

OIR Assessment Tool
National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) 2011
October 11, 2012

Purpose of Survey: *As noted in the executive summary the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) “measures the extent to which students engage in practices understood to be effectively linked with learning outcomes, personal development, student satisfaction, and graduation (p. i).”*

1. The data collected addresses information relating to what university group or situation? (I.e., from whom is the university collecting this information? Whose perceptions are we reading?)

The data are collected from first year and senior undergraduate students.

2. How often is this tool used and analyzed? What time of year?

The survey is administered every two years in the spring.

3. To whom does the assessment group believe that an analysis of this report would be beneficial? In other words, what individuals, departments, or programs need this information in order to have reliable information to ‘close the loop’ on their assessment process?

Since many of the benchmarks discussed in the NSSE are directly tied to the “Exceptional UND initiative,” all of UND should be interested in the results. In particular, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans of all colleges, the Dean of Students, the Vice President of Student Affairs, those overseeing first year programs, the Center for Community Engagement, and International Programs would benefit from an analysis of this report.

4. What UND student learning goals are assessed?

- a. Use Y, N, ? to indicate whether the instrument collects data relevant to each of the following Institutional and/or General Education goals:

☐Y___ 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)

☐Y___ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)

☐?___ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)

☐N___ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)

☐?___ 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)

☐Y___ 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)

☐N___ 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)

☐Y___ 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

- b. Additional goals

5. What are the findings/results of this tool?

- a. From Question 4a above: For the goals with a Y or ?, describe the relevant findings/results from this survey:

For all of the above goals the survey asks students questions about how often they participate in certain types of activities or behaviors that provide a context in which student learning is most likely to take place. In other words, student learning is not directly or even indirectly assessed. As such, the results help us to understand the context in which learning occurs, but they do not directly assess the goals noted above.

- b. Other findings/results

Please see 11 below.

6. Is this tool a direct measure, an indirect measure, or a non-measure of student learning?

The NSSE is a non-measure of student learning, however, it does provide excellent information regarding behaviors that are central to student learning.

7. Does this tool empower individuals or the university to better understand and assess student learning at the university? If so, how?

The NSSE is a non-measure of student learning, but it highly useful in terms of understanding behaviors that provide a foundation for student learning to take place. Along these lines, it provides us with the ability to understand the levels of student learning that are uncovered using other survey instruments. For example, if a deficit in student learning is discovered, then the results from the NSSE may be able to help us pinpoint why such a deficit might be occurring. It does so by providing us with information regarding behaviors that are central to student learning. The NSSE also has the potential to allow us also to acknowledge different learning styles that students exhibit on campus, especially in terms of the specific types of activities that students are engaged in.

8. Are there recommendations for changes (e.g., additional or better tools, different means of analysis, etc.) that might improve the university's ability to use this information?

We note that response rates are central to the level of confidence we can have in the results of any survey. OIR has been successful in improving the response rates of the NSSE, and we encourage a continued commitment to enhancing performance in this area.

9. What value does the committee place on this tool for helping to achieve the university's assessment plan?

The NSSE is a useful tool that provides us with information related to behaviors that provide a foundation for student learning. As such, the NSSE helps us to understand information regarding student learning that is collected by other means. Therefore, the NSSE is helpful in achieving UND's assessment goals.

10. Review Summary (one or two sentences).

The NSSE is not a direct measure, but it has great value in terms of learning about student behaviors that provide a foundation for achieving student-learning goals at UND. It is also helpful in understanding information regarding student learning that is collected by other means.

11. What might faculty want to know about this survey? *(Please provide one to two paragraphs describing some findings from this survey. These paragraphs will be forwarded to academic departments as a means of keeping them informed about the existence of information that might be useful to them.)*

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

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, 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 Enriching Educational Experiences. Enriching educational experiences includes elements such as participating in co-curricular activities, participating in community service or volunteer work, and the campus environment encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds. The summary of the 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 emphasizing synthesis and organization of ideas and students working 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 might provide useful information for colleges (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).

12. What results about this study would students find interesting?
- We are proud that students feel supported at UND and that UND cares about their success. Most students would attend UND again if they could start over.*
 - UND could improve on providing high-impact learning activities, such as internships, travel abroad, and student-faculty research projects. Students at other universities are taking advantage of these opportunities more than students at UND. These types of experiences make you more competitive for jobs, so take the extra initiative to participate in them.*
 - College-level data is available if you would like to learn more about your college.*

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Form revised: 09/06/12