

# How Residence Life Professionals Can Use Engagement Data

**Sarah Hurtado**

*Project Associate, NSSE Institute*

**Polly Graham**

*Project Associate, National Survey of Student Engagement*

**Robert Gonyea**

*Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research*

ACUHO-I Conference  
Providence, RI  
June 2017

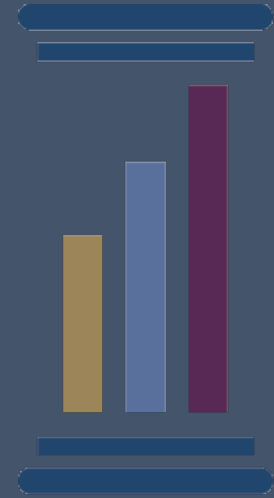
# How familiar are you with NSSE?



- I am unfamiliar with NSSE
- My campus has participated in NSSE, but I haven't seen or heard much about it
- My campus has participated, and results have been shared with me
- I am generally familiar with NSSE
- I am one of the NSSE experts on my campus

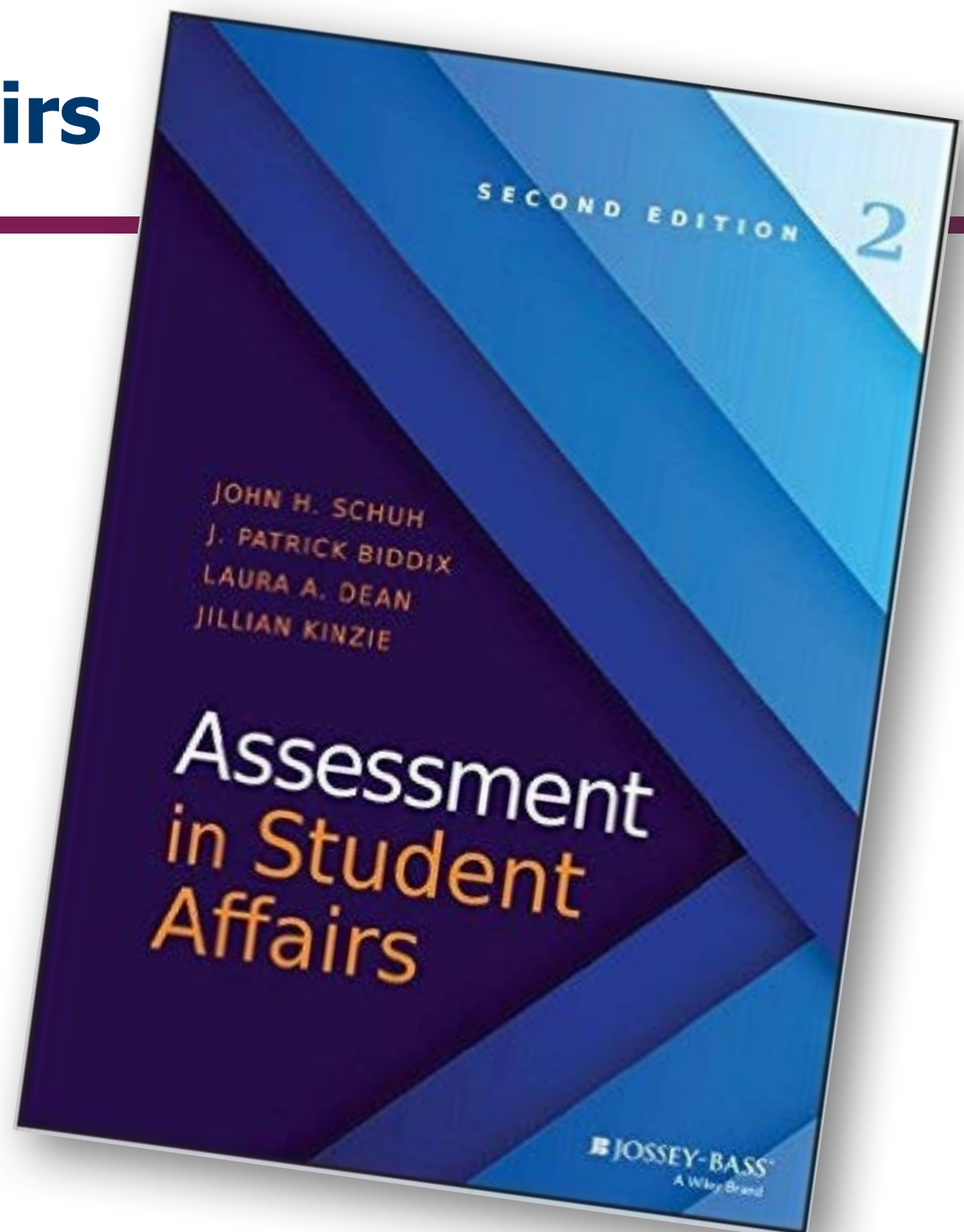
# Session Overview

1. Assessment in residence life
2. Overview of NSSE data and its potential use by residence life professionals
3. Examples of residence life NSSE data use
4. Strategies for collaborating with institutional researchers



# Assessment in Student Affairs

- Institutions are facing greater accountability for student success and improvement
- Residence life professionals are considering how they can utilize available data and assessment resources such as NSSE



# Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators

## Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)

The Assessment, Evaluation, and Research competency area focuses on the ability to design, conduct, critique, and use various AER methodologies and the results obtained from them, to utilize AER processes and their results to inform practice, and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses in higher education.

