Summary of Survey Findings
Prepared by members of the University Assessment Committee

During fall semester of every year, members of the University Assessment Committee read results and reports from surveys administered during the previous year. The committee’s aim is to ensure that faculty have a convenient way to learn about the kinds of information available in each of the surveys. Example findings from last year’s surveys, including points likely to be of general faculty interest, are included in the summary below. If you want to know more about any of these surveys, you can use any UND computer to go to the survey page on the Office of Institutional Research website (http://und.edu/research/institutional-research/survey-timelines.cfm). There you will find complete results for the surveys below and for others administered in other years.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

NSSE is a survey that measures student behaviors that have been highly correlated with learning. As such, it helps us understand behaviors that should provide the foundation for learning. It also aids in understanding information about student learning that is collected through other means.

The results suggest that UND is characterized by a supportive campus environment, which includes elements such as “quality of relationships with faculty members,” “quality of relationships with other students,” and “campus environment provides the support students need to succeed academically.” Students’ satisfaction with their overall experience at UND is in the 80% range and the majority of students would re-attend UND if they could start over. Student-faculty interactions also appear to increase over time, with students who are seniors reporting more frequent interactions than students who are freshmen. Overall, students feel that UND is committed to their success.

UND has fallen behind peer institutions in terms of providing students with Enriching Educational Experiences. Enriching Educational Experiences is a category that includes elements such as “participating in co-curricular activities,” “participating in community service or volunteer work,” and “the campus environment encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.” The summary of previous NSSE results suggests that, historically, UND struggles in this area. Satisfaction with advising continues to be an area in which improvements might be made, as students are not highly satisfied in some colleges (although, overall UND is performing at the same level as peer institutions in the area of advising). The results pertaining to Level of Academic Challenge (which includes elements such as “coursework emphasizes synthesis and organization of ideas” and “students work harder than they thought they could to meet instructor expectations”) suggest that students may not feel as challenged academically as we would like.

The results are broken down by college, which could be useful for deans and college curriculum committees (college-specific information is available through OIR’s website). However, it is worth noting that college results might be skewed by the nature of programs offered (for example, some colleges offer more internship opportunities than other colleges).

Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

FSSE is a survey tool that measures the extent to which faculty encourage students to engage in practices understood to be effectively linked with learning outcomes, personal development, student
satisfaction, and graduation; this survey benchmarks UND with other research universities. Moreover, in combination with the results from NSSE, a survey that measures student behaviors that have been highly correlated with student learning, the FSSE reveals trends on campus and/or any disconnects between faculty expectations or perceptions and student-reported experiences.

FSSE results demonstrate that UND faculty members tend to respond similarly to their national counterparts at research universities with regard to their perceptions of student involvement and student engagement. UND faculty respondents indicate they work to include diverse perspectives in their courses; however, they also indicate students aren’t getting enough interaction with diverse populations. Since this tends to be the result of UND’s relative homogenous culture, the institution should continue to work toward a more diverse campus culture.

As a general rule, responses show UND faculty are organizing their courses such that the goals outlined in the Essential Studies program now are being addressed. There is a particular focus on critical and analytical thinking.

UND faculty expect students to spend about six hours per week preparing for a course. Faculty indicate they believe students are spending about one-half this amount of time – or about three hours – actually preparing for class. NSSE results indicate students are spending close to the six hours the faculty expects.

UND faculty respondents indicate they spend more time on student advising and on service work than do their national peers. With regard to advising, UND should ensure faculty have the tools necessary to successfully advise students; the institution should also ensure that faculty are addressing the complete advising picture, including course registration, meeting graduation requirements, and career preparation.

**Sophomore Satisfaction Survey**

As provided in the executive summary of the Sophomore Satisfaction Survey report, these items should interest faculty:

- Large numbers of respondents indicate they spend minimal time on academic work; 78% of respondents report spending less than twenty hours per week preparing for class, with 13% reporting less than six hours per week.
- All sophomores responding indicate they are attending college to obtain a degree and increase their knowledge and understanding in an academic field. Career development goals are also high, with 95% indicating a goal of their college attendance is to improve knowledge for a career, and 93% to formulate long-term career goals.
- Sophomores responding report increasing satisfaction with the academic advising they are receiving. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents are satisfied with their academic advising, while 70% are satisfied with the career advising received. For the first time, the 2012 survey asked sophomore satisfaction with the advising they receive in general education requirements, and 64% indicate they are satisfied or very satisfied.
- Text messaging and social network sites continue to be popular with sophomores – more so than administrators may be aware. Two-thirds of sophomore respondents indicate they use text messaging ten or more times daily. Ninety-seven percent of sophomore respondents indicate they use social networking sites, with most (86%) using these sites daily.
First-Year Experience Survey

The First-Year Experience (FYE) Survey is designed to gather information from students enrolled or participating in academic and non-academic FYE courses and groups. The survey addresses extra-curricular activities, institutional integration, and engagement with learning practices. The FYE courses and groups include FYE pilot sections, Honors courses, University Life courses, the Integrated Studies Program, and the College of Engineering and Mines living/learning community.

Findings from the survey reveal that there are discernible differences by type of FYE course/group in students’ levels of institutional integration (peer group interactions, interactions with faculty, level of faculty concern with student development and teaching, academic and intellectual development, institutional and goal commitments) and engagement (active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, level of academic challenge). For example, students in the Honors/ISP cohort are more “integrated” and “engaged” than their Fall 2011 FYE peers. Students in the FYE pilot cohort are more “integrated”/“engaged” than the students in UNIV 101. The FYE pilot students felt their experiences were at least, and in some cases more, challenging than either the ISP/Honors or the U-Life cohorts. Overall, students expected to be more academically engaged in the first year than they were, suggesting that there is an opportunity to engage students in intellectually stimulating activities as early as possible in their college careers.

Essential Studies portion of the USAT

Summary totals from the Essential Studies questions on the Fall 2011-Spring 2012 USAT forms show a positive picture of student perceptions of their learning around ES goals. Regardless of breadth area, students typically scored their learning above the mid-point of 2.0 (typically scoring themselves in the 3.0 to 3.5 range). That does, however, still leave room for improvement on the learning outcomes emphasized in the various ES courses.

Two findings related to breadth areas are particularly of interest. First, it’s clear that in many cases, the goals most frequently identified as well-learned within an ES course make sense given the breadth area of the course. One example is the clear emphasis on quantitative reasoning and critical thinking indicated by students taking courses within the Math/Science/Technology area. Second, it was good to see that Social-Cultural Diversity, an area which had been identified as far too weakly learned within the old GE program, is one of two goals frequently cited by students as emphasized in courses within the Social Science area. Furthermore, students score their learning in Diversity quite highly (3.5 on a 4.0 scale in Fall 2011, 3.4 in Spring 2012).

However, the summary information also suggests that a substantial number of students are not fully understanding the questions or perhaps not understanding the ES program generally. For example, courses in the Communication breadth area are required to address the communication goal, but students often identify a different goal (most often critical or creative thinking) as the ES goal addressed in a communication course. Another example of student confusion occurs in students misidentifying courses as capstones. If these issues can be addressed through form revision or through greater attention to clarity and explanation on the part of faculty, information generated through the ES questions on the USAT form will be more useful both for the ES program and for faculty in individual ES courses.