



National Survey of
Student Engagement
The College Student Report

Using NSSE to Improve Learning and Institutional Effectiveness

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Snowbird, Utah



Assertion

We all want the same
thing—an educational
experience that results in
high levels of learning and
personal development for
all students.

Advance Organizer

What *kinds* of evidence
about student learning and
institutional effectiveness
are compelling and useful
for improving
undergraduate education?

Overview

- Effective Educational Practice
- NSSE
- What We've Learned So Far
- Using NSSE data
- Lessons for data driven change

The Challenge

There's too much at stake to
assume students are doing
the things that lead to high
levels of learning and
personal development.

One Promising Response

- To consistently
use effective
educational
practices
throughout the
institution



Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

(Chickering & Gamson, 1987)

- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Respect for diverse learning styles
- Cooperation among students



Lessons from the Research

- What matters most to desired outcomes is what students do, not who they are
- A key factor for student learning is the quality of effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities

What *Really* Matters in College: Student Engagement



“The research is unequivocal: students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the college experience than those who are not so involved.”

*Ernest T. Pascarella & Patrick T. Terenzini,
How College Affects Students*

Lessons from the Research

- What matters most is what students do, not who they are
- A key factor is the quality of effort students expend
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities

Two Components of Student Engagement

- What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things

Evidence of Student Engagement

- To what extent are students engaged in effective educational practices?



Types of Measures

- **Outcomes measures**
 - Evidence of what students have learned or can do
- **Process Measures**
 - Evidence of effective educational activity by students and institutions

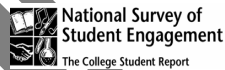


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National Survey of Student Engagement
(pronounced "hessie")

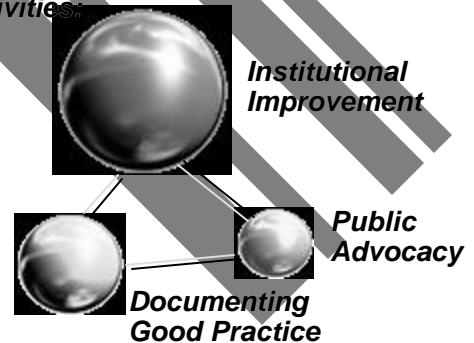


Community College Survey of Student Engagement
(pronounced "sessie")



College student surveys that assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development

NSSE's core activities:

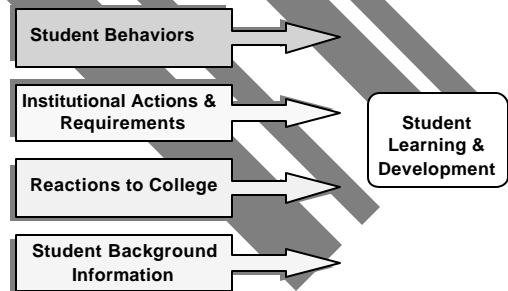


NSSE Project Scope

- 400,000 students from 730 different schools
- 58% of 4-yr undergraduate FTE
- 50 states, Puerto Rico
- 50+ institutional consortia



The College Student Report



NSSE

10 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Made a class presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

www.iub.edu/~nsse

NSSE

9 About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

of hours per week

	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	More than 30
a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Working for pay on campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Working for pay off campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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NSSE

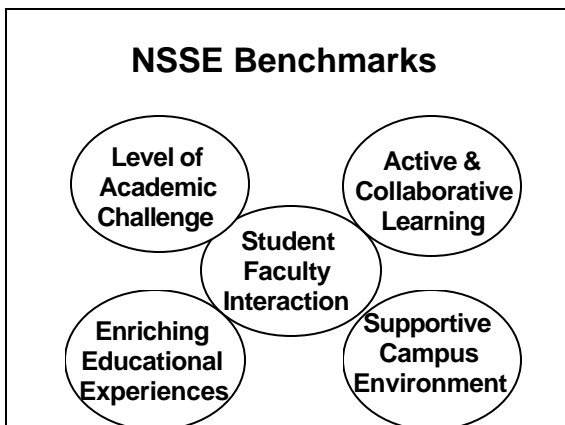
11 To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Acquiring a broad general education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Writing clearly and effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Institutional Report

- Overview
- Institutional data
- Means & frequencies
- 1st year students, seniors
- Comparisons by Carnegie, national
- National benchmarks



What else have we learned so far from NSSE?

