COVID Times and Student Engagement: Using and Interpreting NSSE 2021 Results

NSSE
national survey of student engagement

Welcome to the NSSE webinar!
Please use the chat to introduce yourself and share ideas.

Presenters: Alex McCormick, Jillian Kinzie, Shimon Sarraf, Bob Gonyea, and Jim Cole

November 18, 2021

The Pandemic & NSSE 2021

NSSE results confirm that the coronavirus pandemic continued to have an impact on higher education in academic year 2020-21.

NSSE 2021 adaptations:

- Added pandemic-specific question →
- Introduced two salient new modules:
  - Coping with COVID
  - Experiences with Online Learning

> 22. To what extent have the faculty and staff at your institution done a good job helping students adapt to the changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic?
>
> *Response options: Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little*

Implications for:

- Interpreting results
- Comparison groups
- Longitudinal analysis

Selected Questions at Webinar Registration

1. What considerations should I make with comparison groups – since a portion are from NSSE 2020?
2. How do we interpret comparison group data when some institutions in 2021 were fully remote and others were not?
3. Our results were not as positive as we are used to. How can I help our constituents understand the impact of COVID?
4. Which groups of students faced greater disadvantage during the pandemic?
5. How are others using NSSE and FSSE data to help make data-informed decisions?
6. Biggest takeaways – Anything unique/unexpected in the data?

Agenda

- Overview of NSSE 2021: What have we observed?
- Comparing 2021 results with prior years
- NSSE User Resources
- Using your BCSSE and NSSE results to improve the student experience
- Preview of coming attractions

NSSE 2021 Overview

- 890,000 first-year & senior students invited
- 353 institutions (344 US, 5 Canadian, 4 other countries)
- 211,667 respondents
- Average response rate for U.S. institutions was 30% (consistent with 2020)
- Assessment matters, even in an "asterisk" year!

NSSE national survey of student engagement

NSSE 2021 Overview

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, pronounced "nessie") collects information from first-year and senior students about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. Since the inception of the survey, nearly 1,700 bachelor's-granting colleges and universities in the United States and Canada have used it to measure the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices that are empirically linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, and graduation.

NSSE data are used by faculty, administrators, researchers, and others for institutional improvement, public reporting, and related purposes. Launched in 2000 with the support of a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, NSSE has been fully sustained through institutional participation fees since 2002. This document provides an overview of NSSE 2021, including administration details, response rates, participating institutions, and respondent characteristics.

The Pandemic Continues

The coronavirus pandemic continued to have a profound impact on higher education and its students this past year, demanding rapid adaptation to unusual circumstances like shifting academic calendars and constantly changing health and safety requirements. NSSE adapted by adding a pandemic-specific question, and introduced two salient modules, Coping with COVID (created specifically for the 2021 administration) and Experiences with Online Learning.

Recognizing these difficult and changing circumstances, NSSE asked students about the extent faculty and staff had done a good job helping them adapt to pandemic-induced changes. Heartening, nearly 3 out of 4 respondents (73%) said faculty and staff had helped them substantially ("quite a bit" or "very much") in this regard. However, some student groups reported slightly less support than their peers, such as those studying mostly online (71%), those at a doctoral degree-granting institution (71%), and Black or African-American students (72%).

In addition, student responses to the NSSE item about course type demonstrates a substantial shift to mostly remote instruction, with over 60% of all students reporting this course modality.

Survey Data and Methodology

Approximately 890,000 first-year and senior students from 353 institutions (344 in the US, 5 in Canada, and 4 in other countries) were invited to participate in NSSE 2021. Of this population, 211,667 students responded to the survey. First-year and senior students were about equally represented among the respondent population.

NSSE's sampling methodology calls for either a census of all first-year and senior students or a random selection of an equal number of students from each group, with sample size based on total undergraduate enrollment. Census administration is available only via email recruitment, in which students get a survey invitation and up to four reminders by email. In 2021, all but one participating institution opted for this method rather than the regular mail option, in which sampled students get up to three messages by post and up to two email reminders.

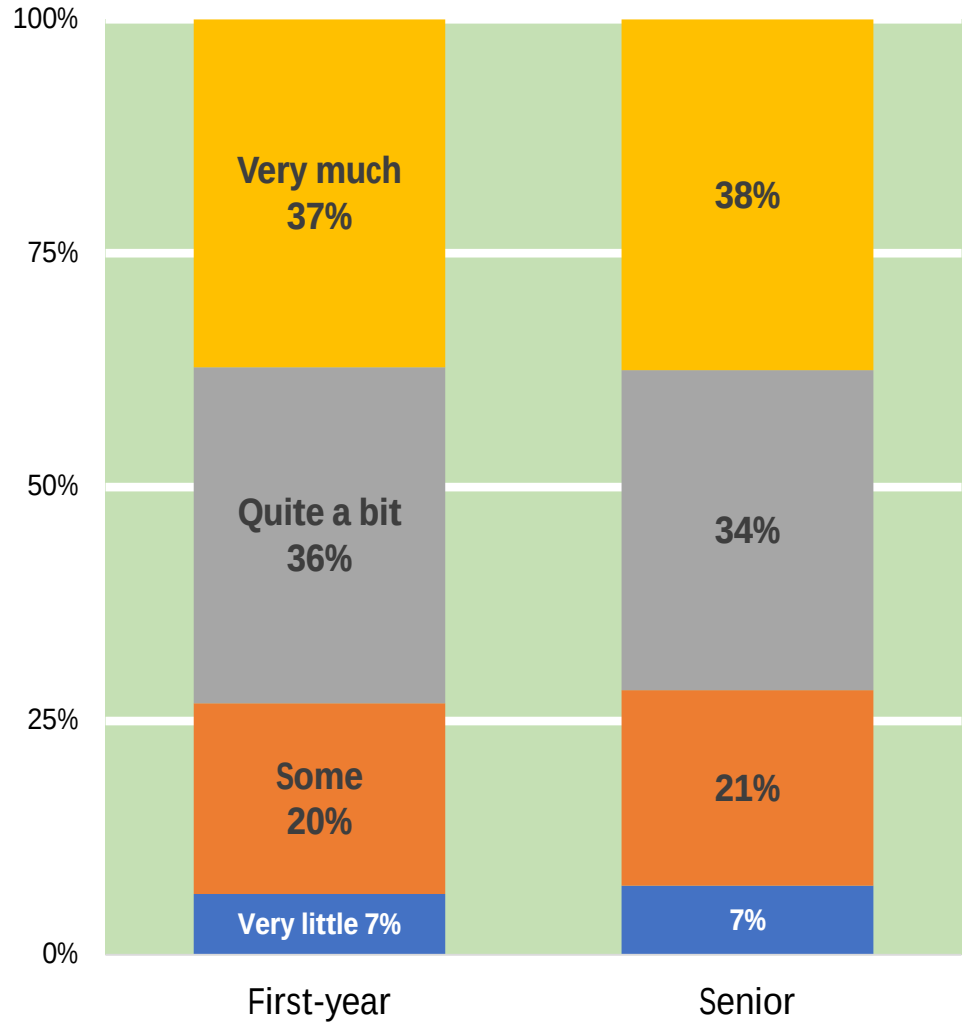
Unless noted otherwise, the results presented below are from 342 institutions—337 in the US and 5 in Canada—that participated in NSSE 2021. Due to nonstandard details of their participation, 11 institutions are not represented. In these summary tables, and in the *Institutional Report 2021*, only data for census-administered and randomly sampled students are included. NSSE 2021 U.S. respondents profiled here include 203,284 first-year (47%) and senior (53%) respondents.

