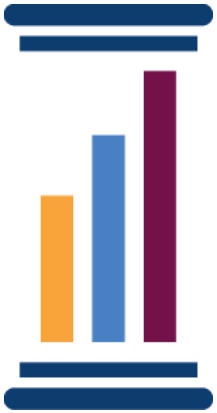
Using NSSE as a Catalyst for Improvement: Lessons from the Field



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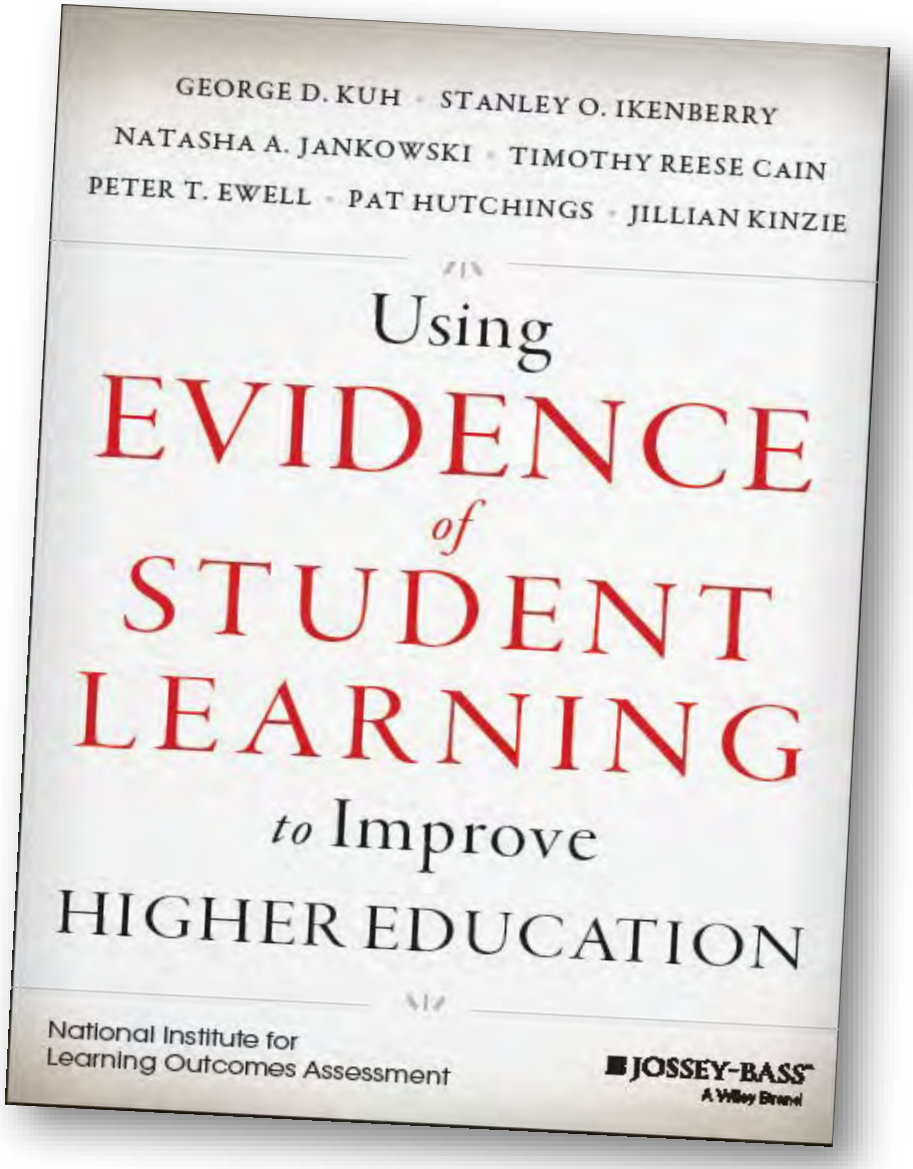
MAY 31 - JUNE 3 • NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Jillian Kinzie, NSSE, Indiana University

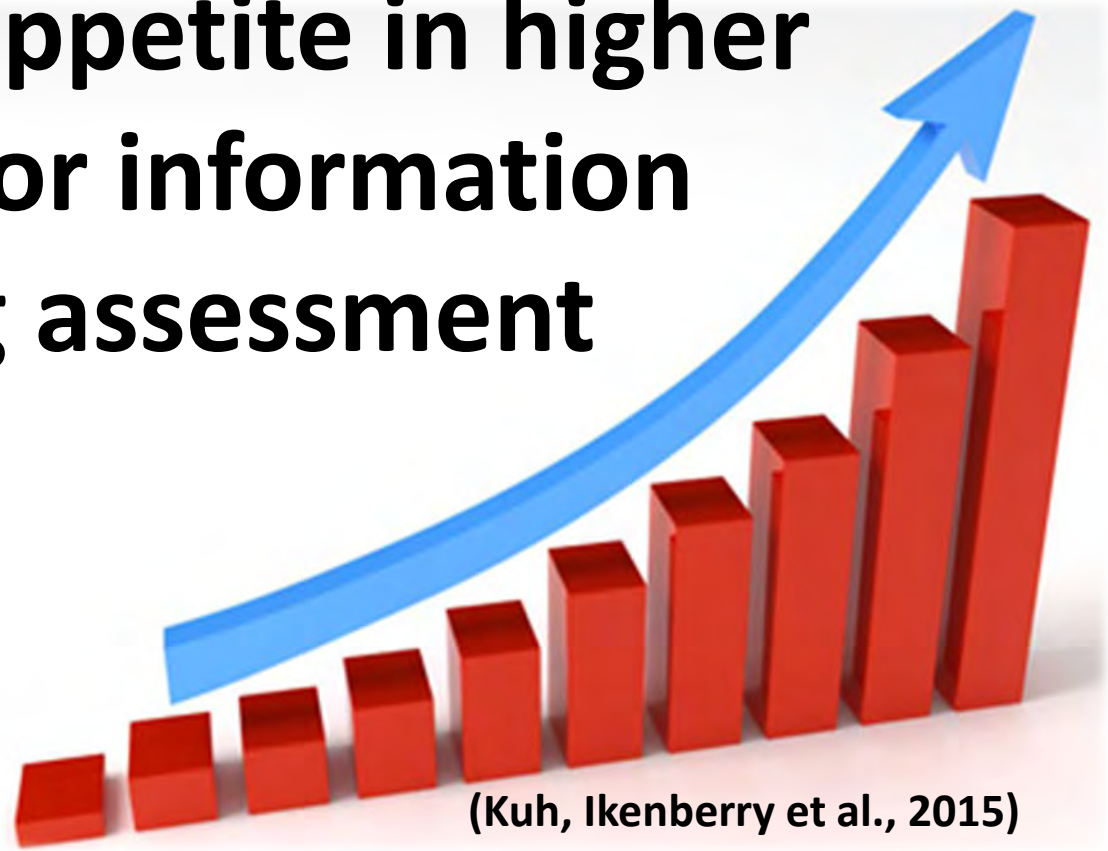
Sarah Owens, University of North Dakota

Fang Du, The New School, New York City

Making Assessment Matter



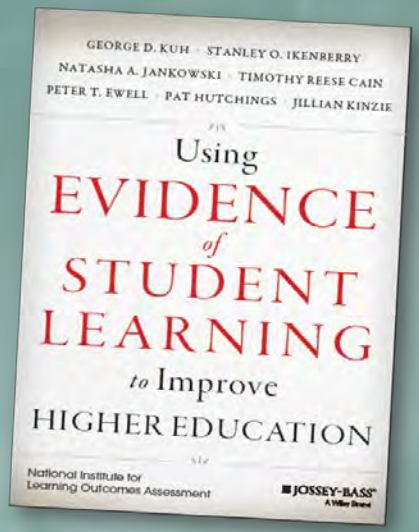
1. More assessment activity.
2. Greater focus on student learning.
3. Persistent appetite in higher education for information about using assessment to improve.



