-faculty collaboration on research at Columbia College, Fontbonne College, Georgia Tech, Indiana University, Marymount Manhattan College, and the University of Richmond.

“Alverno College is in the business of constantly improving student learning. We use NSSE to structure conversations about priorities for teaching, learning, and assessing, and we are working on new ways to help prospective students and others in the college’s community understand the complex factors that contribute to the college experience.”

—Sister Joel Read, President, Alverno College

“NSSE clearly identified our strengths but more importantly showed us some areas where we could improve the educational experience for our students. We have incorporated NSSE into our strategic plan and will use it as part of our comprehensive institutional assessment to strengthen our academic program.”

—Nancy Hensel, President, University of Maine at Presque Isle

“Using Student Engagement Results”

[Image of a graph showing data points and lines]
Integrating In-Class and Out-of-Class Experiences

Saint Xavier University was gratified with some aspects of its initial round of NSSE results, especially the relatively strong academic challenge scores. Other findings, though, pointed to areas where the University wanted to do better. To address initial faculty skepticism about the validity and reliability of the findings, a campus-wide assessment committee replicated some NSSE survey items in a local survey. Because the local survey return rate was 80 percent, and the findings were consistent with NSSE results, people now have greater confidence in the reliability of the NSSE instrument. In addition, a second year of NSSE data (2001) corroborated the findings from 2000.

NSSE results have been presented in a variety of venues—faculty assemblies, Board of Trustees meetings, and various staff meetings and retreats. Improving performance on selected engagement activities became the centerpiece for academic program planning, a Title III Grant proposal, creation of a service learning experience in freshmen orientation, common reading materials in the first year seminar class, and new initiatives to foster more out-of-the-classroom collaborations between faculty and students. Also, a Web page devoted to NSSE summarizes some of the findings for prospective students and their parents (www.sxu.edu/admission/ataglance/NSSE.html).

A newly established Writing Council encourages faculty to embed more writing, general education, and major field courses and additional resources have been earmarked to better integrate “Blackboard” into courses across the disciplines to stimulate greater use of electronic technology and more faculty-student communication. Grants of $1,000 support out-of-class research or creative projects by students and faculty; up to $500 is available for student-incurred expenses, such as local travel, materials, and equipment. Results from the 2002 NSSE survey indicate some positive changes in the first-year student experience that can be traced to specific initiatives designed to improve these areas, such as the service learning component in new student orientation.

Saint Xavier University is using two of the NSSE benchmark measures as institutional performance indicators for the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) initiative to monitor progress toward accomplishing mission-specific educational goals.

Driving Results Down to the Department Level

Southwest Texas State University (SWT) is pursuing two key strategies in using student engagement data to improve teaching and learning. The first is asking faculty members to complete a faculty version of the NSSE in order to estimate levels of student engagement and the relative value of certain student engagement items. The second strategy is systematically oversampling students in selected majors to insure that enough students complete the survey to enable faculty members to be confident about the results. This past year, 13 department chairs requested that their units be included in the local oversampling and that their 300 tenure track faculty complete a faculty version of the survey.

In general, faculty members and students tend to respond the same way to about half of the NSSE questions. This is particularly true for high and low areas of engagement. For about a quarter of the items, faculty members overestimate student engagement. Some of these differences are understandable, such as faculty reporting much more class discussion than students. Faculty may devote a considerable amount of class time to discussion and answering questions, but in a class of 40 students, 10 students may be responsible for most of the discussion. So, 30 of 40 students responding could accurately report “never” or “occasionally” when asked about participating in class discussions. Similarly, faculty members say students more often come to class without completing readings or assignments than students report. This makes sense in that what faculty members consider being prepared is probably more rigorous than students’ understanding.

“NSSE has done an extraordinary job of considering alternative ways of characterizing student engagement and zeroing in on factors that really do contribute to positive learning experiences.”
—John H. Schuh, Professor of Higher Education, Iowa State University

“I used the NSSE framework to talk about the importance of student engagement during our annual Fall Faculty Institute. It was the first time that faculty members and student affairs staff came together to talk about what students do inside and outside the classroom.”
—Jason D. DeSousa, Vice President for Student Affairs, Savannah State University
Focusing on the gaps between student and faculty responses helped SWT establish and more clearly communicate appropriate expectations for student performance, especially relative emphases on memorization contrasted with higher order analysis and synthesis mental activities. In addition, certain engagement activities are more important in faculty members’ eyes for first-year students (class discussion, prompt feedback) and others for seniors (class presentations, talking about career plans).

Thus, SWT’s improvement strategy is driven by and responsive to local priorities and needs. This criterion-referenced approach to using NSSE data is increasing faculty ownership in the process of improvement and appreciation for the value of student engagement. Academic and student affairs deans and department chairs find it compelling to prioritize improvement initiatives based on what their colleagues agree is important and what their students say they are or are not doing very often.

(NSW continued)

“NSSE results are being used to assess campus-wide initiatives, such as our strategic plan, ‘Educating Illinois,’ as well as the implementation of our new General Education curriculum… Students have been brought into the assessment process on campus like never before.”

—Wendy Troxel, Director of University Assessment, Illinois State University

Using Student Engagement Data Campus-Wide

Meredith College is using its NSSE results to enrich the undergraduate experience inside and outside the classroom. Instructors in the First Year Experience Program become familiar with the five areas of effective educational practice and the variety of educationally purposeful in-class and out-of-class experiences so that they can help students take fuller advantage of what Meredith offers by becoming more engaged in the educational process. The Task Force on General Education used NSSE data to inform its general education redesign, including how to incorporate diversity experiences and experiential learning into the first-year general education course, The Context of Culture.

Meredith added several NSSE items to the HERI Faculty Survey administered in fall 2001 in order to identify and address differences and similarities in student and faculty perceptions of student engagement. Executive summaries of the findings are posted on the Web site of the Office of Research, Planning and Assessment (www.meredith.edu/epie/index.htm), both of which are available to the public.

Finally, inspired by a review of its NSSE results, Meredith sent a four-person team to the 2002 AAHE Summer Academy to focus on a project related to collaborative learning. The experience spawned an August 2002 workshop on collaborative learning, entitled “Better Teaching Through Collaborative Learning” involving about 90 participants. The team will continue to work through the coming year to implement a strategy to sustain the focus on collaborative learning.
Using NSSE as a Vehicle for Collaboration

■ Adams State College (ASC) is an ethnically and culturally diverse institution located in a small town in rural southwestern Colorado. The institution has adopted the language of student engagement which allows faculty members, student affairs professionals, and other administrators to use similar concepts when discussing the quality and character of the undergraduate experience. With an eye toward informing and improving educational practices, student affairs professionals in partnership with academic affairs are using NSSE results to benchmark against peer institutions in order to identify what the college is doing well and areas where improvement would be desirable.