Mississippi State University

What We've Observed in NSSE 2021

Core survey COVID item

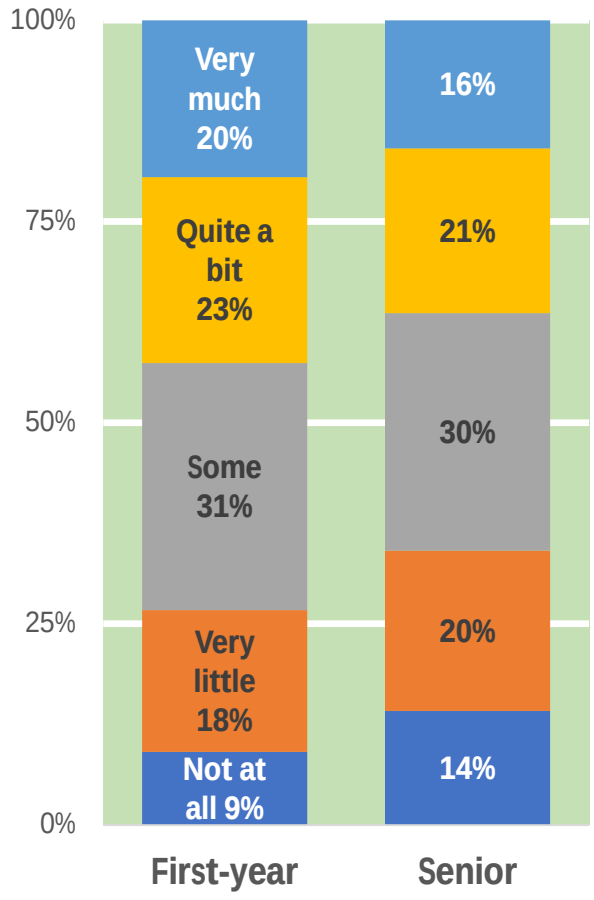
To what extent have the faculty and staff at your institution done a good job helping students adapt to the changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic?



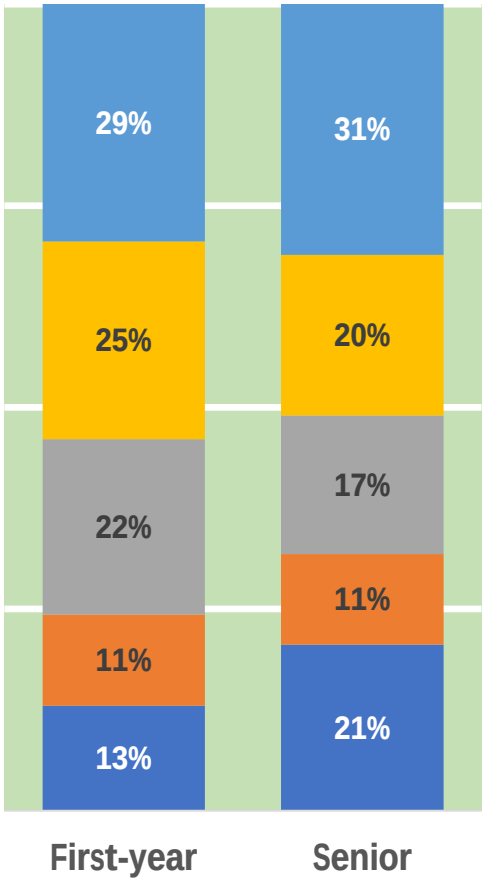
What We've Observed in NSSE 2021

Topical Module: Coping w/COVID

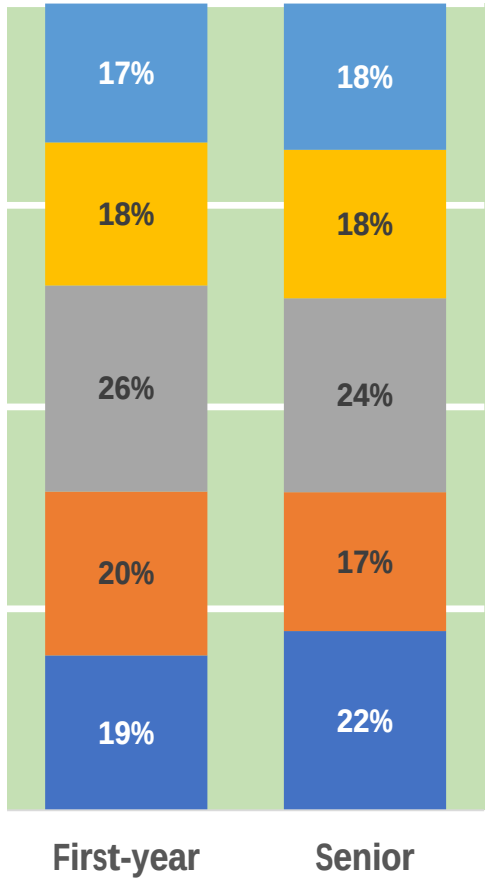
To what extent, if any, has the COVID-19 pandemic interfered with the following?



