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 were invited to express their opinions freely about their college learning experience in a space allowing up to 5,000 characters. Institutions could choose <u>one</u> of four open-ended prompts, the first of which was the default for institutions that did not choose a prompt.

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?**

In 2018, the second year of the optional prompts, about 3 in 5 institutions chose a non-default question.

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 to enjoy working with the students. The most disappointing experience 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. "It would be beneficial for students to have more opportunity to take courses outside of their discipline."

Winston Salem University

Tips for Using Student Comments

NSSE provides a Student Comments report and a separate SPSS data file of all responses exactly as the students entered them (which may not be suitable for distribution without prior review). If applicable, comments from the Civic Engagement and First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions modules are also included in the report and data file. Depending on the reason for choosing an open-ended option, the information gathered can be used in a variety of ways, including:

- 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 offices that can do their own focused analysis. For example, housing 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 the comments for feedback on experiences with faculty.

- Add student comments to promotional materials to show students how much their opinions are valued.

View Our Recorded Webinar
Hearing the Students' Voice: Using NSSE Comments
nsse.indiana.edu/webinars