### Foundational Outcomes

- Differentiate among assessment, program review, evaluation, planning, and research as well as the methods appropriate to each.
- Select AER methods, methodologies, designs, and tools that fit with research and evaluation questions and with assessment and review purposes.
- Facilitate appropriate data collection for system/department-wide assessment and evaluation efforts using current technology and methods.
- Effectively articulate, interpret, and apply results of AER reports and studies, including professional literature.
- Assess the legitimacy, trustworthiness, and/or validity of studies of various methods and methodological designs (e.g. qualitative vs. quantitative, theoretical perspective, epistemological approach).
- Consider rudimentary strengths and limitations of various methodological AER approaches in the application of findings to practice in diverse institutional settings and with diverse student populations.
- Explain the necessity to follow institutional and divisional procedures and policies (e.g., IRB approval, informed consent) with regard to ethical assessment, evaluation, and other research activities.
- Ensure all communications of AER results are accurate, responsible, and effective.
- Identify the political and educational sensitivity of raw and partially processed data and AER results, handling them with appropriate confidentiality and deference to organizational hierarchies.

### Intermediate Outcomes

- Design program and learning outcomes that are appropriately clear, specific, and measurable, that are informed by theoretical frameworks and that align with organizational outcomes, goals, and values.
- Explain to students and colleagues the relationship of AER processes to learning outcomes and goals.
- Design ongoing and periodic data collection efforts such that they are sustainable, rigorous, as unobtrusive as possible, and technologically current.
- Effectively manage, align, and guide the utilization of AER reports and studies.
- Educate stakeholders in the institution about the relationship of departmental AER processes to learning outcomes and goals at the student, department, division, and institutional level.
- Discern and discuss the appropriate design(s) to use in AER efforts based on critical questions, necessary data, and intended audience(s).
- Use culturally relevant and culturally appropriate terminology and methods to conduct and report AER findings.
- Actively contribute to the development of a culture of evidence at the department level wherein assessment, program review, evaluation, and research are central to the department's work and ensure that training and skill development in these areas is valued, budgeted for, and fully embedded in day-to-day procedures.
- Apply the concepts and procedures of qualitative research, evaluation, and assessment including creating appropriate sampling designs and interview protocols with consultation, participating in analysis teams, contributing to audit trails, participating in peer debrief, and using other techniques to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative designs.
- Participate in the design and analysis

- ACPA & NASPA Professional Competency area: *Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)*

- AER competency—Student affairs educators should be able to:

- ✓ Select methods, tools and instruments that fit goals of assessment
- ✓ Facilitate data collection
- ✓ Effectively interpret and articulate results
- ✓ Connect findings to learning outcomes



# Student Engagement

# What is Student Engagement?

- Time and effort students devote to activities shown in research to promote desired educational outcomes (Kuh, 2001, 2009)
- Includes two key components:
  - ✓ Time and effort devoted to effective educational practices
  - ✓ Institutional resources and support to provide effective educational practices
- The second dimension represents an area where residence life professionals can be particularly influential.

*Important to consider institutional conditions and action, rather than placing all of the responsibility for student success on students.*

(Quaye & Harper, 2015).



# Types of Engagement Questions

## Behavioral:

- To what extent do you work with peers in and outside of class on projects?
- How often do you have discussions with people different from you... racial-ethnic, political views etc.?



## Perceptual:

- To what extent does your institution emphasize providing support to be involved socially? Support for your well-being?
- How much institution has contributed... acquiring job- or work-related knowledge... being an informed and active citizen





# Using Student Engagement Data

- **Become familiar with student engagement & how it can inform residence life practice**
  - ✓ E.g., HIPs
- **Understand what the data can tell you and what it cannot (interpretation)**
- **Share findings – make plans**
- **Cycle**



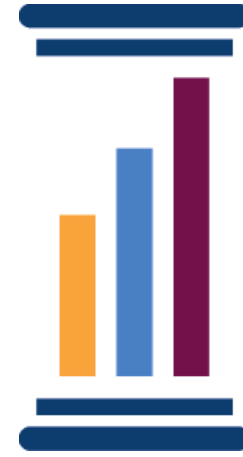
*At high-performing colleges and universities, student affairs staff collaborate with others to periodically collect and review data about the effectiveness of policies and practices...*

(Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2010).

