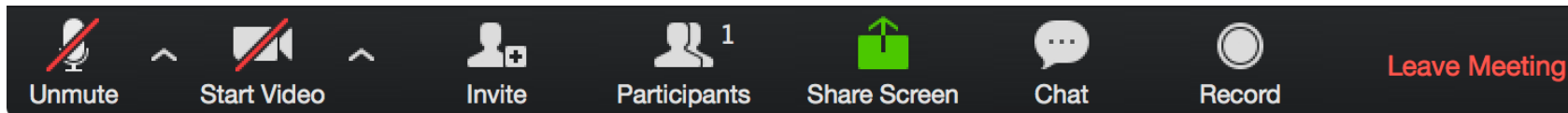


# Learning and Assessment in Student Affairs: The NSSE Way

**Webinar will begin at 2 pm EST.**

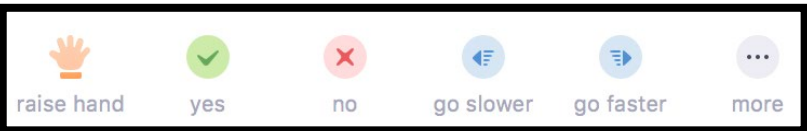
**Before we begin, please review the Zoom controls below. Leave your audio and video off, unless prompted by a host. You can post any questions in the chat box.**



Please leave your audio muted and video off (both indicated by a red slash)

Click to open the Participants box. This will allow you to give nonverbal feedback.

Click to open the Chat box. This will allow you to chat with Hosts and Participants.



- Visit <https://kb.iu.edu/d/aods#hear-talk> for a comprehensive set of tests and troubleshooting solutions if you have issues with the Zoom software
- To check your audio connection, click the arrow next to the microphone on the left hand side of the in meeting toolbar.
- Click “Test Computer Audio” and audio preferences will open.
- You can test the volume and output of your speaker device by selecting “Test Speaker.” If you cannot hear, change the output source by selecting a different speaker device.



# Learning and Assessment in Student Affairs: The NSSE Way

Dajanae Palmer

*Graduate Assistant, NSSE Institute and Project Services*

Samantha Silberstein

*Graduate Assistant, NSSE Institute*

Paper presented at the 2019 NASPA Annual Conference, March 2019



# Outline

- ✓ Engagement and Assessment in the Co-curricular
- ✓ Mapping NSSE Data to Student Affairs and Co-curricular Learning
- ✓ Assessing Learning Outcomes and Program Evaluation Using NSSE Data
- ✓ Share the Knowledge: Promoting NSSE Results
- ✓ Now What? NSSE Data to Inform Change



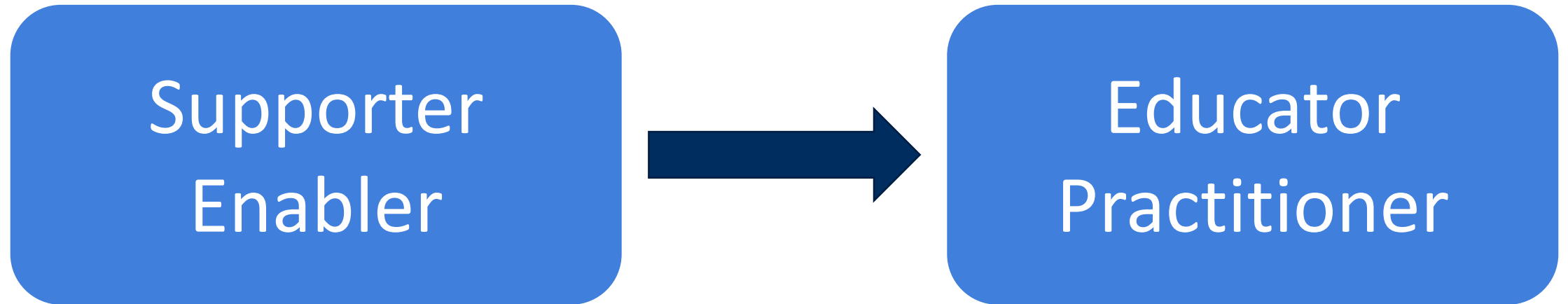
# In what department do you currently work?

- Academic advising
- Student abroad
- International services or affairs
- Residence Life
- Student life and involvement
- Campus recreation or outdoor leadership
- Administrative services
- Academic affairs
- Institutional research or assessment

# Learning and Assessment in the Co-curricular

# Learning in Student Affairs

Shift in the field (Moore & Marsh, 2007)



Student affairs educators are promoters of learning and academic achievement in virtually everything they do with students (Blake, 2007)



# Valuing the Difference Student Affairs Makes

When we asked students to think of a specific, critical incident or moment that had changed them profoundly...

