



**EMBARGOED
FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 5, 2007**

Contact: Jillian Kinzie
Phone: 812.856.5824
E-mail: nsse@indiana.edu

High-Impact Practices Boost Learning, Involved Parents No Problem

Findings from a national survey released today show that taking part in certain activities during college boosts students' performance in many areas, such as thinking critically, solving real world problems, and working effectively with others. These "high-impact" activities include learning communities, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, and capstone projects.

Contrary to what some educators believe, students who frequently talk with their parents and follow their advice participate more frequently in educationally purposeful activities and are more satisfied with their college experience. This is also true for students with so-called "helicopter parents" – those who intervened with institutional officials to solve problems their student encountered on campus.

The 2007 report from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is based on information from about 313,000 randomly selected first-year and senior students at 610 four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada. The NSSE study, titled "*Experiences That Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success*," gives schools an idea of how well their students are learning and what they put into and get out of their undergraduate experience.

"The results clearly show that colleges and universities should do everything possible to encourage undergraduates to participate in at least two high-impact activities, one in the first year and one later in their studies. Such experiences will better prepare students for a productive, satisfying lifetime of continuous learning," says George Kuh, the NSSE director and Indiana University Bloomington professor of higher education.

Now in its eighth year, the survey findings annually provide comparative standards for determining how effectively colleges are contributing to learning. Five key areas of educational performance are measured: 1) level of academic challenge, 2) active and collaborative learning, 3) student-faculty interaction, 4) enriching educational experiences, and 5) supportive campus environment.

"NSSE is becoming increasingly helpful in improving student success and building public confidence in the commitment of colleges and universities to improve teaching and learning," says Paul E. Lingenfelter, President of the State Higher Education Executive Officers. According to Douglas Bennett, president of Earlham College, "NSSE provides prospective students and their parents with information and insights that will help them find a college or university that is a good fit for them."

– continued on back –

Other key findings from the 2007 report are:

- Students who meet with their advisor at least twice a year are more engaged and gain more from college, yet 10% never meet with their advisor.
- Thirteen percent of first-year students have parents who frequently intervene with college officials; another quarter had parents who intervened sometimes.
- When faculty members provide guidance and feedback on projects and papers, students are more satisfied and say they benefit more in desired ways.
- First-year men report higher SAT or ACT scores, but spend less time than women preparing for classes and more time relaxing and socializing in the first year of college.
- Students who study abroad report greater gains in intellectual and personal development than their peers who do not have such an experience.
- First-generation students are less likely to take part in enriching educational experiences such as study abroad, an internship, or research with a faculty member.
- An internship or field placement is the most powerful form of a culminating senior experience in terms of greater self-reported gains.
- Only 29% of seniors at public institutions do a culminating senior experience, compared with 42% of their private college and university counterparts.

“NSSE is an institution’s most trustworthy lens for seeing deeply into the quality of students’ experiences because its results can translate directly into plans for action and reform and transformation strategies,” says Lee S. Shulman, president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. According to James H. Breece, University of Maine system vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, “NSSE provides invaluable information to our administrators, faculty, and staff that they need to make changes to improve the student experience.”

Kuh believes that colleges and universities should be more consistently using promising practices in teaching and learning throughout the curriculum to engage all their students at high levels. “The real question,” he says, “is whether we have the will to do so.”

The NSSE 2007 Report is sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

###

The NSSE 2007 Report, “*Experiences That Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success*,” may be obtained for \$20 from the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, School of Education, 1900 E. 10th Street, Eigenmann Hall, Suite 419, Bloomington IN 47406-7512. NSSE Web site: www.nsse.iub.edu.