# Types of Questions NSSE Can Help YOU Answer



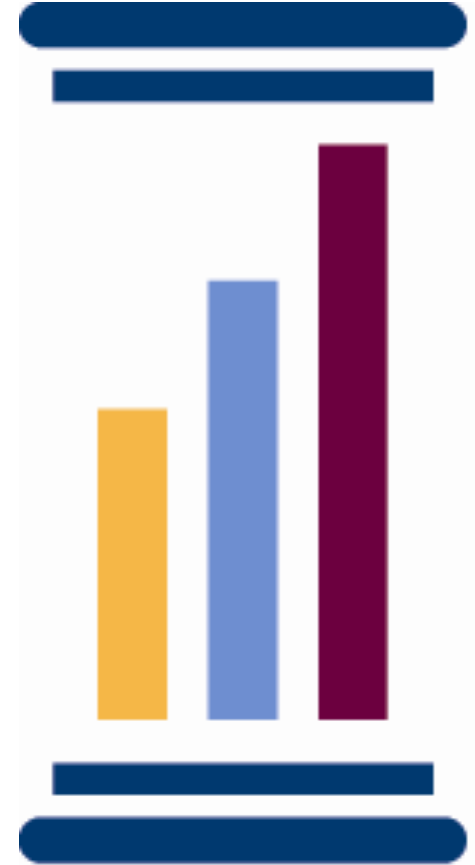
- How frequently do students converse with diverse others?
- Do students perceive adequate support for their academic success?
- How do students have good opportunities to be involved socially?
- Do perceptions of institutional support for students' overall well-being vary by gender identity?
- How do these differ between on- and off-campus populations?



# NSSE Administration

# About NSSE

- ✓ Administered annually to first-year & senior students
- ✓ Provides a snapshot of student engagement in programs and activities for learning and personal development
- ✓ Results estimate how students spend their time and what they gain in college
- ✓ NSSE items represent empirically confirmed “good practices”
- ✓ Updated in 2013



# Engagement Indicators

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Engagement Indicators</i>
<b>Academic Challenge</b>	<b>Higher-Order Learning</b> <b>Reflective &amp; Integrative Learning</b> <b>Learning Strategies</b> <b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>
<b>Learning with Peers</b>	<b>Collaborative Learning</b> <b>Discussions with Diverse Others</b>
<b>Experiences with Faculty</b>	<b>Student-Faculty Interaction</b> <b>Effective Teaching Practices</b>
<b>Campus Environment</b>	<b>Quality of Interactions</b> <b>Supportive Environment</b>

# High-Impact Practices



- **Learning Community**
- **Service-Learning**
- **Research with Faculty**
- **Internship/Field Experience**
- **Study Abroad**
- **Senior Culminating Experience**

# Determining Residence



**Q: Which of the following best describes where you are living while attending college?**

- Dormitory or other campus housing (not fraternity or sorority house)
- Fraternity or sorority house
- Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within walking distance to the institution
- Residence (house, apartment, etc.) farther than walking distance to the institution
- None of the above

# Other Content of Interest to Student Affairs

- Held a **formal leadership role** in a student organization or group?
- Hours spent in co-curriculars, working, relaxing...
- Emphasis attending campus events and events addressing social, political issues
- Gains in working with others, becoming an active citizen, etc.
- Demographics:
  - ✓ Gender identity
  - ✓ Racial-ethnic categories
  - ✓ Sexual orientation
  - ✓ Disability
  - ✓ Student-athlete
  - ✓ Veteran
- Additional student comments!



# Topical Modules

- 
- Academic Advising
  - Experiences with Writing
  - First-Year Experience/ Senior Transitions
  - Development of Transferable Skills
  - Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity
  - Civic Engagement
  - Learning with Technology
  - Experiences with Information Literacy
  - Global Learning



# NSSE Data and Reports

# Does Your Institution Have NSSE Data?

- SEARCH to see if and when your institution has participated:  
[nsse.indiana.edu/html/participants.cfm](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)

**Participating Institution Search**

All 2017 U.S. Registrants

All 2017 Canadian Registrants

3, 2016. NSSE 2017 waitlist registration is accepted through January 2017.

institutions that fit the selected criteria. med using both current- and prior-year 7 participants may identify institutions from

Unive

### WHO'S PARTICIPATING

Enter all or part of an institution's name:

[Advanced Search »](#)

(Hold Ctrl or Apple key to select more than one)