**4 of 5** chose a situation or event outside the classroom.

(Light, 2001)



# What percent of your work is currently dedicated to assessment activities?

- 5 or less
- 6 - 10
- 10 - 25
- 25 - 50
- More than 50





# Assessment in Student Affairs

## Moving from

- Counting programs, bodies
- Asking agreement questions
- Haphazard assessment efforts

## Moving to

- Assessing quality
- Student learning outcomes
- Asking and observing (behavior evidence)
- Formal assessment offices/coordination

# Mapping NSSE Data to Student Affairs and Co-curricular Learning



# Determining NSSE Items for Inclusion

- Approximately 107 items students answer from the core survey
- Eliminated questions explicitly course-based (Example: *Explained course material to one or more students*)
- Consider viewing Engagement Indicators as a scale
- Reviewed remaining questions to determine which were relevant to student affairs, considering:
  - Is this an action, program, or outcome that we have control or influence?
  - Would these results inform our work?



# NSSE Campuswide Mapping Document

- Stimulate thinking about NSSE measures (Engagement Indicators, High-Impact Practices, individual survey items, and Topical modules) related to a variety of departments, units, and committees.
- NSSE Item Campuswide Mapping is presented in 2 ways:
  - NSSE Item All-Unit Mapping: NSSE items mapped to all campus departments, units, committees, areas, and groups
  - NSSE Group Mapping: NSSE items mapped to 26 distinct campus groups of related departments, units, committees, etc.



# Engagement Indicators

| <b>Theme</b>             | <b>Engagement Indicator</b>   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Academic Challenge       | Higher-Order Learning<br>Reflective and Integrative Learning<br>Learning Strategies<br>Quantitative Reasoning |
| Learning with Peers      | Collaborative Learning<br>Discussion with Diverse Others  |
| Experiences with Faculty | Student-Faculty Interaction<br>Effective Teaching Practices   |
| Campus Environment       | Quality of Interactions<br>Supportive Environments  |



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# High-Impact Practices

- Internships/ Field Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Study Abroad
- Research with Faculty
- Senior Culminating Experiences
- Service-Learning



# High-Impact Practices

- **Internships/ Field Experiences**
- **Learning Communities**
- **Study Abroad**
- Research with Faculty
- Senior Culminating Experiences
- Service-Learning





# Additional Engagement Questions to Consider

- *During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?*
  - Attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)
- *Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?*
  - Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group?
- *About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?*
  - Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)
  - Working for pay on campus
  - Doing community service or volunteer work



# Identity Indicators

## **Engagement and Social Identities**

- Class level
- Full-time/Part-time
- Transfer student status
- Fraternity/Sorority
- Student athlete
- Campus employment\*
- Campus leader\*
- Campus engagement\*

## **Cultural and Demographic Identities**

- First-generation status
- Gender
- Age
- Nationality
- Race/Ethnicity
- Veteran status
- Ability status
- Sexual orientation

\*Based on recoding NSSE questions

# Assessing Learning Outcomes and Program Evaluation Using NSSE Data



# Institutional Report

- Package of reports that compare student responses with those of students at 3 comparison groups
- Comparison over time
- Broken out by first-year and senior experience
- Reports make comparisons for:
  - 10 Engagement Indicators
  - 6 High-Impact Practices
  - All other individual items including Academic Challenge items and Perceived Gains items



## Institutional Reports

- Help to develop the narrative of your campus
- Provide a quick review of your campus strengths
- Help to identify areas of improvement
- Stimulate assessment questions you may want to investigate



## NSSE Report Builder

- Displays results by user-selected student & institutional characteristics
- Instantly generates reports of your choosing
- Variables include Engagement Indicators and individual items
- To access Institution Version contact your NSSE CPM



# Accessing NSSE Data

- Institutions receive student level datafile
- Use this to disaggregate results based on student characteristics
- To see when your institution has participated:  
<http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/participants.cfm>
- Each campus has a primary contact (CPM). To learn who this person is on your campus contact us: [nsse@indiana.edu](mailto:nsse@indiana.edu)



# Office of Student Life and Learning

- Creating an end-of-year report for the VP of Student Affairs
- Want to include assessment data to support our claims
- Given access to NSSE data from the Office of Institutional Research
- Opportunity to think strategically about next year
- Questions to consider:
  - What can we know from survey data about our office and our students?
  - What experiences are students naming as significant learning?
  - Why are these co-curricular experiences significant for students?