(Kuh, Ikenberry et al., 2015)

Despite 30 years of effort, assessment has had an embarrassingly modest impact on student and institutional performance.

(Kuh, Ikenberry et al., 2015)



Making Assessment Matter

To be consequential, assessment information needs to be…

- ✓ ***actionable,***
- ✓ ***focused on needs of end users,***
- ✓ ***embedded in teaching & learning,***
- ✓ ***available in understandable forms,***
- ✓ ***customized and,***
- ✓ ***supported by institutional leaders***

(Kuh, Ikenberry et al., 2015)

Studying Actionable Assessment

The Case of Student Engagement

NSSE Users in the Audience?

To what extent has your institution…

a. Taken action on NSSE results?

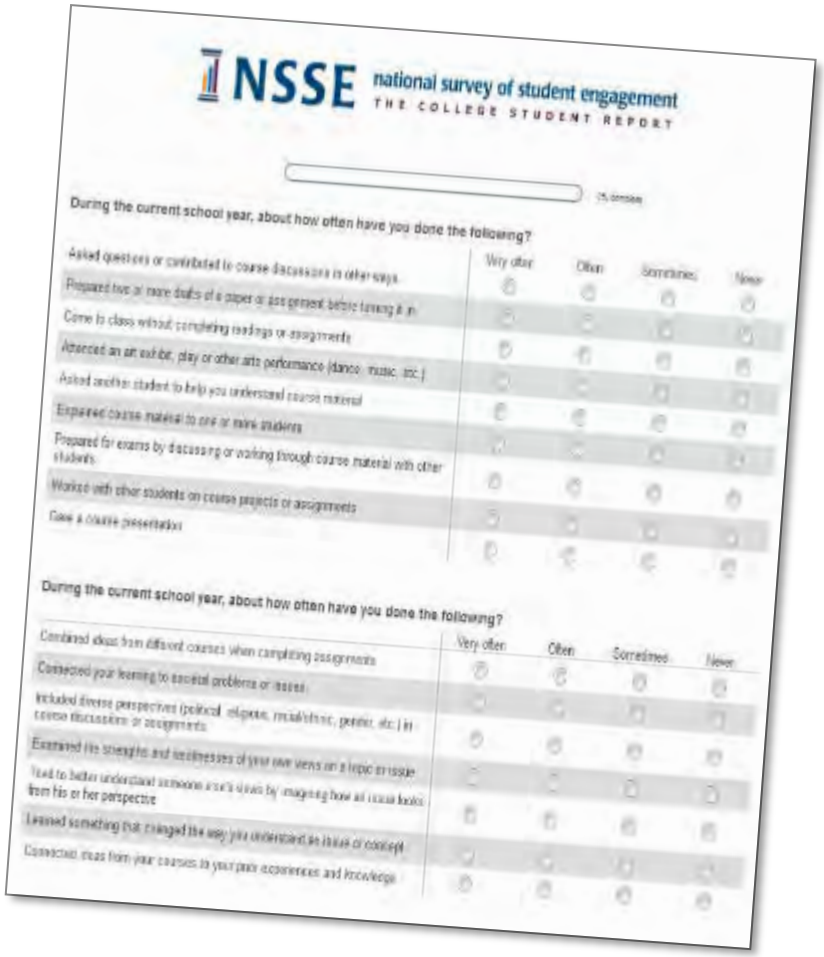
Very much | Quite a bit | Some | Very little

b. Used NSSE as a catalyst for improvement?

Very much | Quite a bit | Some | Very little

NSSE & Actionable Assessment

- NSSE launched in 2000
- Diagnostic information to support the improvement of undergraduate education
- Ask students about their experiences and behaviors


NSSE national survey of student engagement
THE COLLEGE STUDENT REPORT

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

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways				
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in				
Come to class without completing readings or assignments				
Attended an art exhibit, play or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)				
Asked another student to help you understand course material				
Explained course material to one or more students				
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students				
Worked with other students on course projects or assignments				
Gave a course presentation				

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

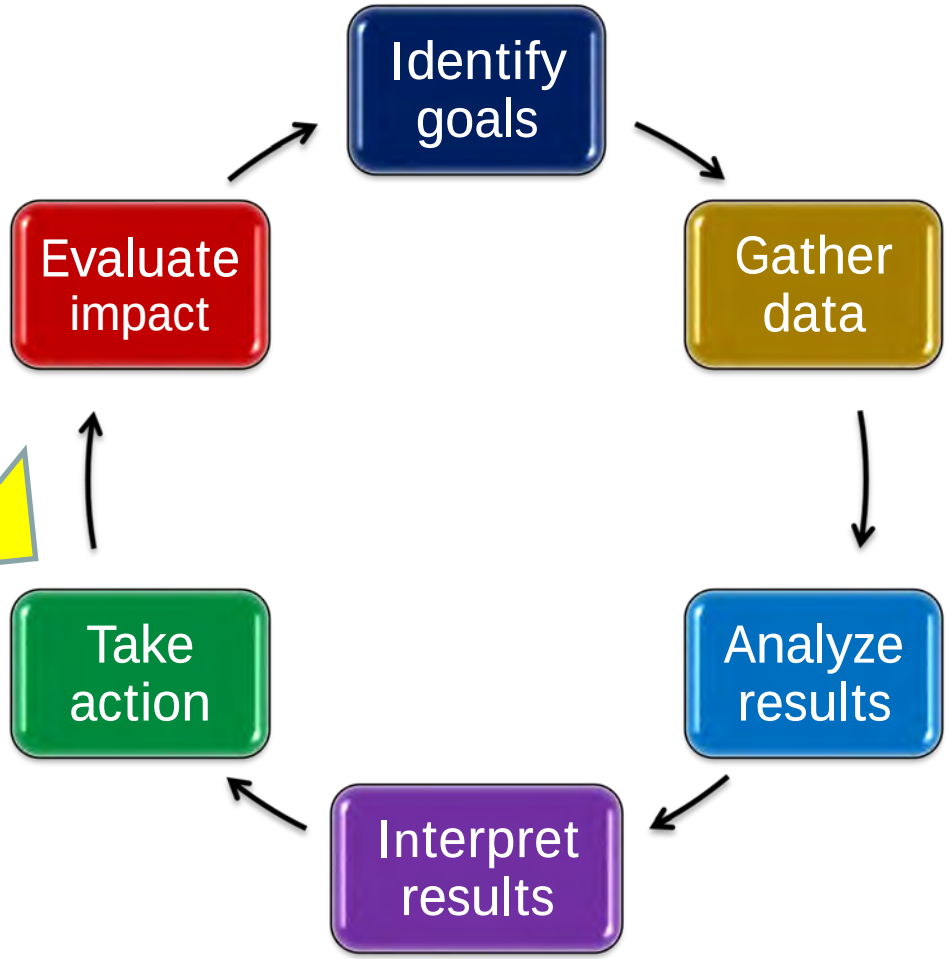
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments				
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues				
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments				
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue				
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective				
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept				
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge				