ASC’s motto is “quality education with a personal touch.” Selected engagement activities are being used as benchmark indicators of the extent to which the student experience reflects this aim. Student affairs is implementing the philosophy that every interaction between a student and the institution is a “divisional moment of truth because there is a life in the balance.” A “secret shopper” approach is being used to monitor this effort whereby selected students report the quality of their interactions and the customer-service orientation of various campus services and programs.

To give more emphasis to academics while at the same time providing additional support for student success, ASC is strengthening and increasing the number and types of learning communities. The residential Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs) now have full-time coordinators and undergraduate mentors. Special Support Services personnel are providing FIG members with supplemental instruction opportunities and the first-year seminar was redesigned to emphasize critical thinking and reading. Because NSSE data show that ASC students spend much more time working and caring for dependents compared with students at peer institutions, efforts are underway to make certain eligible students apply for Pell Grants and available diversity scholarships. Campus work-study was centralized to make it easier for students to become aware of and take advantage of such opportunities to earn while learning without leaving the campus. The institutional research office is planning to link NSSE data with other institutional information to more effectively assess student progress in these areas.

“We’re using NSSE in three strategic ways: 1) as a barometer to measure global changes to create a student-centered campus, 2) as a lightning rod to stimulate campus discussions on ways to challenge and engage students, and 3) as a thermometer to measure our progress on the five areas of effective educational practice which we are using in our upcoming regional accreditation.”

—Anne Gormly, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Georgia College and State University
number of university or state systems have endorsed the use of NSSE at some or all of their institutions.

**NSSE 2000**
- City University of New York System
- Indiana University System
- University of Maryland System
- University of Massachusetts System
- University of Missouri System
- New Jersey State System
- University of Texas System
- West Virginia State System

**NSSE 2001**
- Connecticut State System
- Texas A&M System
- Kentucky State System
- University of Wisconsin System
- Indiana University System
- University of Hawaii System
- University of Missouri System
- University of North Carolina System

**NSSE 2002**
- California State University System
- Connecticut State System
- Indiana University System
- New Hampshire State System
- New Jersey State System
- South Dakota State System
- University of Massachusetts System
- University of Missouri System
- University of Texas System

The University of Missouri (UM) aspires to become “nationally recognized as an eminent learner-centered research university” (p. 1, 2001 University of Missouri Strategic Plan). Toward that end the UM System is using NSSE in two ways. First, campus-level results are being used to establish baseline measures for the four system performance indicators that focus exclusively on the undergraduate learning environment. Five-year targets are set for each campus, and NSSE results are being used to monitor progress on an annual basis across institutional types as well as to compare results against those from similar types of institutions beyond Missouri.

Second, NSSE was introduced to new faculty members through the System’s New Faculty Teaching Scholars program to help them better understand what it means to create a “learner-centered environment” and to identify practical ways that they can infuse effective educational practices in their work with students inside and outside the classroom. By comparing campus results with benchmark scores from similar institutions, the Teaching Scholars were able to determine what their campus was doing well and areas where improvement would be welcome.

The University of Wisconsin System is using NSSE data to compare institutional values and priorities with actual practice. The results prompted considerable discussion and several campuses are administering NSSE annually to learn more about how their students are experiencing their educational programs. For example, the University of Wisconsin-Stout adopted selected metrics from NSSE as part of its strategic plan and set goals for these metrics. NSSE results provided meaningful comparative data and helped document the effectiveness of certain institutional practices in its successful application for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

The System is also administering a subset of NSSE questions to the 2001-02 graduates from all campuses to learn if there is a difference in the responses between students who followed a traditional path to completing a degree and those who followed a non-traditional path.
Accreditation, Accountability, and Planning

Among the schools using NSSE results in accreditation are Baker University, California Lutheran University, Juniata College, Keuka College, McDaniel College, and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Radford University is featuring student engagement in pilot testing SACS new accreditation criteria. NSSE data will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of Radford’s quality enhancement plan to improve student learning.

St. Bonaventure University and the University of Maine at Presque Island are using NSSE results along with other surveys and existing institutional data for strategic planning.

California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) plans to administer NSSE every other year as part of its outcomes assessment strategy and the California State University’s (CSU) biennial accountability process. For this purpose, Cal Poly joined a consortium of 12 other CSU campuses to collect data on common system-wide questions. Results from the NSSE 2002 survey will be integrated with the previous year and presented to CSU and its Board of Trustees.

Adams State and Longwood University are using their NSSE results to meet state performance indicator requirements related to persistence and graduation rates, general education, student learning, and civic engagement.

At Saint Michael’s College various groups (Academic Affairs Council, President’s Cabinet, Retention Committee, Campus Culture Committee, Dean’s Council, Board of Trustees, Teaching Resource Group) examined results from NSSE, CIRP, and its own student and alumni surveys. The analysis helped to identify initiatives to enhance existing programs, such as the honors program and “ambassador housing” which intentionally brings international and American students into more frequent contact.

Curriculum and Technology

An Eastern University task force focusing on core competencies (writing, math, oral communication, computer skills) recommended that certain courses become writing intensive with an emphasis on giving students multiple opportunities to revise papers after getting feedback from faculty.

Drake University is providing more opportunities for oral communication experiences into the curriculum, with a particular eye on using the first-year seminar program for this purpose.

NSSE results at the University of Utah showed that student use of technology was not at the desired level. This prompted information technology staff to design additional staff training and planning efforts.

At Aurora University NSSE helped stimulate an examination of the role of computing in general education.

Framingham State College is using NSSE to monitor the impact of student technology use as the institution becomes the first public institution in the Commonwealth to require wireless laptops of all entering first-year students.

First-year Experience

St. Vincent College used evidence from NSSE to support the case for instituting a first-year experience program. Subsequent administrations of the NSSE survey will be used to evaluate whether the first-year program is having the desired effects.

Chatham College used its NSSE results along with other information to improve its first-year experience program. Finally, North Carolina State University is using its NSSE results during new student orientation to emphasize key activities and behaviors that lead to student success.

“We’re using NSSE to complement our Academic Vision Plan which emphasizes student engagement in academic and co-curricular programs and integration of various aspects of their four-year experience.”

—Jane Jakoubek, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs, Hanover College

“We are piloting a new freshman-year program and NSSE is a major part of the assessment of the effectiveness of that effort. We’ll use senior-year data from NSSE to see what impact the new curriculum has had on student engagement over the four year period.”

—Robert Holyer, Dean of the College, Randolph-Macon College
Lessons Learned

The preceding examples show, some early NSSE adopters now have had enough time to examine and reflect on their student engagement results, weigh options, and take action to improve selected aspects of student and institutional performance.

Based on what we’ve learned so far, we offer the following suggestions for incorporating NSSE data in institutional change efforts.

1. **Make sure faculty and staff understand and endorse the concept of student engagement.**

The value of student engagement results to improving teaching and learning needs to be convincingly explained to those faculty members less familiar with assessment in general and the engagement concept in particular. There are many roads to the top of this mountain. Structure is not nearly as important as relationships to effectively communicating and acting on this message. Early on it’s wise to identify and validate existing pockets of quality—areas where student engagement is at high levels—so people have examples to which to aspire and move forward with confidence.