Student Engagement Quiz

What percent of full-time students study two hours or more for every hour in class?

(a) 14% (b) 20% (c) 31% (d) 39% (e) 49%

a. 14%

Student Engagement Quiz

What percent of first-year students *never* discuss ideas outside of class with a faculty member?

(a) 14% (b) 19% (c) 30% (d) 37% (e) 45%

e. 45%

Student Engagement Quiz

True or false?

Seniors report more experiences with diversity during the current academic year than do first-year students.

False

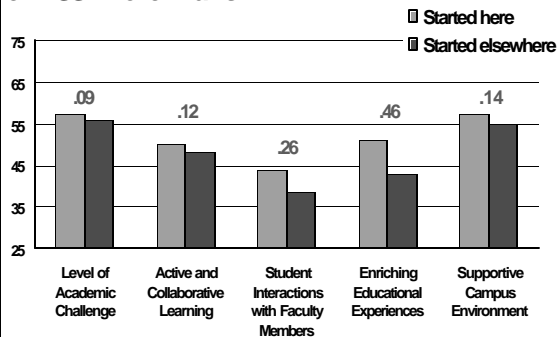
Student Engagement Quiz

True or false?

Transfer students are generally more engaged overall than native students.

False

Senior Transfer Status and Effect Size on NSSE Benchmarks



Transfer *shock*?!?

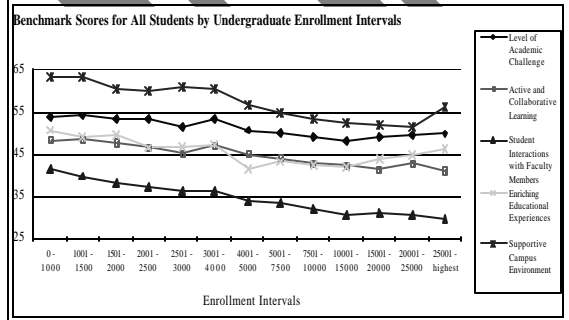


Or transfer daze/malaise?!?

Academic reputation is *not* related to:

- active & collaborative learning
- student-faculty interaction
- supportive campus environment

Benchmark Scores for All Students by Undergraduate Enrollment

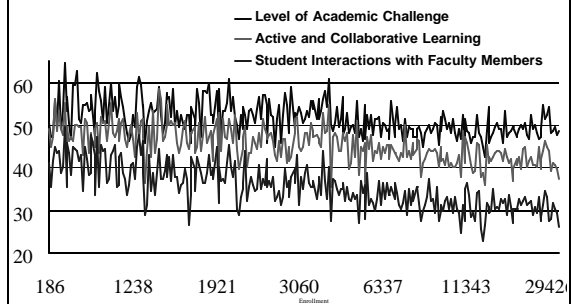


Does institutional size matter to engagement?

Yes, size matters.

Smaller is generally better.

Academic Challenge, Active Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction by Enrollment



Student engagement varies more *within* than between institutions.



Grades, Persistence and Engagement?!?

Grades, persistence, and engagement go hand in hand

Though direction of relationship not clear

Who's more engaged?

- Women
- Full-time students
- Students who live on campus
- Fraternity & sorority members
- Learning community students
- Students with diversity experiences

Who Is Most Likely to Experience Diversity?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>More</i> | <i>Less</i> |
| Students of color | White students |
| Traditional-age students | Older students |
| Women | Men |
| First-year students | Upper-division students |



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How has NSSE data been used?



Audiences

- College and University Administrators
- Faculty members
- Governing Boards
- External Authorities (accreditors, government agencies)
- Current and prospective students
- College advisors
- Institutional researchers
- Higher education scholars

Using NSSE Data

- Discover current levels of engagement (institution, major field, year in school)
- Determine if current levels are satisfactory (criterion reference, normative or peer comparison)
- Target areas for improvement
- Modify programs and policies accordingly
- Teach students what is required to "succeed"
- Monitor student and institutional performance

Benchmarking

Two Approaches:

- Normative - compares your students' responses to those of students at other colleges and universities.
- Criterion - compares your school's performance against a predetermined value or level appropriate for your students, given your institutional mission, size, curricular offerings, funding, and so forth.