NSSE Goals

To be practically useful for institutional assessment activities and to inform institutional improvement efforts.

Moving from Data to Action

- NSSE is an agenda for evidence-based improvement
- Collecting data is the *easy* part!



Reflection Questions…

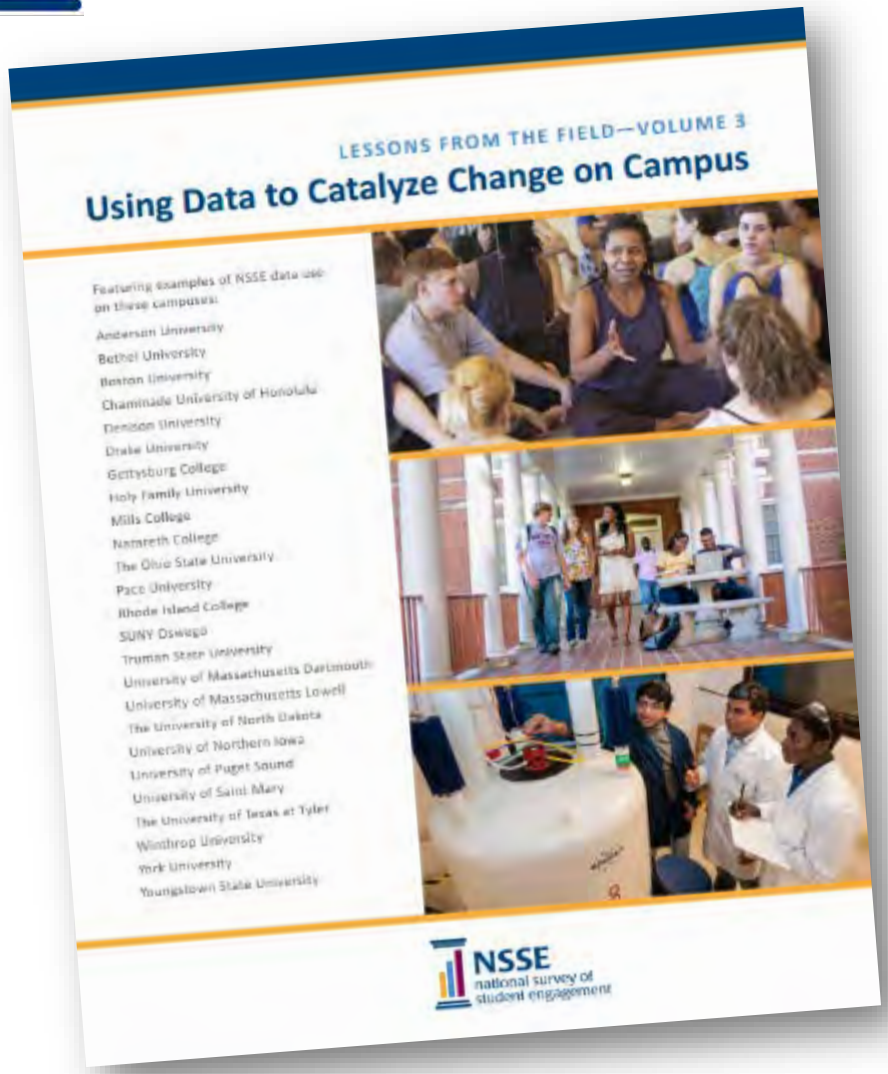
- What proportion of your IR and assessment time is spent on **data use**?
  a) None
  b) Up to a quarter
  c) About half
  d) More than half

Applying, translating, putting results to work

- Is there a person/committee responsible for acting on your NSSE results?
- **What is your role in promoting data use for improvement? Do you know what works?**

Some Good Examples of Using Data and Taking Action for Improvement

Examples of Data Use & Taking Action



Featuring examples of NSSE data use on these campuses:

- Anderson University
- Bethel University
- Boston University
- Chaminade University of Honolulu
- Denison University
- Drake University
- Gettysburg College
- Holy Family University
- Mills College
- Nazareth College
- The Ohio State University
- Pace University
- Rhode Island College
- SUNY Oswego
- Truman State University
- University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- The University of North Dakota
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Puget Sound
- University of Saint Mary
- The University of Texas at Tyler
- Winthrop University
- York University
- Youngstown State University