Of course, not everyone will jump on the student engagement bandwagon. Involving 10 percent of the faculty and support staff may be enough—a large enough group that is impossible to ignore and whose efforts can have a demonstrable effect. One way to start is to invite deans and department chairs to share their ideas and concerns about student engagement. What kind of information about student learning and institutional effectiveness would you and your colleagues find compelling and useful? What can we do individually and collectively to take more responsibility for student learning? How do we get students to take greater advantage of institutional resources for learning? Focus groups with students almost always yield pithy insights into what results mean and suggestions for increasing engagement in certain areas. And, as the examples from Akron, Alverno, Southwest Texas State, Edgewood, and Winthrop indicate, using the faculty version of the NSSE survey can stimulate faculty interest in student engagement results and point to gaps between faculty expectations and student behaviors.

2. **Collect enough results so the information is usable at the department or unit level.**

Faculty enthusiasm for digging into student engagement data may wane if only a handful of students from their department are among the respondents. For this reason many campuses are surveying more students than called for by NSSE’s standard sampling strategy (which is designed to produce acceptable point estimates at the institutional level).

A large sample size reduces sampling error and is more likely to yield enough respondents to be able to “drill down” to the department or major field level. More important, faculty members can be more confident that the data represent “their” students, a key to generating interest and commitment to improvement.

There are various ways to achieve this objective, such as requesting NSSE to oversample a particular student population, or by locally administering the survey on campus via classrooms, residence halls, or campus mail.
Understand what student engagement data represent and use the results wisely.

Most schools have little experience using student engagement data. Thus, they need time, space, and experience to understand and make the best use of NSSE results. A few faculty members will almost surely question the validity and reliability of the data and whether students accurately report their experiences. We know of no school where NSSE results told a different story than that suggested by other sources of evidence. At the same time, effectively managing the inevitable denial that comes with being confronted with less-than-desirable results (and almost every school has one or more areas where it is falls short of its self image) is a critical step in the process of moving from discussion to action. When possible, confirm NSSE results with other information to directly address skepticism and to encourage colleagues to suspend disbelief.

Report student engagement results in a responsible way.

Every time an institution discloses its student engagement results is an opportunity to help educate the public about the value of student engagement as a new metric for defining and examining collegiate quality. For this reason, NSSE encourages participating schools to share their results, provided that disclosure leads to a better understanding of collegiate quality and promote institutional improvement efforts. NSSE especially supports public reporting of student engagement results in ways that enable thoughtful, responsible institutional comparisons while encouraging and celebrating institutional diversity. So far, more than one quarter of NSSE schools have made some or all of their NSSE results available to the public (e.g., Web site, alumni magazine, press release).

That said, public disclosure is an institutional decision; NSSE does not make institutional scores available to third parties nor do we endorse the use of student engagement results in rankings [see www.iub.edu/~nsse/html/usingst.shtml for NSSE’s policy on rankings]. Moreover, in the near term some colleges and universities will be understandably cautious about releasing their scores with only one or two years of information available, or if the institution has not thoroughly vetted and had an opportunity to take action on the results. It's counterproductive if disclosure diverts institutional focus and energy away from improvement because student engagement data are used inappropriately or irresponsibly.

Don't allow the numbers to speak for themselves.

Every number and comparison reported publicly should be accompanied by an explanation and interpretation of what can and cannot be concluded from the results. Moreover, it's almost inevitable that institutional comparisons will be made after data are released. These can be especially problematic and misleading when they include schools that differ in terms of mission and resources and in the percentages of students who are enrolled full- or part-time, who are transfers, or who major in various fields. Without explaining what the numbers mean, people lacking relevant contextual information may infer their own (frequently erroneous) interpretations. Think through the most effective local release strategy. Is it wise to disclose all the NSSE results at one time? Or will featuring selected patterns of engagement data in short reports targeted to various groups be more likely to have the desired effect? Releasing the results over a period of time insures a steady flow of information and may, over the long term, attract more attention as more people are exposed to the concept of student engagement. A steady flow of information also presents ongoing opportunities for periodic updates about how the results are being used.

“Among the ways we’re using NSSE results is to examine the relationships between engagement and persistence with an eye toward identifying students who may be prone to leaving college early.”
—Janet Easterling, Institutional Research Associate, Seton Hall University.

“We asked faculty members how they thought their students WOULD respond and how they think their students SHOULD respond. Their responses were compared with our 2001 results and the discrepancy analysis helped focus campus conversation and action on those areas where student scores differed from faculty expectations.”
—Joseph Prus, Director of the Office of Assessment, Winthrop University.
Examine the results from multiple perspectives.
The results from the first administration of NSSE may best be viewed as a baseline indication. One set of findings may be enough to mobilize action, especially when peer comparisons confirm or challenge assumptions about the quality of performance. But equally meaningful discussions result when colleagues take a criterion-referenced view of student engagement in the context of the school’s mission and then determine what are reasonable levels of engagement in certain educational practices (as illustrated in the Southwest Texas State example). Because certain groups of students may be more or less engaged, it’s also wise to compare their engagement levels, such as first-year women students or seniors in various majors. In addition, as we illustrate in the next section, students with different backgrounds and attendance patterns may also have engagement patterns that differ from the dominant institutional pattern.

Link results to other information about the student experience and complementary initiatives.
Student learning is enhanced when students engage in a variety of complementary activities inside and outside the classroom. In a similar vein, the positive impact of student engagement results will be multiplied if the data can be made relevant to groups of faculty and staff working on different reform efforts around the campus. To this end, student engagement data can be used to foster collaboration across various innovations such as general education reform, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning activities, service learning, and diversity initiatives. This will help units with common improvement agendas to work together and increase the positive impact on teaching and learning that each effort might produce by itself.

Don’t go it alone.
Institutions often are stymied in their efforts to improve because they encounter inevitable obstacles and drags on their will and resources. It’s difficult to sustain energy and commitment in the face of the myriad daily distractions and multiple competing priorities inherent in contemporary academic life. Peter Ewell of the National Center on Higher Education Management Systems and others argue that the chances of successful innovation improve when campus teams are formed and institutions work together in consortial arrangements on topics of mutual interest. Institutional teams linked to partners at other schools introduce a measure of peer accountability into the process and also provide much-needed support and encouragement to persevere. In addition, participating in a consortium will likely increase the number of institutionally compatible, transportable exemplars that are encountered, as more people are looking for them. NSSE, AAHE, AAC&U and other organizations are using variants of the consortium model in retreats and summer workshops. Another approach worthy of emulation are the statewide NSSE conferences in Ohio and Texas that bring together neighboring colleges and universities to learn and share how to best use student engagement data to facilitate institutional improvement.
Engaging in effective educational practices is critical to learning and personal development for all students. And knowing how particular groups of students are performing is necessary to take appropriate action when needed. In this section we examine the relationships between engagement and what students bring with them to college (input characteristics), experiences they have with diversity and learning communities, and outcomes as reflected in grades and self-reported gains. Where appropriate, the analyses controlled for year in school, race, sex, age, transfer status, place of residence (on/off-campus), major field, enrollment status, parents’ educational attainment, sector, undergraduate headcount, Carnegie Classification, urbanicity, and the measure of institutional selectivity from Barron’s.

