How Institutions Use NSSE Results

Lessons from the Field, Volumes 1–4

Each year, more campuses use their NSSE results in innovative ways to improve the undergraduate experience. Lessons from the Field—Volume 4: Digging Deeper to Focus and Extend Data Use, released in 2017, describes how institutions use NSSE data to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning. All four volumes in this series are available for download from the NSSE website.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/lessons_home

Search Tool for Examples of NSSE, FSSE, and BCSSE Data Use

NSSE’s searchable database of examples contains over 1,000 ways campuses have used their results to improve undergraduate education. Search by keyword, institution name, institution type, or category of use such as accreditation, general education, retention, and advising.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/using_nsse_db

Data Use Teams Resources

Our data use studies suggest that NSSE data get more traction on campus when a team is charged with promoting the survey, interpreting data, and acting on results. Expand your on-campus NSSE team by adding data use team members on your Institution Interface. Resources for these groups can be found here:

nsse.indiana.edu/html/data_use_teams.cfm

Making NSSE Results Public

Many colleges and universities have posted their NSSE results on their websites. View exemplary website displays and the resource Guidelines for Display of NSSE Results on Institution Websites to develop appropriate and communicative displays of results.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/inst_web_site_display.cfm

Annual Results Institutional Examples

NSSE’s Annual Results features stories from participating institutions that illustrate how NSSE data have been used in initiatives such as redesigning the first-year seminar, engaging commuter students in high-impact practices, and improving academic writing instruction.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/annual_results.cfm

Data and Results Guides

NSSE Data User’s Guide

The NSSE Data User’s Guide outlines strategies and topics for consideration when communicating results and provides worksheets with exercises to facilitate the use of NSSE data for accountability, assessment, and improvement.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/data_users_guide.cfm

The resource is discussed in the webinar, Increase Dissemination and Discussion of Results: Introducing the NSSE Data User’s Guide. View the webinar:

nsse.indiana.edu/webinars/archives.cfm

NSSE Response Rate FAQ

While viewing and interpreting your institution’s results, you may have questions about your survey response rate and what it means for data quality. This document answers several common questions on this issue and helps users facilitate broader conversations about understanding survey data quality.

nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/Resp_Rate_FAQ.pdf

*View this guide with embedded links here:
nsse.indiana.edu/links/online_resources
Accreditation Toolkits
NSSE Accreditation Toolkits offer guidelines for incorporating NSSE into accreditation self-studies and ways to map specific items from NSSE to accreditation standards. Regional and specialized toolkits are aligned with the NSSE survey.
nsse.indiana.edu/links/accred_toolkits

NSSE Item Campuswide Mapping
NSSE Items Mapped to Institution Departments, Units, Committees, Functional Areas, and Interest Groups
To stimulate thinking and discussion about the meaning of NSSE results, we mapped NSSE Engagement Indicators, High-Impact Practices, individual survey items, and Topical Modules to a range of campus interest groups including career services, student activities, general education and academic support services.
nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/NSSE_Item_Campuswide_Mapping.pdf

The NSSE Degree Qualifications Profile Toolkit
The Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), created by Lumina Foundation for Education, proposes specific proficiencies that benchmark associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees. This information prompts institutions to examine the overlap between their NSSE results and the DQP learning outcomes expected of all students earning a degree.
nsse.indiana.edu/links/DQP_toolkit

A Guide to Contextualizing Your NSSE Data: Cognitive Interviews and Focus Groups

NSSE Sightings
NSSE’s blog features information related to student engagement topics on research publications, conference presentations, webinars, institutional data use stories, and more. Blog posts are written by the researchers themselves, usually with links to the full paper. nsse.sightings.indiana.edu
Also, follow us on Facebook and Twitter: @NSSEsurvey

NSSE User Workshops
NSSE occasionally sponsors workshops—hosted by participating institutions—where users, faculty, administrators, and institutional researchers come together to better use and understand their NSSE data. Materials from these and other sessions at the April 2015 workshop held at Bucknell University are available on the NSSE User Workshop website.
nsse.indiana.edu/html/workshops_2015_Bucknell.cfm

NSSE co-sponsors Using Evidence for Improvement: Teaching and Learning National Institute (TLNI), held in 2016, 2017, and 2018 at The Evergreen State College. This annual residential institute provides learning space for campus teams to develop evidence-based action plans for initiatives to foster teaching that sparks engaged student learning and to generate strategies for engaging colleagues in elaborating and institutionalizing those action plans. A summary of TLNI is available on our website.
nsse.indiana.edu/html/workshops_evergreen.cfm

NSSE Data Tools

Accessing Your NSSE Results Online
NSSE provides three ways to access your results online, all via the secure Institution Interface:
websurv.indiana.edu/nsse/interface/login.cfm

- All respondent data and reports can be downloaded from the “Data & Reports” table.
- The Online Institutional Report, a web-based version of your Institutional Report, allows access to reports and can be accessed from the “Data & Reports” table.
- The NSSE Report Builder is an interactive online tool for creating tailored reports based on student and institutional characteristics.