Your ability to succeed as a student



Your plans to participate in special learning opportunities

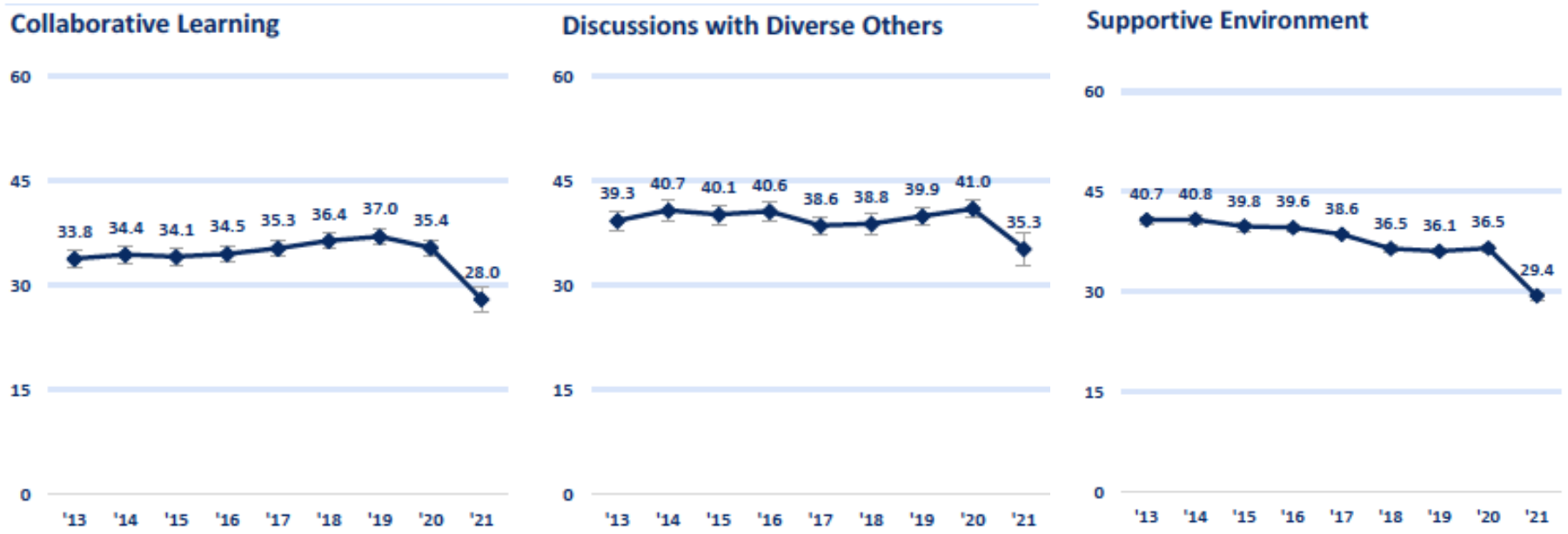


Your ability to pay for college and living expenses

What We've Observed in NSSE 2021

Institution-level Trends (from selected Multi-Year Reports)

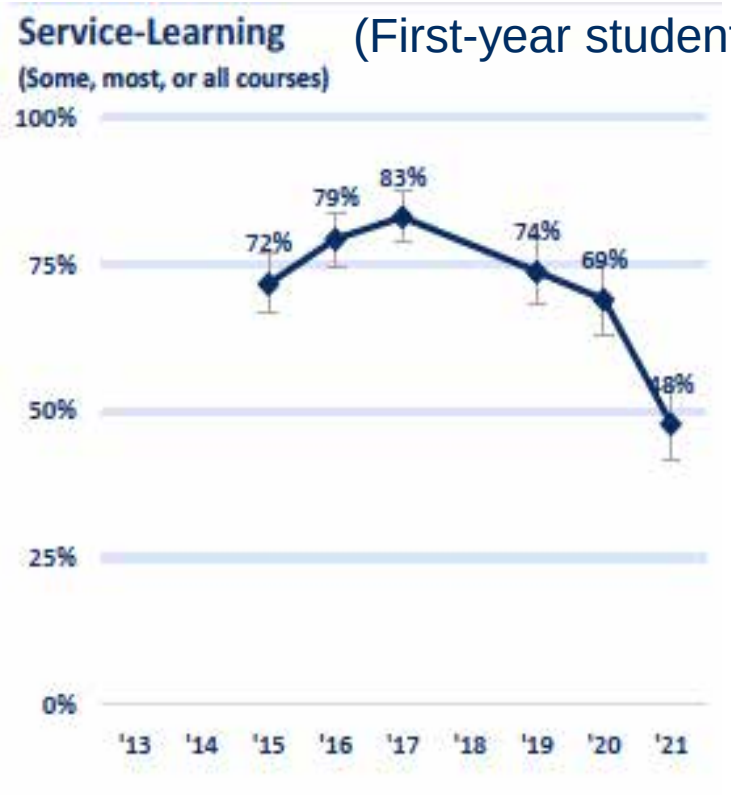
Engagement Indicators (first-year students)



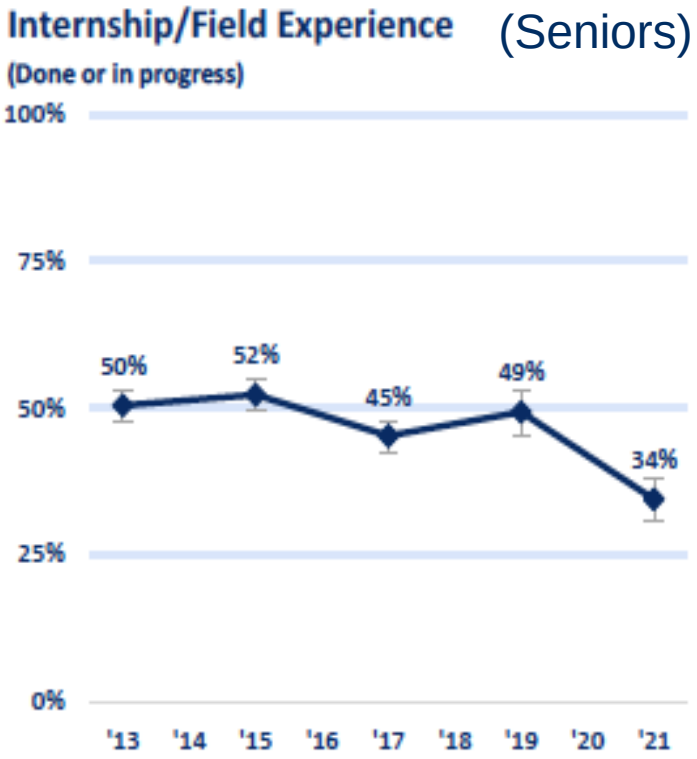
What We've Observed in NSSE 2021

Institution-level Trends (from selected Multi-Year Reports)

High-Impact Practices



(First-year students)



(Seniors)

Comparing NSSE 2021 to Prior Years

Comparing 2021 to 2018/2019 Administrations

§ Engagement Indicators, HIPs, and select questions show shifts at 300+ schools — but most measures did not change substantially.

§ Decrease

- Collaborative Learning (FY: 7, SR: 3)
- Discussions with Diverse Others (FY: 3, SR: 2)
- Student-Faculty Interaction (FY: 3, SR: 2)
- Supportive Environment (FY: 3)

HIPs:

- Service-learning (FY: 9% pts.)
- Internships (SR: 6% pts.)
- Study abroad (FY/SR: 5% pts.)

§ Increase (modest)

- Quantitative Reasoning (FY/SR: 1)
  - Master's & small colleges
- Preparing for class (FY/SR: 1 hr/week)
  - Doctoral and Master's institutions

Change by Student Sub-Populations

- Overall, few meaningful differences by student sub-populations exist using race, first-generation status, disability, and older student status
  - Student-level data used from 200+ schools that participated in 2021 and 2019

- Exception: traditional-age students showed more pronounced declines in Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Supportive Environment scores compared to older students (by 1 to 2 pts)

- Are you concerned about certain student groups? We'd like to hear from you in chat!

Using Peer Group Results with 2020 Data

Analyses suggest that removing 2020 results from most peer groups is unlikely to shift comparison group averages across the vast majority of measures in meaningful ways.

§ Dropping 2020 results decreases the norms group average for:

- Collaborative Learning (FY: -0.3 effect size, SR: -0.2)
- Discussions with Diverse Others (FY/SR: -0.1)
- Supportive Environment (FY: -0.15)
- Service-learning participation (FY: -3 percentage points)
- Internship participation (SR: -4 p.p.)
- Study abroad participation (SR: -3 p.p.)