Race and Ethnicity
In general, students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds appear to engage in effective educational practices at comparable levels. Among the exceptions:

- Asian Pacific Americans and African-Americans are somewhat more likely to take part in enriching educational experiences than their peers.

- African-Americans report more active and collaborative learning activities, Asian Pacific Americans are the least engaged in this area.

Race and ethnicity are also related to student-reported gains and satisfaction:


- Latinos/as and Whites are the two groups most satisfied with their college experience.

International Students
Generally speaking, international students are more engaged in effective educational practices than their American counterparts, especially in the first year. International students:

- Score higher on academic challenge

- Interact more frequently with faculty members

- Engage more in diversity-related activities

- Perceive the campus environment to be more supportive

- Report greater gains in personal and social development, practical competence, and general education

First-year international students report higher levels of active and collaborative learning than their American peers, but spend significantly less time relaxing and socializing. By the senior year international students are more like American students in terms of time spent socializing.
Transfer Students
Forty percent of all seniors attended college at one or more institutions in addition to the one they are currently attending. What is the quality of the educational experience for those who attend multiple institutions during their undergraduate years?

Senior transfer students share many characteristics with both older students and commuters but differ in marked ways from their counterparts who stayed at the same college where they started. In general, being a transfer student is negatively related with scores on four of the five benchmarks: active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. These relationships hold true even after controlling for institutional factors like sector, enrollment size, and Carnegie type, and also when controlling for student characteristics like sex, enrollment status, age, and race.

However, transfer students appear to be performing academically on par with non-transfer students in that they report comparable grades and similar degree of academic challenge. In addition, they more frequently rewrite papers and are more likely to be prepared for class.

Senior transfer students are more likely to:
- Be older, enrolled part-time, and drive to campus
- Spend time caring for dependents
- Be a student of color

Senior transfer students are less likely to:
- Work with classmates outside of class to complete class assignments
- Tutor other students
- Use e-mail to communicate with an instructor
- Talk about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Work with faculty members on activities other than coursework
- Perceive the campus environment as supportive of their social needs

Women in Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology
Attracting more women to careers in science, math, engineering, and technology (SMET) continues to be a priority. Though 66 percent of NSSE 2002 respondents were women, they constituted only about 45 percent of all senior SMET majors.

In general, women SMET majors report greater levels of academic challenge. They spend more time studying and less time relaxing and socializing compared with men SMET students and women students in other fields.

Compared with men SMET majors, women SMET majors report:
- Greater academic challenge
- More enriching educational experiences
- More progress in greater personal and social development
- More interaction with faculty members
- A more supportive campus environment
-Less relaxing and socializing
- Less progress in practical competence

Compared with women in other majors, women SMET majors report:
- More interaction with faculty members
- More challenging exams
- Making more progress in practical competence
- Less active and collaborative leaning
- Less relaxing and socializing
- Less progress in general education
- Less progress in personal and social development
Experiences with Diversity

Diversity-related experiences are positively related to many other effective educational practices. Such experiences include:

- Attending an institution that encourages contact among students of different backgrounds
- Talking with others of different races/ethnicities
- Talking with others who are very different in terms of their religious beliefs or personal values,
- Incorporating diverse perspectives into class discussions or writing reports

Students who have more experience with diversity report:

- More progress in personal and educational growth
- More involvement in active and collaborative learning and
- Higher levels of satisfaction with their college experience

Diversity experiences vary by institutional type. Students at Liberal Arts Colleges are the most likely to engage in diversity-related activities, while students at Master’s institutions are the least likely. Density of racial and ethnic groups is important as students are somewhat more likely to engage in diversity-related activities on campuses where there are larger proportions of students of color, regardless of institution type.

Learning Communities

Nationally, 29% of first-year students and 22% of seniors report participating (or planning to participate) in some type of learning community—an experience where students take two or more of the same courses together. Learning communities are positively related to all of the five benchmarks, diversity experiences, gains in personal and social development, practical competence, and general education, and overall satisfaction with the undergraduate college experience. This is true for both first-year and senior students, though the effects are greatest for first-year students (as they are more likely to have had the experience recently).

Among the students most likely to gravitate to learning communities are:

- Women
- Full-time students
- Students living in Greek housing
- Native students (contrasted with transfer students)
- International students
- Students majoring in health-related fields; education; ethnic, cultural and area studies; park, recreation and sports management; agriculture; and liberal/general studies.

Grades and Engagement

Engagement is linked to a wide array of desired outcomes of college, so it’s no surprise that engagement and grades go hand-in-hand. In fact, GPA is positively related to all five benchmark scores and nearly all of the effective educational practices represented on the NSSE survey. Specifically, GPA is associated with time spent preparing for class, coming to class prepared, asking questions in class, tutoring other students, receiving prompt feedback from faculty, high quality relationships with faculty; and a favorable evaluation of overall educational experiences in college. These patterns generally hold for both first-year and senior students, though they don’t explain the direction of the relationship between grades and engagement. That is, does engagement result in higher grades, or do higher grades promote more engagement?

- 19% of first-year students and 24% of seniors report A grades.
- Few students report C or lower average grades—only 5% of first-year students and 1% of seniors.
- Women report higher grades than men.
- White students generally reported the highest grades, Asian and multiracial students somewhat lower grades, Latina/o and Native American students lower grades still, and African American students reported the lowest grades.
- Grade patterns vary by major fields. Seniors majoring in education, foreign languages, humanities, math, and the visual and performing arts report the highest GPAs, while those majoring in agriculture, engineering, and public administration report the lowest.
- Grades do not vary appreciably by institutional type or selectivity strata, though the distribution of grades is considerably compressed at more selective institutions.
“NSSE is an invaluable resource. It sheds light on our strengths, while at the same time pointing us to areas where improvement is needed. It also gives us confidence to continually improve, a benefit of participation in the survey that is difficult to calculate.”

—Peter Smith, President, California State University-Monterey Bay

“NSSE has been most useful for highlighting areas where improvement might be made. A faculty discussion focused on writing across the curriculum was well attended, the discussion was lively, and several ideas for expanding and improving writing instruction were proposed.”

—Margaret Kasimatis, Executive Assistant to the President for Assessment, Harvey Mudd College

NSSE is now a well-established, valid and reliable assessment tool. Building on this foundation, NSSE is working with an expanding cadre of partners to further strengthen institutional accountability for student learning.

**Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)**

Based at the University of Texas at Austin, CCSSE (“sessie”) is directed by Kay McClennen and supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Lumina Foundation for Education, and the MetLife Foundation. With an additional emphasis on retention issues, about 80-plus percent of the CCSSE survey questions overlap with NSSE items. After a year of field-testing, CCSSE’s first national administration will be in spring 2003. NSSE and CCSSE envision a number of collaborative efforts, such as examining student engagement at two-year and four-year campuses within a single state or university system and tracking the movement and performance of students between the two sectors.

**NSSE Institute**

The NSSE Institute helps faculty members, administrators, governing board members and others interested in enhancing the quality of undergraduate education to discover and implement effective mechanisms for linking information about student experiences to efforts to improve academic programs and support services. The first set of Institute initiatives was launched in partnership with the American Association for Higher Education with support from Lumina Foundation for Education. This project, Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP), features case studies of about twenty colleges and universities that have higher-than-predicted scores on the NSSE benchmarks and also have higher-than-predicted graduation rates. The goal is to discover and document what these institutions do and, to the extent feasible, how they have achieved this measure of effectiveness. In addition, NSSE and AAHE are working with teams from institutional consortia made up of schools committed to improving the undergraduate experience. These activities include: (1) roundtables and discussions at AAHE’s Summer Academy where teams will identify objectives for and obstacles to profitable insti-

**Wabash College Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts.**

NSSE Institute personnel along with Fellows from the Wabash Center are collaborating to learn more about effective educational practices at a set of high-performing liberal arts colleges as part of Project DEEP. The Wabash Center is a catalyst for reshaping liberal arts education in the 21st century by providing resources to explore, test, and promote the efficacy of the liberal arts.

**Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS)**

With support from Lumina Foundation for Education, NSSE staff members are working with AAHE and the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education (Alliance) to help reduce the national gap in educational attainment for African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans by increasing the number of students from these groups who earn a bachelor’s degree. The project will enable up to 150 Alliance member institutions to focus on enhancing student engagement, learning, and success. BEAMS schools will administer NSSE twice between 2003 and 2006, first to identify priorities for action and a second time to track progress. In addition, participating schools will participate in a variety of capacity-building activities (www.aahe.org/BEAMS).

NSSE’s expanded workscope and the NSSE Institute promise to transform NSSE from an annual survey of undergraduates into a national movement for using data to improve the undergraduate experience. Working with such groups as The Carnegie Foundation, AAHE, AAC&U, NASPA, the Wabash College Center for Inquiry in the Liberal Arts and other organizations committed to enhancing student learning positions NSSE well for realizing its mission of strengthening institutional accountability for learning. We invite you to join us in this timely, much-needed endeavor.
Supporting Materials on NSSE Web Site

For more detailed information in the following areas, please visit the NSSE Web site at:


- Copy of NSSE’s survey instrument, *The College Student Report 2002*.
- Profiles of all participating colleges and universities
- NSSE 2000-2001 benchmark percentiles and descriptive statistics by first-year students and seniors and by Carnegie classification
- Creating the NSSE benchmarks of effective educational practice
- NSSE conceptual framework and overview of psychometric properties

Resources


“We've used our NSSE results fairly extensively in discussions within our Provost’s Council to better understand the behavior of our students so that we can manage our academic and co-curricular programs as well as possible. In general we find this to be an extremely useful instrument.”

—Alan Caniglia, Franklin & Marshall College
To represent the multi-dimensional nature of student engagement at the national, sector, and institutional levels, NSSE developed five indicators or benchmarks of effective educational practice:

- Level of academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Enriching educational experiences
- Supportive campus environment

The benchmarks are based on the combined results from 2000, 2001, and 2002, and reflect responses from about 135,000 randomly sampled first-year and senior students at 613 different four-year colleges and universities. As expected, the scores are very similar to those reported in 2000 and 2001.

Student cases are weighted for sex and enrollment status (full time, less than full time). Single institution benchmarks are created by summing the weighted, averaged, equalized values of each item within the benchmark. Comparison group benchmarks (Carnegie Classification and national) are the mean of institutional benchmarks within the respective category. To facilitate comparisons across time, as well as between individual institutions and types of institutions, each benchmark is expressed as a 100-point scale. For more details on the construction of the benchmarks, visit: www.iub.edu/~nsse/html/report-2002.shtml

As in previous years, smaller schools generally have higher benchmark scores across the board. However, the variation of benchmark scores within categories of institutions is substantial so that some large institutions are more engaging than certain small colleges in a given area of effective educational practice. Thus, many institutions are exceptions to the general principle that “smaller is better” in terms of student engagement. For this reason, it is prudent that anyone wishing to estimate collegiate quality ask for student engagement results or comparable data from the specific institution being considered.

Summary Statistics
National Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

Doctoral / Research Universities-Extensive (Doc-Ext)
These institutions offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to a graduate education through the doctorate. They award 50 or more doctoral degrees per year across at least 15 disciplines.

Doctoral / Research Universities-Intensive (Doc-Int)
These institutions offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the doctorate. They award at least 10 doctoral degrees per year across three or more disciplines, or at least 20 doctoral degrees per year over all.

Master’s Colleges and Universities (Master's)
- Master’s Colleges and Universities I
  These institutions offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. They award 40 or more master’s degrees annually across three or more disciplines.
- Master’s Colleges and Universities II
  These institutions offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. They award 20 or more master’s degrees annually in one or more disciplines.

Baccalaureate Colleges-Liberal Arts (Bac-LA)
These institutions are primarily undergraduate colleges with major emphasis on baccalaureate degree programs. They award at least half of their baccalaureate degrees in the liberal arts.

Baccalaureate Colleges-General (Bac-Gen)
These institutions are primarily undergraduate colleges with major emphasis on baccalaureate programs. They award fewer than half of their baccalaureate degrees in liberal arts fields.

Menlo Park, CA: Author. * Not all categories are listed in the table.
The charts in this section are a modified “box and whiskers” type of display. Each column shows the benchmark scores at the 5th, 25th, 50th (median), 75th, and 95th percentiles. The white circle with horizontal line to the right signifies the median—the middle score that divides all institutional benchmarks into two equal halves. The rectangular box shows the 25th to 75th percentile range, i.e. the middle 50 percent of all scores. The “whiskers” on top and bottom are the 95th and 5th percentiles.

This type of chart gives more information than a chart of simple point-estimates such as means or medians. One can see the range and variation of institutional scores in each category, and also where mid-range or normal scores fall. At the same time, one can see what score is needed (i.e. 75th or 95th percentile) to be a strong performer in the group.

The specific percentile scores are also listed in a table below the charts.

### Guide to Benchmark Figures

- **95th Percentile**: 54
- **75th Percentile**: 54
- **50th Percentile (Median)**: 54
- **25th Percentile**: 54
- **5th Percentile**: 54

---

### Benchmark Item Frequency Tables

Following each benchmark is a table of item frequencies based on the NSSE 2000-2002 student-level database. These tables show the percentages of how students responded to each of the survey items within the benchmark. The values listed are column percentages. Frequencies are shown by class standing for each of the Carnegie Classification types and national dataset.

