

OIR Assessment Tool
2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Spring , 2009
November 30, 2009

Purpose of Survey: *As noted in the executive summary, this survey “measures the extent to which students engage in practices understood to be effectively linked with learning outcomes, personal development, student satisfaction, and graduation” (p.3)*

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?) *First year and senior year students complete this survey. 1,873 first year students and 1,453 senior students were surveyed. The response rate was 29%*
2. How often is this tool used and analyzed? What time of year? *According to the Office of Institutional Research website, the NSSE is used and analyzed every two years.*
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? *Although it is unclear how they might use the information, it should be of interest to college deans, department chairs (findings were disaggregated by college and although the sample sizes were quite small, some insight might be drawn from results especially when considered along-side related assessment data collected and analyzed by an individual college), multicultural student services, and the Director of the Memorial Union. Please refer to the NSSE report for information at the college level.*
4. Are there findings which may be of potential interest to other parties on campus? Who should be encouraged to access these findings? *This information should be of interest to the Vice President for Student and Outreach Services, Dean of Students, and student advisement offices within the university and colleges*
5. Who is responsible to provide the assessment group the information for this report? *Office of Institutional Research*
6. 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:

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

___?___ 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”)

___N___ 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”)

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

b. Additional goals

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

- a. From Question 5a above: For the goals with a Y or ?, describe the relevant findings/results from this survey:

*Although the survey does not directly measure student learning, the following Benchmark aligns with Goal 2 and to a lesser extent Goal 3: **Level of Academic Challenge** (an institution’s ability to establish a challenging intellectual and creative environment for students). Four of the nine items identified in the survey address goals of analysis, synthesis, organizing, making judgments and applying theories or concepts to new situations. Both first years and seniors report a greater emphasis in coursework in the area of critical thinking in 2009 than in 2007. When compared to other institutions, fewer first years and seniors report experiencing an emphasis on synthesizing and organizing in their coursework than their peers in RU/H institutions. It is important to note that UND results for this benchmark for first-years were statistically significantly lower than their counterparts at research universities with high activity; however, the minimal effect size revealed that the practical significance of the difference is small. Also student means for seniors was not statistically significant.*

*Although the survey does not directly measure student learning, the following Benchmark aligns to some extent with Goal 1: **Active and Collaborative Learning** (the level at which students are asked to collaborate with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material). Both first years and seniors report greater efforts in the area of **Active and Collaborative Learning** in 2009 than in 2007. When compared to other institutions, UND first years are*

statistically significantly behind their peers at RU/H institutions; however, the difference for seniors is not statistically significant.

Although the survey does not directly measure student learning, the following Benchmark aligns to some extent with Goal 6: **Enriching Educational Experiences** (an institution's ability to foster complementary learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to augment academic programs). Three of the eleven items on this part of the survey address students' interactions with from different economic, social, racial or ethnic backgrounds. Both first years and seniors report greater efforts in the area of Enriching Educational Experiences in 2009 than in 2007; however, findings related to questions around contact with those of a different race or ethnicity revealed that students were unlikely to engage in those conversations and did not feel an institutional emphasis existed for them to do so. When compared to other institutions, UND first years and seniors lag behind their peers RU/H institutions.

b. Other findings/results

The following Benchmark may be of interest to faculty, chairs and Deans: **Student Interactions with Faculty Members** (the extent to which students interact with faculty members inside and outside of the classroom). Nine items addressed students' perspectives related to interactions. Benchmark scores for this item have increased in 2009 over those in 2007, but lag behind other RU/H institutions. More students reported discussing grades and career plans with faculty or advisors than in 2007.

The following Benchmark may be of interest to the Vice President for Student and Outreach Services, Dean of Students, the Director of the Memorial Union, and student advisement offices within the university and colleges: **Supportive Campus Environment** (the extent to which institutions cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus). Six items addressed students' perspectives related to interactions. Benchmark scores for this item have increased slightly in 2009 over those in 2007, and are equivalent with other RU/H institutions. Generally students report high quality relationships with students, faculty and staff; however students were less positive about UND helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities.

8. What evidence is provided or should be provided to support the results of the survey? The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was constructed to parallel the (NSSE) and may provide additional evidence to support the results of this survey.

9. What evidence does the assessment group believe should be collected/compiled for the next accreditation visit? *See # 8 above.*
10. Is this tool a direct measure, an indirect measure, or a non-measure of student learning? *This is non-measure of student learning.*
11. Does this tool empower individuals or the university to better understand and assess student learning at the university? If so, how? *The tool may empower individuals or the university to understand the environment in which student learning may occur. It is not in itself a measure of student learning.*
12. Is there a better way to obtain or report the data to be analyzed? *No*
13. Does the tool reflect a culture of assessment at UND? *Yes*
14. Does the tool need increased university or administrative support or faculty involvement in order to make it more useable or effective? *No*
15. Does the assessment group need any administrative insight or guidance in order to analyze the tool effectively? *No*
16. What value does the committee place on this tool for helping to achieve the university's assessment plan? *This tool holds value for those groups wishing to understand student perspectives related to the five benchmarks Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative, Student Interactions with Faculty Members, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. It may supplement other more direct assessment measures.*
17. Review Summary (one or two sentences)
UND's benchmark scores have improved over the last two years in all benchmark; however, UND scores are lower than those recorded by institutional peers (<http://www.und.edu/dept/datacol/peer/>) and Carnegie classification peers.
18. Recommendations of the Reviewers: *A notice should be sent to Department Chairs, Deans, and other administrators who regularly assess student perceptions of learning and campus climate at UND about the availability of the survey.*
19. 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.)

Results of the NSSE survey provides a general picture of student perceptions in five board categories Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative, Student Interactions with Faculty Members, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. Additional findings are disaggregated by college although sample sizes are small. The population surveyed includes first-year students and those in their senior year at UND and at peer institutions. The overall return rate was 29%.

Although information presented in the NESSE report will be of interest to a variety of groups on campus, it is important to remember that surveys are imprecise measures and findings are often “biased in such a way that puts the student in a good light” (Do college student surveys have any validity? Paper presented at the 2009 meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education Stephen R. Porter). Furthermore, as reported in the same paper, students do not all interpret the questions the same way, or the same way that instructors interpret them. Given this, the most significant results may be the changes that occur from one reporting period to another. Consequently, it makes sense to consider the report’s findings along with additional, perhaps more direct assessments.

*Overall, UND’s 2009 mean benchmark scores have improved over the mean benchmark scores recorded in 2007. These results will be seen in subsequent sections of this report. UND continues to lag the mean benchmark scores recorded by other comparable institutions, including UND’s institutional peers, UND’s Carnegie classification peers (RU/H institutions), and the entire population of participants in NSSE 2009. UND scores strongest on the benchmark area **Supportive Campus Environment**. UND scores weakest on the **Enriching Educational Experiences** benchmark. UND first year students tend to lag their peers at comparable institutions more so than UND senior students, with first year students significantly behind their Carnegie peers in four out of five benchmarks. UND senior students significantly lag their Carnegie peers in just one benchmark area, **Enriching Educational Experiences**. (Information downloaded from: <http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/datacol/reports/subFolder/NSSE2009/nsse2009.pdf>).). Comparisons with other institutions, however, must be made with caution because differences may derive from differences in institutions or from differences in student populations – NSSE data does not allow distinguishing these two effects.*

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Form revised: 11/2/09