The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is one of the most commonly used assessment tools aimed at gauging levels of student activity on campuses across the United States. NSSE asks first year and senior students to report on various aspects of their college experience, both inside and outside the classroom. Nearly 1,500 colleges and universities across the United States and Canada have used NSSE, so comparisons can easily be made between UND and similar institutions. UND has participated in NSSE during the spring semester of odd-numbered years since 2001. While various NSSE survey questions have been changed, fairly consistent data is available since 2003.

This report will focus on aspects of NSSE that might be of interest to student groups. It will look at trends over the past decade, as well as focus on ways UND is using NSSE results to impact academic and support programming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is student engagement?</th>
<th>NSSE has two companion surveys:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>While there doesn’t exist a clear definition for student engagement, the meaning is generally understood to reflect active student learning practices. The more students study a subject and the more they interact with faculty regarding their coursework, the more likely they are to understand that subject matter and enhanced learning outcomes will be evident. Likewise, the more involved a student is on campus, both within and outside the academic realm, the more “connected” they become to campus and the greater the likelihood they have a positive experience. This will also lead to enhanced learning and increased retention and graduation rates. High levels of engagement leads to greater numbers of successful graduating students.</td>
<td>The <strong>Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)</strong> asks faculty members to report on their impressions of student engagement. This tool allows institutions to compare faculty and student responses to determine similarities and/or difference between what faculty report they perceive and students report what they are experiencing. The <strong>Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)</strong> asks incoming first-year students to reflect on the aspects of engagement they experienced in high school and their expectations for the first year of college. These responses can be combined with first-year NSSE responses to provide a picture of student transition to college, and how their experiences are meeting their expectation. This report will look at various components of both the FSSE and BCSSE alongside NSSE results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The National Survey of Student Engagement results are combined into five benchmark areas. These benchmark areas include:

- **Level of Academic Challenge (LAC):** Including items tied to hours spent preparing for class, number of assigned readings and written papers or reports, and perceived coursework emphasis on analyzing elements, synthesizing information, making judgments about the value of information and applying theories to new situations.

- **Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL):** Asking students about learning in different settings, including asking questions in class, making class presentations, working with classmates, tutoring, and discussing course topics outside of class.

- **Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI):** Interactions with faculty inside and outside the classroom, such as discussing grades or career plans, working with faculty outside of coursework or on research, and receiving prompt feedback from faculty.

- **Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE):** Complementary learning opportunities, including hours spent participating in co-curricular activities, participation in internships, community service, foreign language coursework, and senior capstone projects, and interactions with a diverse mix of students.

- **Supportive Campus Environment (SCE):** the satisfaction students report on the campus environment providing support to succeed both academically and non-academically, and student rating of relationships with other students, faculty, and administrative personnel.

Benchmarks are calculated on a 100-point scale. To achieve a benchmark mean of 100, however, each survey taker would have to record the highest response for each of the benchmark component survey items. Each benchmark is calculated for both first-year and senior respondents. Due to the large population of students taking NSSE, small differences in benchmark mean score will calculate to be statistically significantly different. Institutions, therefore, are encouraged to look at populations within their campus to determine which groups of students might score higher or lower on a particular benchmark.

The following sections of this report look at these various benchmark areas.

Figure 1 shows UND performance on NSSE benchmarks versus select national comparison groups. UND scores indicate the best relative performance in the area of having a Supportive Campus Environment. UND shows the worst (when compared to peer groups) in the area of Enriching Educational Experiences. This stems from UND’s relative lack of diversity among the student population, and the tendency of UND seniors to not be as likely to indicate they have completed internships and study abroad.
University of North Dakota
Benchmark Results from the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Five benchmarks are created from clusters of NSSE questions. The below table summarizes UND's results compared to peer groups. When 2011 scores are compared to 2009, UND first-year scores show improvement while scores for seniors are on the decline. UND's worst performance is in the area of enriching educational experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>UND 2009 Scores</th>
<th>UND</th>
<th>Institutional Peers</th>
<th>Carnegie Peers (RU/H)</th>
<th>Plains Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)</td>
<td>First-Year</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)</td>
<td>First-Year</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)</td>
<td>First-Year</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)</td>
<td>First-Year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)</td>
<td>First-Year</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Indicates UND's score is statistically lower than the comparison group.
- Indicates UND's score is statistically higher than the comparison group.
- 7 of UND's 15 Institutionally defined peers participated in NSSE 2011; 49 RU-H institutions participated (UND's 2010 Carnegie Class); 27 Plains Public institutions participated (including public institutions from IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, & SD)
- ** Indicates an Effect Size greater than 0.20, implying more than a small significance. (Effect size equals mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation.)
While relatively flat, all UND FY benchmark scores show an increase in the 2011 administration over the 2009 benchmark scores. This follows the trend where all 2009 benchmarks increased over 2007 benchmark mean scores.

