Using NSSE Data in Student Affairs
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Over 1,160,000 students at 1,100 different four-year colleges and universities have participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Student affairs departments at these institutions have used NSSE data to create programs that support a climate of success on their campuses. Through collaborative ventures with academic affairs, they have initiated assessment and improvement efforts, particularly around first-year experience initiatives.

**Augsburg College**
As a Lutheran college, Augsburg College was interested in comparing their students’ responses to NSSE questions on the development of spirituality to those of students at peer colleges. NSSE data were also used to evaluate Day Student Orientation, Campus Ministry, and overall student satisfaction. NSSE data along with student and parent evaluations, professional conferences, faculty and staff input, and the College Institutional Research Project (CIRP) are used to make decisions about curricular and co-curricular programming for first-year students and to evaluate Augsburg’s orientation program.

**Bellarmine University**
The Division of Student Affairs at Bellarmine University (KY) used NSSE results to better assess and meet students’ needs by focusing on their performance on the Supportive Campus Environment NSSE Benchmark. BU included improving their performance on this benchmark as one goal of the University’s strategic plan. In addition, the Division used NSSE data to support hiring of a staff person dedicated to overseeing the initiative, implementation of a co-curricular transcript initiative, and increased assessment within the Division.

BU’s first-year students indicated they wanted to do internships, but most had not done this by the time they were seniors. Student affairs staff initiated more campus advertising and increased the focus on internship programs.

The Division of Student Affairs couples NSSE results with CIRP and internal survey data to better understand the characteristics of incoming students. Staff members use data on the activities students report participating in prior to arriving at BU to determine which campus opportunities to highlight or better communicate to new students.

**Northern Arizona University**
Northern Arizona’s Institutional Research Office disseminates NSSE results to colleagues in the Division of Student Affairs in abbreviated format to make it more accessible. The NAU first-year taskforce, a joint-committee of academic affairs and student affairs staff, was established to review first-year students’ success. Results from NSSE, Your First College Year (YFCY), and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) surveys are used to gauge students’ progress. The taskforce examines the first-year experience, reviews program evaluations, and outcomes-based assessments. NAU Residence Life used results from a NSSE oversample of students living in learning communities to monitor program success.

**St. Mary’s College of Maryland**
One of the long term recommendations of Multicultural Advisory Committee, which studies diversity on the St. Mary’s campus, was to explore use of NSSE data to review work-school-life balances among specific groups of students. In terms of academic preparedness, the Committee wanted to gather this information to help students who may be spending time on tasks that are detrimental to their studies.

**Saint Thomas University**
Saint Thomas University (FL), a member of the Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS) Project, used its NSSE results to inform the restructuring of several areas of the Division of Student Affairs. To improve engagement and foster development of leadership skills, the Vice President for Student Affairs created the L.I.F.E.L.O.N.G. Center for Leadership and Student Engagement. The student affairs division developed courses, workshops, experiential learning exercises, on-line resources and developmental opportunities to build on the existing strengths and talents of students. Leadership101 is a course designed for student leaders who currently hold positions of governance within a student organization. The course emphasizes a specific set of experiences presented in highly interactive seminars, guest lectures, experiential exercises and small group projects.

**University of North Carolina – Charlotte**
UNC-Charlotte integrates results from multiple assessments and has correlated NSSE results with EBI items on residential satisfaction. Data “crosswalks” allow the institution to have conversations about NSSE data that have direct implications for programming and support. UNC-Charlotte provides departments with tailored reports that outline NSSE results that apply to them directly. Academic affairs, institutional research, and assessment offices collaborate to identify the best dissemination strategies and provide support to those who need advice on data interpretation.
University of South Florida – St. Petersburg
To meet one of the goals of their 2003-2008 Strategic Plan and to address NSSE results which indicated a need for a broader range of services for students, USFSP allocated new space and additional funding for expanded tutoring services. The Academic Success Center opened in fall of 2005 offering extended tutoring hours that include evenings and weekends, a wider selection of subjects with a focus on general education courses, support for GRE preparation, and credit and non-credit workshops on study skills and time management.

University of Texas at Tyler
UT Tyler initiated a four year plan in fall ’04 to improve the “UT Tyler Tradition,” a program aimed at fostering rigorous intellectual growth and academic development in all disciplines. NSSE results are used to assess current levels of overall lower division student satisfaction as well as to measure the progress of the program. In an effort to become a “destination campus,” a university that students choose first over other universities, UT Tyler has made improving the overall quality of student life a high priority objective. NSSE student satisfaction scores will be used to measure the success of this goal. UT Tyler plans to redevelop the student center, expand food services, increase options for student housing, expand freshman learning communities, develop a full program of community service opportunities, expand intramural sports, create and foster institutional traditions around matriculation and graduation, and plan and allow a Greek system to grow.

University of Toronto
The University of Toronto created a 6-year, campus-wide strategic plan in 2004, called “Stepping UP.” The plan is centered around seven key priorities: 1) teaching, learning and the student experience; 2) enabling research; 3) interdisciplinary teaching and research; 4) faculty support and renewal 5) staff support and renewal; 6) realizing excellence, equity and diversity; and 7) academic leadership and academic planning. NSSE will be used as the pivotal assessment tool to measure on-going progress. UT did not use NSSE to compare themselves with other institutions, but rather to inform specific and strategic initiatives. For example, UT created the City House, a place for commuter students to socialize.

University of Wisconsin – Platteville
The University of Wisconsin at Platteville has developed a strategic plan to reach six goals by the year 2008. Goal 4 uses NSSE data to create an institutional climate that fosters learning through a respect for racial and ethnic diversity. The first initiative is a collaborative effort to foster a respectful campus climate. NSSE data collected from UWP students (majority and minority) will help to assess their needs regarding racial and ethnic diversity. A second initiative will explore opportunities to provide programs on inter-group relations, conflict resolution and community action for students. UWP will enlist the Diversity Advocates Peer Education team as a campus resource to promote collaborative programming when planning a racial or ethnic diversity event.

University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
In the spring of 2005, the Student Success Advisory Committee at UWSP requested a “map of student success activities” on campus. Committee interviews with student affairs staff and academic department chairs were organized around the five benchmark items from the NSSE survey to learn what types of specific activities departments and units do that might improve NSSE responses and to gauge awareness of NSSE items by campus faculty and staff.

Washington State University
Washington State University’s NSSE results indicated that students felt the campus was above average on being supportive, but was not meeting their expectations on collaborative learning areas, faculty-student interactions, and educational challenges and experiences. WSU already supported a successful living-learning community but it was limited to a small number of students. Freshman Focus learning communities were created to provide all incoming freshmen the opportunity to engage in an extensive living-learning community system.

Western Oregon University
Residential students at Western Oregon suffer from a common problem: they abandon campus for various reasons each weekend, creating the ubiquitous “suitcase” effect. Taking advantage of the fact that NSSE is administered to all students (residential and off-campus, traditional and distance-education), administrators are combing their data at the item level to identify initiatives that can might keep residential students on campus and attract off-campus students to it. By combining NSSE results with those from ACUHO, ACUI, and ACT assessments, Western Oregon is augmenting effective programs and eliminating outdated ones in order to begin rebuilding its co-curricular campus community.

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