NSSE
national survey of student engagement

Open-Ended Prompts and Student Comments Report

NSSE Additional Comment Prompts: Choose Among Four Options

At the end of the survey, students are invited to openly share comments about their learning experiences. Institutions have the option to select <u>one</u> of four open-ended prompts:

   I. **If you have any additional comments or feedback that you'd like to share on the quality of your educational experience, please enter them below.** (default)

  II. **What has been most satisfying about your experience so far at this institution, and what has been most disappointing?**

III. **Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution.**

IV. **What one change would you most like to see implemented that would improve the educational experience at this institution, and what one thing should not be changed?**

The space provided allows students up to 5,000 characters to express their opinions freely about their college experience.

Sample Responses

Here are a few actual responses to illustrate each of the prompts:

   I. *"I would like to see more proactive academic and career advisers. I also feel my education would be improved with more communication and collaboration between faculty within [my major], instructors are often surprised by what we have or haven't been taught in prerequisite courses."*

  II. *"The most satisfying experience I have had at this institution thus far would be just the overall ability to participate in higher education where the faculty and staff seem to be passionate about their role at the university, and who enjoy working with the students. The most disappointing experience I have had so far would have to be realizing that university can at times feel lonely."*

III. *"Various friendships with professors--conversations outside of class, being referred to different books, getting to know leaders on study abroad trips, etc. I've learned the most from interacting with my professors outside of class, where we can talk in more of a mentor way than a strictly professor-student way."*

IV. *"I think it would be beneficial for students to have more opportunity to take courses outside of their discipline."*

In 2017, the first year of the optional prompts, about 3 in 5 institutions chose one of the new open-ended comment prompts. Institutions that did not select were given the first prompt as a default.

NSSE provides a *Student Comments* report of all responses exactly as the students entered them (which means they may not be suitable for distribution without prior review).

Robert Morris University

Tips for Using Student Comments

The information gathered in student comments can be used in a variety of ways, depending on an institutions reasons for choosing an open-ended option. Here are a few suggestions about how to use student comments:

- Use software such as NVivo or Rapidminer to conduct qualitative or text-mining analysis respectively.
- Analyze the data for sentiment—discover whether responses are positive, negative, or neutral.
- Share student comments with different offices who may be able to do their own focused analysis. For example, Residence Life staff may be able to review for feedback on various living situations, or by student populations.
- Use student comments to supplement quantitative findings. If Student-Faculty interaction is an area of concern for you—scan student comments for feedback on experiences with faculty.
- Add student comments to promotional materials to show students how much their opinions are valued.

Webinar Coming this Fall
How to Analyze and Use Student Comments
Check your email for more details!