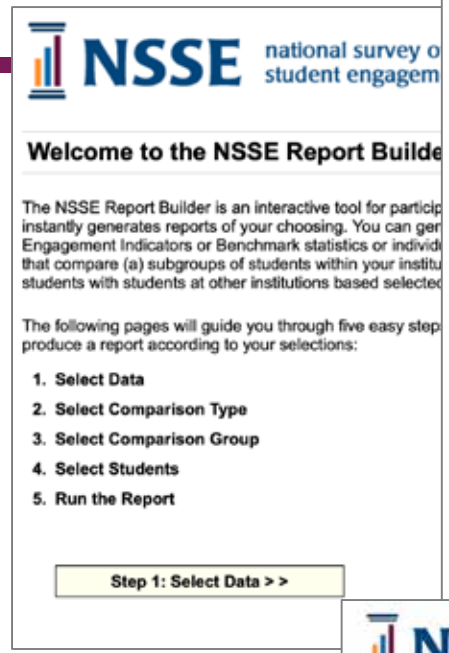
Your 2021 Results—What Now?

Additional Resources

1. **NSSE Report Builder –**
   2021 data to be available starting next week

2. **2021 Summary Tables**
   Document will be posted along with this recorded webinar

3. **Custom Analysis**
   Contact NSSE to run a new analysis with 2021-only comp groups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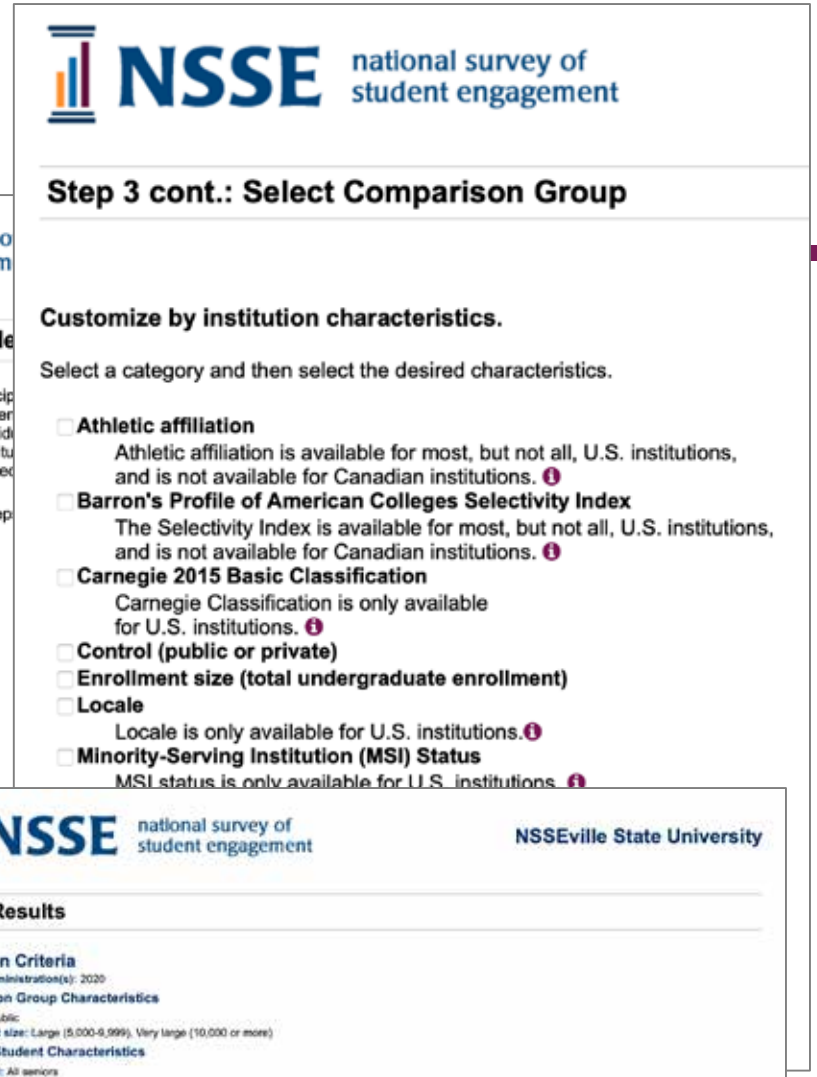
Welcome to the NSSE Report Builde

The NSSE Report Builder is an interactive tool for particip instantly generates reports of your choosing. You can ger Engagement Indicators or Benchmark statistics or individ that compare (a) subgroups of students within your institu students with students at other institutions based selecte

The following pages will guide you through five easy step produce a report according to your selections:

1. Select Data
2. Select Comparison Type
3. Select Comparison Group
4. Select Students
5. Run the Report

Step 1: Select Data > >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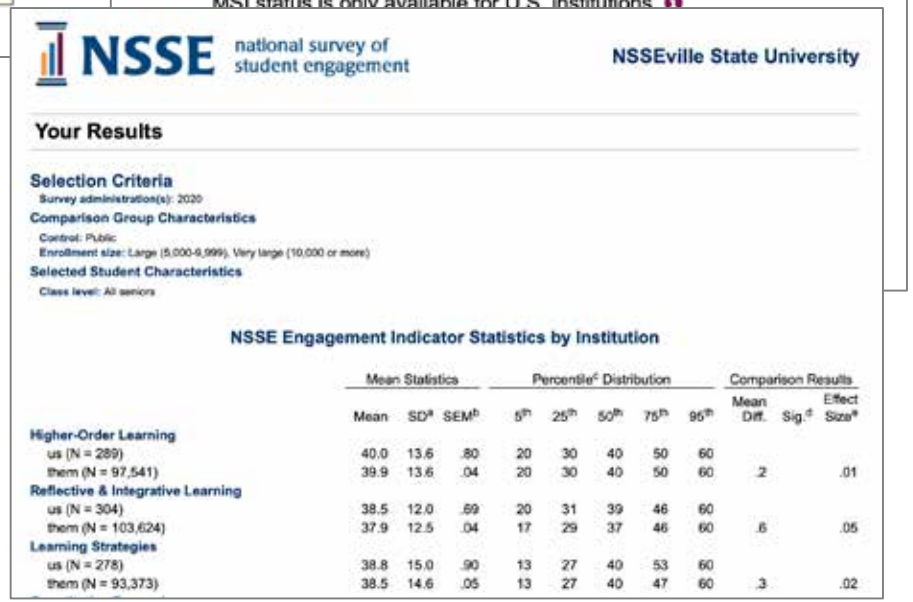
Step 3 cont.: Select Comparison Group

Customize by institution characteristics.

Select a category and then select the desired characteristics.