The benchmark rankings (SCE highest to EEE lowest) is a trend that is consistently seen at all institutions and is driven by the nature of the component survey items.
For UND seniors, benchmark means trended downward in 2011 when compared to 2009 benchmark scores, with SCE being the only item to show an increase. This downward trend may be a one-year anomaly in the data points, as the mean scores for seniors have tended to alternate up and down over time.

As a general rule, senior benchmark scores tend to be higher than that of FY respondents, however comparisons between the two groups are generally discouraged, as the perspectives and expectations of FY and SR students are quite different.
83% of FY respondents report living in dormitory / campus housing, so those responses tend to drive UND’s overall FY survey responses. While the population is small, it is interesting to note those FY respondents living off campus within walking distance of UND tend to score higher on the NSSE benchmarks than on-campus students.

SR respondents living in fraternity or sorority houses tend to score the highest benchmark mean scores, with the exception being SCE.

The “Other” category is primarily made up of those students taking online courses. Fig. 6 presents additional information on these online student responses.
When evaluating the differences between respondents taking primarily online courses versus those on campus, some interesting revelations occur.

It is worth noting that online respondents report little difference with regard to the level of academic challenge benchmark and the supportive campus environment benchmark. This would indicate they feel they are experiencing similar quality of coursework, while at the same time receiving adequate support even though they do not reside on campus.

It is not so surprising to see the online respondents reporting lower benchmark scores for those items requiring personal interaction: ACL, SFI, and EEE. Not being on campus provides few opportunities for students to work together, fewer opportunities to have discussions with faculty, and minimal opportunity to interact with those different from themselves.

Few FY online respondents completed NSSE, therefore their results are not presented. With regard to the SR respondents, 72% of them attend part-time, which is quite different from UND’s student population where just one-fourth attend part-time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>On-Campus</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Academic Challenge</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active &amp; Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching Educational Experiences</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Campus Environment</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 6. UND Senior Benchmark Scores On-campus Versus Online Student Respondents](chart.png)
One positive revelation from the 2011 NSSE is that respondents, both first-year and seniors, are reporting increasing amounts of time being spent preparing for class (Fig. 7). The averages indicate most students spend roughly thirteen to fifteen hours per week on academic preparation on things such as studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, or rehearsing.

While positive things are happening on the academic front, 2011 NSSE results may show some caution with regard to student involvement outside the classroom. Both FY and SR respondents reported spending less time on co-curricular activities, which are defined by NSSE as organizations, publications, student government, fraternities or sororities, and intercollegiate or intramural sports (Fig. 8).

Fig. 9 shows student time spent studying comes close to what faculty expect, yet faculty think students actually spend significantly less time on academic work.

**Figure 7. Reported Hours Spent Preparing for Class**

Mean on 8-point scale

(1= None  2= 1-5 hours per week  3= 6-10 hrs. per week
4= 11-15 hrs. per week  5= 16-20 hrs. per week  6= 21-25 hrs. per week  7= 26-30 hrs. per week  8= more than 30 hrs. per week)

**Figure 8. Reported Hours Spent Participating in Co-Curricular Activities**

Mean on 8-point scale

(1= None  2= 1-5 hours per week  3= 6-10 hrs. per week
4= 11-15 hrs. per week  5= 16-20 hrs. per week  6= 21-25 hrs. per week  7= 26-30 hrs. per week)
Figures 10 and 11 look at reported time spent on these activities as reported on both BCSSE and NSSE. Recall BCSSE is given to incoming students and asks them to report on their high school experience and their college expectation while NSSE asks these same students during spring of their freshman year a similar question.

When asked about their high school experience, most students (71%) report they spend ten or fewer hours preparing for class during high school. When asked what they expect in college, most report an increase, with nearly one-third indicating they plan on spending more than 20 hours per week on academic work. When these students are asked as FY students, the amount they actually study is somewhere between – more than what they reported they did in high school, but significantly less than what they expected as incoming students.

