Welcome to the NSSE Webinar

Thank you for joining us. The Webinar will begin at 3pm EDT.

Some guidelines before we begin:

Sound:
• Please turn up your computer speakers or plug in your headphones to listen to the presentation.
• What to do if you don’t hear anything:
  o Right click on “Meeting” in left of dark grey tool bar at top of screen and select “Settings.” Make sure the “Allow” radiobutton is checked, then “Close.”
  o If this does not work, you may need to consult your technology support person. Since the Webinar is being recorded, you will be able to view the session on the NSSE Web site at a later day.

E-mail Chat:
• Participants will be able to submit questions via e-mail during the break between Parts 1 and 2 and at the end of the presentation.
• When the “Chat” box appears, type your question into the “Chat” box at the bottom and click on the arrow. Messages will appear in a continuous list as they are submitted.

Part 1 Agenda

1. Introduction to Concepts
   a. What is Student Engagement?
   b. What does NSSE tell us about the student experience?
   c. What are Effective Educational Practices?
2. A Successful NSSE Administration
   a. Reviewing and understanding your materials
   b. Advocates for the survey
   c. Incentives for students
   d. Publicity strategies
4. Questions and Answers – 15 min.

The NSSE Challenge

How might we more effectively use data about quality in undergraduate education to:
✓ provide evidence of student learning
✓ motivate and inspire effective educational practice
✓ strengthen the learning environment?

Current Context for Accountability & Assessment

1. Press to improve student success and provide evidence of student learning
2. Sec. Spelling’s report emphasizes access, affordability, accountability, transparency VSA, NAICU’s UCAN, etc.
3. Accreditation placing more attention on direct measures of student learning and quality improvement plans

NSSE Core Purposes

Institutional Improvement
Public Advocacy
Documenting Good Practice
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

Foundations of Student Engagement

- Time on task (Tyler, 1930s)
- Quality of effort (Pace, 1960-70s)
- Student involvement (Astin, 1984)
- Social, academic integration (Tinto, 1987, 1993)
- Good practices in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)
- College impact (Pascarella, 1985)
- Student engagement (Kuh, 1991, 2005)

Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

(Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Experiences with diversity
- Cooperation among students

Student Engagement Triad:

- 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
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities

What NSSE Measures

- Student Behaviors
- Institutional Actions
- Reactions to College
- Student Background Information
- Student Learning & Development
Some things we’ve learned from NSSE…
(see NSSE Annual Reports 2000-2007)

• Student engagement varies more within than between institutions…plenty of room for improvement on campus!
• Schools with lower student-faculty ratio, more FT faculty, & more classes with fewer than 20 students generally score higher on all five NSSE benchmarks.
• FSSE – NSSE data: when faculty use effective practices, students report engagement in these activities!
• Effective educational practices measured by NSSE are independent of institutional selectivity.
• Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, and engagement go hand in hand.
• For underrepresented students, engagement has compensatory effect on FY grades & persistence to the second year of college

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

General Considerations
• Engagement scores are process measures.
• Engagement scores may depend on context, especially with class year.
• Multi-year comparisons require a baseline (longitudinal, criterion, norm-referenced?)
• Are the measures (survey questions, scales) the same across years?
• Trend analysis?

Five Indicators of Effective Educational Practice

- Supportive Campus Environment
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Level of Academic Challenge
- Student Faculty Interaction
- Active & Collaborative Learning

Reminder: Recent NSSE Enhancements
• Institutions create up to 3 customized peer comparison groups (2007)
• All content of Institutional Report available for download from secure site (2007)
• New Report “What Students are Saying…” based on NSSE Pocket Guide questions (2007)
• New Executive Snapshot Report in November (2006)
• Increased sample size for web-based admin (2006)

NSSE Scalelets and Modules

• Course Challenge
  • Out-of-Class Interaction
  • Information Technology
  • Diversity Experience
  • Support for Student Success
  • Interpersonal Environment
• Writing
• Higher-Order Thinking Skills
• Integrative Learning
• Active Learning
• Collaborative Learning
• Course Interaction