Targeting Improved Educational Practice

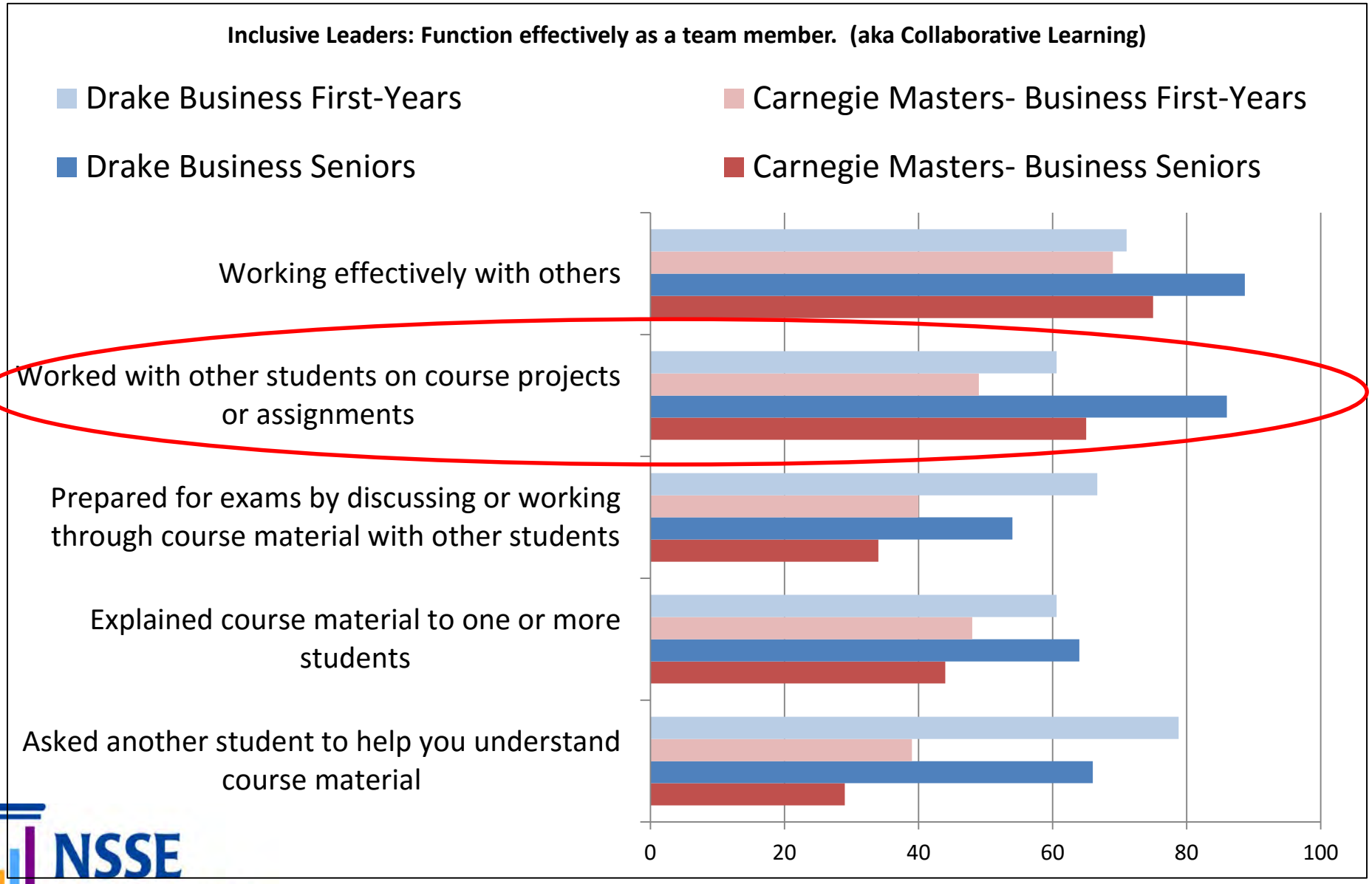
U Mass Lowell - created Report Card to track and evaluate 25 strategic indicators

National Survey of Student Engagement Results: High-Impact Practices*

	2013	2018 Goal
UMass Lowell Freshmen	65%	70%
New England Publics Freshmen	56%	
Carnegie Class Peers	57%	
UMass Lowell Seniors	83%	85%
New England Publics Seniors	86%	
Carnegie Class Peers	85%	

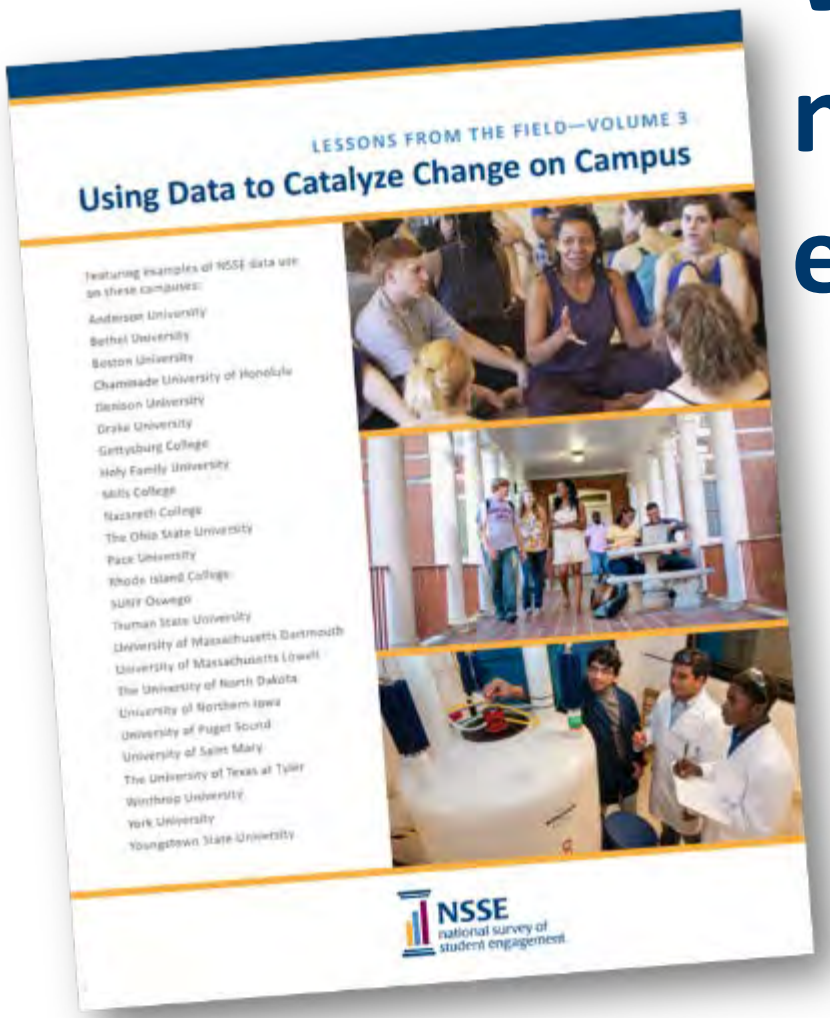
** For Freshmen, these High-Impact Practices include Learning Community, Service-Learning, Research with faculty; For Seniors, these include Internship, Study abroad & Culminating senior experience in addition to those for Freshmen*

Educational Effectiveness: Business Program



NSSE national survey of student engagement

Case Studies



What do you notice in the example?

- What was done well?
- What might this suggest for practice?

