Using Evidence to Document Liberal Education Outcomes and Promote Institutional Change

AAC&U Annual Meeting
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George Kuh, Robert Gonyea, Jillian Kinzie, Indiana University Bloomington
David Eubanks, Coker College
Linda Calendrillo, Valdosta State University
Judy Ouimet, University of Nevada-Reno
We value what we measure

Wise decisions are needed about what to measure in the context of campus mission, values, and desired outcomes.
Overview of the Session

- Context for emphasis on liberal education outcomes
- What do we know about liberal education gains?
- Institutional examples: Assessing key outcomes and institutional change
  - Coker College
  - Valdosta State
  - University of Nevada-Reno
- Q&A
College Learning for the New Global Century

A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise

Association of American Colleges and Universities
Narrow Learning is Not Enough—
The Essential Learning Outcomes

★ Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical & Natural World
★ Intellectual and Practical Skills
★ Personal and Social Responsibility
★ Integrative Learning
NSSE Review:

- NSSE is administered annually (spring) to first-year & senior students at participating colleges and universities.
  - Results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college; the extent to which they perceive their institutions support their academic and personal development.
  - NSSE 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.
NSSE Results

- Are diagnostic; to help institutions look holistically at undergraduate experience
- Help pinpoint aspects not in line with mission, or what institution expects
- Identify weaknesses and strengths in educational program
- Help institutions know what to focus on to improve student learning and success
- Can be combined with FSSE results, which measure faculty expectations & activities related to effective educational practices
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Reported Educational and Personal Gains from College</th>
<th>First-Year Students NSSE 2006</th>
<th>Seniors NSSE 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking critically and analytically</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring a broad general education</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working effectively with others</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing clearly and effectively</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning effectively on your own</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using computing and information technology</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing quantitative problems</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking clearly and effectively</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding yourself</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a personal code of values &amp; ethics</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving complex real-world problems</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to the welfare of your community</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a deepened sense of spirituality</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting in local, state, or national elections</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FSSE Educational & Personal Gains Items**

(“To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas?” -- % “very much” or “quite a bit”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Reported Educational and Personal Gains from College</th>
<th>Lower Division FSSE 2006</th>
<th>Upper Division FSSE 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking critically and analytically</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquiring a broad general education</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working effectively with others</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing clearly and effectively</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning effectively on your own</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using computing and information technology</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing quantitative problems</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking clearly and effectively</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding yourself</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a personal code of values &amp; ethics</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solving complex real-world problems</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a deepened sense of spirituality</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</table>
Essential Learning Outcome: Integrative Learning

NSSE DEEP LEARNING SCALE:

- Integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Included diverse perspectives in class discussions/writing
- Put together ideas from different courses
- Discussed ideas with faculty members outside of class
- Discussed ideas with others outside of class
- **Analyzing** the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- **Synthesizing** & organizing ideas, info., or experiences
- **Making judgments** about the value of information
- **Applying** theories to practical problems or in new situations
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views
- Tried to better understand someone else's views
- Learned something that changed how you understand an issue
Essential Learning Outcome:
Intellectual and Practical Skills

NSSE SELF-REPORTED GAINS:

- Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills
- Writing clearly and effectively
- Speaking clearly and effectively
- Thinking critically and analytically
- Analyzing quantitative problems
- Using computing and information technology
- Working effectively with others
- Solving complex real-world problems
Essential Learning Outcome:
Personal & Social Responsibilities

NSSE SELF-REPORTED GAINS:

- Voting in local, state, or national elections
- Learning effectively on your own
- Understanding yourself
- Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Developing a personal code of values and ethics
- Contributing to the welfare of your community
- Developing a deepened sense of spirituality
Gains in Intellectual and Practical Skills by Deep Learning Quartiles

- Very much
- Quite a bit
- Some
- Very little

- First-Year
- Senior

Deep Learning Quartiles:
- lowest
- second
- third
- highest
Gains in Personal and Social Responsibilities by Deep Learning Quartiles

- Very much
  - First-Year
  - Senior

- Quite a bit
- Some
- Very little

Deep Learning Quartiles

lowest, second, third, highest
Institutional Example: Coker College

- Hartsville, South Carolina
- Independent Liberal Arts college
- About 1200 students
- Traditional and Non-traditional programs
- On and off-campus locations
- SACS accredited last in 2005
“Collegiate learning is complex, and the evidence used to investigate it must be similarly authentic and contextual. ...”

SURREALIST PAINTER RENÉ MAGRITTE AND HIS BROTHER, SURREALIST PLUMBER, RODRIGO.

Neither is this.

This is not a pipe.
Learning and Ability

FACS Composite by GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>03FA</th>
<th>04SP</th>
<th>04FA</th>
<th>05SP</th>
<th>05FA</th>
<th>06SP</th>
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<tr>
<td>GPA &gt; 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 &lt; GPA &lt; 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA &lt; 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- GPA > 3
- 2 < GPA < 3
- GPA < 2
Engagement and Learning

- **Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.**
  - Correlated with FACS at 0.21

- **Came to class without completing readings or assignments.**
  - Correlated with FACS at -0.28

- **Acquiring a broad general education.**
  - Correlated with FACS at 0.25
Questions and Discussion

For More Information:

- NSSE Web site: www.nsse.iub.edu