Alabama  
Alaska  
Arizona  
Arkansas  
California

**INSTITUTION NAME:**  
(Enter all or part of an institution's name)

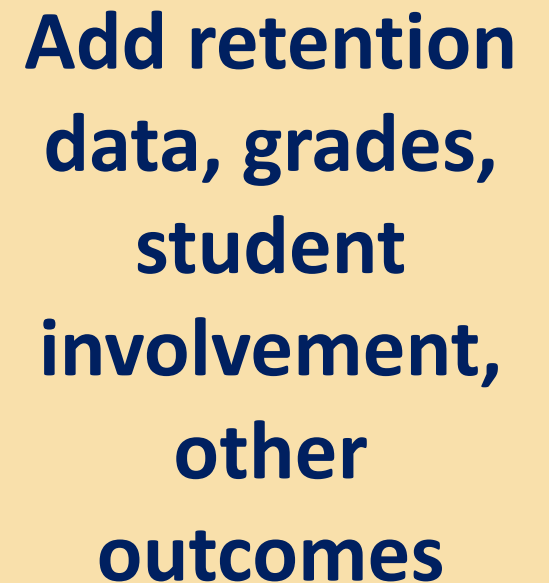
**BASIC CARNEGIE TYPE (US only):**  
(Hold Ctrl or Apple key to select more than one)

Doctoral Universities (Highest)  
Doctoral Universities (Higher)  
Doctoral Universities (Moderate)

GOVERNANCE:  ORDER BY:

# NSSE Institutional Report

- Package of reports that compare student responses with those of students at three customized comparison groups
- Reports make comparisons for:
  - ✓ Engagement Indicators, High-Impact Practices, all individual items
- Institutions are also provided
  - ✓ Student-identified data file for additional analysis
  - ✓ NSSE resources to support data use

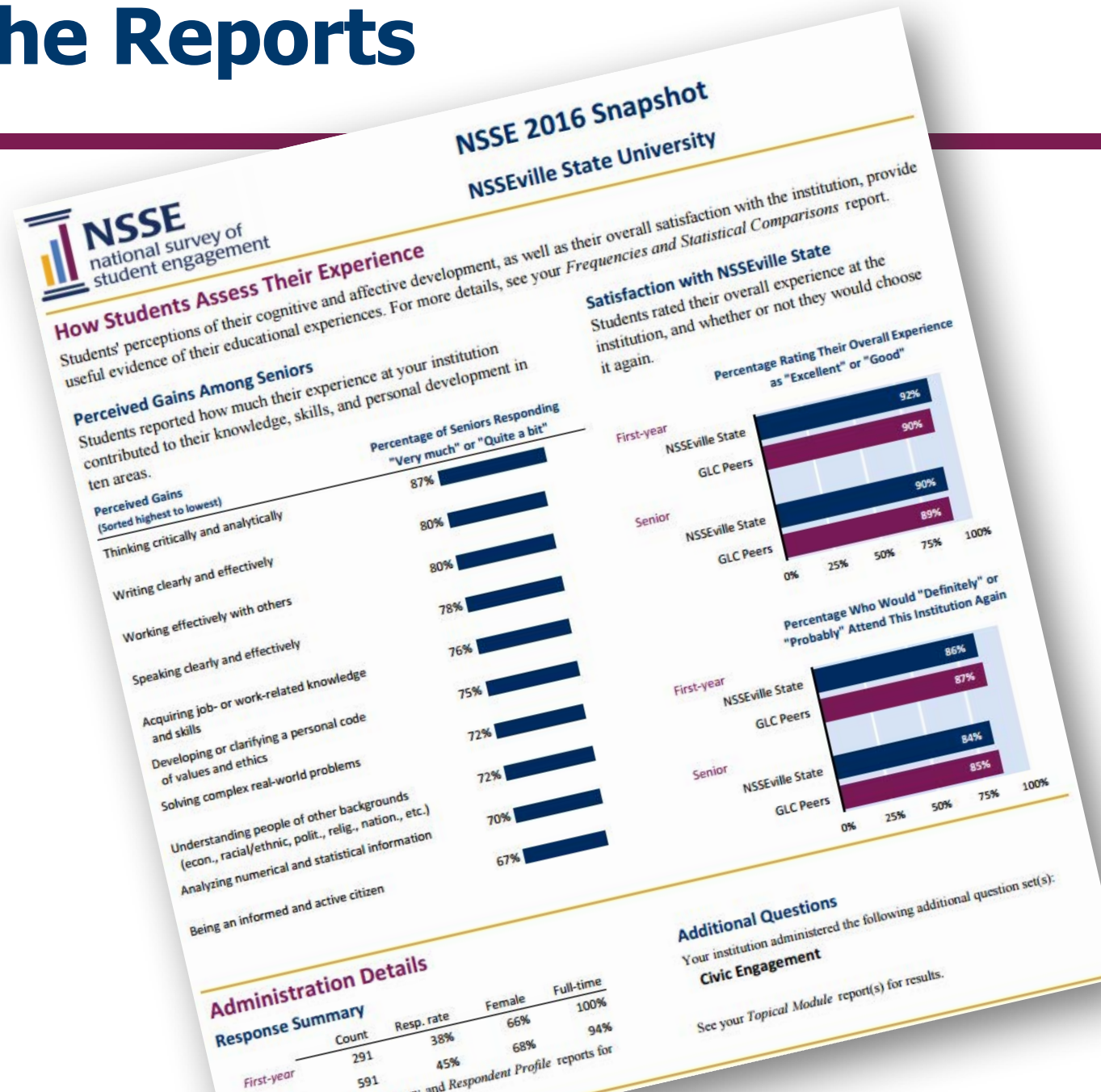


**Add retention data, grades, student involvement, other outcomes**

# Using the Reports

NSSE data and reports help institutions to:

- ✓ Gain insight in the holistic experience of students
- ✓ Identify strengths of current practices
- ✓ Identify weaknesses and areas of improvement of current practices
- ✓ Determine a plan of action for improving practices to further promote student learning and success



# Institutional Data File



- Institutions receive student-level data file
- Use this to disaggregate results based on student characteristics
- Examples:
  - Race/Ethnicity
  - Gender
  - Transfer status
  - Veteran status
  - First-generation students
  - Disability
  - Student-athlete
  - AND where they live!



# NSSE Resources

# NSSE Campuswide Mapping Document

- Purpose: Stimulate thinking about how NSSE measures - *Engagement Indicators, High-Impact Practices, individual survey items, and Topical modules* - relate 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.

Survey Items	Individual Survey Items Mapped to Relevant Units (NSSE Items 1-5)
<b>Question 1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</b>	
1a	Asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways
1b	Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
1c	Come to class without completing readings or assignments
1d	Attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)
1e	Asked another student to help you understand course material
1f	Explained course material to one or more students
1g	Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
1h	Worked with other students on course projects or assignments
1i	Gave a course presentation
<b>Question 2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</b>	
2a	Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
2b	Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
2c	Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
2d	Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
2e	Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
2f	Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
2g	Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge
<b>Question 3. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</b>	
3a	Talked about career plans with a faculty member
3b	Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
3c	Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
3d	Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member
<b>Question 4. During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?</b>	
4a	Memorizing course material
4b	Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
4c	Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
4d	Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source
4e	Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information



### Individual Survey Items Mapped to Relevant Units (NSSE Items 1–5)

Survey Items	Relevant Units
<b>Question 1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</b>	
1a Asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways	Center for teaching & learning
1b Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	Academic success center, SoTL, Tutoring, Writing center
1c Come to class without completing readings or assignments	Academic advising, Academic success center, Dean of faculty, SoTL, Tutoring
1d Attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)	Art museum, Fine & performing arts, Performing arts center, Student activities

### Question 2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

2a	Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	SoTL
2b	Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	Civic engagement, Faculty senate, Political/social science studies, Service-learning office, Social justice studies
2c	Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	Diversity office, Service-learning office
2d	Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	Diversity office, Residence life, Service-learning office
2e	Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	Diversity office, General education, Residence life, Service-learning office
2f	Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	General education, Service-learning office
2g	Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	General education, Service-learning office

2g	Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	General education, Service-learning office
<b>Question 3. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</b>		
3a	Talked about career plans with a faculty member	Academic advising, Career planning & services
3b	Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	Faculty senate, Student affairs
3c	Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	Dean of faculty, Faculty senate
3d	Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	Academic advising, Dean of faculty, Faculty senate

### Unit Groups Mapped to NSSE Items

1. Academic advising, Academic success center, Academic support services, Learning support, Tutoring
2. Academic affairs, Academic departments, Department chairs
3. Activities advisors, Student activities, Student affairs
4. Administrative offices, President's office, Provost's office
5. Admissions, Enrollment management, Financial aid, Registration/registrar's office
6. Alumni affairs
7. Area studies, International office/student services, Study abroad programs/office
8. Art museum, Fine & performing arts, Performing arts center
9. Athletics, Campus climate committee, Commuter services, Greek life, Health services/center, Parking services, Recreational & fitness center, Residence life
10. Career planning & services
11. Center for teaching & learning, Instructional technology, Scholarship of teaching & learning (SoTL)
12. Civic engagement, Community service, Service-learning office, Social justice studies, Town & gown committee
13. Counseling/counseling services
14. Cultural centers (African American, women's, etc.), Disability services, Diversity office, Equity committee, GBLT office, Multicultural committee, Veterans services
15. Curriculum committee
16. Dean of faculty, Faculty development, Faculty senate, Promotion & tenure committee
17. First-year experience
18. General education, Literacy committee
19. Graduate studies
20. Integrative learning, Interdisciplinary studies
21. Library
22. Political/social science studies
23. Quantitative literacy/reasoning
24. Retention committee/task force
25. Undergraduate research
26. Writing center/programs

### Unit Group 9 Mapped to NSSE Items

Athletics, Campus climate committee, Commuter services, Greek life, Health services/center, Parking services, Recreational & fitness center, **Residence life**

EIs Mapped to Unit Group 9	
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions (QI) Supportive Environment (SE)

### NSSE Items Mapped to Unit Group 9

Question 2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 2d | Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue                                 |
| 2e | Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective |

Question 11. Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 11c | Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together |
|-----|---|

Question 13. Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution.