NSSE Suite of Assessment Instruments

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
- Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)

NSSE Survey & Administration

- **NSSE** = College student survey that assesses the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development
  - Third party administration (IU Center for Survey Research)
  - Students surveyed in the spring
  - Random sample of first-year students & seniors
  - Paper and web version
  - In 2007, over 1 million students from 610 institutions invited to participate, average institutional response rate = 36%

Administration and Reporting Timelines

- **October – December**
  - Prepare for Administration (pop files, letters, consortium)
  - Get campus ready!!!
- **Mid-January early February**
  - NSSE administrations open
  - BCSSE registration begins mid February
- **Mid-March early April**
  - FSSE administration open
- **June**
  - NSSE & FSSE Administrations close
  - BCSSE administration begins at many campuses
- **August**
  - Institutional Reports sent, including NSSE, FSSE, and prior summer’s BCSSE
  - BCSSE administration continues

NSSE Administration

- **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

Materials for NSSE 2008

- Letter templates
  - Mode-dependent
  - Announcements
- Population files
  - Population file updates in spring
  - Replacement samples
- Group variables (id: Learning Community students; adult students; transfers etc.)
- Target oversamples?
- All materials should be in by now!

NSSE Consortia 2008

- American Democracy Project
- Arts Consortium
- Associated New American Colleges
- Association of American Universities Datexxchange
- Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design
- California State University
- Canadian Research Universities
- Catholic Colleges & Universities
- Connecticut State Universities
- Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
- Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges
- Information Literacy
- Jesuit Colleges and Universities
- Lutheran Colleges and Universities
- Military Academy Consortium
- Mission Engagement Consortium for Independent Colleges
- Online Educators Consortium
- Ontario Universities
- Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
- Private Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities
- South Dakota Public Universities
- University System of Georgia
- Urban Universities
- UW Comprehensives
- Women’s Colleges
Publicizing the survey

Getting the word out to:
• Students
• Staff
• Faculty

Serves two purposes:
• Helps increase response rates and quality of your data
• Helps prepare these constituencies to eventually put that data to work!

USF St. Petersburg Example – E-News (excerpt)

“Nessie was recently sighted giving a demonstration to the Campus Computing staff who were very interested in learning more about the upcoming administration of the NSSE at USF St. Petersburg. Nessie recommended that they visit the NSSE Web site.”

Getting faculty on board

• Education about the survey and data it yields
• Classroom advocacy
• Go viral!
  – Influential faculty
  – Key committees
  – Who are the people on your campus that can get faculty interested in assessing student learning?

Student publicity

• How do you reach students on your campus?
• Please do not contact them directly about the survey
• Create an environment of awareness

Publicity examples

• Posters in key locations
  – Residence halls/student restrooms
  – Table tents in dining areas
  – Public transportation
• Screen savers in computer labs
• Faculty advocacy in classes
• Campus radio/newspaper/other media

Incentive strategies

• Several smaller “prizes” are more effective than one large prize
• Best strategy is to offer a small reward to each respondent
• Include timeline for when prizes can be collected
• Institution-specific prizes
  – One-time parking pass for a pay lot
  – Bookstore voucher
Break
Question and Answer Session

Take a 5-min break to consider:
• What questions do you have about what we’ve presented?
• What else do you need to know or do to make your NSSE administration a success?
We will return for a 15-minute question and answer session.

Part 2 Agenda

1. NSSE Data and Reports: The Basics and Examples of Use
   • Selecting Peer Comparison Groups
   • Respondent Characteristics
   • Means and Frequencies
   • Benchmarks
   • Linking NSSE to other student data
   • Institutional examples
2. Break – 5 min.
3. Questions and Answers – 15 min.

Customized Institutional Report (Aug)

✓ Overview
✓ Institutional data
✓ Means and frequencies
✓ 1st year students and seniors
✓ Comparisons by peers, Carnegie, national
✓ Benchmark Report
✓ Data use tips
✓ Student-level data, etc.
✓ And more!