NSSE
national survey of student engagement

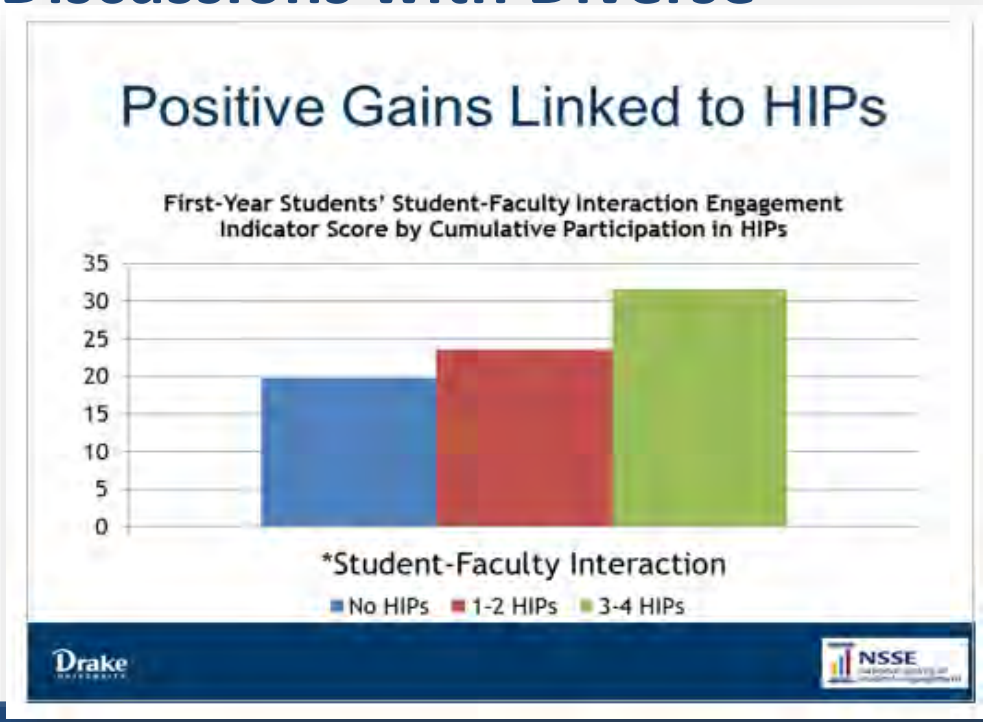
Institutional Example

Gettysburg COLLEGE

- **NSSE results informed strategic action on Student-Faculty Interaction & undergraduate research, and internships.**
  - Invested in summer research, senior projects, conference participation, showcasing student work
  - Launched Annual Colloquium on Undergraduate Research, Creative Activity & Community Engagement
  - Low results on internships was "call to action" to expand career-related opportunities

Institutional Example

- Extensive data sharing… meetings with deans, associate deans, student life…
- Creating custom reports, posting data
- Addressing low scores on Discussions with Diverse Others in curriculum
- Analyzed relationship between student faculty interaction & HIPS, to focus attention on and increase SFI outcome



NSSE national survey of student engagement

What challenges are you experiencing in using NSSE data for improvement?

Lessons from:

University of North Dakota

University of Mount Union

NSSE national survey of student engagement

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Sarah Owens

About Me

- New to IR
  - Online & Distance Education
  - 3rd AIR Forum
- New to survey data/research
  - While UND has been a long-time NSSE participant, NSSE 2015 was my first project for UND Office of Institutional Research

UND UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

About UND

- Research Institution
- Nearly 15,000 students (more than 11,000 undergrads)
- 225+ fields of study
- 275+ student clubs and organizations
- NCAA Division I athletic teams

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UND Office of Institutional Research

Transparency

Survey Name (Academic Year	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Advising Survey *	NA	NA	YES	NA	YES
Alumni Outcomes Survey (Act) ✓	NA	NA	NA	YES?	NA
Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)	NA	NA	YES	NA	YES
Campus Quality Survey ✓	NA	YES?	NA	NA	YES?
CIRP College Senior Survey (CSS)	NA	NA	YES	NA	NA
Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employer Satisfaction Survey ✓	NA	YES?	NA	YES?	NA
Employment (Placement) Survey *	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outcomes (Employment) Survey *	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Faculty Survey (HERI)	NA	NA	NA	YES	NA
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) ✓	NA	NA	YES	NA	NA
Freshman Survey (CIRP)	NA	YES	NA	NA	NA
Freshman Survey (SIQ)	NA	NA	NA	YES	NA
Graduating Student Survey *	NA	YES	NA	NA	YES
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) ✓	**YES**	NA	YES	NA	YES

2015 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):

Carmen Williams
Office of Institutional Research
September 23, 2015

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is the best known national project for measuring student engagement. The survey, administered by the Indiana Center for Postsecondary Research, measures the extent to which students engage in practices understood to be effectively linked with learning outcomes, personal development, student satisfaction, and graduation. Students actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities have been found to gain more from the college experience than those who are not involved. In the spring of 2015, 2,175 first-year (FY) students and 3,319 senior (SR) students were invited to participate in NSSE at UND. 362 FY students and 549 SR students responded to the survey, for a response rate of 19%. This was the eighth time UND has participated in NSSE.

NSSE Major Field Reports

These NSSE reports provide an overview of students' response by groups of related majors. Keep in mind that majors are student-reported and only the first reported major is presented. The first Major Field Report compares students' responses across groups of related majors.

- ***Within-Institution Comparisons***
- ***Arts & Social Sci***

2015 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

NSSE Report

Administrative Summary

Pocket Guide

Snapshot

Survey Instrument

Engagement Indicators

Multi-Year Report

High Impact Practices

Highlights of Additional Modules

Freqs & Stats Comparisons

NSSE: Weekly Planner

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

Importance of Buy-in

"At UND, we're all about our students. Help us make the UND experience the best it can be by taking the NSSE!"

Steven Light
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a survey specially designed for students to provide information about your undergraduate experience.

Complete it today to be eligible for one of ten $50 cash awards!

UND UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a survey designed for **freshmen** and **seniors** to provide information about your undergraduate experience.

Complete it today to be eligible for one of ten $50 cash awards!

"I want to make UND a better place, so I am doing my part by sharing my experiences. Please help by sharing your experiences too."

-Matt Bakke

Former Student Body President

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

University Assessment Committee

Discuss:

- Findings
- What student learning goals are assessed
- How to further utilize results
- What might various constituencies want to know about the survey

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Make it Relevant

Extract Data

- Use NSSE Report Builder
- Then dig deeper for various campus constituencies

Connect NSSE Results with:

- Student Data
- High Impact Practices
- Other Survey Data (FSSE, BCSSE, etc.)

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Give Them What They Want

What data is valuable to ***you***?

What questions would ***you*** like answered?

Ask for their interpretation and suggestions

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Draw Them In

"I felt as though I learned enough factual information about the topics covered in class, but my instructors never challenged me to improve or grow beyond my limits."

"If a university wishes students to grow in their understanding of diversity it would be best NOT to require such courses, but instead provide many voluntary opportunities (with fun incentives) to learn about other cultures."

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Go Beyond the Generic Announcement

Ask inviting **questions**

How many hours per week do freshmen spend preparing for class?

NSSE 2015 How many hours do **freshmen** spend in a week doing the following?

