First-Year Experiences Module

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Agenda

• Introduction
• Who participated
• Module items
• Findings
• Ideas for using the module results
The transition from high school to college can be challenging for most students (Miller, Bender, Schuh, & Associates, 2005).

Students are adapting to increased academic rigor (Holtstom, Karp & Gray, 2002) and dealing with increased responsibilities (Karp, Holmston, & Gray, 1998).

Calls for colleges to do more to assist with the transition into higher education (Callan & Finney, 2003; McDonough, 2004)
Introduction

• Nationally, there are concerns about completion rates (Hauptman, 2012)
  • These concerns are greater for students from historically marginalized populations (Carey, 2004)

• Lumina Foundation Goal 2025
  • Working to ensure that by 2025, 60% of all Americans hold a college degree or postsecondary credential.
  • This goal is only attainable if colleges do more to increase attainment rates for underrepresented groups.
Introduction

• From the literature we know, students leave for a variety of reasons including:
  • Financial concerns, family demands, poor fit, etc.

• However, we also know that to truly understand retention and persistence we must look at the individual student characteristics and institutional characteristics (Braxton, 2000; Braxton et al., 2004; Hurtado & Carter, 1997)
In 2015, 127 U.S. institutions elected this module.

Largest concentrations of Carnegie Basic Classification:
- Master’s Colleges & Universities (larger programs) (30%)
- Baccalaureate Colleges - Diverse Fields (21%)
- Baccalaureate Colleges Arts & Sciences (17%)

68% of institutions were Private.

Largest concentrations of undergraduate enrollment:
- 1,000—2,499 (33%)
- 2,500—4,999 (20%)
- Fewer than 1,000 (17%)

Nearly 23,000 students responded to this module.
BCSSE and NSSE Information on the First Year Experience

BCSSE provides information about entering students' experiences – can be paired with NSSE in the spring as follow-up between expectations and actual engagement.

NSSE results for first year students provide data about students' experiences in the first year.

New NSSE module on First Year Experiences can be appended to NSSE to get a more complete picture of the first year.
First-Year Experience Module

• Module parallels items on BCSSE
• Items focus on:
  • Academic perseverance
  • Help-seeking behaviors
  • Institutional commitment
## Module Items

1. **During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Studied when there were other interesting things to do</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn’t understand the material</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn’t feel like it</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Finished something you had started when you encountered challenges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not at all difficult</th>
<th>Very difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Learning course material</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Managing your time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Getting help with school work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Interacting with faculty</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **During the current school year, about how often have you sought help with coursework from the following sources?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Faculty members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Academic advisors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Friends or other students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Family members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Other persons or offices</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module Items

4a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?
   - Yes
   - No

   [Only if “Yes”]
   4b. Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)
   - Academics are too difficult
   - Academics are too easy
   - Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)
   - Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)
   - To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)
   - Difficulty managing demands of school and work
   - Too much emphasis on partying
   - Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun
   - Relations with faculty and staff
   - Relations with other students
   - Campus climate, location, or culture
   - Unsafe or hostile environment
   - Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)
   - Another reason, please specify: _____________________

5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module Items

• Information on all of the topical modules and their items can be found on our website at: http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/modules.cfm
Studied when there were other interesting things to do?

- Very often: 32% (Female), 37% (Male), 36% (Total)
- Often: 37% (Female), 36% (Male), 36% (Total)
- Sometimes: 28% (Female), 23% (Male), 26% (Total)
- Never: 5% (Female), 4% (Male), 5% (Total)
Effort and Asking Instructors for Help

Find additional information for course assignments when you don't understand the material:

- Never: 3%
- Sometimes: 29%
- Often: 43%
- Very often: 24%

Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments:

- Never: 9%
- Sometimes: 40%
- Often: 32%
- Very often: 19%

Find additional information for course assignments when you don't understand the material and Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments.
Persistence and Positivity

Finish something you have started when you encounter challenges

- Never: 1%
- Sometimes: 17%
- Often: 47%
- Very often: 36%

Stay positive even when you do poorly on a test or assignment

- Never: 3%
- Sometimes: 26%
- Often: 41%
- Very often: 29%
During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?

- **High Difficulty (5+6)**
  - Learning course material: 16%
  - Managing your time: 35%
  - Getting help with school work: 12%
  - Interacting with faculty: 14%
During the current academic year, about how many times did you seek any assistance with coursework?

- 7% Never
- 23% 1 or 2 times
- 27% 3 or 4 times
- 18% 5 or 6 times
- 7% 7 or 8 times
- 17% 9 or more times
Sources of Help with Coursework

- 6% I did not seek help
- 47% Friend(s) or other student(s)
- 5% Family member(s)
- 23% Faculty member(s)
- 3% Academic advisor(s)
- 15% Learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)
- 1% Other persons or offices
During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?

- 68% No
- 32% Yes

Female:
- 68% No
- 32% Yes

Male:
- 70% No
- 30% Yes

Total:
- 69% No
- 31% Yes
Why did you consider leaving?

- To Improve my career prospects: 29% (Female), 25% (Male), 29% (Total)
- Due to unsatisfactory academic progress or performance: 26% (Female), 24% (Male), 25% (Total)
- Financial reasons: 37% (Female), 33% (Male), 35% (Total)
- To obtain a better quality education: 28% (Female), 26% (Male), 29% (Total)
- Personal reasons (family, health, etc.): 36% (Female), 33% (Male), 33% (Total)
- Other: 29% (Female), 31% (Male), 30% (Total)
Using Module Results

• Informing first-year taskforce initiatives
• Campus-wide strategic planning
• Programmatic improvement and planning
• Creating outcomes-based assessments
• First-year curriculum
• Improving student support services
• Disaggregating for focus on key populations
• Restructuring campus environments
Something to think about...

• What could your school do with these data?
• What are your priorities regarding the first-year experience?
• What are your institution’s core learning outcomes for first-year students?
Comments or questions?

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