- Athletic affiliation
  Athletic affiliation is available for most, but not all, U.S. institutions, and is not available for Canadian institutions.
- Barron's Profile of American Colleges Selectivity Index
  The Selectivity Index is available for most, but not all, U.S. institutions, and is not available for Canadian institutions.
- Carnegie 2015 Basic Classification
  Carnegie Classification is only available for U.S. institutions.
- Control (public or private)
- Enrollment size (total undergraduate enrollment)
- Locale
  Locale is only available for U.S. institutions.
- Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) Status
  MSI status is only available for U.S. institutions.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NSSEville State University

Your Results

Selection Criteria
Survey administration(s): 2020
Comparison Group Characteristics
Control: Public
Enrollment size: Large (5,000-9,999), Very large (10,000 or more)
Selected Student Characteristics
Class level: All seniors

NSSE Engagement Indicator Statistics by Institution

	Mean Statistics			Percentile[c] Distribution					Comparison Results		
	Mean	SD[a]	SEM[b]	5th	25th	50th	75th	95th	Mean Diff.	Sig.[d]	Effect Size[e]
Higher-Order Learning											
us (N = 289)	40.0	13.6	.80	20	30	40	50	60			
them (N = 97,541)	39.9	13.6	.04	20	30	40	50	60	.2		.01
Reflective & Integrative Learning											
us (N = 304)	38.5	12.0	.69	20	31	39	46	60			
them (N = 103,624)	37.9	12.5	.04	17	29	37	46	60	.6		.05
Learning Strategies											
us (N = 278)	38.8	15.0	.90	13	27	40	53	60			
them (N = 93,373)	38.5	14.6	.05	13	27	40	47	60	.3		.02

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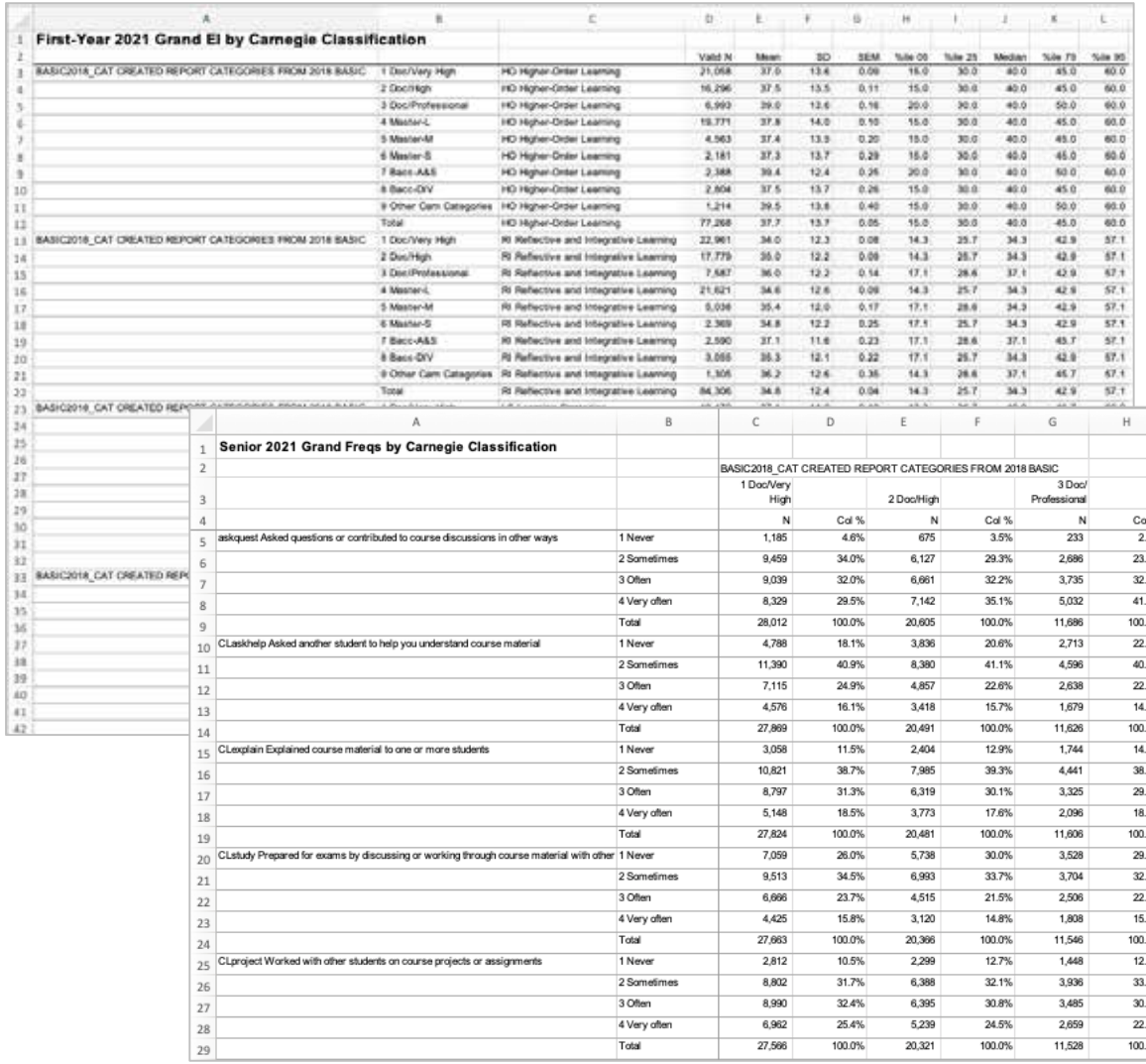

First-Year 2021 Grand EI by Carnegie Classification

			Valid N	Mean	SD	SEM	%ile 00	%ile 25	Median	%ile 75	%ile 90
BASIC2018_CAT CREATED REPORT CATEGORIES FROM 2018 BASIC	1 Doc/Very High	HO Higher-Order Learning	21,058	37.0	13.6	0.09	15.0	30.0	40.0	45.0	60.0
	2 Doc/High	HO Higher-Order Learning	16,296	37.5	13.5	0.11	15.0	30.0	40.0	45.0	60.0
	3 Doc/Professional	HO Higher-Order Learning	6,993	39.0	13.6	0.16	20.0	30.0	40.0	50.0	60.0
	4 Master-L	HO Higher-Order Learning	19,771	37.8	14.0	0.10	15.0	30.0	40.0	45.0	60.0
	5 Master-M	HO Higher-Order Learning	4,563	37.4	13.9	0.20	15.0	30.0	40.0	45.0	60.0
	6 Master-S	HO Higher-Order Learning	2,181	37.3	13.7	0.29	15.0	30.0	40.0	45.0	60.0
	7 Bacc-A&S	HO Higher-Order Learning	2,388	39.4	12.4	0.25	20.0	30.0	40.0	50.0	60.0
	8 Bacc-DIV	HO Higher-Order Learning	2,804	37.5	13.7	0.26	15.0	30.0	40.0	45.0	60.0
	9 Other Carn Categories	HO Higher-Order Learning	1,214	39.5	13.8	0.40	15.0	30.0	40.0	50.0	60.0
	Total	HO Higher-Order Learning	77,268	37.7	13.7	0.05	15.0	30.0	40.0	45.0	60.0
BASIC2018_CAT CREATED REPORT CATEGORIES FROM 2018 BASIC	1 Doc/Very High	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	22,961	34.0	12.3	0.08	14.3	25.7	34.3	42.9	57.1
	2 Doc/High	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	17,779	35.0	12.2	0.09	14.3	25.7	34.3	42.9	57.1
	3 Doc/Professional	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	7,587	36.0	12.2	0.14	17.1	28.6	37.1	42.9	57.1
	4 Master-L	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	21,621	34.6	12.6	0.09	14.3	25.7	34.3	42.9	57.1
	5 Master-M	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	5,038	35.4	12.0	0.17	17.1	28.6	34.3	42.9	57.1
	6 Master-S	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	2,369	34.8	12.2	0.25	17.1	25.7	34.3	42.9	57.1
	7 Bacc-A&S	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	2,590	37.1	11.6	0.23	17.1	28.6	37.1	45.7	57.1
	8 Bacc-DIV	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	3,055	35.3	12.1	0.22	17.1	25.7	34.3	42.9	57.1
	9 Other Carn Categories	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	1,305	36.2	12.6	0.35	14.3	28.6	37.1	45.7	57.1
	Total	RI Reflective and Integrative Learning	84,306	34.8	12.4	0.04	14.3	25.7	34.3	42.9	57.1

