NOW WHAT? Using Your NSSE Data

Charting Your Course through Using NSSE Data

Jillian Kinzie
Regional NSSE Users Workshop
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Where do I start?

- What burning questions do you have about your students?
- What are the hot topics on your campus?
  - How can these data feed you with information on those topics?

Getting to Know NSSE Data

- Respondent Characteristics
- Comparative data [National, Carnegie, Selected Peers]
  - Means Comparison
  - Frequency Distribution
  - Benchmark Data
- Data File

How do I deal with skeptics?

Skeptics tend to ask about the following:

- Why are we administering this survey?
- Validity and reliability
- What is the research foundation?
- Others?
Assessment Strategies

- “The institutional attitude should encourage organizational constituents to ask – about all policies, programs, and procedures – ‘What is our source of evidence for that assertion?” (Wolfe & Harris, 1994, p. 276).
- “Examine, share, and act on assessment findings” (Palomba & Banta, 1999, p. 14)


Focus Assessment on What Matters in College: Student Engagement

Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of college impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement.

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 602

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Validity of Self-Reported Data

- Self-reported data is valid if five conditions are met:
  1. Information is known to respondents
  2. Questions are phrased clearly & unambiguously
  3. Questions refer to recent activities
  4. Respondents think the questions merit a serious & thoughtful response
  5. Answering the questions does not threaten or embarrass students, violate their privacy, or encourage them to respond in socially-desirable ways
- NSSE was intentionally designed to satisfy these five conditions

Does the instrument yield valid information?

- Survey items...
  - Are clearly worded
  - Are well-defined
  - Have high content and construct validity
  - Relationships exist between items that are consistent with objective measures and other research
  - Responses are normally distributed
  - Patterns of responses are consistent both within and across major fields and institutions

Data Quality

- Random sampling from similar population types
- Response rate
  - 39% in 2006
- Sampling error
  - An estimate of the margin likely to contain your “true” score, for example:
    - If 60% of your students reply “very often” and the sampling error is ±5%, it is likely that the true value is between 55% and 65%
  - More respondents --> smaller sampling error
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Research Foundation

- Student Engagement: based on the work of George Kuh and C. Robert Pace
- Current exemplars:
  - Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter (Project DEEP)
  - Assessing Conditions to Enhance Educational Effectiveness: The Inventory for Student Engagement and Success

Communicating your Results

- It's your call on how to do this!
- Sample PowerPoint presentation in binder
- Focus groups
  - Faculty
  - Students
- Facilitator's guide can help you get organized

Sharing NSSE Results...Stimulating Conversation on Campus

“NSSE is a great way to stimulate reflection and debate about what we do more and less well, and why. For us it’s proving an exciting and enlivening tool for self-reflection and self-improvement.”

--Michael McPherson, President of The Spencer Foundation (former President of Macalester College)

Communicating Results - INTERNAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Sharing of NSSE 2005 Results</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Staff</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Chairs</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>Academic Advisors</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governing Board</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (web site, fact book, etc.)</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Communicating Results - EXTERNAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Sharing of NSSE 2005 Results</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation Agencies</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>No External Disclosure</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web Site</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective Students</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>10</td>
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NOW WHAT? Using Your NSSE Data

**Using your Data**

- Benchmarking
  - Normative approach
  - Criterion approach
- Accreditation Preparation
  (see the Toolkit in your binder or on our Web site)
- Link to institutional data
- Link to other survey data

**The Facilitator's Guide in Action**

- Simply reporting results may not lead to action
- The Facilitator's Guide is an instructor's manual and can help you get organized
- Provides suggestions for leading a workshop or session on understanding, interpreting and taking action on NSSE data

**The Facilitator's Guide in Action**

- Topic 1: Respondent Characteristics
- Topic 2: Mean Comparisons
- Topic 3: Pattern Analysis
- Topic 4: Frequency Distributions
- Topic 5: Benchmark Comparisons

- Copies available: www.nsse.iub.edu/institute

**The Facilitator's Guide in Action**

- Exercise 4: Frequency Distributions
  - Good for an internal view of your own students
  - Look at the “never” responses. What percentages are too high? Do these make sense? What does this tell us?
  - What other encouraging or challenging patterns do you see in the frequency reports

**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.

**The Facilitator's Guide in Action**

- Exercise 5: Benchmark Reports
  - Good for external comparison purposes
  - What are the patterns here?
  - What are our strong points? Challenges?
  - How does our institution perform, given our student and institutional characteristics?
  - How does our institution compare, given our student and institutional characteristics?
Making Sense of Data: Benchmarking

Two Approaches:

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

Discussion and Questions

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