In addition, a special column labeled ‘Top 5%’ shows the response percentages of students attending schools that scored in the top 5 percent of all institutions (roughly 30 schools) on the benchmark. Thus, the pattern of responses among the Top 5% institutions shows what would need to be achieved in order to be among the top performers on a particular benchmark.

---

### Excerpt from Table

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<th>Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions</th>
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<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Bac-LA</th>
<th>Bac-Gen</th>
<th>Top 5%</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Doc-Ext</th>
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- **Benchmarks**
- **First-Year Students**
- **Senior Students**
- **Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)**
Level of Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by setting high expectations for student performance.

National Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

Guide to Benchmark Figures

Percentiles for Level of Academic Challenge

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<th>Bachelor of General Studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>25th%</td>
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| Annual Students | Seniors |

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<th>Bachelor of General Studies</th>
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## Level of Academic Challenge (in percentages)

### First-year Students

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<th>Bac-Gen</th>
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<td>21-25 hrs/wk</td>
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### Working harder than you thought to meet expectations

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### Number of assigned textbook readings

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### Number of written papers or reports 20 pages or more

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<td>15</td>
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<td>Between 5-10</td>
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### Number of written papers or reports between 5-19 pages

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<td>23</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>21</td>
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### Coursework: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory

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<th>Bac-LA</th>
<th>Bac-Gen</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a Bit</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
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### Coursework: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences

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<th>Bac-LA</th>
<th>Bac-Gen</th>
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<tr>
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<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>24</td>
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### Coursework: Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods

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<th>Bac-Gen</th>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
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### Coursework: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations

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<th>Bac-LA</th>
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<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
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### Emphasize: Spending significant amounts of time studying

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Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are asked to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students to deal with the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily, both during and after college.

Guide to Benchmark Figures

Percentiles for Active and Collaborative Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year Students</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>75th%</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>50th%</td>
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<td>25th%</td>
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# Active and Collaborative Learning (in percentages)

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<td>Doc-Int</td>
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<td>Never</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Worked with other students on projects during class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussed ideas from your readings or classes outside of class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3

Student-Faculty Interactions

Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.

Guide to Benchmark Figures

Percentiles for Student-Faculty Interactions

First-year Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doc-Ext</th>
<th>Doc-Int</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Bac-LA</th>
<th>Bac-Gen</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95th%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50th%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
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</table>

Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doc-Ext</th>
<th>Doc-Int</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Bac-LA</th>
<th>Bac-Gen</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95th%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50th%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>39</td>
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## Student-Faculty Interaction (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year Students</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor** | **Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor** |
| Never | 26 | 19 |
| Sometimes | 49 | 45 |
| Often | 18 | 23 |
| Very Often | 7 | 12 |

| **Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class** | **Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class** |
| Never | 48 | 32 |
| Sometimes | 40 | 48 |
| Often | 9 | 15 |
| Very Often | 3 | 5 |

| **Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance** | **Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance** |
| Never | 9 | 32 |
| Sometimes | 42 | 36 |
| Often | 37 | 43 |
| Very Often | 12 | 43 |

| **Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework** | **Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework** |
| Never | 72 | 57 |
| Sometimes | 20 | 28 |
| Often | 5 | 10 |
| Very Often | 2 | 5 |

| **Worked on research project with faculty member outside of course** | **Worked on research project with faculty member outside of course** |
| Undecided | 48 | 12 |
| No | 24 | 61 |
| Yes | 28 | 27 |

*Note: The table shows the percentages of first-year students and seniors who reported interacting with faculty in various ways.*
Enriching Educational Experiences

Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augment the academic program. Experiencing diversity teaches students valuable things about themselves and other cultures. Used appropriately, technology facilitates learning and promotes collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide students with opportunities to synthesize, integrate, and apply their knowledge. Such experiences make learning more meaningful and, ultimately, more useful because what students know becomes a part of who they are.

Percentiles for Enriching Educational Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year Students</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Doc-Ext</strong></td>
<td><strong>Doc-Int</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95th%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50th%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th%</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th%</td>
<td>47</td>
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### Enriching Educational Experiences (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year Students</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds</strong></td>
<td><strong>Encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doc-Ext</td>
<td>Doc-Int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used the Internet (list-serv, chat group, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Used the Internet (list-serv, chat group, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community service or volunteer work</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community service or volunteer work</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign language coursework</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foreign language coursework</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study abroad</strong></td>
<td><strong>Study abroad</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent study or self-designed major</strong></td>
<td><strong>Independent study or self-designed major</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, thesis, etc.)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, thesis, etc.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, etc.)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, etc.)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 hrs/wk</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-5 hrs/wk</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 hrs/wk</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-15 hrs/wk</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-30 hrs/wk</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+ hrs/wk</td>
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</table>
Supportive Campus Environment

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.

### Percentiles for Supportive Campus Environment

#### First-year Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Doc-Ext</th>
<th>Doc-Int</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Bac-LA</th>
<th>Bac-Gen</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95th%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>50th%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th%</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
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</table>

#### Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Doc-Ext</th>
<th>Doc-Int</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Bac-LA</th>
<th>Bac-Gen</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95th%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>50th%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th%</td>
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<td>54</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
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</table>
### Supportive Campus Environment (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>First-year Students</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Seniors</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doc-Ext</td>
<td>Doc-Int</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>Bac-LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasize:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provided the support needed to succeed academically</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasize:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasize:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Providing support to thrive socially</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality: Your relationships with other students</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfriendly, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly, etc.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality: Your relationships with faculty members</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailable, etc.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available, etc.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality: Your relationships with administrative personnel and offices</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful, etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpful, etc.</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Participating Colleges and Universities (2000-2002)

| A | Abilene Christian University  
| Adams State College  
| Adelphi University  
| Agnes Scott College  
| Alaska Pacific University  
| Albertson College of Idaho  
| Alfred University  
| Allegheny College  
| Alma College  
| Alvernia College  
| Alverno College  
| American University  
| Angelo State University  
| Antioch College  
| Appalachian State University  
| Arcadia University  
| Asbury College  
| Auburn University  
| Auburn University Montgomery  
| Augustana College  
| Augustana College  
| Aurora University  
| Austin Peay State University  |

| B | Baker University  
| Baldwin-Wallace College  
| Barton College  
| Baruch College of the City University of New York  
| Baylor University  
| Bellarmine University  
| Belmont University  
| Beloit College  
| Berry College  
| Bethel College  
| Binghampton University-State University of New York  
| Birmingham-Southern College  
| Black Hills State University  
| Bloomfield College  
| Boise State University  
| Boston University  
| Bowling Green State University  
| Brenau University  
| Brigham Young University  
| Brigham Young University -Hawaii  
| Brooklyn College of the City University of New York  
| Bryant College  
| Bryn Mawr College  
| Bucknell University  
| Butler University  |

