

2005 NSSE and FSSE Summary Report

December 12, 2005

Overview

NSSE

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has been collecting data from students at four-year colleges and universities around the country since 2000 to assess the extent to which students engage in educationally effective activities. The guiding premise is that student participation in these activities at reasonable levels is a meaningful proxy for collegiate quality.

FSSE

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) is a project coordinated by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at Indiana University Bloomington. FSSE (pronounced 'fessie') is designed to measure faculty expectations of student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. The survey also collects information about how faculty members spend their time related to professorial activities and the kinds of learning experiences their institution emphasizes.

1,165 California State University, Sacramento faculty were invited to participate in the 2005 FSSE survey. The survey was completed by 381 faculty members. Faculty invitations were sent via email; they were subsequently asked to respond to the online survey administration.

Faculty were asked to respond to questions based upon one particular undergraduate course section they are teaching or have taught during the current academic year. The findings presented in this report are then tabulated by the lower or upper division undergraduate course selected. This enables comparisons with the responses from first-year or senior students who completed the NSSE.

Methodology

NSSE

985 first-year and senior students were included in the California State University, Sacramento 2005 NSSE sample. These students were randomly selected from data files provided to ETS by the University. 409 students from this sample responded to the survey.

NSSE sampling procedures require sending the survey to an equal number of first-year and senior students with the standard sample size determined by the number of undergraduate students enrolled at the institution. Students had the option of responding via a traditional paper questionnaire or online. The Web+ survey mode includes multiple electronic contacts and one traditional paper questionnaire delivered to a portion of non-respondents.

FSSE

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The findings presented in this report are then tabulated by the lower or upper division undergraduate course selected. This enables comparisons with the responses from first-year or senior students who completed the NSSE.

Findings

Coursework Emphasis

Faculty perceive they place the most emphasis in “analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory” in their coursework and the least emphasis on “memorization of facts, ideas, or methods.” Senior students concur that analysis is emphasized, however, both first-year and senior students perceive that memorization is emphasized to a greater extent than faculty do.

Coursework Emphasis: Percentage Indicating “Very Much” or “Quite a Bit”

	Faculty (LD)*	Students (FY)**	Faculty (UD)*	Students (SR)**	Difference LD Faculty-FY Students	Difference UD Faculty-SR Students
Memorizing facts, ideas or methods from your course and readings	33%	70%	29%	66%	-0.37	-0.37
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory	88%	68%	90%	85%	0.20	0.05
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences	78%	58%	84%	71%	0.20	0.13
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods	70%	57%	69%	65%	0.13	0.04
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	73%	62%	84%	74%	0.11	0.10

*Percentage of faculty who reported that they place quite a bit or very much emphasis in their courses on these aspects

**Distribution of student responses to how much their coursework during the current school year emphasized these aspects quite a bit or very much

Skill Development

Faculty perceives that they primarily structure their course to enable students to think critically and analytically. Students concur that their college experiences contributed highly to their development in this area. Faculty also perceive they structure their courses to enable students to learn effectively on their own. Students, particularly first-year students, don't perceive that their experiences contributed as much to development in this area

Skill Development: Percentage Indicating “Very Much” or “Quite a Bit”

	Faculty (LD)*	Students (FY)**	Faculty (UD)*	Students (SR)**	Difference LD Faculty-FY Students	Difference UD Faculty-SR Students
Writing clearly and effectively	58%	68%	70%	76%	-0.10	-0.06
Speaking clearly and effectively	36%	63%	45%	66%	-0.27	-0.21
Thinking critically and analytically	91%	71%	92%	86%	0.20	0.06
Analyzing quantitative problems	36%	57%	41%	66%	-0.21	-0.25
Using computing and information technology	35%	61%	47%	68%	-0.26	-0.21
Working effectively with others	54%	59%	54%	72%	-0.05	-0.18
Learning effectively on your own	88%	61%	84%	72%	0.27	0.12

*Percentage of faculty who structured their courses quite a bit or very much so that students learn and develop in the following areas

**Distribution of student responses to the extent that their college experience contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development quite a bit or very much

Participation in Activities

Faculty perceives that it is most important for students to participate in experiential learning opportunities and a culminating capstone experience. A larger proportion of first-year students than seniors plan to participate or have participated in experiential learning, and less than 50% of freshmen or seniors plan to participate or have participated in a culminating experience.

