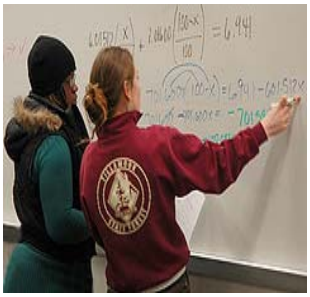
Using NSSE Data to Build Support for Academic Programs

39th Annual Institute for Chief Academic Officers & Chief Advancement Officers The Council of Independent Colleges

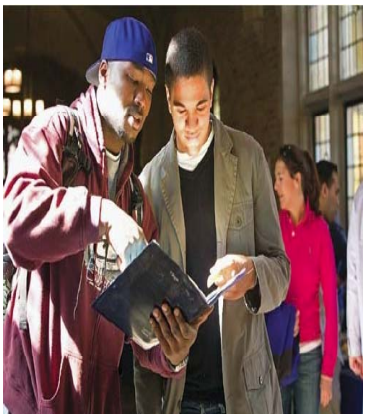


Jillian Kinzie, NSSE; Hal Hartley, CIC; Stuart Sigman, American Jewish University

November 7, 2011

Today's Student Learning Agenda

- ✓ **Improve student learning**
- ✓ **Create enriched, quality learning experiences**
- ✓ **Increase student success – graduation rates, learning outcomes, post-graduation goals…**



- ✓ **Ensure skills, knowledge for 21st century**

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Improving Learning…Amidst Many Challenges

Increasingly diverse student population

Is college worth it?

Greater accountability & transparency!!!

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Assertion:

All colleges must focus on enhancing the quality of educational experiences that develop and lead to student learning and success.

What We Know About Student Success:

Student engagement in intentionally designed educationally purposeful activities is necessary to achieve desirable learning outcomes.

What is Student Engagement?

Student engagement is the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities – practices shown to be related to desired educational outcomes

NSSE national survey of student engagement

OK, but what *is* Engagement?

- Challenging academic work
  - High expectations
  - Deep approaches to learning
- Quality involvement with faculty
- Enriching activities and high-impact practices
  - Active and collaborative learning
  - Powerful educational experiences
- Supportive peers, faculty, staff, campus

National Survey of Student Engagement 2011

The College Student Report

1 **In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? Mark your answers in the boxes. Examples: ☒ or ☑**

	Very often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Made a class presentation	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders,				

	Very often	Often	Some-times	Never
r. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
u. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or				

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE): Key Aims

- Enrich the discourse about college quality
  - Shift the focus to teaching & learning
  - Proven effective educational practices
- Provide diagnostic information to support the improvement of undergraduate education
  - Actionable information based on valid & reliable measures
  - Meaningful comparisons

NSSE national survey of student engagement

NSSE's Big Idea

- Ask students about their experience
- Focus on *behavior:* empirically confirmed effective practices

Engaged learning is a gateway to the desired outcomes of college.

Students who engage more frequently in educationally purposeful activities both in & outside the classroom get better grades, are more satisfied, and are more likely to persist and graduate.

