

Launched in 2013, the updated NSSE, FSSE, and BCSSE surveys herald a new era in higher education survey research and data use. Maintaining NSSE's signature focus on diagnostic and actionable information related to student engagement in educationally effective experiences, the updated survey instruments introduce rigorously tested new and refined items, new summary measures, and topical modules. These changes with the updated instruments open new ways to look at a campus's survey results and widen opportunities for action.

Receiving the *Institutional Report* binder containing the campus reports and SPSS data file should signal the beginning of data use. This document highlights how four institutions responded to and used data from their 2013 NSSE administration.

### Closing Out NSSE 2000–2012 and Starting Fresh Pace University

Pace University, a multi-campus research institution in the New York metropolitan area, administered NSSE every year from 2002 through 2012 and the updated version in 2013. While initially saddened to bring closure to several multi-year studies, campus leaders realized that beginning with NSSE 2013, it was time to open a new chapter of NSSE studies that would provide different perspectives on institutional questions. To celebrate all they had learned and the action they had taken on their institutional assessment results, Pace published a NSSE Retrospective recounting all the ways NSSE has made a difference for teaching, learning, and, especially, students at Pace.

To investigate institutional concerns such as retention, for example, Pace matches the most recent NSSE data to each Fall semester's roster of first-year students who stayed and those who left. Analysis of these results provides valuable clues to student behavior and suggests actions that faculty and student success professionals might take. A study of sophomore retention at Pace used the NSSE responses of second semester first-year students who would soon be sophomores to provide insight into how to address "sophomore slump" and resulting attrition. Results from the early years of NSSE administration at Pace highlighted the need to pay more attention to student-faculty interaction. To address this

need, Pace's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, along with the University Assessment Committee, developed a series of faculty development workshops using NSSE results. These workshops included breakout sessions in which faculty discussed NSSE results and shared best practices. Results from subsequent NSSE administrations showed upward trends in the student-faculty interaction scores. With NSSE 2013, Pace opens a new chapter in its increasingly sophisticated efforts for improvement. The updated survey's potential for deeper examination of student-faculty interaction through the Engagement Indicators, its expansion of the quality of relationship questions, and new quantitative reasoning items invite fresh insights and fuller understanding of important educational issues.

#### Tools for Looking at Data Longitudinally

##### Item-by-Item Comparisons of the Original and Updated NSSE

This document tracks differences between items in the previous and the updated versions of NSSE. Before using this resource, we recommend reviewing your NSSE 2013 or 2014 results to identify items that have been historically interesting for your campus, and then consulting this document to see if and how much the item has changed and then considering if the changed item results mean something different for your students.

[nsse.iub.edu/pdf/NSSE%202012-2014%20Item%20Comparisons.pdf](https://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/NSSE%202012-2014%20Item%20Comparisons.pdf)

##### From Benchmarks to Engagement Indicators

Given the major shift with NSSE 2013 from Benchmarks to Engagement Indicators, we do not recommend using results from the updated NSSE in longitudinal comparisons. However, some of the new Engagement Indicators are similar to the earlier Benchmarks. The student-faculty interaction measures, for example, are similar, so it would be possible to compare scores to those for your comparison institutions but not to the previous Benchmarks scores. Another shift with the update was from a 100 pt. scale to the new 60 pt. scale. This was an intentional change to correct the occasional mistaken impression that the scores represent percentages. The new 60 pt. scale both signals the update and makes more obvious the fact that the scores are not percentages.

[nsse.iub.edu/html/engagement\\_indicators.cfm](https://nsse.iub.edu/html/engagement_indicators.cfm)

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## Introducing the Campus Community to the NSSE Update

### Nazareth College

For NSSE 2013, the most recent of Nazareth College's five NSSE administrations, the college's institutional researchers reached out to boost response rates. First, they encouraged faculty who spent most of their time teaching first-year or senior-level courses to mention the survey in class. Additionally, a campus email to all faculty saying when students would receive invitations to participate in the survey asked them to mention the survey in classes they taught on the day of an invitation.

At the end of Spring semester, prior to receiving the college's NSSE 2013 results, institutional researchers distributed copies of the instrument to the campus community. When passing out the survey at meetings, they asked faculty and staff to think about what they wanted to learn from the results. This activity helped get the attention of campus leaders already interacting with data and alerted them to the campus's upcoming NSSE administration. The goal was widespread awareness of the survey and of what NSSE data could reveal.

Upon receiving NSSE 2013 results, the institutional researchers shared the *Snapshot* and *Engagement Indicator Report* with the President's Council, which had representatives from each academic division as well as from administrative offices across campus, and they shared the *Snapshot* at a campus-wide meeting of office managers. The goal of sharing these reports was to create an understanding across the campus community of what the data could tell them. Meetings focused on different aspects of the reports, and discussions homed in on the box-and-whisker charts. While the charts displayed an admirable mean score for the college, they also revealed gaps in the range of student experiences.

In response to questions raised in discussions with faculty and staff about the *Snapshot*, institutional researchers dived into their data to compare the results of students who stayed at the college with those of students who left. Then, looking at the results of students who left with a 3.0 GPA or better, they found that these students scored low on NSSE items in the Effective Teaching Practices indicator. Discussions of these findings among campus-wide faculty at the annual Faculty Day retreat included sharing ideas about appropriate actions.

## Using Refined NSSE Content

### Rhode Island College

Rhode Island College (RIC) has participated in NSSE five times, including their most recent 2013 administration. To share the college's 2013 NSSE results with senior administrators, the campus prepared a special longitudinal report in which responses to NSSE 2013 items and identical items in previous administrations were directly compared, with appropriate adjustments to the item scales, and 2013 items similar—but not identical—to earlier NSSE results options were reported side by side. This report allowed senior administrators to make general comparisons of the new questions in the updated NSSE alongside questions from previous NSSE administrations.

To provide more survey-related resources to faculty and staff, RIC created a Web page featuring a comprehensive report that highlights NSSE data and longitudinal changes in RIC results alongside results from RIC's three comparison groups. Future plans for the Web page's postings include a short report that focuses on data most relevant to faculty and also updates benchmarking for current campus initiatives related to NSSE 2013 item-level results.

## Using New Summary Measures

### University of Texas at Tyler

The University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler) has made significant use of its 2013 NSSE data in a number of ways. The president's Fall newsletter, distributed to both the campus and the community at large, featured information from the *Snapshot*. The state-of-the-university report to UT Tyler's chancellor included NSSE Engagement Indicators. The Engagement Indicators are also part of program-level conversations at the campus about assessment for ongoing improvement based on student feedback.

UT Tyler's efforts related to NSSE's High-Impact Practices (HIPs) include assessment rubrics that draw on NSSE reports, results, and HIP criteria and curriculum-mapping templates that include course-related HIPs for courses in each academic program.

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