**NSSE Foundations: An Introduction to the National Survey of Student Engagement**

Regional Users Workshop
Wichita, Kansas
April 19-20, 2007

**What is NSSE?**
- An annual snapshot of student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development.
- The results will provide an estimate of how under graduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college.
- National Survey of Student Engagement items represent empirically confirmed ‘good practices’; they reflect behaviors associated with desired outcomes of college.
- The time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development.

**History of NSSE**
- 1998 Pew Charitable Trust
  - Better ways to look at schools than US News?
    - Non-Student Measures of Success (i.e. endowment, admit rates, external opinions)
  - Can we look at undergraduate quality?
    - Asking students about their experiences
  - Survey is conceptually based on the CSEQ, developed by Robert Pace (and still a survey in the NSSE family)

- 1999: 2 Pilots (Fall and Spring) were conducted and meetings were held with education leaders, administrators, and faculty
- Early concerns by stakeholders
  - a concern that the NSSE might create pressure to homogenize curricular practices,
  - the need to clarify the NSSE’s purpose and to develop safeguards against the misuse of survey results,
  - the recognition that institutions might try to manipulate the results—especially if the survey is used in rankings or other “high-stakes” settings, and
  - a concern that The College Student Report (an earlier name for NSSE) is really a “reputation/selectivity” measure in another guise.
**NSSE Foundations:**
Introduction to NSSE

**History of NSSE**

![Graph showing history of NSSE](image)

**NSSE Today**

- The “NSSElings”
  - The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (2003)
  - The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (2004)
- Additional Surveys
  - The Law Student Survey of Student Engagement
  - The College Student Experiences Questionnaire
  - The College Student Expectations Questionnaire
  - The High School Survey of Student Engagement*
  - The Community College Survey of Student Engagement*

*Not administered by the Center for Postsecondary Research

**NSSE Today**

- Additional Research Projects
  - Building Engagement and Attainment in Minority Students (BEAMS)
  - Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)
  - Connecting the Dots, American Democracy Project, State Higher Ed Systems, Teagle grant exploring religion & spirituality, CIC “Making the Case”
- Additional Resources
  - Accreditation Toolkits
  - Regional Workshops
  - Pocket Guides
  - Facilitator’s Guide to Using NSSE Data

**NSSE Today**

- NSSE Around the World
  - Canadian, French Canadian, Spanish Versions
  - Administered to over 1,200 different institutions in all 50 states
  - Institutional Demographics of participants mirror those of the Nation

**NSSE 2006 Participating Colleges & Universities**

![Bar chart showing participation](image)

**Core Surveys: NSSE**

- Research based on effective educational practices
- Designed and tested for high validity and reliability
- Relatively stable over time
- High credibility of self-reported data
- Over 275,000 students at 600 institutions annually
- Actionable data
- Psychometric properties document on website

*What questions do you have about the items??*
NSSE Foundations: Introduction to NSSE

NSSE Survey Item Organization

- Q.1 - Academic activities
- Q.2 - Learning mental activities
- Q.3 - Reading & writing
- Q.4 - Homework
- Q.5 - Academic challenge
- Q.6 - Co-curricular activities
- Q.7 - Enriching educational experiences
- Q.8 - Campus relationship
- Q.9 - Time usage
- Q.10 - Institutional emphasis
- Q.11 - Gains
- Q.12 - 14 - Satisfactions

Using NSSE to Enhance the Undergraduate Experience

Exercise - Which activity listed in NSSE question #1 if increased would lead to greatest learning and development for first-year students?

Who might be interested in these questions and the results on your campus?

Core Surveys: FSSE

- Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
  - Parallel survey designed to measure faculty expectations for student engagement in educational practices that are known to be empirically linked with high levels of learning and development
  - To date more than 75,000 faculty members at 380 institutions
  - Faculty members who teach at least one undergraduate course during same the academic year

FSSE Instrument

- Faculty perceptions of how often their students engage in different activities
- Importance faculty place on various areas of learning and development
- Nature and frequency of interactions faculty have with students
- How faculty members organize class time

FSSE Instrument: Survey Options

- Course-based (default)
  - Responds to questions based on one particular undergraduate course section during taught during the current academic year
- Typical-student
  - Responds to questions based on the typical first-year student or senior taught during the current academic year

Core Surveys: BCSSE

- Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (pronounced “bessie”)
  - Designed as a companion to NSSE
  - Measures entering first-year students’ pre-college academic and co-curricular experiences, and their interest in and expectations for participating in educationally purposeful activities during college
**NSSE Foundations: Introduction to NSSE**

**BCSSE Instrument**
- Two pilots: 2005 and 2006
  - 2004-2005 pilot with 28 schools, 15,890 students
  - 2005-2006 pilot with 70 institutions, 39,686 students
- Use to examine gap between expectations and engagement
- Study effect of students’ background on NSSE scores
- Registration now open

**Timelines (May - Feb)**
- May-September
  - NSSE/FSSE registration opens
- September
  - NSSE/FSSE registrations confirmed
  - Institutional Interface opens
  - NSSE materials due two weeks after registration confirmation
- October
  - NSSE population files, oversample, and consortium decisions due
- December
  - FSSE materials and population files due
- Mid-January early February
  - NSSE administrations open
  - BCSSE registration begins mid February

**Timelines (January-September)**
- Mid-March early April
  - FSSE administration open
- June
  - NSSE & FSSE Administrations close
  - BCSSE administration begin at many campuses
- August
  - Institutional Reports sent, including raw data and printed reports for NSSE, FSSE, and the prior summer’s BCSSE
  - NSSE administration continues
- September
  - BCSSE reports sent to participating institutions