	0 hours	1-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-15 hours	16-20 hours	21-25 hours	26-30 hours	30 + hours
Preparing for class	1%	16%	**26%**	24%	17%	9%	4%	3%

Find unique ways to present the data

(NSSE website is an excellent resource)

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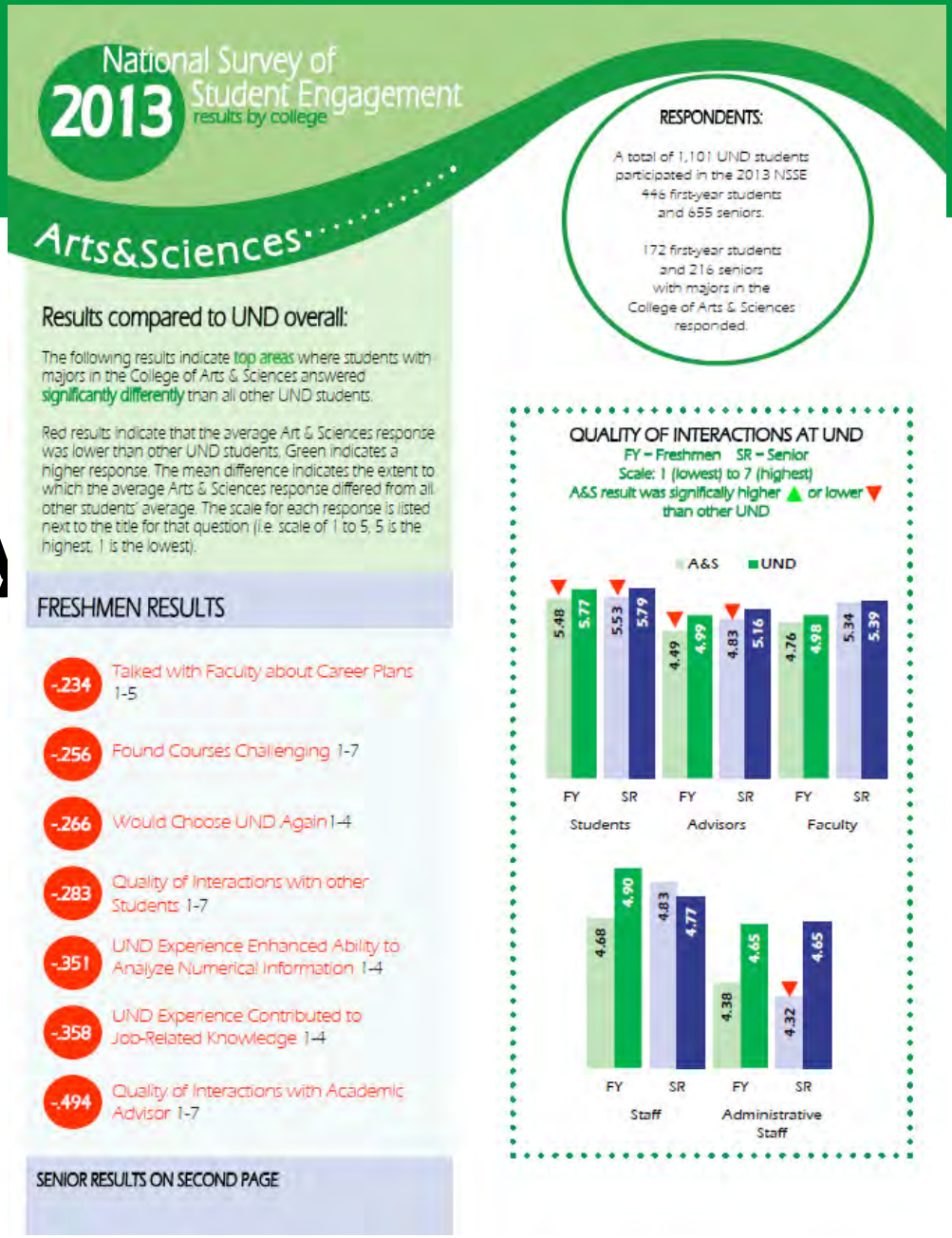
Quick, Relevant, To the Point, Easy to Retrieve/ Access Information



National Survey of Student Engagement 2013
results by college

Arts&Sciences

RESPONDENTS:

A total of 1,101 UND students participated in the 2013 NSSE 446 first-year students and 655 seniors.

172 first-year students and 216 seniors with majors in the College of Arts & Sciences responded.

Results compared to UND overall:

The following results indicate top areas where students with majors in the College of Arts & Sciences answered significantly differently than all other UND students.

Red results indicate that the average Art & Sciences response was lower than other UND students. Green indicates a higher response. The mean difference indicates the extent to which the average Arts & Sciences response differed from all other students' average. The scale for each response is listed next to the title for that question (i.e. scale of 1 to 5, 5 is the highest, 1 is the lowest).

FRESHMEN RESULTS

-.234 Talked with Faculty about Career Plans 1-5

-.256 Found Courses Challenging 1-7

-.266 Would Choose UND Again 1-4

-.283 Quality of Interactions with other Students 1-7

-.351 UND Experience Enhanced Ability to Analyze Numerical Information 1-4

-.358 UND Experience Contributed to Job-Related Knowledge 1-4

-.494 Quality of Interactions with Academic Advisor 1-7

SENIOR RESULTS ON SECOND PAGE

QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS AT UND
FY = Freshmen SR = Senior
Scale: 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest)
A&S result was significantly higher ▲ or lower ▼ than other UND

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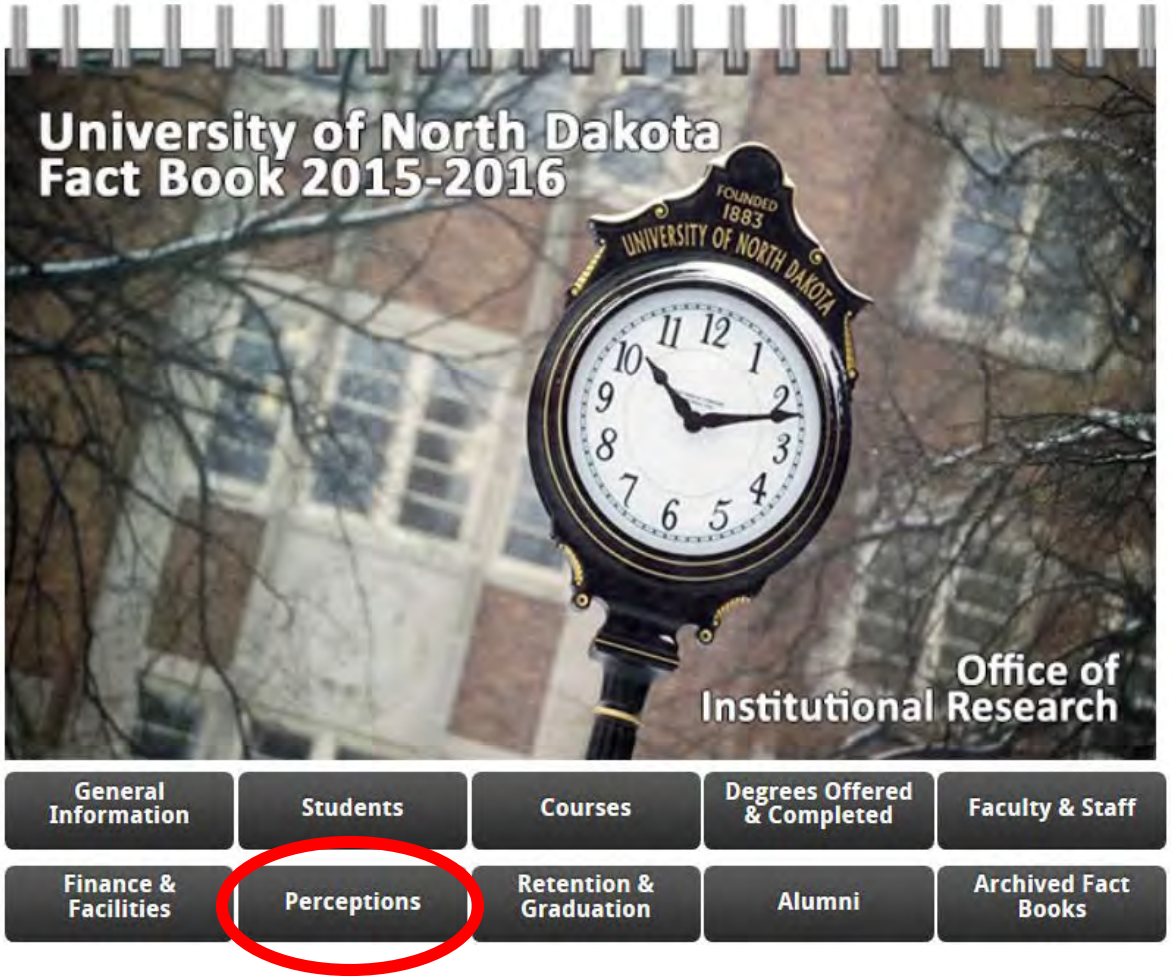
Get It Out There



