

**OIR Assessment Tool**  
**Survey Title and Data Collection Year**  
**Date of Review**

Purpose of Survey: *Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement (BCSSE)*

*The BCSSE provides information that can be a baseline for comparison with NSSE data (collected from first year and senior students). Students answer questions about their high school academic engagement behaviors and their expectations for university academic engagement behaviors.*

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?)

*This is a survey of incoming first-year students, completed in the summer before they begin classes on campus.*

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

*Survey results reviewed were from summer 2010. This was the first time the BCSSE was administered at UND so it has not yet been built into a regular rotation. It must be administered in the summer and data analysis occurs during the following academic year.*

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?

*This information should be especially useful to those involved in teaching, planning, or overseeing First Year Experience opportunities of various sorts. Academic departments, especially those serving significant numbers of first-year students, may also be interested in understanding that student population better.*

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)

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ 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...”)

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ 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

*The survey provides information about how student time is spent – not an intended learning outcome, but still useful for understanding students. It also provides interesting information that documents one quite significant difference between incoming UND students and students elsewhere: they will finance a much greater part of their education through loans and a smaller amount through parents/family or through scholarships/grants.*

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:

*Examples of findings for the six items designated with Y are as follows:*

*Communication – Fewer UND students than student elsewhere expect that they will ask questions of faculty. They come to UND with writing experiences which are quite similar to those of peers at other institutions. They have done less assigned reading than peers elsewhere.*

*Critical Thinking - UND students report less preparation in the area of critical and creative thinking than do students elsewhere.*

*Quantitative Reasoning – Students arrive at UND with a less strong background in mathematics than do students at comparable institutions.*

*Diversity – Compared to students elsewhere, students arrive at UND with fewer experiences with diversity and they anticipate having fewer such experiences during college.*

*Lifelong Learning – Students coming to UND describe themselves as less committed to persisting in the face of difficult challenges and they have somewhat lower expectations that they will be academically engaged.*

*Service/citizenship – Students arriving at UND have generally been quite involved in volunteering and expect to continue to do so.*

- b. Other findings/results

*These findings and others from the BCSSE are worth noting. However, it's also worth noting that BCSSE findings derive statistical significance from very small differences between UND students and those elsewhere due to the very large sample size overall. The large sample size allows small but persistent differences to be regarded as "real" (i.e., statistically significant). Despite the reality of the differences, they may not be especially meaningful (i.e., our entering students are not dramatically less prepared or otherwise less likely to succeed than students elsewhere). It remains clear, however, that there is room for improvement in engagement behaviors during their time on campus, and BCSSE findings suggest that helping students grow in those areas may be an important step toward success at the university.*

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

*The findings are not particularly relevant for accreditation except to the degree that they, like other pre-college and early college surveys (e.g., the CSI, the NSSE) support the need for current efforts to strengthen the first-year of college. Thus UND's actions in this area might be worth noting as an attempt to close the loop on findings that indicate a need for more emphasis on helping first-year students make a successful transition to the university.*

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

*This is a non-measure of student learning and in fact students take the test before they have been on campus to accomplish any learning. However, it is useful for understanding learning since it provides indirect evidence of behaviors that are linked with learning (and with some of UND's institutional and ES goals specifically) and thus may be a baseline for other assessments of those behaviors that occur once students are on campus.*

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

*In conjunction with other tools, the BCSSE provides information that can be used to understand who our students are as they arrive on campus to then to identify the degree to which we are able to improve academic engagement behaviors during the first year of college.*

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

*If numbers are sufficient to make findings meaningful, it would be interesting to see breakdowns for students in various majors or groups of majors (e.g., undecideds, STEM majors, aerospace majors, health care majors, etc.). That might make findings actionable for more programs on campus.*

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

*The information is available but, as always, institutional resources are necessary to support actions that might be taken in response to the findings.*

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

*No.*

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

*This is a useful tool, especially because of the alignment with the NSSE and because of the links between survey items and academic engagement behaviors – which are those found to be linked to learning.*

18. Review Summary (one or two sentences)

*The BCSSE provides information about academic engagement behaviors of entering first-year UND students and students at similar institutions elsewhere. Students self-report on high school engagement behaviors and describe their expectations for participation in engagement behaviors during college.*

19. Recommendations of the Reviewers

*If this survey is used again, we would recommend, if possible, building it into the Getting Started program in order to achieve the best possible response rates (the rate was 27%, which is not a particularly bad rate for a survey; but a higher rate would allow findings to be parsed by academic program, e.g., thereby potentially getting more value for the effort).*

20. 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.)

*The Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement is a survey administered to incoming students during the summer prior to arrival at the UND campus. Students are asked to self-report on a variety of topics but the primary focus is on academic engagement behaviors which have been linked to success in college and student learning. Students are asked, for example, about past behaviors including asking questions in class, working with other students on projects, making class presentations, discussing work with a teacher, preparing multiple drafts of papers, and discussing academic ideas outside of class. They are also asked about their previous diversity experiences and*

*previous uses of time. For each topic, students not only report on past behaviors but also indicate their expectations for college.*

*The survey reveals that entering UND students describe themselves as less likely to anticipate academically engaged college behaviors, less likely to anticipate persevering academically in the face of difficulties, and less academically prepared than peers at similar institutions. Although these differences are statistically significant because of the large sample size, most differences between entering UND students and entering students at other institutions are not dramatic on a percentage difference. Areas of interest where differences are larger include preparation in mathematics (calculus and statistics) and amount of assigned reading done during high school. It is also worth noting that UND students anticipate needing to rely more on loans and less on grants/scholarships or parents/family than do students at similar institutions.*

*Information from this survey is likely to be of high interest for anyone who routinely teaches first-year students, especially those who teach classes where such students predominate. However, anyone who is interested in improving undergraduate learning at UND will find useful food for thought in the results of this survey.*

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