Using NSSE to Build Case Statements and Support for Academic Programs

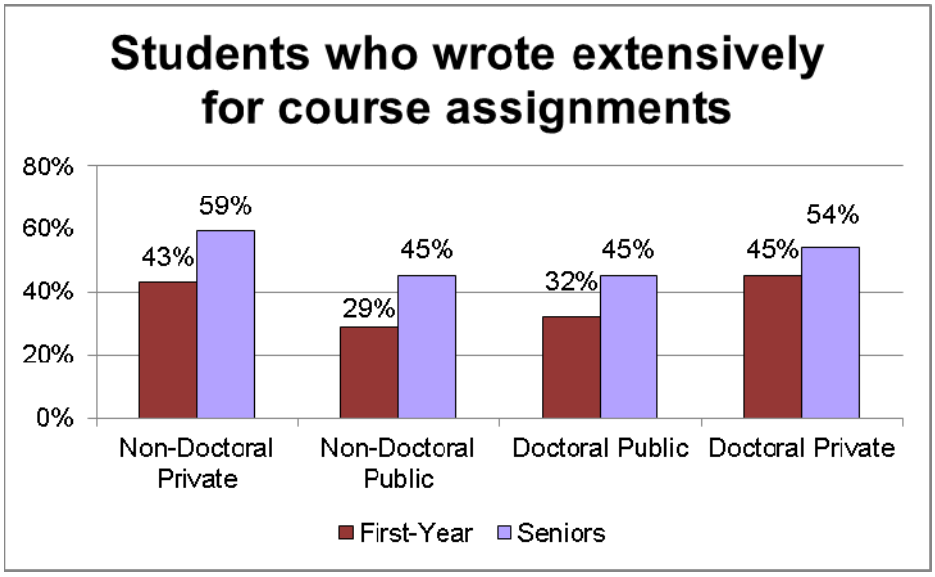
May 2011 • A Special Report on

INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

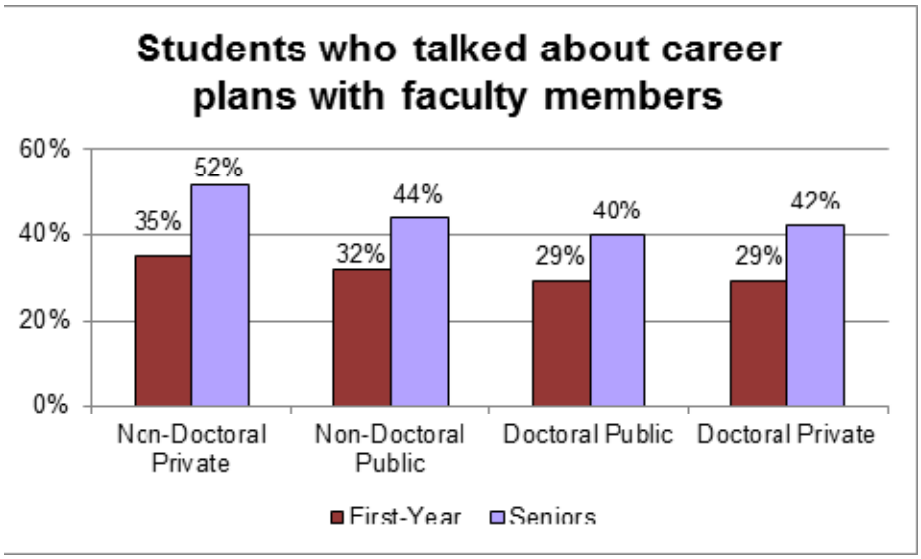
and Student Engagement

- NSSE Benchmarks
- Higher-Level ("Deep") Learning
- Individual Gains & Personal Development
- Comparisons:
  - Private vs. Public
  - Non-Doctoral vs. Doctoral

www.cic.edu/MakingtheCase



Note: Percentage of students who reported that they wrote five or more papers or reports between five and 19 pages in length during the academic year.



Note: Percentage of students who responded "very often" or "often" to the question, "How often have you talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor?"

Considerations for NSSE and Advancement

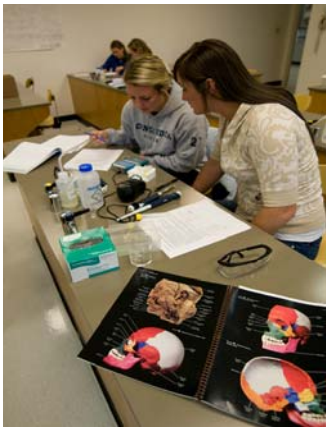
NSSE national survey of student engagement

Use NSSE Data to…

- identify areas of engagement that distinguish campus (perhaps in comparison to other CIC peers, or to public, regional institutions) & provide evidence of educational value.
- combine with other data to present a comprehensive portrait of student experience to interested stakeholders.
- make the case for greater investments in distinctive campus experiences.
- demonstrate need for resources to enrich practices in which students are under-engaged, or to support underrepresented students in high-impact practices.
- provide evidence that investment of resources made a difference.

Findings from NSSE and AAC&U: Some Educational Activities are Unusually Effective

Growing evidence that "high-impact practices" provide substantial educational benefits to students



[AAC&U, 2008 publication: *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access To Them, and Why They Matter*]

High Impact Practice Gap?

Percentage of "CICville College" first-year students who "plan to" participate vs. Seniors

HIPs at "CICville College"	FY students	Seniors
Internship, Practicum, Field Experience	78%	48%
Study Abroad	62%	25%
Undergraduate Research	44%	30%

What do "CICville College" results suggest?