# Descriptives

| <b>Descriptive Statistics</b>       |     |         |         |              |                |
|-------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------------|----------------|
|                                     | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean         | Std. Deviation |
| Discussions with Diverse Others     | 535 | 0       | 60      | <b>41.05</b> | 12.629         |
| Reflective and Integrative Learning | 536 | 14      | 60      | <b>39.97</b> | 11.438         |
| Supportive Environment              | 536 | 0       | 60      | <b>32.60</b> | 11.475         |
| Quality of Interactions             | 527 | 10      | 60      | <b>39.92</b> | 9.604          |
| Valid N (listwise)                  | 523 |         |         |              |                |

# Examining Associations: Correlation

| Correlations                |                                     |                                 |                        |                         |         |  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------|--|
|                             | Reflective and Integrative Learning | Discussions with Diverse Others | Supportive Environment | Quality of Interactions | leaderR |  |
| leaderR Pearson Correlation | -0.123                              | -0.110                          | -0.104                 | -0.013                  | 1       |  |
| Sig. (2-tailed)             | <b>0.000</b>                        | <b>0.002</b>                    | <b>0.003</b>           | 0.712                   |         |  |
| N                           | 816                                 | 813                             | 814                    | 790                     | 817     |  |

# T-Tests

| Independent Samples Test            |                             |                   |       |                              |         |                 |                 |                       |                      |       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------|
|                                     |                             | Levene's Test for |       | t-test for Equality of Means |         |                 |                 |                       |                      |       |
|                                     |                             | F                 | Sig.  | t                            | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Lower | Upper |
| Reflective and Integrative Learning | Equal variances assumed     | 1.252             | 0.263 | 3.543                        | 814     | <b>0.000</b>    | 2.960           | 0.835                 | 1.320                | 4.600 |
|                                     | Equal variances not assumed |                   |       | 3.574                        | 580.153 | 0.000           | 2.960           | 0.828                 | 1.333                | 4.586 |
| Discussions with Diverse Others     | Equal variances assumed     | 2.526             | 0.112 | 3.154                        | 811     | <b>0.002</b>    | 3.061           | 0.970                 | 1.156                | 4.966 |
|                                     | Equal variances not assumed |                   |       | 3.051                        | 512.052 | 0.002           | 3.061           | 1.003                 | 1.090                | 5.032 |
| Supportive Environment              | Equal variances assumed     | 11.633            | 0.001 | 2.974                        | 812     | <b>0.003</b>    | 2.678           | 0.901                 | 0.910                | 4.445 |
|                                     | Equal variances not assumed |                   |       | 2.829                        | 489.559 | 0.005           | 2.678           | 0.947                 | 0.818                | 4.538 |
| Quality of Interactions             | Equal variances assumed     | 11.690            | 0.001 | 0.370                        | 788     | 0.712           | 0.288           | 0.779                 | -1.241               | 1.818 |
|                                     | Equal variances not assumed |                   |       | 0.347                        | 445.130 | 0.729           | 0.288           | 0.830                 | -1.343               | 1.919 |



# Open-Ended Responses

- *If you have any additional comments or feedback that you'd like to share on the quality of your educational experience, please enter them below.*
- *What has been most satisfying about your experience so far at this institution, and what has been most disappointing?*
- *Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution.*
- *What one change would most improve the educational experiences at this institution, and what one thing should not be changed?*



# Use of Open-Ended Comments in Assessment

- Under-utilized assessment source
  - Viewed as time-consuming
  - Expectation of coding and analysis experience
  - Not often as valued as quantitative responses
- Value of open-ended responses
  - Complements reports using NSSE quantitative data
  - Gives voice and agency to students
  - Expands assessment to include what students view as important
  - Appreciate the time students put into providing a response



# Tools Available for Open-Ended Response Analysis

## Qualitative

- Nvivo
- Dedoose
- Atlas.ti
- **Excel**
- **Word**

## Quantitative

- SPSS Text Analytics
- SAS Text Analytics
- WordStat for Stata
- R: tm, quanteda, ngram packages, etc.
- Rapidminer



# Things to Consider

- Have a question or topic in mind
  - What are you interested in knowing?
  - What are your learning outcomes?
- Narrow your scope
  - Demographics: Is there a specific group of students you want to assess?
  - Keywords: Are you looking for reference to a specific activity or event?
- Do a quick review of responses
  - Can help further eliminate comments not pertinent to your current assessment plan (i.e. responses discussing course-based experiences)
- Code or categorize responses to find themes



## An Example

*Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution.*

Question/Topic: What are students naming as significant learning as it relates to leadership experience?