- |     |          |
|-----|----------|
| 13a | Students |
|-----|----------|

Question 14. How much does your institution emphasize the following?

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 14a | Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work                        |
| 14e | Providing opportunities to be involved socially   |
| 14f | Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.) |

Question 15. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 15a | Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities) |
| 15h | Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.)  |

Question 17. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 17h | Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.) |
|-----|--|

Question 33. Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?

Question 34. Which of the following best describes where you are living while attending college?

Question 35. Are you a student-athlete on a team sponsored by your institution's athletics department?

### Topical Modules Mapped to Unit Group 9


Development of Transferable Skills

Experiences with Diverse Perspectives

Experiences with Information Literacy

# NSSE Report Builder

- Public and Institution versions available
- Demos available at:  
[nsse.indiana.edu/html/report\\_builder.cfm](https://nsse.indiana.edu/html/report_builder.cfm)
- Display 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



The screenshot shows the NSSE Report Builder Public interface. At the top left is the NSSE logo, which consists of three vertical bars of increasing height (orange, blue, red) followed by the text "NSSE national survey of student engagement". Below the logo is a heading "Welcome to the NSSE Report Builder—Public". The main content area contains a welcome message: "You choose the group. We'll show you the results." followed by a paragraph explaining the tool: "The NSSE Report Builder is an interactive tool that instantly generates reports of your choosing. The tool draws from a secure database of responses from the updated NSSE (2015 & 2016), and can be queried using any combination of student and institutional characteristics. You can choose to generate tables of Engagement Indicator statistics or individual item frequencies." Below this is another paragraph: "The following pages will guide you through five easy steps to filter the data and produce a report according to your selections:" followed by a numbered list of five steps: "1. Select Report Variables", "2. Select a Grouping Variable", "3. Select Institutions", "4. Select Students", and "5. Run the Report". At the bottom right, there is a button with the text "Step 1: Select Report Variables >>".

**NSSE** national survey of student engagement

---

## Welcome to the NSSE Report Builder—Public

You choose the group. We'll show you the results.

The NSSE Report Builder is an interactive tool that instantly generates reports of your choosing. The tool draws from a secure database of responses from the updated NSSE (2015 & 2016), and can be queried using any combination of student and institutional characteristics. You can choose to generate tables of Engagement Indicator statistics or individual item frequencies.

The following pages will guide you through five easy steps to filter the data and produce a report according to your selections:

1. Select Report Variables
2. Select a Grouping Variable
3. Select Institutions
4. Select Students
5. Run the Report

**Step 1: Select Report Variables >>**

# Investigating NSSE Results Further



- Explore student comments
- Use qualitative methods to make meaning of results
  - ✓ Focus groups
  - ✓ Adapted cognitive interviewing
- Address lingering questions from results
  - ✓ What do students have in mind when they respond to an item?
  - ✓ How do they define terms used in survey items?