Increasing Targeted Learning Experiences Quinnipiac University (CT)

QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

- **Desire to increase "high-impact practices" (HIPs) - service-learning, global experiences/study abroad**
- **Increased HIPs by enhancing the required QU Seminar Series --** 3 required seminars that integrate a student's connection to their local, national and global communities.

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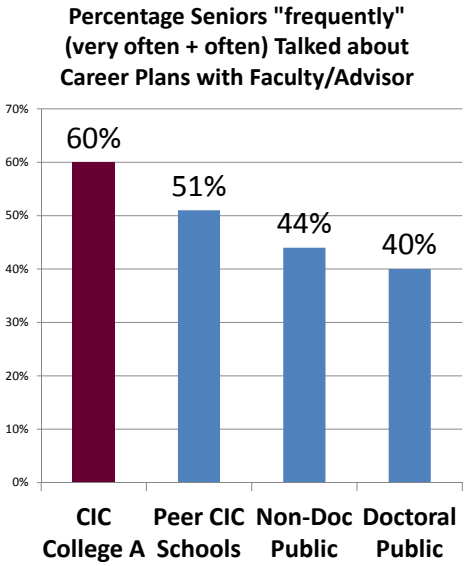
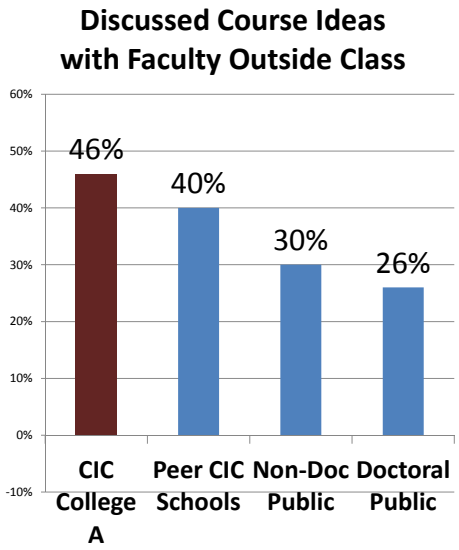
Making the Case and Campus NSSE Results

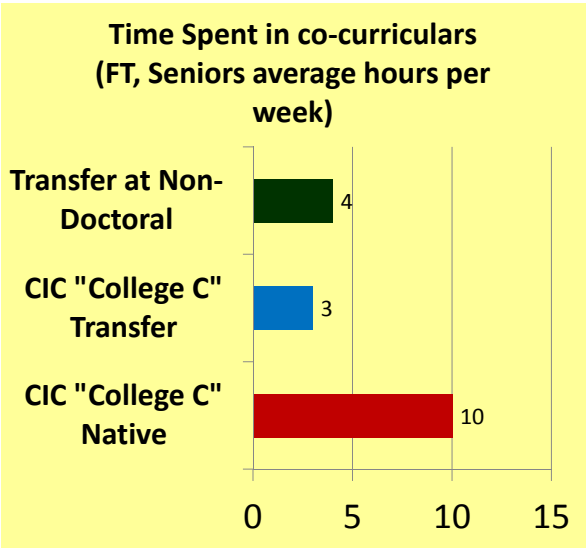
- **Quality of Student-Faculty Interaction higher at CIC colleges and universities.**
- **What is the case at your institution?**
- **Does your campus claim a greater distinctiveness on student-faculty interaction?**

Evidence of CIC "College A" Claim of Distinctive Student-Faculty Interaction?





Is this A Good Place for Transfer Students?



Transfer students also evaluated the *quality of their interactions with peers* significantly lower than native students

California Lutheran University

- **CLU's Assessment Committee and Office of Student Life staff noticed a gap in NSSE results for co-curricular engagement of transfer and commuter students.**
- **Finding prompted an increase in programs focused on the needs of commuter students and the creation of a peer mentor program for transfer students.**

Franklin Pierce University
Enhancing FY Seminar IC 101

- Revised seminar in 2008. Seminar's requirement for hours of community engagement activities, introduces university mission:"preparing students to become active, engaged citizens and leaders of conscience."
- NSSE results showed: first-year and seniors involvement in service & volunteer work **far exceeded students at comparison institutions**; used data to confirm learning goal of active involvement in the community and for strengthening students' responsibility toward and contribution to community.

NSSE and Your Advancement Initiatives

- How have NSSE results been shared with advancement staff on your campus?
- What potential do you see in sharing results?
- What advancement initiatives could be strengthen by NSSE (or other assessment) results?

Discussion and Comments

NSSE national survey of student engagement

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