Scope: Senior students

Not interested in: Courses, study abroad, residence life, etc.





| A  |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | addcomm   |
| 2  | Working with others and understanding/appreciating other walks of life.   |
| 3  | research assistant for the kinesiology department   |
| 4  | studying abroad   |
| 5  | Teachers who want you to succeed in their class and reach out to you to help  |
| 6  | Being able to participate in many leadership opportunities on campus has given me the ability to grow beyond the classroom in ways that a book cannot teach you.  |
| 7  | My calc teachers office hours 1-2 times a week  |
| 8  | Studying the magnetocaloric effect for materials science in a contemporary physics lab ultimately leading to publication.   |
| 9  | I think my most significant learning experience at this institution was my time as an orientation leader. I learned a lot about different people, cultures, and the diversity of campus. I also learned leadership skills. I was able to connect with students and staff. This experience was not related to my major but I feel as though I learned so much about my self and this institution and relating to others. |
| 10 |   |



|    | A  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 1  | addcomm  |  |
| 2  | <del>Working with others and understanding/appreciating other walks of life.</del>   |  |
| 3  | <del>research assistant for the kinesiology department</del>   |  |
| 4  | <del>studying abroad</del>   |  |
| 5  | <del>Teachers who want you to succeed in their class and reach out to you to help</del>  |  |
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| 10 |  |  |



# Organizing Data: A Few Examples

- Color-code responses
- Copy/Paste similar responses into separate Word documents or Excel sheets
- Highlight responses and add Comments in Word with short descriptions or codes



|   | A  |
|---|--|
| 1 | addcomm  |
| 2 | <u>Working as a peer leader</u> and welcoming new international student is my most memorable experience. It was a great learning and leadership experience to introduce new students to the university and its culture and resources and being a part of their life at the institution.  |
| 3 | The most significant learning experience I have had so far was being given the opportunity to attend a <u>leadership conference</u> for LGBTQ+ college students. The conference taught me a great deal not just about how to be leader in the LGBTQ+ community, <u>but about myself</u> .  |
| 4 | I worked on a leadership retreat at the beginning of the school year with an African American woman who does not identify with a specific sexual orientation. Although I've always considered myself as culturally aware, I really realized that you are <u>never quite aware enough</u> . You always need to be thinking about how your words and actions are affecting those around you. |
| 5 | Being able to participate in many leadership opportunities on campus has given me the ability to <u>grow beyond the classroom</u> in ways that a book cannot teach you.  |
| 6 | <u>Being an RA has given me</u> training and experience with regards to leadership, communication, responsibility, etc.  |
| 7 |  |



# Analyzing Open-Ended Responses

## **Quantity**

- Count of responses by theme
- Select themes with most responses

## **Quality**

- Focus on the richness of the data
- What are the responses telling us about the student experience?
- What are the outliers?



# Leadership and Learning: An Example

## **Leadership roles significant to student learning**

- Resident advisor (30 responses)
- Student organization leader (28 responses)
- Orientation leader (17 responses)
- Student government (12 responses)

## **In what ways do students benefit from leadership experiences?**

- Opportunities to learn about who they are as people
- Develop traditional leadership skills
- Creation of a supportive and collaborative community
- Develop a better understanding of people different from oneself

Share the Knowledge: Promoting  
NSSE Results



## Some Considerations

- Provide enough information that the reader has a clear understanding of what you are presenting
- Incorporate visuals, numbers, and written text
- Seek out multiple avenues for distribution
- Keep it simple
- Make sure your results are relevant and that they matter to your reader





# Know Your Stakeholders

- Departmental or divisional colleagues
- Administrative leadership
- Faculty
- Community partners
- Funding distributors
- Governing or oversight boards
- Accrediting bodies
- Students (alumni, current, and future)
- Families

