

OIR Assessment Tool
BCSSE – administered in Summer 2011
October 11, 2013

Purpose of Survey:

The Beginning College Survey for Student Engagement (BCSSE) is designed to predict student engagement in college based on high school experiences and attitudes toward college.

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 BCSSE is administered to entering first-year students during summer orientation prior to enrollment.

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

Although designed by the same people as the NSSE and FSSE, the BCSSE is a newer survey and UND started using it in the summer of 2010. It was administered in both the summers of 2010 and 2011. It was not used in the summer of 2012, but was administered again in summer of 2013.

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 very useful to anyone needing to understand entering students either to provide services (e.g., directors and administrators within the Division of Student Services) or to provide academic programs in which large numbers of entering students enroll (e.g., directors of Essential Studies, composition, Honors, FYEs, FYS programs). The information should also be useful to those who plan and engage in student recruitment in terms of understanding the population of students who actually enroll at UND. Finally, those who are interested in institutional outcomes (e.g., involved in retention programming and oversight) may find it useful to use BCSSE to provide baseline data about entering students as part of understanding their experiences and perceptions as they near graduation.

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 Essential Studies 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”)

____ **Y** ____ 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

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

- a. From Question 4a above: For the goals with a Y, describe the relevant findings/results from this survey:
b. Other findings/results of note for faculty or in reference to student learning

In all cases, the information in the survey contributes to understanding baseline information about students in relation to the specific learning goal, e.g., whether they engaged in service activities in high school (goal 8), the frequency of writing assignments and presentations in high school (goal 1), math classes previously taken and perceived preparation for quantitative work (goal 4), etc. Survey results also include students’ expectations for their time at UND, e.g., how often will they make a presentation, discuss ideas outside of class, participate actively in a class discussion, interact with people from backgrounds different than their own. Understanding where our first-year students are in terms of these experiences and expectations may be useful in understanding both their transition to college and their achievements during their time at UND.

6. Does this tool measure student learning or behaviors associated with student learning? If it measures student learning, does it do so directly or indirectly?

This is an indirect and baseline measure that will be useful in understanding our entering students and understanding their behaviors and experiences with learning once enrolled at UND.

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

Yes. It can be difficult to understand student behaviors related to learning without first understanding their pre-college experiences, behaviors, and expectations.

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?

No recommendations for change.

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

This is a valuable tool for a number of different campus constituencies and, especially in relation to Essential Studies goals, it makes an important contribution to the assessment plan.

10. Review Summary (one or two sentences).

The BCSSE provides UND with overview information about enrolling student demographics, previous behaviors and experiences, and attitudes and expectations.

Although it is not explicitly focused on student learning outcomes, the information in the BCSSE can shed light on findings regarding learning outcomes while also informing planning of initiatives such as orientation, enrollment management, and retention.

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.)*

The BCSSE provides UND with overview information about demographics, previous behaviors and experiences, and attitudes and expectations among the university's entering student population. Examples of findings are cited here, but the survey contains a great more information on similar topics.

Although first-year students who enroll at UND generally have had a strong record of academic success (the vast majority of new students received primarily A and B range grades in high school), they also have attitudes and expectations that can make the transition to college challenging. Compared to enrollees at other doctoral institutions, for example, they perceive themselves as having less strong academic preparation and they are less committed to the idea of academic perseverance. UND students also report having encountered a significantly lower degree of academic challenge in high school than do students from other doctoral institutions. Compared to peers, UND students feel underprepared for the key academic tasks of thinking critically and analytically, learning independently, and writing clearly and effectively.

On the other hand, most of UND's new students have been employed during high school, and 11% have worked more than 20 hours a week as a high school student. A high majority of UND's entering students expect to continue working part-time, normally at a moderate level (i.e., less than 20 hours a week) while in college. This may be because UND has much smaller numbers of students receiving help from parents/family or from scholarships/grants than does a typical doctoral institution.

12. What results about this survey would students find interesting? *(Please provide a few sentences or bullet points of highlights, written in student-friendly language. This will be posted on the assessment website and distributed to students via other means as well.)*

What experiences and expectations are typical of students who enroll at UND? This is the question addressed by the Beginning Survey of Student Engagement. The survey provides a great deal of information about first-year students as demonstrated by these examples.

- Students enrolling at UND feel less prepared for key academic tasks than do students elsewhere. For example, they are less confident in their preparation for critical and analytical thinking, for learning independently, and for writing effectively.***
- On the other hand, new students were often very involved in class discussions while in high school and expect to continue that pattern in college. New students also frequently worked with peers on class projects, something that can be quite important for study in many of UND's majors.***

13. Should review of this instrument be continued as part of the UAC review cycle? If so, how frequently?

This instrument should be reviewed by the committee, and those reviews should occur as frequently as the survey is administered in order to ensure that any key patterns are observed early.

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Form revised: 10/1/13