"NSSE is a great way to stimulate reflection and debate about what we do more and less well, and why. For us it's proving an exciting and enlivening tool for self-reflection and self-improvement."

- **Michael McPherson**, President,
Macalaster College

Institutional Improvement Examples

Concern: level of student interaction with faculty members

The University of Richmond designed strategies to increase first-year student involvement in research projects and has expanded opportunities for students to serve on institutional committees

Institutional Improvement Examples

Concern: level of active and collaborative learning among first year students

The University of the South used data to inform the development of their First Year Program and as an assessment measure for a grant.

Other Reported Uses

- Assessing impact of learning communities
- Assessing quality of senior capstone courses and internships
- Sharing NSSE data with academic advisors so they can help students better manage their time and use academic resources
- Organizing campus symposia around the topic of student engagement



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**How have you
used NSSE data?**



**Lessons Learned:
Principles for Data-Driven
Learning-Centered Change**

1. Get the ideas right

- Focus on a real problem (e.g., persistence, raising expectations, success in major field courses)
- Concentrate on effective educational practices

Characteristics of Educationally Effective Colleges

Curriculum

- Coherence in learning
- Synthesizing experiences
- Integrating education and experience
- Ongoing practice of learned skills

Characteristics of Educationally Effective Colleges

Teaching and Learning

- Active learning
- Assessment and feedback
- Collaboration
- Adequate time on task
- Out-of-class contact with faculty

Project DEEP

To discover, document and describe what high performing institutions do and how they achieved this level of effectiveness.



DEEP Selection Criteria

A. Higher-than-predicted graduation rates

B. Higher-than-predicted student engagement scores

Project DEEP

Doctoral Extensives

University of Kansas
University of Michigan

Doctoral Intensives

George Mason University
Miami University (Ohio)
University of Texas El Paso

Master's Granting

Fayetteville State University
Gonzaga University
Longwood University

Liberal Arts

California State, Monterey Bay
Macalester College
Sweet Briar College
The Evergreen State College
University of the South
Ursinus College
Wabash College
Wheaton College (MA)
Wofford College

Baccalaureate General

Alverno College
University of Maine at Farmington
Winston-Salem State University

Academic Challenge

- Cal State Monterey Bay adopted an asset model (contrasted with a deficit model) to guide policy and pedagogical practices. First-year ProSeminars emphasize writing. Assessment of student learning is extensive, and deeply imbedded in the campus culture.

Active & Collaborative Learning

- University of Texas at El Paso uses learning communities and course-based service learning and volunteerism to actively engage its mostly commuter, first-generation students.

Active & Collaborative Learning

- U of Maine at Farmington teaches students how to “do” active and collaborative learning using service learning, portfolios, web-enhanced activities. The “Summer Experience” attracts 20% of new students to the weeklong discussion-oriented seminar before fall classes.

Active & Collaborative Learning

- Ursinus College’s Common Intellectual Experience (CIE) is a two-semester course for first year students. Common readings and the “Uncommon Hour” provides opportunities for students to have a shared intellectual experience outside the classroom that complements class activities.

Student-Faculty Interaction

- Longwood University students have the same faculty member as their advisor for all four years. The assumption is that “If you are not in your office with the door open, people wonder if something is wrong with you...”

Student-Faculty Interaction

- Elizabeth City State University requires first-year students to meet with their advisor six times a semester, and immediately after mid-term grade reports either to celebrate good progress or discuss ways to improve.

Enriching Experiences

- Diversity at George Mason University is deeply rooted, and intentionally woven into the curriculum, especially at New Century College. Through the STAR Center and other venues students are encouraged to use technology to enrich learning.

Supportive Environment

At Fayetteville State University all first- and second-year students are assigned to University College, which is designed as a transitional bridge. “Failure is not an option here ...”

Characteristics of Educationally Effective Institutions

Take a look at the NSSE benchmark items.

How are these items reflected in your institution?