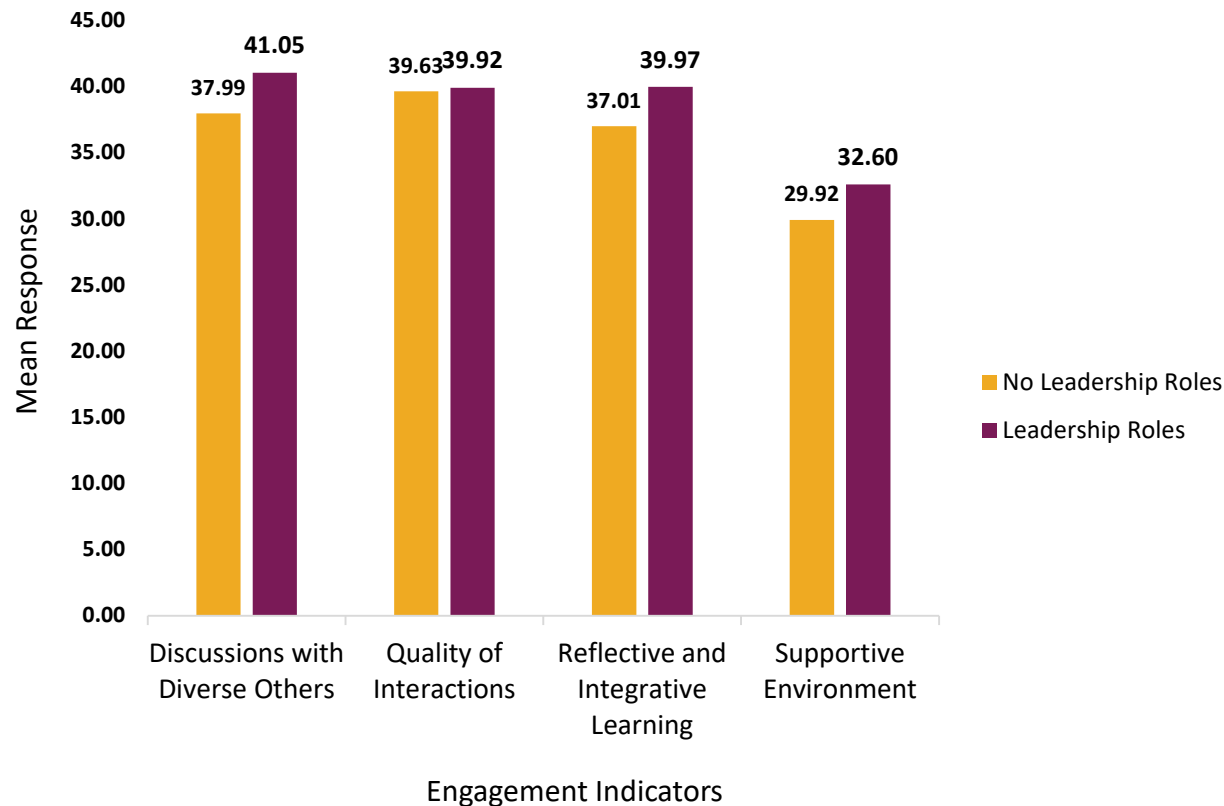


# Different Ways of Presenting Data

- Visuals or promotional material (posters, dining hall cards, brochures, etc.)
- Social media posts
- Reports (end-of-year, strategic initiatives, grants, program evaluations, etc.)
- Presentations (board meetings, departmental meetings, classrooms, etc.)
- Working groups (allow for discussion and feedback)

# Importance of Leadership Experience

## Impact of Leadership on Engagement Indicators



Significant learning happens inside and outside the classroom. As the Office of Student Leadership we have determined the engagement indicators directly affected by students holding a leadership role on campus. Our hope is to increase the number of students in leadership roles that students hold to increase their opportunities to have discussions with diverse others, opportunities for more quality interactions, and more opportunities for reflective and integrative learning.

Now What? NSSE Data to Inform  
Change



# Getting Started

- What are your department or divisional goals?
- What are your learning outcomes?
- What did the data tell you?
- What sources of support are available to you?
- Whose voice needs to be heard?



# Our Data: Leadership and Learning

- Multiple avenues to gain leadership experience (student organizations, RAs, orientation, conferences and institutes, etc.)
- Benefits to participating in leadership opportunities (intercultural communication, personal growth, confidence, communication skills, etc.)
- Not all students are participating in these opportunities



# Our Data: Leadership and Learning

- Form a committee to further explore leadership on our campus
  - Focus groups
  - Leadership survey
- Create partnerships to cultivate avenues for leadership development
  - On-campus job opportunities
  - Serving as a teaching assistant
- Apply for funding to host an on-campus leadership institute
  - Provide assessment data to funding source (internal or external)
  - Use student responses to help develop a curriculum



# Final Thoughts

- Student affairs professionals = educators in the field of higher education
- The learning occurring in the co-curricular and informal learning environments IS relevant to the student experience
- There are multiple venues for assessing student learning and engagement
- The data is out there, let's use it!
- Honor the time and care that students put in to providing feedback
- Do not isolate yourself in the assessment process – involve your stakeholders!





Thanks so much for joining us!

Dajanae Palmer

Samantha Silberstein

Blog: [NSSEsightings.indiana.edu](http://NSSEsightings.indiana.edu)

@NSSEsurvey

