About NSSE®

What is student engagement?

Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies show are linked to student learning.

What does NSSE do?

Through its student survey, The College Student Report, NSSE annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college.

NSSE provides participating institutions a variety of reports that compare their students’ responses with those of students at self-selected groups of comparison institutions. Comparisons are available for individual survey questions and the four NSSE Engagement Indicators:

- **Academic Challenge** – Including Higher-Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Learning Strategies
- **Learning with Peers** – Including Collaborative Learning and Discussions with Diverse Others
- **Experiences with Faculty** – Including Student-Faculty Interaction and Effective Teaching Practices
- **Campus Environment** – Including Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment

Each November, NSSE also publishes its Annual Results, which reports topical research and trends in student engagement results. NSSE researchers also present and publish research findings throughout the year.

What is the survey about?

Survey items on The College Student Report represent empirically confirmed "good practices" in undergraduate education. That is, they reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college. NSSE doesn’t assess student learning directly, but survey results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved.

How are survey results used?

Institutions use their data to identify aspects of the undergraduate experience inside and outside the classroom that can be improved through changes in policies and practices more consistent with good practices in undergraduate education. This information is also used by prospective college students, their parents, college counselors, academic advisers, institutional research officers, and researchers in learning more about how students spend their time at different colleges and universities and what they gain from their experiences.

More than 1,500 different colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada have participated in NSSE since it was first administered in 2000.
QUICK FACTS

Survey Instrument: The College Student Report

Participating Institutions: 621 colleges and universities participated in NSSE 2013. 1,554 have participated since 2000.

Student Participation: 371,284 students completed NSSE in 2013. Approximately 4 million students have completed the survey since 2000.

HISTORY

Conceived in 1998 as a new approach to gathering information about collegiate quality and piloted in 1999 with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts.


RELATED PROJECTS

NSSE is a self-supporting auxiliary unit within the Center for Postsecondary Research (CPR) in the Indiana University School of Education.

Note: This information is from the NSSE website at nsse.iub.edu.