| C | California Lutheran University  
| California Polytechnic State University  
| California State University  
| San Marcos  
| California State University, Bakersfield  
| California State University, Chico  
| California State University, Dominguez Hills  
| California State University, Fresno  
| California State University, Fullerton  
| California State University, Los Angeles  
| California State University, Monterey Bay  
| California State University, Northridge  
| California State University, Sacramento  
| California State University, San Bernardino  
| Canisius College  
| Capella University  
| Cardinal Stritch University  
| Carroll College  
| Carthage College  
| Case Western Reserve University  
| Catawba College  
| Catholic University of America  
| Cazenovia College  
| Cedar Crest College  
| Cedarville College  
| Central College  
| Central Connecticut State University  
| Central Methodist College  
| Central Michigan University  
| Central Missouri State University  
| Central Washington University  
| Centre College  
| Chadron State College  
| Chaminade University of Honolulu  
| Champlain College  
| Chatham College  
| Christian Heritage College  
| Christopher Newport University  
| Circleville Bible College  
| Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York  
| Queens College of the City University of New York  
| Clark University  
| Clarkson University  
| Cleveland State University  
| Colby-Sawyer College  
| Colgate University  
| College of Charleston  
| College of New Jersey  
| College of Notre Dame of Maryland  
| College of Saint Rose  
| College of St. Catharine  
| College of St. Scholastica  
| College of Staten Island of the City University of New York  
| College of the Holy Cross  
| College of William and Mary  
| College of Wooster  
| Colorado College  
| Colorado State University  
| Columbia College  
| Columbia College Chicago  
| Concordia University  
| Concordia University Irvine  
| Concordia University Nebraska  
| Concordia University Wisconsin  
| Concordia University, St. Paul  
| Connecticut College  
| Converse College  
| Corcoran College of Art & Design  
| Covenant College  
| Creighton University  |

| D | Daemen College  
| Dakota State University  
| Davis & Elkins College  
| Denison University  
| DePaul University  
| DePauw University  
| Dickinson College  
| Dickinson State University  
| Dominican University  
| Dordt College  
| Drake University  
| Drew University  
| Drexel University  
| Drury University  |

| E | Earlham College  
| East Carolina University  
| Eastern Connecticut State University  
| Eastern Kentucky University  
| Eastern Mennonite University  
| Eastern New Mexico University  
| Eastern University  
| East-West University  
| Eckerd College  
| Edgewood College  
| Elizabeth City State University  
| Elizabethtown College  
| Elmhurst College  
| Elon College  
| Emory-Riddle Aeronautical University  
| Endicott College  
| Eureka College  
| Evergreen State College  |

| F | Fairleigh Dickinson University  
| Fairmont State College  
| Fayetteville State University  
| Florida Atlantic University  
| Florida Institute of Technology  
| Fontbonne University  
| Fort Hays State University  
| Fort Lewis College  
| Framingham State College  
| Franciscan University of Steubenville  
| Franklin & Marshall College  
| Franklin Pierce College  
| Fresno Pacific University  |

| G | George Fox University  
| George Mason University  
| Georgetown College  
| Georgia College & State University  
| Georgia Institute of Technology  
| Georgia Southern University  
| Georgia Southwestern State University  
| Georgia State University  
| Goldey-Beacom College  
| Gonzaga University  
| Gordon College  
| Goucher College  
| Graceland University  
| Greensboro College  
| Greenville College  
| Grove City College  
| Guilford College  
| Gustavus Adolphus College  |

| H | Hamilton College  
| Hamline University  
| Hampden-Sydney College  
| Hanover College  
| Hardin-Simmons University  
| Harris-Stowe State College  
| Hartwick College  
| Harvey Mudd College  
| Hastings College  
| Heidelberg College  
| Henderson State University  
| Herbert H. Lehman College of the City University of New York  
| Heritage College  
| High Point University  
| Hiram College  
| Holy Family College  
| Houghton College  
| Howard Payne University  
| Humboldt State University  
| Hunter College of the City University of New York  
| Huntington College  |

| I | Illinois College  
| Illinois Institute of Technology  
| Illinois State University  
| Indiana University Bloomington  
| Indiana University East  
| Indiana University Kokomo  
| Indiana University Northwest  
| Indiana University Southeast  
| Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis  
| Indiana Wesleyan University  
| Iowa State University  |
Jacksonville University
Jewish Hospital College of Nursing and Allied Health
John Brown University
John Carroll University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice of The City University of New York
Johnson State College
Judson College
Judson College (AL)
Juniata College
Kalamazoo College
Kansas State University
Kean University
Keene State College
Kent State University
Kentucky State University
Kettering University
Keuka College
Knox College
La Roche College
La Salle University
Laboratory Institute of Merchandising
Lafayette College
LaGrange College
Lake Forest College
Lamar University
Lawrence Technological University
Lawrence University
Lebanon Valley College
Lee University
Lees-McRae College
Lewis & Clark College
Lewis University
Lipscomb University
Longwood University
Loras College
Loyola College in Maryland
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola University Chicago
Loyola University New Orleans
Luther College
Lynchburg College
Lyndon State College
Lyon College
Macalester College
Madonna University
Maharishi University of Management
Malone College
Manchester College
Marist College
Marshall University
Mary Washington College
Marymount College Tarrytown
Marymount Manhattan College
Marywood University
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Master's College
McDaniel College
Menlo College
Mercer University
Meredith College
Messiah College
Metropolitan State College of Denver
Miami University
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
MidAmerica Nazarene University
Millersville University of Pennsylvania
Millikin University
Minnesota State University Moorhead
Monmouth University
Montclair State University
Moravian College
Morehead State University
Morris College
Mount Mary College
Mount St. Mary's College & Seminary
Mount Union College
Murray State University
National University
Nazareth College
Nebraska Wesleyan University
New College of Florida
New Jersey City University
New Mexico State University
New School University
New York City College of Technology of the City University of New York
Norfolk State University
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
North Carolina Central University
North Carolina State University
North Central College
North Dakota State University
North Georgia College & State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northeastern University
Northern Arizona University
Northern Illinois University
Northern Kentucky University
Northern Michigan University
Northern State University
Northland College
Northwest Missouri State University
Northwestern State University
Northwestern University
Norwich University
Notre Dame College
Oakland University
Occidental College
Oglethorpe University
Ohio Northern University
Ohio State University at Mansfield
Ohio State University
Ohio University
Ohio University-Zanesville
Ohio Wesleyan University
Oklahoma State University
Old Dominion University
Olivet Nazarene University
Oral Roberts University
Oregon State University
Our Lady of the Lake University
Oxford College of Emory University
Pace University
Pacific Lutheran University
Palm Beach Atlantic University
Peace College
Penn State Abington
Pennsylvania State University
Pennsylvania State University -Penn State Erie, The Behrend College
Peppler University
Pfeiffer University
Pine Manor College
Plymouth State College
Point Loma Nazarene University
Polytechnic University
Portland State University
Prairie View A&M University
Presbyterian College
Purdue University Calumet
Queens University of Charlotte
Radford University
Ramapo College of New Jersey
Randolph-Macon College
Randolph-Macon Woman's College
Regis College
Rhode Island School of Design
Rice University
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
Rider University
Ripon College
Roanoke College
Robert Morris College
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rockhurst University
Rollins College
Roosevelt University
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Rosemont College
Rowan University
Russell Sage College
Sacred Heart University
Saint Francis University
Saint John Vianney College Seminary
Saint Joseph's College of Maine
Saint Joseph's University
Saint Louis University
Saint Mary College
Saint Mary's College of California
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Saint Michael's College
Saint Vincent College
Saint Xavier University
Salem College
Salisbury University
Sam Houston State University
Samford University
San Francisco State University
San Jose State University
Santa Clara University
Seattle Pacific University
Seattle University
Seton Hall University
Shorter College
Siena College
Simmons College
Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania
Sonoma State University
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
South Dakota State University
Southeastern Louisiana University
Southeastern University
Southern Arkansas University
Southern Connecticut State University
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Southern Utah University
Southwest Texas State University
Southwestern College
Southwestern University
Spelman College
Spring Hill College
Springfield College
St. Ambrose University
St. Bonaventure University
St. Cloud State University
St. Edward's University
St. John's University
St. Joseph's College, New York
St. Joseph's College, New York - Suffolk Campus
St. Lawrence University
Universities (2000-2002) (continued)