Senior 2021 Grand Freqs by Carnegie Classification

			BASIC2018_CAT CREATED REPORT CATEGORIES FROM 2018 BASIC					
			1 Doc/Very High		2 Doc/High		3 Doc/ Professional	
			N	Col %	N	Col %	N	Col %
askquest Asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways	1 Never		1,185	4.6%	675	3.5%	233	2.2%
	2 Sometimes		9,459	34.0%	6,127	29.3%	2,686	23.6%
	3 Often		9,039	32.0%	6,661	32.2%	3,735	32.5%
	4 Very often		8,329	29.5%	7,142	35.1%	5,032	41.8%
	Total		28,012	100.0%	20,605	100.0%	11,686	100.0%
CLaskhelp Asked another student to help you understand course material	1 Never		4,788	18.1%	3,836	20.6%	2,713	22.8%
	2 Sometimes		11,390	40.9%	8,380	41.1%	4,596	40.1%
	3 Often		7,115	24.9%	4,857	22.6%	2,638	22.9%
	4 Very often		4,576	16.1%	3,418	15.7%	1,679	14.3%
	Total		27,869	100.0%	20,491	100.0%	11,626	100.0%
CLexplain Explained course material to one or more students	1 Never		3,058	11.5%	2,404	12.9%	1,744	14.7%
	2 Sometimes		10,821	38.7%	7,985	39.3%	4,441	38.0%
	3 Often		8,797	31.3%	6,319	30.1%	3,325	29.2%
	4 Very often		5,148	18.5%	3,773	17.6%	2,096	18.1%
	Total		27,824	100.0%	20,481	100.0%	11,606	100.0%
CLstudy Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other	1 Never		7,059	26.0%	5,738	30.0%	3,528	29.7%
	2 Sometimes		9,513	34.5%	6,993	33.7%	3,704	32.3%
	3 Often		6,666	23.7%	4,515	21.5%	2,506	22.2%
	4 Very often		4,425	15.8%	3,120	14.8%	1,808	15.7%
	Total		27,663	100.0%	20,366	100.0%	11,546	100.0%
CLproject Worked with other students on course projects or assignments	1 Never		2,812	10.5%	2,299	12.7%	1,448	12.7%
	2 Sometimes		8,802	31.7%	6,388	32.1%	3,936	33.9%
	3 Often		8,990	32.4%	6,395	30.8%	3,485	30.5%
	4 Very often		6,962	25.4%	5,239	24.5%	2,659	22.9%
	Total		27,566	100.0%	20,321	100.0%	11,528	100.0%

Your 2021 Results—What Now?

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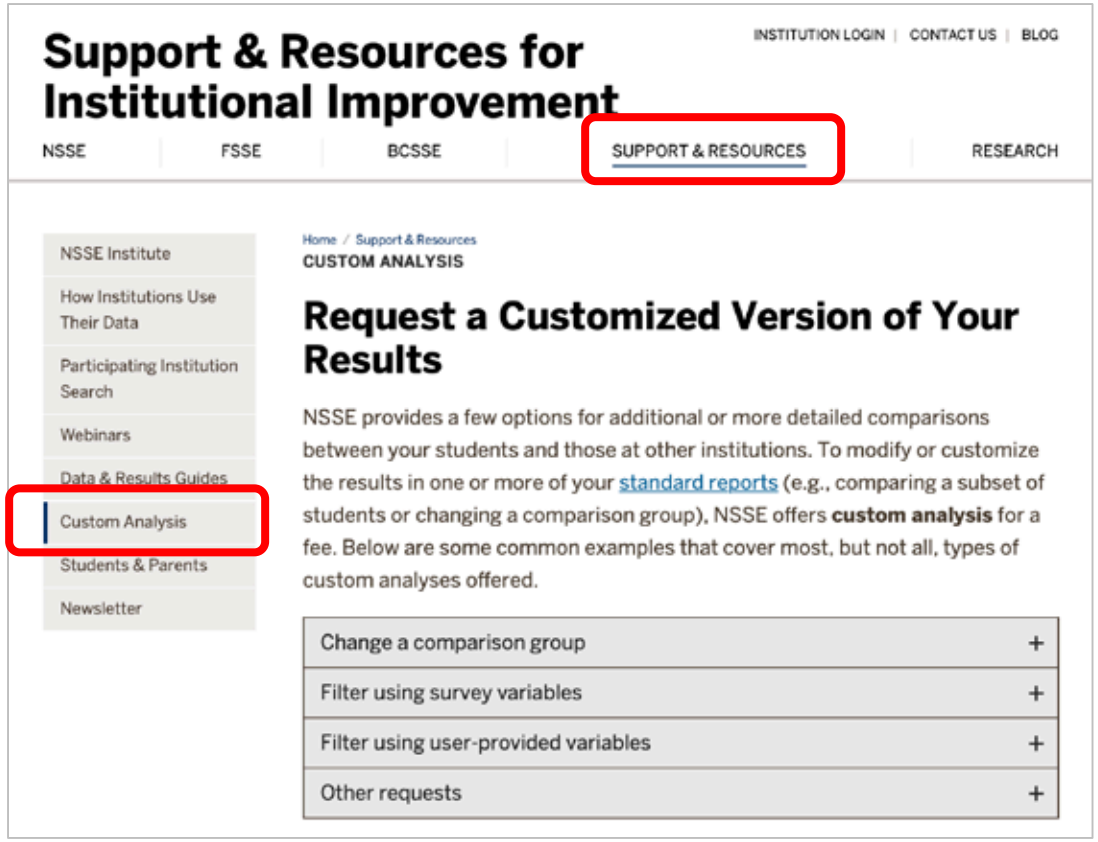


Applying results from BCSSE 2021 and NSSE 2021 to inform institutional improvements

What Were Entering Students Saying?

It feels like COVID stole a year of my life progress and makes me feel like I'm in a place where I don't have resources to progress at the pace I want.