Sample Analyses and Syntax
Our sample analyses and syntax page includes a variety of SPSS syntax files that can be used to further explore your data, for example, to create and recode variables that NSSE uses in its reports, such as dichotomized engagement variables and first-generation status. This web page also includes code conducting specific analyses (for example, to explore differences in student engagement with faculty by gender).
nsse.indiana.edu/html/analysis_resources.cfm

NSSE Report Builder
Create user-customized reports with your institution’s data using this online resource.
nsse.indiana.edu/html/report_builder.cfm
Publications to Enhance Educational Practice for Improvement

Promoting High-Impact Practices: Maximizing Educational Gains

This research brief summarizes findings on High-Impact Practices (HIPs)—including service-learning, learning communities, research with faculty, study abroad, internships, and culminating senior experiences—highlighted in NSSE Annual Results 2007 to 2012. The brief can inform campus discussions about maximizing opportunities for and benefits from HIPs.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/findings.cfm

Key Resources on High-Impact Practices

Using NSSE Data to Assess and Enhance High-Impact Practices

This webinar prepares participants to facilitate campus dialogue about HIPs and maximize the benefits of the updated NSSE survey data and reports.

nsse.indiana.edu/webinars

Ensuring Quality and Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale**

NSSE founding director George Kuh and Ken O’Donnell present research on HIPs linked to greater academic challenge, student engagement, and achievement. They discuss how these practices relate to improved retention and completion and how to ensure that all students experience multiple HIPs.


George Kuh discusses 10 educational practices that research has shown correlate with higher levels of student performance. NSSE data are used to examine these HIPs.

**Reports can be ordered from the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

www.aacu.org/leap/hips

Project DEEP Publications

Three publications from NSSE’s 2002–2007 Project DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practice) target institutions concerned about enhancing student learning: Student Success in College (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2010), Assessing Conditions to Enhance Educational Effectiveness (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005), and a second edition of One Size Does Not Fit All (Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2014).

nsse.indiana.edu/html/projectdeep.cfm
nsse.indiana.edu/html/featured_publications.cfm

A series of 16 topical practice briefs based on the Project DEEP schools summarize educationally purposeful activities that matter to student learning and provide useful suggestions for promoting student success to a wide range of audiences, including university administrators and other institutional leaders, faculty, students, and the general public.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/DEEPPracticeBriefs.cfm

NSSE User Support Resources

A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College

NSSE’s popular guide to exploring colleges helps prospective college students and their parents in the college decision-making process and also serves as a useful resource for college admissions staff.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/pocket_guide_intro.cfm

A Spanish-language version of NSSE’s updated pocket guide is also available.

nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/PocketGuide_Spanish.pdf

Use a QR code to access the mobile version of the pocket guide on the NSSE Institute website.

nsse.indiana.edu/institute

YouTube Video on Using NSSE’s Pocket Guide

This 2-minute YouTube video shows how prospective college students—while touring a campus—can benefit from using A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College: Questions to Ask on Your College Visits.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/pocket_guide_vid

Voluntary System of Accountability

NSSE is one of four assessment instruments about students’ experiences and perceptions used in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). SPSS syntax to recode your NSSE data for the VSA College Portrait template is available.

nsse.indiana.edu/html/vsa.cfm

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Publications and Presentations

On NSSE’s Publications and Presentations web page, users can easily find NSSE-related publications, recent presentations, and scholarly papers. nsse.indiana.edu/html/publications_presentations.cfm

Recent Publications and Conference Papers


BrckaLorenz, A., & Hurtado, S. (2018). Assessing small populations: Recognizing everyone counts in your counts. Presentation at the Student Affairs Assessment and Research Conference, Columbus, OH.


Gonyea, R. M., & Kinzie, J. (2017). Making the most of NSSE: An overview of customization options, reports, and resources. Presentation at the Association for Institutional Research Forum, Washington, DC.


Hurtado, S., & BrckaLorenz, A. (2017). Improving student understanding of sexual assault policies and procedures. Presentation at the American College Personnel Association Annual Convention, Columbus, OH.


*Faculty use of rubrics: An examination across multiple institutions.* Presentation at the Assessment Institute, Indianapolis, IN.

*Transparent quality: Framing and building a psychometric portfolio.* Presentation at the Association for Institutional Research Annual Forum, Orlando, FL.

Reimagining student engagement: How nontraditional adult learners engage in traditional postsecondary environments.  

*Supporting faculty who advise: Using findings from the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement to activate discussions.* Presentation at the conference of NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, St. Louis, MO.


*Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 58, 15–26.

Student engagement and student learning: Examining the convergent and discriminant validity of the revised National Survey of Student Engagement.  
*Research in Higher Education,* 58(8), 880–903.