Participation in Activities

	Faculty (LD)*	Students (FY)**	Faculty (UD)*	Students (SR)**	Difference LD Faculty-FY Students	Difference UD Faculty-SR Students
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	74%	80%	82%	62%	-0.06	0.20
Community service or volunteer work	52%	69%	56%	66%	-0.17	-0.10
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	52%	49%	45%	27%	0.03	0.18
Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	45%	24%	47%	19%	0.21	0.28
Foreign language coursework	64%	65%	65%	62%	-0.01	0.03
Study abroad	40%	30%	38%	19%	0.10	0.19
Culminating senior experience (capstone course, thesis, project, comprehensive exam, etc.)	81%	41%	77%	44%	0.40	0.33

*Percentage of faculty who reported that it is important or very important that students at their institution participate

**Distribution of student responses to whether they had done or plan to do the activities

Student Development

Understandably, lower division faculty structure their courses so that students can acquire a broad general education and upper division faculty structure their courses so that students can develop real world problem solving skills and acquire job or work related knowledge and skills. Over 70% first-year and senior students perceive that their college experiences contributed to acquiring a broad general education.

Student Development

	Faculty (LD)*	Students (FY)**	Faculty (UD)*	Students (SR)**	Difference LD Faculty-FY Students	Difference UD Faculty-SR Students
Understanding themselves	55%	51%	48%	56%	0.04	-0.08
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	50%	50%	46%	60%	0.00	-0.14
Solving complex real-world problems	60%	46%	63%	52%	0.14	0.11
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	45%	47%	46%	46%	-0.02	0.00
Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	10%	23%	11%	20%	-0.13	-0.09
Acquiring a broad general education	68%	72%	46%	78%	-0.04	-0.32
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	52%	40%	65%	65%	0.12	0.00

*Percentage of faculty who structured their courses quite a bit or very much so that students learn and develop in these areas

**Distribution of student responses to the extent that their college experience contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas

Institutional Emphasis

A majority of both faculty and students perceive that the institution encourages the use of computers in academic work. While about 70% of both first-year and senior students perceive the institution emphasizes requiring students to spend significant amounts of time studying, about 60% of faculty share this perception. 58% of faculty perceive the institution encourages contact among students from different backgrounds, 46% of first-year and only 35% of seniors perceive this to be the case.

Institutional Emphasis: Percentage “Quite a bit” or “Very Much”

	Faculty (LD)*	Students (FY)**	Faculty (UD)*	Students (SR)**	Difference LD Faculty-FY Students	Difference UD Faculty-SR Students
Requiring students to spend significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	60%	71%	58%	72%	-0.11	-0.14
Providing students the support they need to help them succeed academically	64%	62%	67%	56%	0.02	0.11
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social and racial or ethnic backgrounds	58%	46%	58%	35%	0.12	0.23
Helping students cope with their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	27%	24%	28%	15%	0.03	0.13
Providing students the support they need to thrive socially	26%	31%	21%	21%	-0.05	0.00
Encouraging students to attend campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	45%	44%	42%	37%	0.01	0.05
Encouraging students to use computers in their academic work	85%	79%	87%	85%	0.06	0.02

*Percentage of faculty who reported that their institution emphasizes each factor “quite a bit” or “very much”

**Distribution of student responses to the extent that their institution emphasizes each factor “quite a bit” or “very much”

Positive Relationships

More students than faculty perceive that student have positive relationships with other students. Slightly more faculty than students perceive students have positive relationships with faculty. Faculty are much less likely than students to perceive that student relationships with administrative personnel are positive

Positive Relationships: Percentage indicating “Positive” Relationships

	Faculty (LD)*	Students (FY)**	Faculty (UD)*	Students (SR)**	Difference LD Faculty-FY Students	Difference UD Faculty-SR Students
With other students	67%	82%	74%	81%	-0.15	-0.07
With faculty members	70%	64%	77%	74%	0.06	0.03
With administrative personnel	26%	52%	34%	53%	-0.26	-0.19

*Faculty responded to the items above on 7-point scales (e.g., 1 = Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation to 7 = Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging). Responses of 5, 6, or 7 are coded as positive quality.

**Students responded to the items above on 7-point scales (e.g., 1 = Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation to 7 = Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging). Responses of 5, 6, or 7 are coded as positive quality and responses of 1, 2, 3, and 4 are coded as neutral or negative.