It was difficult to maintain focus and motivation while being online because everyb started slacking, even the teachers

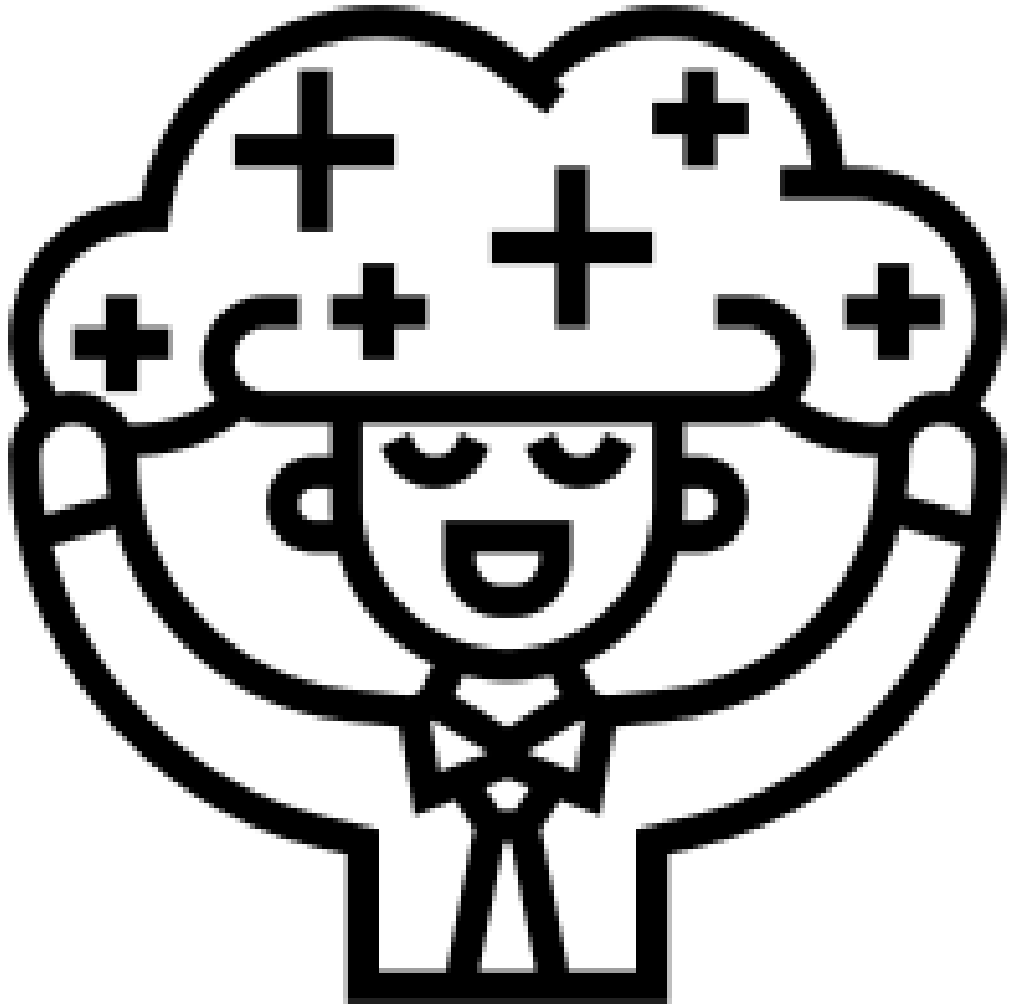
I have not been able grasp the sudden change occurring in m academic career. I was a junior in high school the last time I was in a class room; now I am a university student.

I am constantly getting brain fog and forgetting things.

Covid-19 opened my mind. I just wanted to play soccer, now I want to study and play.

Even With the Challenges, Student Optimism Was High

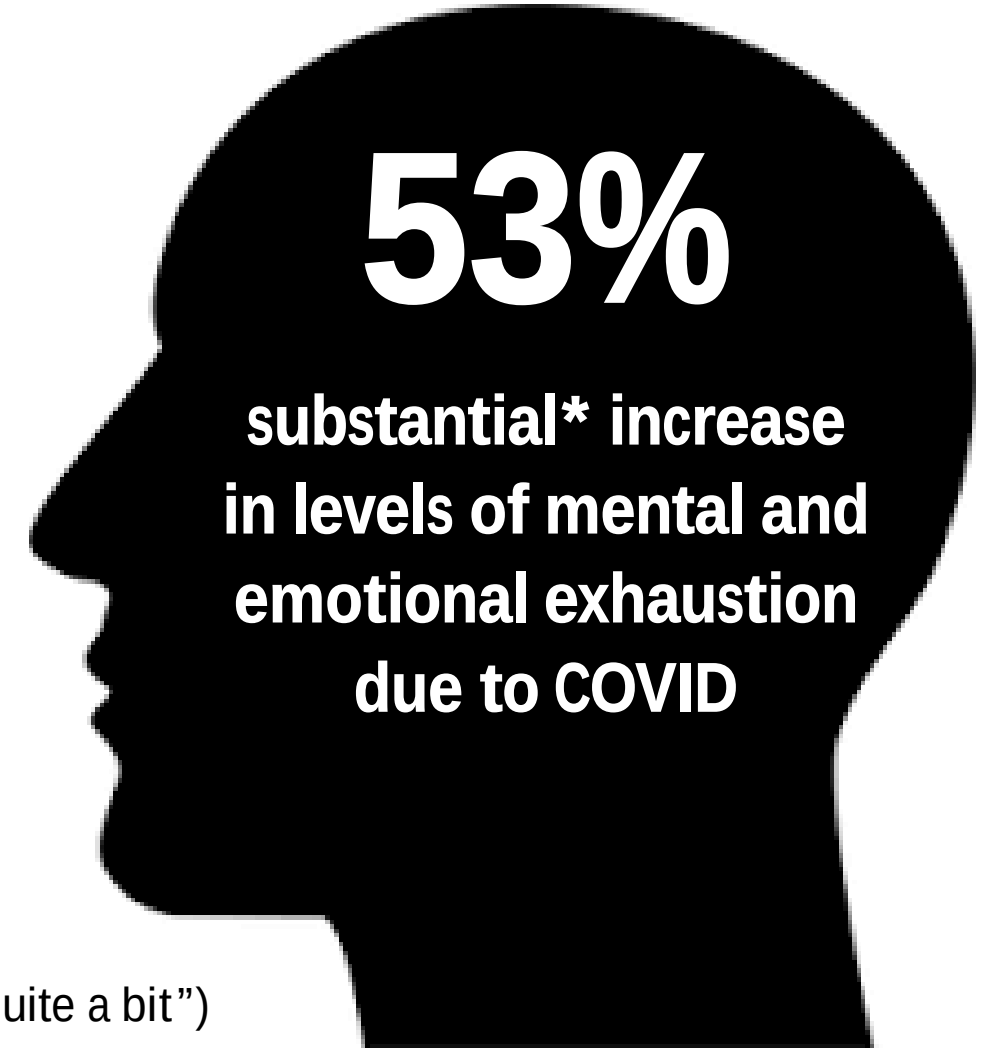
85% entering students optimistic* about having a successful first year



(*Very optimistic + moderately optimistic)

Mental and Emotional Health

Optimism was high, but many students experienced declines in mental and emotional health



(substantial = “very much” or “quite a bit”)

How Did Colleges & Universities Respond?

