

OIR Assessment Tool
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement
Distributed March 2007 -- Reported November 2007

Purpose of Survey: *'The survey measures faculty members' 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 professional activities and the kinds of learning experience their institution emphasizes.'*

1. The data collected addresses information relating to what university group or situation?

The survey explores student engagement in educational practices from the faculty's perspective, i.e., the educational activities which faculty perceive to be meaningful. It also addresses the length of time faculty are engaged in various teaching, research, and service activities associated with student learning.

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

The FSSE was first administered at UND in 2003. It was most recently distributed in March 2007.

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?

Faculty may find the results meaningful as they engage in curriculum and course planning activities. An awareness of educational strategies meaningful to other faculty and to students (via the NSSE) would encourage reflection on current practice and promote excellence in teaching.

Faculty may compare their own perceptions to the perceptions of 1) UND faculty responding in 2007 and 2003, and 2) faculty from other Doctoral Research – High institutions (n=162 in 2007). Faculty may also be interested the comparison of faculty perceptions (FSSE) to student perceptions (NSSE: National Survey of Student Engagement; UND 2007).

Administrators and personnel in non-academic units may find the results meaningful as they seek to understand student experiences, provide infrastructure, and develop programming (such as service learning, study abroad and co-curricular opportunities).

4. Who is responsible to provide the assessment group the information for this report?

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR).

5. What UND student learning goals are assessed?

Again, student learning is not addressed. Strategies to enhance the achievement of goals are reported.

The survey is intended to measure faculty perceptions of student engagement in activities which are 'empirically linked to student learning and development.' The activities addressed by the survey include Enriching Educational Experiences; Quality of Relationships; Institutional Emphasis on Aspects of Student Learning; and Time Usage. Questions regarding a particular course addressed the Course Academic Experiences; Course Intellectual Engagement; Course Reading and Writing Activities; Course Problem Sets; Student Course Preparation; Course Activities; Course Class Time Use; Coursework Challenges Student; Emphasis on Mental Activities; and Coursework Contributing to Educational and Personal Growth

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

Just a few of the finding are reported as examples. Faculty and administrators are encouraged to access the full report.

Since 2003, faculty report greater importance on students experiencing community service, research outside of program requirements, study abroad, foreign language coursework, and a culminating senior experience. Upper division faculty report increased importance on a student practicum, internship, co-op or clinical assignment.

Upper division faculty report greater amounts of time spent on research and scholarly activities, advising, and working with student outside of coursework than do lower division faculty. Lower division faculty spend more time preparing for class, teaching, and grading papers.

Interactions between faculty and students relative to coursework or career choices are minimally changed since 2003.

In 2007, faculty reported greater emphasis on analyzing, synthesizing, making judgments, and applying theories than was reported in 2003.

In 2007, faculty reported they mostly structure their courses to enhance student development in thinking critically and analytically, and in learning effectively on their own. Increases since 2003 are noted in faculty structuring coursework to enhance student learning in analyzing quantitative problems, using computing and information technology, acquiring job or work-related knowledge, solving complex real-world problems, and working effectively with others.

Faculty, in general, report enriching educational experiences to be more important than the percentage of students planning to complete the activity. An exception to this is in community service activities.

Students report greater levels of high-quality relationships than faculty feel they have. Both faculty and student perceptions are that students have fewer high-quality relationships in 2007 than in 2003.

7. What evidence is provided or should be provided to support the group's findings?

As faculty review the findings of the FSSE and NSSE, they should be encouraged to interpret and apply the findings relative to their disciplines, students, and outcomes assessment data. Educational strategies relevant to their settings will be maximized.

8. What evidence does the assessment group believe should be collected/compiled for the focused visit or the next accreditation visit?

No additional evidence is necessary.

Information relative to the usefulness of the results would be beneficial, i.e., how are the results used in decision making at UND. Do faculty routinely access this information? Do administrators use the information in the development of programs and services? Does the NDUS use the data?

And, as per the November 2007 UAC review of NSSE findings: 'This is not about preparing for the focused visit or about accreditation – it's about being more responsible to our students (and about helping them understand how to be more responsible for themselves, where appropriate).'

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

The FSSE is a non-measure of student learning.

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

Faculty may have a better understanding of students' approach to learning, and the importance that students place on activities intended to foster learning. Educational practices and student learning and development may be enhanced.

11. Is there a better way to obtain or report the data to be analyzed?

The chosen instrument is used across the nation and across years, facilitating comparisons between and within institutions. UND's report is clearly written, with text, tables, graphs, and figures to assist the readers' understandings. The executive summary provides a snapshot of the results; the full report is available upon request. Additional information/analysis is also available through OIR should an individual or department have additional needs.

12. At what level of assessment is the tool being used; beginning level, making progress level, or maturing stage of continuous improvement? Is there any evidence to support the assessment group's deduction?

Making progress. Two sets of UND data are available, and comparisons are made between years and between UND and other Doctoral Research High institutions. The results from 2003 and 2007 have been disseminated. It is unknown if the results have been used in any closing the loop activities at the individual, departmental, and/or university level.

13. Does the tool reflect a culture of assessment at UND?

Yes. The results help educators and administrators understand students' perceptions and engagements, facilitating data-driven decisions for teaching and learning activities.

14. Does the tool need increased university or administrative support or faculty involvement in order to make it more useable or effective?

It would seem that University and administrative support is present. Use of the results is dependent upon faculty and administration finding meaning within in the results.

15. Does the assessment group need any administrative insight or guidance in order to analyze the tool effectively?

No, not for analysis.

Questions remain:

- Are the results used for data driven decisions?*
- The response rate is 43%; descriptive results identify the 'what is,' but are the results typical or atypical within and across institutions?*
- The FSSE and NSSE can be compared in a superficial manner (descriptive statistics), but what are the true meanings behind similarities and differences? (Individual student data is not tied to individual faculty data – students in a particular course addressed by a faculty member are not necessarily the students responding on the NSSE.)*
- Finally, have the results of the 2003 FSSE been used in institutional decision-making, and how were they used? How will the 2007 results be used?*

Answers to the above questions are unknown by these reviewers.

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

This is institutional level assessment.

17. Are there findings which may be of potential interest to other parties on campus? Who should be encouraged to access these findings?

It is unclear as to the current recipients of the executive summary and/or full report. Academic and non-academic units which provide curricula promoting student learning and development would find the reports interesting.

18. Review Summary

This instrument does not assess student learning and development. Individuals and departments which provide curricula and activities promoting student learning and development would find the results useful as they plan and develop of their teaching and learning episodes.

19. Recommendations of the Reviewers

The FSSE does not measure student learning and development. If the University Assessment Committee is the only entity reading the findings, its usefulness is limited. If other persons on campus (administrators, developers of curricula, faculty) find the information useful, it could be continued for their purposes. Input from other users/stakeholders should be elicited.

Educators and administrators at all levels, academic and non-academic, should be encouraged to access the findings.

As with the NSSE, the University should 'Discuss options for generating greater institution-wide awareness of findings.'

20. (As the summary and note-worthy items are relayed to other stakeholders, what meaning do they find in the survey results? How do they use the results in decision making (examples are helpful); how is the information used to 'close the loop?')

21. (Reports from the stakeholder(s) re this Assessment Tool is (are) due: _____)

22. (The Assessment Committee's final summary as to the usefulness of the Assessment Tool, university-wide.)

Submitted by: Renee Mabey, Jon Jackson
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