St. Mary’s College of Maryland
St. Olaf College
St. Thomas University
State University of New York at Buffalo
State University of New York at Stony Brook
State University of New York College at Geneseo
State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
State University of West Georgia
Stillman College
Suffolk University
Susquehanna University
Sweet Briar College
Syracuse University

T
Tarleton State University
Taylor University
Telkauf Poit University
Temple University
Texas A&M International University
Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Texas A&M University -Corpus Christi
Texas A&M University-Calgoven
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Texas A&M University-Texarkana
Texas Christian University
Texas Lutheran University
Texas Tech University
City College of the City University of New York
Thiel College
Townson University
Transylvania University
Trinity Christian College
Truman State University
Tulane University

U
United States Air Force Academy
United States Merchant Marine Academy
Unity College
University of Akron
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Alabama
University of Alaska Anchorage
University of Arizona
University of Arkansas
Main Campus
University of California-Santa Cruz
University of Central Arkansas
University of Central Oklahoma
University of Charleston
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado at Boulder
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs
University of Colorado at Denver
University of Connecticut
University of Delaware
University of Dubuque
University of Florida
University of Hawaii-West Oahu
University of Hawaii at Hilo
University of Hawaii at Manoa
University of Houston
University of Idaho
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Iowa
University of Kansas Main Campus
University of Kentucky
University of Louisville
University of Maine
University of Maine at Farmington
University of Maine at Presque Isle
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Massachusetts Boston
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
University of Massachusetts Lowell
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
University of Michigan-Dearborn
University of Minnesota, Morris
University of Minnesota-Duluth
University of Mississippi
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of Missouri-Kansas City
University of Missouri-Rolla
University of Missouri-St. Louis
University of Montana
University of Nebraska at Kearney
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of New Haven
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina at Asheville
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
University of North Carolina at Pembroke
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
University of North Dakota
University of Oklahoma
University of Pittsburgh
University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg
University of Puerto Rico in Humacao
University of Puget Sound
University of Rhode Island
University of Richmond
University of San Diego
University of South Carolina
University of South Dakota
University of Southern Indiana
University of Southern Maine
University of St. Thomas
University of Tampa
University of Tennessee
University of Texas at Arlington
University of Texas at Austin
University of Texas at Brownsville
University of Texas at Dallas
University of Texas at El Paso
University of Texas at San Antonio
University of Texas at Tyler
University of Texas at the Permian Basin
University of Texas-Pan American
University of the Arts
University of the Ozarks
University of the South
University of Toledo
University of Tulsa
University of Utah
University of Vermont
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
University of Wisconsin-Platteville
University of Wisconsin-River Falls
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
University of Wisconsin-Stout
University of Wisconsin-Superior
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
University of Wyoming
Ursinus College
Ursuline College
Utah State University

V
Vassar College
Villanova University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Wesleyan College

W
Wabash College
Wagner College
Warner Pacific College
Washington and Lee University
Washington College
Washington and Lee University
Washington College
Washington State University
Wayne State University
Waynesburg College
Webb Institute
Webber State University
Wells College
Wesleyan College
West Texas A&M University
West Virginia University
West Virginia University Institute of Technology
Western Carolina University
Western Connecticut State University
Western Kentucky University
Western Michigan University
Western New England College
Western New Mexico University
Westminster College
Westmont College
Wheaton College
Wheaton College
Whitman College
Wichita State University
Wilkes University
Williamette University
William Carey College
William Jewell College
William Paterson University of New Jersey
Wilmington College
Winston-Salem State University
Winthrop University
Wittenberg University
Wofford College
Woodbury College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Wright State University

X
Xavier University of Louisiana
York College of Pennsylvania
York College of the City University of New York
York College
# National Survey of Student Engagement Staff

**Project Director** .......................................................... George Kuh

**Assistant Director, NSSE** ........................................ John Hayek

**Assistant Director, NSSE Institute** .......................... Jillian Kinzie

**Project Manager, BEAMS** ....................................... Brian Bridges

**Senior Research Analyst** ....................................... Robert Carini

**Research Analysts** .................................................. Robert Gonyea

Paul Umbach

Chun-Mei Zhao

**Project Associates** .................................................. JoAnne Bunnage

Todd Chamberlain

Sara Hinkle

Patrick O’Day

Carla Morelon

Shaila Mulholland

Richard Muthiah

Megan Palmer

Auden Thomas

**Administrative Secretary** ....................................... Deb Lane

**Webmasters** .......................................................... Roh Seak-Zoon

Kevin Barry

**Project Support Assistants** ................................. Rachel Burks

Carrie Kearns

Margie Schrader

Melanie Smith

---

# Indiana University Center for Survey Research

**Director** .......................................................... John Kennedy

**Associate Director** ........................................ Nancy Bannister

**Business Manager** ........................................ Donna Hackney

**Assistant Director – Survey Technologies** .......... Kevin Tharp

**Field Director** .................................................. Katherine Adams

**Project Manager** ................................................ Cheryl Burke

**Programmer / Analyst** ....................................... Amanda McComb

**Computing Assistant** .......................................... Nicholas Bannister-Andrews

**Field Supervisor** ................................................ Jamie Salazar
National Survey of Student Engagement

Indiana University
Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning
Ashton Aley Hall, Suite 102
1913 East Seventh Street
Bloomington, IN 47405-7510
Phone: 812-856-5824
Fax: 812-856-5150
E-mail: nsse@indiana.edu
Web: www.iub.edu/~nsse