# **Suggestions for NSSE Collaborations**

# Triangulation to Deepen Analysis & Action

## Multiple data points tell a stronger story



+



+



Card swipe  
data from  
events

+

Student  
Activities  
Survey

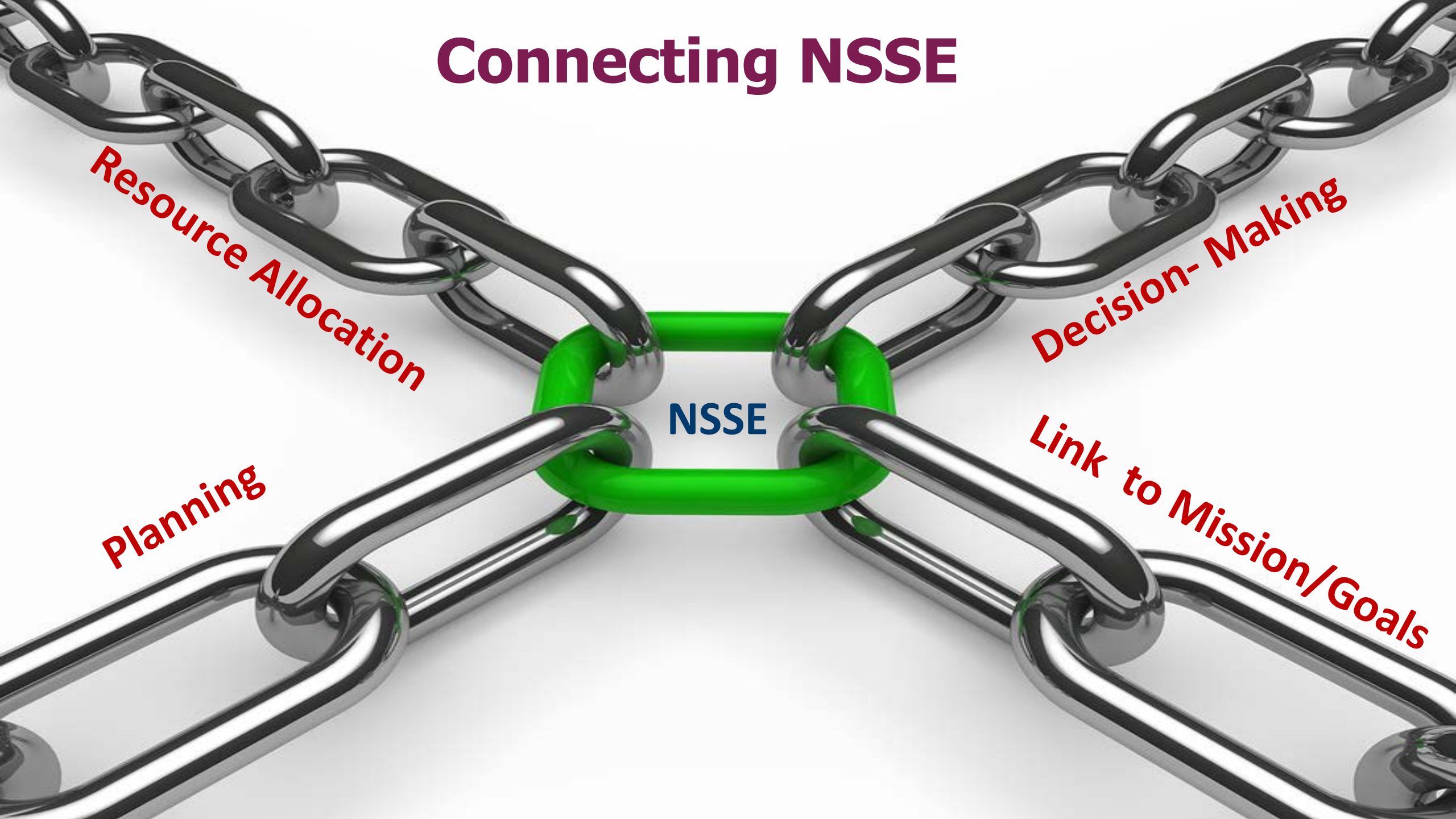
+

NSSE results  
on co-  
curricular  
hours

=

Robust information that can be used to outreach for collaborations with other departments or provide information for specific enhances to programming structures