**NSSE Administration**
- Sample Size
  - Numbers are based on mode and school size
  - Oversampling can increase sample size or ensure adequate representation of populations of interest

**NSSE Administration**
- Administration Mode
  - Paper: We need accurate mailing addresses, letterhead, signatures
  - Web+: 4x the paper sample, we need e-mail and mailing addresses
  - Web: 5x the paper sample, we need e-mail addresses

**NSSE Administration**
- Things that we need from you
  - Contact persons
    - Campus Project Manager (required)
    - Campus Administrative Contact (required)
    - Auxiliary Contact (optional)
  - Population File
    - All First-Year and Senior Students
    - Accurate mailing and/or e-mail addresses
  - Institutional letterhead and signature file (Paper mode only)
NSSE Foundations: Introduction to NSSE

**NSSE Administration**

- Things for you to consider
  - Broad buy-in from others at your institution (informal word-of-mouth)
  - Web-mode institutions: good partnership with IT department

- Things you to consider (cont.)
  - Administration Plan
    1. Follow the IRB rules of Indiana University Bloomington
    2. Allowed up to 5 institutional contacts
    3. Promotion plan
    4. Incentive programs
    5. Tips to boost response rates

- Special Groups
  - Consortia
    - Schools like you
    - Additional Questions
  - Selected Peers
    - Schools like you
  - Special Populations
    - Identified in Pop file
  - Special Analysis
    - Post Hoc Analysis
  - Experimental Items
  - Web schools only

- 2006 Consortia
  - American Democracy Project
  - Associated New American Colleges
  - AAMC
  - Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design
  - Association of Independent Technical Universities
  - Bringing Theory to Practice
  - Catholic Colleges and Universities
  - Colleges that Change Lives
  - Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
  - Council for Undergraduate Education
  - Jesuit Colleges and Universities
  - Private Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities
  - State and University Systems
    - Ontario Universities
    - South Dakota Public Universities
    - Tennessee Public
    - Texas Public
    - University of Wisconsin

- How do we communicate with you?
  - Client Services Teams
    - Team 1: Institutions A-E
    - Team 2: Institutions F-Ni
    - Team 3: Institutions No-U of A
    - Team 4: Institutions U of B-Z
  - Telephone: 812-856-5824
  - E-mail: nssetm[insert team#]@indiana.edu
    - e.g. nssetm1@indiana.edu

- Institutional Report (August)
  - Institutional data
    - Respondent characteristics (Demographic Information)
    - Means and Frequencies (item averages and response percentages)
    - Benchmark of Effective Educational Practice
  - Additional Data (If Applicable)
    - Experimental Items
    - FISSE Report
    - BCSSSE Combined Report

- NSSE Institute Information
  - Using NSSE Data
  - Accreditation Toolkit
  - Data Facilitator’s Guide

- NSSE Deliverables
  - NSSE Institute Information
  - Using NSSE Data
  - Accreditation Toolkit
  - Data Facilitator’s Guide

- NSSE Reports: Respondent Characteristics Table

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NSSE Reports: Frequency Distribution

Benchmark Report (August)

Benchmark Report

Making Sense of Your Data: Benchmarking

Approaches:
- Normative - compare your students’ responses to those of students at other colleges and universities.
- Criterion - compare your school’s performance against a predetermined value or level appropriate for your students, given your institutional mission, size, curricular offerings, funding, etc.
- Longitudinal - compare your student’s scores over time

Making Sense of Data: Two Approaches

- Most valued activities
  What is most valued at your institution, in departments, what does the data show?

- Eliminate “Nevers”
  Work on reducing or eliminating reports by students of never doing specific engagement activities.
NSSE Foundations:
Introduction to NSSE

**Seniors Never Participating**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% Participating</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare Multiple Drafts</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Activities</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial Others</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Learning</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Career Plans</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Out-of-Class</td>
<td>60%</td>
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**Making Sense of Data: Internal Discipline Specific Comparisons**

**Sharing your NSSE data**

- Provide summaries of results
- Copy NSSE tables; create your own
- Involve groups from the beginning
- Make meaning of the data; why are the numbers what they are?
- Go back to other data sources
- How might scores be improved?

**Using NSSE Data**

- Problem Identification: results point to things institutions can do something about – almost immediately
- Mobilize Action
- Context Setting - paint a picture of the institution
- Evidence of outcomes & processes
- Refocus conversation about collegiate quality
- Helps inform decision-making
- Provides lexicon for talking about collegiate quality in an understandable, meaningful way

**NSSE: Only one step in assessment process**

**NSSE in your assessment plan**

- How often should I administer NSSE?
  - Every Year: Gives you a snapshot of each class
  - Every Three Years: Gives you a picture of a cohort at the beginning and the end of their college experiences
  - Every Five Years: Works well with most accreditation cycles (Accreditation and Interim Reports)
- Other factors to consider
  - Establishing a baseline
  - Costs (using all core surveys)
  - Additional Surveys/Sources of Data
  - Time to take absorb results, make changes
NSSE Foundations:
Introduction to NSSE

NSSE Services

- You become part of the NSSE Family with your participation
  - Consulting
  - Help with making sense of data
  - Presentation assistance
  - Technical questions
  - Updates, Briefs, Annual Report, new information
  - Special regional users workshops (meeting other users)
  - Feedback for NSSE – our Report Card

Moving toward action...

- What concerns do you have about your NSSE administration and results?
- What opportunities do you see for using your NSSE data? What obstacles do you anticipate?
- Who might you want to involve in your next conversation about NSSE?
- What might you do within the week after returning from this meeting?

Discussion and Questions

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