When looking at participation in activities outside the classroom, incoming students report relatively high levels of participation during high school, and they expect to spend less time on these activities once they get to college. However when they are here on campus, the amount of time reported spent on these co-curricular activities is even less than what the incoming student expect. This indicates that UND should not only encourage incoming students to seek opportunities to participate in student organizations but seek ways to make this participation easy.
UND NSSE respondents generally report being happy with the academic advising they receive.

Figure 12 shows slight increases in reported quality of advising over time, while Figs. 13 and 14 compare reported advising at UND being quite similar to that at research universities.
When evaluating the quality of advising, the emphasis placed on faculty advising by each college may result in differing student expectations and student opinions. Figures 15 and 16 below show varying student respondent satisfaction with the advising received. Some positive highlights from first-year students would include Arts and Sciences, which is showing a nice upward trend in the number of students responding the advising they have received is good or excellent. While the College of Education shows high quality advising in the first-year, this represents relatively few respondents and may not be representative of the true atmosphere.

For senior respondents, those from the School of Medicine and Aerospace report the highest quality advising, while Business seniors responded with the lowest level of quality. As a general rule, most colleges are seeing an increase in the level of reported advising quality.
In summarizing student attitudes, NSSE asks respondents two questions: how they evaluate their entire educational experience at UND and if they could start over again, would they go to the same institution they are now attending.

When compared to respondents from research universities with high activity (RU/H), UND respondents show more positive results. Nearly all FY respondents indicate they have a good educational experience at UND.

Figure 17. Entire Educational Experience
(Percent Responding "Excellent" or "Good")

Figure 18. Would You Attend Again?
(Percent Responding "Definitely Yes" or "Probably Yes")
NSSE results from first-year respondents were evaluated with regard to comparing those respondents who returned to UND for their sophomore year in the fall of 2011 and those not returning. Not surprisingly, more of those returning indicate they had an excellent or good experience at UND, and many more indicate they would definitely attend UND again (Fig. 19).

Similarly, those FY respondents who did not return are significantly less likely to indicate on NSSE that they would again choose UND if given the chance to start over (Fig. 20).

Certain survey items reveal these students may not be developing close relationships with their fellow students which may be leading to a certain sense of alienation or not belonging. In particular, students not returning report a lower mean score when asked to rate the quality of their relationships with other students; on a 7-point scale, the mean scores are 5.57 for retained FY students compared to 5.07 for those not retained.

Students not being retained also score a lower benchmark mean score in the Active and Collaborative learning benchmark, with those returning averaging 42.0 on this scale compared to 36.9 for those not returning.
Students are often asked to complete various surveys to assist UND in assessing educational outcomes and student satisfaction. One question that may arise is “Are these results being used?” Two examples of NSSE results driving campus discussions include:

In the Spring 2012 issue of “On Teaching”, published by UND’s Office of Instructional Development, Brian Schill explains the importance of undergraduates participating in research with faculty and provides tips to faculty on how to get students active in their research work. Mr. Schill quotes NSSE to show undergraduates at UND are less likely to report having participated in research with a faculty when compared to national research universities (Fig. 21)

In the Fall of 2009, Provost LeBel requested the formation of a working group on campus to enrich the learning experience for undergraduates at UND. This “Undergraduate Learning Working Group (ULWG), evaluated NSSE, along with other assessment tools, to develop actions that would lead to a fuller undergraduate experience for students.

In particular, the ULWG recommended and implemented the formation of First Year Experience(FYE) courses aimed to support a successful transition to college, foster academic engagement, include core academic content, and meet at least one Essential Studies requirement. These FYE courses were developed and piloted during Fall 2011, and NSSE responses were used to measure differences between those students participating in the FYE courses and those not completing the courses.

![Figure 21. Percent of Senior Respondents Indicating They Have Done Research With Faculty](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) serves as a resource to university decision makers by providing official and consistent data, in a timely manner, that can be used to assess the goals and objectives of the University of North Dakota.

Please visit our website:
http://und.edu/research/institutional-research/

In addition to conducting various survey assessments, OIR tracks official enrollments, student retention, and credit hour production.

OIR also supports UND’s Assessment Committee, and compiles data from the course evaluations (the University Student Assessment of Teaching (USAT) forms) completed each semester.