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Always Be Prepared

For Questions

Talking Points

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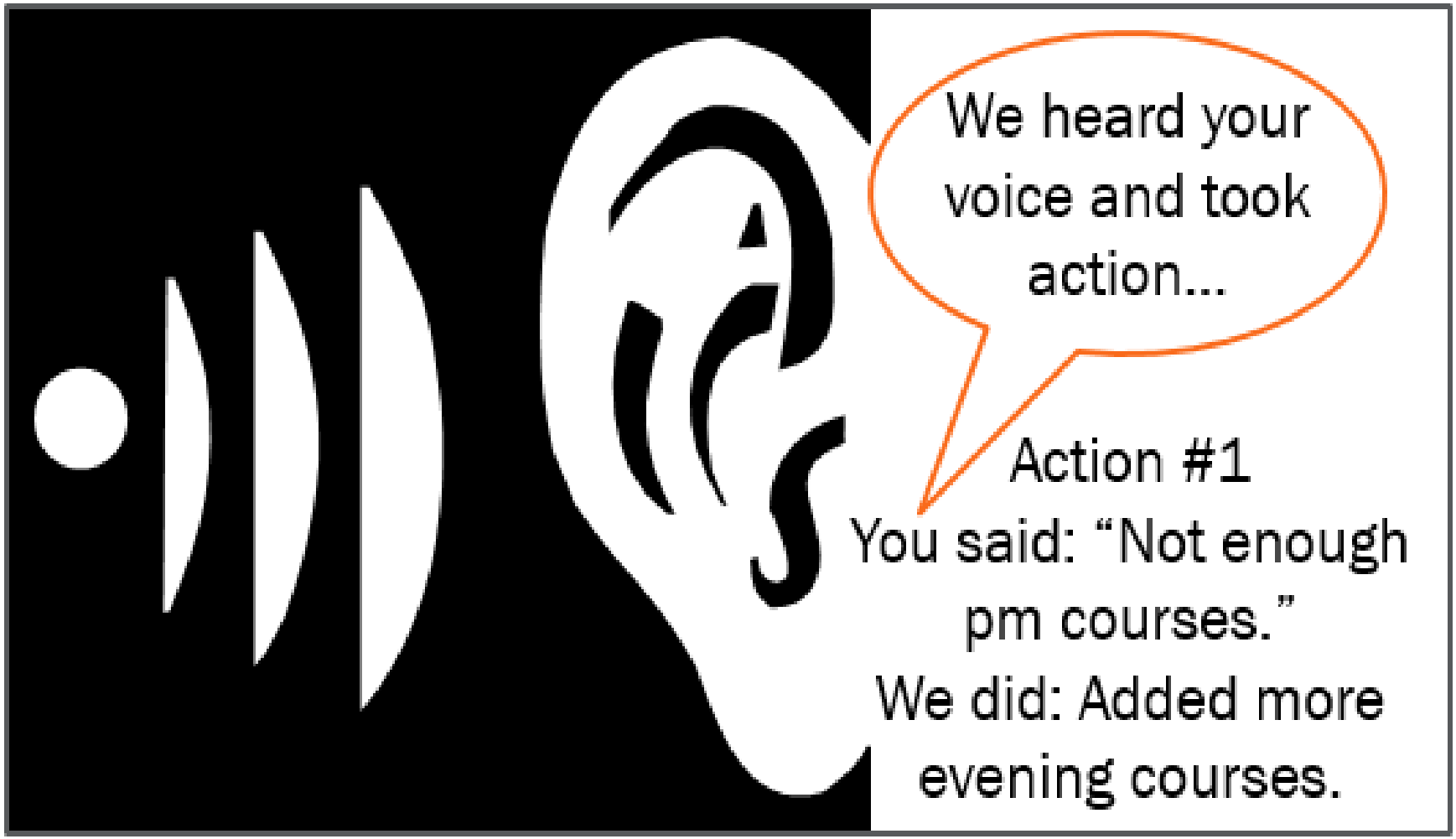
Show Action


We heard your voice and took action...
Action #1
You said: "Not enough pm courses."
We did: Added more evening courses.

UNIVERSITY of MOUNT UNION
Where Exceptional Begins
Using NSSE Findings to Enhance the Co-curricular & Advising Aspects of a First-Year Seminar
Fang Du, PhD
Growth Through Experience
#Be Exceptional
mountunion.edu

About Mount Union

- **Mission Statement**
  - To prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work and responsible citizenship.

About Mount Union

- Located in Alliance, Ohio
- Founded in 1846
- 4yr private
- Liberal arts tradition
- 61 different majors
- 2,145 undergraduate students
- 78 graduate students

First-Year Seminar (FYS) Initiatives

Take Aways…

- What are you taking away from these examples?
- What field tested insights can you add?