Appendix

FSSE Demographics

Participation rate	(33% Full completions, 4% Partial 36% completions)*			
Number of invited faculty members	1165			
Total number of respondents	425			
Number of full completions*	(118 Lower Division, 238 Upper Division, 381 19 Other, 6 Missing course level)			
Number of partial completions*	44			
	Lower Division	Upper Division	Other	Total
Discipline of appointment				
Arts and humanities	33%	23%	12%	26%
Biological science	5%	4%	6%	5%
Business	1%	8%	0%	5%
Education	2%	8%	41%	7%
Engineering	1%	7%	0%	5%
Physical science	16%	5%	12%	9%
Professional	8%	7%	6%	7%
Social science	22%	17%	12%	19%
Other	12%	22%	12%	18%
Rank				
Professor	22%	30%	33%	27%
Associate Professor	3%	9%	11%	7%
Assistant Professor	36%	41%	17%	38%
Instructor	6%	7%	11%	7%
Lecturer	28%	11%	28%	17%
Graduate Teaching Assistant	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	5%	2%	0%	3%
Tenure status				
Tenured	26%	40%	44%	36%
On tenure track but not tenured	36%	39%	17%	37%
Not on tenure track	36%	19%	33%	25%
No tenure system	3%	2%	6%	2%
Highest degree earned				
First professional degree	3%	1%	0%	2%
Doctoral degree	63%	78%	83%	74%
Master's degree	31%	16%	17%	21%
Bachelor's degree	2%	2%	0%	2%
Associate's degree	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2%	2%	0%	2%

"full completion" is a respondent who completed the survey through the FGNWORK item or beyond. A "partial completion" is a respondent who initiated the survey but ended submission prior to FGNWORK. All percentages are based on full completions only.

	Lower	Upper		
	Division	Division	Other	Total
Full-time/Part Time				
Full-time	68%	76%	78%	73%
Part-time	32%	24%	22%	27%
Years teaching				
4 or less	26%	20%	11%	21%
5-9	27%	23%	17%	24%
10-14	9%	17%	28%	15%
15 or more	37%	40%	44%	39%
Age				
34 or younger	19%	16%	6%	17%
35-44	34%	28%	24%	30%
45-54	22%	27%	47%	26%
Older than 54	25%	29%	24%	27%
Gender				
Male	50%	55%	41%	53%
Female	50%	45%	59%	47%
Race / Ethnicity				
American Indian / Native Amer.	2%	0%	0%	1%
Asian Amer. / Pacific Islander	5%	8%	0%	7%
Black or African American	1%	3%	6%	3%
White (non-Hispanic)	70%	66%	78%	68%
Mexican or Mexican American	2%	2%	6%	2%
Puerto Rican	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Hispanic or Latino	0%	1%	0%	1%
Multiracial	2%	5%	6%	4%
Other	4%	3%	6%	3%
Prefer not to respond	15%	12%	0%	12%
Citizenship status				
U.S. citizen, native	82%	80%	100%	82%
U.S. citizen, naturalized	10%	10%	0%	10%
Permanent resident of the U.S. (immigrant visa)	5%	7%	0%	6%
Temporary resident of the U.S. (non-immigrant visa)	3%	2%	0%	2%

NSSE Demographics

		CSU Sacramento	
		FY	SR
Response Rate^a			
Overall		42%	
By Class		33%	50%
NSSE Sample Size ^b		483	496
Sampling Error^c			
Overall		4.7%	
By Class		7.6%	5.8%
Number of Respondents ^b		159	250
Total Population		4,790	2,017
Mode of Completion			
Paper		49%	66%
Web		51%	34%
Gender			
Female		70%	69%
Male		30%	31%
Race/Ethnicity			
Am. Indian/Native American		1%	0%
Asian Am./Pacific Islander		26%	18%
Black/African American		3%	3%
White (non-Hispanic)		38%	47%
Mexican/Mexican American		11%	9%
Puerto Rican		0%	0%
Other Hispanic or Latino		3%	3%
Multiracial		3%	5%
Other		4%	8%
I prefer not to respond		10%	6%
International Student		5%	8%
Class Level		39%	61%
Enrollment Status			
Full-time		95%	87%
Less than full-time		5%	13%
Place of Residence			
On-campus		27%	2%
Off-campus		73%	98%
Transfer Status			
Transfer Students		6%	79%
Age			
Non-Traditional (24 or older)		1%	54%
Traditional (less than 24)		99%	46%

^a Response rate (number of respondents divided by sample size) is adjusted for non-deliverable mailing addresses.

^b Over sampled students are included in institution numbers upon request but not in Consortium, Carnegie, or NSSE 2005 sample numbers.

^c Sampling error is an estimate of the margin by which the 'true' score for your institution on a given item could differ from the reported score. To interpret the sampling error, assume that 60% of your students reply "very often" to a particular item. If the sampling error is +/- 5%, then the true population value is most likely between 55% and 65%.

^d Each number represents the percent of total respondents within the category.