# Connecting NSSE



*Resource Allocation*

*Decision-Making*

**NSSE**

*Planning*

*Link to Mission/Goals*

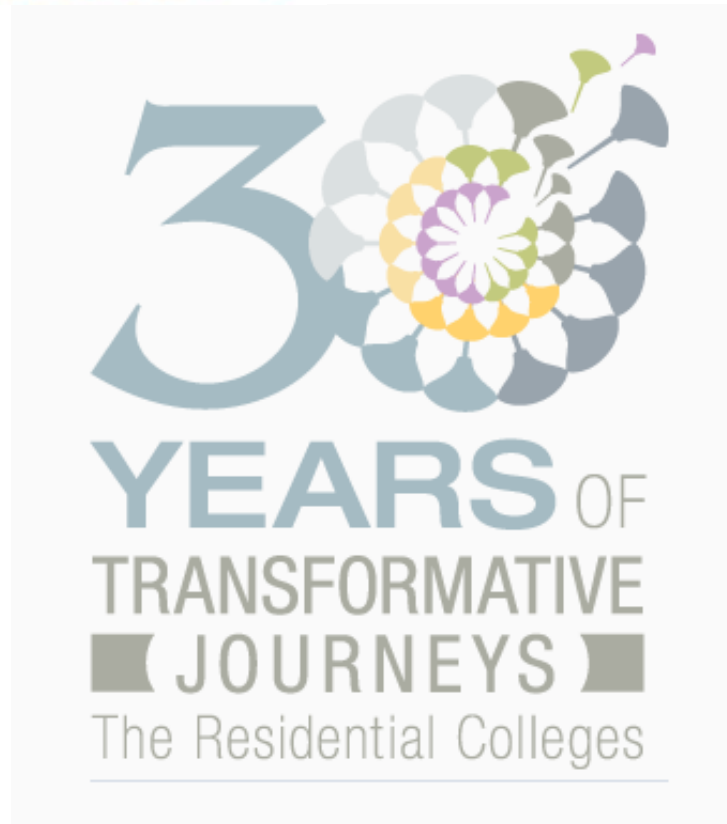




# **Institutional Examples**

# Institutional Examples

**Bucknell**  
UNIVERSITY



## Bucknell University – Gauge program effectiveness

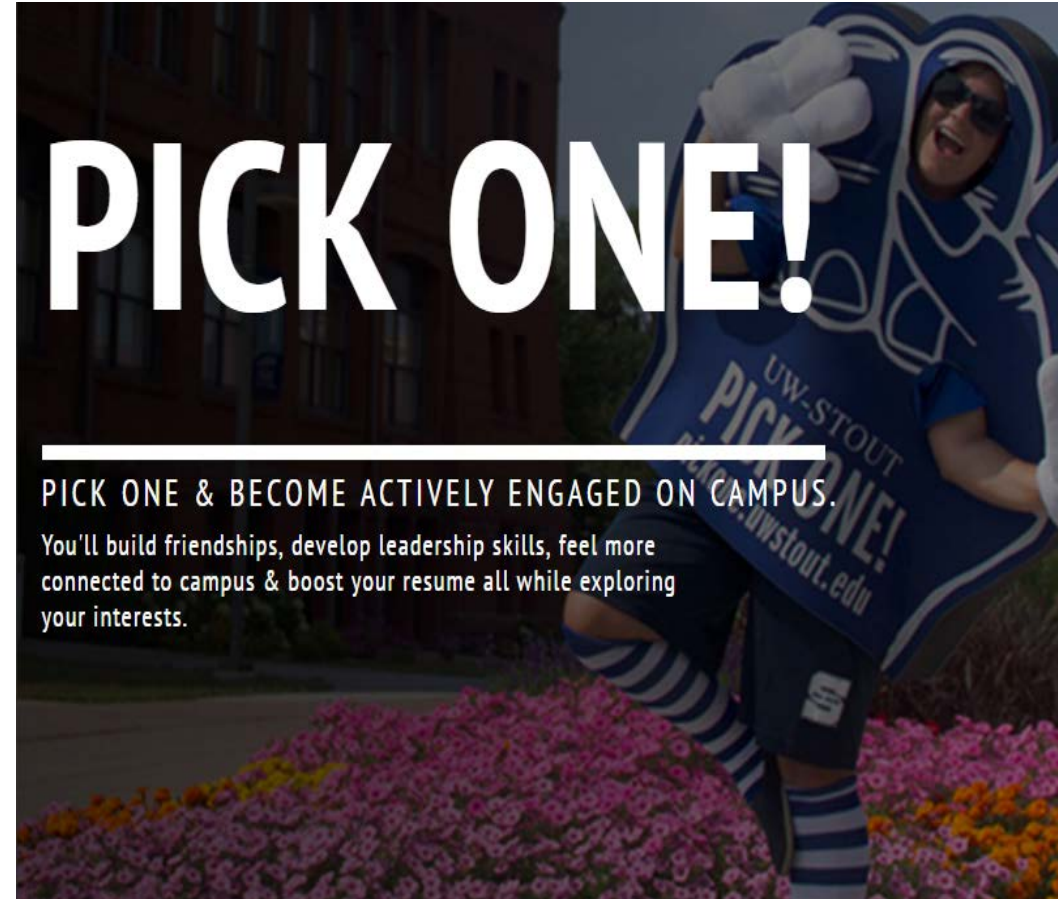
- Used NSSE to assess effectiveness and impact of participating in a Residential College
- Students who participated in Residential Colleges were more engaged on Reflective and Integrative Learning & Discussions with Diverse Others Els, and participate in more HIPs
- Evidence of value of RC and to increase participation

# Institutional Examples



## Explore and promote engagement

- NSSE data helped demonstrate that retention rates were higher for students who were engaged in various activities on campus: student organizations, volunteerism, student jobs, etc.
- Developed “Pick One!”
- Initiative aimed at getting all students to “find their one” and get involved in a way that is best suited for them



# Institutional Examples

California Lutheran  
UNIVERSITY

## Study student populations

Findings disaggregated by transfer students illustrated a gap in co-curricular engagement, which led to increased programming including a peer mentor program for transfer students.



# Institutional Examples



## Promote engagement

- Found gap between number of students who “plan to do” HIPs and number of students who actually do them.
- Worked with Student Life to increase promotion of HIP opportunities
- Created materials unique to each class year to ensure all students are informed of opportunities to participate in HIPs

Remember you need to apply for certain opportunities – like mentorship, summer jobs, study abroad programs and donships – as early as January.  
**Set a reminder now!**

Another great way to find research opportunities is to **talk to** your professors

# Take-Aways

---

- What is one new thing you learned about NSSE today?
- What is one way you learned NSSE can support your work in Residence Life/Housing?
- What is something you will go back and **do** based on what you learned?

# Final thoughts and questions?

Thank you for joining us!

Bob Gonyea

[rgonyea@indiana.edu](mailto:rgonyea@indiana.edu)

Sarah Hurtado

[ssfernan@indiana.edu](mailto:ssfernan@indiana.edu)

Polly Graham

[pagraham@indiana.edu](mailto:pagraham@indiana.edu)

Web: [nsse.indiana.edu](http://nsse.indiana.edu)



@NSSEsurvey



@NSSEsurvey

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