- **Check-ins:** Collaborated with Student Government Association president to send out a text message to all of our first-year students, asking them how things were going and if they needed anything (*Northern Kentucky University*)

- **Student Conversations:** Used BCSSE data to normalize challenging topics and to more openly discuss with students. For example, saying "did you know that 2/3 of the incoming students shared that they were exhausted, depressed, and feeling lonely. How are things going for you? How have you connected with others on campus?" (*California State University Dominguez Hills*)

- **Enhance Counseling:** Counseling position was not full-time, but is now; Continue to offer counseling remotely as well as in-person; Doing a "Second Year Re-Orientation" prior to classes beginning (*Avila University*)

How Did Colleges & Universities Respond?

- More welcoming messages, events
- Encouraging faculty to create "warm syllabi"
- Frequent check-ins with new students & families
- Deploying more student life supports (counseling, peer mentors)
- Creating safe, fun, more social events

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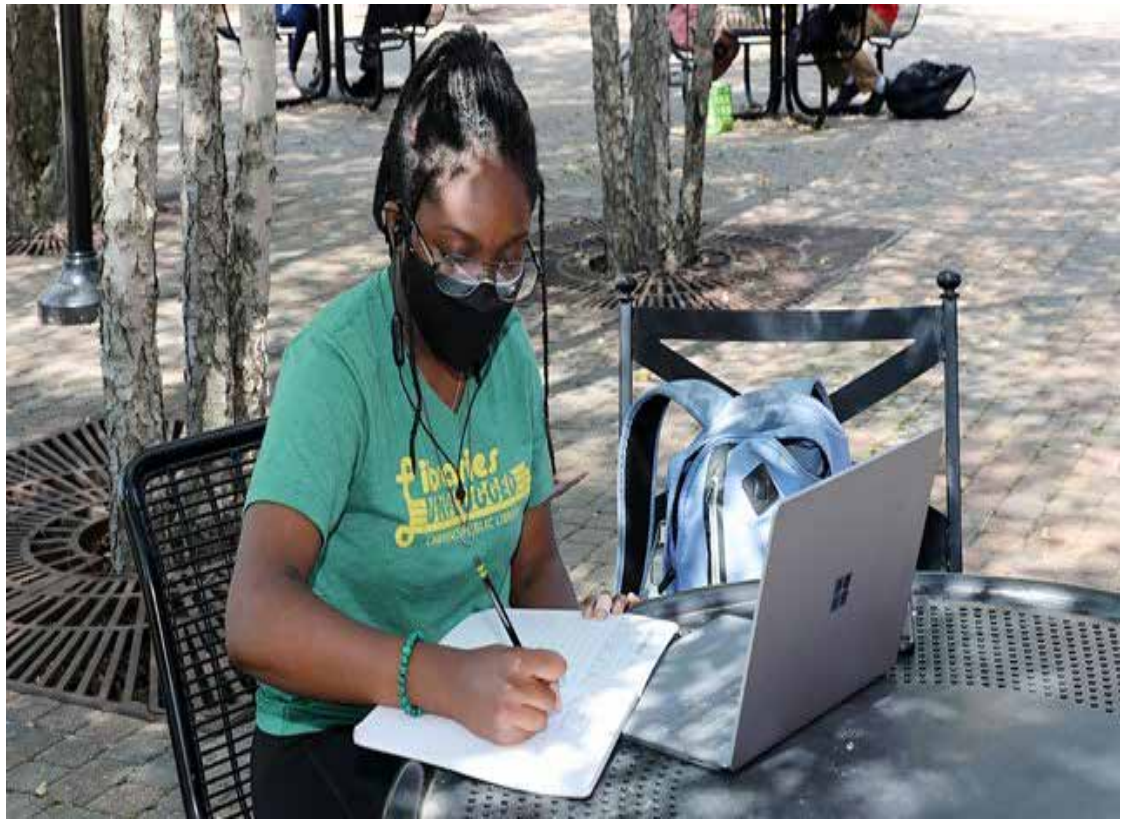
- More welcoming messages, events
- Encouraging faculty to create "warm syllabi"
- Frequent check-ins with new students & families
- Deploying more student life supports (counseling, peer mentors)
- Creating safe, fun, more social events

- **Join us for a webinar on January 26, 2022**
  - **Learn how institutions used BCSSE to support entering Fall 2021 students**
  - **What will the challenges be for Fall 2022 entering students?**
  - **Enhancements/updates to BCSSE**

Explore the data yourself at on BCSSE's new dashboards: nsse.indiana.edu/bcsse

NSSE 2021*

Framing and making good use of NSSE 2021 results



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Framing your NSSE 2021* results

- What did your institution **do well**? What do student comments reveal about what students appreciated? Who were the helpers?
  - Example: increased online support, access to virtual tutors, advisors...
- What **less positive aspects** of the student experience were revealed during the pandemic?
  - Example: emotional well-being, racial inequities, insufficient study space, weak learning support services, underdeveloped peer supports
- What **opportunities** do you see to address _____ (i.e., the HIP Dip? Low Peer Collaboration?)
  - Example: Address pandemic induced pent-up demand for experiential learning – create more on-campus, short term special experiences

Using NSSE to plan sophomore year experiences

Your NSSE 2021 First-Year Respondents are now Sophomores!

Look to your NSSE 21 FY results (items, EIs, comments) for information about what these students experienced and what they might need now, in their second year

- What strengths might you build on?
- Where is there pent-up demand (for HIPs, leadership, collaboration)?
- If your typical FY strong suits are low, how might you bolster?
- What summary information might be good to share with academic departments? Learning support?

More ideas about application to the second year…

- The transition to the second year, “sophomore slump” is real; exacerbated during 2021 with a disrupted FY
- Look at Sense of Belonging results by major field – what might **academic departments** do to promote belonging & help students feel valued?
- Add career exploration opportunities
- Foster peer connections & support

Resources: The Pandemic & NSSE

Archived Webinars (Available On-Demand, including slides and chat)

Your NSSE Institutional Report 2021: Step-by-Step

Bob Gonyea and Jillian Kinzie

September 23, 2021.

Slides

Students Entering College Fall 2021: What Colleges and Universities Should Know

Jim Cole and Jillian Kinzie

August 26, 2021.

Slides

Blog: "Assessment Data Asterisk: What Can NSSE Campuses Learn from Spring 2020 Results?" What results might reveal about institutions, students' experiences, and how this could inform educational design

NSSE Users Experiences, Ideas and Questions

- What ideas do you have for making good use of your NSSE 2021 results?
- Any lingering questions or comments?
- How can NSSE help?

For More Information...

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Ask us questions, let us know how things are going...

Copies of papers and presentations as well as annual reports and other information are available through the website: nsse.indiana.edu