Welcome!

Let's try to make this as interactive as we can. Use the chat box to introduce yourself, ask questions, and respond to prompts.

What brings you to this session today?

Our Topic Today: Sense of Belonging

The psychological feeling of belonging or connectedness to a social, spatial, cultural, professional, or other type of group or a community (Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

Whether or not students feel respected, valued, accepted, cared for, included, and that they matter, in the classroom, at college, or in their chosen career path (Strayhorn, 2012).

Why Sense of Belonging?

• Sense of belonging influences student persistence
• Interventions can improve students’ sense of belonging

The Chronicle: Colleges are offering new classes on racial history and social justice—creating equity- and justice centers, and hiring ethnic-minority specialists in neglected topics to deepen students’ understanding. Also, in concert with co-curricular and extracurricular study groups & clubs, offering students in underrepresented minority groups a deeper sense of belonging.

NSSE’s Sense of Belonging Items

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Response options: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
a. I feel comfortable being myself at this institution.
b. I feel valued by this institution.
c. I feel like part of the community at this institution.
Most students feel they belong, but differences exist among subgroups

November 2020 - Annual Results
Building a Sense of Community for All
https://nsse.indiana.edu/research/annual-results/belonging-story/index.html

What do you expect to see in First-Year student belonging results in spring 2021?

Feeling a part of the community at this institution 74%

COVID makes [UNIVERSITY] a terribly not fun school. I am disassociated from everyone…students and faculty. It affects my mental health and negatively affects my school work.

Let’s CHAT

What populations or groups of students are you most interested in looking at, specifically for sense of belonging?

Do Students of Different Backgrounds Feel They Belong?

• For some types of students, such as those with nonbinary gender identities, differences are reflected in all three belonging measures. These students consistently express a lower sense of belonging than their cisgender peers.
• To see findings and comparisons for other subgroups of students see our Tableau dashboard.
Dashboard is accessible from our NSSE 2020 Annual Results story.

Approaches for Exploration

• Start with basic frequencies and crosstabs

• Run these same descriptives for subpopulations and compare the patterns in response

Looking Within: Focus on Small Groups!

• Look at variation within subpopulations of interest to your campus (and consider looking at groups you don’t know much about!)
  • See our tips for analyzing small populations and inclusive data sharing and analysis
  • Let go of the need for statistical significance: nonparametric or effect size calculations can be informative, but a qualitative mindset can take you far
  • Aggregate small groups based on their experience not a pre-conceived notion of identity (for example, Asian and Pacific Islander students are often grouped, but often differ greatly in experience)
  • If groups do need to be removed from analyses, say something about them descriptively, try to not silence voices of small groups!
**A Different Kind of Approach: Person-Centered**

- Start by dividing students into groups (quartiles, high-medium-low, etc.) based on Sense of Belonging
  - In my example, Low SB = 0-33, Moderate SB = 40-47, Highest SB = 53-60
  - Look at the proportions of students in these Belonging groups
    - $x^2$ tests can help but might not be necessary

**Comparing Approaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low SB</th>
<th>Med SB</th>
<th>High SB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person Centered</td>
<td>Variable Centered</td>
<td>Person Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International student</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not international</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you want to get statistical, try a $x^2$ test with Adjusted Standardized Residuals. These results tell us that international students are over-represented in the middle group of sense of belonging ($\chi^2 = 7.5, p < .005, ASR = 7.3$)

This helps explain why the variable-centered approach found positive results, but what about all of those international students in the lowest group of sense of belonging?

**Black or African American Students and Levels of Sense of Belonging**

- Black or African American first-year students sense of belonging scores divided into Low, Middle & High SB groups.
  - By examining what relates to groups, we can identify ways to improve experiences.

**Comparing Approaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Centered</th>
<th>Person-Centered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistical analyses that people are used to seeing</td>
<td>People may not be used to seeing these kinds of analyses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great for people who love significance stars</td>
<td>Can be done with or without statistical significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls allow for you to parse out variation from other sources</td>
<td>Allows for seeing variation within groups of people, identity is not monolithic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isn’t friendly to small populations</td>
<td>Accounting for multiple aspects of identity can be challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t allow for seeing variation within</td>
<td></td>
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Implications of Sense of Belonging Results

Knowing what relates to high sense of belonging for under-represented student groups, or populations of interest to the campus, suggests ways institutions can foster belonging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect Size Relationship with Sense of Belonging</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Order Learning</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective &amp; Integrative Learning</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching Practices</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Interactions</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Environment</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Examples of Using Belonging Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does Sense of Belonging Relate to Persistence?

- Belonging is particularly important for first-year retention.
- Students’ major also plays an important role in belonging.
- First-year students with a declared major felt greater belonging than those who were undecided.
- Senior sense of belonging is also related to major with students majoring in Health Professions, Education, and Business feeling the greatest belonging.

Figure 1: First-Year Students’ Sense of Belonging by Intended Return to the Institution.

What resources have you found useful in exploring student sense of belonging on your campus?

Learning from Institution Stories

- **Affirming the Importance of Belonging**
  - California State University, Dominguez Hills: Using the NSSE 2020, campus of belonging results as a variety of activities, including student stories, professional development, and assessment of First-Year Experience.
  - In their moves, sharing of insights, and in an analysis of retention.

- **Complementary Efforts to Study and Act on Belonging**
  - Oregon State University: Faculty training to increase student sense of belonging and retention.

- **Sense of Belonging as Validation of the Power of Community**
  - Taylor University: A faith-focused school where students are encouraged to engage in community activities, both locally and internationally.
Pairing SB with Data on Productive Mindsets

- NSSE sense of belonging results provide GSW a complementary measure to examine alongside belonging data from the institutions’ results on the University System of Georgia’s Mindset Survey.
- Results help identify topics for institutional action, with a focus on how aspects of student life such as contact among students from different backgrounds, being involved socially, and attending campus events, could be redesigned to focus more intentionally on their contribution to productive academic mindsets.

To Assess FYE Program & Retention Analysis

- SB results included as part of integrated assessment of First Year Experience
- Results shared with Associate Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents, General Education curriculum committee, advising council; and in analysis of retention
- FY belonging averages looked good, affirmation that CSUDH is inclusive
- Results informed Faculty Development Center emphasis on faculty’s role in helping students feel valued and part of the community

Validating a Core Component of Mission

- Taylor challenges students to live authentically, while also supporting others in their community. In essence, they promote sense of belonging through their campus culture, and their NSSE results validate this notion.
- Data show strong belonging scores overall, and specifically in comparison to peer institutions.

Opportunities for Sense of Belonging Results

- Bring Student and Academic Affairs together to discuss results and identify strategies to enhance engagement practices associated with high levels of belonging
- Explore sense of belonging among students by level of academic performance, work with learning support services & faculty teaching first year courses to devise early indicators of belonging

Thanks so much for joining us!

Find our slides on the NSSE website nsse.indiana.edu/research/publications-presentations/index.html
Blog: nsse.indiana.edu/research/blog/index.html @NSSEsurvey