Digging DEEP to Discover What Matters to Student Success

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Digging DEEP…

Overview

- Introduction to the Session
- Project Background
- Research Approach
- Emerging Themes
- Next Steps
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Learning Outcomes
- Understanding of Project DEEP
- Insight into policies and practices of educationally effective institutions
- Understanding of potential student affairs applications of NSSE and DEEP and collaboration with academic affairs
- Ideas for new approaches to enhancing student learning and success
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Advance Organizer

- How can we use what we know about educational effectiveness to improve undergraduate education?

- What kinds of information about educational effectiveness will you and your colleagues find compelling?
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Warm-up:
What programs or practices best promote student learning at your institution?
Are there practices you’re aware of that other institutions employ?
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Concerns

- Press for demonstrable impact
- High stakes environment
- Can’t assume students are doing the things that lead to high levels of learning
Lessons From The Research

What do we know about students and effective educational environments?
Lessons From The Research

- What matters most to desired outcomes is what students do, not who they are.
- A key factor for student learning is the quality of effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities.
What Really Matters in College: Student Engagement

“The research is unequivocal: students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the college experience than those who are not so involved.”

Ernest T. Pascarella & Patrick T. Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*
Lessons From The Research

- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities
Two Components of Student Engagement

- What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education
(Chickering & Gamson, 1987)

- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Respect for diverse learning styles
- Cooperation among students
Principles for Good Practice in Student Affairs
(Blimling & Whitt, 1999)

- Engages students in active learning
- Helps students build coherent values and ethical standards
- Sets high expectations for learning
- Uses systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance
- Uses resources effectively to help achieve goals
- Forges partnerships that advance learning
- Builds supportive and inclusive communities
National Survey of Student Engagement
(NSSE -- pronounced “nessie”)

College student survey that assesses first-year and senior student engagement in activities associated with high levels of learning and development
National Survey of Student Engagement

- 3 years of data
- 265,000 students from 614 different colleges and universities have participated in NSSE
- 49 states
Enriching Educational Experiences

Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

- Academic Challenge
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Active and Collaborative Learning
- Supportive Campus Environment
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Purpose of Project DEEP

Project DEEP aims to get beyond NSSE results, and offer a more in-depth picture of student engagement.

The goal is to discover and describe different forms and conditions of student engagement and to document what institutions do and how they achieved this level of effectiveness, and then share these success stories to help other institutions transform.
Project DEEP Partners

National Survey of Student Engagement
The College Student Report

AAHE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

LUMINA
Foundation for Education

CENTER OF INQUIRY IN THE
Liberal Arts
AT WABASH COLLEGE
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Research Approach

- 20 case studies
  - Team of 24 researchers review institutional documents and conduct multiple-day site visits
  - Observations of campus culture, individual and group meetings
  - Identification of effective practice and programs
- Roundtables conducted by AAHE to explore uses of NSSE data for improvement of student learning
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Selection Criteria

Controlling for student and institutional characteristics (i.e., selectivity, diversity, institutional type), DEEP schools have:

- Higher-than-predicted NSSE benchmark scores
- Higher-than-predicted graduation rates

Region and institutional type, special mission
Project Status

- 20 initial site visits completed
- Interim Reports to be reviewed by institutions
- Debriefing meetings conducted during second visits
- Identification of preliminary findings
Lessons Learned...

Campus Culture

- Macalester College students, faculty and staff understand and articulate the College’s core values of academic excellence, service, multiculturalism and internationalism. These values are enacted in the curriculum and co-curriculum.
Lessons Learned from DEEP schools

Campus Culture

CSUMB is a public liberal arts institution with a distinctive curriculum and outcomes-based education model. Its “Vision Statement” is the driving force behind all decisions and actions taken at the institution.
Academic Challenge

Fayetteville State provides an appropriate balance of academic challenge and support: “We are open admission, but not open graduation.”
Active and Collaborative Learning