How to select peer groups
(“Report Information Form” – June)

• What is important to you? peer, aspirational, competitor, pre-determined
• Size of the group matters
• Up to three fully customizable comparison groups – can be created by:
  – Institutional type
  – Carnegie classification
  – Hand-picked
  – Default (not advised)

Communicating your Results

• It’s your call on how to do this!
  – Identify your audiences: Deans? Faculty? Accreditors? Alumni?
  – Think about what is relevant to group
• Sample PowerPoint presentation
• Focus groups
  – Faculty
  – Students
• Facilitator’s guide can help you get organized (see NSSE website)

Sharing your NSSE data

• Provide summaries of results
  – Copy NSSE tables or 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?
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

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

General Data Sharing Tips

Don’t just send out copies of NSSE reports!

- Create data “teasers”, short reports for committees/units, add narrative, admin info etc.
- Share results broadly to stimulate discussion and support for further assessment and change
  - Faculty, Student Affairs, Students
- Merge response options to create dichotomous variables (1/0)
  - “Frequently”= often + very often “Substantial”= quite a bit + very much
- Report % of students responding “never” or “very little” to an item. “44% of our 4th years never…
  - Ask: Does this match what we say about our experience? Might suggest simple curricular or program changes that can be made to reduce the proportion of students responding this way.

Making Sense of Data: Two Approaches

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

✓ Focus on “Nevers” of concern
  Sharing “% nevers” gets attention on campus. Can then focus action on reducing or eliminating reports by students of never doing specific engagement activities.

Conveying the Import, or How do I deal with skeptics?

Know the answers to these questions:

- 1) Why are we administering this survey?
- 2) What is the research foundation?
- 3) Data validity and reliability

“This survey is not appropriate for OUR students”

“You expect me to pay attention to results with that low response rate!?”

NSSE Results: Where do I start???

1. Start with want you want to know, then go to the data
   a. What burning questions do you have about your students?
   b. What are the hot topics on your campus?
   c. How can these data feed you with information on those topics?
2. Scan the results, noting trends or results you may not have anticipated. How are you stacking up in terms of educational practices of interest to your campus?

Get to Know Your NSSE Data

- Respondent Characteristics
- Comparative data [National, Carnegie, Selected Peers, Consortium]
  - Means Comparison
  - Frequency Distribution
  - Benchmark Report
  - Executive Snapshot
  - What Students are Saying...
- Data File

First NSSE? PREVIEW “NSSEville” State report on website so you’re familiar with report formats
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

Example: 1

Assessment Issue: Insure high quality writing experiences in the 1st year. Are we using writing center/tutors effectively?

Audiences: Assessment team, Faculty teaching FY courses, Writing Center staff

Relevant NSSE items: 1c, d; 3c, d, e; 11c. Provide student learning process & outcome indicators

NSSE results: First year students write short papers comparable to peer schools; but fewer med & long papers, are less likely to prepare 2+ drafts & also report lower gain in writing than peer schools.

Interpretation: Benchmarking with peer schools indicates institution is underperforming; what other data might you gather to assess writing? What first year writing initiatives might help? What goals might you set for improvement?
Benchmarking – longitudinal (performance indicators & co-curricular improvements)

Assessment Issue: Maintaining effectiveness and making targeted improvements with upper division students
Audiences: Assessment team, Student Affairs staff
Relevant NSSE items: NSSE items identified as key performance indicators, gains items for 4th years (11 a-p); and targeted improvements in co-curricular experiences (1h,s,t; 6a; 7b, 10f & diversity scale, 1e,u,v; 10c)

Interpretation: Longitudinal benchmarking (2006-2008); could also benchmark with peer schools. Did you meet performance goals? Did the enhancements have an impact?