A Challenge:

“I know what works. What I don’t know is how to get people here to do those things.” (College President)

2. Get grass roots buy-in

- Leaders endorse, but don’t dictate
- Structures not (nearly) as important as relationships
- Validate pockets of quality
- The 10% rule

2. Get grass roots buy-in

Examples

- ✓ Ask deans about their concerns
- ✓ Focus groups
- ✓ Get students “engaged” in the improvement effort (Illinois State, Oregon State)
- ✓ Ask: “What surprised you?”
- ✓ Faculty version of NSSE survey

FSSE

2003 Field Test

- 147 schools
- 16,000 faculty respondents

FSSE

5 About what *percent* of students in your selected course section do the following?

	None	1-24%	25-49%	50-74%	75% or Higher
a. Frequently ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Discuss grades or assignments with you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Discuss ideas from readings or classes with you outside of class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Work harder than they usually do to meet your standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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FSSE

9 Time students spend preparing for your selected course section:

of hours per week

	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	More than 12
a. In a typical 7-day week, about how many hours do you expect your students to spend preparing for your class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to your course)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. In a typical 7-day week, about how many hours do you think your students actually spend preparing for your class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to your course)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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FSSE

11 In your selected course section, on average, what percent of class time is spent on the following?

% of class time

	0	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-75	75 or more
a. Lecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teacher-led discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teacher-student shared responsibility (seminar, discussion, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Computer mediated activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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FSSE

11 In your selected course section, on average, what percent of class time is spent on the following?

e. Small group activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Student presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. In-class writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Performances in applied and fine arts (e.g., dance, drama, music)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Experiential (labs, field work, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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FSSE

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

of hours per week

	0	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-15	16-20	21-30	More than 30
e. Reflecting on and revising class activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Advising undergraduate students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Working with undergraduates on research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Supervising internships or other field experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Working with students on activities other than course work (committees, organizations, student life activities, orientation, intramurals, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Percent responding “often” or “very often”

	1 st year student	Lower division faculty	Seniors	Upper division faculty
Work with other students on projects during class	59%	47%	71%	58%
Receive prompt feedback	54%	92%	64%	92%

Percent responding “quite a bit” or “very much”

	1 st year student	Lower division faculty	Seniors	Upper division faculty
Coursework emphasizes memorizing	70%	30%	60%	21%
Coursework emphasizes synthesizing	64%	76%	72%	86%

% Students Responding at Least “Sometimes” and % Faculty Reporting Less than Half of their Students

	1 st year students	Lower division faculty	Seniors	Upper division faculty
Asked questions in class	97%	66%	98%	50%
Came to class unprepared	82%	64%	84%	73%

Student Engagement Tips

- From Robert Smallwood, AVPAA at SWTSU
- <http://www.assessment.swt.edu/> and then “NSSE at SWT”

3. Keep the stakes and volume low

- Avoid “winners” & “losers”
- Suspend disbelief
- Denial management
- Go public later than sooner

4. It’s the culture (stupid)

- Culture is (almost) always (at least) part of *the problem*
- Focus on “reculturing” and “revisioning”
- Use familiar (or at least understandable) language

5. Think and act systemically

- Link innovations and change efforts from different parts of the campus (e.g., Greater Expectations, Gen Ed reform, SOTL, NSSE, service learning, diversity)

5. Think and act systemically

- Link different innovations
- Work across units with common improvement agendas

Where To Look

- ❖ Southwest Texas State U.
- ❖ University of Akron
- ❖ Oregon State University
- ❖ CC of Denver
- ❖ Juniata College
- ❖ Radford University
- ❖ Truman State University
- ❖ Indiana University
- ❖ University of Montana

It Takes a Whole Campus to Educate a Student



The Effective Educational Practices Agenda

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
- The NSSE Institute
- Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)
- Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS)

Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS)

- 5-year project funded by Lumina Foundation for Education
- AAHE & NSSE Partnership
- Alliance for Equity in Higher Education institutions
- Using student engagement data to guide change initiatives
- Provides resources for improvement initiatives





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Questions & Discussion

For more information:

**NSSE web site
www.iub.edu/~nsse**