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student engagement

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Reinforcing Take Aways - UND & UMU

Do:

- go beyond posting results
- try something new – volunteers/grad students
- invest the time you have – recognize limitations (staff, resources)

Don't

- Wing it …have a definitive plan (time to process, communicate, etc.)
- send out generic email stating survey results available (Often no response)

NSSE national survey of student engagement

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Checking in: Making Assessment Matter

To be consequential, assessment information needs to be…

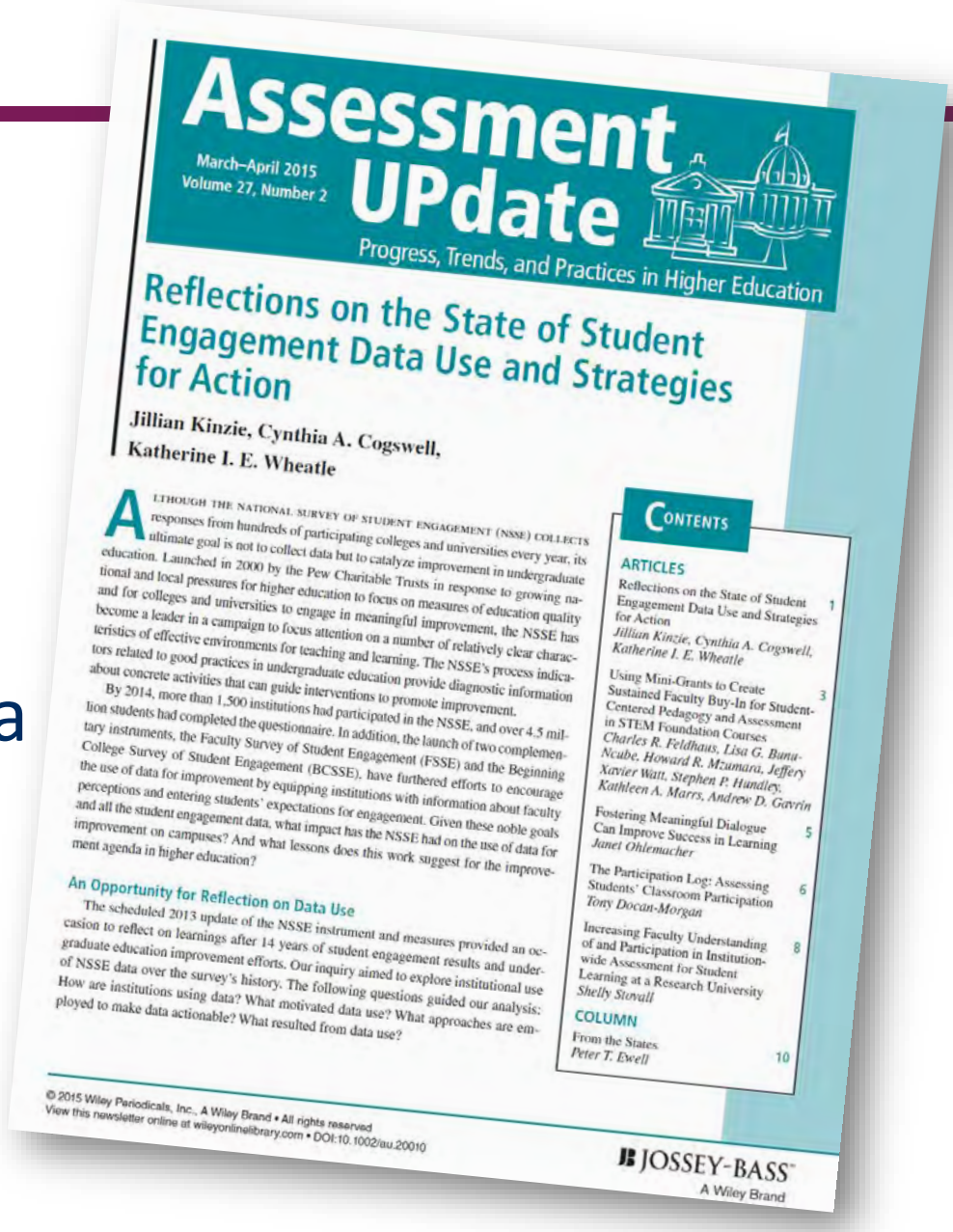
- ✓ ***actionable,***
- ✓ ***focused on needs of end users,***
- ✓ ***embedded in teaching & learning,***
- ✓ ***available in understandable forms,***
- ✓ ***customized and,***
- ✓ ***supported by institutional leaders***

(Kuh, Ikenberry et al., 2015)

More Lessons from the Field

Systematic review of 120 examples of NSSE use:

- What motivated data use?
- What approaches are employed to make data actionable?
- What lessons can we derive about data use?



Assessment UPdate

March–April 2015
Volume 27, Number 2

Progress, Trends, and Practices in Higher Education

Reflections on the State of Student Engagement Data Use and Strategies for Action

Jillian Kinzie, Cynthia A. Cogswell, Katherine I. E. Wheatle

ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE) COLLECTS responses from hundreds of participating colleges and universities every year, its ultimate goal is not to collect data but to catalyze improvement in undergraduate education. Launched in 2000 by the Pew Charitable Trusts in response to growing national and local pressures for higher education to focus on measures of education quality and for colleges and universities to engage in meaningful improvement, the NSSE has become a leader in a campaign to focus attention on a number of relatively clear characteristics of effective environments for teaching and learning. The NSSE's process indicators related to good practices in undergraduate education provide diagnostic information about concrete activities that can guide interventions to promote improvement.

By 2014, more than 1,500 institutions had participated in the NSSE, and over 4.5 million students had completed the questionnaire. In addition, the launch of two complementary instruments, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) and the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), have furthered efforts to encourage the use of data for improvement by equipping institutions with information about faculty perceptions and entering students' expectations for engagement. Given these noble goals and all the student engagement data, what impact has the NSSE had on the use of data for improvement on campuses? And what lessons does this work suggest for the improvement agenda in higher education?

An Opportunity for Reflection on Data Use

The scheduled 2013 update of the NSSE instrument and measures provided an occasion to reflect on learnings after 14 years of student engagement results and undergraduate education improvement efforts. Our inquiry aimed to explore institutional use of NSSE data over the survey's history. The following questions guided our analysis: How are institutions using data? What motivated data use? What approaches are employed to make data actionable? What resulted from data use?

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JOSSEY-BASS
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What is Your NSSE Data Use Story?

www.nsse.iub.edu/html/institutionStory.cfm

HOW
NSTITUTIONS USE
NSSE

DATA AND
RESULTS GUIDES

WORKSHOPS,
WEBINARS,
MEETINGS

What is Your Institution's NSSE Story?

Do you have a NSSE data use story to tell? NSSE is interested in gathering information on innovative practices surrounding student success and engagement in a variety of areas. These include methods for communicating results across institutions and using survey (and other) data to create more effective educational practices, (e.g., promoting active learning, integrating student support in the classroom, improving teaching and learning, quality improvement projects for regional accreditation).

Check out NSSE data use accounts in the ***Lessons from the Field*** series!

Name:

Email:

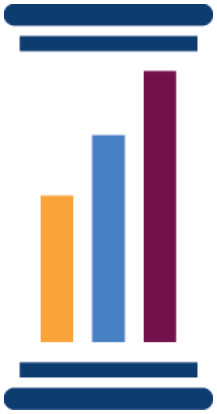
Institution:

What NSSE Data Use Story do you have to tell?

(tell your story)

THANK YOU!

What can NSSE do to help you act on your data?



For more information: see Volumes 1-3 Lessons from the Field; Center of Inquiry at Wabash College; Assessment Update article; NILOA- learningoutcomesassessement.org

Contact: Jillian Kinzie, jikinzie@indiana.edu