Examining Subsets of Your Campus
• Comparisons by Demographics
  – First generation Students
  – Adult/Transfer Students
  – Athletes
  – By College, Faculty or Department
• Comparisons by Behaviors
  – Community Service
  – Study Abroad
  – High Faculty Interaction
• Oversampling

Descriptive Analyses by Major

Moving to deeper understanding
• Comparisons over time
  – Program implementation
  – First year students → Seniors
• Create your own benchmark scales
  – Technology
  – Spirituality/Ethics
  – Satisfaction
• Other Surveys
  – FSSE: Faculty/Student Perceptions
  – BCSSE: Incoming characteristics
  – Outside Surveys: YFYC, HERI
  – Internal Data
Reminder: User Measurement Scales
Ex. Deep Learning Activities

- Higher-Order Learning activities that require students to utilize higher levels of mental activity than those required for rote memorization (2b,c,d,e)
- Integrative Learning activities that require integrating acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies into a meaningful whole (1d,e,i,p,t)
- Reflective Learning activities that ask students to explore their experiences of learning to better understand how they learn (6d,e,f)

Multi-Year Approaches

2004 2007
FIRST-YEAR FIRST-YEAR

Cross-sectional comparison of different cohorts

SENIOR

Institutional Peers

Tracking results of peer comparisons

Institutional Peers

Comparing estimates of class populations

NSSE Survey & Reporting Changes

Tools to help with:
- Tracking variable changes
- Merging datasets
- Using Benchmark variables
- Changes to report logic

See NSSE website: “Researchers” tab
Using NSSE Data

• Problem Identification - results point to things institutions can do something about – almost immediately
• Study Retention
• Link to other data about student experience
• Context Setting – paint a picture of the institution
• Accreditation - Evidence of outcomes & processes

NSSE and Retention

Links between NSSE & Retention Goals:

➢ NSSE is a stimulus for reflection on what the institution does well, & areas for improvement
➢ Ultimate goal of retention initiative is improved educational experiences (not just retention)
➢ Identifies what distinguishes institution, where student experience matches espoused mission, & where it falls short
➢ NSSE results can be connected to institutional data to build retention models

Predicting Retention at Elon University

• Students’ relationship with peers predictive of retention.
Elon considering programs/services to foster these relationships, checking published findings & best practice.

NSSE Accreditation Tool-kit

1. Background information on using student engagement in accreditation
2. Customized to each of the six regional accrediting bodies; AACSB, ABET, NCATE in-development
3. Complete map of NSSE items to accreditation standards
4. Vignettes from other institutions on using NSSE in accreditation

Impact of Educationally Purposeful Activities on the Probability of Returning for the Second Year of College by Race

NSSE plus other Assessment Data

Co-curricular Involvement in the First Year

• NSSE results for Institution A:
  “About half of our FY students spend no time on co-curricular activities. This seems really low. What did our students do in high school?”

  Institution reviews CIRP data. Their entering students are lower than the norm. Admissions confirms most new students worked part-time jobs in high school, likely limiting co-curricular involvement. Consider co-curricular involvement models appropriate for students at Institution A.
NSSE: Only one step in assessment process

- **Step A1: Survey Data**
  - Survey students
  - Review results
  - Develop preliminary list of strengths and opportunities for improvement

- **Step A2: Follow-up**
  - Use results as benchmarks to monitor progress
  - Faculty & student focus groups

- **Step A3: Action Plan**
  - Finalize plan
  - Share plan with appropriate groups
  - Link to strategic plan
  - Implement action

- **Step A4: Reflection**
  - Lessons learned

NSSE in your assessment plan

- How often should I administer NSSE?
  - Every Year: Gives snapshot of each class
  - Every Three Years: Gives picture of a cohort at beginning & end of their college exp.
  - Every Five Years: Works well with most accreditation cycles

- Other factors to consider
  - Establishing a baseline
  - Building a longitudinal data file
  - Costs (using all core surveys)
  - Additional Surveys/Sources of Data
  - Time to take absorb results, make changes

Institutional Example: Focus on desired pedagogy

- First-year students less involved in service learning than JMU desired.
- Workshops conducted to encourage faculty to adapt courses to include service learning
- Studied change in participation of students and instructional practice

Institutional Example: Plymouth State University

- Student Affairs reviews NSSE data to assess out-of-class support
- NSSE and institutional survey data used to revise General Education program
- NSSE results supported grant application for faculty development center

Institutional Example: More Analysis

Three Targeted Analyses:

