A time-honored approach to improving productivity is the identification and adaptation of qualities that characterize high-performing organizations. Similarly, any institution of higher education can learn valuable lessons from educationally effective colleges and universities. Toward this end, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) collaborated on Project DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practice). With support from Lumina Foundation for Education and the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College, this initiative examined the everyday workings of a variety of educationally effective colleges and universities to learn what they do to promote student success. The effort is the first in a series of activities undertaken by the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice to respond to national concerns about improving the quality of undergraduate education.

In Fall 2002, a NSSE Institute research team launched the project by conducting case studies of 20 high-performing colleges and universities, including large, small, urban, and special mission institutions. Schools selected for the study had higher-than-predicted graduation rates and higher than-predicted scores on the five NSSE clusters of effective educational practice: level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interaction with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. Data collection and analysis continued through Spring 2004. Results of the study will be disseminated over the course of coming months through presentations, workshops, articles, and a book to be published by Jossey-Bass and AAHE in Spring 2005 entitled, *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter*. Also several dissemination conferences are planned for the spring and summer of 2005.

**Project DEEP Institutions**

Alverno College  
California State, Monterey Bay  
The Evergreen State College  
Fayetteville State University  
George Mason University  
Gonzaga University  
Longwood University  
Macalester College  
Miami University (Ohio)  
Sweet Briar College  
University of Kansas  
University of Maine, Farmington  
University of Michigan  
Sewanee: The University of the South  
University of Texas at El Paso  
Ursinus College  
Wabash College  
Wheaton College (MA)  
Winston Salem State University  
Wofford College

For more information:

NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice  
Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research  
1900 East 10th Street  
Eigenmann Hall, Suite 419  
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512 USA  
(812) 856-5824  
(812) 856-5150 (fax)  
nsse@indiana.edu  
www.iub.edu/~nsse
Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter

What do high-performing colleges and universities do to promote student success?

What campus features—policies, programs, and practices—contribute to high levels of engagement and better-than-predicted graduation rates?

Overview
A time-honored approach to improving productivity is the identification and adaptation of qualities that characterize high-performing organizations. In a similar way, virtually all institutions of higher education can learn valuable lessons from educationally effective colleges and universities. The goal of the Institute’s two-year initiative, Project DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practice), is to share success stories with institutions that are searching for ways to turn their NSSE results into action plans for promoting student success.

Although there is no single blueprint for student success, six factors and conditions appear to be common to educationally effective institutions.

1. A “living” mission and a “lived” educational philosophy;
2. An unshakeable focus on student learning;
3. Clearly marked pathways to student success;
4. Environments adapted for educational enrichment;
5. An improvement-oriented campus culture; and
6. Shared responsibility for educational quality and student success.

The book features a wide array of examples of effective educational practice and policies from the twenty DEEP institutions and offers suggestions for how other colleges and universities can create and sustain effective practices most appropriate for their institutional type and culture that will promote student success.

Intended Audience
Available from Jossey-Bass and AAHE in Spring 2005, the book is intended for institutional leaders, faculty members, student and academic affairs professionals, and other campus stakeholders interested in enhancing student engagement, persistence, and success. In addition to several dissemination meetings in coming months, the Inventory for Student Engagement and Success will be available in Fall 2005, also from Jossey-Bass and AAHE. ISES is a self-study guide that colleges and universities can use to discover to determine where and how to foster higher levels of student engagement and educational effectiveness.