- **Ursinus College’s Common Intellectual Experience (CIE)** is a two-semester course for first year students. Common readings and the “Uncommon Hour” provides opportunities for students to have a shared intellectual experience outside the classroom that complements class activities.
Wofford College’s learning community courses connect first-year students, preceptors, and faculty both in-and out-of-class through weekly “pizza discussions” in the residence halls, off-campus excursions, and dinner discussions in the faculty dining room.
University of Kansas students constitute 20% of campus policy-making committees. Most classes (79%) have fewer than 30 students.
Longwood University faculty members serve as a student’s advisor all four years. The advising philosophy is developmental and holistic; mentoring is a key component.
The University of Maine, Farmington’s Student Work Initiative employs students in meaningful work in student services, laboratories, and field-research. Such experiences provide opportunities to apply what they are learning to practical, real-life situations.
Enriching Educational Environment

- George Mason University uses technology to enhance the learning environment through its Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC) program, which assists liberal arts students in achieving ten instructional technology goals.
Enriching Educational Environment

- Sweet Briar College has a variety of ways for students to get involved in independent research projects: in-class group projects, summer research, senior thesis, and “mentoring research groups.”
Wheaton College’s First Year Seminar courses employ a “team” approach to assist new students in their transition to college. The team consists of the course professor, two trained student preceptors, a librarian, and an administrative mentor.
Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution adopts a model of student affairs practice appropriate for its institutional culture and academic mission.
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Student success is enhanced when:

- Academic rigor is appropriately calibrated for the institution’s mission and students.
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Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution enacts a talent development philosophy.
Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution is open to innovation, and is committed to improvement.
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Next Steps In the Effective Practice Agenda

- NSSE and AAHE Support for Institutional Improvement
  - National roundtables
  - Campus consortia
- Nationally-disseminated monographs and policy briefs
- Workshops and presentations at national and regional meetings
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The Effective Educational Practices Agenda

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- The NSSE Institute
- Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)
- Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS)
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Implications

- Student Affairs application of NSSE and DEEP
- Collaboration with Academic Affairs
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Questions and Comments

For more information: www.iub.edu/~nsse
Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution adopts and enacts a talent development philosophy.
- Students have the skills needed to succeed academically.
- Instructors use effective, active and collaborative learning approaches.
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- The institution’s mission is shared among students, faculty and staff.
- Units collaborate around student learning.
- Effective educational practices are used consistently throughout the institution.
- Academic rigor is appropriately defined for the institution.
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- Students perceive curricular experiences are relevant.
- Intentional connection of in- and out-of-class experiences.
- Clearly communicated course expectations and intended outcomes.
- Assessment that promotes student learning.
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- Institutional agents, preferred courses and programs of study, support services, and extracurricular activities are accessible.
- Students have regular contact with peers whose values and aspirations are compatible with the institution's educational purposes.
- Academic and social programs, policies, and practices are integrated and complementary.
- Students feel they belong and are valued as individuals.
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University of Michigan senior faculty members teach discipline-based frosh seminars for students in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts and introductory courses in the redesigned engineering program.
Sewanee’s Interdisciplinary Humanities Program includes four writing-intensive courses that introduce the cultural history of the western world. The program is team-taught using a mix of lectures and small discussion sections.
Active and Collaborative Learning

- University of Texas at El Paso uses learning communities and course-based service learning and volunteerism to actively engage its mostly commuter, first-generation students.
Active and Collaborative Learning

- California State University, Monterey Bay encourages students to use one another as resources to learn math in a course called “Math Huge.” The classes enroll anywhere from 60 to 90 students, but students engage in collaborative groups of 3 around a computer to problem solve with actual data sets.
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Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)

- To discover and document the programs, policies, and practices that successfully engage students in learning activities and lead to strong graduation rates.
In an effort to support the diverse needs of students, faculty at California State University, Monterey Bay are encouraged to accept multiple lines of evidence from students for the demonstration of a given course outcome clearly articulated up front. In this way, diverse students with different strengths can select the best way for them to satisfy an outcome.