- Comparison of SR students’ responses to education and personal growth items with peers at other institutions and NSSE cohort to assess performance on general learning objectives
- Comparison of responses of minority and non-minority students on items related to diversity
- Comparison of students’ responses on mental activities, study abroad, undergraduate research, and capstone project with peers and NSSE cohort

Institutional Example: Improving teaching & learning

- NSSE and CIRP pointed to problems with first year students’ academic engagement, but WTAMU desired more holistic picture of students’ experience
- Conducted “Student Engagement Audit Focus Groups” – 2 focus groups per college to discover what faculty and students found educationally engaging and identify classroom experiences that were engaging and disengaging
Established an "Sophomore Experience Working Group" to investigate if FY exp. carried over in SP year. Focused on low NSSE score items, conducted focus groups, created sophomore survey. Led to pilot of "Pace Plan" (mentoring), includes Career Exploration Course, Sophomore Kick-Off Day
- NSSE results framed a “Sophomore Experience”
- 2005 = Pace’s 5th year of participation
- Concern regarding SP-JR persistence; FY results offers context for understanding exp. as students enter SP year
- Established “SP Experience Working Group” to investigate if FY exp. carried over in SP year. Focused on low NSSE score items, conducted focus groups, created sophomore survey. Led to pilot of “Pace Plan” (mentoring), includes Career Exploration Course, Sophomore Kick-Off Day
- NSSE also used in strategic indicators, Accred, NCATE, AACSB, Faculty Development/Colloquia, items used by offices (Technology, Multicultural Affairs), studies performed by Enrollment Mgmt.

Institutional Example: Results
Support Action
NSSE results showed need for improvement in academic advising:
- Implemented professional advisors in residence halls
- Based on NSSE and internal survey, 50% faculty were interested in advising workshop
- Recommendation to provide faculty with regular workshops and advising newsletter
- VP of Academic Affairs to carry out comprehensive assessment of advising on campus

Institutional Example: Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- NSSE results showed FY students were less engaged than seniors
- New FY interdisciplinary, inquiry-based seminars; better integration of disciplines; engaging introductory courses
- Associate Dean appointed to Office for the First Year
- Assessment plan in development with NSSE indicators as key component

Institutional Example: Disseminating NSSE Data at Doane:
- Executive summary of scores prepared for president and vice-presidents
- Report aligning NSSE benchmarks and survey items with long-range strategic plan sent to Board of Trustees, presented to full-faculty, and posted on campus Web site
- Student learning report examining student reading experiences based on NSSE scores that contribute to student performance data. To be presented to faculty, included in general assessment report, and posted on Web site.
Using NSSE Data: Lessons Learned

1. Make sure faculty and staff understand the concept of student engagement
2. Collect enough data to use results at department/unit level
3. Understand what engagement data represent and use and report results wisely
4. Distribute responsibility for performance fairly (e.g., transfers)

5. Examine the results from multiple perspectives
6. Link results to other information about the student experience and complementary initiatives
7. Don’t allow the numbers to speak for themselves
8. Manage the message and the media

NSSE Virtues

- Research based
- Focus on educationally purposeful activities
- Results point to areas where improvement is desirable
- Compelling face validity
- Established psychometrics
- Transparent operations
- Third party administration

- Random sampling
- Targeted sampling
- Flexibility: consortium question, modules
- Contributes to value-added estimates when linked to BCSSE, CLA, other outcomes measures
- Benchmarks for peer, national and other comparisons

NSSE Cautions

- Only one source of information
- Corroborate results
- Engagement skeptics
- Not an outcomes measure
- Denial in face of less-than-desirable results
- Eschew rankings

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 participating in this webinar?
We will take a 5-minute break then conclude with a 15-minute question and answer session.

Jillian Kinzie  
Associate Director  
jkinzie@indiana.edu

Chad Ahren  
NSSE Client  
Services Coordinator  
cahren@indiana.edu

Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research  
1900 East 10th Street  
Eigenmann Hall, Suite 419  
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512  
Ph: 812-856-5824  Fax: 812-856-5150

Web site: www.nsse.iub.edu  
E-mail: nsse@indiana.edu